

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A PLEA FOR THE USE OF THE METHODS OF SCIENCE IN MORAL MATTERS

LIKE numberless other persons, I have been driven back upon myself by the war. After more than thirty years of thinking and teaching and writing about right and wrong, freedom and necessity, duty and happiness, self-sacrifice and self-realization, the sublime order of the moral world, the permanence and stern benevolence of its laws, their embodiment in the multiform institutions of society and in the customs, traditions, and habits of its members, I am obliged to ask whether, after all, I have been of much use to my fellow-men. What is much more serious, I have been forced to enquire whether the Science I profess to teach has any use, and to question the whole value of theorizing on morals.

I have been proud of my office and very grateful for my "Station and its duties," and I believed I had sound reasons for my satisfaction. "Wise man," says Carlyle, "was he who counselled that Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sartor Resartus*, book i. chap. i.