

UNSAFE LIFEBOATS.

REV. DR. TALMAGE STILL FINDS NEW SUBJECTS AND NEW THOUGHTS.

The Recent Yacht Race—Importance of the Lifeboats—One That Can Live in Any Sea—A Sure Refuge in the Storm of Life.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 23.—After preaching on nearly 4,000 different subjects and being closely followed by the printing press for about 23 years Rev. Dr. Talmage still seems to find new subjects that have never been preached on. This forenoon he chose for his subject "Unsafe Lifeboats," the text being Acts xviii, 32, "Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let her fall off."

While your faces are yet somewhat bronzed by attendance on the international boat contest between the Vigilant and the Valkyrie I address you. Good things when there is no betting or dissipation, those outdoor sports. We want more fresh air and breeziness in our temperaments and our religion. A stale and slow and lethargic religion may have done for other times, yet will not do for these. But my text calls our attention to a boat of a different sort, and instead of the Atlantic it is the Mediterranean, and instead of not wind enough, as the crews of the Vigilant and Valkyrie the other day complained, there is too much wind and the swoop of a Euroclydon.

I am not calling your attention so much to the famous ship on which Paul was the distinguished passenger, but to the lifeboat of that ship which no one seems to notice. For a fortnight the main vessel had been tossed and driven. For that two weeks, the account says, the passengers had "continued fasting." I suppose the salt water, dashing over, had spoiled the sea biscuit, and the passengers were seasick anyhow.

The sailors said, "It is no use; this ship must go down," and they proposed among themselves to lower the lifeboat and get into it and take the chances for reaching shore, although they pretended they were going to get over the sides of the big ship and down into the lifeboat only to do sailors' duty. That was not sailorlike, for the sailors that I have known were all intrepid fellows and would rather go down with the ship than do such a mean thing as those Jack Tars of my text attempted.

When on the Mediterranean last June the Victoria sank under the ram of the Camperdown, the most majestic thing about that awful scene was that all the sailors staid at their posts doing their duty. As a class all over the world sailors are valorous, but these sailors of the text were exceptional and pretended to do duty while they were really preparing for flight in the lifeboat. But these "marines" on board—sea soldiers—had in especial charge a little missionary who was turning the world upside down, and when these marines saw the trick the sailors were about to play they lifted the cutlasses from the girdle and chop! chop! went those cutlasses into the ropes that held the lifeboat, and splash! it dropped into the sea.

My text describes it, "The soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let her fall off." As that empty lifeboat dropped and was capsized on a sea where for two weeks winds and billows had been in battle I think that many on board the main vessel felt their last hope of ever reaching home had vanished. In that tempestuous sea a small boat could not have lived five minutes.

My subject is "Unsafe Lifeboats." We cannot exaggerate the importance of the lifeboat. All honor to the memory of Lionel Lukin, the coach builder of Long Acre, London, who invented the first lifeboat, and I do not blame him for ordering put upon his tombstone in Kent the inscription that you may still read there:

"This Lionel Lukin was the first who built a lifeboat and was the original inventor of that principle of safety by which many lives and much property have been preserved from shipwreck, and he obtained for it the king's patent in the year 1785."

A WORD OF CAUTION. All honor to the memory of Sir William Hillary, who, living in the isle of Man, and after assisting with his own hand in the rescue of 305 lives of the shipwrecked, stirred the English parliament to quick action in the construction of lifeboats. Thanks to God for the sublime and pathetic and divine mission of the lifeboat. No one will doubt its important mission who has read of the wreck of the Amazon in the bay of Biscay, of the Tweed running on the reefs of the gulf of Mexico, or of the Ocean Monarch on the coast of Wales, or of the Birkenhead on the Cape of Good Hope, or of the Royal Charter on the coast of Anglesea, or of the Esmouth on the Scotch breakers, or of the Cambria on the Irish coast, or of the Atlantic on the rocks of Nova Scotia, or of the Lexington on Long Island sound.

To add still further to the importance of the lifeboat, remember there are at least 8,000,000 men following the sea, to say nothing of the uncounted millions this moment ocean passengers. We "land-lubbers," as sailors call us, may not know the difference between a marine spike and a ringbolt, or anything about heaving a log, or rigging out a flying jibboom, or furling a topsail, but we all realize to greater or less extent the importance of a lifeboat in every marine equipment.

Put do we feel the importance of a lifeboat in the matter of the soul's rescue? There are times when we all feel that we are out at sea, and as many disturbing and anxious questions strike us as waves struck that vessel against the sides of which the lifeboat of my text dangled. Questions about the church. Questions about the world. Questions about God. Questions about our eternal destiny. Every thinking man and woman has these questions, and in proportion as they are thinking people do these questions arise.

There is no wrong in thinking. If God had not intended us to think and keep

on thinking, he would not have built under this wheelhouse of the skull this thinking machine, which halts not in its revolutions from cradle to grave. Even the midnight does not stop the thinking machine, for when we are in dreams we are thinking, although we do not think as well. All of us who are accustomed to thinking want to reach some solid shore of safety and satisfaction, and if any one has a good lifeboat that we may honorably take I wish he would unswerving it from the davits and let us get into it and put for shore.

But I give you fair notice I must first examine the lifeboat before I risk your soul in it or advise you to risk your soul in it. All the splendid Ramsgate lifeboats, and Margate lifeboats, and South Shields lifeboats, and American lifeboats were tested before being put into practical use as to their buoyancy and speed and stowage and self righting capacity. And when you offer my soul a lifeboat I must first test it.

THE THEOPHIC LIFEBOAT. Here is a splendid new lifeboat called Theophy. It has only a little while been launched, although some of the planks are really several thousand years old, and from a worm eaten ship, new they are painted over and look new. They are really fatalism and pantheism of olden time. But we must forget that and call them theophy. The Grace Darling of this lifeboat was an oarswoman by the name of Mme. Blavatsky, but the oarswoman now is Annie Besant. So many are getting aboard the boat it is worthy of examination, both because of the safety of those who have entered it and because we ourselves are invited to get in.

Its theory is that everything is God. Horse and star and tree and man are parts of God. We have three souls—an animal soul, a human soul, a spiritual soul. The animal soul becomes, after awhile, a wandering thing, trying to express itself through mediums. It enters beasts or enters a human being, and when you find an effeminate man it is because a woman's soul has got into the man, and when you find a masculine woman it is because a man's soul has taken possession of a woman's body.

If you find a woman has become a platform speaker and likes politics, she is possessed by a dead politician, who 40 years ago made the platform quake. The soul keeps wandering on and on, and may have 50 or innumerable different forms, and finally is absorbed in God. It was God at the start and will be God at the last. But who gives the authority for the truth of such a religion? Some beings living in a cave in central Asia. They are invisible to the naked eye, but they cross continents and seas in a flash.

My Baptist brother Dr. Haldeman says that a theosophist in New York was visited by one of these mysterious beings from central Asia. The gentleman knew it from the fact that the mysterious being left his pocket handkerchief, embroidered with his name and Asiatic residence. The most wonderful achievement of the theosophists is that they keep out of the insane asylum. They prove the truth of the statement that no religion ever announced was so absurd but it gained disciples.

Societies in the United States and England and other lands have been established for the promulgation of theophy. Instead of needing the revelation of a Bible you can have these spirits from a cave in central Asia to tell you all you ought to know, and after you leave this life you may become a prima donna, or a robin, or a gazelle, or a sot, or a prizefighter, or a Herod, or a Jezabel, and so be enabled to have great variety of experience, rotating through the universe, now rising, now falling, now shot out in a straight line and now describing a parabola, and on and on, and up and up, and down and down, and round and round. Don't you see? Now, that theosophic lifeboat has been launched. It proposes to take you off the rough sea of doubt into everlasting quietude. How do you like the lifeboat? My opinion is you had better imitate the mariners of my text and cut off the ropes of that boat and let her fall off.

Another lifeboat tempting us to enter is made up of many planks of good works. It is really a beautiful boat—almagiving, practical sympathies for human suffering, righteous words and righteous deeds. I must admit I like the looks of the prow, and of the rowlocks and of the paddles, and of the steering gear, and of many who are thinking to trust themselves on her benches. But the trouble about that lifeboat is it leaks. I never knew a man yet good enough to earn heaven by his virtues or generosity.

If there be one person here present on this blessed Sabbath all of whose thoughts have been always right, all of whose actions have always been right, and all of whose words have always been right, let him stand up, or if already standing let him lift his hand, and I will know that he lies. Paul had it about right when he said, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." David had it about right when he said, "There is none that doeth good, no not one."

The old book had it about right when it said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Let a man get off that little steamer called The Maid of the Mist, which sails up to the foot of Niagara falls, and then climb to the top of the falls on the descending floods, for he can do it easier than any man ever will be able to climb to heaven by his good works.

If your thoughts have always been exactly right, and your words exactly right, and your deeds always exactly right, you can go up to the gate of heaven, and you need not even knock for admittance, but open it yourself and push the angels out of your way and go up and take one of the front seats. But you would be so unlike any one else that has gone up from this world that you would be a curiosity in heaven and more fit for a heavenly museum than for a place where the inhabitants could look at you free of charge.

No, sir, I admire your good works, and that lifeboat you are thinking of

trusting in is handsomer than any yawl or pinnace or yacht or cutter that ever sped out of a boathouse or hoisted sail for a race. But she leaks. Trust your soul in that, and you will go to the bottom. She leaks. So I imitate the mariners of the text, and with a cutlass strike the ropes of the boat and let her fall off.

Another lifeboat is Christian Inconsistency. The planks of this boat are composed of the split planks of shipwrecks. That prow is made out of hypocrisy from the life of a man who professed one thing and really was another. One of our lifeboats was the falsehood of a church member, and the other our was the wickedness of some minister of the gospel, whose iniquities were not for a long while found out. Not one plank from the oak of God's eternal truth in all that lifeboat. All the planks, by universal admission, are decayed and crumbling and fallen apart and rotten and ready to sink.

"Well, well," you say, "no one will want to get into that lifeboat." Oh, my friend, you are mistaken. That is the most popular lifeboat ever constructed. That is the most popular lifeboat ever launched. Millions of people want to get into it. They jostle each other to get the best seat in the boat. You could not keep them back though you stood at the gunwales with a club, as on our ship Greece in a hurricane, and the steerage passengers were determined to come up on deck, where they would have been washed off, and the officers stood at the top of the stairs clapping their back. Even by such violence as that you could not keep people from jumping into the most popular lifeboat, made of church member inconsistencies.

In times of revival when sinners flock into the inquiry room the most of them are kept from deciding aright because they know so many Christians who are bad. The inquiry room becomes a world's fair for exhibition of all the frailties of church members, so that if you believe all in there told you you would be afraid to enter a church lest you get your pockets picked or get knocked down.

This is the way they talk: "I was cheated out of \$500 by a leader of a Bible class." "A Sunday school teacher gossip about me and did her best to destroy my good name." "I had a partner in business who swamped our business, and he was so tricky and then rolled up his eyes in Friday night prayer meeting, as though he were looking for Elijah's chariot to make a second trip and take up another passenger."

But what a cracked and water logged and gaping seaored lifeboat the inconsistencies of others! Put me on a shingle mid-Atlantic and leave me there rather than in such a yawl of spiritual confidence. God forbid that I should get aboard it, and lest some of you make the mistake of getting into it I do as the mariners did on that Mediterranean ship when the sailors were about to get into the unsafe lifeboat of the text and lose their lives in that way. "Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let her fall off."

NOT LEFT TO CHANCE. "Well," says some one, "this subject is very discouraging, for we must have a lifeboat if we are ever to get ashore, and you have already condemned three." Ah, it is because I want to persuade you to take the only safe lifeboat. I will not allow you to be deceived and get on to the wild waves and then capsize or sink. Thank God, there is a lifeboat that will take you ashore in safety, as sure as God is God and heaven is heaven. The keel and ribs of this boat are made out of a tree that was set up on a bluff back of Jerusalem a good many years ago. Both of the oars are made out of the same tree. The rowlocks are made out of the same tree. The steering gear is made out of the same tree. The planks of it were hammered together by the hammers of executioners who thought they were really killing a Christ, but were really pounding together an escape for all imperiled souls of all ages.

It is an old boat, but good as new, though it has been carrying passengers from sinking ships to firm shore for ages and has never lost a passenger. These old Christians begin to smile because it is dawning upon them what I mean. The fact is that in this way years ago they got off a wreck themselves, and I do not wonder they smile. It is not a senseless giggle that means frivolity, but it is a smile like that on the face of Christians the moment they leave earth for heaven—yes, like the smile of God himself when he had completed the plan for saving the world.

Right after that big tumble of the Atlantic ocean six or seven weeks ago on the beach at East Hampton I met the captain of the life saving station and said, "Captain, do you think a lifeboat could live in a sea like that?" Although the worst of it was over, the captain replied, "No, I do not think it could." But this lifeboat of which I speak can live in any sea and defies all breakers, and all cyclones, and all equinoxes, and all earth, and all hell. In 30 years the life saving apparatus along our Atlantic coast saved the lives of over 45,000 of the shipwrecked, but this lifeboat that I commend has saved in 25 years hundreds of millions of the shipwrecked. Like those newly invented English lifeboats, it is innumerable, self righting and self balling.

All along our rocky American coast things were left to chance for centuries, and the shipwrecked crawled up on the beach to die unless some one happened to walk along or some fisherman's net might be near. But after the ship Ayrshire was wrecked at Squan beach, and the Powhatan left her 300 dead strewn along our coast, and another vessel went on the rocks, 400 lives perishing, the United States government woke up and made an appropriation of \$200,000 for life saving stations, and life lines from faking box are shot over the wild surf, and hawsers are stretched from wreck to shore, and what with Lyle's gun and six oared surfboats, with cork and the sides to make it unsinkable, and patrolmen all night long walking the beach until they meet each other and exchange vital hints, so as to show

the entire beach has been traversed, and the Coast Light flashes hope from shore to sufferer, and surfmen, incased in Merriman life saving dress, and life car rolling on the ropes, there are many probabilities of rescue for the unfortunate of the sea. But the government of the united heavens has made better provision for the rescue of our souls. So close by that this moment we can put our hand on its top and swing into it is this gospel lifeboat. It will not take you more than a second to get into it.

A STANCH CRAFT. But while in my text we stand watching the marines with their cutlasses, preparing to sever the ropes of the lifeboat and let her fall off, notice the poor equipment. Only one lifeboat. Two hundred and seventy-six passengers, as Paul counted them, and only one lifeboat. My text uses the singular and not the plural, "Cut off the ropes of the boat." I do not suppose it would have held more than 30 people, though loaded to the water's edge.

I think by marine law all our modern vessels have enough lifeboats to hold all the crew and all the passengers in case of emergency, but the marines of my text were standing by the only boat, and that a small boat, and yet 276 passengers. But what thrills me through and through is the fact that though we are wrecked by sin and trouble and there is only one lifeboat, that boat is large enough to hold all who are willing to get into it. The gospel hymn expresses it:

All may come, whoever will, This Man receives poor sinners still. But I must haul in that statement a little. Room for all in that lifeboat, with just one exception. Not you—I do not mean you, but there is one exception. There have been cases where ships were in trouble, and the captain got all the passengers and crew into the lifeboats, but there was not room for the captain. He, through the sea trumpet, shouted: "Shove off now and pull for the beach. Goodby!" And then the captain, with pathetic and sublime self sacrifice, went down with the ship. So the Captain of our salvation, Christ the Lord, launches the gospel lifeboat and tells us all to get in, but he perishes.

"It behooved Christ to suffer." Was it not so, ye who witnessed his agonizing expiration? Simon of Cyrene, was it not so? Cavalry troops, whose horses pawed the dust at the crucifixion, was it not so? Ye Marys who swooned away with the sun of the midday heavens, was it not so? "By his stripes we are healed." By his death we live. By his sinking in the deep sea of suffering we get off in a safe lifeboat. Yes, we must put into this story a little of our own personality. We had a ride in that very lifeboat from a foundered craft to solid shore.

Once on the raging seas I rowed. The storm was loud; the night was dark. The ocean wailed and raged below. The wind that tossed my foundering bark. But I got into the gospel lifeboat, and I got ashore. No religious speculation for me. These higher criticism fellows do not bother me a bit. You may ask me 50 questions about the sea, and about the land, and about the lifeboat that I cannot answer, but one thing I know, I am ashore, and I am going to stay ashore, if by the Lord by his grace will help me. I feel under us something so firm that I try it with my right foot, and try it with my left foot, and then I try it with both feet, and it is so solid that I think it must be what the old folks used to call the Rock of Ages.

And be my remaining days on earth many or few I am going to spend my time in recommending the lifeboat which fetched me here, a poor sinner saved by grace, and in swinging the cutlasses to sever the ropes of any unsafe lifeboat and let her fall off. My answer, without asking any questions, get into the gospel lifeboat. Room and yet there is room! The biggest boat on earth is the gospel lifeboat. You must remember the proportion of things, and that the shipwrecked craft is the whole earth, and the lifeboat must be in proportion.

You talk about your Campanias, and your Lucanias, and your Majestics, and your City of New Yorks, but all of them put together are smaller than an Indian's canoe on Schroon lake compared with this gospel lifeboat that is large enough to take in all nations. Room for one and room for all. Get in! "How? How?" you ask.

Well, I know how you feel, for summer before last on the sea of Finland I had the same experience. The ship in which we sailed could not venture nearer than a mile from shore, where stood the Russian palace of Peterhof, and we had to get into a small boat and be rowed ashore. The water was rough, and as we went down the ladder at the side of the ship we held firmly on to the railing, but in order to get into the boat we had at last to let go.

How did I know that the boat was good and that the oarsmen were sufficient? How did I know that the Finland sea would not swallow us with one opening of its crystal jaws? We had to trust, and we did trust, and our trust was well rewarded. In the same way get into this gospel lifeboat. Let go! As long as you hold on to any other hope you are imperiled, and you get no advantage from the lifeboat. Let go! Does some one here say, "I guess I will hold on a little to my good works, or to a pious parentage, or to something I can do in the way of achieving my own salvation." No, no, let go! Trust the Captain, who would not put you into a rickety or uncertain craft.

AS EAGEREST FERVENTION. For the sake of your present and everlasting welfare, with all the urgency of an immortal addressing immortals, I cry from the depths of my soul and at the top of my voice, Let go! Last summer the life saving crew at East Hampton invited me to come up to the life station and see the crew practice, for twice a week they are drilled in the important work assigned them by the United States government, and they go through all the routine of saving the shipwrecked. But that would give little idea of what they would have to do if some midnight next winter, the wind driving beachward, a vessel should get in the grasp of a hurricane.

BALD HEADS. What is the condition of yours? Is your hair harsh, brittle? Does it split at the ends? Has it a lifeless appearance? Does it fall out when combed or brushed? Is it full of dandruff? Does your scalp itch? Is it dry or in a heated condition? If these are some of your symptoms be warned in time or you will become bald. Skookum Root Hair Grower. In what you need. Its production is not an accident, but the result of scientific research. Knowledge of the disease of the hair and scalp led to the discovery of a remedy. "Skookum" contains neither mineral nor oil. It is not a dye, but a delightful cooling and refreshing tonic. By stimulating the follicles, it stops falling hair, cures dandruff and grows hair on bald spots. EP: Keep the scalp clean, healthy and free from irritating eruptions by the use of Skookum. It restores perspiration (which, when stopped, destroys the hair). If your dandruff cannot empty your head direct to us, and we will forward you a sample of the product. Orders, \$1.00 per bottle; 1 for \$2.00. Send no. per jar; 4 for \$8.00. THE SKOOKUM ROOT HAIR GROWER CO., 37 South Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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breakers, and then responding lights flaring from the beach, and hear the rockets buzz as they rise, and the lifeboat rumbles out, and the gun booms, and the life line rises and falls across the splintered decks, and the hawser tightens, and the life car goes to and fro, carrying the exhausted mariners, and the ocean, as if angered by the snatching of the human prey from the white teeth of its surf, rises with increased fury to assail the land. So now I am engaged in no light drill, practicing for what may come over some of your souls. It is with some of you wintry midnight, and your hopes for this world and the next are wrecked.

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