

I think you will all agree with me that the one virtue in a truth seeker is what Carlyle calls "veracity." There must be no haze in your minds as to what you believe. The idea that there is something specially pleasing to God in obscure thinking is a strange survival of the medieval doctrine of "implicit faith." We dare not have faith in anything but the truth, and if we are asked to believe what is shocking to our reason or our conscience, we must firmly decline. What we can verify in our experience we must believe: what has no meaning for us we must refuse to admit. But I would not have you think I am insisting upon freedom to think anything that happens to occur to us. Truth is not a happy guess: it comes only to those who are willing to seek for it, and to seek for it with much expenditure of toil and in the face of many discouragements. Nor, again, does the discovery of truth mean that we are to begin *de novo*, as if no one had ever thought before. On the contrary, I would have all young truth-seekers cultivate a spirit of reverence for the beliefs which have sustained our forefathers, beliefs which were the result of the sweat and tears of humanity. When they have risen to the level of these, by honest toil, they may then hope to see beyond them. And even then, let them remember that the possession of fuller light does not mean that the past had no light. At the best, all the advance in truth any of us can make will only differ in degree from the truth of the past; and therefore we should rather in all cases seek to enter sympathetically into the ideas of others, than be forward to emphasize our real or supposed originality of thought; indeed, it is only by a catholic sympathy with all and every belief, even that most divergent from our own, that we can get a fully-rounded system. In the region of knowledge, as in all other regions, we must "die to live"; we must exercise that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

But, while we must always be willing to do full justice to the ideas by which others seek to rationalize life, we must be resolute in holding fast that which is good. We must, indeed,

be sure that what we hold fast is truth, and not mere prejudices or half-truths; but what we see clearly and feel intensely we must be prepared to fight and if need be to die for. The utmost liberality of thought is not incompatible with the most tenacious conviction; on the contrary, the basis of all liberalism in things of the mind is the belief that truth is so strong in itself that no assaults can overcome it. And this means that the love of truth is so deeply-seated in our nature that we have only to see it, unobscured by the mists of ignorance and prejudice, to yield ourselves joyfully to its persuasive influence. Hence I should advise you, when you are asked to accept any doctrine which is based upon the supposed unknowability of the true nature of things, to ask yourselves rather what element of truth gives it plausibility, than to believe for a moment that it is a final view of our nature. All knowledge ultimately rests upon faith in the rationality of the real, and any theory which exaggerates the imperfection of our knowledge into an absolute limit is self-condemned. Durer, in the picture to which I have referred, seems to suggest that the only science which was beyond the reach of doubt was mathematics. In his day, when chemistry was as yet unliberated from the perverted industry of the alchemists, and the physical sciences were still in their infancy, it was natural to take a gloomy view of the future of knowledge. For us there is not the same excuse. The dreams of the alchemists have vanished like smoke, but in their place we have the science of chemistry, which has at least been able to formulate some of the special laws of the combination of elements; physics has developed into a vast body of systematized truth; the new science of biology has been able to detect the process by which all forms of life have developed; and the great historical process of evolution has shown us how thought in all its changes is the differentiation and integration of a single rational principle. None of these sciences could have made a single step in advance, had they not, consciously or unconsciously been ruled by faith in the intelligibility of the universe, or, in other words, by