

**A NEW INTERPRETATION OF
HERBART'S PSYCHOLOGY AND
EDUCATIONAL THEORY
THROUGH
THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNIS**

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A new interpretation of Herbart's psychology and educational theory through the philosophy of Leibnis by John Davidson

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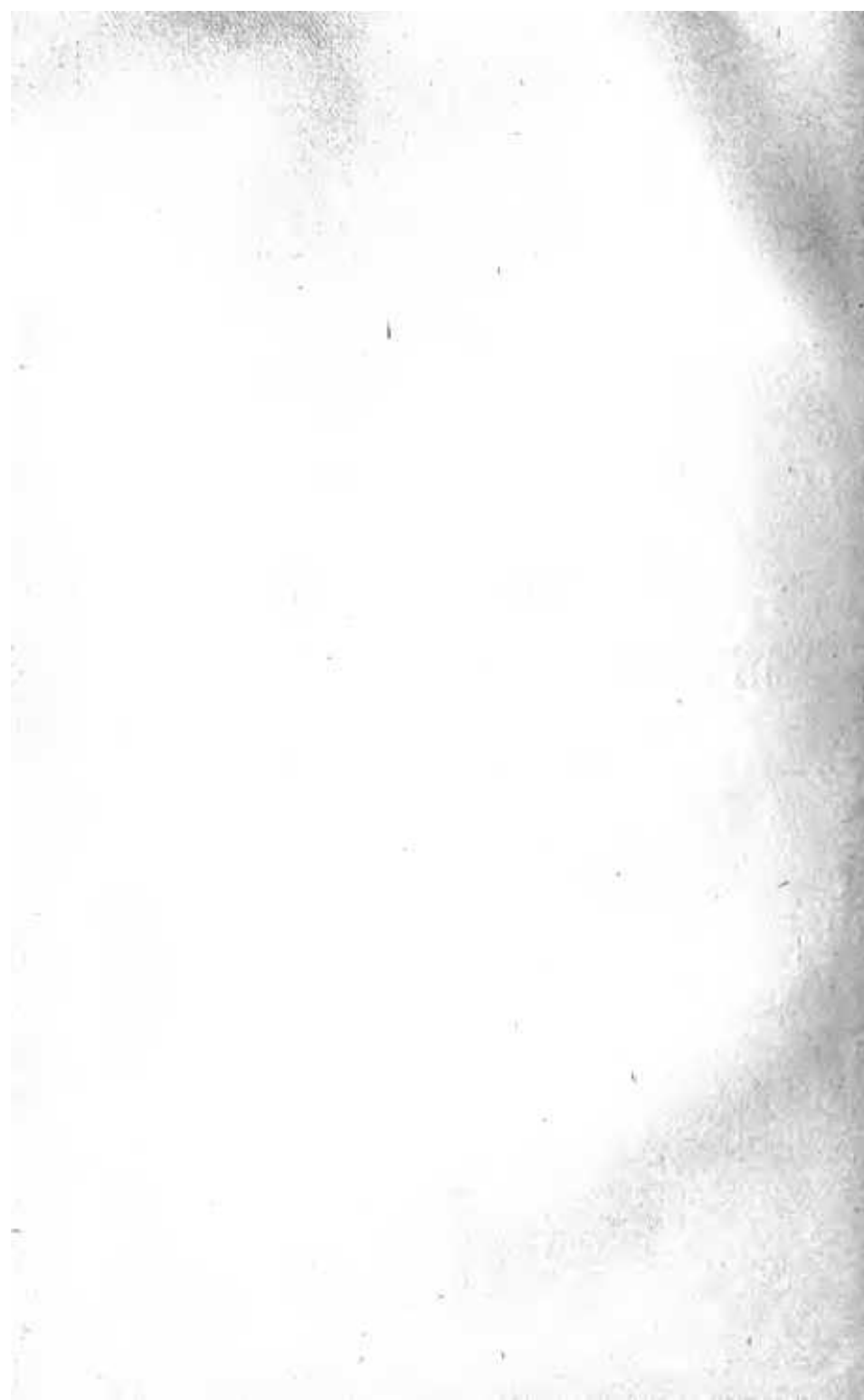
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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNIZ

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following pages represent an attempt to give a general and, it is believed, a new interpretation of Herbart's psychological and educational theories so as to show the adequacy of his fundamental conceptions to meet at least some of the demands of a science of education. In particular, there is an attempt to show, first, that Herbart's psychological standpoint is the only intelligible and workable standpoint for the practical teacher; and second, that from this standpoint such definite connotations can be given to the terms soul or mind, knowing, feeling, desiring, will, interest, and habit, that the terms so connoted become scientific and guiding concepts for educational practice.

No one can be more aware than the writer of the many imperfections of his interpretation. Thus, for example, in connection with the Leibnizian philosophy through which the interpretation of Herbart is reached, there are ultimate metaphysical questions which he has left severely alone, and which the philosophic critic may compel him to answer before allowing him to

pass on. Yet he has excuse. Were the educator to wait on the solution of all ultimate metaphysical questions for his educational concepts he would wait for ever, whilst all the time practical needs would be urging him to get forward somehow. With an eye therefore on practical issues, the writer has tried to steer a course through metaphysical difficulties by the way of least resistance, and has been led to conclusions, either Herbartian or implicit in Herbart, which on the whole seem to him to be in harmony with the results of long personal observation and experiment in the schoolroom.

It would be a lengthy task for the writer to acknowledge his indebtedness to all those whose works have helped him towards his interpretation. Amongst those to whose writings he is more specially indebted should be mentioned his old chief Professor Laurie, and Professor Darroch—the philosophical antagonism of both to Herbart's educational theory forming a guide as well as an inspiration to the argument; Professors Latta and Stout, whose masterly expositions of Leibniz and Herbart respectively were of constant service; the late Professor Adamson of Glasgow; Professor James; and, of Herbartian educational writers, Professor Adams of London University, and Dr F. H. Hayward, whose enthusiastic work 'The Critics of Herbartianism' is a veritable "vade-mecum" to a student of Herbart. Most of all the writer has been dependent on the original works of Leibniz and Herbart, as well as on those of

the Herbartian critics Ostermann, Natorp, Hubatsch, and others. In the numerous quotations from these writers fidelity to the thought rather than elegance of translation has been rightly aimed at.

In conclusion, it may be permissible to state that the treatise as now published is practically what was accepted by the Senatus of Edinburgh University in 1905 as a Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Whatever improvements have been made upon it since then are almost entirely due to the sympathetic and suggestive criticism of Professor Welton of Leeds University, the additional examiner for the degree of D.Phil.