

## **XIX.VII. ROBERT E. LEE, AS PURE AS A VIRGIN AND GRAND AS ACHILLES - The Nineteenth Century (pt.7)**

### **Q. ARE YOU READY FOR CHURCH HISTORY?!**

Two questions and answers:

#### **QUESTION 1. What is Church History?**

**ANSWER.** Church history is the story of how Jesus has built his church for his own glory and his peoples' good. **Matthew 16:18** "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

#### **QUESTION 2. Why should we study Church History?**

**ANSWER.** We should learn church history because it is the amazing story of Jesus conquering the nations through his Gospel. **Revelation 6:2** "[Christ] came out conquering, and to conquer."

Today we are going to look at the Nineteenth Century for the 7th time. But before we do that let's remember what we learned last time.

#### **Q. Who can tell me the name of the person I taught you about last time?**

- **Everyone say, "David Livingstone."**

#### **Q. Who can tell me something about David Livingstone?**

### **RECAP**

*In the nineteenth century, God used David Livingstone to show the power of long obedience in the same direction.*

Who can tell me

#### **NINETEENTH CENTURY (pt.6) MEMORY VERSE.**

- "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 3:14**).

#### **NINETEENTH CENTURY (pt.6) MEMORY QUOTE.**

- "Say rather it is a privilege...I never made a sacrifice." (**David Livingstone**).

Now, today I am going to teach you about the Nineteenth Century PART 7 (1,800-1,900).

What happened in the Nineteenth Century (1,800-1,900) that shows us how Christ built His church as He continued to conquer the nations?

## Today I am going to teach you about a man named Robert E. Lee (1807-1870).

- **Everyone say, "Robert E. Lee."**

### HISTORY OF ROBERT E. LEE

**(i)** Robert Edward Lee was born on January 19, 1807, at Stratford Hall Plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia, the son of Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee III, a Revolutionary War hero and former governor, and Ann Hill Carter Lee, into a distinguished but financially troubled Virginia family where duty, honor, and Christian faith were instilled from an early age. LEE WAS BORN INTO A PROMINENT VIRGINIA FAMILY STEEPED IN DUTY AND FAITH.

- **Everyone say, "George Washington was Lee's hero." (Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, vol. 1; Encyclopedia Virginia)**

- **Now say, "Lee loved Jesus."**

**(ii)** As a youth he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1825, graduating second in the class of 1829 with no demerits, earning the nickname "Marble Model" for his discipline and character; he was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers and began a distinguished career building fortifications while marrying Mary Anna Randolph Custis in 1831, great-granddaughter of Martha Washington. LEE EXCELLED AT WEST POINT AND EMBRACED A LIFE OF MILITARY DUTY.

- **Everyone say, "Lee did his duty."**
  - **A Virginia gentleman's heart burned for faithful service to country and family." (Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, vol. 1; U.S. Military Academy records)**

**(iii)** In the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848 he served with distinction under General Winfield Scott, earning brevet promotions for gallantry at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and Chapultepec despite heavy fire; he later supervised engineering projects and commanded the force that captured John Brown at Harpers Ferry in 1859, all while wrestling with national tensions over slavery and union. LEE ANSWERED THE CALL TO MEXICO WITH BOLD COURAGE AND SKILL.

- **LEE. "Duty then is the sublimest word in the English language." (Lee to his son, 1852; Freeman, *R. E. Lee*)**

**(iv)** With Virginia's secession in 1861, Colonel Lee faced the agonizing choice between the Union he had served for 32 years and loyalty to his native state; declining command of Federal forces, he resigned and accepted command of Virginia's troops, soon becoming a key Confederate general, moving his family from Arlington as war engulfed the land. LEE CHOSE VIRGINIA AND TOOK UP THE

## CAUSE OF THE SOUTH.

- **Everyone say, "I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor." (Lee, postwar reflection; National Park Service, Arlington House records)**

**(v)** In 1862 he assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia, driving back McClellan in the Seven Days' Battles, winning decisively at Second Manassas, and standing firm at Fredericksburg despite overwhelming odds; though wounded in spirit by the costly stalemate at Antietam, Lee inspired his men with tactical brilliance and personal courage amid cannon fire and hardship. LEE LED HIS ARMY TO VICTORY IN THE EAST AND INSPIRED UNDAUNTED LOYALTY.

- **Everyone say, "It is well that war is so terrible, lest we should grow too fond of it." (Lee at Fredericksburg, December 1862; Edward Porter Alexander, *Military Memoirs of a Confederate*)**

**(vi)** In 1863 he launched the invasion of Pennsylvania, seeking decisive victory, but met defeat at Gettysburg after three days of fierce fighting; undeterred, Lee conducted a masterful retreat and later defended Virginia tenaciously against Grant's Overland Campaign in 1864, enduring heavy losses while prolonging Southern hopes through brilliant maneuvers. LEE CARRIED THE WAR NORTH AND DEFENDED VIRGINIA WITH TENACITY.

- **Everyone say, "We must forgive our enemies; I can truly say that not a day has passed since the war began that I have not prayed for them." (Lee, postwar letters and reflections; Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, vol. 4)**

**(vii)** By early 1865, facing overwhelming numbers and supply shortages, Lee's army was besieged at Petersburg; on April 9 at Appomattox Court House he surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant with dignity, ending major combat and urging his men to return home as good Americans, his heart heavy yet committed to peace. LEE ENDURED THE GREAT BEREAVEMENT OF SURRENDER WITH HONOR.

- **Everyone say, "After four years of arduous service... I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice..." (Lee, General Order No. 9, April 10, 1865; Official Records of the War of the Rebellion)**

**(viii)** Known as the revered commander of the Army of Northern Virginia and a symbol of Southern valor, Lee spent the war years separated from family, losing properties including Arlington, which became a national cemetery; he and Mary had seven children—three sons who served in the Confederate army—enduring the trials of separation and loss while maintaining devout prayer and trust in Providence. LEE BECAME THE BELOVED LEADER OF THE CONFEDERACY AND A MODEL OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

- **Everyone say, "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength." (Lee, personal correspondence; Freeman, *R. E. Lee*)**

**(ix)** He faced repeated perils—deadly battles, supply crises, political pressures, and the grief of fallen soldiers—yet maintained unwavering trust that God would sustain him and use every trial; Lee lived to see the Confederacy defeated yet

sought reconciliation, preaching unity and education over bitterness. LEE PREACHED DUTY AND PRAYED THROUGH ADVERSITY TO THE END.

- Everyone say, "There is a true glory and a true honor: the glory of duty done—the honor of the integrity of principle." (Lee writings and letters; various biographies)

(x) After the war, Lee accepted the presidency of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, in 1865, promoting reconciliation, honor, and practical education while living modestly; he died on October 12, 1870, after a stroke, with reported final words invoking duty and command, his body laid to rest in Lexington amid national mourning. LEE FINISHED HIS COURSE IN SERVICE AND RECONCILIATION.

- Everyone say, "Strike the tent." (Reported final words; Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, vol. 4; contemporary accounts)

(xi) Lee's legacy endures as one of America's most skilled and honorable military leaders, a man of deep Christian faith whose courage, dignity in defeat, and call to reconciliation continue to challenge generations; his story of duty, loss, perseverance, and postwar service remains a powerful testament to character amid national division. LEE'S LEGACY IS DUTY, HONOR, AND RECONCILIATION IN A DIVIDED LAND.

- Everyone say, "Lee's example still calls men to integrity and the higher duties of faith and country." (Freeman, *R. E. Lee*; Emory Thomas and other modern biographies)

## INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ROBERT E. LEE

- **Born into prominence but financial hardship:** Lee was born on January 19, 1807, at Stratford Hall Plantation in Virginia to Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee III, a Revolutionary War hero and friend of George Washington. His father's debts left the family struggling, and young Robert helped care for his mother and siblings.
- **West Point "Marble Model":** He entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1825 and graduated second in the class of 1829 with **zero demerits**—a rare feat. Cadets nicknamed him the "Marble Model" for his discipline, focus, striking appearance, and perfect conduct.
- **Mexican-American War hero:** Serving under General Winfield Scott, Lee earned multiple brevet promotions for gallantry. Scott later called him "the very best soldier I ever saw in the field." Lee's daring reconnaissance, including crossing lava fields at night, was pivotal in the campaign to capture Mexico City.
- **Captured John Brown in under an hour:** In 1859, Lee led a small force of U.S. Marines that quickly recaptured the Harpers Ferry arsenal from abolitionist John Brown and his raiders.

- **Frugal to a fault:** Traumatized by his father's spendthrift ways, Lee was extremely careful with money. He once wrote to his bank about a \$1.20 discrepancy in his account and worked hard to restore profitability to his wife's Arlington estate.
- **Improved Mississippi River navigation:** As a young Army engineer in St. Louis in the 1830s, Lee personally directed major channel improvements that greatly enhanced the river's navigability. He labored alongside common workers in the hot sun.
- **Didn't grow the famous beard until the Civil War:** For most of his life, Lee was clean-shaven or wore only a mustache and sideburns. He grew the iconic white beard during the winter of 1861–1862, which aged his appearance along with the stresses of command.
- **Pet hen named Nelly:** During the war, Lee kept a pet hen that laid eggs under his cot each morning. He reportedly refused to eat any other eggs.
- **Devout Christian and family man:** Lee was deeply religious, often quoting the Bible for strength. He and his wife Mary Anna Randolph Custis (great-granddaughter of Martha Washington) had seven children. He maintained close ties to family despite long separations.
- **Postwar educator and reconciler:** After surrendering at Appomattox in 1865, Lee became president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia. He promoted education, practical skills, and national reconciliation rather than bitterness.
- **Famous horse Traveller:** Lee's beloved gray horse carried him through much of the war and became an icon. Traveller was buried near Lee after his death.
- **Final words and death:** Lee died on October 12, 1870, after a stroke. His reported last words were "Strike the tent," evoking his military life. He was laid to rest in Lexington.

## HISTORICAL SHORT LIST

### Q. What can we learn from Robert E. Lee?

*In the nineteenth century, God used Robert E. Lee to teach us that Christian duty and honor are important in the Christian life.*

## THEOLOGY LEARNED FROM ROBERT E. LEE

"When the future historian shall come to survey the character of Lee, he will

find it rising like a huge mountain above the undulating plain of humanity, and he must lift his eyes high toward heaven to catch its summit. He was obedient to authority as a servant, and loyal in authority as a true king. He was gentle as a woman in life; modest and pure as a virgin in thought; watchful as a Roman vital in duty; submissive to law as Socrates, and grand in battle as Achilles!"  
— Benjamin Harvey Hill

**I) Lee teaches us to be HOLY IN ALL OF LIFE** (he was "modest and pure as a virgin in thought").

**Everyone say, "I must be holy."**

- "You shall be holy, for I am holy" **(1 Peter 1:16)**.

**II) Lee teaches men to BE ABLE TO FIGHT** (he was "grand in battle as Achilles").

**Everyone say, "Men should know how to fight."**

- "A man of war" **(1 Samuel 16:18)**.
  - Men need to protect their families and the innocent.

**III) Lee teaches us to TAKE RESPONSIBILITY** (he took the blame for Gettysburg and did not blame shift).

**Everyone say, "I must take responsibility."**

**Now say, "I must not blame shift."**

- "The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" **(Genesis 3:12-13)**.
  - **ROBERT E. LEE:**  
"It is all my fault, all my fault, all my fault."  
— Robert E. Lee, when the wounded soldiers limped back across the battlefield at Gettysburg

**IV) Lee PROMOTED CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATION** (he was President of Washington College and contracted the Christian chappel).

**Everyone say, "Christ must be honored."**

- He became the President of Washington College in Lexington, VA, and both argued for and oversaw the construction of the Christian chapel at the college campus.
  - "[Christ] is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent." **(Colossians 1:18)**.
    - ♦ "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength."

— Lee acknowledging a gift Bible, quoted in J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences* (1875), 157; also referenced in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:490.

- ◆ "I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."  
Lee to army chaplains (February 1864), in J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp* (Richmond: B. F. Johnson & Co., 1887), 49–50; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 3:307.
- ◆ "I prefer the Bible to any other book. There is enough in that to satisfy the most ardent thirst for knowledge; to open the way to true wisdom; and to teach the only road to salvation and eternal happiness."  
— Quoted in *Recollections and Letters*, 432.
- ◆ "God is our only refuge and our strength. Let us humble ourselves before Him. Let us confess our many sins, and beseech Him to give us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and more determined will..." (General Order calling for fasting and prayer, 1863)  
— Reproduced in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 3:88.
- ◆ "We poor sinners need to come back from our wanderings to seek pardon through the all-sufficient merits of our Redeemer. And we need to pray earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit to give us a precious revival in our hearts and among the unconverted."  
— From a letter in *Recollections and Letters*, 165.
- ◆ "We are all in the hands of a kind God, who will do for us what is best and more than we deserve."  
— Various letters and reflections, summarized in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*.

## RECAP

*In the nineteenth century, God used Robert E. Lee to teach us that Christian duty and honor are important in the Christian life.*

## NINETEENTH CENTURY (pt.7) MEMORY VERSE.

- "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty" (**Luke 17:10**).

## NINETEENTH CENTURY (pt.7) MEMORY QUOTE.

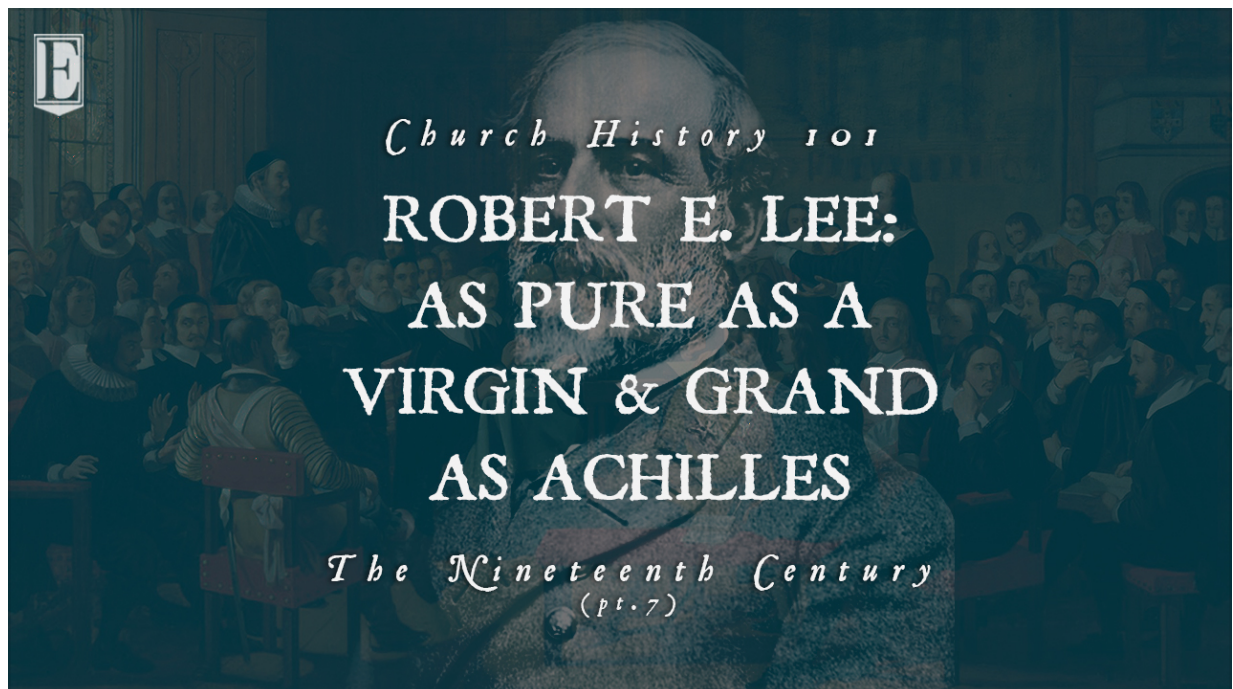
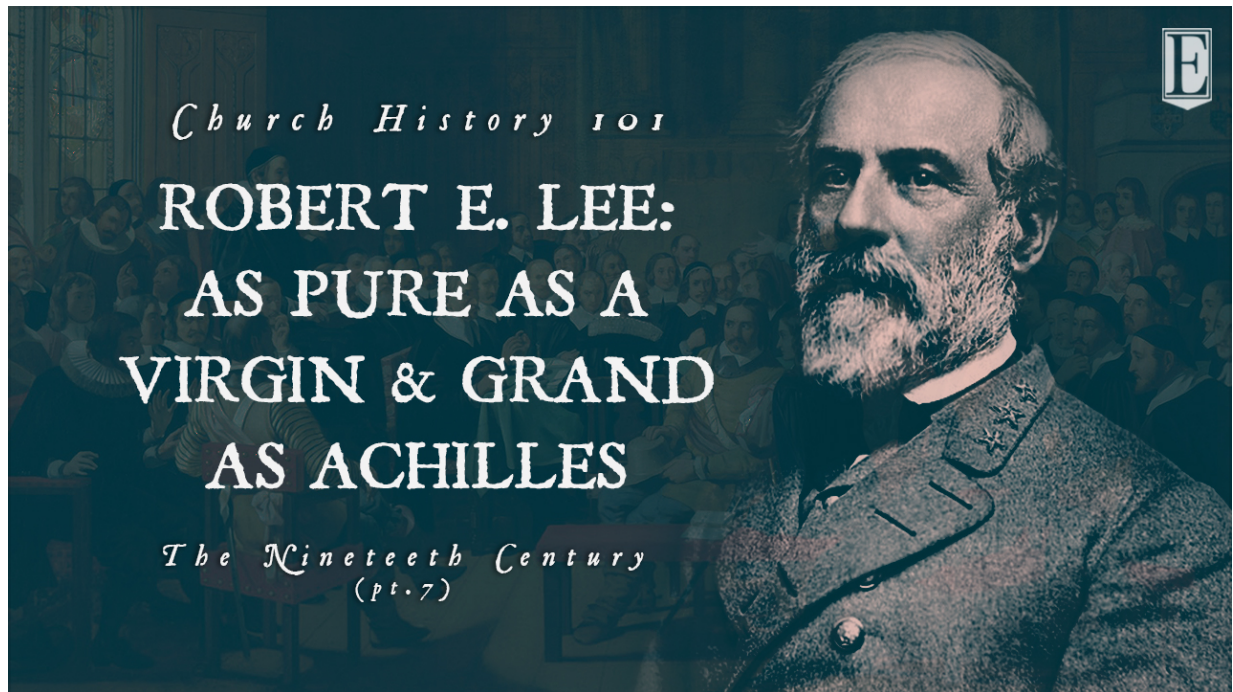
- "I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation" (**Robert E. Lee**).

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## FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Civil War series - Episode 9 - Robert E. Lee: His Life and Legacy - <https://youtu.be/bRmpBApXcho?si=MMN8JYxai1FnHVVo>
  - The Christian Character of Robert E. Lee by John J. Dwyer - <https://youtu.be/Np-eVBhCckQ?si=K1BWEyh9pMdEvd9z>
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## IMAGE



## QUOTES BY ROBERT E. LEE

### On Duty and Honor

- "There is a true glory and a true honor: the glory of duty done—the honor of the integrity of principle."  
— Robert E. Lee, memorandum (as quoted in J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Letters of Gen. Robert E. Lee* [New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1875], and Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, 4 vols. [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934–35], vol. 4).
- "I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor, and if all was to be done over again, I should act precisely in the same manner."  
— Postwar reflection, quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:398.
- "Obedience to lawful authority is the foundation of manly character."  
— Quoted in Captain Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1904), 25.

### On the War, Battle, and Command

- "It is well that war is so terrible, lest we should grow too fond of it."  
— Edward Porter Alexander, *Military Memoirs of a Confederate* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 302; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 2:462.
- "What a cruel thing is war: to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world!"  
— Lee to his wife, Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee, December 25, 1862, in *Recollections and — Letters*, 87–88; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 2:398.
- "I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of."  
(Pre-war, January 1861)  
— Lee to his son Custis, quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 1:416.
- "We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence, to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our

falling into greater dangers."

— Quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 2:105.

- "Never mind, General, all this has been my fault; it is I that have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it in the best way you can." (After Pickett's Charge, Gettysburg)  
— Quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 3:130.
- "After four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. ... You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a Merciful God will extend to you his blessing and protection." (from General Order No. 9, Farewell Address, April 10, 1865):  
— *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), ser. 1, vol. 46, pt. 1, 1267; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:154.

## On Christian Faith and Providence

- "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength."  
— Lee acknowledging a gift Bible, quoted in J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences* (1875), 157; also referenced in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:490.
- "I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."  
Lee to army chaplains (February 1864), in J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp* (Richmond: B. F. Johnson & Co., 1887), 49–50; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 3:307.
- "I prefer the Bible to any other book. There is enough in that to satisfy the most ardent thirst for knowledge; to open the way to true wisdom; and to teach the only road to salvation and eternal happiness."  
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- "God is our only refuge and our strength. Let us humble ourselves before Him. Let us confess our many sins, and beseech Him to give us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and more determined will..." (General Order calling for fasting and prayer, 1863)  
— Reproduced in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 3:88.

- “We poor sinners need to come back from our wanderings to seek pardon through the all-sufficient merits of our Redeemer. And we need to pray earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit to give us a precious revival in our hearts and among the unconverted.”  
— From a letter in *Recollections and Letters*, 165.
- “We are all in the hands of a kind God, who will do for us what is best and more than we deserve.”  
— Various letters and reflections, summarized in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*.

## **On Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Post-War Life**

- “We must forgive our enemies. I can truly say that not a day has passed since the war began that I have not prayed for them.”  
— Lee to a visitor in Richmond (April 1865), quoted in John Esten Cooke, *A Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1871), 480–81; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:202.
- “Abandon your animosities and make your sons Americans!”  
— Postwar advice to students at Washington College, quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:398.
- “I am rejoiced that slavery is abolished. I believe it will be greatly for the interest of the South. So fully am I satisfied of this... that I would cheerfully have lost all I have lost by the war, and have suffered all I have suffered, to have this object attained.”  
— Quoted in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:490.
- “Strike the tent.”  
— (Reported final words, October 12, 1870) Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:502.

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## **QUOTES ABOUT *ROBERT E. LEE***

### **From Military Contemporaries**

- “Colonel Robert E. Lee is not only the greatest soldier of America, but the greatest soldier now living in the world. This is my deliberate conviction, from a full knowledge of the man... and if he ever gets the opportunity, he will prove himself the greatest captain of history.”

— Winfield Scott (Lee's commander in the Mexican War), as recorded in conversations circa 1861. J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences, Anecdotes, and Letters of Gen. Robert E. Lee* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1875), 31–32; also discussed in Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934–35), 1:421.

## On Character, Faith, and Gentlemanly Qualities

- "When the future historian shall come to survey the character of Lee, he will find it rising like a huge mountain above the undulating plain of humanity, and he must lift his eyes high toward heaven to catch its summit. He was obedient to authority as a servant, and loyal in authority as a true king. He was gentle as a woman in life; modest and pure as a virgin in thought; watchful as a Roman vital in duty; submissive to law as Socrates, and grand in battle as Achilles!"  
— Benjamin Harvey Hill (Confederate senator), address before the Southern Historical Society, February 18, 1874. Benjamin H. Hill, as reproduced in J. William Jones, *Personal Reminiscences* (1875), 452–53; also in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:503–4.
- "We recognize Robert E. Lee as one of our greatest American Christians and one of our greatest American gentlemen."  
— Franklin D. Roosevelt, at the dedication of the Robert E. Lee statue in Dallas, Texas (1936).  
Quoted in context in Freeman, *R. E. Lee* (posthumous editions and appendices often reference the speech); primary record in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938–50), 5:200–201.
- "The very greatest of all the great captains that the English-speaking peoples have brought forth."  
— Theodore Roosevelt, as cited in historical assessments drawing from his writings and speeches; referenced in Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, vol. 4, and popular biographies drawing on Roosevelt's correspondence.

## On Leadership and Legacy

- "His noble presence and gentle, kindly manner were sustained by religious faith and an exalted character."  
— Winston S. Churchill, as quoted in various Lee biographies; primary context in Churchill's writings on American history, e.g., *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (London: Cassell, 1956–58), vol. 4.

- "Never was more beautifully displayed how a long and severe education of mind and character enables the soul to pass with equal step through this supreme ordeal... The reticence, the self-contained composure, the obedience to proper authority, the magnanimity and Christian meekness that marked all his actions..."  
— Description of Lee on his deathbed by a professor (son of a comrade).  
Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 4:501–2 (drawing on contemporary eyewitness accounts).
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## **Robert E. Lee, As Pure as a Virgin and Grand as Achilles - The Nineteenth Century (pt.7)**

In an age of national division, war, and reconstruction, Christ raised up men of character who displayed Christian duty and honor even amid conflict. One such man was Robert Edward Lee, whose life of discipline, courage, humility, and postwar reconciliation continues to instruct believers in what it means to live faithfully under providence. Through Lee's example of duty, manly resolve, personal responsibility, and promotion of Christian education, Christ reminded His church that true greatness lies in humble obedience to God.

### **Robert E. Lee (1807-1870)**

Robert Edward Lee was born on January 19, 1807, at Stratford Hall Plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia, the son of Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee III, a Revolutionary War hero and former governor, and Ann Hill Carter Lee, into a distinguished but financially troubled Virginia family where duty, honor, and Christian faith were instilled from an early age (Freeman 1934–1935, 1:1–12). Lee was born into a prominent Virginia family steeped in duty and faith. As a youth he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1825, graduating second in the class of 1829 with no demerits, earning the nickname "Marble Model" for his discipline and character; he was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers and began a distinguished career building fortifications while marrying Mary Anna Randolph Custis in 1831, great-granddaughter of Martha Washington (Freeman 1934–1935, 1:78–89). Lee excelled at West Point and embraced a life of military duty.

In the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848 he served with distinction under General Winfield Scott, earning brevet promotions for gallantry at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and Chapultepec despite heavy fire; he later supervised engineering projects and commanded the force that captured John Brown at Harpers Ferry in 1859, all while wrestling with national tensions over slavery and union (Freeman 1934–1935, 1:234–267). Lee answered the call to Mexico with bold courage and

skill. With Virginia's secession in 1861, Colonel Lee faced the agonizing choice between the Union he had served for thirty-two years and loyalty to his native state; declining command of Federal forces, he resigned and accepted command of Virginia's troops, soon becoming a key Confederate general, moving his family from Arlington as war engulfed the land (Freeman 1934–1935, 1:415–430). Lee chose Virginia and took up the cause of the South.

In 1862 he assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia, driving back McClellan in the Seven Days' Battles, winning decisively at Second Manassas, and standing firm at Fredericksburg despite overwhelming odds; though wounded in spirit by the costly stalemate at Antietam, Lee inspired his men with tactical brilliance and personal courage amid cannon fire and hardship (Freeman 1934–1935, 2:1–156). Lee led his army to victory in the East and inspired undaunted loyalty. In 1863 he launched the invasion of Pennsylvania, seeking decisive victory, but met defeat at Gettysburg after three days of fierce fighting; undeterred, Lee conducted a masterful retreat and later defended Virginia tenaciously against Grant's Overland Campaign in 1864, enduring heavy losses while prolonging Southern hopes through brilliant maneuvers (Freeman 1934–1935, 3:1–189). Lee carried the war north and defended Virginia with tenacity.

By early 1865, facing overwhelming numbers and supply shortages, Lee's army was besieged at Petersburg; on April 9 at Appomattox Court House he surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant with dignity, ending major combat and urging his men to return home as good Americans, his heart heavy yet committed to peace (Freeman 1934–1935, 4:1–89). Lee endured the great bereavement of surrender with honor. Known as the revered commander of the Army of Northern Virginia and a symbol of Southern valor, Lee spent the war years separated from family, losing properties including Arlington, which became a national cemetery; he and Mary had seven children—three sons who served in the Confederate army—enduring the trials of separation and loss while maintaining devout prayer and trust in Providence (Freeman 1934–1935, 4:156–178). Lee became the beloved leader of the Confederacy and a model of Christian character.

After the war, Lee accepted the presidency of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, in 1865, promoting reconciliation, honor, and practical education while living modestly; he died on October 12, 1870, after a stroke, with reported final words invoking duty and command, his body laid to rest in Lexington amid national mourning (Freeman 1934–1935, 4:512–523). Lee finished his course in service and reconciliation. Lee's legacy endures as one of America's most skilled and honorable military leaders, a man of deep Christian faith whose courage, dignity in defeat, and call to reconciliation continue to challenge generations; his story of duty, loss, perseverance, and postwar service remains a powerful testament to character amid national division (Freeman 1934–1935, 4:534). Lee's legacy is duty, honor, and reconciliation in a divided land.

### **Theological Lessons from Robert E. Lee**

Robert E. Lee's life teaches four enduring lessons for Christ's church.

**First, Lee teaches us to be holy in all of life.** Everyone say, "Lee teaches us to be holy in all of life." He was described as "modest and pure as a virgin in thought" (Hill, quoted in Freeman 1934–1935, 4:490). Scripture commands, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). Lee's personal discipline and moral integrity reflected a life lived consciously before God.

**Second, Lee teaches men to be able to fight.** Everyone say, "Lee teaches men to be able to fight." Like Joshua charged his men, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous" (Joshua 10:25). Lee displayed courage under fire in Mexico, at Gettysburg, and throughout the war, modeling the manly resolve Scripture requires of those called to protect family, church, and the innocent.

**Third, Lee teaches us to take responsibility.** Everyone say, "Lee teaches us to take responsibility." After the defeat at Gettysburg, when wounded soldiers limped back across the battlefield, Lee declared, "It is all my fault, all my fault, all my fault" (Freeman 1934–1935, 3:134). This stands in stark contrast to Adam's blame-shifting in the garden (Genesis 3:12–13). True leadership owns failure rather than shifting blame.

**Fourth, Lee teaches us to promote Christianity and education.** Everyone say, "Lee teaches us to promote Christianity and education." As president of Washington College, he oversaw the construction of a chapel and emphasized Christian character in education. He wrote, "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength" (Jones 1875, 157). Lee understood that Christ must be preeminent in every sphere of life (Colossians 1:18).

### **Conclusion: Christ's Victory in the Nineteenth Century**

In the nineteenth century, God used Robert E. Lee to teach us that Christian duty and honor are important in the Christian life. From the halls of West Point to the fields of Virginia and the lecture rooms of Washington College, Lee lived with integrity, courage, responsibility, and devotion to Christ. Though placed in one of the most tragic conflicts in American history, he sought to honor God through duty and, in defeat, pursued reconciliation rather than bitterness.

Let us learn from Lee: pursue holiness in all of life, cultivate manly courage for the sake of those we love, take full responsibility when we fail, and promote the cause of Christ and sound education in our generation. May we, like him, live with the conviction that "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language" (Lee to his son, 1852; Freeman 1934–1935, 1:372). Christ is still building His church. He is still conquering the nations through faithful men and women who honor Him in their calling. Let us live boldly, knowing His kingdom advances, unstoppable, until it fills the earth. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE. "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty" (Luke 17:10).

MEMORY QUOTE. "I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation" (Robert E. Lee).

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