

of human thought, that has to be analysed and interpreted." This may seem a little too sweeping for some, but perhaps it is a view which ultimately will prevail. Philology has already done much to settle some knotty points in the science of religion, and as it becomes more sure of its results many more of the hard things in theology and metaphysics may become easy.

Now the modern languages of Europe, and especially the Romance languages, offer a most favourable opportunity to the student entering on the pursuit of philological study. In the latter we have a number of cognate dialects—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Roumanian and Rhotoromanisch—living languages which can be thoroughly studied, descended from a common tongue—Latin—which has been preserved to us in a very complete form. We have thus both ends of the problem. We know definitely in a large number of cases the exact form and meaning of a large number of words in the original tongue; we know what forms and meanings these words have assumed in the various dialects of to-day, and we have a mass of constantly accumulating evidence with respect to a series of intermediate forms and meanings they have had at various periods from the days of classical Latin till the present. Hence, Romance philology has become almost an exact science. The changes which have taken place in pronunciation have received a large share of attention from scholars, and the laws governing these changes have in a great measure been established. Less has been done in the departments of syntax and semantics, but even here the work has been mapped out, and many important additions have been made to our knowledge of the science of language.

There can be no doubt that a training in this department is of the great-

est usefulness to him who purposes to prosecute the study of Indo-Germanic philology, or to him who wishes to go yet wider afield into the study of Semitic speech, or any of the other groups of, to us, less well-known languages. In Romance or Teutonic philology not only are all the great questions respecting the origin of language, the growth and decay of dialects, the connection between thought and language and the like brought to our attention as much as in any other department, but they possess the additional advantage of having arrived at a larger mass of solid result, and are therefore well fitted for developing the true scientific spirit of careful, patient research, and unflinching loyalty to proved facts, which is so needful in all linguistic investigation. The student who serves an honest apprenticeship in them is much better fitted to cope with general problems than if he were to begin with the special questions raised in the departments of so-called Classical philology. Here one end of the problem—the original Indo-Germanic speech—is dark and unknown, and instead of knowledge respecting it we must be content to put up with speculation, and the weighing of probabilities, a most useful training, but one which should follow the investigation of well-established facts and principles.

Thus I have tried to show that the modern languages and the training we receive in acquiring them are of great utility. But the benefit derived from them depends altogether on whether or not they are seriously studied. The dilettante must not expect much pleasure or profit from them; but to him who goes about this study patiently and soberly the advantages will not be trifling. Generally the greatest mistake is made in not studying thoroughly enough the languages as we find them spoken to-day. It is rare to find a student who is willing to put