

**LOGIC; OR, THE
ANALYTIC OF
EXPLICIT REASONING**

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Logic; or, The analytic of explicit reasoning by George H. Smith

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BY

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PREFACE

IT is well known to those conversant with the current literature of Logic that recent logical theories diverge widely from the old Logic of Aristotle and the Schoolmen, and no less widely from each other. From this it happens that, under the common name of Logic, we have many doctrines essentially different from each other; and the student who desires to enter upon the study of the subject is thus confronted with the preliminary problem of determining under what name the true Logic is to be found. Nor in this case can he expect much help from his instructors; who, like the rest of the logicians, are hopelessly at a loss. Whether he shall study Logic—whatever may be his wishes and his determination—must therefore be a matter for chance to determine. And, even should he be so lucky as to light on a place where something like Logic is taught, it will probably be taught in so mutilated a form and so mingled with extraneous, and even inconsistent matter, that it will be

impossible for him to understand it or to appreciate its utility. Hence, if the plain truth is to be told, Logic, in the true sense of the term, is no longer taught or learned anywhere; but has become a lost art.

But while the logicians of the day are thus at variance among themselves, there is unfortunately one point in which they agree with each other, and also with Whately and others of the older logicians. This consists in the opinion that Logic is a purely formal science, and as such concerned only with the forms, and not with the matter or content of language or of thought; or, in other words, that it does not deal with what is thought or expressed, but with the forms of the thought or expression only. From this it must follow—if the view be accepted—that Logic, except merely as an improving mental exercise, can be of no practical utility; and this indeed is commonly asserted and always implied in the Logics of the day; which, though essentially different in other respects, agree in this. And from this again it must follow—as on this view was irresistibly argued by Locke, Stewart, Reid, and others—that the subject is unworthy of the serious attention of rational men; which, on the premises assumed, has indeed come to be the verdict of the common sense of mankind. Thus the student is discouraged from

the study of the subject not only by the confusion reigning over it and the almost insurmountable initial difficulty of recognizing the true Logic among so many pretenders, but by the conviction impressed upon him by an irresistible argument and by the practically unanimous teachings of logicians, that Logic cannot be put to any practical use.

The view taken of Logic in this work is different. It is what I conceive to be the ancient and orthodox view, that Logic has to deal with the matter as with the forms of thought and its expression; that it embraces in its scope everything that touches the right use of words, as instruments of reasoning, or, in other words, the whole subject of explicit reasoning or ratiocination; that it is the science fundamental to all others and essential to all who, in the search after truth, would pass beyond the mere evidence of their senses; that, in its educational aspect, it is not only an essential part, but the very foundation of rational education; and finally that, in use, it is indispensable to the rectitude of thought and of life. Hence, of all branches of learning, I believe it to be of the largest practical utility to man, and that all the learning of the day cannot compensate for its loss; and also that its decadence in modern times has been one of the great calamities of mankind. All this I attempt to

establish and to illustrate practically in the following pages; to which I must refer for the complete proofs; but perhaps something towards this end may be effected in advance by explaining briefly how the work came to be written.

In the investigation of Jurisprudence, Politics, and Morality generally—to which my studies have been principally devoted—two important facts were forced on my attention, that seem to establish my present thesis:

(1) The first of these was that the prevailing errors in the theory of Politics, Sociology, and Morality, and the Moral Sciences, or Science of Human Nature, generally, have their sources, almost always, in merely logical fallacies, and may be readily refuted by the application of familiar logical principles; all of which will be practically illustrated in treating of the fallacies. Here, then, I think, we have a practical proof of the indispensable utility of Logic, and the consequent refutation of the error that it deals only with the forms of thought or expression. For it is known to all logicians that the most serious and pernicious of the recognized fallacies are those that relate to the matter expressed in language, and are therefore called the material fallacies; which by logicians generally are admitted into Logic, but, as it were, on sufferance only.

(2) The second fact I learned was that, though it is impracticable to refute such errors otherwise than by the application of logical principles, yet owing to the logical decadence of the age, and the general disuse of Logic, this mode of refutation is unavailable. Hence under existing conditions, there is no practical means of stemming the tide of moral and political heresy with which, with increasing violence, mankind is being afflicted; and from this it follows, as a necessary inference, that the first step towards reform of doctrine, or life, in any direction, must be a revival of the study and use of Logic. My work therefore is the result of a profound realization of this practical necessity, and of the imperative demand thus resulting. Nor—however interesting the theory of Logic may have been to me—have I ever lost sight of what I conceive to be the most important aspect of the subject, namely, its supreme practical utility.

Generally, the object of the work is to vindicate, as against modern innovations, the old or traditional Logic. This constitutes a perfectly definite body of doctrine, rivalling in accuracy and in demonstrative force the Geometry of Euclid. Nor are there wanting treatises in which its theory and application are, on the whole, well explained, — as, *e. g.*, notably Whately's work; which, notwithstanding some