

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **T**HE Dispute between Michael the Arch-Angel, and the Devil concerning the Body of Moses; What are the Conjectures of the Learned on that Affair?

Ans. The place where this passage is found in the ninth of St. Jude—"These speak evil of Dignities, yet Michael the Archangel when contending with the Devil he disputed about the Body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee—Which words are plainly an enlargement or kind of Commentary on those in the second of St. Peter 2. 10, 11. "They are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities—whereas Angels which are greater in Power and Might, bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord—And here we must first enquire who Michael the Archangel is, and secondly, what is intended by the Body of Moses, and the Dispute between the Devil and the Archangel concerning it. By Michael the Archangel some understand our Saviour, who is call'd an Angel in several places in the Old Testament, and as some say particularly in the third of Zechariah, which many think is here alluded to: Others understand it of a Created Angel, a Chief, or Archangel, one of the highest Order, nay, Head of that Order, (Michael fought and his Angels) for that there are distinct Ranks among those Blessed Spirits was the Judgment of all Antiquity, and will be made good in the Answer to the next Question. Now that it was a Created Angel here mentioned, we are inclin'd to think for several Reasons. First, Because Christ and the Archangel are distinguish'd both in the Old Testament and New. In the Old 'tis hardly to be doubted but that Daniel speaks of two distinct Persons in that Michael the Prince, and that Messiah that was to be cut off, which he mentions; but it's yet made plain in the N. T. See 1 Thes. 4 16. The Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God, &c. and 2 Thes. 1. & 7. The Lord Jesus shall be reveal'd from Heaven with his Mighty Angels, which may well refer to the Archangels. He that shall be reveal'd with the Angels, with the Archangel, can't be himself that Archangel, or any of those Angels. Our second Argument is from the same passage mentioned in St. Peter, as quoted above; this whole Epistle of St. Jude, as appears plainly to any who but casts his Eye upon't, being an Abridgment of the second of St. Peter, though in this place rather an Enlargement thereof. "The Angels, saith St. Peter, being greater in power and might bring not railing Accusations. Had it been Christ, the Argument

wou'd have run higher, he being greater than the Angels, above all Principalities and Powers; nor are we to think the inspired Author wou'd have omitted what wou'd have added so much more force to his Argument. The Angels, that is, Michael and his Angels, (for they were all seven present at this dispute in the Temple, See Zech. 3. ult.) "though greater in power and might, bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord. Greater than whom, against whom, greater than those Dignities, and against them; and who those Dignities are St. Jude tells us (compar'd with the Apocalypse) Satan, or the Dragon and his Angels, those *νομομαχοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ αἱ αἰωνοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ* (whereof formerly) Rulers of the darkness of this World, Princes of this World, who by the Fall of Man obtain'd a sad Dominion over the World, whose Thrones are in the Hearts of the Children of Disobedience. These are Dignities and Powers certainly *de Facto* only, yet against these for that reason because permitted by God to Lord it here—the Archangel himself did not, nay dared, not bring a railing accusation.

Thus much for Michael, now for the second difficulty, the Body of Moses. The Interpretation which at first sight seems most easie and probable, is, that this dispute was between 'em concerning the divulging the place of Moses his Burial, which was kept secret by God, as Deut. 34. 6. the Devil being willing to discover his Body on purpose to make the Jews Idolize it; the same way he first brought Idolatry, both into the Heathen and Christian World, and Michael resisting him in his Attempt, which both the Apostles might have by Tradition, confirm'd and guided by Inspiration, (as Moses himself also wrote.) Or perhaps out of Sanbook of the Jews then extant, which might relate it, they having undoubtedly many which were not Canonical, tho the Holy Spirit might direct these Apostles to what was true therein, if as here necessary to their present Argument. And such a Book is mentioned by Grotius and others of the Moderns, nay, even by Origen and Epiphanius, if not more of the Ancients, under the Name of *'Ανάλυσις* or the Assumption of Moses. And of this Opinion are Ekins, Grotius, Vorstius, and most other Commentators: Nay, so confident in it that they give it with an *haud-dubie*, undoubtedly, say some of 'em it must refer to that 34th of Deuteronomy. But yet the other side are as confident as they, and both the Learned Junius, and our own excellent Dr. Hamond tell us that it does *Indubie* (full as good as *haud-dubie*) refer to Zech. 3. 2, 3, &c. where the very words are found, and that spoken to Satan by the Angel of Jehovah, very probably this same Michael, since

since one of the Seven, as before. "The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, &c. But still here's nothing concerning the *Body of Moses*, nor o't'other side is there any thing of this *dispute*, where we read of his *Burial*; something therefore must be *supply'd* in one place, and why not rather *here* than *there*, since so many other *Circumstances* meet? The *Body of Moses* therefore these two great Men take in a *Figurative Sence*, for the *Temple* at *Jerusalem* then *Rebuilding*, and the *Worship of God* then about to be *restor'd*, which Satan no doubt wou'd have *hinder'd*, standing to *resist Joshua*, and which is call'd, "The *Body of the Jews* in the *Maccabees*, and may as fitly be the *Body of Moses*, because depending on *Moses* as the *Head* or *Legislator*, (we are *Moses* his *Disciples* say the *Pharisees*.) Nor is this *sence* of the words without a *president*, as harsh as it may at first sound, for exactly after the same Scheme or manner of Speech we find in the N.T. the *Chr. Church*, or *Christians* gathered together to the worship of *Christ* who is their *Law-giver*, and *Instituted* their worship, are call'd, The *Body of Christ*, as on the other side the *Body of Christ* is called a *Temple*, and our *Bodies* the *Temples* of the *Holy Ghost*, and this latter Opinion is in our Judgment the more probable of the two, leaving others to their own Thoughts in this matter.

Quest. What we are to think of St. Denis the Areopagites opinion concerning the Hierarchy of Angels which he divides into nine Orders—whether there's any thing in it, or we are to suppose a perfect equality between 'em?

Ans. For that Denis whose works we now have, we are not very sure he was a Saint; but we are certain he was not the Areopagite, and for his nine Orders, or Trinal Triplicity, as Spencer calls 'em, they are more fit for Poetry than Divinity, since there's nothing of certainty, nor so much as any fair or tolerable probability for 'em in the H. Scriptures, and whence else shou'd we know any thing of 'em, since meer reason only tells us that they may be, but can never without help demonstrate so much as their real existence, much less their qualities and orders. That which this Man of mystery whoever he was, pretends to found his Doctrine upon, is no more than the mentioning those nine words in the Scripture relating to Angels, and no more than bare mentioning most of 'em, namely Cherubims, Seraphims, Thrones, Powers, Hosts, Dominions, Principalities, Angels, and Archangels—of whom he gives us as exact a description as Mahomet himself does of those Angels who had one Horn Snow and the other Fire—and perhaps for the most part one as authentick as the other—His intention, seeming only to be, that he'd be thought to know more than all the rest of the World, to attain which he tow'r'd so high that he lost both himself and sence and truth and all. But not thinking it worth the while to follow him in his Dreams, we shall only observe, with the great Grotius, that these names seem to be brought with

the Jews from the Persian Empire—Thus much however, we shall observe from 'em, that there certainly is an Order, a Government, a Hierarchy among 'em, these Blessed Spirits which we think very clear from Sacred Scripture; and even that particular Angels preside at least over particular Countries, and the Archangels over the affairs of the Church. That some of 'em preside over particular Kingdoms, or Empires, seems plain from the Prophecy of Daniel, where the Angel that spake unto him mentions the Prince of Persia, the Prince of Grecia, and both these Angels as well as Michael one of the chief Princes immediately after nam'd or Michael your Prince—The Guardian of the Jews, at that time the only Church of God, as afterwards of the Christian Church, for which Michael fought and his Angels, as we read in the Apocalyps. Now where ever there are Principalities, nay Princes, there must as certainly be some Order, some in Subjection, as the Relate do's infer the Correlate, the Father the Son. Further, and what else is the meaning of so many expressions founding this way so fairly in the H. Scripture what is a mighty strong Angels, Revelation,—but an Archangel? Whose Number our Church also holds to be more than one, as well as their Order distinct from the ordinary Angels. For thus she expresses her self in that Seraphical Hymn at the Communion—'Therefore with Angels and Arch-Angels, &c. That this was the Opinion of the Jewish Church, we may learn from the History of Tobit, I am Raphael, says Azariah there, one of the seven Angels which stand and minister before the Holy One. So their very number expresses—In this Apocrypha, so say many, was the Book whence both St. Peter and Jude quote their History, as before, yet that was certainly true, and so may this—Nay, there's more than a probability on't, for the Canonical Scripture confirms it—See Zech. 4. 10, 12. 'Those seven are the Eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro thro' the whole Earth; relating to the seven Lamps of the Candlestick in the Temple, by which the seven Angels were figur'd, and which were also mentioned, cap. 3. v. 9. as all of 'em assisting at the Foundation of the Temple—Upon one Stone shall be seven Eyes. 'The Angels, says Philo, being the Eyes of the great King. The Eyes of the Lord, says Haggai the Seer to King Aza, 2 Chron. 16. 9. 'run to and fro thro' the whole Earth, to shew themselves strong in the behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards him. So the very expression used here by Zechary—But as much is said more than once in the New Testament, where are mentioned, Rev. 1. The seven Spirits before the Throne of God—But if that be doubtful, (tho' it cannot be meant of the H. Ghost, who is God himself, and therefore in the Throne, not before it. See cap. 4. and 5. 'There were seven Lamps of Fire burning before the Throne, and these are the seven Spirits of God—alluding plainly to the place already