
Readings for the Thoughtful

Hubert Henry Samuel

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Author: Hubert Henry Samuel

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READINGS

FOR THE

THOUGHTFUL.

BY THE

REV. H. S. M. HUBERT, M. A.

Rector of Sutton with Sutton Boningham.

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PREFACE.

Though innumerable comments on the *political* bearing of modern events appear in the Newspapers ; yet few attempts are made to expound the *spiritual* lessons which we should endeavour to learn from the remarkable occurrences of these eventful days.

The clergy often feel the want of little books for distribution written with the view of assisting the reader to derive religious instruction from the peculiar circumstances of our own times.

It is to supply the deficiency thus indicated that the author ventures to put forth the present little publication.

The plan which the author has attempted to carry out in several of these Readings has been to take for his text, as it were, the circumstances of some interesting modern event, and thence to deduce important lessons of practical Christianity.

The author quite feels that it must be for others to decide whether those important lessons are effectively taught by the plan here adopted.

Thetford, January 31st, 1856.

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READING I.

THE THREE SCOURGES.

IN all ages the Almighty has employed the sword, the famine, and the pestilence as the instruments of punishing the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity.

Sometimes the Lord brings war upon a country, and says "Sword, go through the land." *Ezek.* xiv. 17.

At another time the language of the Almighty is, "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it." *Ibid.*

VERSE 13.

At another time the Most High "sends a pestilence into the land, and pours out his fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it both man and beast." *Ibid.* VERSE 19.

Before the captivity of Babylon the Lord had given to the Jews many and oft repeated warnings, both by the voice of his prophets and by the corrections of his rod, and He had thereby assured them that, if they still continued impenitent, their temple would be destroyed, their country made desolate, and they themselves carried into captivity.

Such however was the hardness of their hearts, that they neither regarded the warnings of the prophets, nor the teaching of the Divine chastisements.

That they did *not* repent is evident from the language of Jeremiah contained in the words, "O Lord are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed, them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder

than a rock ; they have refused to return.
Jeremiah v. 3.

But the Jews are not the only people to whom these words may justly be applied : These sayings may with equal truth be affirmed of the people of every nation who repent not, and return not to the Lord, notwithstanding the public chastisements with which they are visited.

The calamities which of late years have befallen the English people—at one time a malady prevalent among the cattle—at another time the potato blight, which has now continued more or less for many years in succession—several severe visitations of cholera—and, more recently, the great slaughter and disasters which befel our troops soon after the commencement of the present war—all these things are the instruments employed by the Almighty for our correction.

That no one of these events has happened by *chance* and that they greatly err who ascribe these calamities to second causes, in-