

**THE PRINCIPLES OF
DESCARTES'
PHILOSOPHY. [1961]**

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BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA & HALBERT HAINS BRITAN

**THE PRINCIPLES OF
DESCARTES'
PHILOSOPHY. [1961]**

THE PRINCIPLES OF
Descartes' Philosophy

BY
BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA

(THE PHILOSOPHER'S EARLIEST WORK)

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
HALBERT HAINS BRITAN, Ph.D.

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*As a token of gratitude for his kindness and
for his help, I dedicate this book*

TO

PROFESSOR GEORGE M. DUNCAN, LL.D.

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PREFACE

This translation, undertaken at the suggestion of Professor George M. Duncan of Yale University, has been made from the Latin text of Vloten's and Land's *Benedict de Spinoza Opera*, 1895. A careful study of this work such as a translator must needs make has convinced me that more attention should be given to the early writings of Spinoza for the help they give in understanding his Pantheism. By this means, by seeing how his ideas followed naturally if not always quite logically, from personal factors, and from Descartes' philosophy, some of the most obscure points in his system of philosophy are materially elucidated and explained. But a historical or genetic study of any subject today needs no apology. The only remarkable thing about this is that so little attention has been given to this method of clearing up the obscurities of Spinoza's thought.

In my introduction I have not attempted to make an exhaustive analysis of the work translated so much as I have endeavored to fasten the attention upon some of the points which throw light upon Spinoza's Pantheism. Little reference is made to Part II. or to Part III. of the *Principles* because they treat of matter that has but little importance in understanding the *Ethics*. And the contents of Part I. being better presented in the *Cogitata Metaphysica*, we have confined our analysis mainly to the appendix. If some added light is thrown upon the two or three points to which