

**THREE ESSAYS ON
RELIGION. [1874]**

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Three Essays on Religion. [1874] by John Stuart Mill & Helen Taylor

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ON

RELIGION

BY

JOHN STUART MILL



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

ACTING upon the hope of making their uniform edition of Mr. Mill's Miscellaneous Writings ultimately include them all, the American Publishers have inserted his Essay on "Berkeley's Life and Writings," in the present volume.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

THE three following Essays on Religion were written at considerable intervals of time, without any intention of forming a consecutive series, and must not therefore be regarded as a connected body of thought, excepting in so far as they exhibit the Author's deliberate and exhaustive treatment of the topics under consideration.

The two first of these three Essays were written between the years 1850 and 1858, during the period which intervened between the publication of the Principles of Political Economy, and that of the work on Liberty; during which interval three other Essays—on Justice, on Utility, and on Liberty—were also composed. Of the five Essays written at that time, three have already been given to the public by the Author. That on Liberty was expanded into the now well-known work bearing the same title. Those on Justice and Utility were afterwards incorporated, with some alterations and additions, into one, and published under the name of Utilitarianism. The remaining two—on Nature and

on the Utility of Religion—are now given to the public, with the addition of a third—on Theism—which was produced at a much later period. In these two first Essays indications may easily be found of the date at which they were composed; among which indications may be noted the absence of any mention of the works of Mr. Darwin and Sir Henry Maine in passages where there is coincidence of thought with those writers, or where subjects are treated which they have since discussed in a manner to which the Author of these Essays would certainly have referred had their works been published before these were written.

The last Essay in the present volume belongs to a different epoch; it was written between the years 1868 and 1870, but it was not designed as a sequel to the two Essays which now appear along with it, nor were they intended to appear all together. On the other hand it is certain that the Author considered the opinions expressed in these different Essays, as fundamentally consistent. The evidence of this lies in the fact that in the year 1873, after he had completed his Essay on Theism, it was his intention to have published the Essay on Nature at once, with only such slight revision as might be judged necessary in preparing it for the press, but substantially in its present form. From this it is