

avails for deep research in any field of enquiry. Perhaps it may not seem so when we regard ourselves as the "heirs of all the ages." Bacon, in a well-known passage of the *Novum Organon*, says that reverence for antiquity and the authority of men have greatly retarded the advancement of science; and he urges that, if knowledge and mature judgment are to be looked for in the old man rather than in the youth, then we have reason to expect much greater things from our own age than from antiquity, because, so far as the history of thought is concerned, we are older than the ancients, and the world grows richer in knowledge with the advancing centuries. Truth is the daughter of time, not of authority, and the bonds of antiquity and authority must often be broken just as the opinions of youth are outgrown by advancing wisdom.

But, while there is a sense in which this is true, alike in theology as in physical science, yet we do well to remember that we are not the first who have handled the problems of life. The history of doctrine shows us how the same questions have presented themselves age after age. Some of the answers given to those questions have been rejected by men of later generations; some of them are accepted by ourselves; all of them have some value for us, even were it only to show us how along certain lines we need not look for solutions, and to illustrate the conflict of opinion through which, in many instances, our creeds have been formulated. Every wise student will treat with respect the efforts of those who have wrought before him: indeed, he cannot accurately appreciate their work if he studies it with a scornful or arrogant spirit.

But it is not so much in regard to the labors of others, as in regard to the nature and majesty of truth itself, that the spirit of research and enquiry should be reverent and humble. It should be so even in the fields of physical science. Perhaps it might be asked, what matters it whether the spirit of the man of science be reverent or flippant, humble or arrogant? Surely all that is here required is that the intellect be clear and strong, sufficiently daring to venture into new fields and well enough informed to know the value of new experience. If the man who is exploring some department of nature has only the means for making accurate observations and the patience to make a sufficient number, if he can only gather a great enough array of facts, what matters it though he were a profane and self-conceited blasphemer? Might he not, by means of his materials, enlarge the world's vision and grasp of truth!

And yet, it is not the mere accumulation of facts that is required if we are to gain new realms of truth: we need the interpretation of the facts. We may receive our data, our facts, from any witness, provided he be trustworthy; but these data may be like words in an unknown tongue, which it is not given to every one to explain: they may be as perplexing as Pharaoh's dreams, until some Joseph comes to interpret them. For, the facts that form the basis for the inductions of science are not to be regarded as so many quarried blocks which we gather and build into walls, calling the structure a temple of truth. They are rather to be regarded as the whispers of a voice, from which we want to learn who speaks to us: they are tokens of an orderly arrangement existing in the world and we want to know the law that underlies them, binding them in unity. But, for this interpretation of the tongues of nature, for this