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A STRONG SWIMMER.

From Him Dr. Talmage Draws a Noble Lesson.

The Always Ready Helpfulness of Religion for Those Who Struggle Against Adverse Circumstances.

(Copyright, Louis Klopsch, 1892.)
Washington, Oct. 22.

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 25:11: "He shall spread forth His hands in the midst of them, as 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 Pewters 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 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 of 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."

"Certainly you'd not change. No one thought of such a thing. Go back and finish with the boys you started in with."

"Father, you don't understand. That institution's last three months. Four of the best football players have sent word that they must drop out. It is all up, and I want a job."—Detroit Free Press.

His Revenge.

As they bent solicitously over him, the man who had been kicked by a horse opened his eyes. "Have you any last wish?" they asked him.

"Yes," he murmured. "Have an automobile hearse at the funeral."

Revenge, it seemed, was strong even in death.—N. Y. Press.

SYRUP of FIGS

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AND BOWELS

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"Jesus," but I tell you the bitterest word in all our language, the most angry and hateful, the word saturated with the most trouble, the word that accounts for all the loathsome 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 siss of the flame or the hiss of the serpent. Sin! And then if you add three letters to that word it describes everyone of us by nature—sinner. We have outraged the law of God, not occasionally, or now and then, but perpetually. The Bible declares it. Hark! 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 or small, 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 pollution; sin is death. Give it a fair chance, and it will swamp you and me, body, mind and soul, forever. In this world it only gives a faint intimation of its virulence. You see a patient in the first stages of typhoid fever. The cheek is somewhat flushed, the hands somewhat hot, pereceded by a slight chill. "Why," you say, "typhoid fever does not seem to be much of a disease." But wait until the patient has been six weeks under it, and all his energies have been wrung out, and he is too weak to lift his little finger, and his intellect gone, then you see the full havoc of the disease. Now, sin in this world is an ailment which is only in its first stages, but let it get under full way and it is an all-consuming typhoid. Oh, if we could see our unpardonable sins as God sees them, our teeth would chatter and our knees would knock together, and our respiration would be choked, and our heart would break. If your sins are unforgiven, they are bearing down on you and you are sinking—sinking away from happiness, sinking away from God, sinking away from everything that is good and blessed.

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 stretcheth forth his hands to swim."

You have noticed that when a swimmer goes to rescue anyone 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 forth 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 over His wounded feet, and it came above the spear stab in His side—aye, it dashed to 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 whole body is in propulsion. 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 so deep 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 surf 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 bellowing Gennesaret; it was not a quarter of a God that mastered the demons of Gadara; it was not two-thirds of a God that lifted up Lazarus into 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!

If you have lived much by the water, you notice also that if anyone is going out to the rescue of the drowning he must be independent, self-reliant, able to go alone. There may be a time when he must spring out to save one, and he cannot get a lifeboat, and if he goes out, and has not strength enough to bear himself up and bear another up he will sink, and instead of dragging one corpse out of the billows you will have two to drag out. When Christ sprang out into the sea to deliver us, he had no life buoy. His Father did not help Him. Alone in the wine press, alone in the pang, alone in the darkness, alone on the mountain, alone in the seal. Oh, if He saves us, He shall have all the credit, for "there was none to help." No ear, no wing, no ladder! When Nathaniel Lyon fell in the battle

charge in front of his troops, he had a whole army to cheer him. When Marshal Ney sprang into the contest and plunged in the spur till the horse's flanks spurted blood, all France applauded him. But Jesus alone! "Of the people there was none to help." "All forsook Him and fled." Oh, it was not a flotilla that sailed down and saved us. It was not a cluster of gondolas that came over the wave. It was one person, independent and alone, "spreading out His hands among us as a swimmer spreadeth forth his hands to swim!"

I want to persuade you to lay hold of this strong swimmer. "No," you say; "it is always disastrous for 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, pinioned 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, blessed be God, Jesus Christ 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 to the land, and He is willing to take you 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!

I have sometimes thought what a spectacle the ocean bed will present when in the last day the water is all drawn off. It will be a line of wrecks from beach to beach. There is where the harpooners went down. There is where the line of battleships went down. There is where the merchantmen went down. There is where the steamers went down, a long line of wrecks from beach to beach. What a spectacle in the last day, when the water is drawn off! But, oh, how much more solemn if we had an eye to see the spiritual wrecks and the places where they founded! You would find thousands along our roads and streets. Christ came down in their awful catastrophe, putting out for their souls, "spreading out His hands as a swimmer spreadeth forth his hands to swim," but they thrust Him in the sore heart, and they smote His fair cheek, and the storm and darkness swallowed them up. I ask you to lay hold of this Christ and lay hold of Him now. You will sink without Him. From horizon to horizon not one sail in sight, only one strong swimmer, with head flung back and arms outspread.

I hear many saying: "Well, I would like to be a Christian. 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 arm or 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 Heaven. 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 and achieve it all. 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 some one under process of resuscitation after long submergence? The strong swimmer has put him on the beach after a struggle in the waters. To excite breathing in the almost lifeless body what manipulation, what friction of the cold limbs, what artificial movement of the lungs, what breath of the rescuer blown into the mouth of the rescued! And when breathing begins, and after awhile the slight respiration becomes the deep sigh, and the eyes open, and the blue lips take on a smile, what rejoicing, what clapping of hands all up and down the beach, what congratulation for the strong swimmer and for all who helped in the restoration, what shouting of "He lives, He lives!" Like this is the gladness when a soul that has been submerged in sin and sorrow is "coming to." What desire on the part of all to help, and when under the breath of God and under the manipulation by the wounded hands of Christ, the life eternal of the soul begins to show itself, all through the ranks of spectators, terrestrial and celestial, goes the cry: "He lives. Rejoice, for the dead is alive again!" May the living Christ this moment put out for your rescue, "spreading His hands in the midst of you, as a swimmer spreadeth his hands to swim!"

If you have lived much by the water, you notice also that if anyone is going out to the rescue of the drowning he must be independent, self-reliant, able to go alone. There may be a time when he must spring out to save one, and he cannot get a lifeboat, and if he goes out, and has not strength enough to bear himself up and bear another up he will sink, and instead of dragging one corpse out of the billows you will have two to drag out. When Christ sprang out into the sea to deliver us, he had no life buoy. His Father did not help Him. Alone in the wine press, alone in the pang, alone in the darkness, alone on the mountain, alone in the seal. Oh, if He saves us, He shall have all the credit, for "there was none to help." No ear, no wing, no ladder! When Nathaniel Lyon fell in the battle

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