

amid this multiplicity and variety, the preacher need not search long for a text to expound, or for a theme to discuss. But what if this very multiplicity and variety should constitute one of the chief sources of the preacher's perplexity? Even if all texts of Scripture were intrinsically equal in importance, there would be a relative importance belonging to some which did not belong to others. A score of texts may be before the preacher's mind, each the expression of some weighty and important truth, and yet not one of them may appear to him to be just the one which he ought to undertake to expound the next Sabbath; and though a thousand different subjects, none of them entirely devoid of interest, may be suggested to his mind, not one of them may appear to be the one exactly appropriate to that particular occasion.

All texts and all themes are not equally adapted to the mental peculiarities of every preacher. There is perhaps no man who is equally at home in every branch of biblical interpretation, or in the treatment of all kinds of subjects. Even if he possessed the requisite learning to warrant him in undertaking all this, every conscientious preacher must feel that there are some subjects which he is not fitted by nature to discuss. There are truths in the Bible which can only be seen by the seer's eye—which can only be apprehended by those gifted spirits who, owing in part to the fineness of their organization, and in part to their intense love of the truth, are permitted to come face to face with it; so that their eyes see what, to ordinary men, is only known by the hearing of the ear. But not to speak of those truths which, though the most real and essential of all truths, are too subtle and spiritual to be discerned except by those whose eyes are specially anointed to see them, there are logic, metaphysics, and poetry in the Bible—subjects which cannot be effectually treated except by such as have the logical, the metaphysical, or the poetical faculty (as the case may be) in an extraordinary degree. But all preachers are not logicians, metaphysicians, or poets. A man may have all the practical good sense necessary to deal with that class of truths which stands in the most intimate relation to the every-day life of men, and which should ever form the staple of pastoral instruction, and yet feel that he has no fitness for the treatment of the more abstruse and difficult problems which are ever and anon presenting themselves to the mind of the thoughtful student of either natural or revealed religion. He may feel that this is a work to which he has not been called, and for which he has not been endowed. Besides, most preachers have by them a list of reserved texts which they intend to take up, which they are persuaded they can discuss with credit to themselves and not without profit to their hearers, just so soon as they can find time to "read up" upon the subjects to which they refer, and to devote to them that amount of quiet and patient thought which will not only enable them to thoroughly understand them themselves, but also to make that orderly disposition and arrangement of their several parts which will make them easily understood by others, and to find such illustrations as will invest them with sufficient popular interest to secure the attention of those whom it is his aim to instruct. He hopes the time will come when he will