

Leslie Stephen's Agnosticism and Victorian Debate on Faith and Science

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This paper will examine the basic methodological characteristics of Sir Leslie Stephen's agnosticism in comparison with Victorian intellectual atmosphere on science and religion. The paper's major target is his *An Agnostic Apology* (1876).

First, the paper briefly shows the fundamental argument, in those days, of reasoning of the existence/non-existence of soul/God by Benthamites, Darwinians and their opponents from the view point of 'empiricism vs. intuitionism' or 'the limit of reason'.

Second, the paper focuses on Leslie Stephen's *An Agnostic Apology* as a representative of Victorian compromised view on faith and science, although the term 'agnosticism' itself was coined by Huxley in 1869 as 'Agnosticism' ... 'is not a creed, but a method' together with raising the problem of the meaning of 'substance', 'assurance', and 'evidence' and so on...'. It also traces how Stephen classified and characterized some contemporary thinkers' views on the matter such as Spencer's and Newman's.

Third, the paper, then, will try to confirm that Stephen was struggling with finding a compromised point between 'an intuitional proof' of the existence of shown in Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, for instance, and his own philosophical radical-originated logical agnosticism. This provisional conclusion will imply that nothing has changed in the argument of the existence of god since 1876, the year of publication of the Stephen's article.