

biblical exposition with the other methods of discourse. In entering upon such a course, it is not necessary that the minister should introduce his first experiments into the principal service of the Lord's day: he might make trial of his gifts in less frequented meetings, or in some more familiar circle called together for this special purpose. And even where the expository method is exclusively adopted, as some may see cause to do, the pastor is to beware of that extreme which would always present very long passages. The expository plan, wisely conducted, may be said to include the other. Where, in due course, a verse or even a part of a verse occurs, so important in its relations and so rich in matter as to claim a more extended elucidation, it should be taken singly, and be made the basis of a whole sermon or even more.

As a model of familiar exposition we would cite the Lectures of Archbishop Leighton on the First Epistle of Peter. The great excellency of these is their heavenly unction, which led Dr Doddridge to say that he never read a page of Leighton without experiencing an elevation of his religious feelings. "More faith and more grace," says Cecil, "would make us better preachers, for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. Chrysostom's was the right method: Leighton's Lectures on Peter approach very near to this method."—"Our method of preaching," says the same writer, "is not that by which Christianity was propagated; yet the genius of Christianity is not changed. There was nothing in the primitive method set or formal. The primitive bishop stood up and read the gospel, or some other portion of Scripture, and pressed on the hearers with great earnestness and affection a few plain and forcible truths, evidently resulting from that portion of the divine word: we take a text, and make an oration. Edification was then the object of both speaker and hearers; and while this continues to be the object, no better method can be found."*

Such a mode of preaching is less adapted than its opposite to make the speaker a separate object of regard, and might be

* Cecil's Works, vol. iii. p. 312.

selected by many on this very account. It is now some years since we enjoyed the privilege of listening to the late pious and eloquent Summerfield, the charm of whose brilliant and pathetic discourses will never be forgotten by those who heard them. After having, on a certain occasion, delivered a deeply impressive sermon on Isaiah vi. 1-6, he remarked to the writer of these pages that, in consequence of having been pursued by multitudes of applauding hearers, he had been led to exercise himself more in the way of simple exposition, as that which most threw the preacher himself into the shade, and most illustriously displayed the pure truth of the Word.

The same idea was expressed by the late Dr Mason in circumstances which no doubt drew from him his sincerest convictions and most affectionate counsels. The words are found in a sermon preached in Murray Street Church, December 2, 1821, on the occasion of resigning the charge of his congregation; and we earnestly recommend to every reader this testimony of one who, it is well known, was eminently gifted in the very exercise which he applauds.

In suggesting to his late charge the principles upon which they should select a pastor, he says: "Do not choose a man who always preaches upon insulated texts. I care not how powerful or eloquent he may be in handling them. The effect of his power and eloquence will be to banish a taste for the Word of God, and to substitute the preacher in its place. You have been accustomed to hear that word preached to you in its connection. Never permit that practice to drop. Foreign churches call it *lecturing*; and when done with discretion, I can assure you that, while it is of all exercises the most difficult for the preacher, it is in the same proportion, the most profitable for you. It has this peculiar advantage, that in going through a book of Scripture, it spreads out before you all sorts of character, and all forms of opinion; and gives the preacher an opportunity of striking every kind of evil and of error, without subjecting himself to the invidious suspicion of aiming his discourses at individuals."*

* Mason's Works, vol. i. p. 366.