

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, October 3. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**hether the Vaudois, as is suggested, have maintained the Profession of the Christian Religion uncorrupted with the Errors of Popery from the Primitive Times? or if not, when did they reform?

Ans. That the Vaudois have remained a Church in an uninterrupted Succession in their Valleys 1300 Years, the present *Observer*, Vol. 4. Numb. —. gives an Account: But the Learned Mounfier Allix in his History of the Churches of Piedmont, (Printed by Mr. Chiswel) in Answer to the Bishop of Meaux, gives this Account, that for 300 Years or more the Bishops of Rome attempted by fraud and force to subjugate the Church of Milain under her Jurisdiction, and at last the Interest of Rome grew too Potent for the Church of Milain, planted by one of the Disciples; insomuch that the Bishop and the People, rather than own this Usurped Jurisdiction, retir'd into the Valleys, and from thence were called *Valenses*, *Wallenses*, or the People or Churches in the Valleys: They took not their Name, as has been imagined by some, from Peter Waldo a Merchant, who long after joyned with them, and caus'd the Bible to be Translated. Neither were they Lay-men only, or a discontented Mob, that in a pet left Milain, because they were Offended at the loose Lives of the Clergy, as the Papists would perswade the World: But they went away from Milain an entire Church, with their Pastor, and never reformed from the Errors of Rome, or were Schismatics, or rent from her, for they never were of her Communion; but for Peace, and to enjoy the Primitive Truth in simplicity, as received from the Apostles: They have been a suffering Church to this day, millions of Witnesses having attested it. As to their Original, Doctrines, Practices, Bishops, and also the Attempts of Rome from time to time to subjugate and suppress them from their first to their last Bishops Narrative, and of their being expell'd by the present Duke of Savoy, is learnedly particulariz'd from Year to Year by the said Mounfier Alix, with most curious Observations and Matters of Fact, which the Bishops of Rome have been concerned in about these *Waldenses* or *Vaudois*, and is worth the perusal of all Persons, that they may see the Contrivances of the Popish Clergy to make the World believe the Vaudois were no Church but Lay-men, and how they pretended the Church of Millan, when got into their hands, was founded by a Saint of Rome, and how they suppress'd their Records, and supply'd the places with some of their own, stuff'd with fabulous Tales and Legends about the Saints of the Church of Rome. For a fuller Account we refer you to the Author.

Quest. 2. Whether a Dissenter is a Schismatick, notwithstanding his Liberty by Law?

Ans. A Christian Church becomes not more or less Christian by being National, (as to the Essence of Religion) but if a National Church agrees in Doctrine with the Doctrine of Christ, and Dissenters agree in Doctrine with the National Church, neither of them are Schismatics from the Doctrine or Church of Christ; and it was the Doctrinal part of Religion which Christ promis'd to be withall, so that the Gates of Hell shou'd not prevail against it: But if a National Church makes the Terms of her Communion Political, another Church dependant on her, may dissent from such Political Terms (if the Magistrate gives the Liberty) without Schism.

Quest. 3. Whether Moses had a real or visionary sight of Canaan from Mount Pisgah, since the distance is accounted at least One hundred Miles.

Ans. We are satisfied that ordinarily in travelling 60 Miles the Pole-Star is Elevated a Degree, from which it is manifest that the Earth is round, and that the height of the roundness of the Earth, renders one place invisible to another; so that there's two things, Distance and

the Interposition of part of the Earth, that render a real sight of Moses seeing the Land of Canaan almost incredible; but these difficulties may be both Answer'd: First, By the height of the Mountain whereon he stood. Secondly, By the goodness of his Eye, which (the Scripture says) waxed not dim to the day of his death, nor was his natural force abated. If this is not sufficient, since 'tis impossible for us to see above 30 Miles distinctly, as we may in several places in England; yet God Almighty who was pleased to confer that Favour upon him, might at that time strengthen his Eye, and render the Medium of Visibilty more adapt for such a Prospect; this we are apt to believe, rather than a Visionary Prospect; for if it had been in a Vision, it might as well have been in a Valley, or in his own Tent, as on the Top of Mount Pisgah.

Quest. 4. What Historical Account can you give of the Antiquity of Tyburn? and who was the Prototraylor that dy'd there?

Ans. The Records of the Tower or Newgate perhaps will satisfy you. No doubt but a Papist was the first Criminal that suffer'd, 'tis so long since. Rotten-Row in Old-street was the place of Execution before Tyburn. Some will have the derivation of the Word Tyburn from *tye up and burn*, meaning Execution by Strangling and Faggot; but 'tis more probable from the River that ran there, as also was the derivation of *Holburn*, formerly named *Old bourn*, or a River so called, as you may see amongst *Englands Remarks* in the County of Middlesex.

Quest. 5. Was there ever any such Executions practis'd in England as Hanging in Chains alive?

Ans. Many, about 200 Years since, and some few Instances within 100 Years; whence 'tis common that you have relations of Personseating their Shoulders, and as far as they cou'd reach to preserve Life a little longer than otherwise it was possible. Under this Head comes that famous Relatio of the Woman that kept her Father alive for a very considerable time by the Milk of her own Breasts.

Quest. 6. Why shou'd not a mutual Consent dissolve the Marriage Contract, since it is the Essence, or of the Essence of it, and that which makes has power to unmake in all other Contracts? and were it not better for publick Society if it were so?

Ans. We are all God's Creatures, and owe our dependance to him, and by this Power which he has over his Creatures, he may justly bind 'em by Obligations and Laws to do so and so. 'Twas not Man that made the Law of Marriage but God, who said, 'twas not good for Man to be alone, &c. and as he had Power to make such a Law, he had Power to Repeal it, which he has done under such Conditions as Adultery, &c. and as he has made us Agents in one, so he has in the other, but he no where warrants us to exceed what himself has laid down. Besides, I know not why this shou'd be any more question'd than why a Man shou'd not murder, divide, or part from himself, since a Mans Wife is also made one Flesh with him. This is not like other Contracts, as the Querist urges, since God no where has taken Cognizance of any particular Contracts amongst Persons, but in general Obliges 'em to be just; but he has taken this into his own particular Care, and has also given Orders to his Prophets and Apostles about it, making it a representation of the Union betwixt Christ and his Church, and we don't at all Question but that the Querist wou'd be loath to be divided or sound out of that Union; and if so, no reason that he shou'd in its representative.

Quest. 7. A Person has a perverse Contentious Wife, whether it may not be lawful for him, she also consenting, (sincerely to avoid Passion and Contention, since very destructive to his inward Peace and his Duty) to separate and live asunder?

Ans.

Ans. This comes a little too near the aforementioned Case, and must receive the same Answer; for we can't believe God will sanctifie any other Means to a Mans Duty and Happiness so soon as he wou'd those of which he himself is the immediate Author. If the Querist be unhappy in a perverse Wife, 'tis more than probable he wou'd be more unhappy without her; for such an Unhappiness may by God Almighty be design'd for his good; but if not, a Wise Man can tell how to be happy in any Circumstances. Further yet, They separate for a time, (both Consenting) but as the Apostle immediately adds, it must be, so as to Fasting and Prayer, then come together again, that Satan tempt 'em not to Convinence.

Quest. 8. How are those Words to be understood, Heb. 6. 4, 5. — For 'tis impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again, &c?

Ans. Here are three principal Difficulties in the Words; impossible, falling away, and renewing agen. The Fathers (I think generally) understood the latter of those Expressions, renewing agen, by Rebaptization, which to those who had fallen away from the Faith, or been guilty of any Notorious Sin — Murder, Adultery, &c. was impossible — legally so; unlawful, not permitted by the Christian Law. But with all due Veneration to their Memories, this seems too narrow a Sense of the Words, the main Turn whereof they make to depend on Baptism, because that among other things is mention'd. Others think that by this falling away is meant a Defection from the Christian Faith in some great Instances, as those before mention'd, or in time of Persecution; after which 'tis impossible, very difficult and next to impossible, tho' not absolutely so, (as in the Case of the wicked Jews reproved by *Jeremiah*) that they shou'd agen be renewed, that is, repent and recover. As to this, tho' a safe sense, it seems not here a right one, for the word here used, impossible, ἀδύνατον, is never found in this Author but in the highest absolute sense. The third and last Opinion therefore seems more probable, viz. That by falling away, is meant a total and final denying the Principles of the Christian Faith, embracing Gnosticism, or Apostatizing to Judaism or Heathenism; which those that do, 'tis impossible, absolutely impossible for 'em to repent or obtain Salvation.

Quest. 9. Whether repeating the word, O God, in Discourse, be the plain literal taking his Name in Vain, as forbidden in the second Commandment?

Ans. 'Tis a very hard thing to make a Custom of using that Sacred Name, and always to speak it reverently; for commonly those that accustom themselves to any set Word in their way of Talk, know not when they use it. 'Tis then, and only then a Breach of the second Commandment, when 'tis used in Forswearing, false Vows, or irreverent idle Expressions in our Speech, and yet know not that we speak of it.

Quest. 10. Who was the first Philosopher?

Ans. 'Tis affirm'd by *Laertius* that *Thales* was the first. *Cicero* says the same. *Strabo* gives his Suffrage, that *Thales* was the first amongst the Greeks in Natural Philosophy and Mathematicks. He is call'd by *Plutarch* the Inventer of Philosophy; by *Justin Martyr* the most Antient of Philosophers; by *Tertullian* the first of Natural Philosophers; by *Lactantius* the first that made an Inquisition after Natural Causes.

Quest. 11. What Physical Difference is there between the pale Summer Lightning without Thunder, and that fiery Lightning that comes with Noise and Rain?

Ans. We have in our former Papers given we hope a satisfactory Account of the Nature, Cause, &c. of Thunder, to which we refer you. As to the Pallidity of Thunder we Answer, That in the Summer-time the Heat being greater, must necessarily draw up those bituminous Exhalations a great height: This is more than probable, if we consider how low the Clouds fly in Winter, and how high they mount in the Summer-time. Now Thunder the farther it is off us, the lesser Noise we must hear, and distance abates the fiery Flashes, making 'em appear paler. — Some believe the reason of this Paleness may arise from a greater Composition of Sulphur than ordinary in the Ingredients which make up Thunder.

Quest. 12. Whether Bees make that humming sort of a Noise with their Mouths or with their Wings.

Ans. A very Learned Inquirer into Nature has made Experiments, and asserts, That without either Head or Wing they will make such a Noise. *Aristotle* determines in sundry places, but more expressly in his Book of Respiration, that this Sound is made by the Illusion of an inward Spirit upon a Pellicle or little Membrane, about the Precinct or Pectoral Division of their Body. But 'tis not only the beating upon this little Membrane by an inward Spirit, as *Aristotle* affirms, or the outward Air, as *Scaliger* conceiveth, which affordeth this humming Noise, but most of the other Parts may also concur hereunto, as will be manifest; for if while they Hum we lay our Finger upon the Back or other Parts, we shall feel a trembling jarring Motion, much like that which happeneth while we blow on the Teeth of a Comb through Paper: And so if the Head or other parts of the Trunk be touched with Oyl, the Sound will be much impaired, if not destroyed; for those being also dry and Membranous Parts, by Attrition of the Spirit, do help to advance the Noise, and therefore also the Sound is strongest in dry Weather, and very weak in a rainy Season, and towards Winter, for then the Air is moist, and the inward Spirit growing weak, makes a more languid and faint Allusion upon the Parts.

Quest. 13. Whether when a Horse Neighs, is it a rejoicing, or because he is angry.

Ans. We believe neither, but rather a desire of Company, as is frequently Observ'd in all the Race, both Old and Young.

☞ The Form of Courtship, so much desired, will be Published next Tuesday.

That Person who Confesses himself guilty of a most horrid Sin, &c. will find an Answer to all his Scruples in our 12 Numbers now in the Press.

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☞ The 12 Numbers that compleat our Third Volume (with a Preface and Index to the whole) are now in the Press; containing great variety of Ingenious Questions, and also many Curious Instances, with our Thoughts thereon.

Advertisements.

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There is a Book lately Publish'd, with an Answer to Thomas Wall's Book, called Baptism Anatomiz'd; together with an Answer to a part of Mr. Daniel Williams's Catechism, in his Book unto Youth. By Hercules Collins. Sold by John Hancock in Castle-Alley, near the Royal Exchange.

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