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*"Health is the only good": William James on therapeutic conduct*

James scholars have, to date, paid little attention to James's medical concerns. In this paper I will argue that themes of health and healing play an extremely significant role in his work. From early adulthood onwards James considered the state of health to be an ethical ideal of crucial importance, both with respect to the individual and the race. With reference to his private letters and published works I will demonstrate how James's changing estimation of the religious way of life was closely linked to his changing evaluation of its therapeutic efficacy. I will trace how James's involvement with spiritualist healers and the "religion of mind-cure" led him to conclude that 'science' and 'religion' are both valid "systems of ideas" with which "the world can be [profitably] handled."