

ARTICLE IX.

THE ROUT OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS.

BY THE REVEREND A. A. BERLE, D.D.

PROFESSOR FELIX ADLER, speaking at the National Conference of Ethical Culture Societies at New York City recently, urged his audience to make renewed efforts to persuade young men to take up the leadership of that form of service, because the "Christian ministry is daily falling into greater disrepute." This was his main proposition, and he offered some evidence in substantiation thereof with which we have not now to do. The outstanding fact is, that a leading social figure in the largest city of the continent, a professor in Columbia University, perhaps the most impressive speaker at the recent National Arbitration and Peace Conference held in that city, and the most recent American appointee to lecture in Berlin under the international exchange system of professors, did not hesitate to affront the entire ministerial profession in a manner which should have normally involved the rupture of all possibility of fellowship or coöperation with him in almost any form of social service. A profession which is on the high road to disreputability surely is not a desirable ally. Dr. Adler apparently had neither personal concern nor prudential interest in what the hundreds of Christian ministers of New York might think about his speech.

This is an interesting and suggestive symptom of a type which theological circles are not in the habit of properly appreciating. Dr. Adler is a Jew of course. Most of the ministers who are in middle life have had their "innings" in attacking the ethical culture movement. Professor Adler can

probably remember many unpleasant things said about him when he began his own work in this direction. But the fact still remains, that he is one and they are many, that they represent interests of vast magnitude; also social and educational and religious power in the very institution in which Professor Adler instructs. Not in the memory of the present writer, has any one who comes into immediate contact with Christian clergymen and Christian institutions so openly and frankly expressed his contempt for them. Nor was there any symptom of resentment, in the entire press in the metropolitan city, of the attitude. The only possible inference from this fact is, that Dr. Adler represents a very large section of public opinion in the position which he takes.

But of course the most interesting thing about this position is not that this particular person holds it, but whether he states what is true! It has been the custom, when such statements have been made and reply has been offered, to present the work and growth and the wealth of the Christian churches; and this has been held to be an effective reply. But this can appeal only to the most superficial minds. The momentum of a religion will carry on its institutions long after their vital power has departed. The very accumulations of wealth and social resources would provide sufficient rallying ground for the appearance of prosperity while the substratum of genuine worth and power was falling away. Every city in the land has monuments of this sort standing in its principal thoroughfares. The arguments thus usually brought forth are like most of the ecclesiastical performances of benevolent society secretaries and others in showing how their institutions have prospered when the comparative method would have shown them hopelessly outdistanced in any fair view of the relation of expenditure effort and effective service. Nobody who

knows anything about the gyrations of ecclesiastical statisticians needs to be told this. Most of the church statistics of this country are absolutely valueless for scientific purposes.

But, singularly enough, about the time Dr. Adler made his speech, another voice was heard in the same city, substantially on the same subject, from a somewhat different standpoint, and the present writer makes no apology for extensive quotations from the same. Professor L. P. Jacks, editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, of Oxford, England, himself a lecturer on philosophy in Manchester College, was in this country, and was interviewed on the general movements in theology, sociology, and philosophy. Asked about the movement represented by Rev. R. J. Campbell, under the title "The New Theology," Professor Jacks said:—

"Why, the movement you call the New Theology is social and ethical both in its origin and its aim. The theology is a mere incident. The whole thing is an attempt to state a form of Christianity which shall answer the fundamental needs of men as they have been formed under the social conditions of the time. Mr. Campbell has an influence on the movement itself."

"Is there nothing new in Mr. Campbell's theology?"

"You can put it that way. In a sense there can be no such thing as a new theology. On the other hand, theology always becomes new when people take a new interest in it. That is precisely what is happening on both sides of the Atlantic. There is a wave of awakened interest in theology—or rather religion—such as I have not seen in my lifetime."

"That ought to be a good thing for the churches, ought it not?"

"Yes, I suppose it will be in the long run. *But I doubt if the churches are leading the movement. In a sense they are being led by it. There is an element of moral idealism in society at large that goes on to results which the churches have to overtake.* The world of to-day doesn't wait for the church to tell it what it ought to do, but has its own ideas, or, rather, its own ideals, about these things. *Theology will have to get into line with ideas about human life and duty that have gone ahead of its own teaching, and I imagine it will become considerably changed in the process.*"

The subject of the Higher Criticism as a factor in the changes in Christian doctrine was broached, and Professor Jacks responded:—

“Of course the Higher Criticism has helped to modify many notions, but it has not done as much as some people give it credit for. I am quite satisfied that the main source of the religious ferment should be looked for in social conditions, and only in a minor degree in the work of scholars and critics. All great religious movements originate with the people. They are the counterpart of social aspirations. Religion is like art. You can't create a new movement in art by theorizing on the subject. But when the life of the people is happy and beautiful, art is sure to be reborn. The theory comes afterwards. I believe that the Higher Criticism would have little influence if the social conditions were not favorable to a new development of Christian doctrine.”

To the suggestion that the *Hibbert Journal* has a popular character, he remarked:—

“Popular! What do you mean? There is no word that I resent so much in this connection. That is precisely what we are not! Just think what that expression implies. It implies the delusion that when a trained theologian addresses laymen on a religious question he has to write down to the level of their intelligence. The truth is the precise opposite. There is at the present time an enlightened tribunal of public opinion in the lay world which is fully competent to pass judgment on the treatment of religious questions and I can tell you that when trained theologians appear before that tribunal they have to be on their best behavior and do their best work.”

Then Professor Jacks was led to speak of the relation of the professional theologians to the tribunal of public opinion to which he made reference, and was asked whether they were aware of its existence, and here he approached the attitude of Professor Adler, saying:—

“Some are and some are not. Those who are not—I mean those who treat theology as an esoteric thing of which laymen are not competent to judge—ought to have been born in the dark ages. Today such men may be treated as mere triflers. They are fiddling while Rome is on fire. I will give you an instance of the kind of thing I mean. Here is a man who makes a name by deciphering a Hittite inscription. Forthwith some university makes him a D.D., and after that he is supposed to speak *ex cathedra* on religion, while all the time the man may have no more idea of what religion means

than a whale. Yes, this is the spirit which objects to Mr. Campbell, that he is not a trained theologian. A good thing for him if he is not! The fact is that trained theology of that sort has very little influence in the religious life of to-day. It is a department of antiquarian research. Its place is the museum, not the church. It is about as much use to the men who are grappling with the awful problems of life as a treatise on the Roman trireme would be to the captain of a liner in the height of an Atlantic gale."

" . . . I have been greatly struck with the interest shown in the higher ethical and religious aspect of things by the men who are responsible for the teaching in your universities—I mean, of course, men who are not professionally engaged in the service of religion. I believe this will have a profound effect on the young men who pass through these colleges. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the moral guidance of the nation is coming rather from the universities than from the churches as such."

"So long as a nation has competent moral guides, it doesn't matter a straw whether they have 'reverend' before their names or not."

Professor Jacks went on to say that the great need was to bring the lay and the clerical mind face to face; and, asked with reference to this result, he said:—

"Our synthesis covers the gap between the lay and the clerical mind; and I tell you it is a pretty wide gap, and one that needs bridging. What is needed is to convince the professional teachers of religion that it is just as necessary for them to listen to laymen, as it is for laymen to listen to them. No, it's not arrogance on the part of the clerics; it's only blindness, or, rather, it's mere innocence. But, after all, not many clerics nowadays are such manifest geese as to think that they hold the lay world in leading strings. The younger men are wide-awake, and are quite willing to learn, as well as to teach. At all events, that is what we try to promote in the *Hibbert*—the mutual interaction of the lay and the professional mind. It is a kind of parliament of religious thinking, conducted on true democratic lines. The only types we exclude are the incompetent. And in point of competence, we recognize no difference between laymen and cleric, between the student of physical science and the student of the Higher Criticism. We do not take the deciphering of a Hittite inscription as a sign of competence to deal with religious questions. A writer for the *Hibbert* has to prove his ability in other ways. What for instance? Why, somebody on this side has used the phrase 'The humanizing of theology.' Well, that is one of the marks of competence; but there are many others. Not long ago we published a Catholic defence of eternal punishment. It was not very human, but it was in deadly earnest."

Now it is not necessary to assume that Professor Jacks is infallible, or that the views here quoted are in the main correct; but it is worth while, and very much worth while, to remember that they are the views of the editor of one of the most widely circulated theological magazines in the English-speaking world, and that they afford the point of view from which the readers of the ten thousand copies of the *Hibbert Journal* want theological questions discussed. Now the question arises, Knowing what we all know about the state of our theological seminaries, and the helpless and pitiful quest for men for the ministry, and the general attitude of hopelessness with which the whole question is being handled by those whose business it would seem to be to solve the question, is it or is it not true, that the education which the theological seminaries in the main provide, tends to produce just such "professional teachers of religion" which Professor Jacks describes, who follow rather than lead, and are trained for the ministry by Hittite experts who may have absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of what the ministry of to-day really involves? Is the practical rout of the theological seminaries not due to the fact that they are treading in outworn paths, and are under leadership which has no comprehension of the real problem?

Let us at the outset of the discussion, then, lest we be misunderstood, admit that there are many men who are instructors in theological seminaries who are scholars, and gentlemen, and men of God. The present writer would be the very last man to offer one single word of reproach for the instructors in the theological seminaries which could in the least be construed as a personal derogation. But we are dealing with a vital matter. It is no time to fiddle while Rome is burning. It is not a time to hold to methods which are obsolete while the very church and its ministry are steadily being discredited by

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the contempt of the scholarly and the neglect of the ignorant. Nobody can discredit effectiveness; and whether the minister be technically a "scholar" or not, whether he be a Hittite expert or not, if he be effective in the work to which he has set his hand, he has on his side the unanswerable logic of results. And this, in an age which moves rapidly and whose test is effectiveness, is a sufficient reply. An ineffective theological professor has no more right to toleration than an ineffective pastor in the church. And if a theological seminary cannot produce results, it is as suitable, as just, and as wise to change the incumbents of the professorial chairs as it is to change the incumbent of a given pastorate. The theological seminary exists for the church. If it does not serve the church, it has no reason for existence. If it does not stand in close, vital, and immediate relation to the church, and respond immediately to the life of the church it has no excuse for being. These propositions ought not to require debate. It ought not to be needful even to state them. But it does seem needful to utter them because there seems to exist an opinion that there is something sacrosanct about a theological chair, which does not require its holder to have any sort of sense of the vital life and power of the church problem and its anxieties and difficulties on the practical side. And let it be stated, here and now, that occasional preaching in a neighborhood pulpit, or occasional reading of a paper on a subject upon which the mass of the working clergy can by no conspiracy of things have the materials of judgment and intellectual appreciation, is not having vital relation to the church existence and praxis.

It should also be stated that the excuse for this debacle is in some quarters very promptly returned to the churches with the statement "It is for the churches to send us students. We cannot produce material for the ministry: we can only train

what is sent to us." This may have been true once. It must be remembered that the men whom the seminaries have sent out, have represented the instruction of the theological schools, and the schools have had their way for many years. It is also to be remembered that the chasm between the churches and the theological schools has steadily increased in the last twenty-five years or more. The schools have more and more accentuated their academic, and less and less their practical, relations. They have with increasing emphasis bestowed their rewards, not upon the practical, effective pastors, but upon the men whom they denominated "scholars," irrespective of whether these men ever achieved anything whatever with reference to the practical working power of the church. The present writer has no quarrel with scholarship. But on the side of his virtuosity the most exquisite violin soloist is of little use when Rome is burning. It is the capital indictment of the theological schools, that no amount of pressure has been able to stem the tide flowing away from the churches, especially the great metropolitan centers, by keeping in the forefront the men who shone as academic ornaments, but who had no relation to the great movements among men. The illustrations of this kind are innumerable. They form some of the saddest chapters of the breakdown of what might have been illustrious careers. But the man, keeping in mind the opinion of the academic faculty and remembering that the path to honor and preferment led along that pathway, and especially having been instructed that anything "popular" was among the deadly sins of professional life, made no "concessions to the mob," with the result that the "mob" has forsaken the church, and the few who stood in awed reverence before the student of Hittite inscriptions disappeared, and the church and her power with the masses of men were sacrificed. This process

has gone on steadily for many years. And it may be said, with no fear of successful refutation, that most of the young men who have come out of the theological schools in the last twenty-five years have not come "out" at all. They have kept their eyes upon the academic ideal, and the academic recognition, and the academic standards, when they ought to have been thinking about men. And this indictment lies not against the church which sent that youth up to the school. He went there probably with the right ideals, or he would not have gone at all. But the lad was made to think that linguistic criticism and theological definitions were the paramount things in the ministerial life. Why did he slight "pastoral theology" and "preaching" in their larger and vital relations? Because all the professors of the more "scholarly" chairs, especially those without pastoral experience, taught him tacitly, of course, and by innuendo, that "anybody could do those things," but only men of mental strength and distinction could achieve a paper on the niceties of patristic Greek or the subtleties of the homoousian controversy. The theological schools have steadily taught the mass of their students to underestimate that portion of the preacher's and the pastor's work which alone gives him power in the community, and vitality in the relationships of life. If they deny it, let the results speak for themselves. Let them just look over the lists of the men whom the theological school delighted to honor, and then let them look over the list of the men who have been making the work of the church effective. It is the case of Grant at West Point over and over again. There was a time when the chair of "sacred rhetoric" and the chair of "pastoral theology" were the chairs *par excellence* in the theological school. There will be no considerable change in our present situation until they become so again.

The simple truth then is, viewed from a wholly unpartisan and practical standpoint, that the theological schools have been utterly routed in their effort to meet the necessities of to-day as regards the production of capable and true religious leadership for the people. They, being the natural custodians of the ministerial profession, have suffered it to sink steadily in the public esteem, and have offered absolutely nothing in the last fifteen years to stem the tide against the leadership of the ministry. They are the responsible and acknowledged sponsors for the profession before the world, and cannot evade that responsibility; and they have not only not made the best use of the materials which the churches have sent to them, but have destroyed the initiative, the force, and the natural power of many young men who have been given to them for training and discipline. Judged by the result and their present helpless attitude, which is one of discomfited chagrin, varied only by alternate whimpering and apology, they have been as completely outclassed in the struggle with the world for leadership as though they have none of the splendid and masterful traditions of pulpit power and pulpit leadership which is theirs behind them. As the case stands to-day, the theological school is a discredited professional institution. It is discredited, too, while it sees awakening all about it, even in the university of which it is a part, a moral wave of unsurpassed power and intensity. While the ethical note of society is in some respects the most insistent, and the enthusiasms of politics and statemanship are increasingly moral, the schools of theology have been unable to connect this moral enthusiasm with the profession of preaching and religious teaching, and have seen one after another of their normal functions in the social and educational world taken from them, till they have merely the semblance of leadership,

and are the pathetic residua of a glory which once produced unchallenged mastery of the instinctive hopes and fears of the masses of the American people. Let us partially analyze the causes for this situation.

Perhaps the main and outstanding cause of this rout of the theological schools is found in what Professor Jacks has indicated in his use of the expression "the professional teachers of religion." What is it that makes such an expression significant to-day? Have there not always been "professional" teachers of religion, and was not the ministry always a "profession"? What gives this particular designation the special meaning which its use connotes in our own time? The answer is, that the practice and instruction of the theological schools has produced for many years a "professional" man, instead of a real leader and fellow-religionists among men. The present writer can well remember seeing the transition twenty years ago from the effective type of church-builder to the prevailing type of men who rejoice to bring to the masses their pennyworth of "professional" knowledge, and can look back and see the great figures who, as pastors and men, were, truly enough, not the "scholastic" equals of many of the men who hold their positions to-day, but who were far and away their superiors as men, as preachers to the masses, as leaders in the life and thought and aspirations of the people to whom they ministered. They were "professional" men of course. But their "professional" equipment and training were subordinated to their work in life, and they threw themselves into the work of religious service and labor with and for the people, with an abandon which not only is not attempted now, but which most of the younger clergy have not the moral and spiritual substratum to attempt. These men faced conditions, especially in the Mississippi Valley and the West, far more trying and far

more perplexing than face most ministers to-day. But they had the spirit and the reserve with which to meet their problem, because they went with the right point of view to it. They were not men who felt that the first consideration of ministerial service was to "uphold the dignity of the profession." They upheld it by imparting to it a moral warmth and a passionate devotion which *created* constituencies where none existed before, and enlisted the sympathies of men, by birth, by tradition, and by natural feeling and inheritance, opposed to them, in the work of the Christian church. They were builders!

Now an examination of the program, the life, and the atmosphere of most of the theological schools will reveal at once that the soil out of which such plants grow is utterly wanting. This is not saying that there is not here and there a lively human interest, which occasionally takes a march through the slums, and tries to acquaint itself with the life of the "other half," and goes through the regulation "sociological" discussions and the like. But it has no fire, it contemplates no sacrifice, it has in it none of the apostolic dash and interest that makes the history of the New Testament leaders such a passionate, thrilling narrative. Like school, like preacher, as a rule. We have the "conservative," who is bent on maintaining the old landmarks, and we have the "advanced," who have mastered a beautiful sneer for the men who have not assimilated their own particular theological fad; but neither the conservatives nor the advanced, as a rule, have the fire, the passion, the power, nor the great longing, which is itself the preliminary to every true utterance of the soul in speech. The labor leaders know it better. The socialists make a better use of the New Testament, for purposes of moral appeal, at this very moment, than do the majority of the

ministers of the gospel. The present writer has heard a dozen impassioned socialists, addressing audiences aggregating ten thousand people, make a finer, a more effective, a more dramatic, and a more moral use of the figures, the illustrations, and the moral teaching of the Gospels, in a single evening, than he has heard from any dozen preachers in a month in the last twenty years. Like every other preacher, he has been amazed to hear *his* Bible, *his* Lord, *his* doctrine, *his* religious standpoint, made to serve the astounding uses of a propaganda which has everywhere the aspect and the appeal of a religion. Simultaneously with this fact, he has seen, as we all have, a vile and utterly corrupt Jew theatrical trust capitalize for their own uses the materials of the Bible, and watched the theater under such guidance, produce the emotions and cause the thinking which it is the function of the Christian ministry to induce!

The fact is, the "schools" have turned out men who were thinking of the school and the professional ideal, rather than the human and the religious ideal. They have sent into the churches men who blanched at the expression of any opinions which aroused debate. They have sent into the religious contest, the fiercest and the most deadly known to the human heart and mind, men who have tried to insist that the passion, the feeling, the thinking, the experience of the masses, was merely ignorant foolishness and twaddle, which were not worthy of the educated preacher's notice. Verily he has had his reward. The theologian to-day is made to feel that the possibility of a theological professorship is the highest encomium which can be passed upon him. Side by side with this, the path to the metropolitan pulpit has been along the line of the safe man without divisive opinions. And these two goals—the theological approval of the schools, and the avoidance of

whatever to a church committee looking for a pastor might constitute an "objection"—have produced the ministerial paralysis and inanity which are attributed to it justly, when it is compared with men of equal attainments in any other calling in the land. The schools have been turning out "professional teachers of religion," and the common sense of men, sometimes violent and unreasonable, and however inarticulate and incoherent in its resentments, has simply refused to have what it holds dearest and best in life to be professionalized. This is the reason why the "bush" preacher flourishes so extensively among us. This is the reason why on a fine evening, when a dozen churches are holding their prayer-meetings in a fine old New England city, there are gathered in them the mournful bunch of worshipers trying to feel that they are performing a "duty," while down the street a socialist meeting, with nearly four hundred persons packed into a hall, is hearing the story of the revivals of Wesley and Wycliffe, and of the Peasants' War, with appeals and illustrations from the Gospels, with breathless interest, singing songs of brotherhood, addressing the members as "comrades," and cheering Karl Marx!

"What do you want us to do?" cried an indignant and outraged professor when told these things. "Shall we stop teaching Greek and Hebrew and the history of religion? Do you want us to abandon the laboriously gathered resources of theological knowledge, which we have been ages in accumulating? You are really making a plea for a return to obscurantism." 'Tis pitiful, but 'tis true, that he spoke thus. Are all these scholastic accumulations ends or are they tools? Why know the New Testament in Greek, if the man who knows it thus is paralyzed in its use and application in English? Why know Hebrew or church history, why be able to discuss with

care, precision, and even erudition, the psychology of religion, and be able to differentiate the precise standpoints of Wellhausen and Robertson Smith, or tell why Cheyne is safer than Driver, or what not, if to know all these things does not produce a man more capable of leadership? Is it not quite the fashion to show that Paul misquoted the Old Testament, and that even when he quoted correctly, he made a wrong use of it? Well, we reply, the only possible use of these things, or anything else taught in a theological seminary, is to produce a religious leader and teacher of men. But what if he knows the subject, and not the men? Or what if he gain the whole world of theological knowledge, and lose his own soul as a preacher and deliverer of men? And is it not rather childish in our day to talk of obscurantism? What particular profession furnishes more illustrations of obscurantism, both in and out of the theological schools, than our own? And if there is a *seculum obscurum* in our day, if it is not in biblical criticism and metaphysical theology, where is it?

^ The contrast between the aim of academic discipline and that of popular religious life affords another element of the explanation for the failure of the divinity schools. There is no fear which has so stood in the way of the advance of mankind, than the fear of the wrath of the university. It would be rather late in the history of the race for any one to undertake to impeach or deny to the universities their magnificent place in the development and advancement of the human race. And in America, where the rage for education has reached the proportions of a national superstition, it would be still more daring to attempt in any way to detract from the schools their proper meed of honor and glory. Still it is gradually beginning to dawn upon many leaders, that on the side of human life, which lies specially within the function of the church to

reach and minister to, not only have the universities given little help, but have in many instances been a positive hindrance. While these lines are being written, a warm discussion is going on over the baccalaureate sermon of a distinguished Boston rector, who told the graduating class of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that the college had not so moral an atmosphere as the world into which they were about to enter, and added that the college was what it was, because so little draft was made upon the moral energies and responsibilities of those within its walls. President Eliot's well-known indictment of the public schools for their failure to meet the simplest moral necessities of our civilization is well known, and its relation to our failure to govern municipalities is just beginning to be understood. But no one will pretend that the academic standards have not been increasing in volume, depth, and quality, and that the advance in science, in research, and arts has not constituted a wonderful chapter in our national development. But the fact cannot be ignored, and even if ignored will still be true, that the moral enervation of university life is a well-known chapter of the whole educational problem. Indeed, beginning with the colleges, it has now descended to, and constitutes the chief complication of, secondary schools also.

It is a curious paradox, but nevertheless a real one, that, while often the real moral leaders among educated men are the university men, and many university professors are giving themselves more and more to these interests, the university life as a whole is strangely neglectful of them, and has for the most part no area nor interests which call for or permit intensive moral development or activity. Thus we have the most intense and varied intellectualism, side by side with a standing and almost uninterrupted invitation to moral inertia.

Now it would be hard to find a greater contrast than that which this state of affairs affords to the common and widespread movements among the masses of men. Outside the college everything is being viewed through the moral-spiritual glasses. Great questions of all kinds are being forced into the ethical mold, whether they properly belong there or not. The masses are not asking at all whether it is a question of economics or morals, but are insisting that, whether it is economics or not, it *shall* be morals. Nearly every one of the great economic delusions which have really spread over this country in the last thirty years has really had this at its base. Men have seen things that were wrong, and have had no adequate leadership, either in economics or religion, which has dealt with those phases of the things, which they knew to be wrong. Hence they have made religion of their politics, and threw overboard the professional teachers, who sought to tell them, in the language of the cloister, just where their mistakes lay. The average anti-trust orator, if you will simply change the leading terms in his speech, will be found to be delivering a revival sermon. And it produces exactly the effects of a revival sermon. Those who hope for deliverance are cheered and "converted." Those who know they have a grip on the proceeds, and fear the issue, promptly cry "sensationalism," "socialism," or "anarchy." Who that has ever witnessed a real moral uprising in any community will not recognize at once the old things under new names? And in this, as in the matter of the personal attitude of the professional teacher of religion, the sympathies of the schools are against the masses.

What gave, on the social side, significance to the revival epochs was that they spoke the language of absolute democracy in feeling and destiny. They pointed out how futile and vain, in the spiritual realm, were the transitory distinctions

which made men so tenacious of the symbols of the differences rather than the unities among men. All separatism went down before the common indictment of sinfulness, and all unity went to the fore in a common forgiveness. And the evangelist or the pastor, for it was as often one as the other, stood as the symbolic center of spiritual democracy, in which all men were equal. His education, if he had it in abundant measure, only accentuated the greatness of the inclusive power of the spiritual democracy which he preached. His social standing and his social gifts, if he had these in exceptional measure, again glorified the power that could make the brother of high degree exult with the brother of low degree. He stood as the representative of the great spiritual leveler. And it was, at least for the time being, real leveling! Men *did* forget their differences. Men *did* exalt their unities. The world, the flesh, and the devil may sneer till doomsday; but the fact still remains, that in those brief moments the spiritual kingdom of God as taught by Christ *was* realized. Now, among men, there is no symbol of the caste spirit which is so quickly and so readily recognized and resented as the one which is based upon education. The vulgar power arising from mere money is despised, but the humblest man may entertain hope of some day making a "strike" and equaling the mere rich man. But he knows that the attitude of the educated castemaker is a barrier which he cannot pass. He knows that men do not acquire high education except in youth and amid congenial surroundings, and he knows that that day gone, forever bars him from being one among the scholarly. If, therefore, religion ever becomes in his mind allied to that barrier, there has been created the most deadly alliance against the church in his mind that can possibly be formed. We have no sort of doubt that for many years the training of the theological school

has had this effect, and the rise of the university settlement and the whole army of "social" workers is in a measure due to the impression, for which there is a real foundation, that the product of a theological school had no real interest in what is called "popular" religious life.

Professor Jacks voices this resentment even among educated men, who have strongly accentuated leanings toward democracy. The masses of men feel it sevenfold more strongly, and they have not been mistaken. The despising of what has been called "popular" in education and religion by the clerical profession has really been the spurning of democracy, and has been so construed; and, in this sense, the church has gradually become the representative of various forms of aristocracy, in a time and in a land all of whose symbols and activities were peculiarly along the lines of democratic development. This movement among the churches began many years ago, and perhaps the most astounding, as well as the most absurd and foolish, manifestation of it was the Plan of Union, made in the thirties, when Congregationalists in New England agreed that west of the Hudson no Congregational churches should be organized, but the Presbyterian polity should be employed, because the pure democracy of Congregationalism required a form and state of intelligence which was not then to be found in the frontier settlements! And all the while those very settlements were practising absolutely pure democracy in everything else. In the subsequent development, of course, the vastness of the undeveloped resources, and the ease with which food and land and everything else could be obtained, created no religious problem such as we know now; but the roots of the thing which to-day separates the masses from the churches were present then, and are here to-day in the chasm between the academic-aristocratic sympathies of the clergy

and the popular-democratic social-moral aspirations of the masses. Viewed from the standpoint of the masses, the theological school produces a man who is the servant and the minister of a class, and whose sympathies at their best are with a class. That this class is an educated one, a refined one, and one which has many elements in common with them as relates to material interest and endurance, does not alter the fact.

It must be perfectly plain from this recital, if the main stream of its contention is true, that the well-known loss of moral power and influence by the pulpit was inevitable, and it must also be true that this loss is attributable to the form and method and the spirit of the work done by the theological schools. It will be easy for some skilled dialectician to point out that this argument is "poetry," that this indictment is a "stump speech," and that the whole plea is one which is void of academic significance and dignity. This sort of claptrap maintains itself still in theological circles, when it has been cast out and trodden under foot in almost every other domain of intellectual contention. But it will still remain true, that the whole world of theological instruction has broken down in the face of the tremendous necessities under which modern religious work is done, and that, on every hand, we are faced with incapacity, glaring and inexcusable, with absence of spiritual comprehension and conviction, and in this situation the schools themselves present the most piteous plight of all the religious failures to meet the wants of the new time. As has been conspicuously the case in the past, so in the present, the schools seem to be the last to move in response to the demands of the masses of mankind, and the most deaf to the appeals for the utterance and application of the truths and doctrines of religion to the social and personal needs of the man of to-day. The very thing which a theological school

ought to do, namely, formulate *in advance*, and *prepare for utterance and leadership*, the truths and the accents in the religious life, which the leisure and freedom for contemplation in the school are designed to stimulate, the schools have not done. They have not sent out determinate men. They have not sent out men of convictions. They have not sent out men with the passion for humanity. They have not sent out men filled with the spirit of sacrifice. But lacking these spiritual qualities and equipments, they have not even sent out men with the intellectual discernment and training to seize upon the strategic elements of moral leadership, nor able to discover the signs of the times. They have not done either one of the two groups of things which the theological school ought to do. If they had sent out men on fire with zeal, utterly without head control, something might be said for such a product. If they had sent out men who were intellectually so alert and discriminating as at least to point out with clearness what needed to be done, whether they were able or not to do it themselves, they might have found justification. If the theological faculties were themselves exponents of anything but a moribund scholasticism, possibly something might be achieved. But, barring the mastery of a theological vocabulary, most of it a hindrance to effective public speech, a smattering of a few elements of professional theological study, the divinity school has contributed in most cases absolutely nothing to the equipment of the young men who have passed through it, that tends to make them effective as *ministers*. This last word is the important one in this whole contention. If the aim be theological professorships, especially such as are for the most part directing theological education at the present moment, the system is sound. But the theological school is supposed primarily to exist to train ministers for the

work of the parish, for the building up and instructing and inspiration of the church. At the present moment there is much to be said for the view that a young man whose college course has been well directed and carefully performed might for his professional training much better divide his time between the law school and the medical school, and the social settlement, and get his final "fit" for the pulpit and parish in residence with some preacher of achievement and effectiveness, after the manner which prevailed before the modern theological faculty was organized. At its best the divinity school of to-day is calculated to turn out a man whose natural next step is a fellowship for study in Germany, with a return to a theological professorship. At its worst—well, for its worst, the recent history of the failure of the churches to meet and lead the moral aspirations of the masses furnishes the indictment.