

creed such as should satisfy those who had discarded the ruling religious creed as well as the idealism of Continental thinkers. The simple answer which Herbert Spencer gives to the problem: What is Reality? is this, that what we have so far termed the truly Real or the ultimate Ground of everything, is unknowable to us, though it exists as an underlying Power; and, secondly, that all we can know about Reality is confined to the phenomenal world or to appearance. Though not exactly in the same words, Herbert Spencer's philosophy thus admits that twofold meaning of the word Reality on which I have dwelt in this chapter, and which has come down to us from antiquity, notably through the writings of Plato.

Through this doctrine of the Unknowable, English philosophy has arrived at a similar position to that occupied by several thinkers abroad, for it takes as its fundamental principle that we do not know Reality, directly and immediately, by intuition or instinct, but that we know it only in its appearance through the many things and events which lie in and around us or are known to us historically. As these different regions which make up the phenomenal world offer plenty of occasions for observation and study; as, moreover, this study has to be pursued on definite lines and by precise methods, there is room for a science of First Principles, in addition to the various sciences which carry out their investigations by adopting and using those principles without a previous critical examination of their scope, origin, and validity. Such an examination can be termed metaphysical, although it either disregards, or