

## EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

THE pulpit discourses of Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, during several centuries, have been, for the most part, founded on short passages of Scripture; commonly single verses, and oftener less than more. This has become so prevalent, that, in most treatises upon the composition of sermons, all the canons of homiletics presuppose the treatment of an isolated text. We are not prepared to denounce this practice, especially when we consider the treasury of sound doctrine, cogent reasoning, and mighty eloquence, which is embodied in productions formed on this model, and call to mind the instances in which such discourses have been signally owned of God in the edification of his church. But there is still another method, which, though less familiar to ourselves, was once widely prevalent, and is recognized and approved in our Directory for Worship, in the following words: "It is proper also that large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the sacred oracles."\* And it may not be out of place to mention here, that in the debates of the Westminster Assembly, there were more than a few members, and among these the celebrated Calamy, who maintained with earnestness, that it was no part of the minister's duty to read the Scriptures in public *without exposition*.†

It is not a little remarkable, that in an age in which so much is heard against creeds and systems as contradistinguished from the pure text of Scripture, and in which sacred hermeneutics

\* Directory for Worship, chap. vi. § 2.

† Lightfoot's Works, vol. xiii. p. 36.