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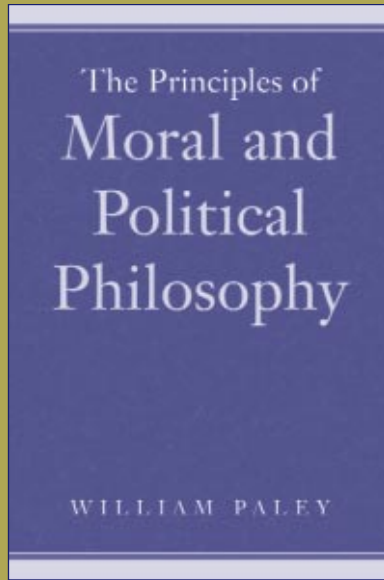
The Principles of
**Moral and
Political
Philosophy**

WILLIAM PALEY

**THE PRINCIPLES OF
MORAL AND POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY**

By William Paley
Foreword by D. L. Le Mahieu

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*The most popular text in the
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First published in 1785, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* was originally based on William Paley's lectures at Cambridge's Christ College from 1766 to 1776 on moral philosophy, divinity, and the Greek Testament, which were highly regarded and well attended.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Paley's popularity fell sharply. The emergence of Darwinian evolutionary theory undermined Paley's basic premise of natural theology, which presented in a clear and lucid manner the evidences for the existence of God.

In 1933, however, Paley's work was rediscovered by Lord Keynes, who wrote: "If anyone will take up again Paley's *Principles*, he will find, contrary perhaps to his expectations, an immortal book." (John Maynard Keynes, *Collected Writings*, Vol. 10). Keynes went on to say, "it was for a generation or more an intellectual influence on Cambridge second only to Newton."

As editor D. L. Le Mahieu points out, Paley's political theories rejected social contract theory and substituted instead a natural history of civil society. His opposition to electoral reform, and later, the French Revolution, "became part of a larger ideological discourse that helped the British elites withstand the revolutionary currents of the 1790s."

Paley died in 1805, having attained the position of archdeacon in the Church of England. In 1825, Paley's son Edmund published *The Works of William Paley, D.D.* in seven volumes. *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* is the fourth of these volumes.

D. L. Le Mahieu is Hotchkiss Presidential Professor at Lake Forest College in Illinois. He is also the author of *The Mind of William Paley: A Philosopher and His Age* (1976) and *A Culture for Democracy* (1988).

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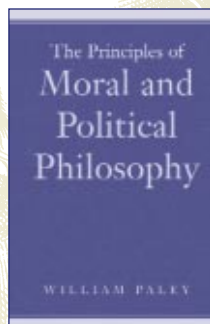
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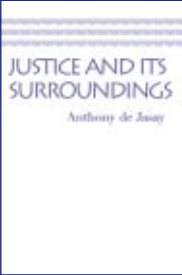
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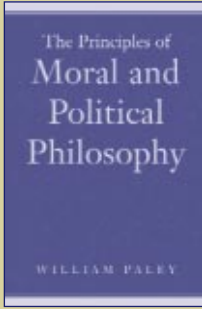
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