



# **The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics, Through the Study of Modern Systems (Classic Reprint)**

*Mary Whiton Calkins*

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Excerpt from *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics, Through the Study of Modern Systems*

I must admit at the outset that this book is not written to lure students, guiltless of metaphysical aspirations, into pleasant paths of philosophical speculations. It is intended rather for students and readers who are seriously concerned with the problems of philosophy and genuinely anxious to study metaphysics under the guidance of the great thinkers. The book is, none the less, designed for beginners in philosophy, as well as for those more advanced, and I have tried to make it clear in statement and logical in order. I have audaciously attempted to combine, also, what seem to me the essential features of a systematic Introduction to Metaphysics with those of a History of Modern Philosophy. This I have done both because I believe that the problems of philosophy are, at the outset, best studied as formulated in the actual systems of great thinkers, and because the historical sequence of philosophies, from Descartes's to Hegel's, seems to coincide, roughly, with a logical order.

I am well aware that in writing a book which seeks to combine two functions, often distinguished, and which attempts to meet the needs of two groups of students, I have run the risk of fulfilling neither purpose and of helping neither set of readers. I hope, however, that certain features of the book may prove useful; in particular, the plan on which it classifies metaphysical systems, the summaries it offers as well of the arguments as of the conclusions of modern philosophers, the exact quotations and multiplied text references of its expositions. If I have overloaded the book with quotations and references, it is because I have myself suffered greatly from my inability to find in the writings of the philosophers the doctrines attributed to them by the commentators.

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