

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. *Why so little care is taken for the Conversion of Turks and Pagans to Christianity, since the world seems so zealous for Religion, and so warm even in Circumstantials?*

Ans. We wish the latter part of the Question did not too well resolve the former, it being as true, as obvious an observation, that those who are most zealous for one, we mean the circumstances, or garniture of Religion, are generally remiss, and negligent enough in the other; and as careless as any what becomes of that it self. This over-warmth for external, and less essential matters, like feverish heats in the extremities of the body, leave the internal and more noble parts destitute of their necessary vigour. 'Tis in vain to talk of *Converting Turks and Pagans*, while we, who call our selves Christians, are worse than *Pagans and Turks*, both in our selves, and to one another; nay, while all Immoralities reign among us, which both hinder us from taking any such care, and if we would, render it altogether ineffectual. And lastly, while what's worse than *Paganism*, has almost overspread all Christendom, namely, down-right *Atheism*, or what's as near as men can possibly go for their own Consciences. So that, as things are, there seems but too much reason for a Question proposed by a person of a great deal of wit to a Gentleman of Quality, who had caus'd his Black to be Baptiz'd — Why he had spoyl'd a Good Heathen — since even the *Light of Nature* teaches, to abhor the Manners of too many Christians. But supposing any such care to be taken, it must either be by the *Papists* or *us*. For the Protestants, it may be said, their Enemies have kept them too full of employment, and just struggling for their own Lives all over Europe, ever since the *Reformation*, and there wou'd be something of Truth in this — but it must be own'd, we have, notwithstanding this, found time and means to correspond even with the remotest parts of the earth, where wealth or profit call'd us, nay sometimes where only revenge. But 'twou'd puzzle a good Historian to give an account of the *Voyages, Expeditions or Embassies* which have been made on purpose to promote, or plant the Christian Faith among the Heathens. For the *Papists*, their Orders, and especially the *Jesuits* have, like the *Pharisees*, compass'd Sea and Land to make one *Proselyte* — But then, as the *Satyrists*, not more tartly than truly observes, their zeal generally wants the Sun to warm and ripen it, it extremely agrees with the rich and fertile parts of the earth; and a man may consult the Acts of the Society, or any other amongst 'em long enough, before he hears of any Missions sent to the poor *forrein Saucodis*, or attempts made for the conversion of *Greenland*.

Quest. 2. *Whether Snakes kept tame are hurtfull by nature?*

Ans. Our English Snakes are onely perfect harmless worms, with no more malignity in 'em than *Erasmus* his *Lizards*, as now almost every Plowman and Old woman knows. That which appears so dreadfully out of its mouth, and which it brandishes so like a Sting, is onely a poor innocent Tongue, more soft, if possible, than any silken thread: It has teeth, but never bites any thing, though never so highly provoked, unless it be its Bran, in which it is usually kept, or the top of a little Grass in the fields, when let loose to divert it self there. This we have experience in some of the very largest of their kind, which have been more then a yard long, and proportionably bulky, which, when anger'd, would hiss, and leap at any thing, but never do any Injury. We han't yet had opportunity to examin their Teeth, whether there is any Saliva about 'em, as in real *Vipers* — which we warn the Reader not to take up, by a mistake, in the Fields, in stead of the other, their poison being very deadly, without speedy remedies though 'tis thought not so strong as those in warmer Climates. Yet we have seen those people who make a Trade of catching 'em, bite off one of their heads while they have been living, being bitten by 'em at the same instant in the Lip or Tongue, till the blood has issued at the Orifice, which, that very moment anointing with Oyl of *Vipers*, they have felt no further harm.

Qu. 3. *Whether a Land-Snake and a Water-Snake are two different reptiles, or onely the same kind?*

Ans. We are apt to believe they are the same; because those Land-Snakes which we have seen tame, when shew'd any water, have very freely taken to it, and swim excellently well, bearing themselves up on their Train much more high and lofty, and seemingly with more ease, then in that protrusive motion which they use when on the other Element. We have also seen those, which they call *Water-Snakes*, in old holes of Banks, in Pools and warm Ponds and Ditches, sunning themselves in the water as the other; if other, they be by Land, but could never perceive any difference in their shape, colour, or motion: for which reason, we believe 'tis the same Creature, and of an amphibious nature.

A Letter sent us, upon our Explication of Psalm 133. v. 5. which being a Collection of so great Pains and Care, we are willing to communicate it to the Learned, our design being not so much our own, as the Publick Good.

Gentlemen;

Your Explication of *Psal. 133. v. 3d.* hath produced these Notes thereon. The Text, in my opinion, is truly Translated, in our last Translation; according to the proper and genuine Sence of the Hebrew Tongue; which being very concise, hath innumerable Elliptical Sentences that must be filled up with the Sence that is most plain and obvious; and amongst other ways, this is one, which the nature of this Language requireth, that is, to have one word stand in the place of two; that by the Repetition thereof, the Text may be plain, as it is in this place, and many others observed by the Rabbies, who best understand the nature of their own Language, and its proper Idiom.

Rabbi David Kimchi thus explains this Text, *As the dew of Hermon, &c.* כֵּטַל עֹמֵד בְּקוֹם שְׁנֵי Ke tal Omed bemakoo Shenim: This word Ketal, as the dew, stands in the place of two; that is, ought to be repeated as he Explains it.

כֵּאִילוֹ אָמַר כֵּטַל חֶרְמוֹן וְכֵטַל שִׁיּוֹרַי עֵיִן Ke ilu amar ketal Hermon Uketal Shejored al haretee Sion: as if he should say, *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descendeth upon the Mountains of Sion.*

The like he observeth on *Psal. 9. v. 18.* For the needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. This last word not, is not expressly in the Original, any more then the word Ke tal, as the dew, was before: but it is to be supplied by the Sence, and so Kimchi saith on this place also, לֹא שׁוֹבֵר עֵיפָר בְּמָקוֹם

שְׁנֵי this word, *lo here*, mentioned, standeth in the place of two כִּזְכּוֹ מִנְהַג הַלְשׁוֹן בְּהִרְבֵּה מְקוֹמוֹת and so is the manner of the Tongue in many places.

The like is used, *Numb. 4. 15. Job 30. 20, 25. cap. 31. 20. Prov. 30. 3. Deut. 7. 26. 2 Chron. 19. 20. Compare 1 King. 10. 21. so Kimchi suppoeth Hos. 3. v. 3. to be read: and like to our Text is Psal. 18. 31. Ps. 19. v. 8, 9, 10.*

2 Sam. 21. 16. He being girded with a new Sword, is supplied, for so it should be, hereon Kimchi thus writeth, Supplying thereby a Sword. וְכִמְהוֹ וּמֵאֲכָלוֹ בְּרִיאָה

וְכִזְכּוֹ דֶּרֶךְ הַמֶּקֶר like unto *Ezek. 34. 3. Ye eat the fat:* as much as to say, *the fat sheep.* וְכִזְכּוֹ דֶּרֶךְ הַמֶּקֶר

And this is the way of the Scripture in many places, (of which he gives more Instances elsewhere.) וְהַחֲסֵרוּ יִתְּבוֹנוּ לִפְיִי הָעֵיִן

And the defect is to be understood, according to the sence, as he doth *Psal. 73. 10. Waters of a full Cup* is to be

וְיִמְלֵא חֶסֶד הַמִּתּוֹאֵר ר"ל וְיִמְלֵא חֶסֶד הַמִּתּוֹאֵר

מלא כמו ומאכלו בריאה כער הקצובים ומי מלא והדומים להם and the words *Waters of a full*, wants the Substantive: and it is as much as if he should say, *and Waters of a full Cup*: according to the defect used in *Ezek. 34. 3.* and like unto another used *Cant. 4. 2.* *A flock of Sheep that are even shorn*: here Sheep is defective, and is supplied by *Aben Ezra*: with other like hereunto, as *Kimchi*, and *Aben Ezra*, on this last Text, and elsewhere; give Instances: Several of which *Buxtorf* hath Collected in his *Thesaurus Grammaticus*, p. mibi, 315, 316, 317. *de anomalis in convenientia nominis cum nomine*, and elsewhere. Thus much I thought at present enough to Justify our Translation, in repeating, and thereby supplying the Sence with the words, *And as the dew*: which, if you think convenient to insert in a future *Mercur*, is at your dispose: so, to do otherwise, I desire it may be returned to me.

Moreover, I think it may not be much amiss to Translate what *Kimchi* further saith on this Verse, *Psal. 133. v. 3.*—and he mentioneth *Hermon*, it being one of the great Mountains of the Land of *Israel*, as 'tis said, *Tabor and Hermon shall sing*, &c. and he mentions the Mountains of *Sion*, because there the Kingdom should be. And he saith Mountains, in the plural, as 'tis said, *The Mountains are round about Jerusalem*. And before he spake of *Oil*, a Similitude belonging to the Chief Priest, but now he mentions *Dew*, which is an Emblem of a King, as it is written, *The wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion*, and his favour is like *Dew upon herbs*.

And moreover, because that deliverance is like unto dew, as 'tis said, *As a dew from the Lord*, &c. And he mentions *Dew upon the Mountains*, because on them it is a blessing, and they have more need of it then valleys and plain ground: And he mentions *Sion*, for there, viz. on the Mountains of *Sion* the Lord hath commanded a blessing, and there he hath commanded life for evermore: and the meaning of, for ever, may be a long time, as 'tis written, *For as the days of a Tree shall be the days of my people, and mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands*; or the meaning of it may be for ever. And speaking in the beginning of the Psalm, of the dew which descendeth upon Mount *Sion*, which, saith he, is more blessed then all the dew which comes down on all the world. Thus far *Kimchi*: and indeed the blessing and love of God to *Sion*, his Church and People, is beyond all that is in the World.

To conclude, The love I bear to the Truth and Purity of the Scripture on the one hand, and the Modesty wherein your Opinion is delivered on the other, encouraged and occasioned these brief Meditations from,

Your Unknown Friend and Servant,

J. W.

Quest. 4. Suppose a Jew, a Mahometan, a Ch. of England-man, an Anabaptist, a Quaker, and a Muggletonian, all living together in one House peaceably, and according to their own Principles—May they not all expect Happiness after this Life?

Ans. It's pity the Querist did not put in an Atheist too, to have made it up a perfect Number. But however there are enough of 'em already, and he must be a Latitudinarian with a witness, and his Charity have got the start of his Christianity, who can hope well of all those here put together? It's true, that in smaller and less, Essential Matters we may well hope Heaven is more merciful to us than we are to one another. But some of these must certainly be *toto Cælo*, distant from others, and tho' several Persons may come to the same place, who take somewhat different Roads, tho' one walks nearer Rocks and Precipices, and another all bespatters and tires himself with worse Way, and a farther Compass about, yet 'tis impossible those who take quite contrary Roads shou'd ever meet—we mean in Heaven, for on Earth they may, but they must first go over the whole Globe. To examine those different Sects and Religions the Querist mentions, we of the Church of England have an excellent Faith; and we are sure it ought not to give Offence that we wish our Works better, at least, those of many who know little else but the Name of their Church, and expect that alone shou'd save 'em. The Articles of our Church have indeed already answer'd this Question for most of the rest, pronouncing an Anathema on all those who affirm 'tis possible to be sav'd in any Religion, if Men live up to't. The express words are these. Article the —

Nor is the herein at all uncharitable or unreasonable, for there can be but one Right, tho' many Wrongs; Either

Christianity must be the true Religion, or all Religion is a Fable, and this Religion tells us that none can be [ordinarily] saved but by the Name of Jesus—At least none of those who perversely and obstinately persecute and hate the very Christian Name, which they must do if they live up to the Principles of their own Religion. For the Jew, he has heard of our Saviour and Blasphemes him, and does to this day, tho' he dares not shew it, a most inveterate hatred to all Christians—so he's gone. For the Mahometan—Tho' some good and learned Men of warm Brains and Charity, have lately been his Advocates, we all know that his Religion is all a Nonsensical piece of Imposture, and that he so mortally hates the Christians, that Dogs are the best Names he'll afford 'em, and expects his Paradise, such a one as 'tis, as the Reward of Murdering 'em.—For the Muggletonian, he may e'en be of the Religion of the two last, or none at all, for none knows what to make of him. All that we e're heard he pretended to, was hating the Bible, some Blasphemy, and a great deal of Nonsense. For the Quakers—We are sure that many, or most of 'em, have held very dangerous and detestable Opinions. They generally speak contemptibly of the Bible, and will by no means allow it to be *Gods Word*: They have turn'd it into an odd sort of a jejune Allegory, even the highest and most sacred Truths therein contain'd, and have spoken not very Honourably of our Saviour, and almost generally deny the Trinity, and many, if not all, embrace the other Socinian Dream of the Souls sleeping till the Resurrection. Besides, they use neither of the Sacraments, and if our most Authentick Accounts don't impose upon us, were at their first appearance in England, commonly acted by a worse Spirit than that they pretend to. These 'tis hard to hope well of, nor can we see how with any manner of Propriety they can be call'd Christians.—But if there be any of 'em who have left their first Principles, and are degenerated into Christianity, (we ask Pardon for the harshness of the Expression) and grown more religious, as well as more mannerly, there may be more hopes of 'em. For the Anabaptist, it's certain both from Popish and Protestant Writers, and even Eye-witnesses themselves, that there never was a fiercer or more dangerous Enemy to all Order both Sacred and Humane, than he was at his first appearance in Germany: But we hope he's now grown better, and that our Soil has a little mended his Crab-stock—For we must own according to their present Writings, there are not many Articles of Common Christianity, if any, which our English Anabaptists disown, besides that of Infant Baptism, wherein some Great Men in the Ch. of God have err'd together with 'em.

Qu. 5. How do we call to mind those things we had forgotten?

Ans. Mr. Hobbs has a very pleasant way of explaining this in his *Tripos*, or Discourse of Humane Nature, where he defines Remembrance by Forgetfulness.—But tho' he assumes never so Dictatorial an Air, he must not expect to make us take Contradictions for Oracles. But we must not quarrel, what others advance without bringing something of our own, and allowing the World the same Liberty to censure ours. We must then make a difference between recollecting and remembering, (tho' in common Speech they are taken for the same) the latter whereof is as it were the Effect of the former. When we wou'd remember any thing more distinctly, whereof we had before a confused Idea, we first recollect or gather together in our Minds the Circumstances thereof, and so climb from one thing to the other, (as when we have lost any thing about the House, we tumble over our Goods to find it, till by the Relations and Dependences there are between all things, we at length arrive at what we desire. To illustrate it—in Travelling—When I have been such or such a Road before, I have a sort of a Picture or Map thereof, at least of some Principal places therein, inscribed on my Mind. Now when I return hither again, I see such a Tree or such a Stone, which I remark when I went the same way last—This brings to mind such another, which lies further, or such a turning either of this side or beyond it, by which I know I am in the right.

Qu. 6. How Infants, Aged and deformed Persons shall arise at the Day of Judgment?

Ans. All Divines generally agree they shall be perfect, and about the Age of 30, or our Saviour's Age at his Resurrection, which was 33. for their Knowledge, &c. See Vol. N—Q.—about Souls and several other Papers as may be seen in the Indexes before each Volume.