

"Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists." Review.

Post by "Daniel" of April 9, 2019 at 6:27 AM

NEWTONIANISM. THE NEW FACE OF EPICUREAN MATERIALISM

"...As we go from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, the atomism of Epicurus and Lucretius moved from being an alien smuggled into Christianized culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to being the only tenable theoretical view of natural philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The time period may be conveniently marked by the contiguous lives of Galileo Galilei (1554-1642) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727)..."

"...chief among the various figures who contributed to the victory of materialist atomism in science...Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) and Robert Boyle (1627-1691). These three are extraordinarily interesting because they combined atomism with fervent Christianity. The link that allowed this new combination was a common hatred of Aristotelianism..."

"...Bruno was the martyr for the cause...Gassendi was engaged in ongoing conversations with the most famous philosophers and scientists of the day - Kepler, Galileo, Mersenne and Thomas Hobbes - and his books enjoyed a wide and enthusiastic readership. Finally, Boyle was the great advocate of taking atomism from the theoretical realm of the physicists to the very practical realm of the chemists..."

"...If we may provide the briefest statement that characterizes the Galilean-Newtonian revolution, we might call it the vindication of atomism through the victory of mathematics...With the complete theoretical victory of Epicurean materialism, all the essential elements of Epicurus's system - the eternal and indestructible atoms, the infinite universe with the unlimited number of worlds, the banishment of the creator God, the rejection of miracles, the displacement of design in nature by chance and material necessity, and the elimination of the immaterial soul - fell into place..."

"...For those living in the two centuries between Newton's Principia and the dawn of the twentieth century, the world was as Newton had described it, and that world was almost exactly as Epicurus had planned it. To understand that moral Epicureanism followed necessarily upon the adoption of theoretical Epicureanism, and that moral Darwinism is the culmination of moral Epicureanism, is to understand the modern world..."