

**SCOTTISH METAPHYSICS,
RECONSTRUCTED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL
SCIENCE**

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Scottish metaphysics, reconstructed in accordance with the principles of physical science by E. Edmond

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E. EDMOND

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PHYSICAL SCIENCE**

SCOTTISH METAPHYSICS

"The genuine method of Metaphysics is at bottom identical with that which Newton introduced into Physical Science."—
KANT.

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[Edmond E.]
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SCOTTISH METAPHYSICS

RECONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE

BY THE WRITER OF

'FREE NOTES ON HERBERT SPENCER'S
FIRST PRINCIPLES'

E. Edmond. Sciv.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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P R E F A C E.

Our Scottish Metaphysics may with advantage be restated or reconstructed somewhat in correspondence with the lines of Physical Science, taken in its widest sense as including organic nature as well as inorganic. This would lead us to deal with the mind and its operations, as we do with the body and its actions, by viewing the mind as having its hyperphysical environments and being active therein, even as the body is active in the midst of its physical environments. As Physiology or Biology is the science of the living organism and its functions, so Psychology is the science of the mind and its functions; but as we have Physics or Physical science, which embraces the former and goes beyond it, so we have Metaphysics, which embraces Psychology and goes beyond it. And as we would not study physical nature by limiting ourselves to only an organised portion of it—viz., the body—so we should not pretend to study moral or hyperphysical nature by confining ourselves to only an organised portion of it

—viz., the mind. We cannot understand the bodily organism and its functions without observing its activities in the extra-organic field, and indeed without marking the mutual relations subsisting between organism and environment; neither can we comprehend the mental organism and its functions without observing its operations in the extra-mental field, and indeed without considering the mutual relations existing between the mind and its moral environment.

But is there a moral sphere or environment connate with the mind, and in which it is active, as the body is in its connate physical environment? If there be such a hyperphysical sphere for the mind, as there is a physical for the body, it cannot be that that moral sphere should inhere *in* or issue out of the mind, any more than that the physical sphere should inhere *in* or be developed from the body; it must be a positively objective sphere, and not a subjective sphere for the mind to expatiate in. The analogy promises the discovery, that as the body derives its substance, maintenance, and growth from its surroundings, so the mind must obtain its substance, nourishment, and development, not from itself, but from its moral surroundings; it must see and breathe in the light and air of Intelligence, feed upon the substance of Goodness, and work under the effectiveness of Causation. This may be deemed a poetic way of stating the alleged facts; but the following pages are an attempt to show that there is a hyperphysical or moral world as well as the physical world,

and even that such is the necessary suggestion and implication afforded by our current systems of Metaphysics.

Following the Scottish views on metaphysical questions as the most practical of the current systems, we may take Hamilton's exposition of it, with his illustrations from other sources, and draw our parallel lines alongside of it, to exhibit, by contrast more vividly, the objective nature of the hyperphysico-moral sphere wherein the mind exists and works. By this means we may succeed in doing what Chalmers seems to have desired—viz., "to clear away idealism (with certain '*a priori* notions') from the regions of the *understanding*, even as the old 'ideas' were cleared away from the region of the *senses*." The process may also help the progress of Science, by "connecting *thought* with the other phenomena of the universe, and suggesting inquiry into the nature of those physical *conditions* or *concomitants* of thought, which may assist us to exercise similar control over the *world of thought* as we already possess in respect of the material world" (Huxley adapted). It would save us from Hegel's ludicrous notion of a philosopher viewing things with his head down and feet up, or Heine's comical reflection upon subjective philosophy—viz., "The ego is to investigate its own intellectual acts under the process of thinking; thought is to play the spy on itself whilst it thinks, whilst it grows gradually warmer until at last it is boiling. This operation reminds us of the monkey seated on the hearth before a copper