

Rudolf Hermann Lotze



*Outlines
of Metaphysic*

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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THE name of Rudolph Hermann Lotze, philosopher, has already been made familiar to a large number of readers in this country, and no little interest has been awakened in his opinions upon various philosophical and religious themes. But thus far the number who have attained any trustworthy knowledge as to what those opinions are, has remained exceedingly small. Until very recently all his most important published works have been inaccessible to every one unable to cope with voluminous philosophical German. Within the present year, creditable translations of the two large volumes on Logic and Metaphysic, which constitute all of his System of Philosophy that the author lived to publish, have appeared in England; and a translation of his Mikrokosmos (three volumes in German) is promised soon to appear. These works, however—especially the two former—are not only large but technical and difficult; few are likely to attempt their mastery who are not already trained in the reading of German philosophy. Yet there is scarcely any other recent writer on philosophical subjects whose thoughts are so stimulating for their breadth, penetration and candor; or with whom an acquaintance is so desirable for purposes of general culture through the philosophic way of considering life, with its interests in not merely pure thought, but also in morals, religion, and art.

It affords me, therefore, the pleasure that comes from the hope of being useful to a wide circle of persons, to

announce that I have arranged to translate and edit several, if not all, of those little books called 'Outlines' which have been given to the public in Germany since the death of their lamented author. These 'Outlines' cover the entire ground of Lotze's mature teaching in the University upon the subjects of Logic, Metaphysic, Philosophy of Nature, Psychology, Æsthetics, Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and History of German Philosophy since Kant. A word of explanation as to the origin of these books will suffice to assure the reader that he is to be put into communication with the thoughts of this philosopher in a way which he can trust both as to substance and form of expression. The German from which the translations are to be made consists of the dictated portions of his latest lectures (at Göttingen, and for a few months at Berlin) as formulated by Lotze himself, recorded in the notes of his hearers, and subjected to the most competent and thorough revision of Professor Rehnisch of Göttingen. The 'Outlines' give, therefore, a mature and trustworthy statement, in language selected by this teacher of philosophy himself, of what may be considered as his final opinions upon a wide range of subjects. They have met with no little favor in Germany.

I have used such competence and diligence as I could command in translating this first one of the Lotze series which it is proposed to publish. As far as seemed consistent with a desirable accuracy, technical language has been avoided, and the work presented with an English expression. Some of the terms employed in the original, however, do not admit of exact and elegant representation in our

language; nor has it been possible—had it been deemed desirable—wholly to disguise the savor of the class-room.

The Metaphysic was selected as the first one of the series for translation, because the views of the author on this subject were always regarded by himself as being, and in fact are, fundamental and initiatory to his views on all the other subjects to be treated. No one can make any progress whatever in understanding the philosophical system of Lotze, or even in seeing the true bearing of his observations on aesthetic, ethical and religious matters, who has not mastered his *metaphysical* notions. This little book, then, should be regarded as furnishing the key and door to all the rest.

Two principal objects have been before my mind as motives for undertaking these translations. I wish, in the first place, to further the work of teaching philosophy by their use. Such condensed, orderly, and mature statements of conclusions on a wide range of philosophical questions will be found exceedingly valuable for both teacher and pupil. They furnish a *scheme* for all the instruction which the teacher is able to give in presenting and answering these questions. When skillfully used, they may be made to introduce the pupil to the widest fields of philosophy under the guidance of a great master, and in an interesting way. They present the applications of Metaphysic to art, religion, nature, and human conduct;—and they thus open regions of reflection into which the instruction of our colleges and universities scarcely takes their students at all,—regions, however, which are precisely the ones where such students both desire and need to go.

I wish, in the second place, to have these thoughts of Lotze do their legitimate work in liberalizing, expanding and elevating the culture of those persons who are wont to be styled the 'educated class.' Perhaps, since what is here offered to them is presented in so compact and manageable form, not a few will be glad to look on life,—in its widest extent, human and divine,—with quickened powers of reflection under the stimulating words of this teacher from another nation. With such an object in view, it may be regretted that the first number of the series should be the most abstract, and seemingly foreign to practical interests, of them all. But, then, as I have already said, it is introductory and fundamental.

It is not my purpose to attempt to defend, refute, or even characterize the opinions which these books will, for themselves, sufficiently set forth. Two or three remarks, however, will help to guard the uninstructed reader against certain misapprehensions of the author which might otherwise easily arise. The philosophy of Lotze is a remarkable combination of elements from the school and from real life. The elements which come from the school are both directly philosophical, and also only indirectly so through the physical and natural sciences. In the same year of his life, at the age of twenty-one, he gained both the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and that of Doctor of Medicine. Although his earliest published works were on Metaphysic (1841) and Logic (1843), the first to be much noticed were those upon the science which deals with the relations of physical and psychical phenomena: on the Physiology of Life (1851) and of the Soul (1852). The

thorough-going attempt made by the latter works to apply the conception of mechanism to the phenomena of mind led many to misunderstand Lotze, and even to class him among so-called scientific materialists. The freest allowance is given to the scientific conception of mechanism in this series of philosophical 'Outlines.' But the reader should never forget that in the view of Lotze, 'Mechanism'—or the coherency of the phenomena according to fixed laws of action—is only the means or 'way of behavior' which the highest Idea, the Idea of the Good, has chosen to realize itself. And the whole drift and aim of the philosophical system set forth in these little books, is away from materialism. The disciples of Lotze—should he make any among us—would become uncommonly at their ease concerning the ultimate result upon our fundamental faiths and aspirations, of materialistic science and destructive criticism.

Some readers of the 'Outlines of Metaphysic' may be betrayed into the hasty conclusion that their author was pantheistically inclined. Such should remember that it is not the business of Metaphysic to go far in the personification of that Absolute Being whom it discovers as the 'Ground' of all reality, or in defining the true personality of the finite spirits which thus apprehend this Absolute Being. On such subjects, the 'Philosophy of Religion' and the 'Philosophy of Ethics' (Practical Philosophy) will give the elaboration and application of the author's metaphysical conceptions. It is my plan to have these two additional numbers of the series follow the one on Metaphysic, within a few months. In the meantime, if this philosopher also must be *classed* with

others, let us affirm our hope and belief that his conclusions will be in the main acceptable to the many who are feeling strongly a certain most interesting and promising drift in modern philosophy. Among such are those who have learned much from Hegel, although they have been obliged to modify many of his views. The method of Hegel was, indeed, always opposed by Lotze; and he endeavored to make good what he considered the deficiencies of Hegel by substituting for a movement of Absolute Thought, a movement of Absolute Life, as the centre and sum of all reality. But, with all the differences in both method and conclusions of the two thinkers, Lotze teaches something like the same spiritual Monism as that into which many who have learned in the school of Hegel are leading the way. And for such as do not feel that they have learned, even indirectly, from Hegel the secret of reconciling science with aesthetics and religious impulse, Spirit with so-called Matter, and Mechanism with Idea, these works will be found useful in pointing out how a candid and well-furnished mind considered such problem of reconciliation, as well as in throwing light on many of the subordinate problems the solution of which is involved in the larger one.

It should be mentioned with gratitude that these translations have been undertaken with the kind permission of the German publisher, Herr S. Hirzel, of Leipsic.

GEORGE T.
LADD.

NEW HAVEN, October, 1884.

INTRODUCTION.

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§ 1. Our every-day apprehension of the World is pervaded throughout with suppositions concerning an inner coherency of its phenomena, which is in no wise immediately perceived by us, and yet is regarded as needing no explanation and as necessary. Thus, for example, even the most common apprehension of the world is impossible without articulating the content of our perceptions in such a manner that we assume 'Things' as the supports and centres of its phenomena and events, and all kinds of 'reciprocal actions' as being interchanged between them. Neither those things, however, nor these actions, are immediate objects of perception. In the same manner are both a theoretic apprehension and a practical treatment of the world inconceivable without the supposition of a causal connection of that which has actual existence.

All these and other suppositions we have become accustomed to in life with the feeling of their necessity, but without availing ourselves of a clear knowledge of their precise meaning and of the grounds and limits of their validity. There are therefore never wanting occasions where doubts at once arise in us concerning their validity. Thus in the consideration of human transactions, the new conception of freedom stands opposed to the 'causal nexus' previously deemed of universal applicability. Thus on consideration of the soul, the conception of 'Thing' seems to

be in general inept to designate the permanent subject of its changeable phenomena.

These contradictions, in which the *extra*-scientific form of representation is involved, and to which the particular sciences also lead,—in so far as the axioms which some one of them follows in its domain run counter to those which another of them leaves undisputed in its domain,—make us sensible of the necessity for a universal science, which takes as the objects of its investigation those conceptions and propositions that, in ordinary life and in the particular sciences, are employed as *principles* of investigation.

This science is Metaphysic.

§ 2. The two questions that lie nearest at hand would accordingly be: How can we get possession of those suppositions *completely*, in order to have in collective form that total content of our reason which is necessary to thought? and, then: How can we demonstrate that these suppositions have any validity, or what validity they have?

As to the former question, it is well known that Aristotle first directed attention to those most general conceptions which are expressed concerning everything actual (the 'Categories'); but without conducting his search for them according to any principle, or giving any security that his enumeration of their series was complete. In more recent times, Kant attempted to make good this deficiency: Every act of cognition, he held, takes place by combination of ideas, whose form is that of logical judgment. If now it is sought to discover the different suppositions which we make about possible or necessary combinations of 'Things,' then there is only need to collect all the essentially different

forms of the logical judgment, and it will thereupon be found that a special model of combination has been followed in each, according to which subject and predicate are thought of as cohering. For example: the categorical judgment ("gold is yellow") simply combines subject and predicate as thing and attribute; and this relation between thing and attribute is one of those suppositions which we make concerning the coherency of things. The hypothetical judgment ("if gold is heated, it melts") unites the predicate to the subject, not absolutely but conditionally; and the thought which lies herein,—namely, that of a combination of changeable phenomena according to a law of conditioning, is a second of those universal suppositions. Kant expresses them both by the brief titles of the categories of 'substantiality and of causality.' [In reference to this point it is common to remark, that the correct form, in which we are able to express those suppositions concerning the nature of actuality that are necessities of our thought, is without exception that of the proposition, not that of the conception. Only a *proposition* states a truth from which, by application to particular cases, definite determinations can be deduced. Conceptions are only elements which can form truths by composition; of themselves alone they are nothing, until we are told what is to be done with them. It was on this account a hindrance to the history of philosophy, and led to inapplicable ways of speaking, that Aristotle reduced those thoughts to the form of fundamental conceptions; and that Kant also, at least at first, represented the truth which is necessary to thought as a series of conceptions, ('pure notions of the

understanding'). In a round-about-way he annulled again this deficiency, when he afterwards sought to deduce a system of fundamental propositions of the understanding from these conceptions of the understanding.]

On the whole, it cannot be admitted that this clue, or that the series of forms of judgment to which it conducts, can lead to the complete, correct, and useful discovery of the metaphysical suppositions. Logical thinking is a combination of ideas according to laws of a universal truth; but these ideas do not relate to what is merely actual, but to all that is thinkable, even to all abstractions which can never of themselves have any actuality. The logical forms are, further, modes of experience, by means of which our human thinking combines and disposes manifold ideas, in such manner that a cognition of what is actual can be gained therefrom; but these logical forms themselves are not immediate copies of the combinations which take place between the elements of actuality. It is therefore to be expected, that this clue will indeed remind us of many metaphysical conceptions, because, of course, even that which is actual can be thought of only in the aforesaid logical forms; but that, on the one side, we cannot be led by it to all the fundamental propositions of metaphysic, and that, on the other side, we may by following this clue hit upon conceptions which have merely a logical value, and of which the metaphysical applicability is not clear.

§ 3. In the above-mentioned way Kant had discovered twelve categories, and, on account of the consciousness of necessary and universal validity which accompanied them,