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978-0-521-03384-8 - The Psychology of Religious Knowing

Fraser Watts and Mark Williams

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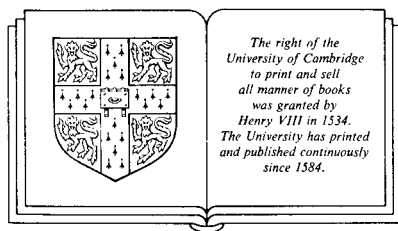
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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWING

FRASER WATTS
and
MARK WILLIAMS



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New York New Rochelle Melbourne Sydney

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521326100

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First published 1988
 This digitally printed first paperback version 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Watts, Fraser N.
 The psychology of religious knowing.
 Bibliography:
 Includes index.
 1. Experience (Religion) 2. Knowledge, Theory of
 (Religion) – Psychological aspects. I. Williams,
 J. Mark G. II. Title.
 BL53.W33 1988 200*.1'9 87-26816

ISBN-13 978-0-521-32610-0 hardback
 ISBN-10 0-521-32610-9 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-03384-8 paperback
 ISBN-10 0-521-03384-5 paperback

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To our parents
Norman and Audrey Watts
John Howard and Barbara Williams

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Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time germinating, and we each feel indebted to the many people who have helped to bring us to the point of being able to write it. Much of the preparation occurred while we were developing separately our approaches to the issues concerned, and before we made the decision to write the book together. Many of the people to whom we feel most indebted have had no part in the actual writing of the book; indeed some do not even know of its existence. Clearly, then, they can in no way be held responsible for the use we have made of their ideas.

One of Fraser's earlier debts is to Bishop Stephen Verney. 'He helped me to understand the richness of the Christian contemplative tradition, and especially the way it has developed in the East. The late John Davy, former science editor of *The Observer* and Vice-Principal of Emerson College, helped me to see the potential of imaginative cognition and to understand its scientific and spiritual significance. Owen Barfield, though scarcely even an acquaintance, showed me through his books what metaphor can be. Chapter 9 is largely a development and application of his ideas. The influence of John Davy and Owen Barfield came together with developments in experimental psychology that led to a kind of 'conversion' to *cognitive* psychology. I remember vividly the intellectual excitement of the winter of 1974–5 as I saw something of the importance and potential scope of an emancipated and rigorous approach to human cognition. There followed an early attempt to set out some of the ideas of this book in a series of articles in *Theoria to Theory*, a Journal edited by members of the Epiphany Philosophers. (We are grateful to the publishers, Gordon and Breach, for permission to re-work some of material from volumes 12 (1978) and 13 (1979) of *Theoria to Theory*, mostly in chapters 5 and 6 of the present book). In the course of preparing those articles, Dorothy Emmet and Jonathan Westphall, the editors, and the late Margaret Masterman, acting President of the Epiphany Philosophers, made many helpful suggestions that shaped the development of my ideas. I am particularly grateful to Jonathan,

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Acknowledgements

who originally suggested that I write the series, and who made his technical expertise in philosophy available to help us with chapter 4. More recently, Eric Hutchison, psychotherapist, scholar and priest, has helped me to understand better the inter-relationship of experience and doctrine, and to appreciate the contribution of Jung. Gerard Loughlin, David Healy and Brother Alistair, SSF, have read parts of the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions. I am especially grateful to Brother Alistair for his encouragement and enthusiasm, and for the openness with which, on numerous occasions, we have been able to share our attempts to follow the personal, intellectual and religious path of which this book is one manifestation.

Mark also owes a great debt to many people. 'Tom Moffatt first introduced me to the way philosophy and religion could illuminate each other. The late Professor George Caird, who was Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, at the time I was in Oxford was a great source of inspiration not only through his preaching and writing, but in the warmth of his friendship. Charles Brock, Fellow at Mansfield and minister at Wheatley United Reformed Church, was also influential in developing a sense of the way psychology and religion could interact. Oxford also gave me the opportunity of getting to know Michael Argyle and Arthur Peacocke, both of whom, working in very different areas, have shown me that the scientific study of religion is possible and desirable. Since moving via Newcastle to Cambridge, I have shared much and learned much from Tony Leighton, Allan Jenkins, John Kemp, David Deeks, James Dickie, Nigel Hancock and Raymond Tomkinson. I am particularly grateful to Allan Jenkins for his willingness to read and comment upon parts of the text. Finally, I owe a tremendous debt to my own family. Firstly, to my nephew David and nieces Rebecca and Katie for occupying my own children, so that many discussions with their parents could take place and many ideas tested. Secondly, and most importantly, to my wife Phyllis and to Anne-Marie, Jennifer and Robert for the gentle way they have brought me down to earth.'

Writing a book such as this that spans several disciplines, and goes beyond our own subject of psychology, is necessarily a hazardous undertaking. We hope readers will feel we have been right to make the attempt and will forgive any inaccuracies that have crept in. The intellectual challenges facing religion in the late twentieth century are such as to make it necessary for people to take the risk of venturing outside their normal academic frontiers.

St Dunstan's day, May 1987

Fraser Watts
Mark Williams