

“Expository preaching is not popular. The people do not like it, and they will not stand it.” Now, in answer to this, I have to say that the minister has to consult the benefit of his hearers as well as their tastes; and where the two conflict, he has to prefer that which will promote the former rather than that which will please the latter. If he is fully persuaded that they need such instruction as Biblical exposition regularly prosecuted can alone impart, then he ought to give himself to it, even at the risk of creating some little dissatisfaction at first; for he may rely upon it, that if he do his work faithfully and well, they will grow interested in spite of themselves, and will come at length to enjoy it. Of course, if he is ambitious of acquiring a reputation for “great sermons” and wishes to hear many complimentary expressions about the beauty and brilliancy of his “effort,” then he will leave off exposition, and indeed, in that case, he had better leave off preaching altogether, for the pulpit is not the place for such displays. But if he wish to honor God’s truth, and if his desire be to hear his people tell him that they have never before so thoroughly understood some portion of Scripture, or that his explanation of a passage has taken a stumbling-block out of their way or put a staff of strength into their hands, he will go on with his expository work, content; oh, much more than content! rejoicing in the fact that he has been in any smallest degree the instrument of building up the Christian character of the people of his charge.

But why is this sort of preaching not popular? Is

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.