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ARTICLE IV.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE ANCIENT CLASSICS.

It is fashionable in these days, perhaps always was fashionable, with very small and aspiring geniuses, to find fault with everything which has about it the flavor of antiquity, and to unsettle, if possible, everything that has become venerable through custom. In compliance with this fashion we propose to find fault with the position which from time immemorial has been assigned to the ancient classics in our educational institutions. This is no new topic of debate. For some years past the relative value of the classics as a means of culture has been warmly discussed by many of the foremost thinkers of Europe, and some of the leading educators of this country have also contributed to the discussion. To show that the debate has been able, we need only to mention a few of the representative men on either side. Herbert Spencer, in his work on education, which has been before the public for more than twenty years, takes strong ground against the classics, and while he does not say it in so many words, he makes it abundantly evident that he would gladly see them altogether excluded from the curriculum and the natural sciences substituted in their place. Prof. Huxley, in a recent address delivered at the opening of a college in Birmingham, showed a strong leaning in the same direction. Matthew Arnold takes the other side, and puts in a strong plea for the Latin and Greek, insisting that they should continue to constitute the basis of all liberal education. He even argues to show that the influence of the classics will be more and more necessary as the domain of science is more and more extended. Moreover, he comforts himself and sympathises with the dogmatic assurance that while human nature remains what it now is, these splendid achievements of the ancient world will maintain their ascendancy. An equally ardent advocate of the classics is found on this side the water in Prof. Gildersleeve of the Johns Hopkins University. He says, "The ancient classics are life of our life. A part of our heritage from the ages, they are an indefeasible possession. We cannot get rid of Greece and Rome if we would. The phraseology of

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Latin is wrought into our tongue. The scientific vocabulary of English is studded with Greek words. The whole body of our literature is penetrated with classical allusions." We are not surprised to find these men waxing valiant in fight. They are contending for their altars and their firesides. After giving them all praise for an earnest endeavor to promote the highest interests of education, we cannot forget that they speak as advocates, not as judges. Their views are colored by the warm glow of an excusable partiality for the studies to which they have devoted the intellectual energies of their lives. The two former are known to make an idol of all knowledge that has upon it the glitter of novelty. The two latter feel the kindlings of an equal ardor when they muse upon that knowledge which has gathered about it the associations of many centuries. Matthew Arnold frankly confesses that there is a probability of his doing the sciences injustice. Doubtless Spencer might truthfully make the same confession in reference to the classics. While, therefore, they are eminently qualified to debate the question, they are not well qualified to decide it. The judge or the jury should be free from bias. We believe the processes of our civil courts are based upon the assumption that a jury are the more likely to decide a case justly the more absolute their ignorance of its merits before it is brought before them. In view of this assumption, it could not be laid to the charge of egotism, should we claim to be well qualified to adjudicate the case of Huxley, Spencer, and others, *versus* Arnold, Gildersleeve, and others. Should it appear that our ignorance of both sides of the question might properly be described as at once comprehensive and minute, the disclosure would only prove our eminent fitness to serve on the jury.

So much by way of apology for our presuming to offer our services to the public. Should we be permitted to arbitrate, we would say to the disputants, *in medio tutissimus ibis*; and we should translate, *the classics should not be banished, but they should be dethroned*. Relatively, too much time is given to them and too much importance attached to them. We must begin our discussion of the subject by briefly noting two facts, out of which the whole significance of the discussion grows. First, the time

that can be devoted exclusively to the acquisition of knowledge is limited. We think we will all agree with Herbert Spencer, that "to prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to perform." We may differ as to what is meant by "complete living," but we will still agree that education can perform no higher end than to prepare us for it. Education is the means, complete living is the end. Of course, we cannot spend a'l our time in *preparing* to live. The stage of preparation must give place to the stage for which it is preparatory. We have decided that this preparatory stage, so far as concerns college training, shall ordinarily last only four years. Usually little of real value has been accomplished before that period. Much time may have been consumed, but perhaps six years of judicious study would be amply equivalent to all that has been done before the freshman year in college. We may say, then, that usually the time given to education, to a preparation for complete living, is about ten years. Secondly, the sphere of knowledge is practically illimitable. We are the heirs of all time, and the extent of our inheritance is distressingly great. We are encumbered with the abundance of the things which we possess. Dr. Alexander Bain tells us that in the universities of Scotland, from the time of their founding down to 1574, nothing was taught except the writings of Aristotle. Yet the students found enough in that one author to keep them busy during a four years' course. In 1574 other Greek classics were introduced; Latin classics followed; towards the latter part of the eighteenth century the English language was admitted. Since that time French and German have found an entrance. Later still, the doors had to be opened to modern sciences, whose spreading branches are now overshadowing the earth and reaching unto the heavens. Leaving out of account the smaller treasures of learning hoarded in other tongues, we have the accumulated literature of the ancient and modern world in the Greek, Roman, French, German, and English languages. Ten years can be expended in the literature of either one of these languages, and even then only a small part of its wide expanse will be explored. Hence the question emerges, What is to be done, since the time is so limited and the field to be traversed so

limitless? Manifestly if the ten years are to be turned to the highest use, the question must first be settled, In what part of this limitless field can the greatest fortune be amassed in a given time? It is like turning a colt loose in a pasture of a thousand acres. He can spend all the years of his colthood in one little corner. It is only a question as to which corner. To get the most good in a given time it becomes necessary to solve the problem, which grass is most nutritive and the most easily assimilated.

From this brief statement of facts we deduce the following canon of criticism: *Ceteris paribus*, that department of knowledge is to be preferred which yields the greatest return in a given time. Waiving for the present the question as to whether the *ceteris* are *paribus*, let us apply our canon to the ancient classics. In order to any profit at all, do they not make a very extraordinary draft on the student's time? Some one has anticipated us in the sage remark that "time is money." He might have followed it up with the equally sage remark that time is life. When man has used up his supply of time, he invariably finds that his supply of life is also exhausted. To give time, then, is to give life—a very valuable article of barter. No one ought to give it without an exceedingly valuable return. His stock at best is small, and cannot be replenished. Is it by any means certain that for the amount of life invested in them, the dead languages always make a satisfactory return? May we not in most cases be bartering a great deal of the living for a very small modicum of the dead? "Could a man be secure that his days would endure as of old, for a thousand long years, what things might he know! What deeds might he do! And all without hurry or care." If we could be perfectly certain of remaining here until we had thoroughly explored the living world, and then have leisure left—time hanging heavily on our hands—we might well afford to spend life's morning hours in robbing the graveyards of the past. But we have time only for a fashionable call, and if we try to cultivate an acquaintance with the taciturn Greeks and Romans, the fear is that the time for leaving will arrive before we have hardly broken the ice. Those old people are very reserved. The German poet,

Heine, as quoted by George Eliot, says: "The Romans never would have found time to conquer the world, if they had first had to learn the Latin language. Luckily for them, they already knew in their cradles what nouns have their accusatives in *im*. I, on the contrary, had to learn them by heart in the sweat of my brow." Putting aside for the present the comparative values of the knowledge gained, as well as the more important matter of mental discipline, consider how much time is given to Latin and Greek. These languages are contemporary with all other branches of learning. Look at the curriculum of any of our first-class colleges. In order to enter the Freshman Latin, the pupil must have compassed two or three grammars and read a couple or more books of Cæsar. To enter the same class in Greek, he is gently reminded that he must have read some of the simpler prose; *i. e.*, he must have travelled many weary parasangs through Xenophon, and, to borrow the witticism of Prof. Gildersleeve, he must form a very intimate acquaintance with the two sons of Darius and Parysatis in all their varying moods and tenses. Then from the Freshman, on through, while the student is dropping off this, that, and the other study as finished, these cling fondly to him until he reaches the depot on his final departure for home. Usually they are contracted in early youth, about the time a boy has gotten well over the measles and whooping cough, and they increase in severity until the awful crisis is reached, often proving fatal just on the eve of graduation. These languages antedate nearly all the studies in the curriculum, and those which they do not antedate they outlive. But this is not all, nor the worst. They crowd everything else to the wall. When you see the student's lamp shooting its lonely beams through the window into the midnight darkness, rest assured that it is shining on the open page of Latin or Greek. When you enter the student's *sanctum*, and find him with brow contracted, lips compressed, eyes set, and the whole frame giving evidence of great mental agony, set it down that he is trying to dispose of an apparently *surplus* word that ages ago flowed from the facile pen of Livy, or to fill up from the stores of his imagination a hiatus in the sparsely settled sentences of Tacitus. All other sources of knowledge beckon

to him in vain. Astronomy, with her glittering jewels displayed; geology, with her rocky bosom uncovered; chemistry, with her ever-fresh surprises freely offered; natural history, with her astounding facts temptingly arrayed—try in turn to win a look of favorable recognition. Their allurements are all lost on him. Still he sits with pale, sad face, bent over the ponderous lexicon, and his eager eyes rapidly scanning its pages, as if in search of the evidence that was to save him from the gallows on the morrow. By-and-by he shuts the big book and takes up his pen. Watch the nervous twitching of the mouth, the frequent thrusts of the fingers through the hair, and see his eyes “in a fine frenzy rolling.” One who had not travelled the road would think that he was scaling the heights of Parnassus and feasting his soul on the landscape of poesy, while his spirit was fast becoming charged with the inspiration of the Muses. But we know from experience that such twitchings and contortions, such intense endeavor to see the invisible, belong to no species of composition known among students, except Latin and Greek exercises. He is only torturing memory to recall some precedent that will enable him to decide whether, in a particular construction, purpose is to be expressed by an infinitive, a gerund, or *ut* with the subjunctive. Such is the chief employment of college life, from the day the student enters as a timid Freshman to the day, the never to be forgotten day, when he crams one hundred and fifty pages of rules for his final examination. Nearly the whole time, devoted to serious work, is spent in digging up the gnarled roots and tracing out the twisted branches of the dead languages. Other studies are hurriedly skimmed over. A glance at natural philosophy before breakfast, moral science between breakfast and chapel, physiology between the student’s room and the class-room, stolen peeps into mental philosophy while other members of the class are reciting. Something after this order is the way in which studies in English are prosecuted. Not only, then, is a large place assigned to the ancient classics in the curriculum, but they usurp a still larger place. The explanation is easy. To make any show at all in Latin and Greek, the student must *work*. He is bound to delve if he get any, even the smallest quantity of

ore. On the other hand, he can snatch a gem here and there from his other studies while running. Hence the student comes to regard Greek and Latin as the great business, and he takes all risks on other books. His feeling is: "If I can only get Latin and Greek off my hands, I can manage the others." So he sets deliberately to work to get them off his hands, and by the time he does it he must manage the others in the way described. In estimating the amount of time given to the classics, we are not to be guided by the specifications of the curriculum. We are to take into account that they domineer over their colleagues to such an extent that it is perhaps under the truth to say that three-fourths of college life is absorbed by them. Judged by the return they make, are we sure that they are entitled to this position of overpowering supremacy? Is it settled beyond all doubt, that for the great amount of time and effort invested, the student receives an equivalent?

Before considering definitely what is the profit derived from the ancient classics, let us subject them to another standard of criticism. *Cæteris paribus*, that department of knowledge is to be preferred that yields the most pleasure. This statement sounds like the harbinger of a glorious millennium to the toil-worn student, and he mentally ejaculates, "*Too good to be true.*" Perhaps so; but we believe that it is just good enough to be true, and that it is truth that is exercising more and more influence in shaping educational methods. Prof. William Sloane, of Princeton College, writing on the public schools of England, says: "The aim of English school-masters has changed within the last century. They are no longer fitly characterised by the Westminster boy's translation of *arma virumque cano*—arms and a man *with a cane.*" Herbert Spencer says: "Of all the changes taking place in plans of teaching, the most significant is the growing desire to make the acquirement of knowledge pleasurable rather than painful; a desire based on the more or less distinct perception that at each age the intellectual action which the child likes is a healthful one for it, and conversely." Another English author in a recent work, when laying down rules to guide us in our choice of books, says: "First of all the book which you

would choose must interest you. If you are not interested, you will not open your mind; and if you do not open your mind, you will take in no ideas. The book may be one of the great masterpieces—full of high ideas and noble sentiments; yet to you it will be nothing but a mass of printed paper.” He quotes Shakespeare in confirmation of his teaching:

“No profit grows where is no pleasure taken;
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.”

We are free to confess that we think this last line of the immortal bard is a little too strong to be made the rule in teaching lazy boys, for the reason that many of them do not “most affect” anything. Yet it is sound doctrine, however liable to perversion, that profit in intellectual pursuits is measured with approximate accuracy by the pleasure experienced. We all know that when physical development is normal, it takes place after a manner that floods life with boisterous joy. The same is true in reference to intellectual development; at least to this extent, that it will be more rapid and vigorous when the activities called into play are of a kind to give pleasure. How will the ancient classics stand the test when we apply to them this canon of criticism? Such was the hatred cherished by the monks of the Middle Ages for Greek, that they were accustomed to call it the “invention of the devil.” If the reason of the average boy is in like manner swayed by his feelings, perhaps he entertains a half-formed belief that both Latin and Greek are the invention of that wicked and cruel spirit. What the mind naturally craves is new ideas, or new combinations of ideas. It delights in the discovery of new truth, or old truth in new forms and relations. Hence the discursive faculties, the reasoning powers, the imagination, give delight in their exercise. But there is little or no room for their exercise in the study of the dead languages. The faculty chiefly called into exercise is memory, and its work is purely mechanical. The great business is to store the mind with a vocabulary of words and a lot of rules that are principally useful as a starting point from which to go in quest of the one thousand and one exceptions. Nothing is more arbitrary than the structure of language, and hence there is little scope for the exercise of the reasoning

powers, and the acquisition of new ideas is too tedious to afford pleasure.

Furthermore, whatever may be said in favor of distasteful studies as a means for developing the mind, no one can doubt that the knowledge thus acquired is soonest forgotten. When the day of liberty comes and the pressure of authority is taken off, the hated text-book is laid aside, and the pursuit of knowledge in that direction is for ever abandoned. This accounts for the fact that if all the Greek and Latin which are forgotten by the great army of college graduates during the first five years of business life should be gathered, "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." If it be true, then, as we think it is, that the dead languages are to the average boy a distasteful drudgery, kindling no healthful glow, stimulating no thirst for truth, awakening no ennobling aspirations, and prompting to no future acquisitions, surely whatever profit they confer is purchased at a great cost.

We are now prepared to consider definitely the amount of profit. Matthew Arnold very truthfully says that what we want in our culture is to know the *best* that has been thought and said in the world. If, in order to know the best, we must know the Latin and Greek languages, then the study of these languages is to be prosecuted at any cost. To simplify our present inquiry, we will look successively at the two distinct objects to be accomplished. One is to strengthen the mind, the other to store it; one is to expand the mind, the other to fill it. Looking at the last mentioned object first, will any one contend that the ancient classics are worth the time and labor expended on them for the sake of the mental furniture gained? We believe it is questionable whether the mind of the average graduate contains one important fact in history or in science, the knowledge of one great principle in ethics or philosophy, which is due to an acquaintance with the dead languages. It may be true, as Mr. Mill says, that "the speeches of Thucydides; the ethics, rhetoric, and politics of Aristotle; the dialogues of Plato; the orations of Demosthenes; the satires and epistles of Horace; all the writings of Tacitus; the great work of Quintilian; and in a less formal manner, all that

is left us of the ancient historians, philosophers, orators, and even dramatists, are replete with remarks and maxims of singular good sense and penetration, applicable both to political and private life." Certainly we are not prepared to dispute the truth of this statement. But however true it may be, it is not more true than the statement, that all these wise and penetrating maxims can be had in English, in a far more intelligible shape than they will ever appear to the average student who looks at them through what to him is the murky atmosphere of the original languages. Not only so, but after all the time devoted by the college graduate to learning how to read the classics in the original, when he wants to possess the ideas they contain, he seeks the translations. About all the store the mind gets is a vocabulary of words and certain peculiarities of grammatical structure. The most enthusiastic champions of the classics confess that such knowledge is, in itself considered, of very little value. Prof. Gildersleeve tells us that "Latin and Greek are to be studied primarily for the knowledge of the life of the Roman and Greek people, as manifested in language and literature, and not because Latin and Greek are convenient vehicles for the communication of a certain amount of linguistic philosophy or comparative grammar." Matthew Arnold expresses his opinion on the same subject in the following decided terms: "When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages. I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, their life and genius; what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what its value." If we have understood these able defenders of the classics, they concede that a mere philological study of Latin and Greek is of small value; and in conceding this, they concede that the average college student derives but small benefit from them. Whatever it may be intended for him to know, "more than so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Latin and Greek languages," it is certain that he does not actually know anything more. Notwithstanding so much time and effort have been expended, it is the exception, and not the rule, when there has been that thorough

mastery of vocabulary, idiom, and structure that is necessary to bring the student into easy and pleasant communication with the ancient mind. We are ready to concede that in these exceptional cases great and varied benefits accrue. The soul is animated and exalted, its powers stimulated and developed, by contact with some of the noblest sentiments of philosophy and the loftiest inspirations of poetry. The taste is cultivated, and the English language becomes an instrument of greatly increased efficiency. But educational methods should have reference to the rule, not to the exception. The rule is for the student to reach the end of his course with only such store of knowledge as will enable him, by slow and irksome effort, to spell out the author's meaning, and usually he is content to put this meaning into the most slovenly and uncouth English.

The assertion is frequently made that the best literature of modern times is based upon the great models of antiquity. Then it is gravely asked if we had not better take our inspiration from the fountain-head? This question becomes amusing when we reflect that not one in ten of those who have sought the fountain-head has ever found it the source of anything approaching to inspiration. To the average student the fountain-head has the appearance of a muddy spring, and when left to consult his own pleasure, he will drink far down the stream where the water, if it be the same, has become clear and pure by filtration. That Homer was a great poet, Aristotle a great philosopher, Demosthenes a great orator, he learns from the English preface to their writings. He never becomes sufficiently familiar with their language to think in its peculiar idioms, and hence can not appreciate their merits of style, nor have his heart warmed by the glow of their ardent minds. He follows their line of thought, or of argument, in his own crude and imperfect translation, and it is needless to say that little of their literary beauty passes into his rendering. Surely, we cannot assign the classics their present position of supremacy, because of the valuable stores which they bring to the mind. Even the vocabulary and grammar are soon gone from memory. Few graduates who have been out five years could boast with the German poet from whom we have already

quoted. After suggesting that the Romans knew in their cradles what nouns have their accusatives in *im*, while he had to learn them in the sweat of his brow, he goes on to say, "Nevertheless, it is fortunate for me that I know them, and the fact that I have them at my fingers' ends if I should ever happen to want them suddenly, affords me much inward consolation and repose in many troubled hours of life." How few who, like him, have purchased such knowledge by the sweat of their brow, can, like him, draw consolation and repose from the continued possession of it! The unfortunate many, if called on suddenly, or for that matter slowly and deliberately, for the Latin accusatives in *im*, would be as non-communicative as if their tongues were suddenly paralysed.

It is claimed for the ancient classics that the study of them in the original languages gives us proficiency in the use of our own tongue. The validity of this claim is conceded, but with this important reservation, viz., the benefit is more than counterbalanced if a knowledge of the dead languages is gained by the neglect of a careful analytical study and thorough mastery of the structure of the English itself. There is no doubt that such is often the case, and that it accounts for certain facts that have awakened surprise. Our Revised New Testament, for example, is the fruit of the ripest classical scholarship that can be found out of Germany. Through what a storm of censure their English has passed since their work was submitted to the public! We may mention one or two specimens of this censure from high authority. A critic in the *Edinburgh Review* says: "It will remain a monument of the industry of its authors, and a treasury of their opinions and erudition; but unless we entirely mistake, until its English has undergone thorough revision, it will not supplant the authorised version." Another critic is much more severe: "It is startling to find in a work which has occupied for ten years a large portion of the time of twenty-five of our most illustrious scholars, so many gross violations of the most elementary laws of grammar." Mr. G. Washington Moon has filled a good sized book with mere specimens of these gross violations. We cannot refrain from introducing a criticism from one of the most distinguished scholars of our Church, or, for that matter, of our country. After

avowing the fact that "Greek scholarship is far in advance of what it was under the patronage of the Stuarts," he draws the following contrast between the English used by the Greek scholarship of that period and of this: "The English Bible given us by King James is the greatest classic in the language, and the one of all others that lies nearest the popular heart. The idea of such a book as the revision becoming a classic at all is preposterous; and the idea of its acceptance in lieu of the people's most sacred and most cherished literary and domestic treasure would be a species of midsummer madness." An English critic accounts for the bad English of the Revision by saying that their work "shows still more conclusively than was already apparent that the study of English has been—and no doubt still is—very much neglected in our high schools and at the universities." A writer in the *Fortnightly Review* says: "It is one of the paradoxes of literary history that in Germany—which is the world's schoolmaster in learning the Latin and Greek languages—so little of the style and beauty of those immortal models passes into their literature." Doubtless the paradox finds its explanation in the fact that attention has been paid to the ancient languages to the neglect of the mother tongue. Perhaps the true state of the case is that the very highest proficiency in English cannot be had without Latin and Greek; while at the same time the actual proficiency would be higher if less attention were paid to the dead and more to the living.

What now remains to be said in behalf of the ancient classics? It may seem that we have been very grudging in allowing them any praise; and that if our verdict is just, the sentence should not be deposition merely, but perpetual banishment. We are not conscious of any motive that would prompt us to be unjustly severe. It is under a sense of that solemn responsibility which attaches to the office of one set to dispense even-handed justice that we speak when we say that, as ordinarily studied, the ancient languages are chiefly valuable, if not solely valuable, as a means of mental discipline. That they do exercise the mind vigorously, no one who has groaned over them will deny. That vigorous exercise will develop and strengthen mental muscle

needs no proof. Possibly the dead languages are a more valuable instrument for the one single purpose of mental drill than can be found elsewhere. It is in virtue of this possibility that our verdict calls for nothing more than deposition. President Porter puts forth distinctly this claim for them. His words are: "The ancient languages, in their structure, their thoughts, also in the imagery which their literature embodies, are better fitted than any modern language can be for the single office of training the intellect and the feelings and the taste." It will be noticed that he claims more for them than the training of the intellect, but we have already considered the other part of his claim for them, namely, their influence on the feelings and taste. In the April number of this REVIEW for 1883, is an article under the heading, *A Thoroughly Educated Ministry*. No "superscription" is given, but the "image" is at once recognised, and the greatest name in the field of theological controversy is not needed to make us read with reverent attention. Here is his weighty opinion: "Translation from language to language is the prime means for training men to discrimination in using words, and thus in thought. There is no discipline in practical logic so suitable for a pupil as those reasonings from principles of syntax by processes of logical exclusion and synthesis to the correct way of construing sentences. As a mental discipline this construing of a language other than our vernacular has no rival and no substitute in any other study." This writer does not assert for the ancient languages a superiority over the modern, as did President Porter. He merely asserts that "the construing of a language other than our own" is the best possible discipline. Prof. Joseph Le-Conte, of the University of California, a warm friend of the ancient classics, uses this mild form of statement: "No doubt the mental culture involved in the translation and writing of an ancient language is both admirable and varied; but it is at least doubtful whether the same culture may not be attained by the study of a modern language." If the ardent advocate speak after this manner, surely the judge should not be suspected of bias if he go a step further and say, "It is at least doubtful whether the same culture may not be attained" without passing the boundary

of the English tongue. Why should it be taken for granted that no discipline is equal to that involved in the acquisition of a language? What particular powers of the mind are reached by the study of language that cannot be reached by some other study? What proof does the author of "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry" offer in support of his proposition that "as a mental discipline the construing of a foreign language has no rival and no substitute in any other study"? Is it assumed that this proposition is so manifestly true that it only needs to be stated? Or is it so plausible in itself that it needs no more to support it than the power of strong assertion? Or is it supposed to be sufficiently supported by the previous assertion that "there is no discipline in practical logic so suitable for a pupil as those reasonings from principles of syntax by processes of logical exclusion and synthesis to the correct way of construing sentences"? But what supports the supporter? Where there is such serious and well considered difference of opinion, it might be worth while to maintain assertions by the *use* of a little "practical logic." It is the opinion of some that the logical process involved in the construing of sentences is a very insignificant part of the business. It has been said that if you take a child of five years and a man of twenty-five, and let each use the same exertion to acquire a knowledge of any *spoken* language, the child will easily excel the man. Our own observation bears this out. A few years ago we became acquainted with a colony of Welsh, fresh from the old country. It was generally remarked that the children soon acquired a complete knowledge of the English as it was spoken by their American neighbors. Men in middle life had more difficulty, and some of those quite advanced in years made so little progress that they gave up in despair. The explanation offered is that "the ear, and the memory derived from the ear, are the means by which languages are acquired." Substitute eye for ear and you will have the chief means that are employed in the acquisition of a *written* language. If memory holds in its possession the peculiarities of *idiom*, the rules of syntax, especially the *exceptions* to the rules, the gender of nouns and the meaning of the words, it is a very feeble intellect that cannot perform the logical process of putting

the sentence into such shape as to extract its meaning. It may be going too far to say, as one has said, that "as a rule it is not the reasoner, or person gifted with great brain-power, who the most quickly learns the language, but the superficial thinker, gifted with ear." It is not going too far, we think, to protest against the policy which makes the power to acquire languages the supreme and all-decisive test of one's intellectual stamina. Should we grant that the chief end of collegiate education is to discipline the mind, to train it to think; should we further grant that the ancient languages are an excellent means to this end, we could not grant that they are so surely the best means as to entitle them to their present position of supremacy. If the chief end is mental discipline, there are other ends which, though subordinate, are very important. Suppose these subordinate ends can best be accomplished by other studies, and that these other studies will at the same time contribute greatly to the chief end, would not this entitle them to a position coördinate at least with the ancient languages? Sometimes the physician must forego the use of a remedy that would be most efficient in staying the chief disease of his patient because of complications. There are minor matters to be considered, and so much weight is due to them as to make it the part of wisdom to use means less efficient for the chief end, but remedies that will accomplish subordinate ends. Now, surely the acquisition of knowledge during the ten or twelve years spent in school is no mean object to the man whose after life is to be altogether taken up with the duties of his business calling. All must admit that for the acquisition of knowledge, there is no field equal to that covered by the varied and exhaustless literature of the English tongue. Would it not be a great saving if there could be found in the same field the means of mental discipline, so that both objects could be accomplished at once? Suppose these means of mental discipline were not the best possible, might not the fact that they served another very desirable purpose make them equivalent to more efficient means that served no other purpose? Bear in mind that we have not admitted that there are not in the whole range of possible English studies any means of mental discipline equal to the ancient

languages. We are disposed to think there are. A great thinker has said: "It would be utterly contrary to the beautiful economy of nature if one kind of culture were needed for the gaining of information, and another kind were needed as a mental gymnastic." To this we may add that the great law of parcimony which prevails everywhere in God's works, and which excludes all superfluity of means, would lead us to expect that whatever department of knowledge best serves the purpose of storing the mind with useful information will also best serve the purpose of developing its powers. The story is told of Stephen Girard, that once when a man came to him for work, having no useful employment for him, he put him to removing a pile of stones from one part of his grounds to another. When the man reported the job finished, he told him to carry them back. He kept him at this for some days, merely for the sake of giving the man something to do. Stephen Girard could afford to pay for work that had in it no other object than to exercise the powers of the body. But we, who are so poor in time, and so rich in opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge, can ill afford to give the best years of life to labor that has for its ulterior aim nothing more than the exercise of the mind. To put the case briefly, we should be very sure that we cannot kill two birds with one stone before we almost exhaust our strength in throwing an extra stone merely for the sake of practice.

We have, perhaps, delayed too long to notice an objection that may have been thrusting itself forward to weaken the force of all our logic. How account for the fact that all through the centuries since the awakening of the mind of Western Europe, after the sleep of the Dark Ages, the ancient classics have constituted the basis, the bone and gristle, of all liberal education? Does not the fact of such long-continued and universal agreement among educators show that the system must be not only good, but the best? An affirmative response is loudly given by all those who think the present age one of dangerous tendencies, and whose favorite way of attempting to restrain these tendencies is to declaim against the degeneracy of the age. "It is forgotten," say they, "that the objections now paraded with so much pretence of

superior wisdom, were maturely considered by the great and good men who settled the system for us, and were properly overborne by the affirmative considerations." Thus they would pronounce against every proposed change on the simple ground that it implies that we can improve on the work of our betters; *quod auctoritas*, as friend Turretin would delight to say. We are conscious of a humility which will not suffer us to assume a position that necessarily implies that we think ourselves wiser than our fathers. To avoid the implication, however, it is enough to suggest that they could not have had certain considerations before their minds which will now occur to minds of far less strength, compass, and acuteness. These considerations have reference to changes that have taken place since the fathers fell asleep. When the great universities of Western Europe were founded, and for centuries afterwards, there was nothing to teach and nothing to learn, except Latin and Greek. All the literature of the world that was worth anything, was locked up in those languages. This state of affairs continued long enough for those institutions to make histories, and hence to come under the mighty influence of precedent and prescription. It is indisputable that nowhere is conservatism so petrified as in old, long-established seats of learning. The school-master's infallibility is proverbial, and this is only a personal manifestation of a spirit that pervades such venerable institutions as the universities of Europe. It only remains to be said that until recently the universities founded in the Middle Ages have been giving law to the learned world in all matters pertaining to education. Thus it has come to pass that what began in necessity has continued under the constraint of custom. Surely there can be no impropriety in suggesting that educational methods which were determined in one set of circumstances might possibly be changed for the better in an entirely different set of circumstances. Had the wise fathers who gave us our present system been endowed with the vigor of Methuselah, they might have lived to weigh other considerations than those which influenced them then. How different the world of letters now from what it was even as late as the age of Elizabeth! When she and her contemporaries were educated, the English language

was in its formative stage. Of the books it could boast, only Chaucer is found at this day in the ordinary walks of literature. Shakespeare and Milton, Bacon and Newton, Pitt and Burke, who have rivalled Homer and Virgil, Aristotle and Plato, Demosthenes and Cicero, were all in the future. So were the hundreds of illustrious scholars, whose names will live for ever on the lips of men, who have brought to every department of knowledge its richest stores, and to general literature its supreme glory; while they have pushed forward the boundaries of physical science, until we of the nineteenth century live on a new earth and gaze upon new heavens. Is it reasonable that the staple of our education should continue to be now what it wisely and of necessity was then? They went to the ancients because there were none others to whom they could go. No one can say that there is the same reason for our going there. The riches bequeathed to us by the ancients are but a poor pittance compared to the great and priceless stores that have been gathered into the treasure-house of the English tongue. We are constrained to think that it is largely due to the tyranny of custom, that the student is forced to turn his back upon these riches of easy access to delve for a meagre fortune amid the rubbish of antiquity. We have read with great admiration of Lady Jane Grey's accomplishments in Greek; also of the wonderful proficiency in the same language acquired by Sir Anthony Cook's daughters, one of whom was the wife of Elizabeth's Prime Minister, and the other the mother of Lord Bacon. They could make Greek verses, and, if necessary, write their love-letters in Greek. But we must bear in mind that there was little else for them to learn. We should not admire them so much if they had given all their time to Greek, when they might have learned to play the piano, sing Italian songs, and master other accomplishments which make the ladies of our day much more lovely and enjoyable than any amount of Greek would make them. In a word, there are other things now which merit the attention of men and women, and all that we insist on is, that the ancient classics shall divide time with these other things, in proportion to their importance. The Greeks and Romans were great men, and did great things, but

wisdom did not perish with them. Why should the bright years of youth's vigorous prime be consumed in efforts to learn what the ancients knew, largely to the neglect of what has been discovered since their time? A limited experience in examining young men for admission to the ministry, suggests that the average graduate knows little enough about the ancients and still less about the moderns. He can tell you something about Latin and Greek conjugations and declensions; but ask him about the laws of motion, the number of mechanical powers, and he is as one that dreameth. His time has been consumed, and his mental energies exhausted, in efforts to acquire that superficial knowledge of the languages which is demanded as a condition of graduation. However extensive his attainments in other directions, he is not honored with the badge of scholarship unless he can make some show in Greek and Latin. Thus a high premium is set on this knowledge, and the student will acquire it at the sacrifice of all opportunity to acquire other knowledge. Here is just the point of our protest, and the exact ground of complaint.

The bearing of the foregoing argument on the subject of "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry" must be briefly noticed. One conspicuous feature of the recent discussion of this subject is, that if any one ventures to suggest any change whatever in our present standard of ministerial education, he is credited with a desire to lower it, and then charged with seeking to introduce uneducated men into the ministry. The history of the Methodist and Baptist Churches is referred to for the purpose of proving the unwisdom of such a course. It is thus constantly assumed that there is no intermediate stage between illiteracy and a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; that there is no learning worth the name, except that which embraces the study of these languages. It is in vain to point out that the English tongue has in the last two or three centuries swept the whole field of knowledge, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, and has brought to the feet of its master the treasures garnered in all other tongues. It is not so much a question of what one knows, as a question of how he came by it. The quantity of knowledge is not the thing demanded, but the quality. All parties are agreed that

the sole function of the preacher is to teach a certain thing; still it is in vain to point out that he can acquire a thorough and accurate knowledge of that thing through the medium of English, and therefore the possession of another medium should not be made essential. It is not a question of knowing what he must teach, but a question of the medium through which the knowledge is acquired. It will not avail to say that he can gain a very much more accurate knowledge through the medium of English by availing himself of the help of critical experts than he could through the use of his own imperfectly mastered Greek and Hebrew. He must be able to silence the gainsayer, not by quoting the authority of some world-renowned scholar, but by his own *ego dico*. The gainsayer might ask if the world-renowned scholar were inspired, and this would be embarrassing. Of course he would be too polite to ask if the *ego dico* were inspired. However, the point we wish to notice is the assumption that there can be no standard of learning that will guard the doctrinal purity of the Church, if the dead languages are omitted. Cease to make these a part of the candidate's trial, and you throw away your safeguards and the touchstone by which culture and orthodoxy are to be tested. There can be no safe substitute for even the superficial knowledge of the languages which our present standard exacts. It is very hard to make this appear reasonable, and especially hard to make it appear scriptural. Our present standard was, beyond a doubt, based upon the college curriculum. "Aptness to teach," means, in addition to knowing what to teach, that the teacher must have a well disciplined mind. The means of discipline are furnished by the college and accepted by the Church. There is certainly no Scripture to offer in justification of each separate specification of our standard. Where is the Scripture, *e. g.*, for demanding of the candidate a knowledge of the "natural and exact sciences"? What did any preacher of apostolic days know of the natural and exact sciences? Did that Ephesian mechanic know aught of chemistry? If we must needs learn Greek because he knew Greek, surely no such reason can be given for our learning chemistry. With all his intimate familiarity with those subjects which now constitute the science

of biblical antiquities, did he know anything about geology? Why, then, should we be compelled to study geology? The reason is not that there is scriptural authority, either in the shape of precept or precedent, but only that these sciences constitute a part of the regular college course, and the regular college course is thought to be necessary to give one "aptness to teach." Everything but Greek and Hebrew must be defended on this general ground. There is no more Scripture for Latin than for Sanscrit. Latin happened to be in the curriculum, and Sanscrit happened not to be. Our standard is what it is, because the college curriculum happened to be just what it was at the time the standard was determined. Suppose it be possible to change the curriculum so as to give the student a different but an equivalent course of study to that on which our standard is based, would not the design of our standard be met? As a matter of fact, has not such a change actually taken place in the curriculum of many colleges? It has been four years since Dr. Goldwin Smith wrote: "The curriculum, both at Oxford and Cambridge, till about twenty-five years ago, was confined to classics and mathematics. Now physical science, history, and jurisprudence, are included as optional studies for the final examinations." Have not similar changes taken place in all high-grade institutions of learning? How different the course of study at Princeton from what it was when Jonathan Edwards was President! The additions are far in excess of the original course. The same is true in respect to all colleges whose histories go back to the time when our standard was determined. Does one necessarily set himself at variance with the spirit of our system, and does he necessarily plead for a lowering of our standard if he ask that practical recognition be made of this great change in reference to the means of mental discipline? A student may now take a select course, omitting both Latin and Greek, that will involve as much time and hard mental labor as the whole course involved a century ago. Then, to be educated, one must know the things specified in our standard, for those were the only things embraced in the course of study prescribed by the colleges. Now, in most colleges, modern languages have been admitted, English literature is allowed a place,

and the list of the natural sciences has been greatly enlarged. Yet our standard takes no notice of these accessions to the means by which "aptness to teach" may be acquired. One may now find in our institutions of learning a course of study lying almost exclusively out of the line of our standard, that will furnish him all the mental store and mental culture that are necessary to give him passport into educated circles; that will fit him to grapple successfully with the most difficult, practical problems in politics, philosophy, theology, and science, and that will enable him to attain to eminence in any of the learned professions. Yet we are debarred from utilising his talents in our ministry, unless he will consent to accept the humiliating condition, and come in under the provision for "extraordinary cases." We still refuse to admit that anything can give "aptness to teach" except the means that were employed centuries ago. We still refuse to acknowledge culture unless it has been attained in a certain prescribed method. We prefer a little culture that is the result of studying Latin and Greek to any degree of culture that has been acquired without these venerable assistants. It does seem that one might reasonably plead for a little more flexibility, a little more adaptability to the changed circumstances of the time. We are dropping behind some of the most conservative colleges. Some of these are yielding to the growing sentiment against the longer supremacy of the ancients, to the extent of allowing two modern languages in lieu of one ancient. They will not withhold the badge of scholarship from him who drops Latin, provided he will atone for it by acquiring both French and German. Suppose the alumni of these colleges who take this course knock at our doors? It seems that we are shut up to the necessity of either sending them back to learn how to "discuss in Latin a *thesis* on some common head of divinity," or of taking them in as "cases extraordinary." Is it not better to so modify our standard as to recognise the fact, for fact it is, that there are thousands of well educated men, "apt to teach," and therefore possessed of all scriptural requisite, who are yet destitute of the ordinary superficial knowledge of Latin and Greek upon which we now insist? It is not forgotten that Greek and Hebrew are defended on the ground that they are the lan-

guages of the original Scriptures. We have only time and space to repeat, what has often been truly said, that they are not the languages through which those who are forced to study them derive their knowledge of the Scriptures.

R. C. REED.

ARTICLE V.

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.¹

In being formally inducted into the Professorship of Biblical Literature in this Seminary, it is but natural that I should find my thoughts recurring to the veteran scholar who for so many years adorned this chair by his learning and piety. A student from his earliest years, and coming to his work with ample furniture in Oriental scholarship, attained under the stimulating instruction of the famous Moses Stuart, Dr. Howe, for more than fifty years, devoted his energies to enlarging his knowledge and broadening his views of Biblical Literature. To recount Dr. Howe's toils and sacrifices for the Seminary, would be to tell a familiar story. To him I believe we owe its survival to this good hour, pressed, as it has several times been, by dangers that threatened its destruction. Laborious to a fault, and faithful to duty, he wrought his very life into these walls and into the hearts of the hundreds of students who here listened to his voice. Profound learning was veiled by a rare modesty, and transfused with a deep personal love for the Saviour. The simplicity of his nature, the depth of his piety, the kindness of his heart, are the traits which we who knew him associate most of all with his memory. To have been a pupil of Dr. Howe is a blessing to any man! It is a high privilege that I was not only his

¹Inaugural Address delivered on September 19, 1883, before the Board of Directors of Columbia Seminary, by Rev. C. R. Hemphill, Professor of Biblical Literature, and published at the request of the Board.