

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

Post by "Cassius" of December 16, 2023 at 3:27 PM

Denunciation of Deism in "[Good Sense](#)":

§118. The Deist exclaims: "Abstain from worshipping the cruel and capricious God of theology; mine is a being infinitely wise and good; he is the father of men, the mildest of sovereigns; it is he who fills the universe with his benefits." But do you not see that every thing in this world contradicts the good qualities, which you ascribe to your God? In the numerous family of this tender father, almost all are unhappy. Under the government of this just sovereign, vice is triumphant, and virtue in distress. Among those blessings you extol, and which only enthusiasm can see, I behold a multitude of evils, against which you obstinately shut your eyes. Forced to acknowledge, that your beneficent God, in contradiction with himself, distributes good and evil with the same hand, for his justification you must, like the priest, refer me to the regions of another life. Invent, therefore, another God; for yours is no less contradictory than that of theologians.

A good God, who does evil, or consents to the commission of evil; a God full of equity, and in whose empire innocence is often oppressed; a perfect God, who produces none but imperfect and miserable works; are not such a God and his conduct as great mysteries, as that of the incarnation?

You blush for your fellow-citizens, who allow themselves to be persuaded, that the God of the universe could change himself into a man, and die upon a cross in a corner of Asia. The mystery of the incarnation appears to you very absurd. You think nothing more ridiculous, than a God, who transforms himself into bread, and causes himself daily to be eaten in a thousand different places. But are all these mysteries more contradictory to reason than a God, the avenger and rewarder of the actions of men? Is man, according to you, free, or not free? In either case, your God, if he has the shadow of equity, can neither punish nor reward him. If man is free, it is God, who has made him free; therefore God is the primitive cause of all his actions; in punishing him for his faults, he would punish him for having executed what he had given him liberty to do. If man is not free to act otherwise than he does, would not God be most unjust, in punishing man for faults, which he could not help committing.

The minor, or secondary, absurdities, with which all religions abound, are to many people truly striking; but they have not the courage to trace the source of these absurdities. They see not, that a God full of contradictions, caprices and inconsistent qualities, has only served to disorder men's imaginations, and to produce an endless succession of chimeras.