

## Introduction

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And whenever a generation has concentrated itself too exclusively on one side, it behoves some prophet or leader of thought to restore the balance by calling attention to another; and to expound it forcibly, in spite of what, to his contemporaries, may seem a painfully inadequate treatment of the side with which they were already familiar.

The author was accused of dogmatism: but in reply explained that throughout he addressed free inquirers like himself; that his book was not one of authority, but one of inquiry and suggestion, intended not to close discussion but to open it. He dealt with the matter as a lay historian rather than as a theologian; and the result is a very living picture. He collects a considerable body of illustrations both of Christ's character and of the great Christian moral principle, "the divine inspiration which makes virtue natural, active, tender, elevated, resentful, forgiving." This he regards as the foundation of the Teachings.

So also with regard to Christ's acts. As an historian he considers that those which are in harmony with his character gain thereby in credibility, and that about many of them there is "something beyond the ordinary reach, or beside the purpose, of invention." Most of the record is justified and rendered probable, by consistency with character, when subjected to the ordinary historical tests and criteria.

### CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

Reading the book we must thankfully realise how great progress has now been made, at any rate in thought, towards a better understanding of genuine Christianity. Our acts and practical achievement still fall terribly short; but in thought there has been a distinct effort in many parts of Europe to throw overboard needless accumulations of tradition and return to the early and simple Teachings.

It is remarkable that within such recent times it was possible to write as follows:—