

An opposing current flows from the higher elevation, discrediting the possibility, and holding on its course in search of the explanation of things behind the appearances contemplated and classified by observational science. The whole conflict of thought in our day is accounted for by these cross-currents. Whatever increased detail in differentiation we may find is consequent on diverse elements commingling in these currents. The one grand conflict is the struggle between an observationalism which seeks the explanation of existence in the facts of existence themselves, and a deeper rational demand which seeks the explanation of Nature beyond itself.

Here is the historic explanation of the rise and influence of agnosticism. It is an attempt to claim that science is all, and that philosophy is nothing distinct; that there is and can be but one line of enquiry in our search for the explanation of things, namely, along the track of observation; that a deeper rational procedure, seeking an explanation of existence behind appearances, is incompetent, and that its votaries are to be recalled. But the times, favorable in one way, are really unfavorable to agnosticism. The force of the cross-current is too strong to be stemmed. Herbert Spencer may be called as a witness whose testimony will be accepted as impartial, and he reads so differently the course of rational progress, that he deliberately offers "a harmony of Science and Religion," and writes in terms so explicit as these:—"The consciousness of an Inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena has been growing ever clearer." (*First Principles*, p. 108.) Science is powerful in its own field, powerless beyond; whensoever it proclaims an agnostic bondage, it falls out of the line of march, weighted and wearied by manacles of its own forging. It cannot place clearly before human view its declaration as to the limits of intelligence, and find credence for its representation. This is admirably put in a passage in the preface to Martineau's *Study of Religion*. To make good the agnostic case, "you must be careful not to look beyond phenomena, as empirical facts; you must abjure the enquiry into causes and the attempt to trace invisible issues; never lift the veil that bounds experience, and you will need nothing and know nothing of a transcendental world." The theory which proposes such restraints cannot be a power in the