

THE
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KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE.

UNDER the title *Erkennen und Leben*¹ I have recently published a book which I should like briefly to introduce to my American colleagues and friends. This can best be done, I think, by sketching the plan of the investigation, and indicating as clearly as possible the way in which it is carried out. The book was originally intended to form part of a larger work. It was primarily personal reasons—especially my present stay in America—which determined me to publish this introductory part of the work separately. But from the point of view of the subject matter treated it seemed also desirable to define the direction which an investigation of fundamental principles should take, before attempting to carry out the work in detail. On account of the confusion and the great differences of opinion at present prevailing in regard to the theory of knowledge, it was necessary that a critical analysis of the main movements of the time should form a principal part of the undertaking. It is not, however, necessary that such a criticism should yield only negative results: it may also serve as a point of departure for the erection of a positive theory.

Attempts to attain a knowledge of reality may be classified under two main heads: First, such a knowledge is supposed to result from the activity of the peculiar power of the intellect; second, knowledge is construed in terms of life, and in terms of the relations which thought bears to life as instrumental to the purposes of the latter. It is clear that knowledge gained by either one of these methods is very different from that obtained through the other.

¹ *Erkennen und Leben*, Leipzig, Quelle und Meyer, pp. v, 165. An English translation will shortly appear from the press of Williams and Norgate.