

**FRANCIS HUTCHESON: HIS  
LIFE, TEACHING  
AND POSITION IN THE  
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649751891

Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy by William Robert Scott

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Cover @ 2017

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# FRANCIS HUTCHESON

HIS LIFE, TEACHING AND  
POSITION IN THE  
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

WILLIAM ROBERT SCOTT

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Cambridge :  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
1900

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Cambridge:

PRINTED BY J. AND C. F. CLAY,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS,

TO THE  
MOST REVEREND

WILLIAM ALEXANDER, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.,

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND,  
A PRELATE JUSTLY RENOWNED ALIKE FOR THE ORATORY  
THAT MOVES, AND THE TOLERATION THAT BINDS TOGETHER  
CHRISTIANS OF DIFFERENT CREEDS—

THIS RECORD OF THE LIFE AND WORK  
OF A PRESBYTERIAN THINKER, KNOWN IN HIS DAY FOR  
ELOQUENCE AND BROADMINDEDNESS, WHO WAS ASSOCIATED  
WITH ARMAGH AND BETRIENDED BY A FORMER  
ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

IS DEDICATED,

BY ONE WHOM HIS GRACE HAS ENCOURAGED  
BY "MEASURED WORDS" OF RIPE WISDOM.

## PREFACE.

As a rule a book dealing with the work of a single thinker is often intended to establish some favourite thesis of the writer. No such claim is made for the following account of Hutcheson's life and position in the History of Philosophy. Indeed any definite conclusions arrived at have been ascertained incidentally. They formed no part of the original plan of the work, which was exceedingly modest, being in fact an endeavour to collect information as to the main facts of Hutcheson's life in Dublin prior to his appointment as Professor at Glasgow. Of this part of his life very little was known and yet it seemed that a man who had been a friend of the Lord-Lieutenant and who had enjoyed the confidence of both Irish Primates should have left some trace upon the social history of his time. The search for such traces of his personality was exceedingly disappointing. Sources from which information might reasonably have been expected gave very small results: and, just when one was ready to despair, new facts were discovered in quite unexpected quarters. This apparent elusiveness of Hutcheson's life appealed to that hunting disposition, which according to evolutionists, is a legacy from remote and non-literary ancestors; and, finally, I decided to



endeavour to run the quarry to earth by examining contemporary history, memoirs and letters in the hope of making an exhaustive search after the necessary material for an account of Hutcheson's life in Ireland. I had intended to reduce the results to some kind of narrative in the form of a magazine article during the year of the 150th anniversary of Hutcheson's death. However, after making a rough draft, I found the material had grown beyond these limits and that the account would have been necessarily incomplete. Besides, I had accumulated a considerable amount of information upon Hutcheson's life at Glasgow; and, when Miss Drennan of Belfast had kindly placed the valuable series of letters written by Hutcheson to her great-grandfather at my disposal, I determined to make a fresh beginning and write a biography which would be complete as far as possible. Such an account of Hutcheson's activities let in much new light upon his general mode of thought, and it became necessary to collate these facts with the internal evidence afforded by his writings. Consequently an analysis of his books is added to the life—not as a mere summary of his Philosophy but rather as an attempt to trace out its origin and to follow step by step the various forms it assumed in the mind of Hutcheson himself. In this exposition no attempt has been made to force him to be self-consistent nor yet to emphasize his inconsistencies. I had intended to end the book at this point, leaving it to the reader to draw his own conclusions from the facts, but it was suggested that, in such a form, the volume would appear unfinished and I have therefore added two chapters, summarising the general conclusions, which appear to me to be deducible from the material contained in the earlier chapters. Such being the growth of the book it will be seen that it is not intended to prove any position and that the place assigned to Hutcheson in the

History of Philosophy is really that which he himself sought to gain, though this fact has been lost sight of through lack of knowledge of several important aspects of his life and work.

I am much indebted to Miss Drennan for the loan of the valuable collection of letters already mentioned. There are twenty of these, one of which has not been printed as it deals with business matters, but the remaining nineteen have been reproduced practically in full, with the exception of a few sentences, which repeat in a condensed form what has been elsewhere detailed more fully. Owing to the fact that most of these letters deal with heterogeneous subjects, it was necessary to divide them into parts and assign each to its proper chapter in the biography. I am also indebted to the following persons and institutions for permission to print MS. material—Sir Edward Reid; Advocates' Library, Edinburgh; Magee College, Londonderry; Public Record Office, Dublin; Registry of Deeds Office, Dublin; Royal Irish Academy, Dublin; Royal Society, Edinburgh; Town Council, Edinburgh; Trinity College, Dublin; and the Senatus of the University of Glasgow. I have to thank the editor of *Mind* for permission to reprint some paragraphs from an article which appeared in that publication, dealing with James Arbuckle.

During the composition of the work I received many valuable suggestions, which have cleared up doubtful points, or enabled me to avoid certain errors I might otherwise have made. Thus, in reference to the first seven chapters, I beg to thank the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., of the Memorial Hall, Manchester; Rev. W. T. Latimer, B.A., of Eglisli, Dungannon; and Mr Pillow of Armagh for information upon special points; and also, for many hints and improvements in the more philosophical portion, Profs. Knight, Ritchie, and Herkless of the

University of St Andrews, and Prof. L. C. Purser of Trinity College, Dublin. To Prof. Ritchie I am specially indebted for reading the whole work in MS. and also the greater part of it in proof.

My thanks are due to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for their liberality in publishing the volume.

ST ANDREWS.

*July 26, 1900.*