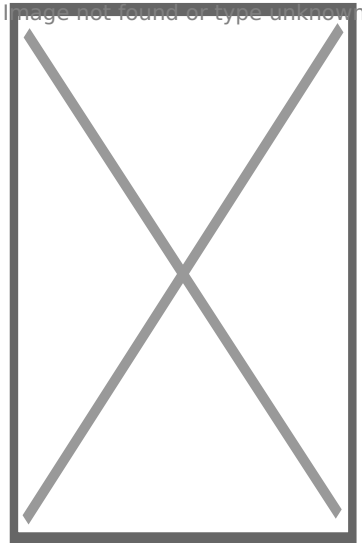


Sermon On Natural Religion - By "A Natural Man" - Likely Thomas Young

Post by "Cassius" of April 10, 2025 at 10:55 AM

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One of the things about this which Matthew Stewart comments on is how interesting it was to the deists of this period to think about life on other planets and throughout the universe, and that this is in fact how the "Sermon On Natural Religion" ends:

it is impossible that God can be perfect and not perfect in the same time; and as he must be necessarily perfect, that nothing whatsoever can be attributed to him, which is imperfect, as hatred, envy, wrath, &c. so that all such expressions must in his opinion be taken in an hieroglyphical, mystical and figurative sense; that his God must be all goodness, and consequently that he cannot decree any one to everlasting damnation, as he formed every thing for the best in its kind: Who can therefore with more propriety enjoy to much happiness, and the real *summum bonum* than the natural man, who by infallible principles is fully persuaded that he has nothing to fear from, nor to do with, an irascible, cruel, wrathful or vindictive Deity, but with an all-good, all-perfect and all-powerful God, who directs and modifies every thing with the most surprising order in such a manner, that all what is, and exists, is in its kind perfect, and for the best of the world, and all what it contains. It is likewise very difficult for a man, who is a Naturalist, to imagine or believe, that only this little earth should contain rational animals called men, and that no others of that kind should any other way subsist, but solely the descendants of Adam, and that out of those, according to the doctrine of some theologers, at least ninety-nine in a hundred should go to Hell and eternal damnation. No! he rather supposes, and with great reason; that other celestial bodies comprehend as well
rational

rational animals as this earth; and as for Adam's descendants, he thinks that never a-one is to go to Hell, and burn everlastingly, as it is inconsistent with the perfections of God Almighty. I shall conclude with the sentiments of a natural man: Mr. Ferguson in his astronomy, p. 24 gives us his spirited thoughts in the following lines, "Every person who looks upon and compares the many systems of moons together, which belong to Jupiter and Saturn, must be amazed at the vast magnitude of these two planets, and the noble attendance they have in respect of our little earth, and can never bring himself to think, that an infinite wise creator should dispose of all his animals and vegetables here, leaving the other planets bare, and destitute of rational creatures: To suppose that he had any view to our benefit in creating these moons, and giving them their motions round Jupiter and Saturn, to imagine that he intended these vast bodies for any advantage to us, when he well knew that they could never be seen but by a few Astronomers peeping through telescopes; and that he gave to the planets regular returns of days and nights, and different seasons to all where they would be convenient, but of no manner of service to us, except what immediately regards our own planet the earth; to imagine, I say, that he did all this on our account, would be charging him impiously with having done much in vain, and as absurd as to imagine that he has created a little sun, and a
planetary