

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 16. 1691.

According to our Promise in our last Mercury, we have Collected the several Questions that have been sent us about the Soul, and shall here answer 'em all together.

Quest. 1. **U**Pon the bare Relation of any thing, an Idea of the thing related is at the same time represented by the Imagination: But when we speak of God or the Soul, we have no Idea at all—  
Query, The Reason of it?

Ans. Imagination is not the Effect of the rational but the animal Soul, as we may perceive by the Dreams of a Dog or a Horse, and therefore no more capable of judging or representing Immaterial Beings than the Pallat is of distinguishing Sounds, or the Ear of trying Gusts and Savors.

Quest. 2. How, or after what manner are our Souls in our Bodies?

Ans. Coextension and Local Presence are not consistent with the Nature of Spirits, which are in Bodies as God Almighty is in all the World. Our Souls perhaps can't be properly said to be physically in our Bodies; 'tis only an expression to our Capacity, to represent to us that the greatest part of their thoughts and of their Idea's, their sentiments of Pleasure and Pain are there by the means of the Body. They act upon the Body by the action of their Will, — or according to Thomas Aquinas, Spirits are in Bodies after two manners, either by the Action which they exercise upon certain Bodies, or corporeal Spaces; or else by the Action which they suffer, and which they receive by the means of certain Bodies—

The following Question is the substance of several, sent by divers Hands.

Ans. Whether our Souls going out of our Bodies, pass into any local Circumscribable place, or whether, according to Origen, Tertullian, and other ancient Fathers, they do assume certain Vehicles or subtle Bodies, retaining the same Characterizing Forms which their Terrestrial Bodies had?

Ans. As we said before, we urge again, that Spirits or Souls can't properly be said to be in any place at all, where we may conceive them to be by a Coextension, and a local or corporeal Circumscription, but only by a pure relation of Operation and Activity, it would be a Manichean Idea, a Chymical and Monstrous Conception, to assign Space and Circumscription (which are only proper to Bodies) to a Soul. When we say the Soul is in the Body, we mean no more than a relation of Empire and Servitude both at the same time, which the Soul hath with the Body, and the Body with the Soul, as a Power of determining the Motions of the Body, and the Servitude of receiving (generally) her Knowledge and Sentiments by the Body; so when we say the Soul goes out of the Body, we mean no more than that she ceases to have that relation to the Body; so when we say the Soul goes out of the Body, we mean no more than that she ceases to have that relation to the Body in respect of Empire and Servitude that she had before— Origen's and Tertullian's thoughts were too like their Bodies, gross and corporeal, in assigning circumscribable Vehicles to uncircumscribable Souls, unless they would have 'em act as in Bodies, and that would revive the old Platonick Transmigration.

Quest. 4. Whether seeing the Soul is immaterial, Heaven or Hell are Local, and if Local, where situated?

Ans. We can't admit a Locality without Extensions, Adjustments of Magnitude and Quantity, and by consequence Circumscribability, which how inconsistent it is with the Nature of God, Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, every one knows, or may know if he reads the preceding 2d. and 3d. Answers. The only Objection and Difficulty which lies in this Assertion,

is, the reconciling it with the Site or Locality of our Saviour's Body, which is in Heaven; in order to which let the Objectors first satisfy us, What sort of Body it is, or what Change is wrought upon't, by putting on incorruption? Until it can be prov'd that such an incorrupt immortal Body, by its Change has not divested all those Qualities and Accidents, which to us are the proof of the existence of common matter, it will be no argument for the Locality of Heaven. I see no reason why Matter, according to that definition we here make of it, may not be changed to something else, and only call'd so to our apprehension as well as form of Matter. We have Instances of the different Forms our Saviour appear'd in after his Resurrection, and once that with his Natural Body he appear'd to his Disciples when the doors were shut, which considered, may in part demonstrate that Heaven needs not be local because our Saviour's Body is there: But this is only offer'd as our own sentiments, and we leave it to the determination of the Learned.

Quest. 5. Whether separated Souls have any knowledge of the Affairs in this World, and what is to be thought of the Apparitions of the Dead?

Ans. Altho it cannot be denied but in some grand and extraordinary Cases, as the Resurrection of those dead which appear'd upon our Saviour's Crucifixion, and the Apparition of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration: And in some other Cases, as many Instances might be reckon'd up: The departed may converse with us, or appear, but perhaps ordinarily, Apparitions are not the Souls of the Dead, but of other Spirits, and mostly of Evil ones. Augustine was of this Opinion, and said, if 'twas a common thing, he was sure his Mother Monica would have appear'd to him, whose love was so extraordinary great whilst living.

Quest. 6. Whether separate Souls know one another, seeing they have not the Organs of Seeing, Speech, &c.

Ans. There is certainly a Communication of Angels and Souls in Heaven, as appears from several Texts, Rev. 7. 9, 10, 11, 12. 1 Cor. 13. 1. Dan. 8. 13. but we can conceive this Communication to be chiefly in an ability of insinuating their thoughts to each other by a meer act of their wills, just as we now speak to God, or our selves in our Hearts, when our Lips don't move, or the least outward sign appear. Whether there's any other Converse, we are not yet satisfied; but that there's what's sufficient to know and be known, we are satisfied.

Quest. 7. Whether departed Souls, as soon as they go out of the Body, are in Joy or Misery?

Ans. The imbodyed Soul is clogg'd with Flesh, byas'd by Interest or Passion, and abus'd with vain hopes, and false fears; but when it comes to be freed from its Clog, and takes a view of it self when naked and without Excuses, it sees and knows its future lot, and by the Characteristical Notes of Holiness or Impiety stamp'd upon it, it makes a Self-judgment, and accordingly begins its Bliss or Wretchedness, by expectation of the last day, which will be an actual Execution of this Self-judgment. This we take to be the immediate Joy or Misery of a departed Soul, which in respect to an ill Man, is not unfitly resembled to a Convicted Criminal at an Earthly Bar, who before his Sentence is pass'd is assured of his Death, and takes the Earnest by forestalling it in unhappy and wretched Reflections.

Quest. 8. Where do departed Souls go immediately upon their separation from the Body?

Ans. The Scripture says, The Spirit returns to God that gave it. Our Saviour's Prayer, that we might be in him, and he in us, gives us alio the liberty to answer this Question Philosophically; and to assert, that all Souls as they are separated from the Body, are united into God, and yet without a Catachresis, if we consider, our Souls coming at first from God, he never loses his Sovereignty over 'em; 'tis in him we live, and move, and have our Being, God contains all things, and is con-

tained

tained or comprehended by nothing: Jupiter est quodcunque vides—*Augustine*, said, you must answer to him who shall ask you where the World is, that 'tis in God; if it be objected, that the Union betwixt God and good Souls, and the Union betwixt God and evil Souls cannot be the same, we answer, it is the same, as to dependance and existence, but different in the manner how. The good are united to God by an Union of Love, Tenderness, or good Liking, but the Evil by an Union of Wrath, Enmity, and implacable Vengeance, God (say the Holy Fathers) is their first and true Hell, by giving them perpetually an Idea thereof, by means of which Idea he impresses on 'em dolorous Sentiments of real burning. There is a separation betwixt God's Goodness, and Sinners, but he is felt as nearly and immediately to the Reprobates as to the Saints.

Quest. 9. Whether has a Man three Souls or no, to wit, the Supream, which they call the Mind, the Sensitive, which they call an Image, and Rational, which ties and knits together the other two?

Ans. I am very well satisfied as to the Composition of Man, with the description St. Paul gives of it in his Prayer for one of the Churches, viz. I pray God that your whole Body, Soul and Spirit, &c. by the Soul meaning the Life, or Animal part, and by the Spirit, the rational, as he explains it in another place, The Spirits of just Men made perfect; I see no Physical or Theological Reason for a third, since these two with the Body render a Man capable of all the ends of his Creation.

Quest. 10. Where are the Souls of Men to remain till the last day?

Ans. In the Favour or Wrath of God Almighty, not in any proper locality, because not matter. The Soul or Mind is not confin'd: I can think of the four Elements, and in my mind range through the whole Creation all in a Minute, which shows that the Soul is not imprison'd in any one of them, and yet I may be under some extream horror all the time: And thus (for any reason I yet see) it may be with a wicked Soul after separation, as also the contrary with a good one.

Quest. 11. What have the Philosophers (guided only by Natural Reason) conceiv'd as to the future state of the Soul?

Ans. One of the Grecian Philosophers writ a Book upon the Immortality of the Soul, that made so lively an Impress upon the Spirits of the People, that Business began to be neglected, as also the Duties of Life, and the Affairs of the Publick, and a great many hastened their own Deaths to enter into such a future state as was represented, insomuch that at the length the Book was forbid and suppress'd, for fear it should have depopulated the Commonwealth: but there's little fear now of any such accidents. When Socrates had the fatal draught in his hand, and looking upon the Officers of Death, said, That it did not seem to him that they led him to Death, but that he was going to mount up to Heaven. Cato embraced his Sword, after he had a while contemplated the Immortality of the Soul. Plutarch saith, The wise Man goes with pleasure out of the Darkeness of the Earth, to enjoy in Heaven an immortal Light with the Gods. Have Courage, (says another) let not Death afright us, since after Death we shall either be Gods, or like Gods. Let us not fear that our Bodies will bury our Souls under their Ruines when the Heavens shall fall, and this Corporeal Nature shall intirely perish and disappear, there is a necessity that the Spirit which animates us, and is the Foundation of our Being, must remain under these Ruines, without being hurt or endamaged by them.

Quest. 12. How are we to understand the Union of the Soul and Body, since the Soul is a pure immaterial Substance, and the Body a gross organiz'd Substance.

Ans. We must not understand a Union of this kind, by coextention, penetration, or an adjustment of Figures and Magnitudes, this Idea wou'd be proper enough betwixt Body and Body.—Suppose we then to avoid these gross thoughts, what an Union of two Angels wou'd be—We can have here no Idea or Conception of other Union than that of thought, will, and sentiment, that is, if these two Angels should necessarily think, will, and understand the same thing, make the same Conclusions from the same Premises, be subject to the same Motion of Love, Hatred, and every thing else that is only proper to Spirits, then these two Angels are properly united, and are one single whole in two individual Substances. Now

we know what is required of a Spirits towards a Union; we'll consider the Body, which is a marvellous Lump of Bones, Nerves, Membranes, &c. in a structure full of Harmony, in which were only the Animal Life (which is communicated to Brutes) infus'd, it would act and suffer as guided by the Sense and Affections, from whence we conclude that there can be no other Union than thus:—When the Sense represents something to the Affections, the Soul which belongs to this Body does at the same time choose, hate, love, &c. what the Body according to its powers is busie upon, this is the Union; and when this Union or Correspondence breaks off, the Soul leaves its unequal Companion, and returns to (or into) God: We cannot conceive any other Union without the grossest Absurdities, as to think the Soul is in the Body as juice is in a Plant, or as Water is mingled with liquid Chymical Spirits. This would confound matter with immateriality, and make up a Jargon of Impossibilities.

Quest. 13. How is the Stone generated in the Head of a Toad, and in no other Creature? How comes a Coal to be found under a Plantane-Root at one time of the Year more than another? Why does a Swan sing at his Death? and never before?

Ans. These Questions are so near a-kin to one another, that 'tis pity they should be parted, and therefore we have put 'em together. A Stone is generated in the Head of all other Creatures as well as in that of a Toad, and that a Mill-stone (or a Whet-stone) as much as any other. There will be a Coal under a Plantane-Root, a Cabbage-Root, or what Root you please, at any time of the Year, if any Person will take the Pains to put it there, but otherwise you may as soon find a Pearl or a Jewel. A Swan sings at its Death just as a Goose does, which will not only Sing after a Rate, but Dance too, if you let it go, after it has received the fatal Stroke. To be short, they are all three no better nor worse than popular Prejudices and meer Romances.

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