

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. *Supposing there were Ten Bushel of Coals laid on a Heap and Fire put to 'em, that would consume 'em all to Ashes, about three Bushels of Ashes still remaining — Pray what becomes of the rest, since nothing can be annihilated?*

Ans. The Question might have been put closer in an Instance of another Nature, where there are no Ashes left at all — particularly in a Candle, where tho there are some small Ashes from the Wick, there would be none at all from the Wax or Tallow, tho the Candle should be like what the Seamen vow'd to the Virgin, as big as a Main-mast. However it's much the same in both cases, the unctuous substance, both in Coals and Candle firing the Flame, and the Faces or heavier part, either subsiding in Cinders and Ashes, or being forc'd up in the smoak, some parts flying one way, others another, by the violent Whirl of the matter, when put in so brisk a motion, but yet no part thereof being really annihilated, tho no man, nor perhaps Angel could find all the scattered parts and join 'em together again as they were immediately before their dissolution.

Quest. 2. *Was that Lazarus whom we read of at Venice and other places, who had a little Brother growing out of his side, two men or one — had he two Souls or one, and how shall they rise at the day of Judgment?*

Ans. It had been a noble piece of Curiosity indeed to have dissected that person after his Death to have made observations how the nourishment or Blood was convey'd out of one into the other. If we remember that Story aright, these two had different Sentiments and perceptions of things, one of 'em often appearing pleased when the other was displeased, and one crying when the other was laughing — which sufficiently evinces they had different passions, accordingly different Souls, and therefore must be two different men, and hence as they had different Deaths, the little Brother as he was call'd, Dying first, tho the other did not long survive him, so undoubtedly they shall be distinctly rais'd — But how the second shall have his own Body restored again, and that compleatly, tho he never had any more than the upper part of a Man, let those look to it who think that 'tis not enough the Bodies of Men should be specifically of the same matter they were before, at the Resurrection.

Quest. 3. *Whereas the Letter G is sound'd Ghe before the Vowel I in Give, Guilt, &c. and before the Vowel E in Get, Geld, Geer, Gehazi, Gedalia, but melts into Gi or J (as to the sounds) before the same Vowel in Gin, Gibbet, Gilly-flower, &c. and in Gender,*

Generation, George, &c. now where G melts in sound as before, may not the use of an J Consonant reconcile this contradiction, and the words be written Jin, Jibbet, Jilly-flower, Jender, Jeneration, Jeorge, &c. and so the J deserve a place in the Alphabet and not dwell in the Pen only — and whether such an alteration may not pass under the same favour with the common Abbreviations now used of writing ['em,] for [them] [tho'] for [though] and many others?

Ans. The sound of the English Letters is so Arbitrary that we believe 'tis impossible to make any Canon for 'em with fewer Exceptions than Busby's Rules, which are so many that you may e'ne throw up Cross and Pile, which shall be the Rule, and which the Exception. This of G particularly, is at once so different and so difficult that 'tis as hard for strangers to know how to pronounce it, as to pronounce it when they know it, we mean the Liquid sound, for when 'tis mute 'tis easie and common to all Nations: And indeed the Greeks know no other sound of it than that more Blunt one which we use in Give, Get, &c. any more than the Germans do now, who pronounce even their own names as we the words just instanced — and we are apt to believe the Romans did the same, but for us, as has been said, we are altogether Arbitrary, pronouncing the same Letters, the same Syllables and taken from the same Language after a different manner. Thus Gyges and Giant are both from the Greek, and yet we pronounce one Mute, and to'ther at least a Sense-liquid and 'tis as common in many other words both from the Greek and Latin, not only to pronounce 'em contrary to what they are in their own Language when we have made 'em Denizens of ours, but even to appropriate one sound to 'em when we express 'em in their own Language. Thus in some of those instances by the Querist, Generation, Gender, George, and that even in the Latin, Generatio, Genus, Georgius, whereas there is little doubt to be made but the Latins pronounced their Georgius and Genus as the Greeks did their γένος, &c. and there is no more reason why we should pronounce Genus with a Liquid sound in Latin, to accommodate it to our own English, nor indeed the English word Gender it self derived from it, then γένος in Greek after the same manner. But tho we have lost the right pronunciation, yet methinks we should keep the right spelling in the words mentioned and others like 'em, that they may at least in some measure confess their Original, as in Gender, Generation, &c. otherwise we should quite lose both. We think therefore 'twou'd be inconvenient to use an J Consonant in these words, as others of the

the same notation. For the others 'tis true there seems to be some reason, in one of that kind, to wit Goal, custom has already made it a moot-case whether is the truer way of spelling it with a G or an J in another, *Gilly-flower*, it's only a corruption and the true word *July-flower*, tho this has obtain'd so long, as writing *Surgeon* for *Chirurgion*, that we now as commonly write one as t'other. For using the J Consonant in all such cases, would indeed be the way to avoid some confusion, but yet such an Innovation seems so odd, that we hardly believe 'twill ever be practis'd. For the other of those Abbreviations now used, there may be several Reasons why they obtained, which this alteration would want. Those were used generally by our Poets, *Ben-Johnson* and the rest, they are more convenient and expeditious for writing and withal more neat than writing at full length.

Quest. 4. *Seeing Angels are Spirits, and consequently immaterial Substances, how can they be said to eat, as we find they did when Abraham and Lot entertained 'em?*

Ans. If we believe *Raphael* the case will be quickly decided, for he tells *Tobit* and *Tobias*, *Tobit* 12. 19. "All these days I did Appear unto you, but I did neither Eat nor Drink, but ye did see a Vision. But the Truth, is that same *Raphael* is a sort of an Apocryphal Angel, who denied his name, and gave a wrong one in the room on't, so that we can't blame any person not to believe him, since he has been caught tripping already. What we esteem most probable is, that those Angels which are mentioned in Canonical Scripture, and which 'tis plainly said did Eat with the Patriarchs, did really do so, and not in a Vision only. For that they had Corporeal Vehicles we are certain, otherwise they could neither have been seen nor heard. In which Vehicles they might receive and contain the Meat which they put into their Mouths, which either might be dispersed again by perspiration, or perhaps fell to the Ground upon the Dissolution of those Vehicles.

Quest. 5. *That the Soul doth subsist out of the Body after Death is granted by all Christians; but whether is it an active or unactive State during that subsistence out of the Body?*

Ans. In order to answer this Question, we'd fain ask the Gentleman who proposes it, what kind of thing he takes an unactive Soul to be, or a Soul in an unactive State which is the same thing? And whether it be'n't as perfect a contradiction, and that in terminis, as to say active, or Rational Matter or a Material Spirit? Passivity is of the Essence of Matter, as Activity of Spirit; take away passiveness from one you make it Spirit, take away activity for t'other, you make it either Matter or nothing at all. In Swoons, Extasies, &c. 'tis not the Soul, but the Body that's unactive, or rather unfit to be acted, and no more wonder we can't remember what passes then, than that we can't see

when our Eyes are fast shut together. Whatever Definition we give of the Soul of Man, if we believe it material, whether we call it a cogitative Being, a reflecting Being, a Knowing, a Thinking Substance, or by what ever Name or Title, we distinguish it, there's still something of Action included in its Essence, and whether it thinks, reflects or knows, still it Acts, or else it is not, for all these Terms, connote some action. In vain then wou'd the Socinian endeavour to mitigate the Absurdity of the Soul's sleeping with the Body in the same Gaave, since notwithstanding his high pretences to Reason, there are not two more indigestible absurdities in all Transubstantiation than an Adorable Creature, or an unactive Spirit, both which he pretends to believe.

Quest. 6. *Whether if the Soul can be absent from the Body for a limited time without Death, provided the Body remain Tenantable, what has been or may be the means used to preserve the Body thus Tenantable in the Soul's absence, and for how long time may it be done? and whether may any such thing be lawfully endeavour'd?*

Ans. We must be very kind, and Give very liberally before we can come near enough to answer the greatest part of this Query — which indeed takes it for granted that we'll resolve those immediately going before in the Affirmative, whereas we are rather for the contrary opinion. Thus we say 'tis in vain to enquire what has been the means to preserve the Body Tenantable during the Soul's absence, when there's no such thing as this absence of the Soul without Death. And for the other Query. Whether it be lawful to endeavour it — that is, we suppose, to preserve the Body Tenantable, if it may be lawful, 'tis yet sufficiently absurd to attempt it.

Quest. 7. *Whether is the Cause of Death, or Separation of the Soul from the Body, in the Soul or, in the Body, or both?*

Ans. The separation of the Body and Soul is not the Cause of Death, but Death it self, the Cause of which Separation is oftentimes very distant from its effect, the Separation it self, nay always so unless in sudden Death. But further, it seems very incongruous to ask whether the Separation of the Soul from the Body be in the Soul, or whether it be in the Body, or both, since any Separation necessarily implies two things to be separated, for who ever heard of one thing that was separated from its self? But upon further consideration the Querist seems to mean much the same with what we have now asserted, and tho his Question sounds a little oddly, intends no more by the separation of the Soul from the Body than Death it self, and not the Cause on't. In answer, we believe the Cause of this Separation to be first in the Body, then in the Soul, and the manner how we have endeavoured to explain in answer to a Question above.