

RESCUE FOR SHIPWRECKED SINNERS

Lay Hold of Christ, the Strong Swimmer—Don't Trust the Plank of Good Works or the Shivered Spar of Righteousness—Talmage's Simile.

Washington, Oct. 29.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage employs a very bold figure of the Bible to bring out the helpfulness of religion for all those in any kind of struggle. The text is Isaiah xxv, 11: "He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, and he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands."

In the summer season multitudes of people wade into the ponds and lakes and rivers and seas to dive or float or swim. In a world the most of which is water all men and women should learn to swim. Some of you have learned the side stroke introduced by George Peckers in 1850, each stroke of that kind carrying the swimmer a distance of six feet, and some of you may use the overhand stroke invented by Gardener, the expert who by it won the 500 yard championship in Manchester in 1862, the swimmer by that stroke carrying his arm in the air for a more lengthened reach, and some of you may tread the water as though you had been made to walk on the sea, but most of you usually take what is called the breast stroke, placing the hands with the backs upward, about five inches under the water, the inside of the wrists touching the breast, then pushing the arms forward coincident with the stroke, the feet struck out to the greatest width possible, and you thus unconsciously illustrate the meaning of my text, "He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim."

The fisherman seeks out unfrequented nooks. You stand all day on the bank of a river in the broiling sun and fling out your line and catch nothing, while an expert angler breaks through the jungle and goes by the shadow of the solitary rock, and, in a place where no fisherman has been for ten years, throws out his line and comes home at night, his face shining and his basket full. I do not know why we ministers of the gospel need always be fishing in the same stream and preaching from the same texts that other people preach from. I cannot understand the policy of the minister who in Blackfriars, London, England, every week for 30 years preached from the Epistles to the Hebrews. It is an exhilaration to me when I come across a theme which I feel no one else has treated; and my text is one of that kind. There are paths in God's word that are well beaten by Christian feet. When men want to quote Scripture, they quote the old passages that everyone has heard. When they want a chapter read, they read a chapter that all the other people have been reading, so that the church to-day is ignorant of three-fourths of the Bible.

You go into the Louvre at Paris. You confine yourself to one corridor of that opulent gallery of paintings. As you come out your friend says to you, "Did you see that Rembrandt?" "No." "Did you see that Titian?" "No." "Did you see that Rubens?" "No." "Did you see that Raphael?" "No." "Well," says your friend, "then you did not see the Louvre." Now, my friends, I think we are too much apt to confine ourselves to one of the great corridors of Scripture truth, and so much so that there is not one person out of a million who has ever noticed the all suggestive and powerful picture in the words of my text.

This text represents God as a strong swimmer, striking out to push down iniquity and save the souls of men. "He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim." The figure is bold and many-sided. Most of you know how to swim. Some of you learned it in the city school, where this art is taught; some of you in boyhood, in the river near your father's house; some of you since you came to manhood or womanhood, while summering on the beach of the sea. It is a good thing to know how to swim, not only for yourself, but because you will after awhile perhaps have to help others. I do not know anything more inspiring or sublime than to see some man like Norman McKenzie leaping from the ship Madras into the sea to save Charles Turner, who had dropped from the royal yard while trying to loosen the sail, bringing him back to the deck amid the huzzas of the passengers and crew. If a man has not enthusiasm enough to cheer in such circumstances, he deserves himself to drop into the sea and have no one to help him. The Royal Humane Society of England was established in 1774, its object to applaud and reward those who should pluck up life from the deep. Any one who has performed such a deed of daring has all the particulars of that bravery recorded in a public record and on his breast a medal done in blue and gold and bronze, anchor and monogram and inscription, telling to future generations the bravery of the man or woman who saved some one from drowning.

In order to understand the full force of this figure, you need to realize that our race is in a sinking condition. You sometimes hear people talking of what they consider the most beautiful words in our language. One man says it is "home," another man says it is the word "mother," and another man says the word "Jesus," but I tell you the bitterest word in all our language, the word most angry and baleful, the word saturated with the most trouble, the word that accounts for all the loathsomeness and the pang and the outrage and the harrowing, and that word is "sin." You spell it with three letters, and yet those three letters describe the circumference and pierce the diameter of everything bad in the universe. Sin is a sibilant word. You cannot pronounce it without giving the hiss of the flame or the hiss of the serpent. Sin! And then if you add three letters to that word it describes every one of us by nature—sinner. We have outraged the law of God, not

occasionally or now and then, but perpetually. The Bible declares it. Mark! It thunders two claps: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." What the Bible says our own conscience affirms.

After Judge Morgan had sentenced Lady Jane Grey to death his conscience troubled him so much for the deed that he became insane, and all through his insanity he kept saying: "Take her away from me! Lady Jane Grey! Take her away! Lady Jane Grey!" It was the voice of conscience. And no man ever does anything wrong, however great, but his conscience brings that matter before him, and at every step of his misbehavior it says, "Wrong, wrong!" Sin is a leprosy; sin is a paralysis; sin is a consumption; sin is a pollution; sin is death. Give it a fair chance, and it will swamp you and me, body, mind and soul, forever.

Then what do we want? A swimmer! A strong swimmer, a swift swimmer! And blessed be God, in my text we have him announced. "He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim." You have noticed that when a swimmer goes to rescue any one he puts off his heavy apparel. He must not have any such impediment about him if he is going to do this great deed. And when Christ stepped down to save us He shook off the sandals of heaven, and His feet were free, and then He stepped down into the wave of our transgressions, and it came up over His wounded feet, and it came above His speckled robe. He came down into the lacerated temple, the high water mark of His anguish. Then, rising above the flood, "He stretched forth His hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim."

If you have ever watched a swimmer, you notice that his whole body is brought into play. The arms are flexed, the hands drive the water back, the knees are active, the head is thrown back to escape strangulation, the body is kept in position. And when Christ sprang into the deep to save us He threw His entire nature into it—all His godhead, His omniscience, His goodness, His love, His omnipotence, head, heart, eyes, hands, feet. We were far out on the sea and sank down in the waves and so far out from the shore that nothing short of an entire God could save us. Christ leaped out for our rescue, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will," and all the surges of human and satanic hate beat against Him, and those who watched Him from the gates of heaven feared He would go down under the wave and instead of saving others would Himself perish, but, putting His breast to the foam and shaking the salt from His locks, He came on and on until He is now within the reach of everyone here, eye omniscient, heart infinite, arm omnipotent, mighty to save, even unto the uttermost.

Oh, it was not half a God that trampled down hell and trampled on the demons of Gaddara; it was not a quarter of a God that mastered the arms of his overjoyed sisters; it was not a fragment of God who offered pardon and peace to all the race. No, this mighty swimmer threw his grandeur, his glory, his might, his wisdom, his omnipotence and his eternity into this one act. It took both hands of God to save us—both feet. How do I prove it? On the cross were not both hands nailed? On the cross were not both feet spiked? His entire nature involved in our redemption!

Behold, then, the spectacle of a drowning soul and Christ the swimmer! I believe it was in 1848 when there were six English soldiers of the Fifth Fusiliers who were hanging to a capsized boat that had been upset by a squall three miles from shore. It was in the night, but one man swam mightily for the beach, guided by the dark mountains that lifted their top through the night. He came to the beach. He found a swimmer that consented to go with him and save the other men, and they put out. It was some time before they could find the place where the men were, but after awhile they heard their cry, "Help, help!" and they bore down to them, and they saved them and brought them to shore. Oh, that this moment our cry might be lifted long, loud and shrill till Christ, the swimmer, shall come and take us lest we drop a thousand fathoms under!

If you have been much by the water, you know very well that when one in peril help must come very quickly, or it will be of no use. One minute may decide everything. Immediate help the man wants or no help at all. Now, that is just the kind of relief we want. The case is urgent, imminent, instantaneous. See that soul sinking! Son of God, lay hold of him. Be quick! Oh, I wish you all understood how urgent this gospel is! There was a man in the navy at sea, who had been severely whipped for bad behavior, and he was maddened by it and leaped into the sea, and no sooner had he leaped into the sea than, quick as lightning, an albatross swooped upon him. The drowning man, brought to his senses, seized hold of the albatross and held on. The fluttering of the bird kept him on the wave till relief could come. Would now that the dove of God's convicting, converting and saving spirit might flash from the throne upon your soul and that you, taking hold of its potent wing, might live and live forever.

New modes have been invented for rescuing a drowning body, but there is nothing better than the old one—cuing a drowning soul. In 1785 Lionel Lukin, a London coach builder, fitted up a Norway yawl as a lifeboat and called it the Insubmersible, and that has been improved upon until from all the coasts of the round world perfect lifeboats are ready to put out for the relief of marine dis-

asters. In sixteen years the French Society for Saving Life From Shipwreck by their lifeboats and gun apparatus, saved 2,129 lives. The German Association for the Rescue of Life From Shipwreck, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and our United States life saving service have done a work beyond the power of statistics to commemorate. What rocket lines and sling life buoys and tally boards and mortars and hammocks and cork mattresses and life saving stations filled with machinery for saving the bodies of the drowning! But let me here and now make it plain that there has been no new way invented for the moral and eternal rescue of a struggling soul. Five hundred attempts at such contrivance have been made, but all of them dead failures. Hear it! There is none other name whereby we must be saved than the name of Jesus. The mighty swimmer of my text comes down off the beach of heaven and through the breakers, comes buffeted and bruised, and reddening the waves from his own lacerations, he cries: "Lay hold of my arm! Put your head on my shoulder! Hear the beating of my loving heart! Be ye saved, for I am God, and there is no other!"

I want to persuade you to lay hold of this strong swimmer. "No," you say, "that swimmer is a drowning man to lay hold of a swimmer." There is not a river or lake but has a calamity resultant from the fact that when a strong swimmer went out to save a sinking man the drowning man clutched him, threw his arms around him, pinned his arms, and they both went down together. When you are saving a man in the water, you do not want to come up by his face. You want to come up by his back. You do not want him to hold you while you take hold of him. But, you trust that swimmer. He is so strong a swimmer He comes not to our back, but to our face, and He asks us to throw around Him the arms of our love and then promises to take us to the beach, and He will do it. Do not trust that plank of good works. Do not trust that shivered spar of your own righteousness. Christ only can give you safe transportation. Turn your face upon Him, as the dying martyr did in olden times when he cried out: "None but Christ! None but Christ!" Jesus has taken millions of sinners and has laid them out on your there. Oh, what hardness to thrust Him back when He has been swimming all the way from the throne of God, where you are now, and is ready to swim all the way back again, taking your redeemed spirit.

On my arm or on my shoulder. Do not say, "I am going to work to become a Christian." My brother, you begin wrong. When a man is drowning, and a strong swimmer comes out to help him, he says to him: "Now, be quiet. Put your arm on my shoulder, but don't struggle, don't try to help yourself, and I'll take you ashore. The more you struggle and the more you try to help yourself, the more you impede me. Now, be quiet, and I'll take you ashore." When Christ, the strong swimmer, comes out to save a soul, the sinner says: "That's right. I am glad to see Christ, and I am going to help him in the work of my redemption. I am going to pray more, and that will help Him, and I am going to weep extravagantly over my sins, and that will help Him. No, it will not. Stop your doing. Christ will do all or none. You cannot lift an ounce, you cannot move an inch, in this matter of your redemption."

This is the difficulty which keeps thousands of souls out of the kingdom of God. It is because they cannot consent to let Jesus Christ begin and complete the work of their redemption. "Why," you say, "then is there nothing for me to do?" Only one thing have you to do, and that is to lay hold of Christ and let Him achieve your salvation. I will not say that I do not know whether I make the matter plain or not. I simply want to show you that a man cannot save himself, but that the Almighty Son of God can do it and will do it if you ask Him. Oh, fling your two arms, the arm of your trust and the arm of your love, around this omnipotent swimmer of the cross!

Have you ever stood by and seen someone under process of resuscitation after long submergence? The strong swimmer has put him on the beach after a struggle in the waters. Fifth Fusiliers, who were hanging to a capsized boat that had been upset by a squall three miles from shore. It was in the night, but one man swam mightily for the beach, guided by the dark mountains that lifted their top through the night. He came to the beach. He found a swimmer that consented to go with him and save the other men, and they put out. It was some time before they could find the place where the men were, but after awhile they heard their cry, "Help, help!" and they bore down to them, and they saved them and brought them to shore. Oh, that this moment our cry might be lifted long, loud and shrill till Christ, the swimmer, shall come and take us lest we drop a thousand fathoms under!

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

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Nehemiah's Prayer.—Neh. 1:1-11.

Time.—B. C. 445. Place.—Shushan. Persons.—Nehemiah. Hanani. Men of Judah. Artaxerxes Longimanus. Commentary.—Connecting links. Ezra gave us a history of the first restoration of the Jewish people after the Babylonish captivity and of the building of the second temple. Nehemiah came into Judea about thirteen years later than Ezra, and succeeded him in the Government there. In this book we have a further account of their settlement in Jerusalem, the building of the wall of the city, and also of some reforms brought about.

1. The words of Nehemiah—Rather the narrative or record. Son of Hachalah—Probably of the tribe of Judah and of the royal family of David.—J. F. & B. He was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes at Shushan, the capital. This title implied that Nehemiah was a counselor, statesman, courtier and favorite. For twelve years he was governor of Judea, leading a great religious revival and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Month Chisleu—Ninth month, corresponding to the end of November and the beginning of December. Twentieth year—Of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned from B. C. 465 to 423.

2. Hanani—His own brother, to whom he afterward gave the charge of the gates of Jerusalem. Chap. vii. 2.—Pul. Com. Came—From Jerusalem to Shushan. I asked him—Respecting Jerusalem and its people. Jews that had escaped—Survived all the dangers to which the new settlement at Jerusalem had been exposed.—M.

3. In the province—Of Judea, now a province of the Persian empire. Great affliction and reproach—Their subjection to Persia forced itself on the Jews at every turn. The tribute imposed on them was a heavy burden to a poor people. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down—The wall and houses had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar more than 140 years before (2 Kings xxv, 10), and their rubbish still lay in sight. They were partially rebuilt at one time. Ezra iv, 12. The neighboring races, infuriated at the rejection of their friendly offers of assistance by Zerubbabel, years before, and still more so by Ezra's recent act in sending back to their homes all the wives of non-Jewish races found in Jerusalem and Judea, had attacked Jerusalem, and after fierce struggles had broken down the newly-built walls and leveled the gates. Neh. ii, 11-15.

Stanley. 4. I sat down and wept—Perhaps now for the first time a deep, keen sense of his people's woes came over his soul.—Whedon. Mourned—Over the condition of his people, the desolation of the Holy City, the reproach upon the name of God, and the sin which had brought them to this low estate, which had not yet been put away.—Ibid. Certain days—From Chisleu to Nisan, four months, until the king noticed his grief.—Clarke. Fasted—A token of the genuineness of his sorrow. Prayed—in earnest protracted prayer that God would favor the purpose which he seems to have secretly formed of asking the royal permission to go to Jerusalem. 5. Covenant and mercy—Covenant refers to God's definite promises. Mercy refers to His loving character, which gives more than is pledged.—Harbit.

6. Ear attentive—eyes open—Let Thine ear hear our confession, and mercifully pardon. Let Thine eyes behold our suffering and send speedy succor.—Clarke. Day and night—His grief was doubtless increased at the thought that all this evil existed in spite of Ezra's work. He withdrew from his court duties and spent a time in retirement in most sincere sorrow. I and my father's house—Nehemiah had a clear sense of his identification with his people in sin as in misery.—Lange.

7. Have dealt corruptly—Some of these sins are mentioned in Neh. v, 17, 10, 11; xiii, 15; Ezra ix, 1; II Chron. xxxvi, 14-17. Thy commandments—The moral precepts by which our lives should be regulated. Statutes—What refers to the rights and ceremonies of thy religion. Judgments—The precepts of justice relative to our conduct to each other.—Clarke.

8. If ye transgress—This is not a quotation, but a reference to the general sense of various passages, such as Lev. xxvi, 47-50; Deut. xxviii, 45-52, etc.—Pul. Com. The fact that God had fulfilled His word of threatening was a proof that He would fulfil His word of promise.

9. But if ye turn unto Me—When we turn to sin God turns to discipline; when we turn to righteousness, He turns to mercy.—Gray. Yet will I gather them—God had a place devoted to His people, and when they were content to dwell there He gave them liberty and rights there.

10. These are thy servants—Who will devote themselves to do thy will. And thy people—With whom thou hast made covenant. They are the descendants of those whom thou hast delivered from Egypt; "to whom thou hast given victories by Joshua, by Samson, by Deborah; and caused to overthrow the Assyrian army."

11. Who desire to fear thy name—True desires are: 1. Constant, not flashes. 2. Hearty, strong and growing. 3. Include the favor of God and spiritual grace. 4. Regard the means of salvation.—Gray. Prosper thy servant this day—He had in mind to ask of King Artaxerxes that he might go to Jerusalem and help his people. He asked definitely for exactly what he wanted.—Peloubet. Mercy in the sight of this man—The king, Nehemiah had decided that to remove the reproach of Jerusalem he must go there in person. That to do so he must obtain the king's permission. Teachings.—Love for God's cause

should prompt us to inquire after its interests. When God's people suffer we suffer with them. The wisest course to take in time of sorrow is to seek a place of prayer. We should never blame God for such calamities. We must abhor sin if we would receive God's help. We should be willing to give up positions of earthly honor if we may advance the cause of God's people.

PRACTICAL SURVEY. The king's cupbearer—Nehemiah was born in exile. He was engaged in service which brought him very near to the king. Yet there was nothing in all that heathen court that could be said to be religious. Where did Nehemiah get his teaching concerning God? He studied the scriptures, and gave himself much to prayer. His heart yearned over his own people, and he embraced an opportunity to learn of their circumstances. It is said to reflect that when such opportunity for a return to the holy land had been given by Cyrus that only 50,000 Jews availed themselves of it, out of probably an aggregate of millions. The manner in which the affairs of the Jewish province dragged down Cyrus day to the time of Nehemiah, a period of nearly 100 years, was not only, nor chiefly, to the opposition of local enemies, but had its chief cause in the apathy and self-seeking of the Jewish people. The heart follows the things around which its affections cling.

Man's extremity.—Affairs at Jerusalem were growing worse and worse. The people were becoming hopeless. God was fading out of their daily lives. They were sinking into despair. Their enemies were openly having revenge. The report of these Jews was that they were in "great affliction and reproach." The voice of triumph was hushed, and the heathen no more declared that the God of Israel was the mighty God. So deeply was he moved for his people that he put himself on a level with them and implored God's mercy. In this attitude he saw his own helplessness even to prevail with the king of Persia, and yet he saw that God could influence him to work in the interests of His people. Here Nehemiah offered himself up as God's instrument, while he depended on God to arrange his temporal affairs, making it possible for him to go forth in the fulfillment of the inspired plan. While it was a miracle performed for Judah God used means at hand to perform it. Nehemiah knew that all was the work of God, though it might appear that the king had merely chosen a new governor for that distant province in order to promote his political interests. God and Nehemiah were intent on a revival. They were "workers together," and results would show that "one with God is a majority." God interposed. He identified himself with a people so despoiled and degraded. But His work for them proved Him Almighty, and His laws holy. The change produced showed what God would have His people be, and how unlike Him they are without Him.

FOR QUICK RELIEF. Spiced Stimulants for Children Should be Avoided

A "colicky" baby is a constant trial to his mother and a burden to his own small self, especially if it be too young to indicate the cause of the trouble and simply shows its distress by the constant wailing cry which soon gives it the reputation of being "the colicest baby that ever lived." There would be very few colic babies if there were more intelligent mothers who understand the use of simple home remedies. In this one instance—the troublesome colic so common to all children—quick relief may be found in hot infusions. In cases of sudden and severe pains in the bowels, caused by an accumulation of gases in the stomach, a hot infusion of peppermint is a valuable remedy for the older children; and for the tiny mites of humanity who are troubled with colic, two or three drops of the essence in hot water will quickly give relief.

For quick relief of any ailment, no mother should think of giving prompt relief to her child, except in extreme cases, and under medical advice. Many a mother flies to alcoholic drinks on the slightest approach of a cold, giving a young child this supposed all-powerful remedy; and a taste for drink is often formed from taking these hot spiced stimulants.

Boys Who Succeed.

Yes, the boy that sweeps the floor the best will be the man that will always have his name at the head of the firm in due time, and the boys that never get their lesson out of their chum's memorandum books, will be the men who become presidents of the colleges, the railroads and the banks. Men trust them for the reason that they have never cheated themselves in the great game of life, where they assumed and bore responsibilities in which, as in the brute creation, the survival of the fittest is the law of God as well as of men. Nay, it is more the law of God with intellect and morals than in the brute creation, as by this law it has been decreed that man shall live "by the sweat of his brow," and "not by bread alone, but by obedience to every word of God," spoken not only in the law of Moses but also in the evolution of the stars and of men, and of the world we live in, writ large, so that there is no excuse for not reading correctly and governing ourselves accordingly. Given the boys who have been taught that time and the opportunity to work and personal responsibility in their use is their capital in trade, and we have the prophecy of the men who will be honored in every calling of life.—J. V. Farewell in Dominion Presbyterian.

Miller's Grip Powders cure.

An able man shows his spirit by gentle words and resolute actions; he is neither hot nor timid.—Chesterfield.