

James Beattie: Selected Philosophical Writings - James Harris

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James Beattie (1735-1803) was appointed professor of moral philosophy and logic at Marischal College, Aberdeen, Scotland at the age of twenty-five. Though more fond of poetry than philosophy, he became part of the Scottish 'Common Sense' school of philosophy that included Thomas Reid and George Campbell. In 1770 Beattie published the work for which he is best known, *An Essay on Truth*, an abrasive attack on 'modern scepticism' in general, and on David Hume in particular, subsequently and despite Beattie's attack, Scotland's most famous philosopher. The Essay was a great success, earning its author an honorary degree from Oxford and an audience with George III. Samuel Johnson declared in 1772 that 'We all love Beattie'. Hume, on the other hand, described the Essay as 'a horrible large lie in octavo', and dismissed its author as a 'bigotted silly Fellow'. Although Beattie is no match for Hume as a philosopher, the success of the Essay suggests that, unlike Hume, Beattie voices the cha...Author: Harris, James
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