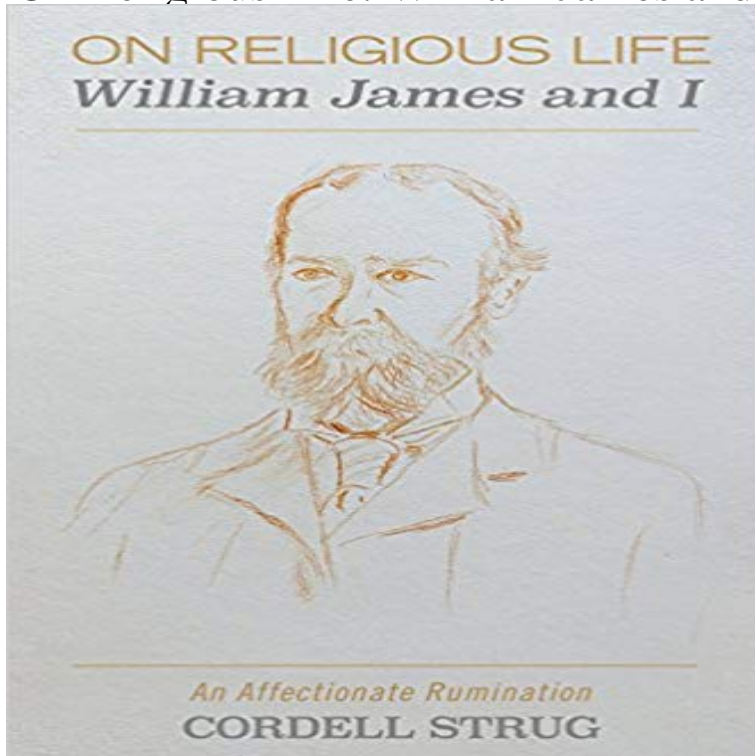


## On Religious Life: William James and I: An Affectionate Ruminati



William James was a great-hearted and generous philosophical spirit. He was also--beneath his human sympathy, his experiments, his scholarship, and his captivating writings--a religious seeker, a pilgrim looking for a new Jerusalem he was ready to define for himself. Cordell Strug, as a young philosophy student, was enthralled by James, especially by his lectures on religion, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. He was drawn by the alternative James offered to religious traditions, by his passionate searching, and by his rich humanity. Yet he found he had to part company with James on the very nature of religious experience and the source of its power. Out of the struggle with James's religious vision, he found a way back to a more traditional religious life, eventually becoming a Lutheran pastor. In this book, he looks back at how he came under James's spell, how he embraced and wrestled with James's vision, and how James remained with him as a living presence, both a guiding and a critical companion. Strug's lively ruminati on the great Pragmatist William James calls readers to attend to actual experience, notably including the reality of evil, and warns against the violent dogmatisms of every tribe. Strug bears witness to James's living presence in his doctoral (Purdue) and ministerial (Luther Seminary) studies, and importantly in decades of rural Minnesota ministry. One may be driven with Strug back to what James neglected: the communal life of faith in service and worship. --Paul R. Sponheim, Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, Luther Seminary, St. Paul

Cordell Strug studied philosophy at Purdue University but spent most of his life as a pastor in rural Minnesota. He has written on philosophy, religion, literature, and film. He is the author of *All Hands Stand By to Repel Boarders: Tales from Life as a Lutheran Pastor* and *The Other*

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