

is taken of the educational qualifications which they did possess. Their lack of literary training has been used so often to point a moral that some churches at periods of their history have affected to despise the training\* of the schools, and to claim that merely human learning, was even a disadvantage to the man who would proclaim in its simplicity the gospel of the grace of God. To show that the evidence in this case is not all on one side, let us see what preparation these men had for the supremely important work committed to their charge. I will not dwell on the fact that they enjoyed the inestimable privilege of associating for between two and three years with the Master himself, and receiving at first hand the instructions that fell from his lips. It was not merely that they saw his miracles and listened to his sermons; a very considerable part of his teaching was addressed specially to them. It is evident from the intercessory prayer, that he attached supreme importance to that part of his earthly work which consisted in preparing these followers to become fishers of men.

To begin with, they all, being Jews, had that careful training, not merely in the history and doctrines of the Old Testament, but in its language, which was the lot of every well-brought-up Jew—a course of training which still marks those who are bred and born in that faith. It was my lot a few years ago, to cross the Atlantic on a vessel on which there were a number of Polish and German Jews. The sight of a Hebrew Bible in the hands of one of them led to a conversation, and finally, to an examination in which it became evident that these men, poverty-stricken, dirty, almost ragged as they were, could, with the utmost fluency, read, translate and even explain many grammatical questions in the language in which were originally written the symbols of their faith.

Again, it is well worth notice that the men among the Apostles who were the least educated (so far as we know), were the men who did least in the way of carrying on apostolic work. Thomas, Judas, Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite, are examples of this, while the men who stand recorded as having done the most important work are men who could compare favorably with our best educated ministers. Matthew, before his call, was a man of business education and clerical habits. We learn that he could write in Aramaic and also in Greek, and his quotations show that he did not depend on the Septuagint for his knowledge of the Old Testament. He could read Hebrew. A man who could read his bible in three languages and preach it in two, can scarcely be looked upon as an untrained man. John, too, could read Hebrew and write Greek as well as his mother-tongue Aramaic, and his introduction to his Gospel shows that he was acquainted with the philosophic thought of his time—his literary style, apparently so clear yet really so profound, is an almost perfect vehicle for the aspect of the story which he presents. I can do nothing more than mention Luke the physician, whose style of Greek shows the influence of classic training. Apollos, not only an independent thinker and an eloquent speaker, but a master of the subtleties of the Alexandrian philosophy; Barnabas, refined and gentlemanly, liberal in mind and persuasive in speech; and Paul, surrounded from his earliest days with the educational opportunities of a Pharisee's household, with the school and university training which Tarsus was well fitted to give, for it was no mean city in this as in other respects, and with a divinity course such as was to be had only at Jerusalem and in the classes of Gamaliel. Paul was undoubtedly the most learned of the apostolic band; but it is not a case where one was first and there was no second.