

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, January 26. 1691.

Twas some time since that we receiv'd these following Questions; to which was desired a speedy Answer, and that in the same Language wherein they were proposed, which was not *English*. The First of these Requests we are forc'd to deny; both because of the multiplicity of Questions on our hands, and the Gravity of the Subject to be discours'd of. For the latter also, we must beg to be excus'd; because our Design is for the General Satisfaction; which would be much abridg'd, should we seal up so large a Disquisition as this must be in an *Unknown Language*. The Questions are concerning those words, Eph. 6. 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. — The sense of which words the Gentleman takes to be, "That we struggle not against weak or contemptible Enemies, that Phrase, *Flesh and Blood*, as he thinks, sometimes signifying *Impotence*, or *Weakness*; but against those that are most strong and powerful, to wit, *Principalities, Powers*, &c. Or else we wrestle not only against *Men*, who consist of *Flesh and Blood*, and who with all their force oppose Christianity, but also against the combin'd Power of the *wicked Spirits*." — Upon which Explication he proposes these Five following Questions.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether these words may be referr'd to the Christians in general, to wit, in all Ages of the Church, or to those only who living in the Churches Infancy, suffer'd Persecution, and all sorts of Calamities, for their professing the Faith? Or to any other Christians plac'd in the same Circumstances of Persecution; because the Apostle giving a Reason of this Exhortation in the Context, says in the 13th. Verse, That ye may be able to stand in the Evil Day, namely, in the Day of Persecution; which seems to relate only to the Christians of the latter sort?

Quest. 2. If those words are referred to all Christians in general, in what sense are we said to wrestle against wicked Spirits, seeing we do not seem to experience any such thing?

Quest. 3. In what sense Evil Spirits are call'd the Rulers of the darkness of this World?

Quest. 4. In what sense they are said to be in High-places?

Quest. 5. If they are said to be in High Places, because they are in Heaven, that is, in the Regions of the Air; how shall we reconcile that Phrase with what went before, — Rulers of the darkness of this World, seeing the Apostle seems here only to vary his Phrase, but still to speak of the same, not different Subjects?

— All which Questions we have placed entirely together, because they depend on each other; and shall now endeavour to give 'em their distinct and respective Answers?

Ans. 1. To the First Question: — We believe the words relate to Christians in general; because all Ages of the Church have the Devil, as well as the World and Flesh to wrestle with, — though more particularly to the Church of God in those First Ages, when the Devils Idolatrous Kingdom was destroy'd, and his Oracles silenc'd; — and yet perhaps most exactly and accurately to those Ephesian Christians, who it may seem in a special manner were to combat with wicked Spirits, — as appears from the History of their Conversion by St. Paul, Act. 19. 8. God wrought special Miracles by the Hand of Paul: From his Body were brought to the Sick Handkerchiefs, and the Evil Spirits went out of 'em. That these Spirits were very common among the Ephesians, appears also by the Story of Scaeva's Sons, who it seems made a Trade of it to cast 'em out. This further appears by the burning of their Conjurings-Books when Converted, ver. 19. Many of them

which used curious Arts, brought their Books together, and burnt 'em before all men. And that these Arts were commonly practiced among the Ephesians, profane Authors tell us. — Now this seems to make a much greater propriety in the words, when directed to the Ephesians, with whom St. Paul himself had formerly convers'd, and to whom he might so properly say, *We wrestle against Principalities, and Powers, and wicked Spirits*, because he himself had been so often engaged in that sort of Conflict at Ephesus, where he fought not only with Beasts, but with Devils, and left them to go on with it. As for the Evil Day, in the 13th. Verse, it may relate to a time of Temptation, as well as Persecution, though indeed those are reciprocal. It seems to us to signify a Day of Trouble, or Danger, when the Evil One, the *ὁ Πονηρὸς*, mention'd in the 16th. Verse, shou'd stir up his Servants, and raise Persecution against 'em from without, as well as secretly tempt 'em and attack 'em by his own fiery Darts, or wicked Suggestions.

II. To the second, If these words are to be referr'd to all Christians in general, in what sense are we said to wrestle against wicked Spirits, seeing we don't seem to experience any such thing? We answer, First, As to Christians and Christianity in general, when the wicked Spirit saw that his open Dominion and Tyranny over the deluded Nations was now come to an end, and Christian Emperours were to ascend the Throne of the Universe, neither cou'd he any longer appear so publicly as he did before, nor if he might, was it his Interest so to do: He was to work with all *deceivableness of unrighteousness* in those who were given over to strong delusions that they might perish, and he accordingly has done so, and preserved the very Life of Paganism, namely, Image-worship, Polytheism, and most other Heathenish Rites, as well as their Persecutions, under the Name and show of Christianity, and thus will he continue to do till the time comes when he shall be bound by the Angel, and cast into the bottomless Pit. As to particular Christians, they still wrestle against him, or else, as has been before hinted, why shou'd they vow against him in Baptism, when they are enroll'd under the Banner of Jesus? And tho' they mayn't so plainly perceive when and how he tempts 'em, yet they are not ignorant of his devices, tho' the more close he works, the deeper he mines, the more dangerous still he is — He sets upon us indeed in the dark, (he's the Ruler of the darkness of this World) and those who fight in that manner have need of the more caution, because they know not whence the blows come, but yet may be sure that they feel 'em, and know the Hand that gives 'em. But this will be still clearer in answering to the following Questions.

III. In what sense Evil Spirits are call'd the Rulers of the Darkness of this World? The Original is, *Κοσμοκράτορες τῆς σκότους τῆς αἰῶνος τούτου*, which is word for word, The wordly Rulers of the darkness of this World; being only a Pleonasm, for which reason in some Copies those last words *τῆς αἰῶνος τούτου*, are left out, as Beza tells us, since they are included in *Κοσμοκράτορες*; nor does our Translation fully express it, tho' there may be indeed a distinction between *Κοσμος* and *αἰῶνος*, or *mundus* and *seculum*, one relating to the World, as 'tis now, this Earth, this material Sublunary World, the other to the whole time or State of the present World, as opposed to that to come, as the first to that which is invisible. Now Evil Spirits, which 'tis plain are meant by these *Κοσμοκράτορες*, both from the following words, and from those *μεθοδεύειας τῆς διαβολῆς* before, and *τὰ βέλῃ τῆς πονηρίας* which come after, are call'd *Κοσμοκράτορες*, or *Mundipotentia*, that is, Rulers of this World, in the same sense that the Devil their Master is call'd the Prince of this World, the God of this World, because of his usurp'd Authority, or rather Tyranny here, especially among

mong the *Children of Disobedience*, who are call'd also the *Children of this World*, who are of their Father the Devil; who are call'd the World, because they are the greater part of it, and because their portion is in it, and these acknowledge the Devil for their Prince, or Ruler, either by worshipping him as some, or obeying him as all of 'em do: To whom the other Spirits being in Subjection, he being their Prince as well as the worlds, they as his Deputies Rule the World also, and thence obtain the Name of Κοσμοκράτορες. They are call'd Rulers of Darknefs — τὸ σκότος, for the same Reason that their Master is call'd the Prince of Darknefs, either from a Moral Reason, because he blinds the Eyes of those that believe not, or because he is the King of the Regions of darknefs, that bottomless Pit, whose Smoke goes up for ever and ever; or because he is the Prince of the Power of the Air, this thick inferiour Darksome Air consisting of our Atmosphere, where the Devils have power since the Fall, to raise Storms, Tempests and Hurricanes, (which last word some say in the Language whereof 'tis compos'd, alludes to the freaks of the Devil, who, as the Indians say, is mad or angry when those furious Storms happen;) and either to tempt or punish the Inhabitants of the World according as their Chain is lengthned. For any, or all of these Reasons, besides one more, which will be given in answer to the last Question, we suppose the wicked Spirits are called the Rulers of Darknefs. And that of this World, Τὴν τῆ αἰῶνος, because in the τῆ αἰῶνος τῆ ἐπομένῃ, the futuro seculo, the World to come, whereof St. Paul and all the holy Prophets have spoken, not these wicked Spirits, but the Saints shall reign on Earth, and be Kings and Priests to the most high God, if the words of the Scripture it self be true.

IV. For the Fourth Question: In what fence they are said to be in High-places, — ἐν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς: In Sublimi, as some; or in Cœlestibus, as others, and the Original: — We have said almost all that needs in the foregoing Question: To which we have this to add, — That 'twas the Notion both of the Jews and Heathens, That all the space from Earth to Heaven was full of such Spirits. Thus the Ἡρόδοτος θεοὶ, as Oenomaus in Euseb. calls 'em, the Demons mentioned in Hesiods Theogonia are described by him, as Ἡερα ἐσθλῆμενοι. For that Expression, ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, 'tis known even to School-Boys, that there are several Heavens; in the lowest of which, the Sublunary or Aerial Heaven, he who is call'd the Prince thereof, with most of his black Retinue, may yet make their Abode, till they shall be sent to a worse place prepar'd for 'em; where, when their time comes, according to their own Confession, they are yet to receive higher degrees of Torment.

V. To the Fifth and Last Question: — If they are said to be in High-places, because they are in Heaven, or the Regions of the Air, how does this agree with what is said before, — That they are Rulers of Darknefs, seeing the Apostle here seems to speak of the same? — We Answer, First, As well, and as congruously as the Devil, who is call'd the Prince of Darknefs, and the Angel of the Bottomless Pit; and his Kingdom, the Kingdom of Darknefs, is also call'd the Prince of the Power of the Air. There is no need that either this Darknefs should refer to Physical Darknefs, though we believe here it partly may; nor that the Spirits, though they are in ὑψηλοῖς, in airy or heavenly places, should be in the Light. The Evil One himself, as well as he that doth Evil, hateth the Light; and that perhaps the natural comfortable Light of the Sun, as well as of Truth, which he maligns and envies to us Men; nor can he himself bear or endure it. If it be true, that wicked Spirits fly the Light, and disappear at the dawn, as we have abundant Evidence from their Apparitions that they frequently do, as they easily may, changing their place as the Sun does his, and still keeping behind in the dark shadow of the Earth, and yet still be in the Air, or our Atmosphere. But there is still another very probable Interpretation. Ignatius in his Epistles to these same Ephesians, speaks of the ἀέριον καὶ γαιεῖον πνεύματα, Airy and Earthy Spirits. The Terrestrial ones the Learned Grotius thinks may be meant by those Κοσμοκράτορες τὸ σκότος, Rulers of Darknefs — The Airy by the πνευματικὴ πορνεία ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, the Spiritual wickedness, or wicked Spirits, (like

opaca locorum, or plana camporum) in high, or heavenly or airy places. The first of which the ἐστὶν δόμων δαίμονες, (of whom the Golden Verses) the Terrestrial Spirits, the before mention'd great Author tells us out of the Hebrew Writers, are thought chiefly to tempt mankind with grosser and more carnal Suggestions, to Lust, Covetousness, &c. and all sensible pleasures. The other, which are Airy, to Pride, Revenge, Vain-glory and such like, not less dangerous, tho' more subtil wiles, (which may also deserve to be reflected on as a further answer to the II. Query.) Almost in the same words the excellent Dr. Hammond on the place: — "He takes notice here (says he) of different kinds of Spirits, disagreeing either in their Suggestions, or place of Abode, namely, the Terrestrial, those κατὰ γῆν, ἐστὶν τὸ σκότος, Rulers of Darknefs, who suggest Lust and carnal Desires, &c. Or Aerial, who tempt to Pride and other Spiritual Sins." And this we hope may in some measure suffice in Answer to these Noble Questions.

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* * A Display of Tyranny, in 2 parts: Or Remarks upon the Illegal and Arbitrary proceedings in the Courts of Westminster and Guild-hall, London, from the Year 1680 to the Abdication of the late King James in the Year 1688. Sold by Richard Baldwin near the Oxford Arms, Warwick-lane.

* * On Fryday last was published the Effigies of General Ginckle, after Mr. Hill in York Buildings, painted by the Life since his return from Ireland, done in Negro and Tinto. By Robert Williams over against the Royal Bagnio in Long Acre, sold at most Print Shops in London.

LONDON, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry. 1691.