

Excerpts from *Astro-Theology: Or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, From a Survey of the Heavens*. Illustrated with Copper Plates. (London: “Printed for W. INNYS, at the Prince’s Arm in St. Paul’s Church Yard. MDCCXV” [1715]) by **William Derham**:

AMONG all the various *Systemes*, I need take notice only of three; the *Ptolemaick*, the *Copernican*, and the *New Systeme*. Of each of which in their order.

Of the *Ptolemaick Systeme*.

In the *Ptolemaick Systeme* the Earth and Waters are supposed to be in the Center of the Universe ... (p. x)

Of the *Copernican Systeme*.

ACCORDING to this *Systeme*, the *Sun* is supposed to be the Center, and the Heavens and Earth to revolve round about him ... (p. xiii)

Of the *New Systeme*.

AND now I pass from the Second *Systeme* to the Third, which is called the *New Systeme*; which extends the Universe to a far more immense compass, than any of the other *Systemes* do, even to an indefinite Space; and replenishes it with a far more grand Retinue than ever was ascribed unto it. (p. xl)

THIS *New Systeme* is the same with the *Copernican*, as to the *Systeme* of the Sun and its Planets ... But then whereas the *Copernican Hypothesis* supposeth the Firmament of the Fixt Stars to be the Bounds of the Universe, and to be placed at equal distance from its Center the Sun; the *New Systeme* supposeth there are many other *Systemes* of *Suns* and *Planets*, besides that in which we have our residence: namely, that every Fixt Star is a Sun, and encompassed with a *Systeme* of Planets, both Primary and Secondary, as well as ours. (p. xli)

HAVING thus represented the State of the *Universe*

according to the *New Systeme* of it, the usual Question is, what is the use of so many Planets as we see about the Sun, and so many as are imagined to be about the Fixt Stars? To which the answer is, That they are *Worlds*, or places of *Habitation* ... (p. xlix)

... the best and most learned modern Astronomers do generally suppose the great multitude of Fixt Stars we see, or imagine to be in the Universe, to be so many *Suns*, and each of them encompassed with a *Systeme of Planets* like our Sun. (p. 33-34)

... *a man cannot but conclude, that such great acts of Nature are governed by some Mind, some Intelligent Being.* (p. 102-103)

... our World is well fitted for habitation, well provided with every thing that may minister to the support, the comfort and pleasure of its Inhabitants. (p. 158-159)

THUS it is manifest how wisely and indulgently the *great CREATOR* hath provided for the good of our Planet, by so critically adjusting its Position to, and it's Distance from the Sun, to the state and temper of it and all things thereon. (p. 160)

Who can view their Glories, and partake of their beneficial Influences, and at the same time not adore the *Wisdom*, and praise the *Kindness* of their CONTRIVER and MAKER! But above all, should there be any found among Rational Beings so stupid, [196-197] so vile, so infatuated with their Vices, as to deny these *Works* to GOD, and ascribe them to a *Necessity of Nature*, or indeed a meer *Nothing*, namely *Chance*! ... stupidly ascribe those manifest demonstrations of the infinite *Power* and *Wisdom* of GOD, to a meer Nothing, rather than to their great Author. (p. 196-197)

Of GOD's Relation to us, and the Duties resulting from thence.

IT APPEARING FROM THE LAST Chapter how great a *Being* the CREATOR is, it is time to consider what Relation he stands in to us, and what is due from us to him. His Relation to us is that of CREATOR; and as such, of *Conservator, sovereign LORD* and *Ruler*, one that hath an absolute power over us, and all things belonging to us, that can subject us to what Laws he sees fit, and that can reward or punish us as we deserve. And in this case, the least we can do, is to *revere* and *fear* him at all times, to

worship and *serve* him with all our power, to *comply* with his [212-213] holy Will sincerely and heartily, and to *obey* him in all things he hath either forbidden or enjoined. And considering also how great *Indulgence* and *Love* the CREATOR hath shewed in his works throughout the Universe, it naturally follows that we ought to be truly *Thankful* to him for his Mercy and Kindness, and to *Love* him for his Love and Goodness. (p. 212-213)

This Survey of the Heavens teaches us not to overvalue the World

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FROM the consideration of the prodigious Magnitude and Multitude of the Heavenly bodies, and the far more noble Furniture and Retinue which some of them have more than we, we may learn not to overvalue this World, not to set our hearts too much upon it, or upon any of its Riches, Honours or Pleasures. For what is all our Globe but a Point, a Trifle to the Universe! A Ball not so much as visible among the greatest part of the Heavens, namely the Fixt Stars. (p. 220)

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