

it not because those who have attempted it have done so too often without any adequate idea of its importance, and have gone on with it in the most slovenly and perfunctory fashion? They have been content to "say away" on the passage, or, to use an expressive Scotch word, they have "perlikewed" awhile, going about it and about it, until everybody hearing them has been longing for the amen. They have taken to exposition because they thought it was an easier thing to do than to write sermons, and they have simply diluted the sayings of the sacred writer by the watery additions of their extempore, not to say ex-trumpery, utterances. They have had recourse to it with the feelings of him who said, "I like to take a whole chapter for a text, because when I am persecuted in one verse, I can flee to another."

Now of course that is fatal. Such preaching does not deserve to be popular, and it is a proof of the good sense of our people that it is not popular. Let no man who wishes to succeed in exposition imagine that he can do so without great labor. No mere cursory perusal of the passage before he goes to the pulpit will suffice. No hasty study of it will be enough. He needs to enter into the spirit of the writer, to recall the times and circumstances in which he wrote, and to live and move and have his being for the week in the argument or narrative, the prophecy or parable, the psalm or supplication, which he is considering. He must follow the old canon of Bengel: "Apply thy whole self to the text, and apply the whole text to thyself." Thus will he discover the "hidden treas-

ures" in the field of sacred Scripture, and when he speaks of them to his hearers, his words will have in them that unmistakable ring—that "accent of conviction," as Mullois calls it—which will make every one feel that he is in living earnest.

One thing, however, he must guard against. He must not turn the pulpit into the chair of the exegetical professor, and spend a long time in hunting down some poor Greek particle, or digging up some obscure Hebrew root. Processes are for the study; results are for the pulpit. Our people do not want to know what every German, English, or American commentator has thought. When one asks what time it is, it would be a mockery of his request if you should begin to tell him all the details of the mechanism of a watch, or if you should go into an exhaustive dissertation on the relative merits of Trinity church clock, or Bennet's, or the clock at the railway depot. You look at your own watch and tell him what its fingers point to, and that is all.

So let it be here. Do not make your expository lecture a place of deposit for barrowfuls of other men's opinions, gathered from all quarters, but tell your hearers what you have concluded for yourselves, with the grounds on which your opinion rests, and then pass on and press the practical application of the principle which you have found in the passage to the consciences of your people and the circumstances of your times.

That this kind of preaching will be both profitable and popular has been clearly proved, both from the

past history of the pulpit\* and from the success of many living preachers. Let the young minister, therefore, take courage and labor on at it. Above all, let him remember here, as in all other things, his dependence on the Holy Spirit, and prayerfully seeking that in the closet, while he diligently does his best in the study let him go forward in the confidence that he will succeed, for God hath said, "Them that honor me, I will honor."

Not all at once will the success come. But it will come as the result of these three things: prayer, perseverance, and patience. Keep on, therefore, with resolute courage, for "all things are possible to him that believeth."

\* For illustrations, I might point to Dr. John Dick's Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles; Dr. John Brown's volumes on the Discourses and Sayings of the Lord; the volumes by Dr. Hanna on The Life of Christ; those of Trench and Arnot on the Parables; the various works of Dr. Cox, now editor of the *Expositor*; and for separate passages, "An Expositor's Note-Book," by the author last named. The volume of Robertson on the Corinthians and those of Vaughan on the Philippians and the book of Revelation are exceedingly valuable, while in another style Peddie's Jonah and Raleigh's Jonah are admirable.