

its due importance. The task would, indeed, be impracticable, were it not that the essence of the past has been gathered up by successive philosophies and presented in the clear medium of thought. At the present day, as it seems to me, the main problem is to interpret anew, by the aid of existing philosophies, the purified results of science, the highest intuitions of art, and the matured religious consciousness in a comprehensive and self-consistent way. The present volume is a small contribution to the solution of that problem.

To prevent misunderstanding, it may be as well to add a few words as to the relation of the first part of the work to the second. The Christian ideal of life, as expressed by its Founder, seems to me to require no adventitious support, being in itself intrinsically rational; but we cannot say the same thing of every system of doctrine which claims to be the sole representative of Christianity. The precise degree of truth which is contained in any given theological creed is a matter to be determined by careful investiga-