

Strike from the annals of these republics the history of their wars, foreign and domestic, scarce one of which can bear the light of Christianity, — strike from them the history of their domestic oppressions, and add to them what never has been written, the history of female degradation there, and of the insufferable despotism which those exercised over their slaves at home, who made the forum ring with their vaunts of liberty, — reduce and correct Grecian and Roman history thus, and you will find little in it which the benevolence of Christianity would not denominate *waste of mind*.

I shall probably be thought most sadly, if not criminally, deficient in reverence for the classic ground of antiquity, by this strong condemnation of the general course of conduct pursued by these ancient republics. Where shall we find oratory more overwhelming, rhetoric more correct, poetry more beautiful, or philosophy more sublime, than in the writings transmitted from the sages of antiquity, and still made the basis of instruction in our higher schools of learning? Instead of undervaluing these productions, I would appeal to them as a ground of encouragement to all literary men; for the whole history of the world scarcely furnishes such an example of success, and such extensive influence exerted by a few literary men. But, on the other hand, it should not be forgotten, that these writings are held in such high estimation not because they contain a correct philosophy, correct moral or religious principles, or even correct rules of oratory. Excepting as models of fine writing, and some rhetorical and mathematical principles, and some true common sense maxims, we are obliged to unlearn all which they contain; and were not the languages in which they were written eminently classic, — that is, chosen as the medium of thought among the learned, — there can be no doubt but these ancient authors