



# SUNDAY READING

## MORNING SERVICE.

### MORNING.

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of them that trouble me; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

#### A Prayer.

O my God! who has graciously promised every blessing, even heaven itself, to those who keep Thy commandments; relying on thy infinite power, goodness, and mercy, and on thy sacred promises, to which thou art always faithful, I confidently hope to obtain pardon of all my sins, grace to serve thee faithfully in this life, by doing the good works thou hast commanded, and which, with thy assistance, I will perform; and eternal happiness in the next, through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

#### Anthem.

What are these that are arrayed?

Hallelujah! What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—*J. Stainer, Mus. Doc.*

#### Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of all the Vanities of the World.

He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught to imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and be delivered from all blindness of heart. Let therefore our chief endeavor be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the spirit will find therein a hidden manna.

But it falleth out, that many, albeit they often hear the gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because they have not the spirit of Christ.

Whosoever then would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavor to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

3. What will it avail thee to be engaged in profound reasonings concerning the Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity?

Surely great words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction, than know the definition thereof.

If thou knewest the whole bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee without the love of God and without grace?

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, except to love God, and Him only to serve.

This is the highest wisdom by contempt of the world to bend towards the kingdom of heaven.

4. It is therefore vanity to seek after perishing riches, and to trust in them.

It is also vanity to strive after honors, and to climb to high degree.

It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labor for that for which thou must afterwards suffer grievous punishment.

It is vanity to desire to live long, and not to care to live well.

It is vanity to mind only this present life, and not to make provision for those things which are to come.

It is vanity to love that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither where everlasting joy awaiteth thee.

5. Call often to mind that proverb, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

Endeavor therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and to turn thyself to the invisible.

For they that follow their lusts stain their own consciences, and lose the grace of God.

#### SERMON.

##### Where I Went and What I Saw.

BY REV. CHARLES LEACH, D. D.

(Preached in Queen's Park Congregational Church, Harrow-road, London.)

JERICO—"The wall fell down flat."—Joshua vi. 20.

The Jericho of Joshua's time was a strong and important one. It was one of the oldest of the land, and was the first which Joshua had to conquer when he entered Palestine. It seems to have been fortified by massive walls, so thick that residences could be built upon them, for we read that Rahab, who protected the spies, had their house upon them. And we may conclude that the city was possessed of considerable wealth, for one soldier in Joshua's army was able to seize a large wedge of gold, 200 shekels of silver, and a costly and beautiful Babylonian garment; while Joshua greatly enriched the treasury of the Lord by the abundance of silver, gold, and valuable metal utensils which he took from the wreck of the city.

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habitants of the city must have smiled when they saw this people marching. But they kept on marching. In silence, in order, in faith, they marched round and round. And when the instrument which sounded the signal was blown it was not the silver trumpets of the priests, but the common ram's horn.

Feeble instrumentalities. God has often worked that way, and does so still. You remember proud Naaman. Covered with honors he came to this very place, ancient Gilgal, to the door of the house of Elisha to seek a cure for his leprosy. How came he to know of the prophet of the Lord? How came he this soldier, to bow himself in reverence and with deepest gratitude to the servant of God? It was all brought about in the Providence of God, through a little captive slave-girl carried from her home in one of the wars of Naaman, a little girl who had been taught to honor God and His prophet, and did not forget to do so when far away and among strangers. It was a feeble instrumentality, but God used it.

Many a time He has used the little girl, the little child to bring men to acknowledge Him. What happened when the little child was born into your home? In the first place, it became the anchor which held the mother to her home as never before. But it did more than this. It was the connecting link which bound together father and mother, husband and wife, in a closer bond of affection and oneness than the marriage ring. The ring was the beginning of the union, the coming of that little child was the completion of the union. Nay, it did more than this even. Impressed by the fact that the little one would look to you for guidance in matters of the soul and the better life, were you not forced to think how you had neglected such matters yourself, and for the child's sake, as well as your own, you were driven to the cross to seek salvation? Such things have often happened and we trust they may again.

The cross of Calvary was a feeble instrumentality. It was foolishness to the Greeks, whilst it became a stumbling-block to the Jews. And yet that was God's appointed way of saving a lost world. The cross is slowly but surely attracting men to itself, and it becomes the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. The preaching of a crucified and risen and glorified saviour has often been regarded as a feeble thing. And yet by the foolishness of preaching God has won for Himself many thousands of the bravest and noblest champions of His cause. As we see the walls of Jericho fall down, and as we read the experience of God's saints in all ages, and think of our own, we may indeed exclaim, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

In the next place we learn that God wants all instrumentalities to fight against the forces of sin. Look at verse 9. It shows us that all the hosts of God were in that procession. First came the armed men, the soldiers who had received such training as could be given them, men who were prepared to fight with skill, courage and strength. They were first in this seven days march. Then came the priests, the ministers of God, whose business it was to deal with holy things. They were in this procession too. Seven of them, carrying trumpets made from the horns of rams, headed the priestly procession, whilst the rest of the priests came and protected the ark of the covenant of God. After the priests came the rearguard. Who were they? They were not armed men, nor did they fill the priestly office; but followed up and sustained those who did. They were the people—loyal, patient, true, and full of faith, and if their place was in the rear, they filled it and did their duty like men.

That is just as it should be in all God's conflict against sin. God wants all, and the battle needs all. Armed, strong men—men of courage, confidence, faith—let these pass on in the front. Let them lead us in the battle. Priests, ministers, teachers—let them fall into line. And then the rearguard—the people. God wants all. He wants you and the cause needs you. Do you say you can't carry arms? You are timid and possess but little or no strength? What of that? There is a place for you: see against those who are in front, and encourage those who are in front, and you will best do this by filling your place in the ranks. Do you say you can't preach? Do you tell us that it is impossible for you to take the pulpit or mount the platform? and address your fellows in eloquent words? You can support and pray for those whom God has called to blow the ram's horn and bear the solemn and sacred ark of the covenant of the gospel. It was Moses who pleaded with God on the mount while Israel fought with Amalek. But Aaron and Hur held up his hands. And God wants you. You can march you can share the conflict, God has a place for you. Oh, brethren, never suppose it is enough to attend church and sing hymns. God wants more of you than this. It is cruel to give your three-penny-bit in the collection, pay for your seat, and give nothing else. Give yourselves, your service, your prayers, your sympathies. The church needs every one of her sons and daughters if she is to bring down the walls of Jericho. The devil's kingdom is strong, rich, proud, and powerful. It is entrenched behind the wicked example of those in high places and strengthened often by the doings of the princes of the earth. But the walls of this kingdom must come down. Privilege monopoly, sin, will have to fall. God has decreed their destruction, and calls for you, for all of us to help in the conflict. There is a place for us, let us to a man seek loyally lovingly, and faithfully to fill that place, and may the Lord of hosts be with us, and make us a blessing.

We should have all our communications with men as in the presence of God, and with God as in the presence of men.—*Colton.*

#### LIFE AND WORKS OF AUGUSTINE.

The "Confessions" of Augustine constitute the choicest autobiographic classic of antiquity, and we must refer our readers to that inimitable book to trace the agitations and wanderings of a powerful intellect in fighting its way into the light of truth, and to note the important part played by his devout mother, Monica, in leading her gifted son to finally embrace christianity. In this brief sketch we wish to confine ourselves to incidents that illustrate the influence upon the age of the great pulpit master.

After his baptism in Milan, Augustine returned to Africa, and lived for some years retired from the world on his own estate. When, through the strong and urgent desire of the people, he was ordained presbyter in Hippo, he wept, overcome with a sense of the importance of the office. He was licensed to preach in the presence of the bishop, a thing unknown before in Africa. His ministry was owned in the edification of the church and in the defeat of heresy. In discussion he vanquished Fortunatus, the great leader of the Manichees, who was obliged to leave Hippo in confusion. His fame as a preacher and controversialist soon spread throughout the Western world. His election as bishop gave wider scope to his zeal and laboriousness. On one occasion a wealthy merchant, who was a chief support of the Manichean sect, was so convinced of his error under the faithful preaching of Augustine, that next day he sought an interview, threw himself at the feet of the bishop and with tears entreated to be instructed in the way of salvation.

Augustine instituted a monastic college that became renowned in Africa, and among the men of piety and learning who went out from that seminary, not less than ten became celebrated as bishops. With the growth of archiepiscopal power, the great preacher retained his simplicity and devoutness. Generously hospitable to others, he himself practised moderation in all things, and gave freely to the poor. He encouraged conversation at table; but would not listen to slander. He had some lines written on his table to the effect that any one who attacked the character of the absent would be excluded from the company, and when on one occasion some bishops, who were his intimate friends, were transgressing this rule, he rose and said with great firmness that either those lines must be erased from the table, or he must retire from their society, and the scandal at once ceased. In Augustine's old age, Genseric, the king of the Vandals, invaded Africa, wrought terrible desolation, and after investing Hippo for fourteen months, the city fell into his hands. In the third month of the siege, the venerable bishop was seized with a fever to which he succumbed in the year 430, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. He preached the gospel to within a few days of his last sickness. Preaching was with him a passion, and all the resources of his mighty intellect were made to contribute to its efficiency. "In his writings," says Possidonius, "the holy man appears; but those who could have seen and heard him speak in public, and particularly in private conversation, would have seen still more."

#### FRAGMENTS OF THOUGHT.

Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.—*Henry.*

We have lost a paradise by sin, and have gained a heaven by the cross.—*Charnock.*

Faith in tomorrow instead of Christ, is Satan's muse for man's perdition.—*Cheever.*

Conscience makes cowards of us; but conscience makes saints and heroes too.—*Lightfoot.*

Man's prayer and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well—while one ascends the other descends.

If thou art wise, thou knowest thine own ignorance, and thou art ignorant if thou knowest not thyself.—*Luther.*

Look upon the bright side of your condition; then your discontents will disperse. Pore not upon your losses, but recount your mercies.—*Watson.*

The issue of every christian's destiny is wrought with threads of mercy, and mercy impresses her own lovely characters on every trial he is called to bear.—*Dr. Raffles.*

If there be one thing on earth which is truly admirable, it is to see God's wisdom blessing an inferiority of natural powers, when they have been honestly, truly, and zealously cultivated.—*Dr. Arnold.*

All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved or the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be effort, and the law of human judgment, Mercy.

Morality without religion is only a kind of dead reckoning—an endeavor to find our place on a cloudy sea by measuring the distance we have to run, but without any observation of the heavenly bodies.—*Longfellow.*

God takes a thousand times more pains with us than the artist with his picture, by many touches of sorrow, and by many colors of circumstances, to bring men into the form which is the highest and noblest in His sight, if only we receive His gifts and myrrh in the right spirit.—*John Tauler.*

For all of which you boast to-day—for liberties, for free institutions, for learning, for art, for kinder hearts and more humane government, we are indebted to the enthusiastic souls whose dreams have been to realize the kingdom of God among men. Our modern world could not have been but for the unbroken line of living hearts that have kept this faith alive in the world.—*W. S. Smart.*

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