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WILLIAM JAMES ON ETHICS AND FAITH

This book offers a new interpretation of William James's ethical and religious thought. Michael R. Slater shows that James's conception of morality, or what it means to lead a moral and flourishing life, is intimately tied to his conception of religious faith, and argues that James's views on these matters are worthy of our consideration. He offers a reassessment of James's "will to believe" or "right to believe" doctrine, his moral theory, and his neglected moral arguments for religious faith. He also argues that James's pragmatic account of religion is based on an ethical view of the function of religion and a realist view of the objects of religious belief and experience, and is compatible with his larger conception of pragmatism. The book will appeal to readers interested in the history of modern philosophy, especially pragmatism, as well as those interested in moral philosophy, religion, and the history of ideas.

MICHAEL R. SLATER is Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Theology, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

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For Erin

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page ix
Introduction: a practical faith	I
PART I PRACTICAL FAITH AND THE WILL TO BELIEVE	
1 The will and the right to believe	19
2 James’s Wager and the right to believe	48
PART II TWO MORAL ARGUMENTS FOR RELIGIOUS FAITH	
3 James’s religious ethics in “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life”	69
4 Overcoming pessimism in “Is Life Worth Living?”	95
PART III PIECEMEAL SUPERNATURALISM AND PRACTICAL NEEDS	
5 Religion and morality in <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i>	113
6 A pragmatic account of religion	165
<i>Epilogue</i>	233
<i>Bibliography</i>	237
<i>Index</i>	243

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Works by William James are referred to in the body of the text by abbreviations given in the Bibliography at the end of the book. Chapter 5 is a revised version of “Metaphysical Intimacy and the Moral Life: The Ethical Project of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 43:1, Winter 2007, 116–53. © 2007 Charles S. Peirce Society, and reprinted with the permission of Indiana University Press. Parts of the third section in Chapter 6 originally appeared in “Pragmatism, Realism, and Religion,” *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 36:4, December 2008. © 2008 Journal of Religious Ethics, Inc., reprinted with the permission of Blackwell Publishing. I thank the publishers and editors involved for permission to reuse this material.