

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, July 4. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**Hat is the best Method for a Person to use to approach worthily to the Participation of the Lords Supper, who has not Communicated for a Year or two last past; partly by Relapses into formerly committed Sins, partly through great Fears of Unworthy Receiving, and partly by violent Temptations of Satan perswading to the Omission of that great Duty of being a Communicant, which our Saviour positively commanded, when he Instituted the Blessed Sacrament?

Ans. We design'd this for the latter part of our second Volume, as being proper to be treated upon amongst other Divinity Questions, but being importun'd for an Answer, the Querist still struggling with his great Temptations and Doubts, &c. We have thought it our Duty to give him what satisfaction we are able in the three particulars of his Query, viz. Relapses, Fears of Unworthy Receiving, Suggestions not to Communicate.

1. To Relapses into a formerly committed Sin, they are indeed great Aggravations to it, but the greater they are, the sooner they ought to be left, because the danger is greater—Yet God Almighty takes not such measures with his Creatures, as we do with one another: Repentance cancels the greatest Debts. The returning Prodigal was no less lov'd than the always dutiful Son. Not but that even our forgiven Impieties ought to impress a deep sense of Humility and fear of Apostatizing, for frequent Relapses create an Habit, and an Habit of Sin generally ends in a State of Reprobation and Impenitency; but we hope better things of our Querist, whose trouble at his Weakness and inconsistent Resolves shows some measure of Penitence, and that he has not yet griev'd the Holy Spirit so as utterly to depart from him.

2. 'Twas Luther's Paradox, That none came Worthy but those that are Unworthy, that is, in their own sense and feeling—A true sense of a Person's Unworthiness, which is attended with Repentance, Holy Resolutions, and a stricter Watch over himself, is never without true Faith, by consequence such a Person is not unqualify'd for a Commemoration and Participation of the Object of his Faith, I mean our dying Saviour.

3. We have little Reason to believe the Father of Lyes, who is always most busie with those he is in danger of losing—Those that came not to the Wedding Supper were destroyed as well as those that came without a Wedding Garment, Matth. 22. 5, 6, 7. compared with 11, 12, and 13 verses,—Christ tasted Death for all men; therefore those frustrate his Love, who wilfully exclude themselves from the benefits thereof in excuses and delays, should supplant a Concern of so great Moment. Numa Pompilius, being upon a time told that his Enemies were in Arms, and coming against him, he made this Answer, *At Ego rem Divinam facio*, But I, (saith he) am Sacrificing to the Gods. He would not omit what he thought his Duty, (although he was a Heathen) when the Enemy was at the very Gates.

In short, let the Querist repent of what he knows he is guilty of, and if he has wrong'd any Person in any Nature, let him make what satisfaction he can, God requires no more; let him resolve to be more Watchful for the future, and avoid the Occasions of his Sin, and then let him Communicate, and Doubt not, for an honest hearty endeavour to Fear God, never wants the Divine Assistance.

Quest. 2. Why are Atheists apt for a Confirmation of any thing to take Gods Name in Vain, and Swear by God, since they believe none?

Ans. I look upon't as a Judgment from God Almighty upon them, and a means to confirm a thoughtful Person in the belief of a Deity. When we hear a Man so foolish and unreasonable, as that his Words and Principles are almost every moment contradictory, what Credit is due to his Assertions, or how shall we believe him, who whilst he Disputes does ever and anon grant the contrary Conclusion?

Quest. 3. What is that that is called by the Name of an Astral Spirit?

Ans. An Astral Spirit according to the Character we have of it, is a Material Substance, of a Nature much more refin'd than Man, betwixt that of Common Spirits and Mankind, that they are Mortal, and generate and live in some Region of the Air, as their proper residence: Their way of Correspondence with Mankind is this, A Man must go backward into a Chamber on the North-side of an House, which Chamber must never before have been lain in, and there must be clean Sheets on the Bed; when the Man comes into the Chamber, he is to go some times round it backward, saying some Psalm backward, and using some other sort of words, after which he sits down upon a Chair or Stool, and a she Astral, shap'd like a beautiful woman, comes into the Door, to whom the Person is to be very Complaisant; and when she pretends Modesty and willingness to be gone, he must be importunate, and at last sh'll sit with him, and afterwards go to sleep with him, but he must never offer to detain her when she has a mind to rise; she will give him a Ring, or some other Token, with such and such Virtues, and then leave him—This is the Astral Spirit either Male or Female, only the Male Astral may be a little bolder. Whether there be any such things really transacted we know not, but if there be, we can't believe it to be any thing else but the Devil, and that the aforesaid Account is only a blind to palliate the horridness of an Act of Uncleaness with the Devil himself.

Quest. 4. Who is the greatest Usurper in the World?

Ans. 'Tis a hard Matter to resolve: The French King bids fair for it, who as near as he can Usurps and Lords it over the Lives, Rights and Priviledges of as much of Europe as he can: But I believe the Pope outbids him, in breaking in upon the Rights of Heaven, and exalting himself above all that is called God: In a word, by answering the Character of Revelat. 17. If it be Objected, that at the present there is no Pope; the Answer is, Though there is not one actually, there is one virtually; viz. The same Power which (though a while suspended, unless Commisively) will by a new Election be again center'd in a New Pope.

Quest. 5. Some Years since I knew a very proud Maid in Cambridge, an Alderman's Daughter, who running to the Looking-glass to View her self, as soon as ever she came home from hearing a Sermon upon a Sabbath-Day, she thought with her self that she saw the Devil in the Looking-Glass, and thereupon fell Distracted—Pray your Opinion of all this?

Ans. Distraction is perfected by a Fright in a moment, and not by little and little; and if she gave this Account when Distracted, 'tis very probable it might have as little Truth in it as what all Distracted Persons Discourse has, who have neither regard to Truth or Lye, Reason or Nonsense, but speak what's uppermost: But if by other fair concurring Circumstances the Relation was Matter of Fact and real Truth, then our Answer is, That God does sometimes mark out and stigmatize a particular Example of his Justice, for the Admonition and Warning of others.

Quest. 6. A Man having a very large Aposthume on the outside of his Left Thigh, which by suppurating Applications was brought to a perfect Digestion, insomuch that the Matter would fluctuate under the Finger; the next Morning it was designed to be Opened, but that very Night it sunk away of it self, and a great Quantity of Pus was voided by Urine, and so it became well. I can assure you this is Matter of Fact: Pray Answer me Anatomically, according to your best Judgment, by what Passages it went into the Bladder?

Ans. Authors abound with Instances of intern Posthumations Evacuated by Urine, but the present Instance propos'd being External is more rare, but may admit of this Solution: The Ichorous and purulent Matter was discharg'd into the Interstitions of the Muscles, and lay there until the Collection became palpable to the Finger, and fluctuated

ated according to the Impression thereof, this Purulency lay deep, inſomuch that it was nearer a Regurgitation inwardly than coming to any extern Apoſthumation, but to aſſign by which way this Recurrency was perform'd, or how Nature put to her ſhifts reliev'd her ſelf, is an uncommon Curioſity: However it might find a Paſſage to transport this retreating Matter into the Bladder, thus—Some of the External Branches of the Iliac or Crural Veins which are not ſmall, might be more patent in the Parts than at other times; and the Patient ruminating upon the Inciſion to be made next Morning, might by an imaginary concurring Fear contribute to the retiring of the collected Purulency into thoſe patent Veins, which having taken it in, they ſpeedily circulated it to the Emulgentſ, which tranſmitted it to the Ureters, and by them into the Bladder.

Queſt. 7. *How many Men the leaſt Number is ſufficient to form an hollow Square?*

Anſw. Eight—One may be placed in the middle of Eight, and at an equal diſtance, but not in the middle of Four.

Queſt. 8. *How can we underſtand a cloſer or looſer Connection in the parts of Matter, without admitting a Mixture of Vacuities?*

Anſw. Very eaſily, ſince either Air or Water fill up what without 'em be a Vacuum, and much eaſier yet when we conſider that Air and Water are of themſelves capable of Contraction and Dilation, as alſo that both of them may be made out of New Matter. See the Experiments among the Philoſophical Tranſactions.

Queſt. 9. *When I lived in Bedford Town, there was a Man of a quick Wit, a bold Spirit, and a fluent Tongue, but of a looſe debauch'd Converſation; who in my hearing affirm'd that he did believe that there was neither God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell, and I told him that he did very raſhly to utter thoſe words, being greatly deluded by the Devil; and that I was confident if I lived to ſee him die, I ſhould hear him contradict ſuch unwary impious Assertions. He replied, At the preſent he was aſſured of what he ſaid—Not long after this Perſon was apprehended, and for a Notorious Crime, condemn'd by a Judge of Aſſize to be hanged, and about a Day before his Execution I went to him, on purpoſe to ſee if the Thoughts of approaching Death had not made him changed his former Atheiſtical Principles: And coming to him he did with many Tears bewail his former Deluſions, and told me, that a Priſon and the Serious Meditation of Death had opened his Eyes; and that when he had formerly ſaid to me, there was no God, yet he did not then heartily believe what he ſaid—What's your Thought upon all this? and whether do you think there ever was a real Atheiſt?*

Anſw. We are all naturally inclin'd to believe what we would have to be. 'Tis an ill Man's Inter'eſt there ſhould be no God, becauſe no Punishment, and this Inter'eſt paſſes into Argument, but yet not ſo concluding as to paſs into a Satisfaction. I know not how far a deep habitual Courſe of Impiety may deprave the Judgment, and render the Delinquent incapable of taking a due Eſtimate of Futurity; but I cannot believe any Perſon that will give himſelf the liberty of thinking, and yet deny the Exiſtence of a Deity, both as to Creation and Providence.—I knew a Perſon that uſ'd to damn that idle thought of thinking, which to me appear'd a greater Argument of an Atheiſt than the profeſſing of one's ſelf ſo. I believe there may be a drunken injudicious Atheiſt, but not a ſober thinking Atheiſt.

Queſt. 10. *A Gentleman having a plentiful Eſtate by his Wife, and no Iſſue, deſires your Opinion, whether it be a ſin to marry another, by whom he thinks he may have Iſſue, the former Wife yet living?*

Anſw. Our Law amongſt other Caſes reckons up Frigiditatis Cauſa, as a Caſe to ground a Divorcement upon, but as I take it, admits not the Man to marry another whilſt his former Wife is living; but ſuppoſing it did, I cannot believe the Act is diſpenſible by the Laws of God, ſince our Saviour has been ſo poſitive and plain in this Caſe, viz. Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery, and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced, committeth Adultery: Beſides all this, 'tis morally an ill change, ſeldom comes a better, and a Wiſe Man had rather take up with one known Trouble than run the hazard of being involv'd in many. A ſecond Wife may be Barren as well as the firſt, if not, 'tis ten to one whither the Happineſs of Iſſue may countervail

the Unhappineſs of the Death of Children, or the ill Courſes they may take, with a thouſand other attending Inconveniences.

Queſt. 11. *What's the Reason that a Bullet dropt from the round top of a Ship under the ſwifteſt Sail, ſhall fall upon the Deck as far before the Maſt as the Hand is that delivers it, and not a great way behind, conſidering the running of the Ship while the Bullet is falling?*

Anſw. Vol. 1. Number 14. 11 Queſtion. We have ſaid ſomething of a Bullet falling from ſome high Place into a Ship under Sail, where we have given our Reaſon that the Motion of the Ship has no effect upon the Perpendicular falling of the Bullet—but in this laſt Queſtion the caſe is very different—for the Bullet falls from one part of the Ship to another, which is all one body, and the Motion is equal at the bottom as well as the top, which ſolves the difficulty of falling in the ſame place, whether under Sail or at Anchor—there needs no experience to convince this Truth, if it be conſider'd, that the Motion is betwixt the Water and the Ship, and not betwixt one part of the Ship and another, for that part of the Water that was perpendicular to the Top of the Ship, when the Bullet begins to fall, is paſt over both by the Ship and the Bullet, which are got into another place of the Water diſtant from the firſt perpendicular perhaps two or three Yards, which is all the Reaſon that a Bullet from an high place in a Ship keeps its due diſtance in its fall, whether under Sail or not.

Queſt. 12. *Whether the Inhabitants of Egypt, and ſome parts of America and other places, receive their Blackneſs occaſioned by the Sun or the Climate? If not, by what?*

Anſw. Vide Vol. 1. N. 12. Queſt. 2.

Queſt. 13. *What Reason is to be aſſign'd for the Brackiſhneſs or Saltneſs of the Sea?*

Anſw. See Vol. 1. Numb. 2. Queſt. 12.

Advertisements.

THE Supplement to the Firſt Volume of the Athenian Gazette (is now publiſh'd) containing the Tranſactions and Experiments of the Foreign Virtuoso's: As alſo their Ingenious Conferences upon many Nice and Curious Queſtions. To which is added an Account of the Deſign and Scope of moſt of the conſiderable Books Printed in all Languages, and of the Quality of the Author, if known. The whole being a Tranſlation of what is moſt rare and valuable, in the Paris Journal des Scavans, the Ada Eruditorum Lipſie, the Universal Historical Bibliothecque, and in the New Book, Entitled, En Treizieme Sciences & Galanies, &c. publiſh'd for the improving of Natural, Moral, and Divine Knowledge, as is ſpecified in the Preface to theſe Papers, which ſaid Preface gives the Reader a full Account of the Deſign and Uſe of theſe Foreign Virtuoso's, — Price 1 s. Sold at the Raven in the Poultry, where is to be had the Firſt Volume of the Athenian Gazette, beginning March 17th. and ending May 30th. 1691. (or ſingle ones to this time.)

We deſign to add the Contents of each Supplement to that Alphabetical Table we have promiſed at the end of every Year, that ſo by the help of this General Table our Querists may preſently find any Queſtion or Subject they have a mind to conſult, either in our Weekly Mercuries, or Supplemental Volumes; and therefore to render our Undertaking thus ſerviceable to the Reader, we ſhall print the Supplement to each Volume of our Athenian Gazette on the ſame Paper with our Weekly Mercuries, that ſo they may bind up with 'em.

In this Supplemental Volume we have Printed that full Account of our Athenian Project which we have ſo often promiſed to the World: And that no Man may be ignorant of what our whole Undertaking is, we ſhall again Print the ſame Account in our next Saturday's Mercury.

We have received ſeveral Queſtions laſt Week that are already answer'd in our Firſt Volume.

Many of the Ingenious Queſtions which we have receiv'd this Week, are answer'd in this Supplement now recited, and ſome of 'em are alſo answer'd in our Firſt Volume.

* * We have had many Queſtions ſent us relating to the Papers, Entitled, A Catalogue of Ladies to be ſold by Auction, which ſhall be Answer'd all together next Tueſday, that being the day on which we are to Answer (according to our wonted Method) the ſeveral Queſtions ſent us by the fair Sex concerning Love and Marriage.

The Supplement to the firſt Volume of the Athenian Gazette is now publiſhed—Price 1 s. Sold at the Raven in the Poultry. In this Supplement, and alſo in our Firſt Volume is Answered many of the Ingenious Queſtions lately ſent us, and the reſt ſhall be Answer'd at the End of our ſecond Volume.

We have receiv'd the Queſtions ſent us from Woodſtreet, about Silver Wire.