



Jeremy Bentham.

# Secular Utilitarianism: Social Science and the Critique of Religion in the Thought of Jeremy Bentham

James E. Crimmins

Clarendon Press (1990)

## Abstract

Jeremy Bentham was an ardent secularist convinced that society could be sustained without the support of religious institutions or beliefs. This is writ large in the commonly neglected books on religion he wrote and published during the last twenty-five years of his life. However his earliest writings on the subject date from the 1770s, when as a young man he first embarked on his calling as a legal theorist and social reformer. From that time on, religion was never far from the centre of his thoughts. In *Secular Utilitarianism*, James Crimmins illustrates the nature, extent, and depth of Jeremy Bentham's concern with religion, from his Oxford days of first doubts to the middle years of quiet unbelief, and finally, the zealous atheism and secularism of his later life. Dr Crimmins provides an interpretation of Bentham's thought in which his religious views, hitherto of little interest to Bentham scholars, are shown to be integral: on the one hand intimately associated with the metaphysical, epistemological, and psychological principles which gave shape to his system as a whole, and on the other central to the development of his entirely secular view of society.

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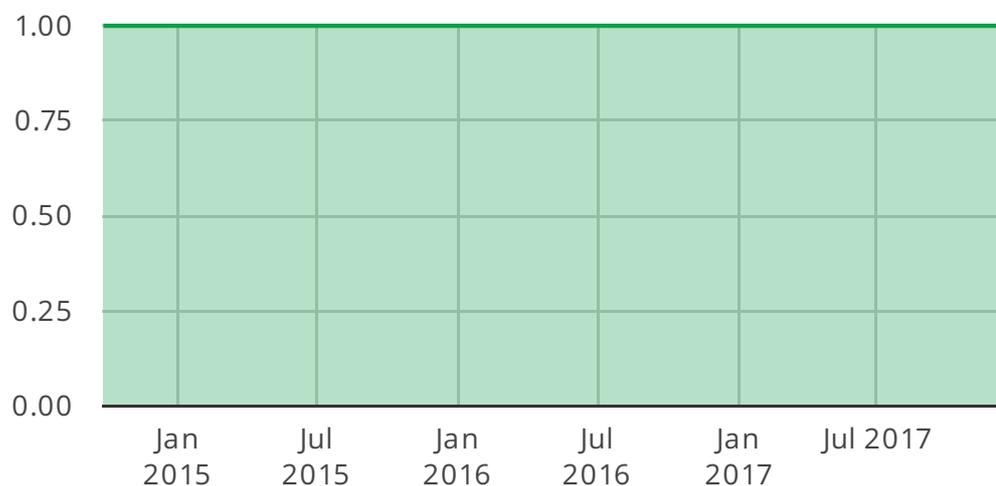
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