

**SEVEN LECTURES ON THE
HISTORY OF GIDEON, FOR
DOMESTIC AND VILLAGE
CONGREGATIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649702534

Seven Lectures on the History of Gideon, for Domestic and Village Congregations by A Country Curate

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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A COUNTRY CURATE

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BY A COUNTRY CURATE, M.A.

"THE SWORD OF THE LORD, AND OF GIDEON."

LONDON :
LONGMAN AND CO.; HAMILTON AND CO.;
AND F. PAWSEY, IPSWICH.
MDCCKLIII.



TO THE
RIGHT REV. EDWARD, LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE

BY PERMISSION

DEDICATED BY A CURATE IN HIS

LORDSHIP'S DIOCESE.

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PREFACE.

THESE Lectures were originally composed for a Congregation, consisting principally of the humbler class of agriculturists. They are now printed with a view to more general circulation, not only amongst the same description of persons in the country, but also in towns, and especially for mechanics, and for servants in private families: and accordingly aim at nothing more than conveying the great truths of religion in the simplest and most obvious form, and in the plainest and most homely language to the readers. All ornament of style or artifice of illustration being carefully avoided as tending to frustrate rather than advance their more immediate object, of enforcing the duties of life among the lowly and less educated, and setting forth the foundation upon which it is indispensable they should be built.

It may appear at first somewhat singular to have selected for this end the subject of Gideon, the bold and successful assertor of the rights and religion of his enslaved countrymen; a theme apparently better calculated

to improve the spirit of military than of domestic life and duties. But the objection will vanish on a closer inspection of the sacred narrative, which, short and simple as it is, inculcates in every detail the necessity of a full and perfect, but humble, confidence in the promises of the Deity, in His will and His power to work out the mightiest salvation, through the feeblest and least promising means. The lesson, also, would teach us by its close to avoid all self confidence and presumption in our own powers, even when these have, in successive instances, been made the instruments of triumphant deliverance from evil by the might of heaven. For there is perhaps equal danger to the Christian in distrusting the power of the Redeemer and in presuming on his own. The very simplicity and conciseness of the History of Gideon therefore render it easy to receive and retain, in one single impression, on the humblest mind.

As the author's object has been to illustrate the practical duties for the lowly in their own sphere, he has carefully shunned the slightest reference to abstract points or disputed tenets of every kind, and deeply would he regret that any one expression should be supposed to carry with it such bearing.

To the humble in station, there is also an additional interest in the scenes and vicissitudes that take place in the highest ranks and the widest stages of life. For in them the Hand of Providence seems to intermingle the deepest shadows with the brightest lights of glory, making the attractions they would otherwise covet a lesson and a warning to the lowly: the more striking and lasting, because framed on the largest scale. Thus in the instance before us, the proud and godless triumph of the warlike Midianites is crushed to the very dust by the humble labourer of the threshing floor, and the final presumption of "the mighty man of valor," is turned into a snare unto Gideon and all his house.

Such is the view taken by the author of these unpretending pages: and he is happy to have found coincidence and support in this opinion from the friends on whose judgment and encouragement he has always had reason to confide: nor is the sentiment confined to them alone; for since the commencement of the author's task, he has heard of two other works on the same subject, though neither of them has fallen in his way.

March 29, 1843.