

**THE VILLAGE PULPIT, A COMPLETE  
COURSE OF 66 SHORT SERMONS, OR  
FULL SERMON OUTLINES FOR  
EACH SUNDAY, AND SOME CHIEF HOLY  
DAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR; VOL. I,  
ADVENT TO WHITSUNDAY**

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The Village Pulpit, a Complete Course of 66 Short Sermons, or Full Sermon Outlines for Each Sunday, and Some Chief Holy Days of the Christian Year; Vol. I, Advent to Whitsunday by S. Baring Gould

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**S. BARING GOULD**

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*THE VILLAGE PULPIT.*

# THE VILLAGE PULPIT,

A COMPLETE COURSE OF 66 SHORT SERMONS, OR FULL  
SERMON OUTLINES FOR EACH SUNDAY, AND SOME  
CHIEF HOLY DAYS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

BY THE

REV. S. BARING GOULD, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "VILLAGE PREACHING FOR A YEAR," "LENT SERMONS ON THE  
MYSTERY OF SUFFERING," "THE PREACHER'S POCKET," ETC.

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VOL. I.

ADVENT TO WHITSUNDAY.



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## PREFACE.

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Two previous volumes of Village Sermons having been well received, and having been found to meet a want, I have been induced to write a new Series. This collection is not, however, one of Sermons fully worked out, but mere Sketches. I have given the leading lines, or heads, of the discourse, with illustrations and anecdotes, the exhortatory matter I have left undeveloped, as that can be worked out by any preacher who uses my outlines.

The illustrations may, perhaps, be thought sometimes too abundant. I, myself, prefer a single illustration in a Sermon, thoroughly worked out and applied. I have, however, not infrequently given more, so that the preacher who condescends to use this little work will be able, if so minded, to make two Sermons out of one of my Sketches. Not every Sermon is thus overcrowded, but some are.

It is a matter of surprise to me how little the Bible is used as a store-house of illustrative matter. We have the same texts, and the same examples, quoted over and over again, not only by the same preacher, but by hundreds of preachers, so that go where we will, we get the same dishes, only slightly varied in the cooking, just as everywhere in Tyrol one gets only veal, sometimes indeed with *sauce piquante*, but generally *as natured*, and sometimes sodden and cold.

This monotony is not confined to English preachers. I purchased a little while ago twelve volumes of "Pattern Sermons" of the most illustrious modern preachers of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany, price nearly £3, in the hopes of finding in them—(they furnish about ten Sermons a Sunday)—something useful, some fresh idea, some striking illustration, or telling anecdote; alas! after wading, over ankle, over knee, waist deep, I found mud, nothing but mud. I am sure there are souls, like thin, sandy soil, that are nourished, fattened, and assisted in



grain-producing by having a layer of this material spread well over them weekly, but why should this sort of stuff be published, when it is to be got in abundance everywhere, when the supply is absolutely inexhaustible, when it can be scraped up with a spade everywhere, as it lies deep in every lane ?

I believe also that there are other souls to whom this is intolerable, souls that are suffocated under the vapid load, they want ideas, and they are given words. To them a pious, idea-less, discourse is horrible, horrible is not the word for it, for that implies something definite and tangible to inspire horror.

I do not for a moment suppose that this little collection of Sermons will suit all. I know it will not, but I believe it will suit some, and I venture to publish it in the belief that it will do them good.

But to return to what I have said about the Bible. This is an almost inexhaustible treasury of illustration, if it be read through over and over again, and loved as a whole, and not had recourse to only on Sundays for the lessons of the day. The Sunday lessons have had this disadvantageous effect. They have so impressed some 104 Old Testament chapters on the memories of the clergy, that when they want an illustration to their text, or an example for their subject, there rises up before their mind's eye a passage or incident from one of these chapters, and it is at once laid hold of, and no further search is made in the remaining 565 chapters for other and fresher matter. Where there is a daily service, the case is better, more of the Bible becomes familiar to the preacher, and his range is accordingly wider.

I think, however, that we need not confine ourselves to illustrations from the sacred volume. Nature also affords us abundance, and, indeed, here are few books one reads out of which one may not pick something ; and perhaps better than books is personal experience.

Again, I believe we can hardly go far wrong in making Bible incidents very real to the people, by graphic description, and I have no scruple in sacrificing archaeological exactness and Oriental colouring, if so be that I can bring the Bible story to the level of the experience of a country congregation. In that, the mediævals were right, they painted the heroes of the Bible in mediæval costume, and the people understood them, and made friends of them. I have trespassed myself in this way with my eyes open, and I think there is no harm in doing so, nay, there is positive good.

I believe one of the secrets of the hold Dissenting preachers have on the uneducated is because they thus treat the Bible narratives. I venture—at the risk of raising a laugh—to quote the opening of a Sermon delivered last year in a little Cornish chapel, by a local Primitive Methodist preacher.

I believe that I give his words without exaggeration. I have no wish to exaggerate, for I am holding up the style to my brethren in the Church, as something to copy, though his matter, as they will see, was not quite correct. The text was from Psalm lvi. 8, "Awake up, my glory, awake, psaltery and harp." And this was the opening of the discourse—

"My brethren! King David woke up early in the morning, just as the sun was rising. There had been wretched bad times, rain, rain, rain, all day and night, and the sheep were cawed (diseased), and the harvest was not got in, the shocks of corn were standing, and the grain was sprouting in the ears. You know what sort of bread comes of that. David had been sore at heart, for he knew the farmers were in a bad way, and the labouring people were also not well off. So he got out of bed, and opened the window, and looked out, and smelt the beautiful fresh morning air. Then he saw the sun come a-peeping up over the Eastern hills, like a spark of gold. So says David, There he comes, and not a cloud in the sky, and there's every promise of a good day. Wake up, my glory! Wake up, my beautiful shining luminary, and give us a long fine day, for we want it sore before the corn is utterly spoiled and done for. And then, my brethren, he made another re-mark, and that he addressed to his Possie-tree. Now I don't pretend to know exactly what sort of a tree a Possie-tree is, but travellers who have been in the East, and learned Commentators, do assert that it is a plant that turns her face to the sun, whichever way the sun be. In short, she (the preacher said 'her') is a sort of a convolvulus. Now David saw this convolvulus drooping, with her blossom heavy with dew, and, says he, with a great shout, 'Possie-tree!' says he, 'Possie-tree, my hearty! wake up! The glorious sun is woke and shining, and it becomes you to wake up too, and look the glorious sun in the face, as is your nature to.'"

Now, of course, this is absurd, and rests on an entire misconception of what a psaltery is, but it is very graphic, and all the little congregation perfectly entered into King David's feelings, and saw the whole situation clearly; and when the preacher drew from it a wholesome lesson, it came home to their hearts and understandings.

The preacher should be very careful not to overdo his description, not

at all to trench on the ludicrous, but I do not think he need shrink from occasionally raising a smile by a telling illustration, which he knows will do this. An experienced extempore preacher needs, however, no hint on such a subject, the hint is for young beginners, who are inclined to make points by exaggeration.

In conclusion, I must express my thanks to that kind friend who has corrected the proofs of this work for me, which I have been debarred from doing myself, on account of my absence from England at the time when it was passing through the press.

LEW TRENCHARD,  
DEVON.

S. BARING-GOULD.

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