

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
TRANSCENDENT USE OF THE  
PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY IN  
KANT, HERBART AND LOTZE: A  
DISSERTATION; PP. 1-61**

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The Doctrine of the Transcendent Use of the Principle of Causality in Kant, Herbart and Lotze: a dissertation; pp. 1-61 by Frank Hugh Foster

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**FRANK HUGH FOSTER**

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OF THE <sup>1445-84</sup>  
TRANSCENDENT USE  
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KANT, HERBART AND LOTZE.

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A DISSERTATION  
TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIPZIG

BY  
**FRANK HUGH FOSTER.**

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## INTRODUCTION.

The present age busies itself to a large extent with the problem of the grounds and extent of knowledge. One of the most important elements in this problem is that touching the principle of causality, which, since the time of Hume, has been the object of special discussion, and about which a variety of opinions have been held. The interests connected with this question are great, for, on the one hand, natural science does not satisfy the desires and impulses of man until he has arrived at some opinion as to the nature of things considered independently of our experience, and, on the other hand, theology seeks for faith the support which can be derived from rational arguments for the being and nature of God. In the strife of opinions, the best results are gained by those who are content to listen to the utterances of the wise, and accept that which has, on the whole, been found most capable of standing the tests of experience and criticism. And a consideration of the views of great men upon this topic will be likely to be rich in practical instruction. It is accordingly the object of the present dissertation to institute a comparison between the views of three great philosophers upon the limits of the application of the principle of causality.

The authors selected are *Kant*, *Herbart* and *Lotze*. Kant began the critical study of this subject in Germany, and has contributed more to it than any other one man. If we turn aside from the idealistic schools which succeeded *Kant*, as likely to give us little more instruction than is contained in him, *Herbart* is the next great German philosopher. Although *Fichte* was his immediate teacher, he was, in a large sense, a pupil of *Kant*, even though strongly opposed to him in many points. He is connected with *Kant*, and yet he shows us a contrary side of the question, while *Lotze*, who was formed very largely by the genius of *Herbart*, stands in still closer connection with *Kant*, and thus combines in himself to a great extent the excellencies of both of these writers. We have in the three, accordingly, not merely a trio of great names, but a group of philosophers, who, through their mutual relations naturally form the complements of one another, and

whose systems may be expected to yield by comparison a mutual correction of error, and a mutual support in the truth.

Our definite topic is conveyed in the words: The Doctrine of the Transcendent Use of the Principle of Causality in *Kant*, *Herbart* and *Lotze*. — The language is from Kant, and is used in the Kantian sense. We are the recipients of sensations and perceptions which constitute a world of experience within ourselves. All philosophers admit, for some reason satisfactory to themselves, that within this world of experience the principle of causality finds a proper application. But our sensations are not themselves the things which may be supposed to lie at their base as their cause, and the question arises whether we can pass out over the boundaries of this experimental world, and affirm anything by help of our principle of a world beyond. If so, this would be to make a *transcendent* use of the principle (Pure Reason p. 292).

It is proposed, then, to examine the systems of these philosophers so far as may be necessary to give a clear view of their opinions upon this subject. We shall ask *What they teach*, endeavor to find *the reasons which they give* for their doctrine, *compare their views* with one another, and endeavor to *estimate the positive results* gained for philosophical science by the combined labors of the three. In this investigation our attention will be particularly directed to their views in reference to the two topics suggested above, the *Ding an sich*, to make use of *Kant's* term or the external cause of our sensations, and God. These will suffice to illustrate the doctrine of the three writers, and afford sufficient materials for criticism. But under the former head one department, that of the soul considered in itself, will be for the most part excluded, as affording nothing for our purpose not gained from the consideration of the material world, and as leading us into too prolonged discussion for our present limits.

We begin with *Kant*.

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1) The editions of the authors employed are as follows: *Kant*, edition of *J. H. v. Kirchmann*: Pure Reason (R. V.) 1877; Practical Reason (P. V.) 1870; Faculty of Judgment (Urthk.) 1872; Prolegomena (Prol.) 1876. The text of the R. V. principally used is the *second* edition 1787. — *Herbart*, "Werke", edition of *Hartenstein*. *Lotze*, System, Logic 1874, Metaphysics 1879, Microcosm, 3d. edition, 1876—80.

## KANT.

§ 1. The Problem of the Pure Reason is expressed by *Kant* in the following words: How are synthetical judgments a priori possible? The form of this question suggests the great underlying presupposition of *Kant's* system, viz. that a priori synthetical judgments exist, and that the province of philosophy is to investigate their possibility. The words employed in it foreshadow his theory. Synthetical judgments are those which make some addition to our stock of knowledge. A priori judgments are those which are made independently and anticipatory of experience, being contributed by those principles of the mind by which experience is made. If there are such a priori elements of knowledge in the mind it is important to have a criterion by which they may be known, and this is given by *Kant* in the proposition that such elements bear marks of *necessity* and *universality*. The single proof suggested for this proposition is that experience never confers upon its judgments either of these distinguishing marks (p. 47 f.).

§ 2. Passing now to the solution of his problem, *Kant* takes up the question: How are pure mathematics possible? And here we need to delay with him long enough to notice some peculiar elements of his doctrine. Space and time are shown to be intuitions, and not concepts, and the proof that they are a priori, rests for the most part upon the fact that they bear the marks of a priori origin, necessity and universality. It is not necessary that we should dwell upon the process of proof by which *Kant* comes to the conclusion that space and time, although a priori, are *empirically real*. But it is of great importance to us, as illustrative of our theme, and preparing us for the consideration of what more closely concerns us, to observe the *method of proof* by which *Kant* arrives at the conclusion that space and time are *transcendentally ideal*, that is to say, "that they are nothing, so soon as we remove the condition of the possibility of experience and consider them as something which belongs to things in themselves" (p. 79). There seem to be but two arguments advanced for this conclusion. The first (pp. 78. 83.) is best stated in respect to space. It is: — "Neither absolute nor relative limitations can be intuited before the