

base all philosophy upon a purely Scientific foundation. It is not necessary, at present, to examine what has been the nature and the result of these efforts. We shall come across them in the sequel when dealing with special philosophical problems. At present it is sufficient to note that these attempts have not been found generally acceptable, and have had little practical influence. It must be admitted that individual beliefs and convictions still play a very large part in the region of thought; that they have quite as much the right to be regarded as facts as any more definite, scientific, or historical knowledge. For although it is true that it will rarely be possible for two persons to agree exactly where beliefs and convictions are in question, it is just as true on the other side that these beliefs and convictions, in their collective aggregate, exert upon our practical life an even greater influence than exact knowledge and science itself.

Most persons are unable or unwilling to take a correct inventory of their beliefs and convictions; they nevertheless, willingly or unwillingly, submit more or less to the existing laws of the society in which they live, and to manifold restrictions and ordinances of a legal, moral, and religious nature.

They do so consciously or unconsciously, admitting in this manner that the convictions and beliefs of which these laws and ordinances are the outcome have a marked reality and are of paramount importance. And if we consider all the more important steps which we take, either in our individual or in our social and political life, and try to analyse the motives