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JAMES BEATTIE'S *ESSAY ON TRUTH* [1770]: AN
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY 'BEST-SELLER'

On 12 February 1971, writing in *The Times Literary Supplement* about a collection of essays entitled *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, the reviewer agrees with the claim in the book's "Introduction" that the eighteenth century produced a great "outburst of intellectual life" which was to place Scotland "at the centre of the thinking-world". He is disappointed, however, that "there is nothing in this collection directly concerned with it". This view represents accurately, I feel, the disappointingly small amount of contemporary writing about Scotland's contribution to the cultural and intellectual growth of the eighteenth century. One of the leaders in this "Scottish Renaissance"¹ and by far its most popular and influential writer was James Beattie (1735-1803), Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic at Marischal College, Aberdeen. Beattie is now remembered solely for *The Minstrel; or, the Progress of Genius* (1771, 1774), an unfinished Spenserian poem which enjoyed enormous popularity for at least sixty years. In his own time Beattie was also renowned as a literary critic, Christian apologist and writer on the education of youth, but was even more widely acclaimed as the greatest philosopher of the age. His philosophical reputation rested on *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (1770),² which was almost universally believed to have refuted the writings of David Hume and other metaphysicians. Dr. Johnson's reaction is typical of most philosophers, clergymen, writers, periodical reviewers, politicians, noblemen and commoners. In October, 1772, Boswell wrote to Beattie, reporting Johnson's opinion: "I had a letter not long ago from Mr. Samuel Johnson, in which he says, 'Beattie's book is, I believe, every day more liked; at least I like it more as I look upon it'."³ A year later David Garrick reported that when he had praised the *Essay* highly, Johnson had supported him strongly: "Why, sir, there is in it a depth of reason-

ing and a splendour of language which make it one of the first-rate productions of the age" (*Beattie and His Friends*, p. 79). And on another occasion, when Hume was mentioned, Johnson thundered, "Beattie has confuted him".⁴ The book was in great demand, with a second edition coming in 1771 as well as translations into French, Dutch and German. The second edition sold faster than the first, so that a third was called for in the same year, and a fourth in 1772. Thereafter editions followed steadily for many years. Clearly the book was the 'best-seller' of its time.

The sudden fame brought to Beattie by the *Essay* also gained him many friends in Scotland and England along with the highest possible praise. He was honored with two LL.D. degrees from King's College Aberdeen and Oxford, and membership of several literary and philosophical clubs.⁵ Sir Joshua Reynolds placed him in his allegorical painting "The Triumph of Truth, with the Portrait of a Gentleman",⁶ and he was offered three 'livings' in the Church of England. The *Essay* itself was "made a class-book in several of the colleges of both the English universities before Oxford granted a degree" (*Beattie and His Friends*, p. 99). And King George III gave him a pension of £200 for life.⁷ More than any other book the *Essay* called wide attention to Scottish writing, which in the opinion of a reviewer in the *London Critical Review* of December 1795 was "calculated to rescue the literature and sciences of Britain from the contempt into which they must otherwise inevitably fall".⁸

It is remarkable that the *Essay* is totally lacking in original ideas. In fact it merely copies and makes constant reference to Thomas Reid's *An Inquiry into the Human Mind upon the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), which itself had grown out of the discussions of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen (1758-1773).⁹ Beattie was also a member; in fact his *Essay* was almost completely read and debated in the club during the four years he was writing it. Many other books, essays and sermons issuing from the club's members show conclusively that they created and fostered the Philosophy of Common Sense because they were greatly alarmed by the moral degeneracy and "irreligion" of the times. The writings of David Hume were seen as the most wicked expression of such scepticism and doubt and were therefore much discussed. Common-Sense Philosophy was thus born in opposition to scepticism, with the opinion of its supporters about the rise and effects of sceptical philosophy being easily stated. The seventeenth-century writers, Descartes and Locke, the argument goes, built philosophical systems on the belief that the mind perceives ideas from external reality. In rejecting this theory in the early eighteenth century, George Berkeley worked himself into the

untenable position of saying that ideas are the only reality. In 1739 in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume reached the logical absurdity in the development of sceptical reasoning by denying the existence of both ideas and reality. Such dangerous nonsense must be refuted and philosophy restored to a firm foundation. This oversimplified statement of the sceptical position was in fact central to the origin and development of Common-Sense Philosophy. All its writers point out the evolution of Common-Sense ideas from Classical times, with William Hamilton (1788-1856) citing forty-eight authorities before Reid who had operated on Common-Sense principles. Many arguments in the *Essay on Truth* are supported by quotations from or reference to Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Johnson, Montesquieu, and many others. The Scottish brand of Common-Sense made popular by the *Essay* is claimed to be the reversal of scepticism, which is immoral and impractical, and the revival and final statement of true philosophy, which is moral and practical. In fact Beattie defines philosophy as "the knowledge of nature applied to practical and useful purposes".¹⁰ The book's arguments are therefore clear, easily followed and free from doubt and idle speculation; and its refutation of sceptical philosophy is violent and polemical. This simplistic, strongly-argued view of philosophy achieved remarkable success, moving quickly from Scotland throughout the British Isles, to Continental Europe and North America. "In face of the authority of Hume, and despite the attacks of Priestley, the philosophy of common sense spread itself rapidly . . . [penetrating] into the universities, among the clergy, into the bar, among men of letters and men of the world; and, without producing a movement so vast as that of the German philosophy, it exercised an influence of the same kind within narrower limits".¹¹ The extent of this influence is seen in the effect of Common-Sense on American universities: "In his lectures [Samuel Stanhope Smith, President of Princeton from 1795] draws explicitly upon the work . . . of Beattie . . . in addition to that of Thomas Reid",¹² while the "*Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* . . . [was] very important at Yale during the late eighteenth century".¹³

Since Reid's demonstration of the nonsense of sceptical writing had gone largely unheeded, Beattie set about rewriting it in a more "popular" style. Their definitions of Common-Sense, for instance, show very well the extent to which Beattie pursued Reid's lead. For Reid Common-Sense is "that degree of judgment which is common to men with whom we can converse and transact business".¹⁴ For Beattie the term means "that power of the mind which perceives truth, or commands belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous and instinctive impulse; derived neither from educa-

tion nor from habit, but from nature; acting independently on our will, whenever its object is presented, according to an established law, and therefore not improperly called *Sense*; and acting in a similar manner upon all mankind; and therefore properly called *Common Sense*" (*Truth*, pp. 35-6). The vividness and clarity of this statement and the great claim for the intellectual validity of Common-Sense are characteristic of the *Essay*. Beattie was forced to elaborate on Reid's definition to distinguish between Common-Sense—"that power by which we perceive self-evident truth"—and reason—"that faculty by which we perceive truth in consequence of a proof" (*Truth*, pp. 27-8). At best the two are mutually dependent, differing only in the mode of obtaining belief—Common-Sense shows truth through instinctive perception, reason requires logical argument and proof. At worst they seem independent of each other, resulting inevitably in the abuse of reason and the denial or disregard of Common-Sense and truth. This is the trap many metaphysical philosophers have fallen into, Beattie claims, so "that too much reasoning hath made them mad" (*Truth*, p. 40). With reason as the ultimate judge, truth is variable, and conviction is achieved only through tedious and repetitious argument. With reason supporting Common-Sense, however, the mind performs naturally and properly: "In the laws of nature, when thoroughly understood, there appear no contradictions: it is only in the systems of philosophers that reason and common sense are at variance" (*Truth*, p. 132). Common-Sense assures us that "things are as our senses represent them" (*Truth*, p. 50), and that the working of the mind in using memory and imagination is accurate and reliable. But consciousness, the "internal sense", is more important than the external senses, for it is "the clear, the intelligent, the irresistible voice of Nature" (*Truth*, p. 58), which indicates fixed and eternal truth. The moral standard of Common-Sense that is established through investigation of fact and experience is the accurate reflection of this ultimate vision of truth. Common-Sense truth is thus the truth of reality as revealed through natural instinct and the senses and regulated by reason and judgment. Beattie tests this theory by discussing in turn mathematical reasoning, external senses, internal sense or consciousness, the evidence of memory, reasoning from the cause to the effect, probable or experimental reasoning, analogical reasoning and faith in testimony. Always the conclusion is the same: some things may be proved by reason, others must be accepted on faith, but all must conform to Common-Sense principles. There is consequently only one sound philosophical method: "To common sense, therefore, all truth must be conformable; that is its fixed and invariable standard. And whatever contradicts common sense, or is incon-

sistent with that standard . . . is not truth but falsehood" (*Truth*, p. 122).

While agreeing with the refutations of Hume in Reid's *Inquiry* and George Campbell's *A Dissertation on Miracles* (1762), Beattie disapproves of their "extraordinary adulation" of his abilities: "I wish they had . . . expressed themselves with a little more firmness and spirit".¹⁵ He himself is unequivocal: "I am convinced, that this metaphysical spirit is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; that to it we owe all this modern scepticism and atheism; that it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life". The Aberdonian philosophers all agreed that the doubt and scepticism of the age were deplorable, but by the time Beattie started work on the *Essay* the situation appeared to have worsened considerably. Dr. John Gregory, one of the Philosophical Society's founders, moved to Edinburgh in 1764 and was immediately shocked at the social and moral decadence of the city. Convinced that the club's members had read scepticism correctly and alarmed that no good men were coming to the attack, he sent many letters to Beattie, emphasizing the urgency of the situation and imploring him to take up the challenge: ". . . if the present spirit is not very speedily checked, I am confident it will give the finishing stroke to that corruption of heart and principles which makes such an alarming progress. Is it not worth while to say, after this, that it will as certainly and speedily suppress all great efforts of genius and imagination. You are the best man I know to chastise these people as they deserve; you have more philosophy, and more wit, than will be necessary for the purpose, though you can never employ any of them in so good a cause" (*Forbes*, I, p. 136). Many times Gregory stressed what was foremost in Beattie's mind: ". . . to be read, you must not be satisfied with reasoning with justness and perspicuity; you must write with pathos, with elegance, with spirit, and endeavour to warm the imagination, and touch the heart of those, who are deaf to the voice of reason" (*Forbes*, I, p. 141).

Beattie therefore saw his role in writing a philosophical book to be quite different from previous writers: ". . . he who makes these sciences the study of his life, may perhaps collect particulars concerning their evidence, which, though known to a few, are unknown to many; may set some principles in a more striking light than that in which they have been formerly viewed; may devise methods of confuting new errors, and exposing new paradoxes; and may hit upon a more popular way of displaying what has hitherto been exhibited in too dark and mysterious a form" (*Truth*, p. 13). His main aim was thus to make philosophy useful and popular by restoring and illustrating its

(*Beattie and His Friends*, p. 76). Hume thus printed a retraction of his *Treatise on Human Nature* and resolved never to write on religion again.¹⁷ As Strahan was about to publish this "Advertisement", Hume wrote to him: "This . . . is a compleat Answer to Dr. Reid and to that biggoted silly Fellow Beattie".¹⁸ The *Essay* clearly caused a great stir in the camp of the enemy and was not soon to be forgotten, for, as Norman Kemp Smith claims, more than any other work, "it has determined the popular conception of the character and consequences of Hume's philosophical teaching".¹⁹

The greatest support came from London, where Oliver Goldsmith was one of the few to oppose the book. "Everyone", Mrs. Thrale wrote to Dr. Johnson, "loves [Beattie] but Goldsmith, who says he cannot bear the sight of so much applause as we all bestow upon him. Did he not tell us so himself, who could believe he was so amazingly ill-natured".²⁰ Years later, when Mrs. Thrale's letters were published, Beattie wrote to William Forbes on 10 July, 1788, that

what she says of Goldsmith is perfectly true. He was a poor fretful creature, eaten up with affectation and envy. He was the only person I ever knew who acknowledged himself to be envious. In Johnson's presence he was quiet enough; but in his absence expressed great uneasiness in hearing him praised. He envied even the dead; he could not bear that Shakespeare should be so much admired as he is. There might, however, be something like magnanimity in envying Shakespeare and Dr. Johnson. . . . But surely Goldsmith had no occasion to envy me; which, however, he certainly did, for he owned it (though, when we met, he was always very civil); and I received undoubted information, that he seldom missed an opportunity of speaking ill of me behind my back. Goldsmith's common conversation was a strange mixture of absurdity and silliness; of silliness so great, as to make me sometimes think that he affected it. Yet he was a genius of no mean rank; somebody, who knew him well, called him *an inspired idiot* (*Forbes*, III, pp. 49-50).

But Goldsmith was not always quiet in Johnson's presence. One day, for instance, he complained of the praise given Beattie: "Here is much ado about nothing . . . why the Man has written but one Book, and I have writ several". Johnson immediately sprang to Beattie's defence with a sharp rebuke: "So you have Doctor . . . but there go many Halfpence remember—to one Guinea".²¹ There is little wonder that Goldsmith could see no point in disputing with Johnson, declaring that, "if his Pistol misses Fire, he'll knock you down with the Butt end".²² Goldsmith was annoyed by Beattie's visit

to London in 1773 in quest of a pension from the King; and Beattie was aware of his feelings at the time, for he notes them several times in his *London Diary*. On Monday, 14 June, for instance, he writes that "Miss Reynolds told me to day some particulars of Goldsmith. He, it seems, not only is, but even acknowledges himself to be, envious of all contemporary authors whose works are successful, and has several times spoken wt. some peevishness of the attention that has been shown to me in England" (p. 55). As Beattie's popularity grew during the summer, Goldsmith's envy increased. According to his biographers, he was going through a particularly difficult emotional upheaval at the time and thus needed his friends badly. His vehemence against Beattie, however, alienated him from them for a time. "I have been but once at the club since you left England", wrote Beauclerc to Lord Charlemont; "we were entertained as usual by Doctor Goldsmith's absurdity". In citing this letter written from Muswell Hill on 5 July, 1773, John Forster says that the "absurdity" was "some harangue against Beattie".²³ The thorn in Goldsmith's side was the fact that he had long solicited in vain for a pension from the Crown. When it was rumored in the newspapers that a pension was to be granted, his attitude towards Beattie softened. On Tuesday, 20 July, shortly after he had received the honorary LL.D. from Oxford, Beattie wrote in his *Diary*: "In my way to Covent Garden I met Goldsmith; who congratulated me on my late honour, & told me the news-papers had it lately that he and I were both to receive pensions; I told him, that I sincerely wished it might be so" (p. 74). But Beattie received a pension and Goldsmith did not so that envy burst forth afresh. The crowning frustration, however, was yet to come. Goldsmith soon learned that Sir Joshua Reynolds had stopped work on a portrait of him to do "The Triumph of Truth, with the Portrait of a Gentleman". The gentleman was, of course, Beattie; Goldsmith could not refrain from having words with Reynolds: "It very ill becomes a man of your eminence and character, Sir Joshua, to condescend to be a mean flatterer, or to wish to degrade so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Dr. Beattie; for Dr. Beattie and his book together will, in the space of ten years, not be known ever to have existence, but your allegorical picture and the fame of Voltaire will live for ever to your disgrace as a flatterer".²⁴ Fortunately Reynold's action and Goldsmith's frankness did not long upset their friendship, and it is probable that Goldsmith's strong feelings towards Beattie soon abated. While revealing much about himself, however, his response also underscores the enthusiastic reception Beattie and his book received in England, indicating "the vast opinion which held him forth as the great philosopher of his generation".²⁵

One of the main reasons for the fine reception given the *Essay* was the fact that it was regarded as Christian apology. Fanny Burney, for instance, wrote in her diary on 13 July, 1787, that the "*Immutability of Truth* is full of religious instruction, conveyed with such a rare mixture of precision and of wit as to carry amusement hand in hand with conviction".²⁶ Beilby Porteus, the Bishop of London, in a published sermon on "irreligion", wished that Beattie "who has lately done such essential service to the cause of religion, by utterly subverting Mr Hume's uncomfortable and unintelligible system", might also publicly refute "the other two fashionable infidels" Voltaire and Rousseau.²² Clearly Beattie's contemporaries "judged his 'Essay on Truth' . . . by the heart it had put into the party of religion at a time when it was considered the mark of superiority in talent and enlightenment to be an unbeliever" (*Beattie and His Friends*, p. 99). Even in the nineteenth century the book was published in a series called *Evidences of the Christian Religion* (1816). But it was not regarded as an apology merely because it attacked scepticism: it is in effect a restatement of New-Testament doctrines for the common reader in the guise of philosophical argument. The process of instinctive and instantaneous perception whereby man may govern properly his thoughts and actions and reach truth is God's way of revealing himself, with natural impulse being "the voice of God" (*Truth*, p. 59). The God of Christianity is the omnipotent creator and preserver of all things, so that the Christian religion is not man-made but God-given—yet another of his creations which show his benevolence and faithfulness. Common-Sense is thus the voice of God speaking to the true believer.

Throughout the *Essay* scepticism is balanced against Christianity and always found wanting. The stated aim is to prove that scepticism is falsehood, bringing misery to man, while religion is truth, creating happiness. God's will is done, therefore, when one consciously avoids scepticism by trusting in Common-Sense. This is the process of "true religion" which "tends to make men great, and good, and happy" (*Truth*, p. 127): the basic metaphor of the *Essay* therefore shows scepticism as a disease, Common-Sense as the cure, and religion as good health. Scepticism has greatly affected the practice of true religion because man's natural tendency to be thoughtless and complacent makes him easily-led. Many have been fooled, for instance, by Hume's claim that "concerning the cause of the universe we can form no rational conclusions at all" (*Truth*, pp. 98-9). Beattie aims to show rationally that the God of Christianity is the cause of the universe. Through the process of "Reasoning from the Cause to the Effect", he demonstrates that the sensory perception of intimations of immortality from the natural world, being "altogether over-

whelming, and divine", is for the believer proof that God is the prime mover in all things: "That the whole sensible universe hath to us the appearance of an effect, of something which exists not by any necessity of nature, but by the appointment of some powerful and intelligent cause different from and independent of it . . . *cannot be denied* . . . we offer violence to our understanding, when we attempt to believe that the whole universe does not proceed from some cause; and we argue unphilosophically, when we endeavour to disprove this natural and universal suggestion of the human mind" (*Truth*, p. 97). Common-Sense is therefore the union of true religion and true philosophy, showing the spirit of God pointing the path to truth: ". . . truth is something fixed and determinate, depending not upon man, but upon the Author of Nature" (*Truth*, p. 120). The effect of Beattie's insisting on divine authority for his brand of popular philosophy is seen in Mrs. Montagu's remarks in 1773: "Philosophy is a holy thing, should keep erect, look up to heaven, contemplate the stars, and adore their Maker . . . Dr. Beattie will give a voice to all the mute objects I now admire, and lead me farther in virtue and wisdom than I can advance by myself" (*Forbes*, I, p. 371).

The time was ripe for a spirited defence of religion, and Beattie was thus seen as the writer who restated basic Christian beliefs as the proper principles of philosophy. The large number of published and the vast number of unpublished sermons on public degeneracy in the eighteenth century indicate the wide-spread effect of scepticism on the established church. In 1757 in London the Reverend Dr. John Brown argued that "we are rolling to the Brink of a Precipice that must destroy us", largely because "the clergy have lost their influence". "Enthusiastic Religion leads to *Conquest*; rational Religion leads to rational *Defense*; but the modern Spirit of *Irreligion* leads to *rascally* and abandoned *Cowardice*. It quencheth every generous Hope that can enlarge the Soul; and levels Mankind with the Beasts that perish".²³ The extreme alarm and emotional cast of these remarks indicate the extent to which the spirit of philosophical inquiry had challenged the Christian church. In the early part of the century the deists tried to establish a natural religion based on reason, which denied the traditional Christian beliefs in supernatural revelation, moral distinctions and life-after-death. Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (1735), the most formidable of the many refutations of deism, argued that the orthodox claims about God and man are analagous to and proved by natural phenomena. But the *Analogy* was no answer to Hume's well-argued conclusion in the *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739) that no rational deductions at all may be reached about the cause of the universe. There is no better

account of apologetic attempts to refute such arguments than Hume's autobiography written shortly before his death in 1776.²⁹ "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise on Human Nature. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots". By 1750 as the *Treatise* and other books became better known, however, "answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company".

Warburton, the first to attack Hume, set the belligerent tone for most later apologies. Hume writes, for instance, that the publication of his *Natural History of Religion* (1757) "was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, annoyance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school". Hurd's pamphlet, *Remarks on Mr D. Hume's Essay on the Natural History of Religion: addressed to the Rev. Dr. Warburton* (1757), is a good example of the virulent apology Hume faced: [The author] "hath not scrupled to adopt [Warburton's] manner of composition, as well as Arguments . . . he is not one of those cool opposers of Infidelity, who can reason without earnestness, and confute without warmth. He leaves it to others . . . to combat the most flagitious tenets with serenity. . . . For himself, he freely owns he is apt to *kindle* as he writes. . . ." Hurd strikes the public pose of treating Hume as beneath contempt by stressing that he had merely published with little correction the remarks he had jotted in the margins of Hume's essay on first reading: ". . . he never designed the following animadversions for an elaborate piece of instruction or entertainment to the learned reader. He would employ only a vacant hour in exposing to the laughter of every man, that can read, the futility, licence, and vanity of Mr David Hume".³¹ But Hurd should have realized that the time was rapidly approaching when Hume's writings would have to be treated with respect if they were to be answered in print. Reid and Campbell soon supplied respectable philosophical arguments and in return gained Hume's respect as philosophers. But they did not reach a wide audience, and Hume therefore was still much admired as the Great Infidel. Christian writers in the age who used pure philosophical arguments to fight scepticism had very little success with the reading public. George Berkeley, for instance, had set out in *Three Dialogues* (1713) to refute sceptics and atheists, but ended with the creation of a more abstruse metaphysical paradox than they had challenged him with. But apologies, such as Butler's *Analogy*, which were more restatements of orthodox beliefs than philosophical argument, gained popular acclaim for a time. By

the late 1760s, however, when a new defence of religion was due, it was clear that new tactics would need to be devised. Beattie supplied these with much more success than any other eighteenth-century apologist by combining in the *Essay on Truth* a rewriting of Reid's philosophical answer to scepticism with the "warmth and spirit" of the Warburtonian school. He was in fact the only Common-Sense writer to make the divine origin of Common-Sense an integral part of his system and was therefore solely responsible for the unique contribution of the Scottish School in rescuing true philosophy from the wiles of "speculative men" and restoring it to its rightful place in the Christian religion. Since the *Essay* stands as the culmination of a long line of apologia, Beattie must be considered as a Christian apologist of considerable importance.

As early as 1783 Emmanuel Kant pronounced a just verdict on Beattie's philosophy: "... seen in its true light, the argument is nothing better than an appeal to the verdict of the multitude; a clamour before which the philosopher blushes, and the popular witling scornfully triumphs". To have done "the problem justice, Beattie should have penetrated deeply into the nature of Reason, in so far as it is occupied solely with pure thought".³² One must agree, for Beattie cannot be defended as a philosopher on the grounds that he deliberately avoided the intricacies of pure thought to make philosophy practical and useful. It is also futile to argue that his *Essay* was popular and influential precisely because it did not fit the Kantian model of true philosophy. Its roots lie elsewhere and are easily traced. On Monday, 12 March 1711, in *The Spectator*, No. 10, Addison told his readers that he was aiming at their instruction and diversion, so that by attempting "to enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality", he might recover "them out of that desperate State of Vice and Folly into which the Age is fallen". He therefore sets out to save the mind "that lies fallow but a single Day, [for it] sprouts up in Follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous Culture". His ambitions in philosophy were even greater: "It was said of *Socrates*, that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-tables, and in Coffee-houses". Addison's success was great, but he did not reach nearly as large an audience in the century as the *Essay*, which thus shows the fruition of his wish for the popularity and utility of philosophy. Beattie's *Essay on Truth* is clearly the direct descendant of Addison's *Spectator* papers.

NOTES

1. This apt title comes from W. J. Hipple's "Introduction" to Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (Edinburgh, 1780), in *Scholars' Facsimilies & Reprints* (Gainsville, Florida, 1963), p. vi.
2. All references are to the 1776 edition (Edinburgh), hereafter referred to as *Truth*.
3. Margaret Forbes, *Beattie and His Friends* (Westminster, 1904), p. 71. Hereafter referred to as *Beattie and His Friends*.
4. James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (Oxford, 1950), Vol. V. p. 273.
5. Of special interest is Beattie's election in 1784 to the American Philosophical Society. Benjamin Franklyn was its President, and the letter to Beattie announcing his election is of historical importance, for it shows that literary intercourse was still going on between England and America even though political relations were greatly strained. The letter is now in the Beattie Collection of Manuscripts in King's College Library, University of Aberdeen.
6. The painting shows Beattie in his red Oxford LL.D. gown with the *Essay on Truth* under his arm, standing near the allegorical figure of truth as she presses three grotesque persons into submission. Beattie claims that these represent "Sophistry, Scepticism, and Infidelity", as they undoubtedly do. But it is also probable, as suggested by many, that they are Hume, Voltaire and Gibbon. Reynolds said outright that Voltaire was one of them and laughed knowingly when Hume's girth was mentioned in relation to the fat figure in the picture. The painting now hangs in Marischal College in Aberdeen.
7. For a detailed account of Beattie's celebrity see *James Beattie's London Diary 1773*, ed. by R. S. Walker (Aberdeen, 1946). Hereafter referred to as *London Diary*.
8. Vol. 15 (December, 1795), p. 377.
9. For a detailed discussion of this outstanding club see my article, "A Scottish 'Philosophical' Club in the Eighteenth Century", *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Summer, 1970), pp. 201-214.
10. William Forbes, *An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie . . . Including many of his Original Letters*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1807), Vol. II, p. 295. Hereafter referred to as *Forbes*.
11. M. Cousin in James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy* (London, 1875), pp. 267-8.
12. Terrence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1961, New York, Kraus Reprint, 1969), p. 14.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
14. *The Works of Thomas Reid* (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 421.
15. Beattie tells of the origin and composition of the *Essay* in a long letter to the

- blind Scottish poet, Thomas Blacklock, on 9 January 1769 (*Forbes*, I, pp. 167-71).
16. Quoted in E. G. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume* (London, 1954), p. 581.
 17. Boswell records the following anecdote: "Heard him [Lord Kames] rail against Beattie for attacking D. Hume, which I contradicted. He told of Hume resolving never to write against Religion" (*Private Papers of James Boswell*, privately printed, 1932, Vol. XV, p. 69).
 18. *The Letters of David Hume to William Strahan* (Oxford, 1888), p. 29.
 19. *The Philosophy of David Hume* (London 1941), p. 6. See also pp. 7, 80-1, and 520-1, where Smith claims the *Essay* influenced the attitudes of James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Bain and Leslie Stephen towards Hume's work.
 20. Mrs. Piozzi, *Letters to and from Samuel Johnson* (London, 1788), Vol. I, p. 186.
 21. *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Thrale* (Oxford, 1951), Vol. I, p. 82.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
 23. *The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith* (London, 1871), Vol. III, p. 390.
 24. Cited in James Northcote, *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London, 1818), Vol. I, p. 300.
 25. William Walker, *The Bards of Bon-Accord 1375-1860* (Aberdeen, 1887), p. 241.
 26. *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* (London, 1905), Vol. III, p. 251.
 27. *Two Sermons preached at the Chapel Royal, St. James's* (London, 1772), p. 22.
 28. *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the times* (London, 1757-8), Vol. I, pp. 15, 83 and 90.
 29. *The Life of David Hume* (London, 1777), pp. 7-21.
 30. (London, 1757), pp. 6-7.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 32. *Prologomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (London, 1883), p. 5.