TWENTY-SIX
FIRST or EARLY EDITIONS
arranged
in chronological order
from 1885 to 1920
In this, James' first appearance in a book, his important 119-page Introduction "presents many of [his] characteristic views, such as the antithesis between monism and pluralism, healthy-minded and the sick soul, religion and moralism, and the appeal to practices for the decision between them. It contains the germ of the principles elaborated in The Varieties of Religious Experience." (John J. McDermott, The Writings of William James, Random House, New York, 1967, p. 822)

SEE ALSO William James, In the Maelstrom of American Modernism by Robert D. Richardson (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 2007, PP. 248-253) for an insightful and in depth look at the significance of this "Introduction."

The remaining contents of the book consist of an autobiographical sketch written by James' father, Henry James Senior along with his fifteen chapter book, Spiritual Creation and a forty-seven-page paper entitled "Some Personal Recollections of Carlyle". It concludes with a three-page bibliography of all of Henry James Senior's works. The elder James was a devotee of Swedenborg and his works are generally in support of that system of belief.

The book, although James' first and his father's last, was not a success and it "sank with scarcely a ripple. A dismissive notice appeared in, of all places, Godkin's Nation; a few friends wrote brief, labored acknowledgments. The publisher sold five copies in six months" (In the Maelstrom noted above, p. 254).

Publisher's original maroon cloth with gilt lettering on the spine. The spine is lightly, but noticeably sunned. The head and tail of the spine have been professionally restored. With the bookplate of Charles Deitz of Omaha on inside front cover. Internally clean, bright and tight. A nice copy.
1890 The 1st Edition, 2nd Printing of James’ Psychological Masterwork


Harvard speculates that the first printing of *Psychology* had a print run of 1,000 copies but the great rarity of the first printing (characterized most easily by the hyphenated “Psy-cho-log-y” opposite the title page) versus this second printing is legendary and somewhat mystifying if, in fact, that many copies of the first printing were actually made. Clearly errors were caught early in the press run and quickly corrected. (See James, *Psychology*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 1577.)

As called for in Harvard’s definitive edition, this second printing has the unhyphenated “Psychology” in the book ads opposite the title page. In addition, it also has two corrections to the errors found in the first printing: “not the sole seat of intellect” rather than “the seat of intellectual power” (Vol. 1, p. 10, l. 9-10) and “object of some absent sensation” rather than “object of some absent object of sensation” (Vol. 2, p. 101, l. 20).

James’s famous, brilliant and long-awaited major work on psychology which emphasized his experimental method and the treatment of psychology as a natural science. This book summarized all of the work that he had been doing at Harvard for the several years preceding its publication.

James was an original thinker in and between the disciplines of physiology, psychology and philosophy. His twelve-hundred page masterwork, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), is a rich blend of physiology, psychology, philosophy, and personal reflection that has given us such ideas as “the stream of thought” and the baby’s impression of the world “as one great blooming, buzzing confusion” (PP 462). It contains seeds of pragmatism and phenomenology, and influenced generations of thinkers in Europe and America, including Edmund Husserl, Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)

While more widely known as the proponent of "Radical Empiricism" and "Pragmatism," James’s psychology is regarded by many as a far more original and substantive achievement. His nuanced rejection of the subject/object split in favor of a more fluid intersection between self and world, famously figured as a *stream of consciousness*, reoriented subsequent inquiry into the nature of consciousness and perception, notably influencing thinkers and schools as diverse as Husserl, Piaget, European phenomenology, Gestalt psychology, humanist psychology and cognitive sciences.

This is a truly seminal work in the history of modern thought.

Original publisher’s dark green bindings with gilt lettering on the spine. There is just the lightest of wear to the edges and the spine tips and along the spine edges. The front cover of Volume 1 has a very faint ring – looking to be from a glass placed upon the book at one time. There is a contemporary former owner’s inked inscription to the center of the first blank leaf in Volume 1 (G. Downes / #7 Winthop). Other than these very minor defects, this is a beautiful, clean, tight and bright copy of this important work by William James.
1892

1st UK Edition (2nd Printing)
James’ Abridgement of The Principles of Psychology
“to make it more directly available for class-room use”


Henry Holt did four distinct printings of this work in 1892 – all with identical title pages. Sheets from these printings were shipped to London where Macmillan provided their own binding and at least two different title pages. This second English printing used the title “Text-book on Psychology” instead of the American standard “Briefer Course: Psychology”. Holt’s first printing was on January 11th (“1,000 copies”), the second on January 14th (“either 1,000 or 500” copies), the third in March (“perhaps 500” copies) and the fourth in December – bleeding over into January (an indeterminate number).

These can be distinguished by the following issue points:

- the first lacks the reference to page “218” at the bottom of page 244
- the second has the words “sexual passion” (rather than “sexual instinct”) on page 94, line 23
- the third has the change to “sexual instinct” on page 94 and 21 lines of type on page 279
- the fourth by all of these along with 26 lines of type on page 279 (rather than 21).


Both James and his publisher wanted a smaller, more manageable version of the two-volume Principles of Psychology, so he significantly revised the work which resulted in this condensed version. As he noted in the Preface:

In preparing the following abridgement of my larger work, the Principles of Psychology, my chief aim has been to make it more directly available for class-room use. For this purpose I have omitted several whole chapters and rewritten others. I have left out all the polemical and historical matter, all the metaphysical discussions and purely speculative passages, most of the quotations, all of the book-references, and (I trust) all the impertinences, of the larger work, leaving to the teacher the choice of orally restoring as much of this material as may seem to him good, along with his own remarks on the topics successively studied. Knowing how ignorant the average student is of physiology, I have added brief chapters on the various senses.

In sum, he stated, “about two fifths of the volume is either new or rewritten, the rest is ‘scissors and paste.’”

The book was a tremendous success as can be seen from the fact that it needed four printings in just the first year and went through a total of twelve printings prior to James’ death in 1910.

Publisher’s original pebble-grained embossed green cloth binding with the title, author and publisher in gilt on the spine. With the graphic bookplate of “Robert Carl & Marion Oak Sticht” to the inside from cover. A near fine, tight, bright and clean copy of this important work by James.
1892

**A Completely Uncut, Dust Jacketed Copy**

1st UK Edition (4th Printing) of James’ Abridgement of *The Principles of Psychology*

“to make it more directly available for class-room use”


Henry Holt did four distinct printings of this work in 1892 – all with identical title pages. Sheets from these printings were shipped to London where Macmillan provided their own binding and a new, simpler title page.

Holt’s first printing was on January 11th (“1,000 copies”), the second on January 14th (“either 1,000 or 500” copies), the third in March (“perhaps 500” copies) and the fourth in December – bleeding over into January (an indeterminate number).

The four printings can be distinguished by the following issue points:

- the first lacks the reference to page “218” at the bottom of page 244
- the second has the words “sexual passion” (rather than “sexual instinct”) on page 94, line 23
- the third has the change to “sexual instinct” on page 94 and 21 lines of type on page 279
- the fourth by all of these along with 26 lines of type on page 279 (rather than 21).


[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]

Publisher’s original pebble-grained green cloth binding and the original dust jacket – with the title “Text-Book of Psychology” on the spine. The front panel of the jacket became detached and has since been repaired with tape. The jacket has a few chips and wear points – most especially at the top and bottom of the spine (as shown in the photo). The spine of the book has extremely bright (like brand new) lettering and the entire binding has been preserved from any wear whatsoever by the dust jacket. A fine, tight, bright, clean and uncut copy of this scarce work.
William James was the fifth president of the English-based (but with an American office in Boston), serving two terms from 1894 to 1895. This is his farewell address as he turned the presidency of the organization over to Sir William Crookes.

James was not present at either the London or Boston presentation of this address – which was read by other members in his absence.

The Society was founded in 1882 for the express purpose of approaching the “varied problems” of parapsychology “without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned enquiry which has enable science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated.”

In this, his Farewell Address read in London on January 31, 1896 and in Boston a day later, James noted “how great a scientific scandal it has been to leave a great mass of human experience to take its chances between vague tradition and credulity on the one hand and dogmatic denial at long range on the other, with no body of person extant who are willing and competent to study the matter with both patience and rigour.” He then proceeded to describe in some detail both the discouraging lack of substantial forward progress with the study of paranormal events and some of the limited successes so far attained.

The first page [1], a Contents page of sorts, is foxed with penciled catalog (?) numbers (B1.4 / R787) in the upper blank space. Otherwise, a clean and bright copy.
This, his first piece of overtly philosophical writing, is seminal for any understanding of William James' thought. Here he famously defends religious beliefs because of their beneficial effects on believers. A popular collection, these nine essays – written between 1879 and 1896 – were first published in an edition of 1,000 copies in March of 1897 and had to be reprinted twice that same year and many times thereafter. (See James, Will to Believe, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 307-8)

Many of James's most important and innovative contributions are developed in this early book – including his advocacy of pluralism and what he calls in the Preface “radical empiricism”. The book clearly illustrates James's efforts to weave together insights from psychology, philosophy, and religion without great regard for the growing and narrowing lines of professional specialization and shows, in the wake of the The Principles of Psychology, his increasing interest in religious questions.

In that sense alone, this book must be read as a major precursor and prelude to his monumental Varieties of Religious Experience – published just five years later.

In the opening controversial and most famous essay, "The Will to Believe", (which James later admitted, might better have been called "The Right to Believe") is “a defence of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced.” Driven by his fierce rejection of W.K. Clifford’s statement that “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence,” James spends most of this essay challenging and then dismissing this very limited ‘scientific’ approach to truth, knowledge and belief and defending the right to adopt a belief that might prove beneficial. In general, James makes a place for and shows the importance to life for a belief in transcendent reality and he does so, pointedly, without endorsing any specific religious creed. (See Richardson, William James in the Maelstrom of American Modernism, Houghton Mifflin, 2006, pp. 361-365 for more details on this book.)

Of special note, James dedicated this book to Charles Sanders Peirce of whom he says: “To My Old Friend, Charles Saunders[sic] Peirce, To whose philosophic comradeship in old times and to whose writings in more recent years I owe more incitement and help than I can express or repay.” The ever crusty Charles Peirce would soon dismiss William James’ brand of “pragmatism” and lobby for his own understanding of that philosophical approach which he labelled “pragmaticism.”

Original publisher’s green cloth with a 2½” high paper label to the spine, Both the spine and the label are sun-darkened – but the label remains 100% readable. With some very light sunning to the extreme edges of both boards. Over and above those noted faults, this is an amazingly well-preserved – clean, tight and bright – copy of this important and scarce book by William James.
The Ingersoll Lectureship was established by a bequest from Caroline Haskell Ingersoll (who died in 1893) leaving $5,000 to Harvard for a series of lectures to be read annually in memory of her father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll. The lectures were to take place at Harvard University and the subject of each was to be "the immortality of man". The lectures were initiated by Harvard president Charles W. Eliot in 1896 when the first lecture, “Immortality and the New Theodicy”, was given by George A. Gordon.

William James was invited to give the second lecture and he did so using the title: “Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objection to the Doctrine.” James begins by stating categorically that he has not been chosen to deliver this lecture because

he is known as an enthusiastic messenger of the future life... but apparently because he is a [Harvard] university official. Thinking in this way, I felt at first as if I ought to decline the appointment. The whole subject of immortal life has its prime roots in personal feeling. I have to confess that my own personal feeling about immortality has never been of the keenest order, and that, among the problems that give my mind solicitude, this one does not take a very foremost place.

Given this initial confession, he questions whether or not “the remarks of a mere professional psychologist like myself” could ever satisfy the founder’s supposed wish to have lectures delivered “inspired with emotional messages on the subject”. Still, he proceeded to address the topic – from a psychologist’s point of view – by investigating his two objections; namely (1) the difficulty of the “relative to absolute dependence of our spiritual life, as we know it here, upon the brain” and (2) “the incredible and intolerable number of beings which, with our modern imagination, we must believe to be immortal, if immortality be true.” The first point was addressed from a purely psychological perspective and the second from a very American, democratic perspective.

Over the years, Ingersoll lectures were also given by Josiah Royce and Alfred North Whitehead among many others.

Finally, it must be noted that James delivered this lecture just at the time that he was beginning to collect material which would find its culmination in the publication of “The Varieties of Religious Experience” four years later in 1902

Houghton Mifflin published this book in two different colored binding: green & burgundy – both of which are offered here separately. Both copies have some wear to the top of the spine and less wear at the bottom. The burgundy bound book has a small red stain to the fore edge which just barely infringes on one or two pages of the book and a neat former owner’s inscription to the front fly leaf (“W.C. Blakeslee / Yale – Dec 1900”). Otherwise, these are both clean, tight and bright copies of this charming piece by James.
First Edition, First Printing of *Talks to Teachers*

*The Principles of Psychology Applied to the Art of Teaching*


James “self-published” this book, i.e. he contracted with a Boston printer to print it and then made a separate contract with Henry Holt of New York to distribute it for him.

There were two printing of this work made, the first on May 6th and the second on September 30th of 1899. They were both from the same plates and are most easily distinguishable by their size and by the number of dots after the word “Relaxation” in the Table of Contents on page xi. This is a “large paper edition” copy measuring 7⅞” x 5½”. (See the Harvard Standard Edition of James works, *Talks to Teachers*, 1983, pp. 266-7.) The second printing is a bit smaller than the “large paper edition” measuring only 7¾” x 5” and it has just four (rather than six) dots after the word “Relaxation.” (See the Harvard Standard Edition of James works, *Talks to Teachers*, 1983, pp. 266-7.)

This is a collection of lectures first delivered in the summer of 1892 and then several times later. The "talks" to teachers consist essentially of material from James' great *Principles of Psychology* applied to the art of teaching. Some topics include 'Psychology and the teaching art', 'The child as a behaving organism' and 'The law of habit'. The three final essays, which James called 'Talks to Students', include "the two essays which best express his social creed, 'On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings' and 'What Makes A Life Significant?' Their theme is the inherent preciousness of each unique human life, viewed from within; the unsuspected presence under a drab exterior, of adventure, courage and emotional warmth; and hence the need of tolerance and imaginative sympathy in human relations."

Original dark green covers with gilt lettering on front cover and spine. Former owner's (Susan Meics Corlies) bookplate to inside front cover with her signature ("Susan M. Corlies / 1899") to the front free endpaper in ink and, below this, a later owner’s name and date ("Evelyn Randall / 1939") in pencil. Otherwise a tight and clean copy of this popular work by James.
James “self-published” this book, i.e. he contracted with a Boston printer to print it and then made a separate contract with Henry Holt of New York to distribute it for him.

There were two printing of this work made, the first on May 6th and the second on September 30th of 1899. They were both from the same plates and are most easily distinguishable by their size and by the number of dots after the word “Relaxation” in the Table of Contents on page xi. This second printing is a bit smaller than the “large paper edition” [see the copy above] measuring only 7¼” x 5”and it has just four (rather than six) dots after the work “Relaxation.” (See the Harvard Standard Edition of James works, Talks to Teachers, 1983, pp. 266-7.)

[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]

Publisher's original dark green cloth with gilt lettering on front cover and spine. Just the most minor of shelf wear. With the former owner’s (William A. Grier) label to the middle of the inside of the front cover. The front free endpaper is detached for the first 4” from the top. Otherwise, this is a clean, tight and bright copy of this work.
This is James' major work on religion, and also one of his most popular books. These Gifford Lectures – delivered in at the University of Edinburgh in 1901-1902 – focused primarily on the nature of religion and the neglect of science in its academic study of religion. They were originally intended to be the psychological part of a much more complete treatise on religion, but that book was never completed.

James was primarily interested in direct religious experiences, considering theology and the organizational aspects of religion as completely secondary to his investigations. For him, religious experiences were simply human experiences: "Religious happiness is happiness. Religious trance is trance." He was only interested in the “experience”, not the dogma or institutional structures of religion.

While he did believe that religious experiences can have "morbid origins" in brain pathology and can even be irrational, he still believed they were largely positive in their overall effects. Using James’ pragmatic method, the effectiveness of religious experiences proves their truth, whatever their source.

This is an important study in both the psychology and the philosophy of religion and soon after its publication, Varieties entered the Western canon for both of those disciplines and has remained in print for over a century.

According to the definitive edition of James's works published by Harvard University Press: "The first edition of The Varieties of Religious Experience was published in England (from American sheets with a special title page) on June 9, 1902, the day of James's final lecture. James received an advance copy on June 2 in Edinburgh. The date of the American publication is not certain. Under A 31018 on April 15, 1902, the copyright was given to James by the Library of Congress, which accepted the two statutory copies on May 26. However, the earliest notice in the Publisher's Weekly was #1586 for June 21, 1902, the book prices at $3.20" (The Varieties of Religious Experience, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 555-6). It must be pointed out, however, that the English edition does not say "First Edition June 1902" on the verso of the TP as does this first American issue.

With "Nietsche" misspelled at line 11 on page 38 - indicated the very first issue of the book. This copy also includes the often missing inserted slip between pages 126 and 127 noting: “Remarks on pages 123-126. – These two cases printed here are selected from a larger number, kindly furnished me by friends. W.J.”

Original dark green covers with the spine lightened by the sun. The fragile paper label is a bit worn on the edges but 100% readable, There is a contemporary former owner’s signature to the front fly leaf (“Martha G. Stokes / 1902”). Overall, a very pretty copy of this important and influential work by William James.
1902 Second American Printing of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*


$600

With "Nietzsche" spelled correctly at line 11 on page 38 (the misspelling occurred only in the very first issue of the book).

*[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]*

Original green covers lightly sunned and the spine “browned out” by the sun. The fragile paper label is very lightly worn with just three letters undistinguishable. Despite the fading to the binding, internally this is a really lovely copy of this important and influential work by William James.
1906

**The Varieties of Religious Experience in French**

James’ Masterwork on Religion and Belief Translated


Published just four years after the book’s first appearance in English.

*Varieties* is James' major work on religion, and also one of his most popular books, being the Gifford Lectures which he delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1901-1902. Originally designed as the psychological part of a more complete treatise on religion (which was never completed) it is an important study in both the psychology and philosophy of religion and also a critical source for the nature and further development of James's philosophy.

In publisher’s original wraps printed with black text to the front and rear covers and to the spine. There are some minor stains, bumps and closed tears to the covers (with a 1½” triangle missing from lower rear cover), but overall this a remarkably well-preserved and completely uncut copy of this first French translation of this important book by James.
James first used the word "pragmatism" in a talk entitled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" that he delivered at Berkeley in August of 1898. Eight years later, he finally gave a full presentation of this new way of "doing" philosophy in a set of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1906 and then repeated at Columbia University in 1907.

While James’ Psychology (1890) is still admired and referenced for his thoughts on consciousness and The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902) continues to be a touchstone work in the field of religious studies, this book, Pragmatism, is easily his most famous and most influential contribution to philosophy and certainly his most eloquent expression of our native “American” perspective on philosophy.

The preface distinguishes between "pragmatism" and "radical empiricism" and contains multiple references to other writers illustrating the pragmatist tendency. James offers his pragmatic method as a technique for clarifying concepts and hypotheses. He claimed that if we do this, ancient metaphysical disputes that appear to be irresolvable quickly dissolve. For instance, when philosophers suppose that free will and determinism are in conflict, James responds that once we compare the practical consequences of determinism being true with the practical consequences of our possessing freedom of the will, we find that there is no conflict worth considering.

James explained his pragmatic method through examples rather than by giving a detailed analysis of what it involves. He did very little to explain exactly what ‘practical consequences’ are; it simply was not an issue for him. He also made no claim to originality: “Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude”, although he acknowledged that it did so “in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed” (Pragmatism, p. 31). It shared with other forms of empiricism an “anti-intellectualist tendency” and it recognized that theories (and presumably concepts) should be viewed as “instruments, not answers to enigmas”. We identify the “practical consequences” of a theory, concept or hypothesis by describing its role as an instrument in thought, in inquiry and in practical deliberation.

This was one of James’ most controversial publications which raised an immediate storm of debate when released and became the single work with which James’ philosophical theory was most closely identified.

Publisher’s original brown boards with lighter colored cloth spine which has been lightly sun-darkened. The spine label is just a bit worn, but 100% readable. Overall, a very pretty copy of this important book by William James, America’s foremost proponent of the pragmatic theory.
1907

First UK Edition of *Pragmatism*


$ 300

This is the first London issue of the book, made up of original American sheets with a new title page.

*See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.*

Publisher’s original brown boards (slightly bowed) with lighter colored cloth spine which has been a bit sun-darkened. The spine label is lightly worn, but about 95% readable (only two letters effected). The gutter between the front free endpaper and the blank leaf is a bit ‘cracked,’ but holding solidly firm. Overall, a very nice copy of this important book by William James, America’s foremost proponent of the pragmatic theory.
1907

First Edition, Third Printing of James’ *Pragmatism*


$125

This is the third printing of James’ most popular book, one of two printing done in July of 1907 (the first printing having been done in June of 1907).

*See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.*

Publisher’s original brown boards with lighter colored cloth spine which has been lightly sun-darkened. The spine label is a bit worn, but 80% readable (effecting about six of the letters). With a former owner’s 3-line pencil inscription to the front free endpaper (“Ethel C. Perkins / 807 N. 9th St., / Terre Haute, Ind”) with an additional ink inscription near the bottom of that page (“Child Nature – Elizabeth Harrison”). Overall, a very pretty copy of this important book by William James, America’s foremost proponent of the pragmatic theory.
James' great defense of pluralism which was originally delivered as the Hibbert Lectures given at Manchester College, Oxford in 1908-09. He begins the book, as he had begun *Pragmatism*, with a discussion of the temperamental determination of philosophical theories, which, he states, “are just so many visions, modes of feeling the whole push … forced on one by one's total character and experience, and on the whole preferred — there is no other truthful word — as one's best working attitude”.

Maintaining that a philosopher's “vision” is “the important thing” about him, James condemns the “over-technicality and consequent dreariness of the younger disciples at our American universities…”

As he gets more specific about other theories, James passes from his critical discussions of Josiah Royce's idealism and the “vicious intellectualism” of Hegel to philosophers whose visions he admires: Gustav Fechner and Henri Bergson. After careful consideration of these thinkers' ideas, he then concludes by embracing a plural-alistic position that he had more tentatively set forth in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: that religious experiences “point with reasonable probability to the continuity of our consciousness with a wider spiritual environment from which the ordinary prudential man (who is the only man that scientific psychology, so called, takes cognizance of) is shut off”. Whereas in *Pragmatism* James subsumes the religious within the pragmatic (as yet another way of successfully making one's way through the world), in *A Pluralistic Universe* he suggests that the religious offers a superior relation to the universe.

Original publisher binding of grayish-green covers with green cloth on the spine. Spine with an almost perfectly preserved paper label (a rare thing with these books by James). The tips of the boards are very lightly worn. Overall, this is remarkably well-preserved and very pretty copy of one of William James’ most important works.
The First UK Edition of *A Pluralistic Universe*


$ 150

The first London edition was made up of US-printed sheets along with a new title page and a locally produced binding similar to the one used in America. It was released at the same time as the New York edition.

[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]

Original publisher binding of grayish-green covers with dark green cloth on the spine. The spine has been just a bit darkened by the sun. The spine label is well preserved and about 80% readable (three letters are rubbed off). Internally a clean, tight, bright and unmarked copy.
The First UK Edition of James’ “Sequel to Pragmatism”
Answering the Professional Objections to that 1907 Book
and provocatively asking: “What Is Truth’s Cash Value in Experiential Terms?”


This work is a further explanation of James’ philosophy of pragmatism while also providing a detailed reply to the criticism, hostility and even ridicule that erupted within the professional philosophical community in response to the theory of truth that he propounded for a lay audience in his 1907 work, Pragmatism. The preface contains an important review of the subject of pragmatism, with a definition of "radical empiricism" and a statement of James’s relation to Shiller and Dewey. One chapter, "Two English Critics", is of particular interest because it contains James' answer to Bertrand Russell's criticism of pragmatism.

It is therefore a much more complex and nuanced “sequel” to that book, being more rigidly philosophical than the former work which had been written expressly for the general reading public.

In his determination to definitely clarify the pragmatic conception of truth, James collected nine essays that he had written on this subject before he wrote Pragmatism and six written later in response to criticisms of that volume by Bertrand Russell and others.

That collection was edited and new Preface added and published under the taunting and deliberately provocative title, The Meaning of Truth, in the year just before his death.

The Meaning of Truth shows William James at his best, clear and readable as always, but deadly serious about making some of his more difficult ideas clear and just as forcefully committed to making them prevail. As he notes in the Preface:

Pragmatism asks its usual question. “Grant an idea or belief to be true,” it says, “what concrete difference will its being true make in any one’s actual life? What experiences [may] be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth’s cash-value in experiential terms?” The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

This is the first London edition which was made up of US-printed sheets along with a new title page and a locally-produced binding similar to the one used in America. It was released at the same time as the New York edition.

Original light green covers with darker green strip on spine. The paper label on the spine is lightly worn – breaking up a few letters in the title. Otherwise, a near fine copy.
For years, James talked of rounding out his philosophical work with a treatise on metaphysics. Characteristically, he chose to do so in the form of an introduction to the problems of philosophy, because writing for beginners forced him to be nontechnical and readable.

The result is that, although this is James’s most systematic and abstract work, it has all the lucidity of his other, more popular writings.

Step by step the reader is introduced, through analysis of the fundamental problems of Being, the relation of thoughts to things, novelty, causation, and the Infinite, to the original philosophical synthesis that James called radical empiricism.

James died on August 26, 1910, before completing the final manuscript for this book. It was prepared for the press by H. M. Kallen and edited with a Prefatory Note by his son, Henry James, Jr.

Original green publisher’s covers with just a bit of wear to the surface of the front cover and a closed tear to the top of the spine. The spine label is a bit worn around the edges, but is remarkably clean and 100% readable. With an ink inscription to the front free endpaper: “Rosina Hayes / from MR. / Southampton 1911”. Overall, a well preserved, bright, tight and clean copy of James’ last published book.
1911

First UK Edition of James’ Posthumously Published

*Some Problems of Philosophy*


$175

The first London edition was made up of US-printed sheets along with a new title page and a locally produced binding similar to the one used in America. It was released at the same time as the New York edition.

*[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]*

Original green publisher’s covers with just a bit of sunning to the front cover. Half title embossed with “Mr. Castar Numan”. Contemporary review of this work laid in. The spine label is a bit worn with a few letters missing, but still mostly readable. Overall, a well preserved, bright and tight copy of James’ last published book.
From the Prefatory Note by his son, Henry James:

Professor William James formed the intention shortly before his death of republishing a number of popular addresses and essays under the title which this book now bears; but unfortunately he found no opportunity to attend to any detail of the book himself, or to leave definite instructions for others. I believe, however, that I have departed in no substantial degree from my father's idea, except perhaps by including two or three short pieces which were first addressed to special occasions or audiences and which now seem clearly worthy of republication in their original form, although he might not have been willing to reprint them himself without the recastings to which he was ever most attentive when preparing for new readers. Everything in this volume has already appeared in print in magazines or otherwise, and definite acknowledgements are hereinafter made in the appropriate places. Comparison with the original texts will disclose slight variations in a few passages, and it is therefore proper to explain that in these passages the present text follows emendations of the original which have survived in the author's own handwriting.

Perhaps most famous of all, this is the first book appearance of his evangelical "The Moral Equivalent of War":

The war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered than the glory and shame that come to nations as well as to individuals from the ups and downs of politics and the vicissitudes of trade. There is something highly paradoxical in the modern man's relation to war.

Original publisher’s green covers with almost no wear to the board. The spine label is almost completely intact and 100% readable (a rarity with James’ works). A gorgeous and unmarked copy of this posthumous collection of James’ essays and speeches.
First Edition of James’ *Essays in Radical Empiricism*
Selected to Present a Systematic Defense and Explanation of This Theory
*A Doctrine that He Considered to be “Independent” of Pragmatism*


Edited, with a Preface, by Ralph Barton Perry, the title and contents of this volume were virtually selected by the author himself several years before his death.

It was his aim to present here in a systematic way, the outlines of the doctrine of Radical Empiricism which he had come to regard as no less important than his much more well-known theories on pragmatism.

As noted in Perry’s Preface:

In short, the present volume is designed not as a collection but rather as a treatise. It is intended that another volume shall be issued which shall contain papers having biographical or historical importance which have not yet been reprinted in book form. The present volume is intended not only for students of Professor James's philosophy, but for students of metaphysics and the theory of knowledge. It sets forth systematically and within brief compass the doctrine of “radical empiricism.”

This collection includes James's groundbreaking essays “Does Consciousness Exist?” and “A World of Pure Experience” in which he explains one of his fundamental ideas: that mind and matter are both aspects of, or structures formed from, a more fundamental stuff — pure experience — that (despite the fact that it is called “experience”) is neither mental nor physical. Pure experience, James explains, is “the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories…”

William James at his finest on his psychological theories and on his theory of Radical Empiricism.

Original publisher’s green covers (remarkably well preserved) with paper label to the spine which is very lightly worn and 100% readable (a rarity with James’ books). A near fine copy of this final work prepared by William James as a systematic presentation of this ideas.
1920  First Edition of James’ Posthumously Published *Collected Essays and Reviews*

*To finally “render easily accessible nearly all of the author’s significant writings”*


Edited by Ralph Barton Perry who notes in his Preface:

This volume brings together for the convenience of students thirty-nine scattered articles and reviews by William James. None of these has heretofore appeared in book form, and many have been lost sight of and forgotten. The present volume when added to those already published will render easily accessible nearly all of the author’s significant writings.

The book contains reprints of essays and reviews that appeared between the years of 1869 and 1910 spanning the complete range of James’ career and his wide-ranging interests.

Original publisher’s green cloth with a large (2½”) paper label on the spine. The top and bottom of the spine show some light wear and the spine label is almost perfectly intact and readable. This a tight, bright and clean copy of this final volume of William James works to be published.
First UK Edition of James’ Posthumously Published Collected Essays and Reviews

To finally “render easily accessible nearly all of the author’s significant writings”


$ 100

The first London edition was made up of US-printed sheets along with a new title page and a locally produced binding similar to the one used in America. It was released at the same time as the New York edition.

[See the listing above for more details on the content and significance of this book.]

Original publisher’s green cloth with a large (2½”) paper label on the spine which is almost perfectly intact and readable. A near fine copy – tight, bright and clean – of this final volume of William James works to be published.
1920

His Life in Letters


$ 200

Edited, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes, by his son, Henry James, and illustrated with photographs and reproductions of drawings and manuscripts.

“In the case of a man like James the biographical question to be answered is not, as with a man of affairs: How can his actions be explained? but rather: What manner of being was he? What were his background and education? And, above all, what was his temperament and the bias of his mind? What native instincts, preferences, and limitations of view did he bring with him to his business of reading the riddle of the Universe? His own informal utterances [found in these letters] throw the strongest light on such questions.”

(from the Introduction)

Original dark blue boards with well-preserved paper labels on spine. Clean, tight and bright – a very pretty set.
"The owl of Athena flies only at dusk"
Georg W. F. Hegel: Preface, Philosophy of Right