the land the solid earth was beneath them, and this, at least, could not give way. But on the lake their dwellings rested on a multitude of wooden piles; and if either of these should rot, or should be struck down by storm, or be cut by an enemy, then the whole edifice tottered. And not unlike this is the condition of the romantic retrogressionists who seek Rome for peace. They abandon the solid ground of simple, self-evidencing faith. And they take refuge on a theological platform which rests on hundreds of props, the destruction of either of which is the destruction of the whole. And on one if not all of these, the storm may any day irresistibly strike. And then comes the wreck of absolute unbelief.

ARTICLE II.

THE POSITION AND METHODS OF THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.[1]

BY REV. E. H. BYINGTON, BRUNSWICK, ME.

The progress of society depends upon men of intellectual strength and culture. The chiefs of the savage tribe are the strong men, like Red Cloud; but the wise man must take the place of the strong man before civilization is possible. These intellectual leaders need a special discipline. Hence the college and the university, not for the many, but for the few who have been endowed by nature with abilities for leadership. As the wants of society are various, there are a number of distinct departments of action for these educated leaders. Each department rests upon some permanent want of society. There has always been a necessity for a class of public men, in distinction from private — the leaders and teachers of men, physicians, lawyers, ministers, and interpreters of nature; men of poetic abilities, which are of power, as Milton says, " to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility";[1] the founders and preservers of states; and last, but not least, the ministers of religion. The men who fill these various offices constitute the scholars of the nation.

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[1] This Article is the substance of an Oration delivered before the Alumni of the University of Vermont, August 3, 1870.

But the question is a fair one, whether there is any need of a permanent class of learned men. The system which has produced them aims at the advancement of society in general intelligence and culture. Its results are cumulative. Each generation is advanced a little beyond that which preceded it. The extension of knowledge among the people of this country has raised the standard of the common mind. Private men now read scientific works, which used to be found only in the libraries of scholars. Everybody reads, and everybody discusses, the highest questions in science, philosophy, and divinity. Is it necessary, in such an age, to have a class of professional men, who are elevated above the masses of the people by superior knowledge? Is this quite in accordance with the principles of our institutions? Is it not better to expend for popular education the funds which are used to sustain the higher institutions of learning? Are not the people outgrowing the need of professional men? Is not the time coming when every man will be his own doctor and his own lawyer and his own religious guide?

There is an apparent force in such views; but there are certain permanent facts which check the inference. For, will not children always need teachers? Will any advance in general intelligence cause reading and writing to come by nature? And if we are still to need teachers, who shall teach the teachers? Do not the lower schools depend upon the higher — the primary school upon the academy, and the academy upon the college? Is there not action and reaction between the parts of the system, so that the higher shed influences upon the lower, even as the heavens shed rain? And do not the highest inspirations ever come from above, so that the progress of intelligence among the people depends upon the advance of the scholarship of the learned class? And on other grounds, is not the need of the highest possible knowledge and skill a permanent need? Is it not true, for example, that diseases become more complicated as civilization advances, so that the intellectual man needs a much higher degree of medical skill than the man whose development is chiefly physical? Was it found, during our civil war, that men without a military education were successful leaders of armies? Have we yet a surplus of statesmen? What answer is suggested by the congressional debates, or by our systems of finance, or by the present course of trade? Does the condition of the currency indicate that the republic has no longer need of trained financiers? And what is the inference from the results of reconstruction in Georgia? What from the condition of the shipping interest? How is it in literature? Have we a crowd of men with "the vision and the faculty divine"? Has the glory of the age of Shakespeare been eclipsed by the lights of our time? Do we go for the highest and purest inspirations to the new books or to the old? The books which the world will not willingly let die — are they the books of the nineteenth century, or of the seventeenth? Are the foundations of theological science so well laid that there is no further need of divines? Are men in public and in private life controlled by well-defined principles more than in the olden time? Is modern speculation tending toward a more quiet and restful and hopeful spirit — toward sweeter and more consoling views of the highest interests — toward "calmer seats of moral strength," — or is the tendency toward unrest and doubt?

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[1] Reason of Church Government. Milton's Works, Vol. i. 146.

I am sure that no careful observer of modern life will deny that so far from being able to dispense with the trained teachers and leaders of men, we need them more and more. If the people read more, and question more acutely, so much the greater need of wise men to furnish a popular literature, and to solve the questions which are new for every generation of inquirers. As our civilization grows more complicated, there is need of a wider knowledge of history, and a closer study of political economy on the part of our public men. If sceptics challenge the grounds of our faith, the truth needs defenders of trained intellects, and extended knowledge. As the common mind rises higher, it needs wiser and more skilful leaders to guide it toward those stages which are yet in advance. The professional man of to-day has therefore, a higher work than his predecessors, and needs a more complete culture.

If it be granted that there is a permanent position for an educated class, the question returns, What is that position? Thus far we have assumed that learning is not chiefly for private but for public use, and that the professional man is, in fact, a public man. This position merits a fuller discussion.

There is a view of learning according to which it is a mere luxury for personal gratification, or it is a means of gaining personal power and fame. So far as there exist among the people a jealousy of the higher institutions of learning, it grows directly out of the popular impression that education is merely a private gain. Lord Bacon tells us that "the greatest error of learning is the mistaking the final end of knowledge; for some have sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention; or a shop for profit and sale; and not a rich storehouse, for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of man's estate."[1]

This error of learning was not peculiar to the age of Bacon. No one who watches the drift of opinion among students in our colleges as well as among educated men in active life, will deny, that there is a strong and increasing tendency to regard education as a private and personal advantage — a means of advancement to wealth or position.

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[1] Advancement of Learning. Bacon's Works (Montague ed.), Vol. ii. p. 51.

Are not the young men losing sight of the inherent excellence and nobleness of intellectual pursuits, and applying to all callings the simple test of pecuniary profit and loss? Is there any question which is examined more carefully by those who are making choice of a profession than this: Will it pay?[1] Do not many enter the learned professions with no higher view of their end and scope, and do not many who have entered these callings with higher aims find that their views are gradually toned down by the spirit of the age and the hard necessities of life, until they are ready to class them with the enthusiasms of uninstructed youth, and to dismiss them for more practical views of life? And, what is still more to the purpose, is it not becoming common for educated men to make the professions mere stepping-stones to positions of greater private emolument, turning aside in the very spring-time of life, from a profession ample enough to give scope to the very highest abilities, to enter some merely secular calling in which to accumulate a fortune? Is it not this view of the use of learning, which opens the way for breaking the ranks of the professions, and which leads so many to ignore the Baconian maxim, that "every man is a debtor to his own profession?" Is it not also the tendency of this utilitarian view of the end of learning, to depress the standard of education, and to strengthen the hands of those who are clamoring for the so-called practical education? Does it not lead men to undervalue the means of broad and thorough culture, and to discard those liberal studies which, in the cant phrase of the day, are of no practical use? And further, is it not the direct tendency of this view, to discourage really profound learning, while encouraging superficial, and showy accomplishments? Is it not already depressing the standard of professional excellence, and weakening and impoverishing the national mind?

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[1] The increase in the number of schools intended to prepare young men for professional life in this country has been very remarkable. A writer in Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia for 1862 (Art. Education) states the number of colleges in the United States at 240, and the number of undergraduates in round numbers at 20,000, and the annual expense of these institutions at $5,000,000, including, we suppose, the expenses of the students. The same writer states the number of professional schools and students as follows: Law Schools 18, students 1300; Scientific Schools 15, students 1500; Medical Schools 55, students 7000; Theological Schools 92, students 4120. It is plain that these numbers can be only approximations to accuracy.

A writer in the Congregational Quarterly (Oct. 1870) gives some carefully collected facts, which indicate quite plainly the course of things among students. The facts cover fifty years, from 1816–1865, and relate to eight New England Colleges: viz., Amherst, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Harvard, Middlebury, University of Vermont, Williams, and Yale. The whole number of graduates at these Colleges has increased from 191 in 1816, to 460 in 1860, and 373 in 1865. The number who entered the Christian ministry was 58 in 1816, while it was only 37 in 1865.

A comparison by decades shows the falling off of theological students even more plainly: thus, the proportion of ministers to the whole number of graduates has been as follows: 1816 to 1825, 30 per cent; 1826 to 1835, 35 per cent; 1836 to 1845, 27 per cent; 1846 to 1855, 20 per cent; 1856 to 1865, 18 per cent.

If this tendency is ever met, it will be by tracing it to its source in the assumption that learning is merely a personal advantage; and by meeting it with the opposite principle, that learning is a rich storehouse for God's glory and man's relief.

And here we do not need to urge those general obligations which touch all men, under the sanctions of religion, by which they are cut off from the selfish view of life, and required to follow the law of benevolence. But we insist that professional men are under obligations which are peculiar to them, and which cut them off from motives and plans of life that are legitimate for men in a private station. Because in the first place, they have been educated in an important sense by the public, and for the public. If this assertion were made only of those who receive their education at the military academy at West Point, no one would question its truth. But the principle extends to all those who receive their education at a public institution of learning. Because every such institution has been founded by the liberal gifts of men who regarded such institutions as the pillars of society; or else it is sustained at the public charge. Besides, the influences which give value to a college, are the slow accumulation of generations. The student at Oxford or Cambridge cannot trace the influences which are drawing out his powers, and touching them to finest issues. Men of genius of other days have left their mark, great teachers of the past instruct him, he is growing in the shadow of great names. The university is not a mere school, but rather a source of influences, which refine and ripen his powers, and these influences are the contributions which great scholars have left for succeeding generations —contributions which are as necessary for the real wealth of an institution of learning, as the silver and gold of its founders. How vain it would be for any student to attempt to gather by his own means these aids to culture. And, in fact, how small a part of the direct cost of his education is paid by any student. Society has founded these schools, and furnished them with the choicest means of culture, and society may justly claim that those who enter her storehouses, and avail themselves of her garnered riches, shall rise above a merely selfish view of life, and shall devote themselves to the general good.

And further, what are the learned professions but platforms of influence, which are provided for men of liberal culture for the sake of the public advantage? Are they not, in an important sense, public offices, the entrance to which is guarded by public policy, and in some instances by legal enactments? The public concede to the professional man a peculiar position and influence, so that he is able to avail himself of his profession as a vantage ground. The man who tries to do the same things without a professional standing works at a great disadvantage. At the same time each of these professions is essential to the well-being of society, and requires men who are fitted most thoroughly for its duties. Each one affords scope for all the abilities a man possesses, and he adds to his fitness for his work by experience. No profession can stand high, unless those who enter it devote to it their best powers and their best years. Only the man who enters upon his work with the enthusiasm of generous devotion, and who gains the experience of busy years, can do the best and worthiest work. If there is progress in the intellectual standard of the common mind, there is the greater need of these ripened powers for those who fill the learned professions. We insist, then, that the man who seeks those educational advantages, which society has so carefully accumulated, and who steps on to this platform of professional influence, is bound in honor to be loyal to his profession, and to live so that he can "give a true account of his gift of reason to the benefit and use of men."

This view is perhaps limited in popular apprehension to the clerical profession. It is the common notion that a clergyman is cut off from many courses of life which are open to other men, and that he is shut up strictly to the duties of his calling. It is esteemed an act of unfaithfulness for him either to use his profession for private aggrandizement or to turn from it without necessity. But each of the professions is for the public advantage, and why is not the physician who uses his profession for mere personal ends, or the lawyer who is unfaithful to his obligations as a minister in the temple of justice, as really a traitor to his profession as an unfaithful and selfish divine.

The older writers were wont to take high views of the duties of learned men. These men have made their election between professional life and the life of laymen. By so doing they have gained certain advantages, and incurred certain disadvantages. Lord Bacon [1] speaks of the meanness of employment of men of learning, who spend their lives in teaching children; and of the peculiarity of manners, whereby they differ from those versed in affairs; and especially of "the smallness of their fortune, since learned men do not grow rich so fast as other men, because they do not convert their labors chiefly to lucre and increase"; and he insists that this sacrifice on their part is needful, for barbarism would long since have prevailed, "if the poverty of learning had not kept up civility and honor of life." The great thinkers have always been content to live without large pecuniary resources. It has often been "the poor wise man" who has saved the city. The highest work for the world is never paid for. No man, indeed, is fit to be a leader of men who cannot say with Demosthenes: "My counsels to you are not such as enable me to become great among you while you become little among the Grecians; but while sometimes they are not fit for me to give, they are always good for you to follow." Great statesmen have always had in them such stuff as martyrs are made of. Truth will not give admission to her arcana to the man who does not seek her for her own sake. "In the Roman state poverty was a reverend and honored thing." The intellectual princes have not been those who served two masters. Mammon is as real, if not as great, a foe to learning as to godliness. Nor can the scholar hope to gain all things which are themselves excellent. Themistocles was not ashamed to confess that he was a stranger to elegant accomplishments; but, said he, "I know how to make a small city a great state."

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[1] **Advancement of Learning. Bacon, Vol. ii. pp. 24–26.**

The ruling tendencies of our times suggest the most weighty reasons for urging these motives to singleness of devotion to intellectual pursuits. It is an age of action, rather than of contemplation; and such an age has little sympathy with those who dwell apart from "noises and hoarse disputes, in the quiet and still air of delightful studies."[1] Seldom has the fidelity of scholars been put to so severe a test as now. The rewards of financial enterprise are so abundant and so sure, as to furnish a constant temptation to draw the scholar from public to private life; while the consideration which wealth gives, adds force to the motive with men who are conscious of superior endowments. So that nothing less than a high appreciation of the inherent dignity and practical value of intellectual pursuits, and a heart open to the sad, inarticulate call of helpless humanity for knowledge and freedom, and high motive, and salvation — nothing but a soul that heeds the higher call, which God makes upon every man to do the highest work for which his abilities fit him, will be likely to keep a man loyal to his profession. And, at the same time, the need of the highest sort of intellectual work among us is most urgent. For the work which is doing in this country is a work for the future. In an eminent sense we are the founders of states. Discarding some of the most important principles on which society in the Old World is organized, we are fully committed to the effort to reconstruct social as well as political institutions on a basis of freedom. The disturbing influences are numerous and powerful. The most serious questions still wait for solution. In this work the nation has need of men of instructed reason, men who know what the past teaches, and have wisdom to build upon sure foundations. In the older nations the ignorance of empirics would be comparatively harmless, because they would be controlled by the conservative tendencies of society; but here, where everything is plastic and free, so that we have "the dangerous facility for experiments," we need men of clear eye and steady hand. We need men who can detect the unwise expedients of conceited and pushing ignorance, and have resources enough to replace their schemes by wise and practical plans. We need them in our schools, to protect them from narrow and superficial views of education. We need them in the medical profession, not only to relieve disease, but to counteract the too evident tendency to physical decadence, and to check those nameless crimes which are changing the laws of population; we need them at the bar, to secure a purer administration of justice; and in political life we need them, to give health and manliness to political contests, and to infuse a broader statesmanship into our legislation; and we need them not less in the pulpit, with power to fix attention upon the real issues of life, and with skill to apply the great and solemn truths of religion, so as to purify the sources of character and of life.

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[1] Milton's Prose. Church Government, Book ii.

History shows that the greatness of nations depends on the power of educated intellect and conscience. The decline and fall of nations is always commenced among the natural leaders of opinion. Death begins at the top. Let the high aims of educated men be lost, so that professional enthusiasm fails, — let it come to be the fact, that the educated men of a country seek mere secular gains and personal advantage, and there is an end of progress in science and literature and government. The leaders of thought will become mere copyists. They will lose the power to meet the emergencies of national life — the power "which mounteth with occasion." The golden age will become leaden and iron, and no advancement in material wealth or in outward refinement can restore the lost glory. Language will decay, poetry will lose its inspiration, and the national spirit will die out. A gross materialism will check the aspirations, and corrupt the moral sentiments of the people.

We have not reached that stage, though there are too many tendencies among scholars which would, if unchecked, lead towards it. The real progress which is made, and there is real progress, is secured by those men among us of large views, who love truth and duty, who scorn base arts, and who welcome the "poverty of learning," that they may serve their generation by the will of God. We still have them in all liberal callings — men of genius, of culture, of true nobility, who are content to work in silence and obscurity, if need be, but to do such work as will build up a free and able commonwealth. In the great crisis of the national life through which we have recently passed, the Republic owed as much, it may be, to the thinking brains of her scholars as to the courage and devotion of her soldiers. Amid the stirs and alarms of war we give too little heed to the results secured by the men of thought. Within the past year one of the most useful of these men has passed away, a man of thorough culture, of eminent learning in the legal profession, of devoted patriotism. Where would the Republic have been to-day, but for the trained intellect and wide experience and unfailing sagacity of the great war secretary? We looked on with wonder at the development of his administrative abilities, at his fertility of resources, at the courage which no reverses could dampen, and at the genius which brought order out of confusion, and organized victory. But it was not until the war was over that we knew how thoroughly he had worn himself out by his exertions. Nor was it until he was followed to his grave that the nation knew that Mr. Stanton had given not only his life, but his fortune, to his country, and that he had left his family no other inheritance than the gratitude of his countrymen. And now, as we look back upon his completed life, it is most instructive for its lesson of the use to which a public man may put his talents and his acquirements. Such men the country needs,—men of thought, of experience, of practical wisdom; men of great hearts, who show how royal a thing a life of duty is. In the phrase of Coleridge: "We need public souls,—we need them."

If this public position be conceded to the professional man, we have not far to go to find what sort of culture he should have. We cannot refuse to apply the test of practical use to methods of education, only we are to insist upon giving to that term, "practical use," a broad meaning. It is unsafe to assume that the scientific culture is of more real use than the discipline of classical studies, even if it has a closer connection with the physical wants of men. Those wants which are met by progress in the arts of life are not our deepest wants. Man needs bread; but is it not written: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God"? It would be strange indeed, if we should discover, at this late day, that the classical culture which has had so important a part in the education of the intellectual leaders of Europe since the time of Erasmus, was essentially barren. The study of Greek and Latin, by which Choate and Everett and Webster were furnished for their public career, was surely practical. No one who reads the great English divines of the seventeenth century can fail to perceive that their profound culture had its roots in a thorough classical training, and that one of the practical wants of our own time is a larger infusion of men of equal thoroughness and breadth of view. While we are to welcome all real additions to the means of education, we are not to permit any narrow views to limit the range of study. Our age needs men of profound and comprehensive culture. Our educated men need to know the best forms of thought, to study the richest treasures of art, as well as to understand the wonderful methods and results of the practical sciences. Education lays under contribution all sciences and all arts, all tongues, all laws, all the institutions and experiences of men, for the purpose is to train men to carry forward the progress which the race has already made toward higher and more beautiful results in the future.

Passing, now, from the attractive field of discussion which these thoughts are opening before us — a field, however, which there are so many to range over — we come to the inquiry: *By what general methods is the scholar to do his work?* We shall limit the discussion to two or three points which are just now pressed upon our attention by the course of events.

I. In the first place, *the scholar should work for individual men.* His real usefulness will depend in great part upon the individuality and definiteness of his aims.

It is a serious defect in certain theories of society and of government that they have lost sight of the worth of man simply as man; and scholars have been led to aim rather at general results than at a definite personal influence.

But there is no work for man so grand as the building up of individual character; because there is nothing in this world so great as a human soul. To borrow the fine phrase of Pascal: "Man is a reed, — the weakest in nature, — but he is a thinking reed. It is not needful for the universe to arm itself to crush him. A drop of water, a breath of air, suffices to kill him. But still man is more noble than that which kills him; for he knows that he dies, while the universe knows nothing of its power over him."[1] We are doing our noblest work when we are developing those powers, and checking the influences which limit the free unfolding of the masses of men. The wisdom of Socrates was shown in adopting the conversational method of teaching. And a greater than Socrates has taught us, by his own example, the secret of a useful life. We shall show our wisdom by following the methods of the Son of Man, who taught the woman of Samaria, as he rested at midday by the well, and who did not scorn to shed his benedictions even upon the little children whom they brought him. There is nothing which moves men so deeply as contact with real humanity. As one studies that great painting, the Heart of the Andes, with its vast reaches of mountain scenery, the lofty summits, which seem to support the very heavens, fill the mind with awe. It is a view of nature in her loftier moods. And yet the eye kindles with a deeper interest as it rests on a hunter's cabin in the foreground of the picture, from which the smoke of the morning meal is just rising, and upon the two or three hunters who stand leaning upon their rifles, looking down the glen. That glimpse of human life touches deeper chords than nature can move. And, indeed, what great work of art is there which does not connect itself closely with our human sympathies? What is all high art, but the mirror of the human soul, of the affections and passions of living men? And is it not a fact in literary history that great poems and romances depend for their hold upon the interest of men on a few strongly marked personal characters? The genius of Sir, Walter Scott is shown in his power to enlist the interest of the literary world in the portraiture of the life of a Scottish peasant girl.

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[1] Pascal's Thoughts (London ed., 1827), chap. xxiii. p. 171.

And in our practical life the greatest men have been able to use all their capacities in teaching and defending the common people, while at the same time the most permanent influences are exerted upon individual character. We are apt to overrate our general influence. If we can give a new truth to this man and that man and the other; if we can freshen old truths which are dying out among the people, we shall not live in vain. It is not the best tendency of learning to seek great occasions. Some of the finest lyrics in our language were written to solace some lonely sufferer. The events in the humblest life have a greatness all their own.

The methods by which the man of culture can use his knowledge for the comfort and help of men are almost endless. Those are the true helpers of men who keep their sympathies close to the life of the people, and who show how much of beauty and of comfort it is possible for knowledge and good taste to add to the common routine of life. Safe and beautiful homes, free public libraries and galleries of art open to all, churches for the people, a truly popular literature which is enriched by the ripest thought and culture of the time; means to develop the minds and hearts and consciences of the masses of men — these are at least as legitimate objects of exertion as those more brilliant enterprises which enlist so much of the attention of educated men.

There is occasion to carry the same principle into public and political life. It is the radical defect of certain theories of government that they lose sight of the individual. There is a profound truth in the ringing words of the great Teacher: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The theory has too long been that man was made for the Sabbath, or for the state, or for the church. It is a great advance, when the truth is recognized that these are all ordained of God as means for the development of individual men.

We are apt to lose sight of the real basis of popular government in the study of its outward forms. The ballot, an elective government, the equality of the citizen before the law; what are all these but methods of securing the rights of the individual? The "glittering generalities" with which the Declaration of Independence opens may have little logical connection with the immediate purpose of that state paper, but they are clear statements of the principles on which political institutions ought to rest; so that it contains the germs of the Constitution, and to this day we interpret the Constitution by its light. But the theories of the Declaration were not by any means completely carried out by its authors. It is interesting to trace the process by which the aristocratic elements have been eliminated from our statutes, as well as from social life. The right of the ballot was limited, even at the time of the Revolution. It has taken three generations for the logic of democracy to bring us to general emancipation and to manhood suffrage. In no one thing has this process been more marked than in the sphere of manners. Before the Revolution, our public men cultivated the courtly manners of the British aristocracy; while the present manners of the American people, with their excellences and their defects alike, are the genuine outgrowth of republican institutions. And the drift of thought among us is partly in favor of the development of the individual.

And yet these principles are meeting new obstacles in our day. As the country grows older, and wealth increases, the structure of society is becoming more complicated, and the tendency is to check the free activity and growth of the individual. We cannot yet tell how much our freedom has depended upon the newness of our country. The pioneer, who builds his cabin on his own acres, breathes the air of freedom and cherishes an independent spirit. Such men are hard to conquer. Personal freedom has always depended very much on the ownership of the soil, while a servile spirit is increased as men do the bidding of others. When the pioneer becomes the agent of other men, he feels at once a new set of influences. The accumulation of capital in great corporations, and the growth of great public works, tend to dwarf the great number of citizens whose property is small. The president and directors of the corporation are lifted into a princely importance, while the crowd of men who are in their service sink into a dependent position. The very greatness of the enterprises dwarfs the men who carry them forward. We are belting the continent with railways, and we forget which is the more important, the Pacific railway, or the men who grade the road-bed. And yet which is the greater — man, or his works; the material world, or a human soul? It is its high estimate of the worth of individual men which is the logical basis of democracy, while the aristocratic spirit subordinates the masses of men to the purposes of the few.

And no thoughtful observer of the present drift of things in this country will deny that less and less importance is given to the individual, and that the man without capital and without powerful friends finds it more and more difficult to make his way. Even our churches are adapted more and more carefully to the wants of the more fortunate classes, while the masses of the people are left outside. The old-time meeting-house, where the common people heard the gospel gladly, was certainly nearer the wants of the largest number, than the more costly and tasteful churches, which are built, and controlled in great part, by men of wealth. And it would not be strange if the power which built the costly church should come in time to control the selection of the minister, and indirectly dictate the utterances of the pulpit. It is inevitable that as our country becomes older, an aristocracy of wealth will seek to gain the same power which is wielded in the Old World by an aristocracy of birth.

Out of these tendencies grow some of the most difficult problems of statesmanship. It was the policy of the founders of our government to impose certain checks upon the accumulation of great estates, and by all legitimate means to favor the distribution of property among the citizens. But they could not have forseen the great increase in the facilities for acquiring wealth which the improvements in the practical arts and in modes of communication have secured. How shall we be able to preserve the principles of democracy in connection with an unparalleled advancement in wealth and in material civilization? This is a problem which will task the wisdom of the Republic. And it is the mission of the American scholar to keep himself in hearty sympathy with the life of the people. The power of educated minds is the best security against the selfish tyranny of wealth.

II. In the second place, *the American scholar should work in the light of history.* It will not answer for the intellectual leaders of society to lose themselves in this devotion to individuals; for there are general interests which include those which are personal. "The scholar," says Mr. Emerson, "is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future."[1] He is not to be merely a man of the times. He is rather to rise above the spirit of the age and nation, to the larger spirit of the ages and of the world. It is his part to correct whatever is narrow and weak in the tendencies of his own times.

The historic spirit is *conservative.* It teaches us to respect the past, for it shows us that the present rests upon the past. We have entered into the labors of those who have been thinking and planning and working for us, and our richest inheritance is what they have bequeathed us.

The historic spirit is also *progressive.* It shows that no stage has been the final stage. Each age looks forward to the future, and prepares the way for victories it cannot itself win. "These times are the ancient times," we are told, and the world has grown wiser, as it has grown older.

The historic spirit combines a true conservatism with genuine progress. It gives the forward-looking mind, as well as the circumspect mind. It inspires hope, while it teaches caution. It saves us from repeating the mistakes which have been made again and again. It shows us what is really new in the results of this age, and what is old.

In this country we have peculiar need of the broad views which are the result of the knowledge of history; for the nation is young. Its home in the New World separates it from the older civilizations by the breadth of the Atlantic.

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[1] The American Scholar. Emerson's Prose Works, Vol. i. p. 61.

Its growth has been rapid. It is liable to self-conceit, and to that crudeness of theory which is its natural outgrowth. Our tendencies are toward provincialism in language, in art, and in legislation. This is especially true of that portion of our people who, by reason of their narrow reading, yield most readily to the peculiar spirit of the country. The tendency is to push principles to an extreme. There is no good cause but must monopolize the public attention. There is no reform but must be pushed without regard to natural limitations. At the same time we need more wisdom than older nations, because the elements we are handling are full of life and promise.

We can neither isolate ourselves from the great world, nor disregard the currents of thought and of sentiment which are flowing in other lands. The present is only a section of the continuous progress of the race. The career of man upon this planet is one. The present is linked with the past, and stretches on into the future. We are only carrying forward the tendencies which had their birth in other lands and other times. Nor is there so much which is peculiar in the progress we are making as some think. The same results, for substance, are secured by the working of the British Constitution, though by different methods. And so it is with the nations of Continental Europe. There is a stream of history which carries with it the nations of the world. There are great movements which are started by the Power that governs the nations, which are working themselves out in this age. Practical wisdom will discern and follow these tendencies. Our recent national history furnishes an instance of the strength of these great movements which are directed by an unseen hand. It was not difficult to forsee the issue of the contest with slavery in the Southern States; for this country is closely connected with the other nations of Christendom, and that contest here was only a section of a wider contest, which was begun by the words of Him who spake as never man spake. When the golden rule was given, slavery was, in fact, the corner-stone of the world's civilization, and the movement, which started with the Christian religion,[1] had already given freedom to the slaves of every Christian nation of Europe. The slave power had been able to prolong its existence in the New World, by the peculiar condition of the nation; but it must have reversed the movements of eighteen centuries, to have maintained itself permanently. If there had not been vitality enough in the Christianity of America to destroy it, the whole power of the civilization of Europe would have been thrown into the scale against it. There was something sublime in the marshaling of the forces. There were moral forces, and political forces, and ecclesiastical influences, and at last there were physical forces. Some of them came from far. Some of the agents knew not what they did. Not all the motives were pure. But there was an unseen hand directing these powers, material and spiritual, and preparing them through long years. And when the time came, there was such concentration, such bearing down from all points upon the opposing power, as is seen only at the issue of some great historic process, which is to change the future of the world. And when the end came, it was so decisive that there was no thought of raising the issue again.

But this is only a single illustration of the logic of history. A large and comprehensive view of the current of events will enable us to forecast the future. The river does not flow in a straight line, but it moves ever toward the sea. Revolutions, it is often said, do not move backward. And we do well to look out for the indices of the designs of Providence, "lest haply we be found to fight against God."

There are natural limits of progress which we may learn from the experience of society. History will hardly encourage any one to expect to build up a thrifty and well-ordered state on the principle of a community of goods. We shall do well to limit our theories of the right of suffrage by the fact that there are natural diversities between the sexes. It is not an open question whether an ignorant people can maintain a republic. In these, and in a multitude of other points, the lessons of history are decisive.

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[1] Works of Prof. B. B. Edwards, Vol. ii. p. 106.

If it were possible to eliminate from modern society those principles of progress which are the outgrowth of Christianity there would be left but a small remainder. It meets those wants of men which are permanent and universal. No age has outgrown it, no progress has antiquated it. The great currents of influence which are raising the masses of men from ignorance and poverty and servility, which are checking the spirit of selfishness and softening the rigors of law — liberalizing the law of nations — are they not all of them Christian in their origin? Nor does the course of history leave us in doubt as respects the future triumphs of Christianity. Slowly but surely the balance of power has been passing over to the Christian nations. The great armies and navies of the world are now controlled in the interest of Christianity, we may almost say of Protestant Christianity. The extension of commerce, and the improvement in means of communication on land and sea, are bringing all tribes and nations into closer intercourse. Light is spreading. Prejudices are disappearing. The benefits of a Christian civilization are more and more appreciated. The interests of men are auxiliaries in extending knowledge among the ignorant races. Commerce, with its myriad influences, is a powerful auxiliary. And, last but not least, the various branches of the Christian church are sending the open Bible and the living preacher to the pagan nations. Through all the ages "one increasing purpose runs." These various agencies combine for one end, and we are slowly but surely nearing the time when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

III. It is only carrying out this thought when we say, that *the scholar, as a public leader, should recognize the supremacy of moral and religious ideas.* He would be out of the line of history if he were to pass them by, for the course of events is bringing these ideas into greater prominence. The constitution of the human mind must be changed before we can safely refuse to recognize religious influences. A physician might as well shut his eyes to the influence upon his patient of the social affections as of the religious nature. The teacher must take the child as he finds him, with intellect and affections and conscience, and the best education is that which meets the wants of the whole nature. Each part affects the rest. You cannot cultivate the heart without quickening the intellect, and the moral nature adds new motives to the love for knowledge. How, then, is it possible to exclude religious influences from the best systems of education? "I would not take the Bible from the schools," said Mr. Choate more than a quarter of a century ago, "so long as one particle of Plymouth rock remained large enough to make a gun flint of, or so long as its dust floats in the air. I would have it read, not only for its authoritative revelations, and its commands and exactions, obligatory yesterday, to-day, and forever; but for its English, for its literature, its pathos; for its dim imagery, its sayings of consolation, of wisdom, of universal truth."[1]

But we need to go further than the systems of education. Moral and religious ideas are very closely connected with the state. There is a mischievous ambiguity in the assertion so often repeated about the separation of church and state. If the meaning be, that the state does not impose a state church upon the people, and that it does not levy a tax for its support, then it is true that there is no connection between the church and the state in this country. But if the meaning be that the state is not to recognize the Christian religion as the religion of the people, then the assertion is not true. If the meaning be that the state is not to recognize moral and religious ends, and those institutions which grow out of the religious wants of men, then such a separation is clearly impossible. President Marsh stated the true position when he said: "The politicians of Europe consider it an essential part of government to support religion, but we have reversed the order, and look to our religion as the only reliable support of our government."[1]

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[1] Life and Speeches of Rufus Choate (Prof. Brown), Vol. i. p. 406.

Every thoughtful man knows that it would be absurd to attempt to maintain a government without any connection with ideas which are strictly religious. For where would government find the sanctions on which it rests? What can take the place of those oaths by which every officer and every citizen binds himself to fulfil his duties to the state? How can government shake off the obligation to protect the religious institutions of the people? If other interests and institutions have a right to protection, why should not the Sabbath be protected by the authority of law from desecration? There is scarcely a village in all the land so small as not to have a Christian church. The settler on the frontier makes it one of his first cares to erect a house of worship. These thousands of churches are connected with the strongest sympathies and most sacred associations of the people, and and can the state refuse to recognize them, and to protect the religious observances of the millions who throng them. And still further, are there not occasions when the state needs to call directly for religious services? If the government provides for the other wants of its soldiers and its sailors, shall it refuse to provide for their religious wants? Are not chaplains called for as legitimately as surgeons? And in great public exigencies, when the pillars of the state are trembling, what shall prevent the government from calling upon the people to supplicate the favor of the Ruler of nations, and the God of battles? The strongest impulses of men have always led them to do this. And after all this has been done, how absurd it is to claim that the state has no connection with the Christian faith.

Society needs moral and religious influences for its protection. It is an admitted principle that public policy requires some system of popular education; for an ignorant population is an element of weakness. But the need of virtuous citizens is quite as plain. Vice will impoverish the people, and eat away the strength of the state.

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[1] Memoir and Remains of James Marsh, pp. 568–569.

We have elements in our population which may well awaken solicitude. If Europe sends us her surplus millions, they will not be the most intelligent or the most virtuous classes. We have learned how universal suffrage works in a great city like New York. And what we find in New York, we may expect to find in other great cities when they gain an equal number of inhabitants. And yet the tendency is to mass men in cities. The census has been showing for two decades that the cities are growing at the expense of the rural districts. Good authorities have stated that the urban population gains twice as rapidly as the population of the whole country, and three times as rapidly as that of the rural sections. This is one of the marked tendencies of our times. It grows out of improved means of communication, and the consequent increase of trade; and it is likely to continue and perhaps to strengthen. What then will be the state of things when other great cities become as populous as New York, and New York as populous as London? And when the cities shall control the political power of this country (as they may by and by) who can answer for the safety of free institutions?

In view of these facts and tendencies, who will say that government has no interest in the moral and religious influences which prevail? Who can deny the right of the government to regulate the traffic in those articles which are the direct causes of vice and crime? Is it safe to fill the land with godless schools and impart to the youth a godless education? Shall we write over every schoolhouse in the land: *No Bible read here, no religious teachings permitted here.*

The course of events is bringing these moral and religious questions into the foreground. The powerful and concerted movements against the Sabbath and the Bible in schools, and against the indirect recognition which the government gives to Christianity, these will in due time awaken the people to counter movements which are essential to the preservation of the institutions of our fathers. The recent national convention at Pittsburgh has called attention to the fact that the Federal Constitution does not in direct terms recognize the Christian religion. This is a fact of greater practical importance than has been admitted by many who have discussed it. The legal questions which have recently come before some of the higher courts in New York and Ohio, and which are sure, sooner or later, to make their appearance before the Supreme Court at Washington — will show us how important it is. The question is already raised, whether this is a Christian nation, and some are taking one side, and some the other, So that it is no longer an open question, whether moral issues shall enter into political discussions; but the question is whether they shall be settled right or settled wrong.

The state has no eyes, save the eyes of its leading men. The men of thought shape its policy. The scholar who knows how controlling a part religious motives and principles have, must shed light on the great moral problems which connect themselves so closely with public policy. There is no real danger of any check of material prosperity. This nation will go on extending its settlements, and increasing its wealth. But it is not so sure that the heart of the nation will be kept sound. Still less certain is it that literature and learning and art will flourish. Yet history shows that the real greatness of nations depends not so much upon material prosperity as upon the intellectual and moral influences which control them. Great poets and philosophers and divines do more to exalt a nation than those who double its trade and its wealth. The work grows larger and more hopeful as the years go by, and it was written long ago, that "in the theatre of man's life it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers on."