

# William James (1842-1910)

- Older brother of novelist Henry James. American philosopher, psychologist
- With Charles Peirce coined the term “pragmatism”.
- Texts:
  - *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897)
  - *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)
  - *Principles of Psychology* (1890)

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- James's pragmatism

“True” is whatever is "expedient in the way of our thinking."

*Does this work for me? Is it useful?*

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- Good answers produce good results and bad answers would produce bad results.
- “Ideas become true just so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience.”

# William James

## Definition of religion:

“‘Religion’ means the feelings, acts, and experiences of individuals men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”

# William James

## Definition of religion:

- Religion is a positive way of fulfilling needs. Can have positive influence on our lives.
- Religion can provide “an assurance of safety” and leads to “harmonious relation to universe.”