

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, October 1. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

We shall now in this, and in all the Poetical Mercuries we publish for the future, insert a Formal Challenge to VICE, wherein we'll endeavour to render all Vice as ugly and as odious as it really is, and on the other side VIRTUE as truly amiable and lovely, so that all together there will be a form'd POEM. This New Project for the Promotion of Virtue, shall be confin'd only to one Vertue and one Vice at a time, that the other half of the Paper may be free to answer such Questions that are sent in Verse, as shall any way merit to be taken notice of.

A Challenge TO VICE and ATHEISM.

Kind Spirit who dost thy self around disperse,
The Soul and Guardian of the Universe:
That 'tis a World, it only owes to thee,
Which else would still a frightful Chaos be:
To thee those beauteous strokes which round it shine
Loudly all o're confessing Hands Divine.
Thy friendly Wisdom first, O heavenly Dove
Did teach the jarring Elements to love,
Till Death and Sin did the fair band unty,
Dissolve the League, and marr the Harmony;
Hence all the mischiefs that besiege Mankind,
Wars, Earthquakes, Dearths, Tempestuous Waves and
And a long train of blacker Plagues behind: (Wind,
Hence monstrous Vice her Hydra head does rear,
And beat with hideous wings the burthen'd Air:
Hence the lewd Atheist lives to dare the Sky,
And hears the Thunder roll unheeded by:
Ill-Faith and Life their powerful Forces joyn,
With Hell's Auxiliary Bands combine;
Proud of their Numbers Truth and Virtue fight,
Who here, almost alone, maintain thy right;
Yet a brave few there are who firm abide,
(And stem with their bold breasts the Impetuous Tide,)
Who dare be good, tho' Numbers them despise,
And spight of ridicule still dare be wise:
O may I, tho' unworthy, have the Grace
In their bright ranks to fill the humblest place!
This Mire into their Sacred Treasure bring,
Nor they disdain so mean an Offering:
Whilst you, kind Spirit, my frozen Breast inspire,
And lighten with your own Celestial Fire;
So shall I with success all Hell engage,
Above the Affronts of an ill-natur'd Age,
Safe in my close unknown Retirement be,
And love and pity those who censure me.
Gigantick Atheism! first I'll grapple thee,
Root of bad Life and Infidelitie!
Tho' to the Clouds thou raise thy lofty head,
Reason, thy boasted Sword, shall strike thee dead:
Proud of thy Ancient house, thou seek'st in vain
To draw thy Pedigree from mighty Cain.
He fear'd a God, and tho' he wisht him none
Like thee, yet what he fear'd he needs must own:
For those who did Mankind it self disgrace,
The haughty Gyants of his Fairblefs race,
All of their History we ever knew,
Is only that they wanted Grace, like you:
Their priz'd Memoirs alas we don't enjoy,
(Did them the Ancient Christians too destroy?)

By God and by his injur'd Father curs'd
Rebellious Cham, in spite produc'd the first,
By whom thou wert in muddy Egypt nurs'd;
Ev'n Egypt thee did soon asham'd disown,
And rather choose a hundred Gods than none.
Thence thou to lying Greece didst wandring run,
Where all thy hated Company did shun,
Proscrib'd and banish'd there, ignobly fell,
And thro' black Acheron didst sink to Hell:
The Fiends at thy more monstrous Form amaz'd,
At thy descent Intemperate on thee gaz'd,
Bid thee from thence agen to Earth repair,
They all believ'd, and knew no Atheist there:
Nor wou'd the Earth agen polluted be,
But thou from place to place art forc'd to flee,
Eternal Vagabonds, thy Sons and thee.
If all Sanfon and Heylin we survey,
Where e're bold Ships have cut their watry way;
Where e're by Land the feet of Beasts or Man,
With rattling Wheels or numerous Carravan,
Through sandy Worlds have pass'd, we light on none,
No Towns no Nations, who a God disown.
Besides, the better men, the more inclin'd,
More fix'd to this great Truth we them shall find:
The more they this believe, the more their Care
For a good Life —————

The wiser and the better still they are.
The Atheists all deny, enrag'd and griev'd,
And swear 'tis false by what they ne're believ'd,
That there's enough to spoil th' Iaduction boast,
And instance in the fierce Soldanian Coast:
The Uri in the West, i'th' East a few,
At Monometapa and Zenderco.

Should all they ask be kindly granted true,
The Argument's still firm, which thus we guard,
What's one finall part to this great whole compar'd?
Some few exceptions spoil not general Rules,
Mankind is Rational, tho' Atheists Fools.
Though little Inequalities are found
On its rough face, all grant the World is round.
Besides, for your good Friends we urge agen,
'Tis doubted if they're rank't with Beasts or Men:
Scarce Humane in their Gesture, Voice or Face,
From Seed's confus'd, a monstrous Mungril Race.
Enjoy your mighty Aim, and whilst you please,
Now boast of such unenvy'd Votes as these:
And since with them you've so much sympathy,
'Tis pity you shou'd ever parted be.
O wou'd you People some forsaken place,
Your selves alone, and not Mankind disgrace:
To th' Cape, or the Carribbe Isles repair,
Steal, Murder, Ravish one another there.
T' your Faith, your Practice joyn, we soon shou'd see,
Tho' not admire what the success wou'd be.

In vain you urge that Honour does supply
The place of Justice, Truth and Piety,
Your God, your Rule to guide your Actions by:
For Honour the Reward of Virtue is,
Or else a blast, a Shade, a Nothing 'tis.
If Virtue you allow against your Will,
You grant us Principles of Good and Ill.
A highest Good there is, if Good at all,
And Good Supream the Deity we call.
If still Consent of Nations you deny,
Still pleading your own wise Authority,
Laugh at the Idea which you can't confute,
That true and real 'tis, we thus dispute:
If Nat'ral 'tis, 'tis granted even by you,
And plain to Sense it self it must be true.
But this appears, and we distinctly prove,
If we all other Springs can first remove,

And

And these two Heads alone assign'd may be,
 With any Face of probability,
 Ancient Tradition, or State-Policy;
 That no State-Engine 'tis may hence appear,
 That we can track and find it ev'ry where:
 Nor cou'd at once all Politicians join,
 And in the profitable Cheat combine:
 Nor some amongst themselves th' agreement make,
 Others from neighbouring States the Notion take,
 Since from all others some by Seas profound
 Remov'd by Enemies, some compass'd round,
 Whence what their Friends or neighbouring Nations use,
 These cou'd not, and the other wou'd not chuse,
 Yet all in this unanimous agree,
 They all adore and own a Deity.
 If from Tradition trackt, in the first Man
 It ends, and then they own the World began;
 But to what end shou'd he the World deceive,
 Or if not natural how shou'd all believe?
 Besides, for truth Traditions Plea stands fair,
 If always 'twas believ'd and every where,
 What stronger Evidence cou'd we desire?
 All cou'd n't sure to cheat themselv's conspire:
 Traditions help Truths not asham'd to own,
 Tho' does not here on that depend alone,
 Nay, can maintain its self without its Aid,
 Th' Idea that, not that th' Idea made.
 The Truth of this by its own Light appears,
 For since in the long Tract of rolling Years
 Around the Globe so many Nations to'sd,
 So many useful Noble Arts are lost,
 Taught only by Tradition, how shou'd this
 Survive 'em all, unless more Nat'ral 'tis?
 Rest here, you but this one Retrenchment have,
 What's all the World to us the Wise and Brave?
 We all the World but our lov'd selv's despise,
 Wit and right Reason we Monopolize;
 'Tis Nonsense all, what all beside us say,
 And with loud Laughter still we win the day:
 We grant you there the odds, and are content
 Entire to yield you your last Argument;
 Let's then another Battery prepare,
 And try if we have better Fortune there:
 From any Being or Effect assign'd
 We clearly argue an Almighty Mind,
 Each *Second Cause* a *First* does plainly show,
 That First is God, nor can we further go;
 Nothing it self can make, but we must run
 At the last step to what was made by none:
 Chance cou'd not make this *beauteous World*, nor are
 Its Works so just, so regular and fair;
 Nor cou'd it any more the product be
 Of an *unguided blind Necessitie*;
 Since not eternal, for we clearly know
 It neither was in Fact, nor cou'd be so.
 The first is from Arts late Invention plain,
 To which some Deluge you object in vain:
 You're with such Answers not your selves content,
 'Tis but *perhaps*, and that's no *Argument*;
 And as it was not, so it cou'd not be,
 Since a direct impossibilitie:
 And one *absurd* first giv'n, a thousand more
 Succeed, as palpable as that before:
 The first absurdity, ev'n plain to fight
 That Monster is — a *double infinite*.
 For if the World eternal we conceive,
 The parts as well as whole we so believe;
 But if with just impartial Eye we trace
 Each step, each line in *Mother Natures Face*;
 Each stroke, each *beauteous Feature* there we see
 Confutes the thoughts of her Eternitie:
 If Sun and Moon, and Night and Day we scan,
 And the great *Lord of the Creation*, Man,
 Wide Earth, vast Seas in hollow Caverns pent,
 This Noble Truth in all is evident.
 And first the chearful Light of Heaven's fair Sun
 Thro' infinite Progressions cou'd not run;
 Nor cou'd the Earth in the same state persist
 As now, nor cou'd from endless age exist:
 Which thus for what we urge we bring to bear,
 The Sun, the Light, the Earth together were;

If then the Light eternal cou'd not be,
 No more could any other of the three;
 But that cou'd not, for chuse you which you please,
 Our Hemisphere or the Antipodes,
 And if eternal 'twas, or one of these,
 Or one or both we must assign to be
 Enlighten'd by the Sun eternallie;
 If only *ours* not *theirs*, if *theirs* not *ours*,
 Further it follows, but a few *short hours*;
 But half a Day wou'd all the difference be
 Betwixt short Time and long Eternitie:
 Nor cou'd Sols beams on both at once descend,
 Nor Light successively to either lend
 From all Eternity — if this you say
 You grant, at once o're all the World 'twas day,
 If that you're as absurd, for if you plead
 This Light did from Eternity succeed,
 And either after either warm and chear
 Now *ours*, and now the Southern Hemisphere.
 This fatal Consequence you can't avoid,
 Which has your own Hypothesis destroy'd;
 That something elder than eternal is,
 And further that it self eternal 'tis.
 In two eternals tell me where's the sence
 Of the same Age, yet six hours difference
 Between their Birth — Besides what cou'd you gain
 If both *Eternal* granted? since 'tis plain
 You're forc'd to own if you to this agree,
 At once the same thing can and cannot be.
 Suppose what's *infinite* may be *surpass'd*,
 And what *eternal* is have *first* and *last*:
 If then the Light with equal pace does run,
 And coætaneous is with Heaven's bright Sun,
 As Earth with both, and if the beauteous Light
 Cannot be in its action infinite,
 We needs must grant some Principle more high,
 Which action both and being can supply;
 And that's a God, who Earth and Sun did make,
 Which to demonstrate we did undertake.

The Ladies Questions will be Answered
 next Tuesday, and after that once every
 Fortnight, 'till we have Answer'd the ma-
 ny ingenious Questions lately sent us by
 the Fair Sex.

Advertisement.

The Post-Boy robb'd of his
 Mail, or the Pacquet
 broke open, consisting of 500
 LETTERS to Persons of
 several Qualities and Condi-
 tions, with OBSERVATI-
 ONS upon each Letter:
 Published by a Gentleman
 Concerned in the *Frollick*.
 Price Bound Two Shillings
 Six Pence. Printed for John
 Dunton at the Raven in the
 Poultry.

L O N D O N, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, 1692.