

# Collection Of Quotes Related to Deism / Natural Law / Primarily from 1800's period

Post by "Cassius" of May 3, 2022 at 9:33 AM

Notes On Deism and Natural Law

(Organized by Author)

5/23/22 -- This is a list of quotes I put together many years ago, including a list of other authors (at the bottom) of similar viewpoint. I am pasting it here just as a reference for further research, as some of the quotes are from Elihu Palmer, and the Mills father and son. Some of the quotes are from Cicero but most are from the 1800's period.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: n.p 42, Dio Chrysostom Twelfth Discourse, Loeb Classical Lib.

Date: 60 BC

Quotation:

And so, of all the many kinds of living creatures there is none except man that has any concept of a god, while among men themselves there is no race so highly civilized or so savage that, even if it does not know what sort of god it ought to have, yet thinks that it ought to have one. This goes to show that man recognizes God because in a sense he remembers and recognizes the source from which he sprang.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: The Republic, Loeb Classical Library, page 211. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, though neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to repeal any part of it, and it impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all

times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is, God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge.

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Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic III. Loeb Classical Library, page 225. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

Ad decus et ad libertatem nati sumus; aut haec teneamus aut cum dignitate moriatur.

It is to glory and to liberty we were born; let us either hold fast to these or with dignity let us die.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic VII. Loeb Classical Library, page 353. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

I do not refuse peace, but war clothed with the name of peace I dread much. Wherefore, if we wish to enjoy peace, we must wage war; if we reject war we shall never enjoy peace.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic VIII, Loeb Classical Library, page 377. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

There is this difference, Calenus, between your creed and mine: I am unwilling that any citizen should act so as to incur the penalty of death; you think that, even if he has so acted, he should be spared. If there be in the body anything such as to injure the rest of the body we suffer it to be cauterized and cut out, that some member, rather than the whole body, should perish; so in the body of the State, to ensure the health of the whole, let what is noxious be amputated. A harsh saying; but yours is harsher: "Let the reprobate, the criminal, the disloyal, be saved; let the innocent, the honest, the good, all the State, be wiped out!"

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic XIII, Loeb Classical Library, page 603 Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

Our first prayer is to conquer; in the second place, to regard no chance of fortune as unbearable on behalf of the honour and liberty of our country. What remains is not a third, but the last alternative of all, to incur the greatest turpitude through love of life.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic XI, Loeb Classical Library, page 491. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

For law is nothing else but a principle of right derived from the will of the Gods, commanding what is honest, forbidding the contrary.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic X, Loeb Classical Library, page 445. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

It is indeed with a great and well-nigh assured hope that we have taken up the cause of liberty; but though I allow that the issues of war are uncertain and Mars inconstant, yet we must struggle for liberty at the risk of life. For life does not consist in breath: it does not exist at all in the slave. All other nations can bear slavery; our community cannot, and for no other reason than that other nations shun toil and pain, and, to be free from these, can endure all things; but we have been so trained and our minds do imbued by our ancestors as to refer all our thoughts and acts to the standard of honour and virtue. So glorious is the recovery of liberty that in regaining liberty we must not even shrink from death. Nay, if immortality were to follow the shrinking from present peril, yet from that it would seem we would shrink the more, as a perpetuation of servitude. But seeing that days and nights all manner of chances surround us on every side, it is not the part of a man, least of all of a Roman, to hesitate to surrender the breath he owes nature to his fatherland.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic X, Loeb Classical Library, page 423. Date: 50 BC

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2500-collection-of-quotes-related-to-deism-natural-law-primarily-from-1800-s-period/>

Quotation:

No man grudges another's merit who is conscious of his own.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: Phillipic III, Loeb Classical Library, page 227. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

But if already - may the Gods avert the omen! - the State has been brought to its last pass, let us, the leaders of the world and of all nations, do what stout gladiators do to die with honor, let us fall with dignity rather than serve with ignominy. Nothing is more detestable than disgrace, nothing fouler than servitude. It is to glory and to liberty we were born; let us either hold fast to these or with dignity let us die.

Author: Cicero, Marcus Tullius

Reference: The Republic, Loeb Classical Library, page 157. Date: 50 BC

Quotation:

And though Brutus was only a private citizen, he sustained the whole burden of the government, and was the first in our State to demonstrate that no one is a mere private citizen when the liberty of his fellows needs protection.

Qui cum privatus esset, totam rem publicam sustinuit primusque in hac civitate docuit in conservanda civium libertate esse provatum neminem.

Author: Dio Chrysostom

Reference: Twelfth Discourse: Loeb Classical Library p 43

Date: 97

Quotation:

To resume, then: Of man's belief in the deity and his assumption that there is a god we were maintaining that the fountain-head, as we may say, or source, was that idea which is innate in all mankind and comes into being as the result of the actual facts and the truth, an idea that was not framed confusedly nor yet at random, but has been exceedingly potent and persistent since the beginning of time, and has arisen among all nations and still remains, being, one may almost say, a common and general endowment of rational beings.

Author: Franklin, Benjamin

Reference: Date: 1859

Quotation:

BF CH 7 end - I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho' some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty: Chapter I, line 156, page 5 Date: 1859

Quotation:

There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence: and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty: Chapter I, line 250, page 7. Date: 1859

Quotation:

The likings and dislikings of society, or some powerful portion of it, are thus the main thing which has practically determined the rules laid down for general observance, under the penalties of law or opinion. And in general, those who have been in advance of society in thought and feeling, have left this condition of things unassailed in principle, however they may have come into conflict with it in some of its details. They have occupied themselves rather in inquiring what things society ought to like or dislike, than in questioning whether its likings and dislikings should be a law to individuals.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter I, line 263, page 7. Date: 1859

Quotation:

Those who first broke the yoke of what called itself the Universal Church, were in general as little willing to permit difference of religious opinion as that church itself.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter I, line 335, page 9. Date: 1859

Quotation:

The object of this essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter I, line 910, page 39. Date: 1859

Quotation:

It is illustrated in the experience of almost all ethical doctrines and creeds. They are full of meaning and vitality to those who originate them, and to the direct disciples of the originators. Their meaning continues to be felt in undiminished strength, and is perhaps brought out into even fuller consciousness, so long as the struggle lasts to give the doctrine or creed an ascendancy over other creeds. At last it either prevails, and becomes the general opinion, or its progress stops; it keeps the possession of the ground it has gained, but ceases to spread further. When either of these results has become apparent, controversy on the subject flags, and gradually dies away. The doctrine has taken its place, if not as a received opinion, as one of the admitted sects or divisions of opinion: those who hold it have generally inherited, not adopted it; and conversion from one of these doctrines to another, being now an exceptional fact, occupies little place in the thoughts of their professors.

Instead of being, as at first, constantly on the alert to defend themselves against the world, or to bring the world over to them, they have subsided into acquiescence, and neither listen, when they can help it, to arguments against their creed, nor trouble dissentients (if there be such) with arguments in its favor. From this time may usually be dated the decline in the living power of the doctrine.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter II, line 1040, page 42. Date: 1859

Quotation:

All languages and literatures are full of general observations on life, both as to what it is, and how to conduct oneself in it; observations which everybody knows, which everybody repeats, or hears with acquiescence, which are received as truisms, yet of which most people first truly learn the meaning, when experience, generally of a painful kind, has made it a reality to them.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter II, 1090, page 43. Date: 1859

Quotation:

The loss of so important an aid to the intelligent and living apprehension of a truth, as is afforded by the necessity of explaining it to, or defending it against, opponents, though not sufficient to outweigh, is no trifling drawback from, the benefit of its universal recognition. Where this advantage can no longer be had, I confess I should like to see the teachers of mankind endeavoring to provide a substitute for it; some contrivance for making the difficulties of the question as present to the learner's consciousness, as if they were pressed upon him by a dissentient champion, eager for his conversion. But instead of seeking contrivances for this purpose, they have lost those they formerly had.

The Socratic dialectics, so magnificently exemplified in the dialogues of Plato, were a contrivance of this description. They were essentially a negative discussion of the great questions of philosophy and life, directed with consummate skill to the purpose of convincing any one who had merely adopted the commonplaces of received opinion, that he did not understand the subject -- that he as yet attached no definite meaning to the doctrines he professed; in order that, becoming aware of his ignorance, he might be put in the way to attain a stable belief, resting on a clear apprehension both of the meaning of the doctrines and of their evidence.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter II, line 1093, page 43. Date: 1859

Quotation:

It is the fashion of the present time to disparage negative logic -- that which points out weaknesses in theory or errors in practice, without establishing positive truths. Such negative criticism would indeed be poor enough as an ultimate result; but as a means of attaining any positive knowledge or conviction worthy the name, it cannot be valued too highly; and until people are again systematically trained to it, there will be few great thinkers, and a low general average of intellect, in any but the mathematical and physical departments of speculation.

Author: Mill, John Stuart

Reference: On Liberty, Chapter II, line 1305, page 49. Date: 1859

Quotation:

That mankind owes a great debt to this morality (Christianity), and to its early teachers, I would be the last person to deny; but I do not scruple to say of it, that it is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided, and that unless ideas and feelings, not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are. Christian morality (so called) has all the characters of a reaction; it is, in great part, a protest against Paganism. Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than active; Innocence rather than Nobleness; Abstinence from Evil, rather than energetic Pursuit of Good: in its precepts (as has been well said) "thou shalt not" predominates unduly over "thou shalt." In its horror of sensuality, it made an idol of asceticism, which has been gradually compromised away into one of legality.

It holds out the hope of heaven and the threat of hell, as the appointed and appropriate motives to a virtuous life: in this falling far below the best of the ancients.... What little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality, is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian; as, even in the morality of private life, whatever exists of magnanimity, high-mindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honor, is derived from the purely human, not the religious part of our education, and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth, professedly recognized, is that of obedience. I am as far as any one from pretending that these defects are necessarily inherent in the Christian ethics, in every manner in which it can be conceived, or that the many requisites of a complete moral doctrine which it does not contain, do not admit of being reconciled with it. Far less would I insinuate this of the doctrines and precepts of Christ himself.

I believe that the sayings of Christ are all, that I can see any evidence of their having been intended to be; that they are irreconcilable with nothing which a comprehensive morality requires; that everything which is excellent in ethics may be brought within them, with no greater violence to their language than has been done to it by all who have attempted to deduce from them any practical system of conduct whatever. But it is quite consistent with this, to believe that they contain, and were meant to contain, only a part of the truth; that many essential elements of the highest morality are among the things which are not provided for, nor intended to be provided for, in the recorded deliverances of the Founder of Christianity, and which have been entirely thrown aside in the system of ethics erected on the basis of those deliverances by the Christian Church. And this being so, I think it a great error to persist in attempting to find in the Christian doctrine that complete rule for our guidance, which its author intended it to sanction and enforce, but only partially to provide. I believe, too, that this narrow theory is becoming a grave practical evil, detracting greatly from the value of moral training and instruction, which so many well-meaning persons are now at length exerting themselves to

promote. I much fear that by attempting to form the mind and feelings on an exclusively religious type, and discarding those secular standards (as for want of a better name they may be called) which heretofore co-existed with and supplemented the Christian ethics, receiving some of its spirit, and infusing into it some of theirs, there will result, and is even now resulting, a low, abject, servile type of character, which, submit itself as it may to what it deems the Supreme Will, is incapable of rising to or sympathizing in the conception of Supreme Goodness.

I believe that other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources, must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind; and that the Christian system is no exception to the rule, that in an imperfect state of the human mind, the interests of truth require a diversity of opinions.

....

It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, pages 9 - 10 Date: 1819

Quotation:

The political tyranny of the earth coalesced with this phalanx of religious despots, and the love of science and of virtue was nearly banished from the world. Twelve centuries of moral and political darkness, in which Europe was involved, had nearly completed the destruction of human dignity, and everything valuable or ornamental in the character of man. During this long and doleful night of ignorance, slavery, and superstition, Christianity reigned triumphant; its doctrines and divinity were not called in question. The power of the Pope, the clergy, and the church, were omnipotent; nothing could restrain their phrenzy, nothing could control the cruelty of their fanaticism; with mad enthusiasm they set on foot the most bloody and terrific crusades, the object of which was to recover from infidels the Holy Land.

Seven hundred thousand men are said to have perished in the two first expeditions, which had been thus commenced and carried on by the pious zeal of the Christian church, and in the total amount, several millions were found numbered among the dead: the awful effects of religious fanaticism presuming upon the aid of heaven. It was then that man lost all his dignity, and sunk to the condition of a brute; it was then that intellect received a deadly blow, from which it did not recover till the fifteenth century. From that time to the present, the progress of knowledge has been constantly accelerated; independence of mind has been asserted, and opposing obstacles have been gradually diminished. The church has resigned a part of her power, the better to retain the remainder; civil tyranny has been shaken to its center in both hemispheres;

the malignity of superstition is abating, and every species of quackery, imposture, and imposition, are yielding to the light and power of science.

An awful contest has commenced, which must terminate in the destruction of thrones and civil despotism; in the annihilation of ecclesiastical pride and domination; or, on the other hand, intellect, science, and manly virtue will be crushed in one general ruin, and the world will retrograde towards a state of ignorance, barbarism, and misery.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 11. Date: 1819

Quotation:

Church and State may unite to form an insurmountable barrier against the extension of thought, the moral progress of nations, and the felicity of nature; but let it be recollected, that the guarantee for moral and political emancipation is already deposited in the archives of every school and college, and in the mind of every cultivated and enlightened man of all countries. It will henceforth be a vain and fruitless attempt to reduce the earth to that state of slavery of which the history of former ages has furnished such an awful picture. The crimes of ecclesiastical despots are still corroding upon the very vitals of human society; the severities of civil power will never be forgotten. The destructive influence of ancient institutions will teach us to seek in nature and the knowledge of her laws, for the discovery of those principles whose operation alone can emancipate the world from dreadful bondage.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 14. Date: 1819

Quotation:

Ignorance is an excellent friend to an ancient system of error, to the church and the different projects by which mankind has been enslaved. If you can once persuade a man that he is totally ignorant of the subject on which you are about to discourse, you can make him believe anything. Impositions of this kind are furnished by every day's experience; and the victim of such imposition is commonly the first to applaud the instrument of his ruin.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 14. Date: 1819

Quotation:

Nothing can be more true, nothing more certain, or important, than that man owes to himself due respect, that his intellect is an object of veneration, and its result interwoven with the best interests of human society. The distorted exhibitions of imaginary beings contained in all ancient theology, ought to excite within us a strong desire to discover truth, and reclaim the dignity which nature gave to man.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 93. Date: 1819

Quotation:

It is extremely destructive to the moral happiness of mankind to teach them the want of powers, or the inadequacy of those they possess; because the fact is otherwise, because it is a solemn truth that the powers of man are competent to provide for his happiness; they are equal to the exigencies of his existence. It is superstition that has made him a fool, it is religious tyranny that has enslaved his mind, perverted his faculties, and tarnished the glory of his intellectual energies. Christianity has taught him two awful and destructive lessons; first, that he is incapacitated for the performance of moral actions; and secondly in case he should perform them, they would add no merit or superior excellence to his character; that his best righteousness is like filthy rags which God would treat with marked abhorrence.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 109. Date: 1819

Quotation:

Reason, righteous and immortal reason, with the argument of printing types in one hand, and the keen argument of the sword in the other, must attack the thrones and the hierarchies of the world, and level them with the dust of the earth; then the emancipated slave must be raised by the power of science into the character of an enlightened citizen; thus possessing a knowledge of his rights, a knowledge of his duties will consequently follow, and he will discover the intimate and essential union between the highest interests of existence, and the practice of an exalted virtue. The power of reason, the knowledge of printing, the overthrow of political and ecclesiastical despotism, the universal diffusion of the light of science, and the universal enjoyment of republican liberty; these will become the harbingers and procuring causes of real virtue in every individual, and universal happiness will become the lot of man.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 138. Date: 1819

Quotation:

The moral qualities of our nature are capable of being drawn into action, in perfect coincidence with the fundamental principles of an exalted virtue; but it is also conceded, that they are capable of being vitiated. In every intelligent agent, actions of the most opposite nature will sometimes obtain; man is not wholly virtuous, nor is he wholly vicious; but he consists of a compound of these two different kinds of action; but whether virtuous or vicious, it is the result of his own choice, and the use of the moral energies of his nature; his virtue is always personal, and his vice are to be attributed to a source which entitles them to a similar denomination. He acts as an independent moral agent; he acts for himself, he is accountable for himself, and he cannot be justifiably criminated by the vices of another, neither can another be criminated by his violation of moral rectitude. In this case, personal moral agency is the correct ground of decision, and to this tribunal alone the whole must be deferred.

Author: Palmer, Elihu

Reference: Principles of Nature, page 157. Date: 1819

Quotation:

The essential principles of morality are founded in the nature of man, they cannot be annihilated, they are as indestructible as human existence itself.

THE FOLLOWING AUTHORS ARE OF SIMILAR DISPOSITION:

Ethan Allen

Reason the Only Oracle of Man (1784)

Elihu Palmer

Principles of Nature (1819)

Thomas Paine

The Age of Reason (1794)

Part 1

Part 2

Worship and Church Bells

Essay on Dream

Examination of the Prophecies

The Existence of God

Origin of Freemasonry

Vindication of Thomas Paine (Ingersoll)

Prospect Papers

Answer to Bishop of Landaff

Benjamin Franklin

BF CH 7 end I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho' some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day

John Toland

Christianity Not Mysterious (1696)

Anthony Collins

Discourse of Free Thinking (1713)

Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty (1715)

Wollston

Gordon

Chubb

Mathew Tindal

Christianity As Old As Creation (1730)

Joel Barlow

The Columbiad (1807)

C.F. Volney

The Ruins, Or, Medications on the Revolutions of Empire (1791)

John Foster

John Stewart

Republican Religion

John Locke

The Reasonableness of Christianity