

derive the benefits which would come from a thorough study of the course.'

"The Conference examinations are often conducted in a careless way. They are often inexact and superficial. They are at best testings on the 'contents of a book,' or 'the views of the author,' rather than a call for definitions by the student of doctrines which he accepts, his own statements concerning their historic development, their basis in Scripture and reason, the formidable oppositions which they have encountered, from what sources and with what results in theological thought and ecclesiastical usage. For, if I rightly understand the object of the Conference course, candidates who pursue it should find it a real school of theology, opening to its members the world of knowledge belonging to their office and profession.

"The time usually spent in Conference examinations is short, the burden of it coming at the closing up of the year's pastoral work. The making out of reports, the packing, the 'good-byes,' and the nervousness and anxiety of the candidate, put him then at great disadvantage. However, he learns to hope that the examining brethren will be 'easy' and 'sympathetic.' And he has the assurance from men who 'got through' without much trouble last year, or the year before, that they are likely to be both 'sympathetic' and 'easy'; and it happens, to the shame of the men who as examiners allow it, or who as ruling *presbyters*, whether over 'districts' or over 'the whole connexion,' wink at it, that men creep into our ministry through examinations that should make a grammar-school boy blush.

"The preacher must be a student. He must know how to study, how to think, how persistently and with concentration to apply his mind and heart to a subject until he can hold it firmly, turn it over, penetrate it, discover its anatomy and relations, and put it into shape for effective application to his hearers.

"The minister of God should know about the dangers to which our homes, our parents, our youth

are exposed, from false science, from lax theology, from bad ethics widely circulated in these days through current literature, the rostrum, the lyceum and the drama. By vigilance, by reading, by conversation, he should be ready to give a wise man's answer to a fool's folly. He should, in a general way, be abreast of the times in matters of literary taste and general culture. It does not require much time, when one has wise direction, to catch the current of popular thought; to take a wise view of the topics which are everywhere exciting popular discussion. The minister must understand the literary elements which quietly antagonize his gospel, and with taste and ability so deal with them that his matter and manner will command the respect of the most cultivated in his community.

"Above all, the minister should be familiar with the English Bible: how it has come to us in the English, the English people through whom it came, and the English in which it comes. This is the minister's one text-book. It contains the word of God, whose witness he is, whose law he is to declare, whose Gospel he is to proclaim, whose promises he is to announce. It is a book of books; THE Book of books; full of history, biography, philosophy, ethics, poetry, prophecy; and in its English form it has been given to us illuminated by the advance of archæological and of philological science, and by the illustration of its principles in the history of that wonderful race, a part of which we are. The preacher of the word should be a master of the English Bible. But the minister should study the English of the Bible—pure, simple, and full of vigour; forming in the critical and loving disciple a clear style, full of classic grace; a style both strong and keen, like a sharp sword which the Lord Himself hath made for the man who would do well the work to which the Lord hath called him."

Bishop Vincent closes his practical paper with the following eloquent paragraphs:

"There was once a great school of theology—of Christian theology—