

of Scientific Thought. There we were from the beginning able to give a simple and intelligible account of the aim and purpose of all scientific reasoning; this consisted in the application of one and the same method to all objects and events of Nature as they exist or have existed in the past. This method was the simple method which begins with observation and proceeds through description and clear definition, to measurements, and ultimately to calculation: only to the extent that the latter and highest process—viz., that of calculation—has become applicable, has it been found possible to deal not only with present and past phenomena and occurrences, but also to some extent to foretell the future, or to penetrate with our knowledge into those recesses of nature which are, through distance in time and space, through magnitude or minuteness, unreachable by actual observation.

49.
No consensus as
to philosophical
methods.

It is not possible to comprise all successful philosophical thought within an equally simple formula. This defect may be traced to two definite causes. The first of these is the fact that no general consensus exists regarding the method of philosophy, such as exists with regard to the methods of science. The methods of the latter, though their logical nature has been variously defined, are nevertheless so simple in their application that little time need be spent by the student of science in learning them. The best way of acquiring a knowledge of them is practice itself. This gives such proficiency that even the greatest minds that have applied these methods with unflinching success have not generally spent much time in giving an account of the processes of thought