

The Nature of Philosophy Defined in Terms of Its Relation to Science and Religion.*

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The history of Philosophy reveals the fact that it has passed through many stages. From the view point of to-day, much that has at times passed for philosophy would not now be recognized as such. There have also been times when the term has been used very loosely; and these times cannot all be relegated to the far distant past. There is need even yet for a clear and comprehensive definition, so clear that all who study it may use the term with the same general notion in mind.

During the middle of the present century, philosophy fell into a decline, caused by the overbearing pride of those who claimed to have a monopoly of it. This decline seemed to have been simply a practical protest on the part of the common people against being recognized as devoid of understanding because shut out of the favored sphere of philosophy.

During the latter part of the century, however, philosophy reached a better day, and learned to look upon the masses with more charity. Every human being is now considered as having a philosophy. The only question is as to what kind of a philosophy it is,—one founded upon a few stray fragments of knowledge, or one founded upon a universal examination of reality. In this general view, philosophy seems to be concerned with the ultimate problems of life, such as find their way into the thinking of every conscious human being, and is thus co-extensive with human life. In this paper it is to be defined in terms of its relation to Science and Religion.

It will be necessary for this purpose to have first, clearly defined views of Science and Religion, and then with these in mind, find the point of resemblance or contrast in relation to philosophy.

(1.) Science has for its particular sphere the world of observation and experience. In this field it can roam at will and undisturbed. All that it can perceive by the senses, or feel in experience are proper objects for investigation.

The work of Science is to note differences and similarities, to classify and arrange, and to record the results of such investigation. Science does not ask *how* or *why* but simply *what*. These investigations are perfectly colourless in being made to stand related to any certain desired result. The scientist is indifferent to any result. His business is simply to record the facts which have resulted from his investigation.

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