

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 18. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **H**ow came Thoughts first into the Minds of men?

Ans. The Question appears something puzzling at first; but on a little closer Examination, all this difficulty vanishes — *Thoughts* indeed did never come into the minds of men from without, but at the very same time we suppose a *Mind*, we suppose *Thought*; for whether we make the Essence of *Spirit* or *Mind* to consist in *Activity*, or *cogitability*, (if we may have leave to coin the *Word*) 'twill recur to much the same thing; if *Mind* is a *knowing*, *thinking*, or *acting Substance*, at the same time it thinks or acts, there is *Thought*, which is nothing else than the *action* of the *Mind*, and which it must exert whenever it has *actual Existence*.

Quest. 2. What is the Similitude of God in Man, or whether it consists in the rational faculty?

Ans. In some of our former Mercuries concerning the *Soul of Man*, we have declar'd we take this Similitude to consist in *knowing*, *willing*, *judging*, which are all Acts of Reason. Should we be more *Metaphysical*, we might fall in with several pretty Notions on this Head. Every derivative Being has some marks or Signatures of the first transcendental Original, *Man* has these more deeply and legibly imprinted than any other visible Creature, and seems to partake more largely of *Entity* and its Properties, than any thing besides in this material World, which might be made appear in the three Properties of *Being*, *Unity*, *Truth* and *Goodness*. As to *Unity*, should we embrace the Platonical Notion, that the *Mind* is the *Man*, 'twere easie to prove *Man* a more simple Being than any other Inhabitants of this World: However thus far 'tis certain, that what is the Noblest part in him, namely his *Soul*, is simple and uncompounded, at least with any other Composition than that of *Essence* and *Existence*; whereas that which is the principle of *Action* in Beasts, is in our Opinions wholly material, (tho' some of our Society are of other Sentiments,) both *Matter* and *Form* are compounded in a *Beast*, the *Matter* only in a *Man*. Then for *Truth*, objective *Truth*, or that by which a thing is known to be what it really is, which by the best *Metaphysicians* is thought a Propriety of *Ens* or *Being*, it is very visibly and fairly stamp'd on mens Minds, and is indeed the principle of all *Science*. *Metaphysical Good* is either so in it self, or to others; the first is perfect, either simply so, as *God* only, or in its own rank or order, as *Man*, of a sound *Mind* and *Body*. *Good* in relation to another, seems to fall in with moral *Good*, or at least *moral Good* may be rank'd under that as well as *Physical* or *Natural*; but in whatever sense we take it, *Man* has the Notions of it imprinted in his *Mind*, he has there inscrib'd the Principles of true and false, and what are perhaps more necessary to his Happiness, those also of *Good* and *Evil*, and in all of these he seems made after the *Image of God*: — To which, what if we should also add, That the outward, *Majestick*, *Divine*, *God-like Form* of *Man* may not improbably be here also hinted at, not as if *God* were like *Man*, with corporeal Hands, Eyes, as a sort of foolish Hereticks formerly thought him, whose monstrous Fancies were reviv'd by *Biddle* in the last Age, but that *Man* may be said in some measure, and in comparison of other Creatures to be like *God*, to have a sort of Rays or *Glory* round his Face, and as he is Lord of the Creation, and has Dominion over the visible World, therein to express some faint glimmerings of that infinite *Majesty* and *Power* whose Deputy he is here below.

Quest. 3. Whether the Image of God is more perfectly express'd in Men or Angels?

Ans. If we take the whole *Body* in Gross of meer

Mankind, we think this *Image* must be granted more lively and glorious in *Angels* than *Men*, we being made a little lower than the *Angels*; thus their *Unity* is more perfect, excluding all Composition of *Matter* and *Form*, they must know infinitely more than we, having the advantage of *Age*, and all our Experiences, besides what they may have themselves. — And indeed the Invention of some very useful Arts has appear'd so strange and unaccountable, that it would tempt a *Man* to think they were really owing to the impulse or Revelation of some of these friendly *Spirits*, who may also (as is still more probable) be the Authors of those kind admonitions, which have been often undoubtedly given to the World by *Prodigies* and *Signs* in the Heavens of future Contingencies, and approaching Judgments, that Mankind may avoid 'em, and atone God's Anger by Repentance. And those who thus know *Truth* must love it; those who are so wise, must be proportionably Good themselves, and love Good in others, communicated or Original, having no opposite Principle, and being also, as some not improbably conjectured, now confirm'd in Goodness by our Saviour, who was the Head of *Angels* as well as *Men*, tho' he did not indeed take their Nature upon him as he did ours; which leads to a restriction we insert'd at the beginning of this Answer, wherein we assert that *Gods Image* is more lively in *Angels* than in meer *Man*; for if we consider the *Saviour*, *God-man*, the *Man Jesus Christ*, we shall find this *Image* still infinitely more luminous and glorious in him than in the highest *Angel* in Heaven, being indeed, as the Holy Scriptures most majestically describe him, the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Image of his Person; and as in the other famous place, the first-born of every Creature, *Angels*, and *Principalities* and *Powers* being made subject unto him. This will be easily granted as to *Knowledge*, *Goodness*, *Power*, or any other *Divine Attributes*, one only excepted, which may admit some dispute, and that is *Simplicity*, *Indivisibility*, or *Unity*: for are not the *Angels*, may it be said, more simple Beings, more closely, intimately, purely one than our Saviour, who is compounded, nay discomposed, (to borrow a word from the Latins) of *God* and *Man*, and that man agen of *Soul* and *Body*: But to this we think there's a clear and ready Answer. As our Blessed Saviour by the intimate Union between the Humane and Divine Nature, had all Power both in Heaven and Earth, even while he was here in mortal weakness, and might have used it when he pleas'd, and so all Grace, all Wisdom, and other Divine Perfections, having in him all the fulness of the *Godhead* bodily; if so, then proportionably by the same ineffable Union by which he and the Father are one, he partakes of such a *Simplicity*, such an *Indivisibility*, nay even *Indistinction* too, as to *Essence*, as no *Man*, no *Angel* ever had, admitting no manner of Composition, neither of matter and matter, nor matter and Form, nor *Essence* and *Existence*, nor *Act* and *Power*, but ever remaining, as he is *God*, one simple, incomprehensible, indivisible, glorious Being, having also at once exalted our Nature, and dazled our Reason, by taking the *Manhood* into *God*; by which Union, not to be found in any Creature, he is more simple, more undivided than any other Being, something after the same manner, (for indeed both are inconceivable) as the Reasonable *Soul* and *Flesh* in one *Man*, and as that *Man* is more one than other visible Creatures, because of his *Soul*, which as before, admits of no other Composition but that of *Existence* and *Essence*.

Quest. 4. Whether is more proper to say, the Soul contains the Body, or the Body the Soul?

Ans. We think neither of 'em, strictly taken, a pro-

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per manner of *Expression*, since neither does the *Soul* contain the *Body*, nor the *Body* properly speaking contain the *Soul*, if we take *containing* for *circumscribing*, which implies *parts* both in the thing contain'd and containing, nay, *parts* without *parts*, or *quantitative parts*, which differ in place and size from each other: But here one of the *Terms*, namely, the *Soul*, can have no such *parts*, therefore it neither can properly contain, nor be contain'd, any more than it can be felt, or seen, or smelt, (by Philip Nerius's leave) or as a modern Author pleasantly expresses it, any more than you can have a *Yard* of *Thought* or a *Pound* of *Reason*.

Quest. 5. How comes the *Soul* in its separate state, to know another *Soul* from an *Angel*, or the *Soul* of *St. Peter* from the *Soul* of *Judas*, and whether this distinction can be made any other way than by *Vision*? and if so, whether *Vision* must not imply difference of *Figure*?

Ans. 'Tis but little we know at best of our *Souls*, even in their present state, and much less does it appear what we shall then be: However, we think the likeliest way to find any thing of probability (we hardly dare say certainty in matters of so Nice a Nature) is to shut our *Eyes*, and prescind or abstract from all sensible *Notions* of things, by which we shall at least gain thus much, not to wander much in the wrong way, tho' we may hardly be able to hit in the right. We must then consider that our *Eyes* are a pair of arrant *Cheats*, and by our having receiv'd most of our *Notions* from 'em, take the advantage insufferably to impose upon us as to those *Objects* which are out of their *Province*, and not to be judg'd of by sense but reason; this the other senses remonstrate against, and fighting the fight with its own Weapons, make their Party pretty good, and never suffer Men to talk of seeing a sound or smell; whereas reason being more abstract, deep, and farther off, the sense at first can with more ease impose upon it, till it comes to reflect on that advice it gives it — Thus here, let any Man set himself a thinking about *Souls* in their separate state, or so conceiv'd, at first glance he'll hardly forbear thinking they are like some glorious thing or other that he has seen or heard of, and perhaps 'twill trouble him to think what he shall do for want of *Eyes* to see such a sight after he has lost his *Body* — but if he'd agen consider, that ev'n in sensible *Objects* there are several ways of Perception besides sight, that *Angels* now certainly have Perception and Knowledge of what is done by *Corporeal Agents*, which yet have no *Eyes* nor *Ears* to do it, that we our selves have now a different Perception from those, we have by our outward Sences (and the internal too, if such there be) which we call *reason*, and that this *Reason* is the judge of all outward Perceptions; we shall from all this conclude, that either God will make other Senses which we are not now aware of, by which in a separate state we shall discern what is necessary for us, or else that by reason improv'd or exalted, we shall be capable of judging what is spiritual and reasonable, tho' the manner we can't know till we are all Spirit.

Quest. 6. Gentlemen, I would desire you to inform me which way *Cain* went into the Land of *Nod*, whether by Sea or Land, and who it was he took to Wife?

Ans. The Circumstances of the History resolves any that will compare them; that *Ver. 3.* in Process of time, or 130 Years after the Creation, *Cain* committed this first Breach in Natural Religion, to kill his Brother *Abel* at that Publick Sacrifice upon their seventh day; and because God manifested his Pleasure or Displeasure by Voice or otherways, &c. to shew his acceptance, therefore it was called the Presence of the Lord, and because these two Brothers were the Heads of the two Lines, the one famous for Good, the other infamous for Bad, therefore all the Numerous Progeny of *Adam* and *Eve*, multiplied within that 130 Years, are omitted, and God designing all should come from one Blood, it's not to be believed *Eve* was to be Barren all that Process of Time, but as the Families increased, they left *Adam*, *Cain* and *Abel*, with others, and Travelled towards the East part of the Garden, and Collon'd a Place which they called *Nod*, or the Land of Settlement of the Travellers or Wanderers, and held Correspondence with *Adam* and them Families, and hither *Cain* fled for Sanctuary after his Fratricide, and by land and crossing small Ri-

vers he arrived there, and married a *Noddish* Woman among these his Relations, and there by their assistance he built, and learned them the Art of Fortification.

Quest. 7. It being a Common Opinion that man consists only of two parts, viz. a *Soul* and *Body*, and finding that *Dr. Hammond* in his Practical Catechism, is of Opinion, that Man consists of three parts, a *Body*, a living *Soul*, and an immortal *Spirit*, which to prove he uses 1 Thes. 5. 23. Now I desire to know your Opinion, whether the *Soul* and *Spirit* are one, or how diversified? and if the *Soul* be the more ignoble, what becomes of it at death?

Ans. We have already in our former Papers asserted a Man to be made of *Body*, *Soul* and *Spirit*, from the aforesaid Text, where *St. Paul* prays that their whole Man, *Body*, *Soul*, and *Spirit*, may be, &c. As for the difference of the *Soul* and *Body*, (tho' they are generally taken for the same) the *Spirit* is that immortal substance which is commonly taken for the *Soul*; and this agrees with our Saviour's recommendation of his *Spirit* into his Fathers hands, when he dy'd upon the Cross; as also after him *St. Stephen*, when he was ston'd. By the *Soul* we mean no more than the Animal Life, and hence it is that we say that Beasts and Vegetables have *Souls*, that is, have lives, or live after their proper Nature: As to what becomes of the Humane *Soul* when a Man dyes, we believe the same that some of the Poets did, *Tenuer vivescit in Auras*, it vanishes into Air; or perhaps as *Solomon* speaks of the *Soul* of a Beast, it goes downward, meaning to the Earth; that this middle Principle or *Soul* of Man is common with that of Beasts, may very fairly be gathered from the Experiments that have been made of transfusion of the Blood of Brutes into Men, which have done very well after, when as their own was before that drain'd out, or no longer able to entertain life by reason of indisposition and distempers, and the Scripture expressly calls the Blood of Beasts their life, but their life being transfus'd into Man, and he living by that makes good what we have said above, and perhaps would evince more to the same effect.

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