

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

**Post by "Cassius" of December 16, 2023 at 8:45 AM**

Also from "[Good Sense](#)"

§204. Some ancient and modern philosophers have been bold enough to assume experience and reason for their guides, and to shake off the chains of superstition. Democritus, Epicurus, and other Greeks presumed to tear away the veil of prejudice, and to deliver philosophy from theological shackles. But their systems, too simple, too sensible, and too free from the marvellous, for imaginations enamoured with chimeras, were obliged to yield to the fabulous conjectures of such men as Plato and Socrates. Among the moderns, Hobbes, Spinoza, Bayle, etc., have followed the steps of Epicurus; but their doctrine has found very few followers, in a world, still intoxicated with fables, to listen to reason.

In every age, it has been dangerous to depart from prejudices. Discoveries of every kind have been prohibited. All that enlightened men could do, was to speak ambiguously, hence they often confounded falsehood with truth. Several had a double doctrine, one public and the other secret; the key of the latter being lost, their true sentiments, have often become unintelligible and consequently useless.

How could modern philosophers, who, under pain of cruel persecution, were commanded to renounce reason, and to subject it to faith, that is, to the authority of priests; how, I say, could men, thus bound, give free scope to their genius, improve reason, and accelerate the progress of the human mind? It was with fear and trembling that even the greatest men obtained a glimpse of truth; rarely had they the courage to announce it; and those, who did, were terribly punished. With Religion, it has ever been unlawful to think, or to combat the prejudices of which man is every where the victim and the dupe.