

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VIII.

## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

## No. I. — AN APPEAL FOR HIGHER THEOLOGICAL TRAINING.

THE church of Christ has a twofold mission in all ages of the world: a mission to grow in two different, but allied, respects. The church begins with a few souls who receive into themselves the gospel, and grows forward in numbers until it wins and embraces the whole world of souls. Its mission is to convert the world into the church. But it also begins in crudeness on the part of the individual and of the church as a whole, and grows forward toward ripeness, symmetry, perfection of Christlike character. Its mission is to make itself a wise, righteous, holy, and blessed church.

The church of Christ in the present age meets, in the attempt to carry on its twofold mission, with especial resistance, either active or passive, from two classes of society. With respect definitely to the work of the pulpit in England, a writer in the Nineteenth Century says: "There is the great working class at one end of the scale, and the great cultivated class at the other. Does not the one regard the pulpit with rough indifference, and the other with polished scorn?" In our land, also, and in the present age, there is, we believe, a pressing, an alarming, demand upon the church to fulfil its twofold mission in respect to these two classes.

It is in full view and confession of this demand that we make this appeal for a higher theological training.

We base our appeal primarily upon the necessity laid upon the church to evangelize and edify the working classes. Much culture in varied theological studies is often supposed to hinder men from evangelizing those whom some are pleased to call "the masses of the people." Higher theological training of some ministers might, it is conceded, help in the work of unfolding the Christian character of the cultivated class, as well as in the polemics of Christianity; but at the other end of the scale the impression prevails it would be a hinderance rather than a help. The drift of our practical activities in the churches, the avowed belief of large sections of leading denominations, the attitude toward thorough culture of many of our revivalists, evangelists, and some of their most ardent co-workers, the astonishing successes of uncultivated men in work with the lower classes, the failures of cultivated men in efforts at the same kind of work, the presence everywhere of a shallow form of utilitarianism, have all combined with other causes to create this impression.

This impression is mistaken. The failures arising from the sin which is in us are not to be charged upon a culture which we have not obtained. The pride, ambition, and indifference to the condition of the lower orders of the people, which are found among the churches and their ministers, come rather because our hearts are so bad than because our heads are so good; they come in spite of some culture rather than because of over-much culture. One of the remedies for them is to be found in increased and higher theological training. We are far from thinking that the application of this remedy alone will win to the church the working class, or the lower outcast and criminal classes. We rejoice in the grand, historic awakening of interest which many laymen, both those with culture and those without, now feel toward the multitudes. Nor are we otherwise than heartily favorable to the activities, which, if intense and persistent enough, can make the whole land swarm with improvised evangelists, visitors, Bible-readers, tract-distributors, and gospellers of every sort and shade of preparation or success. We are, however, distinctly unfavorable and averse to the impression that the highest possible theological culture given to the pastors of churches, tends to unfit them for leading and sharing in this very work.

We charge the impression with being not only untrue, but the very reverse of true. The most generous possible theological training fits a man, other things being equal, the better to do sympathetic and effective work with the lower classes. The tendency of such training is toward such fitness: the fact is that such training produces such fitness. There is doubtless a certain restricted form of culture which operates, otherwise than through immoral pride of culture, to separate its disciple from the people. He who has received only this form of culture feels that the hearts and lives of the lower classes are of necessity a sort of terra incognita to him. All men who have simply studied as preparation for life find themselves very awkward at the beginning of so-called active life. This inevitable awkwardness hinders them from mingling helpfully with the multitudes. Perhaps, also, the stage of culture at which our colleges leave the young man operates, in addition to the form of culture which they bestow, so as to send him forth in about the condition of greatest temporary awkwardness. The risks and embarrassment of such awkwardness cannot be escaped, in the case of ministers, by depriving them of all classical culture, or by diminishing its amount. It is the express intent of our theological seminaries to take their students as they are left by the colleges, endowed with such a kind and degree of culture as colleges give, and carry them generously forward in a kind and to a degree of culture required for the specific work of the pastorate.

It is the tendency of all really sound and generous culture to make men exalt that which is common to humanity above whatever is merely accidental, special, or restricted in space or time. Especially is the ten-

gency of theological studies, fitly taught and pursued, to produce a broad and sympathetic feeling of humanity. Such studies are especially designed to open before the soul, the sweetest, deepest, and most fruitful truths of God. Broad views of truth and of the source of truth, who is the Eternal One, of the church and the mission of the church, of man and the nature of his history, of the Redeemer and the work of redemption, tend to elevate in the student's sympathy and thought the entire race, with its sins, sorrows, and needs; tend to repress the selfish individualism which pushes and plots for place and fame. It is when theological culture has not had the full opportunity to rub out the self-conceit of its students, that there is most risk of its operating to produce ministers who cannot minister to man as man. Coarse-ground men, if ground finer, would make better bread for the hungry poor. The aristocracy of theological learning does not differ from that of other learning; it is aptest to be offensive and harmful when it is shoddy.

But we are not to forget that the special work of evangelizing is not by any means the whole of the pastor's work. As fast and as far as these multitudes of the lower classes are converted, they must be put and kept in the process of growth toward finished Christian character. Something more than the "gospel meeting" is needed for this; something more than that they should themselves become proclaimers of the gospel they have received. If Christianity does not tolerate an esoteric teaching, these men also must be instructed in the deepest, choicest truths of religion; must be polished in the "sweet reasonableness" which unchristian culture cannot bestow. Will it be contended that the most generous training is not a help to a man in the effort to edify these lowly? Such training is of incalculable benefit in the one result of desire and ability to bring the best thoughts of Christianity before this class of converts.

We believe there is not a choice thought upon divine things, pointed out by most critical commentator, or uttered by profoundest theologian or philosopher, which cannot profitably be presented by a well-trained preacher to a congregation of the working people. We believe that the best work in exegesis of men like Meyer and De Wette and Ewald, and the best philosophical thought of men like Ulrici and Lotze and Trendelenburg, can judiciously filter through the mind of the cultured minister into the minds of his humblest hearers. Not that we would repeat the errors of ancient Gnosticism or Mediaeval scholasticism; we would with distinct, self-conscious purpose avoid them. But we would give freely the choicest things of Christian research to the poor. They are hungry for the best things, when once you have whetted their appetite. They are to be built up by them; if these best things are only given in the clearness, simplicity, and humble trust upon the Holy Spirit, which should belong to the minister of Christ. A pastor, who has been unusually severe in his own theological training, declares that he never had praise more highly

gratifying than he received from one of his hearers, who was of the lower class of foreigners, and a whitewasher. On being asked if his brother, who could not speak or understand much English, could get the sermons, this poor man replied: "Yes; a man that can't understand you can't understand much." Yet there was not one of those sermons which had not profited largely by the best German exegesis and metaphysics. That pride which affects clearness without avoiding shallowness, or affects profundity at the expense of clearness, is to be driven out of the heart only by the Holy Ghost, aided by judicious and long-continued discipline.

But an appeal is made to history and to present experience to sustain the impression that high theological culture unfits a man for work amongst the people. We believe the appeal is not sustained. No doubt there has been, and still is, in the ministry much mischievous pride of learning. This pride of theological learning has appeared in certain times and places as more abundant, because all the world's pride of learning has been turned into theological channels. When there is little learning which is not theological, the pride of learning will be, of course, for the most part, connected with theology. At present, we believe, the most highly trained men in the ministry are, on the whole, in most hearty sympathy with the working classes, and are doing for them much of the best Christian work. Kingsley and Chalmers and Macleod did not find their culture keeping them away from the people. She is a lady of culture who, in "English Hearts and English Hands," tells her wonderful story of work among the navvies of England, as well as she who, after raising her cry of "Haste to the Rescue" of the men of "Butcher Row," could narrate her "Annals of the Rescued." In thousands of parishes, in the old world and in the new, ministers of most thorough training are proving themselves, on that very account, all the more helpful to the poor. And glimpses into inside workings convince us that no other class of ministers or churches is in so much danger from the ambition of place-hunting and accompanying alienation from the people, as those who make lightest of theological and other education. The man who takes a deep and generous culture into an obscure parish in the country, or even into the slums of the city, takes an element which nerves, steadies, and strengthens him in work. The people, like the Bible, mean to be iconoclastic of shams; whether of intellectual culture, or of emotions, or of practical activities. But they respect a large, sound learning as well as genuine righteousness or unfeigned piety. As leaders of individual churches into evangelistic work amongst the multitudes, and as pastors of those converted from those multitudes, both in the city and in the country, the cause of Christ needs men of highest culture, as well as most ardent piety. We base our appeal for such culture upon the obligations of the church to furnish her best thought and best men to the lowest of the people.

We base the same appeal for higher training of our ministers upon the

obligations of the church toward the cultivated classes. For they are men, and have souls to be saved, and, as we believe, culture alone will not save them. Of necessity, culture can much easier sympathize and work with ignorance, than ignorance with culture. Yet no amount of culture can deliver a man from the needs to which Christianity addresses itself. There are, in the case of the educated classes, deep, imperative needs, which call for Christian truth, but which cannot be met by any narrow, irrational presentation of the truth. It can scarcely be doubted that there are large numbers of cultivated persons who do not even listen to the claims of Christianity because they expect that those claims will be presented with traditional narrowness and irrationality. For them there is, indeed, no less exacting, no more liberal gospel than for the ignorant multitudes; but there is needed for them the same exacting and yet liberal gospel, presented in a form suited to their wants. There is a piercing cry in the present age for men who can stand upon both feet, outside the bulwarks of concessions to the combined dignity and weakness of the pulpit, with the Bible in one hand, and all the other allied truth of God in the other hand, to tell with clear, argumentative authority what is the gospel of Christ, what the duty of a Christian, what the work and destiny of the Christian church. For—let it be distinctly recognized by the ministers and the churches—there is long and loud complaint against us from the educated classes. Many believe that “the rapidly growing intellectual class . . . . is coming to regard the preacher and his unverifiable assertions with quiet indifference or scorn.” Many also believe, as a recent friendly critic believes, that “for this antagonism the pulpit is mainly responsible.”

Doubtless there is much misunderstanding and exaggeration in the complaint. Doubtless they charge upon the historic ignorance and narrowness of the clergy and the churches much which is due to the sin that is in the world—the same troubles, in part, which many within the churches charge to excessive culture of the clergy. Let us, at any rate, O friends, face the charge in the conviction that much of it is well founded. We have not put into our preaching all the rich, mellow fruit of the New Testament, all the available instructions and warnings from the heavens above and the earth beneath, which are, without exception, good truths to be received and taught as from God. We have for centuries put therein much sour and bitter fruit from the gardens of worldly mistakes and fancies. We have often striven, in narrow and prejudiced zeal, to cramp the unfolding of truth in the world of thought and experience. And yet we have done much grand and helpful work through the ages, by the assisting indwelling Spirit. Since Christ came we have converted, comforted, and cherished many souls, have helped the race nearer to God. We wish, however, to improve, even if we must begin improvement by bearing weakly a slap in the face from hands obligated to tenderness.

As far as the charge is true, and even beyond the suspected limit of truth, we will confess our fault. There has been and is much crudeness, much which is lawfully offensive to cultivated hearts and minds, in the work of Christian ministers. They should be trained to know much of which they are now ignorant, to confess their ignorance of much for professing to know which they now earn contempt. They should be sent out into the work riper Christian gentlemen, far less crude both in mind and emotions.

There should also be thoroughly educated by the churches an abundance of gifted men, who shall stand in every community, shoulder with shoulder, for all manly excellences of mind and manners, with the best in the land. Every church should be able to say to each sneering disciple of unchristian culture: My pastor is every way your peer. The educated who have those secret leanings of heart toward Christ which plead his cause more effectively than sermons should be able everywhere to seek out the minister as one in whom they can every way confide. If fear of losing the influence of the educated classes cannot fitly move the church to make a conquest of them, then let the church be moved by the higher motive of Christ's yearning love. We believe that the church sorely needs these outlying men and women of culture; we know that they sorely need what the church has to give.

Enlarging our view, we go on to say that the church should lead and control the thought of this thinking age. For God *does* work by thought in the world, and every truth with its power over men, is the gift of the Holy Ghost. "I am the truth," said Christ, "and the truth shall make you free." Construct an index rerum, including all that science, philosophy, politics, and art have contributed of rich discoveries and glowing thoughts, and the church is bound to write above it the one name, Christ. Nor can the church control the thought of the world by the effort to repress it, but only by using whatever is best in all thought to show that its own great thought is central, controlling, and true. "The wealth of the plenitude of understanding" is a goal toward which the Christian church is bidden to go. And when scepticism thinks higher than it has done hitherto, it is the business of the thinkers of the church to think higher than scepticism, to wrest from scepticism its facts and arguments, and build them into the walls of God's kingdom. To speak as though the forces of the church lay wholly in flowing emotion, childlike trust, and practical activities is to degrade those forces. To decry flowing emotion and childlike trust is unkind, may be impious; to decry the manly grip of the trained intellect on every form and quality of truth is weak, and may also be impious. God made men with brains as truly as with hearts; God is in the thought of the church as truly as in its love toward the world. Who, then, can look out of the window of his soul upon this busy, seething crowd of polemical thinkers in every department

of thought, as they hasten forward to attack the traditional strongholds of Zion, without prayer that men of thought as pure and high and strong as theirs may be found at every point to meet them? We wish not to preserve the traditions, but to preserve the truth which is in them, and to win more truth. For this work of defence and leadership, in this age of tumultuous and chaotic, but still earnest and progressive, thinking, we need a vastly higher than the average theological training.

Theology must mean more, vastly more, to us in the future than it has in the past. The enemies of the church look upon all truth as theological; the church, if only in barest self-defence, must do the same. Rather ought she with glorious rejoicing and assurance of the future to accept the broadest views of theology as avowedly her own.

We base, therefore, an appeal for theological training upon the nature of theology itself. In that generous use of the word to which the church should attain there is no other form of training at once so high and broad as the theological. The minister should have, in all departments of truth, the most thorough culture with direct reference to his specific work in life. A little Latin, a little distorted history, considerable ritual and ecclesiasticism, might represent, in some places and times, the sum total of priestly culture. In our place and time some minds may hold to an almost equally narrow conception of what is meant by theological training. But, verily, to see all truth in God, and from God's point of view, and to handle it all for God's glory and man's best benefit, is the goal of theological training. Art is indeed long, and life is short. No art is longer than that of the Christian preacher and pastor; no science is comparably long when compared with the science which he studies in preparation.

On the practical grounds already exhibited, the fact is alarming that just one third of the students in even our Congregational seminaries have had no college training whatever, that more than half have had either a partial one or none at all. But on the scientific ground which we are now urging, the fact is also unworthy. It is discreditable to the Christian churches of the land. We would by no means have these young men discouraged from the ministry; we would have more of them encouraged, yes, necessitated, to more thorough training. For, in addition to the practical needs of the churches, we may remind ourselves that a man can have no higher aim or work in life than to cultivate in himself and others the knowledge of God.

We fear this claim will meet with little favor amidst the push of utilitarian views. The manufacturing chemist can show cause why some young men should thoroughly study chemistry. The biologist has the ear of the people. Geology is connected with mining and with the development of the resources of the country. But the study of God and of divine things — why should choice minds give themselves for years to anything

so remote from the immediate interests of the people? To hurry inferior minds through the thinnest slice of rounded preparation seems for the present to satisfy well enough. Twenty years more will show the folly, from the utilitarian point of view, of such a course. But we now place theological training boldly forward, upon the basis of its intrinsic dignity, as a thing of chief concern for all men, and especially for the Christian church in all the ages. True theology has the highest possible claims upon man as man, as rational, and especially upon Christians as rational Christians. True theology is the most lofty and fruitful pursuit possible for the human mind. And just because theology is so much depreciated in the present age by some thinkers would we have it by other thinkers more diligently cultivated. They who take most pains to depreciate it cannot let it alone; they seem to assume that there is no higher work to which a man can devote himself.

All the sciences now so diligently cultivated are preparing vast treasures of fact and thought for the student of theology. Especially, then, in the present age is theology worthy of most diligent and passionate devotion. Never before was a training comparable for breadth and variety required of the Christian teacher. His science is ready to grow high and large, to bloom and scatter fruit on all around. He should be trained in physics as a part of theology, that he may see and demonstrate God where Tyndall can see only the potency of a mysterious something which he defines as matter, and Huxley only carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, with certain "subtle influences" gratuitously thrown in. He should be trained in logic and philology, that he may recognize and demonstrate the God who is the essence of all reason, and who has revealed himself in the Eternal Word. He should be trained to find God in history, in the state, in art, and in all complex human life. Surely he should be trained more in the study of the Bible. He should feel by long experience that to gather and put together these fragments of knowledge concerning the infinite Redeemer is a work than which there is none manlier, more "frankly human," more full of demands for Christlike delicacy and love. The nature of theology itself is such as to demand the highest possible culture in it of the choicest possible minds.

On these bases — without mentioning others — we make a direct appeal for higher theological training. We put passion into the appeal. We wish that this passion should stir answering passion.

We appeal to you, Christian gentlemen of wealth and culture. Your money, your sympathy, your influence are required to meet this need of higher training for the coming pastors of the land. Some of you are living in houses whose cost is equal each one to that of an entire theological seminary, at an annual expense equal to the salary of a half score of professors. The meeting-houses in which you worship have cost as much, and are annually sustained at great expenditure. Though preaching in

those expensive meeting-houses, it is not certain that your ministers put brains into their sermons; if your present ministers do, it is not certain that you can in ten years from now find those, without importation, who will do the same. You have upon the shelves of your libraries hundreds of volumes which are filled with the unbelieving science, fiction, and poetry of the thinkers of to-day. These are the choice books of the present era. How many volumes have you here of ripe, temperate, and sweet theology? How many of your sons are trained to think that all the richest and most prolonged discipline which you are able to give them would be only meagre preparation for preaching the gospel of Christ. We want your money, your sons, and your influence, to lift aloft the standard of theological training in this day and land. You can endow the seminaries, enlarge their courses and appliances, encourage the professors, and students of most marked ability, to wide and varied researches in theology, can strengthen theological literature, and do much to sweeten it, can make the pursuit of theology respected, and do much to deliver the churches from traditional narrowness and bigotry.

We appeal to you, Christian ministers, already at your work. Lack of something to do and of purpose and compass in doing can scarcely, perhaps, be charged as a special fault upon us pastors. Yet we believe that it is possible for us as a class largely to raise the standard of our excellence in theological training; largely to contribute to its raising in the entire land. It may seem invidious to say so, but it is true, we have ministers enough, such as they are. And yet we need more ministers. Orderly, patient, self-impelled work on our part can do much toward removing the reproach that we do not reach either the lower uneducated or the upper educated classes.

We appeal to you, young men, who already have, or who may have, the ministry in your view. The temptations from poverty, shallow estimate of work, general drift of circumstances, to hasty and narrow preparation, are pressing indeed. But let it be understood that if you have any call to the ministry at all, you have, it is likely, as a part of this call, a call, also, to a thorough preparation. At present, and in prospect, we need more thoroughly trained rather than more ministers. But if you will enter and keep in the fields of theological training, with a patient, humble passion of devotion, you will find food there, than which none is sweeter and more nourishing.

We appeal to you, members of all the Christian churches. It is your province to encourage by appreciation the quality of cultured thought and feeling in your pastors. It is your work to endow with your smaller, as well as larger gifts the schools in which they are trained. It is your duty to take an active interest in the men by whom they are trained; not to hinder these professors by suspicion, niggardliness, or petty persecution, but to give them the support which they need in all candid and profound

culture of theology. It is your shame and crime when you lend your ears to sound rather than sense; when you, by direct or indirect influence, do anything to degrade from clear and manly thought the preachers of the land.

A fire of mingled indignation and yearning burns within the bones when we consider the faults and the opportunities of the Christian churches of this land with respect to the higher training of their own pastors and teachers.

G. T. L.

---

## ARTICLE IX.

### NOTICES OF NEW GERMAN THEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS; AND UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

*Dr. Karl Hase: Handbook of Protestant Polemics against the Roman Catholic Church (Handbuch der protestantischen Polemik geg. die röm. cathol. Kirche).* By Dr. Karl Hase. 1 8vo. pp. 596. 4th ed. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel. 1878 10 Marks.

The third edition of this work was published soon after the meeting of the Vatican Council. Since that publication the controversy between the Roman Catholic church and the Prussian government, connected with the famous May Acts of 1873 ("die Maigesetze") arose; and the reviewer in the Leipzig Centralblatt tells us that Hase's additional matter in the fourth edition concerns that controversy chiefly. We are told, too, that the learned and honored old historian seeks in many places to find the gentlest words possible, not as if his hand were growing feeble, but as one who wields the sword "for the sake of a higher peace." Let us say, in speaking of Hase, that although we earnestly desire to see profound investigation of church history by independent scholars in America, yet we wish as earnestly that Hase's Handbook of Church History, rather than most others, should be studied by those who wish to know how Germans view historical questions.

*Ed. J. C. Th. v. Otto's Publication of the Apologetic Writers of the Second Century. Justinus philosophi et martyris Opera.* Tom. I. part. I. et II. Also with the title: *Corpus Apologetarum Christianorum saeculi secundi.* By Ed. J. C. Th. v. Otto. 1 8vo. pp. 258, 609. Jena: Dufft. 1875 and 1877. 17½ Marks.

A good reviewer (L. L. C.) tells us that this edition results not only, as did the previous, from careful collation of mss. and preparation of a critical and exegetical commentary, prolegomena, and a Latin version placed alongside of the original text, but all thus far republished has been carefully revised, the Codex Claromontanus has been accurately collated for