



# Pragmatism and The Meaning of Truth (The Works of William James)

*William James*

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*Pragmatism* is the most famous single work of American philosophy. Its sequel, *The Meaning of Truth*, is its imperative and inevitable companion. The definitive texts of both works are here available for the first time in one volume, with an introduction by the distinguished contemporary philosopher A. J. Ayer.

In *Pragmatism* James attacked the transcendental, rationalist tradition in philosophy and tried to clear the ground for the doctrine he called radical empiricism. When first published, the book caused an uproar. It was greeted with praise, hostility, ridicule. Determined to clarify his views, James collected nine essays he had written on this subject before he wrote *Pragmatism* and six written later in response to criticisms by Bertrand Russell and others. He published *The Meaning of Truth in 1909*, the year before his death.

These two works show James at his best full of verve and good humor. Intent upon making difficult ideas clear, he is characteristically vigorous in his effort to make them prevail.

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