

**THE THEORY OF
INFERENCE,
PP.1-255**

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The Theory of Inference, pp.1-255 by Henry Hughes

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HENRY HUGHES

**THE THEORY OF
INFERENCE,
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R. M. Wentley,

from

H. Hughes

THE THEORY OF INFERENCE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE
THEORY OF INFERENCE

BY THE

REV. HENRY HUGHES, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL MORALS"



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P R E F A C E

THIS book, a wholly secular composition, was originally designed to form part of a treatise on religious faith. But it so grew in the course of being written, in material size and intellectual weight, that at length it seemed desirable to publish it as an independent volume.

Although the argument is primarily intended to serve a special purpose, and the form in which it is cast has to a certain extent been determined by that purpose, yet the author ventures to hope that it will be found to have a general and scientific value. He offers it to the thinking public, not merely as a defence and explanation of the habit of assenting to propositions which are not capable of being demonstrated by one man to another, but as an impartial investigation of the whole of that part of mental science which has to do with inference. He has endeavoured to set forth with all needful clearness and precision the nature and the limits of induction and deduction, as well as to vindicate the essential reasonableness of what he has called illation. Induction and deduction, on the one hand, he has sought to exhibit as the kinds of inference which are appropriate to, and only possible in, the field of natural law: illation, on the other hand, he has striven to expound as the

kind of inference, and the only kind, which leads to the discovery of causes and effects in the field of history. It has seemed to him that, in order to win general acceptance for the theory of illation which it was his primary purpose to establish, it was necessary to make it evident to his readers that induction and deduction are unequal to, and are not as a matter of fact employed in the performance of, the work of drawing conclusions about real and concrete things. And thus it has come to pass that logical inference, from its foundations upwards, has been made the subject of careful and minute investigation.

The book being such as has been described, the author asks for it the attention of other readers besides those scientifically interested in the question of religious faith. He thinks that it may prove to be of use, not only to the theologian, but also to the general student of logic and philosophy.

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