

ingly hard to define clearly, and in the heat of controversy is very apt to be used so loosely that the results are frequently as damaging to one party as the other.

But it is not very clear to many why the word should be used at all in the sense as generally understood: With its broader meaning, doubtless, it would find scope in the realm of metaphysics, but as applied to the investigator after scientific truth, dealing only with material things, it should certainly have no place. As for any man's personal belief, that is an entirely different matter and one entirely beyond the range of scientific investigation.

The distinction between the terms *agnostic* and *atheist*, if these terms must be retained, while it should be sharply drawn, is apt to be confounded. An atheist, pure and simple, by which one understands a person without belief in God, or in any supreme overruling power, is a very rare being to encounter. Certainly they are very rarely found in the ranks of the earnest workers in the field of Natural Science. The greatest writers and students on these subjects do not hesitate when necessary to express their belief in the existence of a first great cause through which life was first introduced on the globe, and by whom all things are controlled—known, indeed, under different names, such as the Creator, the Infinite, Nature, the Power behind the veil, all of which terms in point of fact resolve themselves into the same meaning. From the fact, however, that scientific problems are supposed to be worked out by the aid of natural surroundings alone, and to be capable of actual demonstration, this portion of their belief is not brought prominently into notice, since there is no absolute occasion for its intrusion, but its influence is everywhere apparent in the lives of our most illustrious scientists.

For many hundreds of years the expression *Gnothi seauton*, know thyself, has been familiar to the human race. Generation after generation has been studying the problem this presented with somewhat indifferent success, and no one will to-day, I think, be so presumptuous as to say, that even in the study of the human frame, and of the phenomena which take place in the human body, have we yet arrived at the perfection of knowledge. How much more presumptuous, then, would it be to say that in any of the great fields of science, art