

The Athenian Mercury.

Qu. 1. **W**Hether 'tis Lawful to Trade with Negroes, and to Buy 'em of one another?

Ans. It's undoubtedly Lawful to Deal and Traffick with 'em; for how should we else convert 'em? As for buying 'em for Slaves, how hard soever they work afterwards, 'tis the greatest Kindness we can do 'em, since otherwise they must either be Killed or Eaten, or both, by their barbarous conquering Enemy—Besides, it might be a means to save their Souls as well as Lives, were that care taken of 'em that ought to be.

Quest. 2. What's the true meaning of those Hebrew words which speak of the Worlds being a Chaos, or confused Mass of I know not what—And therefore desire to know of you?

Ans. See a foregoing Question, N.—Q.—Concerning the Creation, and the word Barah, where the Chaos, or Tohu-vabohu is also handled.

Quest. 3. What Language is English?

Ans. 'Tis hard to say what 'tis; but 'tis a sort of a Lingua-Franca—Indeed a Hodg-podg of all Languages; and yet, as the Spanish Olio's, it does well enough altogether. The Basis or Ground-work on't is the old Saxon, the same or little differing from the High-Dutch, or Germans; from whose Nation both our Ancestors and their Language drew their Original; with this it has a sprinkling of Welsh; a considerable stock of French; Latin and Greek words innumerable—not a few Hebrew; some Persian, and others of almost all the Languages of Europe.

Quest. 4. Whether a Minister taking his Text out of the First of Job, or any other place where the Devil speaks, may properly say—"The word of God requires your Attention?"

Ans. Why not—as well as a Witness or a Judge may repeat the Treasonable words of a Malefactor without being Guilty of his Treason; we have in the Scripture the actions and words of good and bad Men, and good and bad Spirits too related, and the Penmen thereof all Christians believe were inspired, on which account all the Bible is properly enough call'd the Word of God—and if the whole, all the parts of it. Nay, the Devil himself speaks some Truth, tho' he gives it a wrong Interpretation, or mingles it with Lies. For example in Job—Doth Job serve God for nought? 'Twas true he did not—but the Adversary had a malicious sence in these words, silyly intimating, that 'twas only Interest which made him Pious.—tho' he was soon prov'd a Liar, and the grand Deceiver himself deceiv'd. Nay, sometimes the Devil himself uses the very Word of God—as in his Temptation of our Saviour.—" 'Tis written "he shall give his Angels charge over thee—but tho' he has abused those words, we hope

the abuse there does not take away the use, but a Minister may make use of 'em agen after him, and preach better Doctrine from 'em.

Quest. 5. Did Adam sin more than once?

Ans. Yes undoubtedly, for the first sin was productive of others both in him and us. But we can prove that he did so by Scripture as well as Reason. He sinned once in Eating the Fruit; a second time in attempting to hide himself from God, thereby questioning his omnipresence. A third time in giving a false Cause for a true, when he told God, that he hid himself because he was naked, whereas the true Cause was, his guilty Conscience accus'd him for his sin: in this questioning the omniscience of God. He sinn'd a fourth time in excusing himself instead of confessing his sin. "The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree and I did Eat. But if the Question relates to his first sin, in eating the forbidden fruit, we see no reason at all why we should think he did it more than once: tho' indeed there is some probability that the Woman repeated her sin. For she did not only eat her self, being then absent from her Husband, but came unto him, "and gave also to her Husband with her, "and he did eat.

Quest. 6. Why did Lazarus never Laugh, after he was raised from the Dead?

Ans. Why should any man ask a Reason for matter of Fact, which he has no reason to believe is true?

Quest. 7. Had the Emphyreal Heaven no Beginning?

Ans. The Emphyreal Heaven must be a Place, because there is Body there, at least Christs glorious Body. Now all Place must have beginning, because all Body had; again, whatsoever is, and is not God, once was not: unless therefore we embrace their opinion who hold God himself to be, Spatium immensum, we must believe the Emphyreal Heavens were once Created. And what if the Creation of 'em should be intimated in the first of Genesis? In those words, "In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth, and the Earth was without Form, &c. the first verse seems a summary of all Gods Work, and the Heavens here, not the 2d or 1st Heaven, (as to us) but the 3d, that beyond the Heaven of Heavens, (which we look upon to be the place of the Stars only) namely the very seat of the blessed, and what the word is to be taken in that sence, seems at least probable to us, because the Heaven here may seem not to be either the Firmament, or Expanse, call'd Heaven afterwards, describ'd as the place for the Heavenly Bodies, nor much less the Aerial Heaven: of the latter there is little question, for the former, it is plainly

ly described as made out of the *Earth*, which is divided from the *Heaven* in the "first verse, The *Earth* was without Form and Void, and Darknes was upon the Face of the *Deep*, The Face of the *Water*. And God said, Let there be a *Firmament* in the midst of the *Waters*: and God made the *Firmament*, and call'd it *Heaven*. Now this *Expanse*, or *Firmament*, is only *Water* extended or stretcht abroad, being transformed into *Air*; and therefore taken out of the first Chaos before mentioned, and therefore part of the *Earth*; but as for the *Heaven*, it's only said, In the Beginning God created it, without resuming or giving any account of it, or of its Inhabitants the Angels, the History whereof did not so much concern us. We confess if any shall affirm this *Heaven* is the same with what is afterward described, and no other than the *Firmament*, we know not how to disprove him, nor can he us, both of'em being probable Interpretations.

Quest. 8. If Adam had not sin'd, had he and his posterity been immortal?

Ans. Yes, or else to what purpose had the threatening been— In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dye? If they had been to have died still notwithstanding their obedience. For there not being room enough for his Posterity had he liv'd, — we have several things to say, — and first— wou'd Mr. Burnet's Hypothesis hold concerning the Paradisical Form of the *Earth* before the Flood, viz. that there was at first no Sea, except what was contain'd the Bowels of the *Earth*, — we shou'd find at least so much more room than now we have. But that we can go near to do without it, for undoubtedly all the *Earth* was curst for Adam's sin, without which curse it's very probable it had all been habitable, — and if so, not only the vast regions of desert in *Africa*, but all the huge Northern Tracts near the Pole, and the Southern *Terra Incognita*, — which wou'd have made room for perhaps as many more as we have now upon *Earth*. But there's no need of this, for when they had lived as long as God thought fit, perhaps a 1000 years, they might have been translated to Heaven as *Enoch* and *Elias* were.

Quest. 9. How many Angels fell in the Rebellion?

Ans. Some think as many as all the Elect upon *Earth*, who shall fill up their rooms in Heaven, and be like the Angels, as the wicked like their companions the Devils, — But how many either those Angels, or the Elect of God are, he only knows, who calls all the Stars by their names.

Quest. 10. What became of the Bodies of those men and women, who perished in the Deluge?

Ans. If the forementioned Gentleman's Hypothesis wou'd but stand, we could easily dispose of'em, for they might all be swallowed up at the bursting asunder of the Cortex of the *Earth*, when the Sea came

out of it, or at least when part thereof was suckt in again, — Nay we can make a shift without this ingenious fancy, for we are sure that the Fountains of the great deep were broken up, and by the passages whence they came, the bodies might roll down into the Bowels of the *Earth*, to the great abyss, others might be buried in the Mud, or under Hills and Mountains; and what if some of those Gigantick Sceletons which are certainly humane, and some of'em entire, which have been so often found in such kind of places, shou'd be the remains of some of these bodies, — which if granted, as we can see nothing improbable in't we thereby gain a great argument for the truth of the History of the Flood, over and above Tradition and Sacred Writ, both of which also assure us that "there were Giants in those days. That there have been such Bodies found, and this not very seldom, is too evident to be denied; and how should they come there, under such Mountains and Hills, unless by some such Deluge? As we find huge Trees buried vastly deep under the *Earth*, which got thither in all probability the same way: There are still other ways to dispose of the bodies of men, &c. who have perished in the Deluge, than we have already taken notice of, which unless they were put out of the way, had they lain unburied upon the *Earth*, (as they must have done, for there were scarce enough left alive, to have buried the Inhabitants but of one single Town) would have by their Pestilent and noisom stench soon have dispatched their survivors; one way is, the Flood continuing from *Noah's* going into the Ark, till he came out again, more than a full year, the Bodies in that time, and perhaps much less, would break, corrupt, and be quite dissolved, so that there would be no sign of'em long before he came abroad again. The other is, that they might either be driven or left upon *America*, and those so long after undiscovered and uninhabited Worlds, or else whelm'd into the vast Seas that run between them and us, or forever sunk in the unfathomable depths of the Northern Ocean.

Quest. 11. Why did Christ Pray, being God himself?

Ans. Both for our example, and because for our sakes, he took upon him the form of a Servant, and was Man as well as God.

Quest. 12. What Sex was Balaam's Ass of?

Ans. We can more easily resolve that, than what Sex the Author of the Query is— For the Ass is at least seven times expressed in the History to be of the Feminine Gender— particularly twice in one Verse, Numb. 22. 25. "And when the Ass saw the Angel of the Lord, SHE thrust her self unto the Wall and crusht Balaam's foot against the wall—and he smote HER again.