

Any Application of Epicurean Theology to the Christian God(s)

Post by "Eikadistes" of June 16, 2022 at 12:03 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But I never found a reference to "Thomas Young." Do you know if he wrote anything worth reading? Probably this list of books here deserves a thread of its own for people who would like to research and cite "Founding Fathers" of the USA for reference in advocating Epicurean viewpoints. Even if they were "deists" or didn't mention Epicurus specifically I can imagine this kind of material being useful to lots of people. I didn't originally consider it but of course now in retrospect I should include Frances Wrights AFDIA in that list too.

Thomas Young was an intellectual mentor to Ethan Allen and perhaps a more devoted contributor to the Lucretius-inspired group of Colonial "Deists" than his contemporaries. I recently read about him in *Nature's God: The Heretical Origins of the American Republic* by Matthew Stewart. It is a dense read, but very informative, and I recommend it.

Young's fellow citizens regularly accused him of being "a man of no morals," an "infamous character," and, of course, an "infidel." And Young--this is perhaps the most unusual thing about him--regularly responded with daring public confessions in which he let it be known, in so many words, that if with such terms his antagonists meant to identify him a deist, then they were right. Rushing to his defense after one assault on the doctor's unacceptable creed, his fellow members of the Boston Committee of Correspondence marveled that on his journey through life he had accumulated many friends of high character notwithstanding the fact that "uniform throughout, he appears in all places to have declared his sentiments on all subjects, natural, civil, and religious." The thing about Young, everyone agreed, was that he could not keep his mouth shut. When he died, the nation he served found it convenient to forget such a troublesome individual. Let him now face the consequence in the afterlife whose reality he so blasphemously denied, they said, and they moved on.

Young's philosophical oeuvre is not large or systematic, and it is sometimes obtuse, as one might expect from a self-taught medicine man moonlighting as a global revolutionary. Yet its neglect turns out to be the most damaging of the many unfortunate consequences of his omission from the history books. In the uncomfortably personal confessions he committed to print, Young tells us what it was like to come of age as a deist in prerevolutionary America. In his sundry philosophical treatises, he articulates a form of deism that is substantially more radical than that which has traditionally figured in the stories America tells itself about its philosophical heritage. And he makes clear that, at least in his own mind, this radical

philosophy was the axis on which the Revolution turned. For him, the project to free the American people from the yoke of King George was part of a grander project to liberate the world from the ghostly tyranny of supernatural religion. (Ibid. 22-23)