

George Berkeley Encyclopedia Article

George Berkeley

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George Berkeley

1685-1753

Irish philosopher and Bishop of Cloyne known for his philosophico-scientific treatises. Berkeley argued that science, no less than religion, relies on metaphysical speculation and lack of rigor as demonstrated by the development of calculus. In *The Analyst* (1734) he noted that both Newton's fluxions and Leibniz's infinitesimals rely on demonstrations requiring increments with finite magnitudes which nevertheless vanish. Berkeley's attack on these "differential entities" was only intended to reveal calculus' faulty foundation, not to impugn its practical utility.