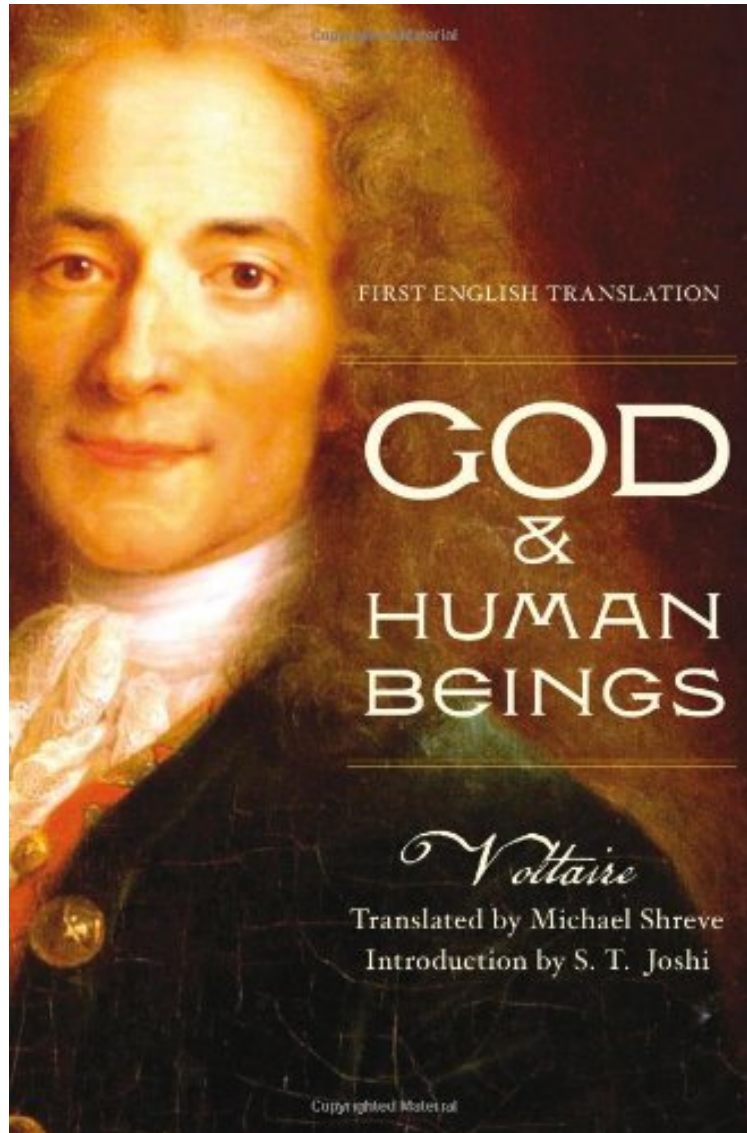


[PDF] God Human Beings: First English Translation

God Human Beings: First English Translation

Voltaire

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Voltaire : God Human Beings: First English Translation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God Human Beings: First English Translation:

34 of 35 people found the following review helpful. God and Humans By Voltaire By LeumasA fantastic review of all religions that Voltaire knew about. However his critique of Christianity and its parent religion Judaism is SUBLIME. This translation into English of the original French is superb. The book was originally published under the pretence that an Englishman (forgot the name) wrote it. This makes it amusing to read some of the parts of the

book. EVERY paragraph, is full of amazing stuff. Voltaire is just wonderful and his sarcasm is hilarious. Wonderful translation, wonderful content and EDUCATIONAL in every paragraph..... do yourself a favor that you will cherish for ever....READ this book. 12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Voltaire Apologetics By Philosophucker Interesting book from Voltaire. Haven't read much before him, but I assume a lot of what's in the book was fairly new to his time/era; if not for the sole reason that the ideas he publishes could not have been published too much before his time, at least not if you wanted to remain alive or at least in one piece..! Although the title is simply 'God' and doesn't indicate any particular religion, Gods and Human Beings is written with a bent towards an explication and criticism of the Jewish and Christian religion. Other religions are discussed, but always with an eye to Jewish/Christian comparison. Much of what Voltaire discusses sets the groundwork for what many might consider a neutered religion or perhaps more euphemistically put, a personal religion. One which satisfies the worshiper but doesn't diffuse into society or have socio-political power over people's lives. Although he was very much religious, his writing sets to release people from any particular dogma, freeing them to worship a Supreme Being through either the personage of a prophet or through a direct communion with the Creator. Voltaire also seems to think that what he considers true religion is tied to morality and that all people are bound by this universal morality and as long as that morality is met, anything else (i.e. dogma) is secondary and superfluous. Discussed with wit and what I would call a righteous indignation, Voltaire skims the bible, giving short incisive reviews of the histories of the Hebrews, Jews and Christians, plucking out from the Bible what he considers are inevitable contradictions; inevitable because the ideas, phenomenon and histories are written by fallible and interested, biased people. These contradictions include "facts" such as genealogies of the same person differing from book to book. Other examples are a bit more subtle such as the claim of a loving God commanding love from His people and yet asking those same people to commit what are, in Voltaire's view, some of the worst atrocities committed by humans. Voltaire also includes reviews of other religions, comparing them to the Jewish and Christian religions, noting the similarities in styles of worship and morality and how many of these religions predated both Christianity and Judaism and that Christianity and Judaism have elements, if not plain plagiarisms of these older religions. Egyptian, Far East and Persian religions are cited, but he also discusses the influences of non religious thinking such as the that of Platonic philosophy on Christianity. I think Voltaire hits the nail on the head of much of his discussion about Judaism and Christianity, however, I can see how his diatribes can come across a bit anti-semitic. It was not only the Jews that committed atrocities and could be considered a roving band of thieves; a point which he appears to admit, but might be lost in his excoriations of Jewish history. Also, I'm not convinced of the existence of a Supreme Being nor of the universality of morality. Granted Voltaire was more deist in his approach to religion, but I think he cannot convince himself to take the next step of taking out what amounts to nonsense. Not nonsense in the sense that there is no Supreme Being, but when you take out the "human qualities" of a God, you are essentially left with nothing with which to ground your definition. God becomes something only described by ambiguous terminology subject to subjective interpretation and necessarily incomplete and effectively useless. For example, we cannot describe eternity. We can only describe it by reference to its opposite: time. Therefore the concept is not only useless to us in ascertaining any kind of certainty in philosophic (or scientific) ideas but it contains contradictions inherent in whatever structures of understanding we are limited to in our human bodies (that doesn't keep us from trying though - its fun and makes interesting movies!). The issue of the universality of morality is a little more complex, but Voltaire does not have the luxury of anthropological, biological and psychological studies available to us today. Perhaps if he did, he still may not believe that morals are relative (even today, the issue is far from decided), but I believe he would be more apt to believe that it is difficult to know. All in all, a great book. A great read. Funny witty. Essential for anyone considering apologetics against religions.. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Cutting and Honest Opinion on Religion. By Annie Voltaire cuts through the established Judeo-Christian myths and fables like an enraged academic with a scythe. None of the ideas are new to today's debate of course but in 1769, when the book was written it must have caused a stir within the various religious circles. He was obviously a passionate and educated man who had no qualms about upsetting the status quo. Claiming to be a deist he nonetheless has little time for religion as espoused by the scribes who brought us our Christian beliefs that still hang on right up to the present day. An easy and fascinating read if you are interested in religion and all that it meant and still means for mankind.

In this little-known work by Voltaire (1694-1778) now available in English for the first time the famous French philosophe and satirist presents a wide-ranging and acerbic survey of religion throughout the world. Written toward the end of his life in 1769, the work was penned in the same decade as some of his more famous works the Philosophical Dictionary, Questions on Miracles, and Lord Bolingbroke's Important Examination all of which questioned the basic tenets of Christianity. Voltaire called himself a deist and thus he professed belief in a supreme deity. But he was always sharply critical of institutional Christianity, especially its superstitions, the hypocrisy of its clergy, and its abuse of political power. Both his deism and his critical attitude toward Christianity are manifest in *God and Human Beings*, which is, in effect, one of the first works of comparative religion. Comparing Christianity to the more ancient belief systems of the Jews, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, and

Arabs, he notes a common tendency to worship one supreme god, despite the host of subordinate deities in many of these religions. He also critiques the many superstitions and slavish rituals in religion generally, but he emphasizes that in this respect Christianity is no better than other faiths. Thus, the clergy's claim that Christianity is God's supreme revelation to humanity has no basis from an objective perspective. This first English translation of a classic critique of religion includes an introduction by writer, scholar, and editor S. T. Joshi, who wrote the article on Voltaire in *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (edited by Tom Flynn). Anticipating many of the themes of the later Higher Criticism and rationalist critiques of religion, this incisive, witty treatise by the great French skeptic will be a welcome addition to the libraries of anyone with an interest in the philosophy of religion, intellectual history, or the Enlightenment.

About the Author Michael Shreve (Paris, France) is the translator of *Testament: Memoir of the Thoughts and Sentiments of Jean Meslier*. He works as a language teacher and translator in Paris, France. He has taught Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, English, and classical civilization courses in universities and private schools in the United States, Canada, Lebanon, Mexico, Malaysia, and France over the past fifteen years.