

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

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Thoughts on Religion by Blaise Pascal

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BLAISE PASCAL

**THOUGHTS
ON RELIGION**

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No attempt has been made, in the following translation, at critical exactness in the arrangement of the matter, or the selection of the French text. The book called "Les Pensées de Pascal" consisting of posthumous fragments on various subjects, and in very different states of elaboration, has been presented to the public in several forms. The earliest editors, his own relatives and friends, not merely selected and arranged the matter in their hands, but took considerable liberties with the language. Their object was to produce a book of practical edification; and they cared more about being correct and avoiding offence than about preserving the very words of Pascal's rough papers. After various additions made to the book, and recasting of its substance, the desire was awakened in France by M. Victor Cousin, to possess a text more genuine than that which had gained currency, and which he shewed to differ considerably from the manuscript remains on which the work was based, and this has led to editions professing

a critical restoration of the text, as well as an amended arrangement of subjects*. But though they have in many ways improved on the older editions, they cannot yet be said to have displaced them.

For this reason it has not been thought worth while in a work published simply for religious use, to depart from the form in which the "Thoughts" have gained and still keep their place as a French classic. It comprises only the "Thoughts on Religion," and is chiefly reprinted from an old translation; but this translation has been carefully compared with the original^b.

* Such are the editions of Faugère, 1844, and Lefèvre, 1847. An English translation has been made from M. Faugère's edition, with an introduction and notes by George Pearce, Esq. London, 1850.

^b The text commonly known as the "Pensées de Pascal," is that published by his relatives and friends soon after his death, of which numerous editions have appeared from time to time in France; the one made use of for this purpose was that printed by P. Didot, Paris, 1844.





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