

# Paul Thyry (Baron D'Holbach / Mirabaud) - French / German Sympathizer With Some Epicurean Ideas

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[Baron d'Holbach](#)

So the Epicurus "riddle" appears in D'Holbach's "[Good Sense](#):"

§57. When we ask, why so many miserable objects appear under the government of a good God, we are told, by way of consolation, that the present world is only a passage, designed to conduct man to a happier one. The divines assure us, that the earth we inhabit, is a state of trial. In short, they shut our mouths, by saying, that God could communicate to his creatures neither impossibility nor infinite happiness, which are reserved for himself alone. Can such answers be satisfactory? 1st. The existence of another life is guaranteed to us only by the imagination of man, who, by supposing it, have only realized the desire they have of surviving themselves, in order to enjoy hereafter a purer and more durable happiness. 2ndly. How can we conceive that a God, who knows every thing, and must be fully acquainted with the dispositions of his creatures, should want so many experiments, in order to be sure of their dispositions? 3rdly. According to the calculations of their chronologists, our earth has existed six or seven thousand years. During that time, nations have experienced calamities. History exhibits the human species at all times tormented and ravaged by tyrants, conquerors, and heroes; by wars, inundations, famines, plagues, etc. Are such long trials then likely to inspire us with very great confidence in the secret views of the Deity? Do such numerous and constant evils give a very exalted idea of the future state, his goodness is preparing for us? 4thly. If God is so kindly disposed, as he is asserted to be, without giving men infinite happiness, could he not at least have communicated the degree of happiness, of which finite beings are susceptible here below? To be happy, must we have an infinite or divine happiness? 5thly. If God could not make men happier than they are here below, what will become of the hope of a paradise, where it is pretended, that the elect will for ever enjoy ineffable bliss? If God neither could nor would avert evil from the earth, the only residence we can know, what reason have we to presume, that he can or will avert evil from another world, of which we have no idea? Epicurus observed: "either God would remove evil out of this world, and cannot; or he can, and will not; or he has neither the power nor will; or, lastly, he has both the power and will. If he has the will, and not the power, this shews weakness, which is contrary to the nature of God. If he has the power, and not the will, it is malignity; and this is no less contrary to his nature. If he is neither able nor willing, he is both impotent and malignant, and consequently cannot be God. If he be both willing and able (which alone is consonant to the nature of God) whence comes evil, or why

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does he not prevent it?" Reflecting minds are still waiting for a reasonable solution of these difficulties; and our divines tell us, that they will be removed only in a future life.