

he be wise, he will construct an index to his library, entering upon an interleaved Bible a citation of the name and page of every book opposite the verse or chapter of which it treats). Then, having thus saturated his mind with the subject, and seen what others have said upon it, he will leave it all to simmer and settle for some days, and, at length, sitting down with his whole soul concentrated upon the work, he will produce a discourse which, by the blessing of God, will be at once interesting and instructive, stimulating and suggestive to his hearers. Thus from week to week he will go forward, his spirit kindling into increasing enthusiasm as he proceeds, so that he will forget the labor in the joy. His people, also, catching fire from him, will long for the return of the Lord's day, that they may renew their study with him, and will deeply regret when by sickness, or absence from home, they are deprived of one of the series. I have seen a slimly attended second service gather back into itself all the half-day hearers that had absented themselves from it, and draw in others besides, through the adoption by the minister of just such a method as this; while the effect, even upon those who have dropped casually in upon a single discourse, has been to send them away with what one of themselves called "a new appetite for the Word of God."

I am thus brought naturally to the consideration of the advantages which are connected with this method of ministerial instruction, and among these I mention, First, the fact that *it brings both preacher*

*and hearers into direct and immediate contact with the mind of the Spirit.* The open Bible on the sacred desk is the token that both speaker and auditors regard it as the ultimate standard of appeal. In the pulpit the minister is not, ordinarily speaking, dealing with those who repudiate the authority of the Word of God. The very presence of his people in the sanctuary may be taken by him as an admission that "they are all present before God, to hear what is commanded them of God." There may be exceptional occasions when he feels bound to deal with sceptical objectors, but, as a general rule, the pulpit is not the place for that. As a brother once said to me, "When I am in the pulpit, I am not there to defend the Bible; the Bible is there to defend me." The great aim of the preacher ought to be to set before the people the mind of God. Now, in so far as he is successful, that is precisely what the expositor does. In the topical sermon, there may be many of his own particular opinions, which are matters of "private interpretation," or of "doubtful disputation." But when he has succeeded in convincing his hearers that he has given the true meaning of the passage which he is expounding, he can say, "This is the mind of Christ," and the force of that both on him and them will be overwhelming. When he so speaks, he will speak "with authority and not as the scribes," and men will feel that they have been brought face to face with God.

Now, it is in the production of this impression that the peculiar power of the pulpit consists. Other men