

**ELEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY,  
COMPRISING  
LOGIC AND ONTOLOGY  
OR GENERAL METAPHYSICS**

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Elements of Philosophy, Comprising Logic and Ontology or General Metaphysics by W. H. Hill

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# ELEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY,

COMPRISING

## LOGIC AND ONTOLOGY

OR

## GENERAL METAPHYSICS.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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The following elementary work, though primarily intended for learners, will, it is believed, be found by the general reader of philosophy to contain things which are new, as regards works of the kind published in the English language.

In order to render the Logic more easy and more practical, *First*, the author has omitted the perplexed, undiscussed and indeterminate Greek derivatives, which give vagueness or obscurity to the matter contained in many popular text books on Logic; and he has aimed to use in their stead the most plain and simple terminology. This perpetual multiplication of indefinite and unintelligible technicalities, which are devised as if to embody new forms of thought, helps much to render the study of Logic and Philosophy discouraging, and their very names repulsive, even to the most ambitious and the most intelligent young minds that attempt to master the established elementary principles of these all-important branches of a good education. The introduction of a new term into a book on Philosophy, does not necessarily imply the actual discovery of a new truth. It is a significant fact that, while eccentric

thought and novel phraseology possess a peculiar charm for ill-educated, rambling and superficial minds; yet, the language which remains in prevailing use, is the embodiment of deep and true philosophy; and the words as well as the conclusions, which convey what is absurd or preposterous, it must necessarily repudiate, by the general law of human thought.

*Second:* It was judged best, also, for the interests of learners in general, to omit the discussion of the *modes* and *figures* of the syllogism; for, in practice they are not attended to, even by those who actually argue in form, the simple rules of demonstration sufficing for all practical purposes, and being all that is even really useful in the strictest argumentation. On the other hand, it was deemed expedient to introduce some matters that pertain to branches of Philosophy, whose full treatment is appropriate to another volume; e. g., certain subjects which strictly belong to Psychology, Cosmology and Natural Theology.

The author derived much help from notes taken in private study years ago, but which were prepared with no thought of ever employing them for any other purpose than his own instruction. It is hoped that the acknowledgment of having made a free use of what was then obtained from the best works within his reach, will excuse the omission of more frequent reference to them in the margin.

In disposing the matter, the method employed in the most approved text books used in the schools of Philosophy is generally followed. In such works the definitions of terms,



many important propositions of Logic and Metaphysics, even with the chief arguments for them, are treated as common property; as happens, for example, with certain definitions and theorems of geometry, originally from *Euclid*, but which are now the recognized property of all geometricians.

In order to secure brevity, after having indicated succinctly, but, as he trusts, clearly and comprehensively, the theories and the salient points of the matters treated, he has been compelled, in many instances, to leave their development to the instructor, or to the reader for himself.

The writer flatters himself that the treatises on certainty, and its motives and principles; on sensible and intellectual cognition; the objective reality of ideas; the principle of causation; will, perhaps, be found to possess special value, more particularly for those who are not familiar with the language of the schools.

It was deemed expedient to insert on the margin, here and there, some suggestive axioms, brief distinctions and explanations, taken from the *Latin* authors, among whom they pass for established doctrine, and are usually enunciated nearly in the same terms. The *Latin* of the schools, besides being brief, is also peculiarly capable of expressing precisely, clearly, and comprehensively, matters which it is difficult to utter through the less accurate vernacular, in terms that are neither obscure nor ambiguous. Though they are not essential to the text of the work, yet, for the convenience of the reader who is not familiar with the Latin language, the translation is subjoined to these

citations. It was, however, found no easy task, in some instances, to reproduce them with fidelity in English phraseology, as the classic scholar will readily see from the result, and know how to judge benignantly.

If the offering which is herewith respectfully made to the cause of education meet with public favor, it is designed to complete the philosophical course by adding to the present work treatises on Cosmology, Psychology, Theodicea, and Ethics or Moral Philosophy. Whether this part of the undertaking be well or ill done—and, doubtless, many errors and imperfections have escaped notice—it may, nevertheless, fairly be taken as a specimen of what the whole is likely to be; and, even if it prove to possess but indifferent merit, still it is the fruit of much toil, and the result of the writer's best possible effort, done, as it was, during intervals between various daily duties. With this candid statement, the work is sent forth with the hope that kind suggestions and ingenuous criticism may contribute to improve, and perfect it for the object intended; i. e., an aid for the study of Philosophy.

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY,  
*February 10th, 1873.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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### PHILOSOPHY; ITS OBJECT.

The word *Philosophy*, according to the sense in which Pythagoras applied it to his school, means the love, desire and pursuit of wisdom. Philosophy, as a science, is the knowledge of things in their highest and most universal causes, so far as such knowledge is attainable by the light of natural reason. Its object, therefore, includes the world or universe, man, God, in their most essential relations to each other.\*

It is not without propriety, then, that Philosophy, when compared to the whole collection of human sciences, is pronounced to be, "as the sun in the planetary system, the light of all." Without some adequate acquaintance, at least with the body of its established doctrine, even a liberal education is incomplete or partial, if, indeed, it be not superficial or unsound.

The *knowledge* of a thing, even when it is *scientific*, stops with the immediate or proximate causes of that thing; but *wisdom*, which is *philosophical knowledge*, refers the same thing

\* "Rerum divinarum atque humanarum causarumque quibus continentur cognitio." The knowledge of human and divine things, and of the causes by which they are related to each other.