

history rather than the paradox of the historian. When, for example, Buckle classes Scotland and Spain together as the two most priest-ridden countries in Europe, ask why the outcome of the riding was so different in the two cases, and you will conclude that brambles and fig trees are not the same, and that it serves no useful purpose to classify them as if they were. As to what the spirit of your age is, men may differ widely in their judgment. That judgment will differ according to the induction they make. May we not venture to say that this age is above everything also critical. We hear of the modern criticism, of its achievements and claims in every department. Undoubtedly criticism has its value, but if this be the chief characteristic of our age, it cannot take the highest place and it is all the more incumbent on us not to be its captives, but its masters. Merely destructive criticism is especially worth little. Niebuhr did not abolish the myths of Greek and Roman history. He interpreted them as expressing larger historical movements than our fathers had learned from the simple stories. And in the same spirit Ewald seeks to construct early Hebrew history. But the importance of this historical criticism has been greatly overrated. I have a good deal of sympathy with the remark of Goethe about its value. "Till lately," he says, "the world believed in the heroism of Lucretia, of a Mucius Scaevola, and suffered itself by this belief to be warmed and inspired. But now comes your historical criticism, and says that those persons never lived, but are to be regarded as fables and fictions, divined by the great mind of the Romans. What are we to do with so pitiful a truth? If the Romans were great enough to invent such stories we should at least be great enough to believe them." Criticism is valuable. It has its legitimate fields and its legitimate claims. Whether we accept its results or not, we must not interfere with its work, but aim at being something more than critics. Do something. And in order that you may do, believe. All the past ages teach us the importance of this. Rejoice in the triumphs of the present as much as you will. Cherish heroic hopes with regard to the future. But be well assured, as Goethe again says, that "let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it glitters and shines forth in the Gospel." Take your stand on the person of Christ and the supreme fact revealed by Him of the Fatherhood of God. The more you trust it the more convincingly it will shine. Depend

upon it that fact is much grander and more life-giving, while it is not one whit more anthropomorphic than Strauss' *Universum*. Again, in your future studies you can now afford to give your strength to some special department, and in taking up this specialty, whatever it may be, never be satisfied unless you get to sources. That is a much shorter method than taking things at second or third hand, and until you have followed it, you have no right to consider yourself a scholar or entitled to speak above your breath. On account of the training given in the German gymnasia, the universities are able to set their students at independent work to a far greater extent than is possible in Britain or America. In every German university it is the aim to set as many students as possible at such work, whether it be to collate a root not yet illustrated, or to experiment in the laboratory with substances hitherto considered elementary, or to count shells never before counted, or to trace a doctrine not yet historically described. As a friend of mine studying in Germany put it, "We are told to find some bit of ground undug and to go at it with our might and tell the world what our spade has brought to the surface." It is this independent study that constitutes the superiority of German scholarship, and nothing contributes so much to it as the thoroughness of the intermediate education. Our Canadian High Schools and Collegiate Institutes are improving so rapidly that we are warranted in hoping that before long much of the work may be done in them that is now done in our universities, and the universities be free to advance beyond the work where a halt is now called. In the meantime, perfect your knowledge, as far as you can in some special department, instead of fancying that your education is finished. Again, be not too eager to attract the world's attention. Every true man is modest. I do not wonder that Bismarck groans over "the eternal talking and begging" that he has had to do. It may seem inconsistent that one whose profession is to teach and preach, and who has had to press upon others the cry of "give, give," as often as the horse leech, should sing the praises of silence and recommend it to others. It is like Carlyle extolling the excellence of silence in volume after volume, or in an eloquent address of one hour and three-quarters long to the students of Edinburgh. Nevertheless Carlyle is right. If you would not deceive yourselves—and that is the deadliest form of deceit—let brave deeds always follow close on brave words. If you cannot do the deed, keep silent. Mere talk will infallibly make you spiritually bankrupt. You may mistake flabbiness for strength. Others will not. Doubtless a word spoken in season is