

# The Pulpit.

VOL. VIII., No. 3.

BUFFALO, N. Y.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

## LESSONS FROM THE RAINBOW.

BY REV. F. W. GUNSAULUS, D. D., PASTOR OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL.

(*Congregationalist.*)

I have set My bow in the cloud and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth: and it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.—Genesis ix., 13.

As the appearance of the bow in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.—Ezekiel i., 28.

And there was a rainbow round about the throne.—Revelations iv., 3.

PERHAPS there are no books in all the world's literature which have so constantly been the victims of that slavish and mole-eyed literalism of interpretation, which is the saddest fate which may befall any really great message of God, as have the books of Genesis, Ezekiel and Revelations. "The letter killeth," as Jesus said; and that stiff dogmatism which grows out of a prosaic literalism becomes the breastwork for an ignorance which neither learns anything nor forgets anything. One of the outcomes of this literalism, which has insisted upon its prosaic interpretations of the poetic words of Genesis, is the current notion that the writer of the book was ignorant of the nature and constitution of the rainbow; and that this is the accurate account which he would leave us of its first being set in the sky. It is useless to say that no one who has sympathy with the deeper meanings of Genesis ever obtained such an impression from the reading of the chapter; and nobody needs to be told that this popular misconception had its birth in that method of Scripture interpretation which persistently misapprehends the story of creation, constantly asserts that there is a conflict between Genesis and geology, and feels that this conflict is only a single battle in the long and hopeless war between religion and science. In a much more brilliant light than that of yesterday, the thinkers of to-day are finding a devout and Scriptural use for every word of

For while the tired waves vainly breaking,  
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
 Far back through creeks and inlets making,  
 Comes silent flooding in the main.

And not by eastern windows only  
 When morning comes, comes in the light ;  
 In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
 But westward look ! the land is bright.

---



---

### THE HEADLAND TO STEER BY.

By REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D. D., OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

(*Presbyterian.*)

Looking unto Jesus.—Hebrews xii., 2.

**A**LL the Bible imagery agrees in representing the Christian life as demanding vigilance and a sharp look-out. There is no such thing as getting into heaven slipshod. What will be the fate of those professors of religion who, notwithstanding their names are on the church books, have no anxiety about their own salvation and no anxiety about the redemption of this ruined world? They will miss heaven, and be lost. God demands of us courage, self-denial, endurance, and, as His picked men, He sets us in the front of the battle, not to have us cut to pieces, but to test our courage and our enthusiasm. During the last war we often saw, in our northern cities and villages, men passing around in uniform. They had a right to be off. They had received from proper authority a furlough. But I have to tell you that in the Christian conflict, from the very moment you first enlist under Christ's banner until the hour in which you shout the victory over death and the grave, there is no opportunity for you to be off of duty, and you will never get a furlough. Paul brings around the Christian life all the exciting illustrations that can be drawn from the Roman and Grecian games—games where a man would run with such utter tension of muscle and of nerve, that he oft-times fell exhausted by the roadside, not reaching the goal. Yea, there were instances recorded where men ran with such speed that no sooner had they clutched the prize than they dropped dead, not living to enjoy the prize. And it was to such a game that the apostle refers when he says: "Run"—not crawl, not walk, but—"run the race set before

you, looking unto Jesus." And as a man would stand at the terminus of the game, with a garland to be placed on the brow of the successful competitor, so our Lord Jesus Christ stands at the end of the Christian race to put upon His child the garland of eternal victory; and may God grant that we may so run as to obtain it.

A celebrated chemist was asked where his laboratory was. The inquirer supposed that he would be pointed to some extensive establishment with costly philosophical apparatus. Instead of that, the chemist ordered his servant to bring in a few glasses and a retort, and he said: "This is my laboratory. With these I make all my experiments." And I have to tell you that while many take whole libraries to express their systems of theology, and while we have thousands of ideas on tens of thousands of subjects in reference to God, and eternity, and the dead, my theology has dwindled down to about three words: "Looking unto Jesus." And when a man shall understand the height, and the depth, and the length, and the breadth of the meaning of that passage, methinks he will understand all.

In the first place, we are to *look at Christ as our personal Saviour*. You are willing to admit, my hearer, that man is only a ruin of what he once was. There is not so much difference between a steamer coming out of Liverpool harbor, pennants flying and all the decks waving with good cheer, and the guns booming the departure, and that vessel driving against the Long Island coast, the passengers crushed to death amid the broken timbers,—as there is difference between man as God sent him forth, magnificently equipped for an eternal voyage, and that same man, when under the pilotage of the devil, tossed, and driven, and crushed, the coast of the great future strewn with the fragments of an awful and eternal shipwreck. Need I stand before men so conversant with the Scriptures, and tell them we are altogether gone astray, that the body is disordered—disease so easily playing upon it that, although to-day we may be in robust health, to-morrow, under one touch of sickness, we may be gone? Need I tell you that the mind is disordered, and that so easily the judgment loses its balance that there are hundreds of insane asylums, proving to the world how easy it is for men of the strongest intellects to lose their minds? Need I go back to God's Word to prove to you that the soul is all wrong? "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "There is none that doeth good;

no, not one." "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot we are full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, which have neither been bound up nor mollified with ointment."

There is in Brazil a plant they call the "murderer." It is a very curious plant. It begins to wind around the tree—it is a climbing plant—winding around the root, poisoning and destroying that, and so on the trunk and on the branches, until the whole tree is dead. This plant called the "murderer" drops its seeds, and other plants come up just as murderous. And when I read of that I thought that is just like sin. Sin is doing an awful work for us. It drops around our soul; yea, it winds around our body, around our mind, around our entire natures, poisoning, poisoning, poisoning—killing, killing, killing! What a ruinous thing sin is! God hates it, and we ought to abhor it. But it would be a very unfair thing to make such a statement as this unless I have some alleviation to propose. There is nothing meaner than for a man to go where someone is suffering from financial distresses, and enlarge upon his misfortunes, at the same time not proposing to help to pay his debts or do anything for his alleviation. Far better not go to that man who is thus cast down by financial misfortunes, than to go in with a depression of spirits. It is a very mean thing for me to go into a sick-room and enlarge upon the bad symptoms of the patient, while I have no physician to recommend, and no medicine to cure him. I had better stay away than to go in and talk about the evils of disease, proposing no saving and powerful medicament. But, glory be to God that when I find men lost and ruined I have someone to tell them of who can pay all their debts; that when I find them sick, even unto death, I can point them to a Physician who cures the body, cures the mind, and cures the soul. Here we have it in the Gospel. Amid the mountains of our sin there rolls a song of redemption. Louder than the voice of woe is the trumpet-blast of God's deliverance. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help!" At the barred gateway of our dungeon the conqueror knocks, and the hinges creak and grind at the swinging open. Manna falls to the famine-struck, and the floods from the hill-top clap their hands, crying: "Drink, O thirsty soul—drink, and live forever." The torn and cut feet on the bridle-path come into a smooth place, and the alders crackle as the panting hart breaks through to the water-brooks, while the dark night of the soul begins

to turn gray with the morning, yea, to purple, yea, to flame from horizon to horizon.

All over glorious is my Lord,  
He must be loved, and yet adored ;  
His worth if all the nations knew,  
Sure the whole earth would love him too.

I go further, and remark that we must *look to Jesus as an example*. Now a copyist is always a failure. If a painter goes to some portfolio or some gallery of exquisite art to get his idea of the natural world, he will fail ; let the painter start out early in the morning, dash the dew from the grass, and look upon the morning just as God builds it in the cloud, and pours it upon the mountain, and kindles it upon the sea. The copyist is always weak, and always a failure. It is so in literature. If a man attempts to copy the smoothness of Addison, or the weirdness of Spenser, or the rugged vigor of Carlyle, or the epigrammatic power of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he will make a failure. He will succeed who follows and improves the style God has given him. There were a great many men who admired Lord Byron ; he was a wonderful genius ; he had also a lame foot, and wore a very large collar, and henceforth there were tens of thousands of men, we are told, in those times, who got to limping, and got to wearing large collars, hoping in that way, somehow, to get Lord Byron's genius. A copyist is always a failure. There never has been but one Character fit to copy. It was some centuries ago when He came forth, His manner, His demeanor entirely different from anything the world had ever seen. He was a model amid all classes of people. Among farmers, He showed what a farmer should be. Amid fishermen, He showed what a fisherman should be. Amid tax-gatherers, He showed what tax-gatherers should be. Amid rulers, He showed what rulers should be. Critics stood and watched every phrase He uttered to see if they could not find something unkind. Not one word could they find. They watched Him—O, how they watched Him ! They knew every house He entered, how long He stayed, when He went out. Slander twisted its whips for Him, and set all his traps, but could not catch Him. Look at Him. Why, little children struggled to come out and get from Him a kiss, and old age tottered on its staff as He passed along. Do you want an illustration of devotion ? Behold Him passing whole nights in prayer. Do you want an illustration of suffer-

ing: See the wave, and the desert, and the mountain tracked with His own blood. Do you want an illustration of patience? See Him pursued yet never giving a sharp retort. Do you want an illustration of an industrious life? See in Him a life without an idle moment. Do you want to see a strong, sacrificing spirit? See that life of shame, that death of ignominy, that sepulcher of humiliation—all for His friends. O, no! for His sworn enemies. His feet cut by the way, yet willing to travel. His back lacerated, yet shouldering the cross. Struck at, but not striking back. Condemned, yet rising higher than His persecutors. And with wounds in the hands, and wounds in the feet, and wounds in the head, and wounds in the side, crying out amid the excruciation; “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” O, my friends, that is the pole by which to set your compass. That is the headland by which to steer. That is the light by which to kindle your lamp.

Alexander was marching with his army, and there was so much ice and snow that they could make no more progress, and so when the army had given up the march, Alexander dismounted and took a pickaxe, and said: “I’ll show you the way,” and he hewed a path through the snow and the ice, and the others seeing their general and their king undertaking it, joined in and plunged in their picks, and so a way was cleared and the army marched on to its destination. So it seems to me that Jesus Christ, our Commander, dismounts from His glory and comes down amid all our hardships, and perils, and sins, and He hews His way and asks us to follow. God help us to follow.

Again, my friends, we must *look to Jesus as a sympathizer*. Is there anybody in this house that can get along without sympathy? I do not think I would live a day without it. And yet there are a great many who seem to get along without any Divine sympathy. Their fortune in the counting-room, or in the store, or in the insurance company, takes wings and flies away. They button up a penniless pocket. They sit down in penury where once they had affluence, and yet there is no Jesus to stand by them and say: “O man, there are treasures that never fail, in banks that never break. I will take care of you. I own the cattle on a thousand hills, and you shall never want.” They have no such Divine Saviour to say that to them. I do not know how they get along. Death comes to the nursery. One voice less in the household. One less fountain of

joy and laughter. Two hands less to be busy all day. Two feet less to bound through the hall. Shadow after shadow following through that household, yet no Jesus to stand there and say: "I am the Shepherd; that lamb is not lost. I took it off the cold mountains. All's well." O, can you tell me the mystery? Can you solve it! Tell me how it is that men and women with aches, and pains, and sorrows, and losses, and exasperations, and bereavements, can get along without a sympathizing Christ? I cannot understand it. But I come here to say that if you really want Divine sympathy you can have it. There are two or three passages of Scripture that throb with pity, and kindness, and love. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee." "Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O, there are green pastures where the heavenly Shepherd leads the sick and wounded of the flock. When all the other trees of the orchard fail, God has one tree of fruit for His dear children. Though the organ wails out its requiem, there comes afterward a song, a chant, an anthem, a battle-march, a coronation, a victory. Do you not want the sympathy of Jesus? I offer it to every man and woman in this house. You need Him. O, how much you need Him!

There was a chaplain in the army wounded unto death. While lying there on the field he heard, at a great distance off, some one crying out in great pain: "O, my God," and he said to himself: "I am dying, but I think, perhaps, I could help that man. Although I can't walk, I'll just roll over to where he is." So he rolled over in his own blood, and rolled over the bodies of the slain, and rolled on until he came to where the other man was dying, and put, as it were, his wound against that wound, and his sorrow against that sorrow, and helped to alleviate it. And so, it seems to me, that Jesus Christ hears the groan of our sorrow, the groan of our poverty, the groan of our wretchedness, and comes to the relief. He comes rolling over sin and sorrow to the place where we lie on the battlefield, and He puts over us the arm of His everlasting love; and I see that arm and hand are wounded; and as He puts that arm over us I can hear Him say: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." O, that you might feel the power and condolence of a sympathizing Jesus.

Again, I remark, and this is my last thought, *we must look to Christ as a final rescue*. There is a heaven. No man wants any

proof of that. There has been so much communication between this world and heaven that I know there is a land of light, and love, and joy, and blessedness ; and "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." I know it. I know it so certainly that nothing could make me know it more certainly. Now, between this world and that, what a contrast ! This barrenness and that verdure. These streams of earth so shallow, compared with the rivers from under the throne on which the armies of heaven recline. In the clear floods the trees of life dip their branches. The instruments of earthly music so easily cracked into discord, compared with the harmonies that drop from harps seraphic and the trumpets that are so musical they wake the dead. These streets along which we go panting in Summer heat, and shivering in Winter cold, and along which the poor man carries his burdens, and the vagrant asks for alms, and there are the shuffling feet of pain, and want, and woe, compared with those streets that are full of light, and those walls made of all manner of precious stones, the light intershot with reflections of beryl, and topaz, and amethyst, and chrysoprasus. O, the contrast between this and that ! What a strange place heaven will be to us when we get through all our weeping and all our struggles. Said a blind child : "Mamma, shall I be blind in heaven ?" "O, no," said the mother, "you won't be blind in heaven, my dear. You will see in heaven." All sorrow done. All sighing over. All tears wiped away. O, what a place it will be !

Blest are the saints beloved of God,  
 Washed are their robes in Jesus blood ;  
 Brighter than angels, lo ! they shine,  
 Their glories splendid and Divine.

Now, my friends, are we prepared for that world ? Here is the simple fact, that we have got to go out of this world. There is no power to keep us. We must go out. We shall before long, you and I, step out amid gigantic splendor, or amid overwhelming darkness. Spirits of light and spirits of darkness contend with infinite fierceness for the mastery of your immortal nature, and while this Sabbath sun goes through the heaven, and this service approaches its close, your eternal destiny is being decided. O, get ready for that great future. Give up your sin this day. Take Christ. Your time is almost gone, perhaps. Death has lately been swinging a



very long scythe through this community. The little child has put down its toy, and the aged man dropped his staff. The half-blown bud and the white blossoms of the almond-tree twisted into a garland for the King. But some of those who went out from us, went without giving us any evidence that they had made any preparation. We never heard them pray. We never heard their voice of confession. They gave no intimation to husband, or wife, or father, or mother, or child that the great and necessitous change had passed upon their soul. O, that now, while the offers of mercy are made, and sitting where you are, you may bow your head in an all-availing prayer, and while the Holy Spirit is shaking mightily at the gates of your immortal soul, why not decide this matter forever? O, how much has been done to save you. Through what tears, across what sharp edges of torture, down what steep declivities, across what murky night did Jesus come to save you?

From the cross uplifted high,  
Where the Saviour deigns to die,  
What melodious sounds I hear,  
Bursting on the ravished ear!  
Love's redeeming work is done,  
Come and welcome, sinner, come.

---



---

## THE SINFULNESS OF SIN.

By REV. BERNARD J. SNELL, M. A., OF LONDON, ENG.

(*Congregationalist.*)

He who commits sin is the slave of sin.—John viii., 34.

ONCE our pulpits rang continually with tremendous declamations against the enormity of sin, in swelling and powerful words that passed muster in the fervent atmosphere of crowded assemblies, but which, when in the cooler air of Monday they were weighed in the balance, were frequently found wanting. Such iteration of preaching on this terrible subject begot familiarity which proved fatal, and the solemn words ended by becoming mere jingling pulpit-counters signifying nothing. And then followed a reaction; men felt it to be a mistake to look too exclusively on the side of human offence, and one rarely now hears a sermon definitely on the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." But a minister who wants to be