

**MATTER AND SPIRIT; A
STUDY OF MIND AND
BODY IN THEIR RELATION
TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE**

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Matter and spirit; a study of mind and body in their relation to the spiritual life by James Bissett Pratt

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JAMES BISSETT PRATT

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BY

PROFESSOR JAMES BISSETT PRATT

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS
BELIEF

WHAT IS PRAGMATISM?

INDIA AND ITS FAITHS

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

ESSAYS IN CRITICAL REALISM

(Written in collaboration with six others)

THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

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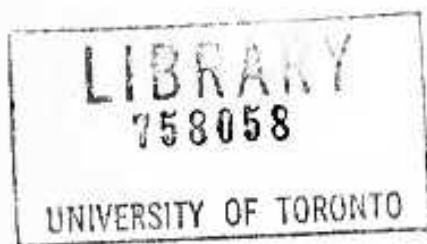
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IN
GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF
WILLIAM JAMES

PREFACE

The principal excuse for a new book on the eternal problem of matter and mind is just the fact that the problem is eternal. And not only is it eternal: it is so complex that there is no end of illuminating ways in which it may be presented. A further excuse, if it be needed, is to be found in the many new attitudes toward the question which contemporary thought has suggested. A fairly rapid survey of the various answers, old and new, which have been given to our question—a bird's eye view, so to speak, of this ancient problem in its modern setting—seems to be called for by the times in which we live. The need for such a review becomes more patent the moment one stops to consider the absolutely central place of the mind-body problem in metaphysical speculation, and the fundamental nature of metaphysics in knowledge and in life. If we knew just how mind affects body and how body affects mind we should have the clew to many a philosophical riddle, and a clew that would give us much-needed guidance not only in philosophy but in many a

region of practical, moral, and religious activity and experience in which our generation is groping rather blindly and is longing very eagerly for more light.

If there be anything individual about this book it is, I suppose, its outspoken defense of Dualism. The time has come, as it seems to me, for those of us (and we are many) who refuse to be brow-beaten by the fantastic exaggerations of a dogmatic Naturalism and who are no longer to be fooled by the spiritual phraseology of a monistic Idealism which is really no less destructive to most of man's spiritual values and most of his dearest hopes than is Naturalism itself—it is time, I say, for those of us who cannot accept either of these most unempirical philosophies to come forward frankly with the opposing view and call ourselves dualists before our critics have the opportunity of branding us with that opprobrious title. For my part, at any rate, I am glad to accept the accusation and to be called, as a writer in a religious periodical recently called me, “an avowed dualist and unashamed.” Derogatory epithets seldom hurt if accepted willingly. “Puritan” and “Unitarian” have long since become at least respectable, and even “Yankee” has not proved fatal.