

short of the qualifications and conditions of the office of teacher of the Bible. Even if the preacher were to be a mere homilist the assertion would still be true of him, but the Presbyterian theory at least of the ministry is that its members should be learned in the Scriptures. They must be acquainted with its external facts, the history of its several parts, the external providential circumstances under which they were composed with their lessons for all time, the relations of the parts to one another and to the great whole, the characteristics of the different classes of literature which make up the Old Testament, whose appreciation has so much to do with the true conception of the teaching embodied in each kind of composition. It would be vain to maintain that these accomplishments can be gained, to any high degree, without faithful study of the original. The fact is that they are not attained to otherwise, partly because certain of these facts and phenomena can only be learned through a study of the genius of Hebrew composition, and partly because the taste for such investigations is only to be got by making them with some degree of independence and with the instruments which Providence has given to secure their successful prosecution. There is no royal road to sacred learning, and the cheap devices that are the natural refuge of a defiance of the lessons of Providence, experience and common sense can and do only result in superficialness, narrowness, and general inadequacy to the duties of authoritative Bible teachers.

To other Biblical gifts and graces it is rightly demanded of ministers of the Word that they should have sure exegetical tact and skill in opening up passages rich in spiritual and moral meaning. There are hundreds of such passages in the Old Testament which are not fully understood or expounded, less because they are intrinsically obscure than because they are not studied in connection with their surrounding and in the forms and idioms in which they were originally expressed. The people at large puzzled but earnest and still looking up with respect and confidence to their appointed guides, cry for an interpreter, as Job did in his day, and receive but seldom an answer that does or that ought to satisfy. Here again the inadequacy of the English version, Authorized or Revised, is glaringly apparent, and, one would suppose, must make itself every day and hour painfully