

ity of ascertaining and weighing the facts, the knowledge of which is indispensable in order to the formation of an opinion that would be of any value."

2. A second piece of advice: *Be content to act on many opinions which you are not able to verify intellectually*; that is to say, for which you can give no theoretical or speculative reasons. Such advice may at first seem harsh or unreasonable, since it seems to recommend that we should live by habit and custom and not as rational and intelligent beings. Yet it is no more than is done by all of us, and by most of us almost every day of our life.

Consider for a moment, what are the two great elements in all opinion. They are authority and personal investigation. Some may be ready to question here the right of authority. And yet it is with authority that our life on earth begins and ends. And in fact it is a great question in every age in regard to human judgments, to determine the separate spheres of authority and personal investigation; just as it has been a great question in regard to human actions, to determine the limits of authority and personal liberty.

As an example, we might take religion; but it will be better to select an illustration from the realm of science. In one sense authority has no place in science. We do not accept Kepler's laws or any other of the discoveries or theories of astronomers because of the eminence of their discoverer, or of those teachers by whom they have been approved and commended to our acceptance. We

accept them, or any of them, because they agree with and harmonize the facts of observation, and because they explain those facts.—But, for all this, the great majority of the human race do receive the results of scientific enquiry simply on the authority of those whom they believe to be better instructed than themselves. They have no opportunity of investigating these subjects personally. They are incapable of doing so. Most people, for example, believe that the earth is round, that it turns upon its axis, that it goes round the sun. They have never verified those doctrines. If they believed their senses, they would say that the world was flat and stationary, that the sun comes up from the eastern horizon and goes down into the western. Yet we do not allow our senses to deceive us into this belief, because we are credibly informed that it is not so, and we believe this doctrine, although we may be quite unable to verify it.

So it is in many questions of religion. We are not all theologians. There are very few even of those whose business it is to teach religion who are capable of investigating thoroughly all the grounds in history and in reason on which it rests. Yet we act upon the conviction that its principles are true, and, in doing this, we are not working in the dark or behaving irrationally. We may not be able to investigate the grounds of our belief, but we may test it practically. We have reason, we have conscience, and we have the evidence of the effects of religion in human society. We may refuse, for example, to receive a doc-

(Continued on page 15.)