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### →\*SERMONS\*←

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#### CHRISTIAN HOPE.

BY REV. ENSIGN MCCHESENEY, PH.D., ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
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*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*—ROMANS xv., 13.

LIVY, the Roman historian, died in the eighteenth year of the Christian era. Thus his life was in part cotemporaneous with that of St. Paul. Livy placed on record the fact that there stood at one time in Rome a temple dedicated to Hope. He added significantly that this temple was struck by lightning and consumed. He probably shared in the feeling that prevailed in his time that human hopes are delusive; that if Hope is a deity at all, it is a deceitful deity, and one whose temple ought to be struck by lightning.

It was not long after this, probably about half a century, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. The Christians at Rome were a miscellaneous company. Part were Jews, part Gentiles. Some of them lived amid the squalor of the Ghetto; some of them were slaves, some of them freedmen. Among them were none of the great and prosperous. All apparently had little to hope for. But St. Paul sends to them a message of hope. Their lives so dreary to all outward appearance were to be triumphantly hopeful. This was their privilege as followers of Jesus Christ. "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Here we see at once that there is a difference between Christian and

Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like unto him, who was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, even him did outlandish women cause to sin." How can there be sympathy in the deepest matters? Each feels that there is one subject on which they are not agreed, and this is a fatal barrier to perfect union. The ungodly partner despises the Christian for marrying in the teeth of principle. The Christian is disappointed because the apparent influence gained before marriage is dissipated soon after the knot is irrevocably tied. Well might Rebekah be weary of her life through those daughters of Heth! Many a Christian girl has married an unbeliever, in the hope of saving him, and has bitterly rued her choice; she has seen her influence wane, and has learnt, though too late, that the Holy Spirit will not co operate with our efforts, if they are based on distinct disobedience to one of the clearest commands of the Bible. If a man threatens that, if you deny yourself to him, he will take violent or fatal steps, *let him!* He has no right to put you in that position; he simply wants to get you into his power, and he will be much too great a coward to carry out his threats. Do right in the sight of God, and leave him to settle the matter with his Maker.

3. *It should have the goodwill of parents or guardians.* This is not necessary where sanction is withheld from caprice. But where it can possibly be obtained, there is the halo of a brighter promise encircling the union of two young hearts, when it is ratified amid the congratulations of rejoicing friends. So it was with Jacob: "Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and sent him away." (Gen. xlviii., 1, 2.) It is wise and right, where practicable, for children to consult, in such matters, those whose love has made them the eager guardians of their opening life; and to do so by courtesy, even when mature years have given them the right to choose and act for themselves. But if parents would have such confidences when their children are old, they must make themselves their confidants whilst

they are young, they must give as well as receive, they must exercise their authority by love and reasoning, rather than by constraint, and they have no right to let their decision be warped, through any personal whim, from the straight line of what would best serve the highest interest of a beloved child.

4. *There should be some prospect of suitable livelihood.* In the broad wealthy land where Jacob found himself, there was not much difficulty about that. It is a much more complicated matter amid the conditions of our crowded modern life. Yet there ought to be some security of a competence. Young people have no need to begin where their parents are leaving off; to do so would avoid much wholesome difficulty and the opportunities for mutual help; but it is equally absurd to run the risk of a late repentance for a rash marriage. Young man, select as your partner one who, with refinement and culture, is not above turning her hands to the practical details of household management, and who knows what to do and how to do it. Young women, give your hearts to men who love you well enough to earn you through years of faithful and steadfast courtship, if so it must be. Anyone could do one deed of gallantry; it took a true man to serve for seven long years.

If these four conditions are fulfilled, there will be the strongest reasons for anticipating a union which shall be a miniature picture of that event, for which the whole creation groans; when the midnight air shall be startled by the tidings of the Bridegroom's advent, and the Church shall pass into the wedding feast.

#### Jesus Coming into His Garden.

By T. DEWITT TALMAGE, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), BROOKLYN.

Hark! I hear the latch of the garden gate, and I look to see who is coming.

I hear the voice of Christ. "I am come into My garden."

I say: "Come in, O Jesus! we have been waiting for Thee; walk all through the paths. Look at the flowers; look at the fruit; pluck that which Thou wilt for Thyself."

Jesus comes into the garden and up to that old man, and touches him and says: "Almost home, father, not many more aches for thee, I will never leave thee; take courage a little longer and I will steady thy tottering steps, and I will soothe thy troubles and give thee rest. Courage, old man."

Then Christ goes up another garden path, and He comes to a soul in trouble and says: "Peace! all is well. I have seen thy tears. I have heard thy prayer. The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He will preserve thy soul. Courage, O troubled spirit!"

Then I see Jesus going up another garden path, and I see great excitement among the leaves, and I hasten up that garden path to see what Jesus is doing there, and lo! He is breaking off flowers, sharp and clean from the stem, and I say: "Stop, Jesus, don't kill those beautiful flowers."

He turns to me and says: "I have come into My garden to gather lilies, and I mean to take these up to a higher terrace for the garden around My palace, and there I will plant them; and in better soil and in better air they shall put forth brighter leaves and sweeter redolence, and no frost shall touch them forever."

And I looked up into His face and said: "Well, it is His garden, and He has a right to do what He will with it. Thy will be done"—the hardest prayer a man ever made.

It has seemed as if Jesus Christ took the best. From many of your households the best one is gone. You know that she was too good for this world. She was the gentlest in her ways, the deepest in her affections. And when at the last the sickness came you had no faith in medicines.

You knew when the hour of parting had come, and when, through the rich grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you surrendered that treasure, you said, "Lord Jesus, take it. It is the best we have; take it. Thou art worthy." The others in the household may have been of grosser mould. She was of the finest. One day a man was taking me from the depot to a village. He was very rough and coarse, and

very blasphemous. But after a while he mellowed down as he began to talk of his little son whom he had lost. "Oh, sir," he said, "that boy was different from the rest of us. He never used any bad language; no, sir. I never heard him use a bad word in my life. He used to say his prayers, and we laughed at him; but he would keep on saying his prayers, and I often thought: 'I can't keep that child,' and I said to my wife: 'Mother, we can't keep that child.' But, sir, the day he was drowned, and they brought him in and laid him down on the carpet, so white and so beautiful, my heart broke, sir; I knew we couldn't keep him."

The Heaven of your little ones will not be fairly begun until you get there. All the kindnesses shown them by immortals will not make them forget you. There they are, the radiant throngs that went out from your homes. I throw a kiss to the sweet darlings. They are all well now in the palace. The crippled child has a sound foot now.

#### Lead Them Home.

Lord, we can trust Thee for our holy dead:  
They, underneath the shadow of Thy tomb,

Have entered into peace: with bended head,

We thank Thee for their rest, and for our lightened gloom.

But Lord, our living—who, on stormy seas  
Of sin and sorrow, still are tempest tossed!

Our dead have reached their haven, but for these—

Teach us to trust Thee, Lord, for these,  
our loved and lost!

For these we make our passion prayer by night;

For these we cry to Thee through the long day.

We see them not, O keep them in Thy sight!

From them and us, be Thou not far away.

And if not home to us yet lead them home  
To where Thou standest at the heavenly gate;

That so from Thee they shall not farther roam;

And grant us patient hearts Thy gathering-time to wait.

—*Sunday Magazine.*