

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, December 12. 1691.

Quest. 1. **A**S within this week I was travelling between Kenford, and Bury St. Edmonds, I was unfortunately set on by three Men in Disguise, who not finding their expected Booty, were so incensed as to rifle me of all my Cloaths, and were sending me home naked, had not one good-natur'd, and more compassionate Rogue than the rest told his Brothers in Iniquity, (pulling the Evangelists out of his pocket) That if the Gentleman wou'd swear to send them 5 Guinea's to such a house, and promise upon Oath not to discover them, I shou'd enjoy my Cloaths, otherwise I must expect to be ill treated, and exposed to the Weather: So I swallowed their Oath, willing to be at liberty, and sound, promising all; but before I pay the Money, I have a Mind to know your Opinion, Whether the Oath be Obligatory, I'm satisfied almost about it; and if the publick good by bringing these Road-plagues to Justice wou'd not be satisfactory for the breach thereof: Give me a Solution by the middle of this Month, for this Money is to be paid speedily?

Ans. An Oath is not properly so, unless it be free and unconfin'd; Fear, Passion, &c. which are the Causes of an Oath ought to be repented of as such, rather than the Oath it self, which by the by will show the insincerity of Death-bed Repentances. But to answer the Question directly, we are satisfied that the Querist is not only free from his Oath, it being forc'd from him, but he is also oblig'd to use what lawful means he can to secure the intended Receiver of the Money, if not the rest that are concerned, thd Honour, Good-nature, &c. may tempt him to the contrary. — Our Reason is this, We are commanded by God to obey the Magistrate, but the Magistrate has establish'd such and such Laws, which not only contradict, but punish such practices: Therefore whoever is accessory, (as the Querist is if he keeps his Oath) acts contradistinctly to the Laws of God, and the Laws of Nations. Our Advice is this, That the Querist repent of the Rashness, Ignorance, and Cowardize of such an Oath, and that he resolve for the future to suffer bravely in any just and honourable Cause, rather than oppose Truth and Justice for little base ends. We cou'd give several other Reasons that his Oath is cancell'd, if the Case was as doubtful as formerly, but every Casuist is now satisfied. Read Mr. Perkins Cases of Conscience, ch. 13. p. 230.

Quest. 2. What Language was spoken by our First Parents in Paradise?

Ans. The British wou'd perswade us 'twas theirs, and the Irish sure will put in too for the Honour, since their Chronicles, they'll tell you, run up almost as high, and they are sure there was a Schoolmaster of their Nation, who taught the Irish Grammar in the plain of Shinar, so early did they begin to be Learned. But least some shou'd be so uncivil to question their Memoirs being authentick, wee'll e'ne let 'em alone to stand by themselves, and impose nothing on the Reader. That Wag Hudibras puts in for the German, when he mentions Mother Eve, and the Serpents tempting her — By an High-Dutch interpreter; which Fancy he founded as the Notes tell us, on a Fancy of Garopius Becanus, who takes a great deal of pains to prove the High-Dutch, which was his own, the Primitive Language. But rejecting all these, as hardly carrying the Face of probability, we think the Hebrew, or Sacred Language stands much fairer for't than any others; for all the Names we find mention'd in History of the beginning of the World were undoubtedly Hebrew. None we think who believe the Scriptures, can question that Adam was really the Name of the first Man, and Eve of the first Woman, or that these Names are Hebrew, the word Adam, signifying much more than Red or Ruddy, for which we generally take it, namely, a florid whiteness, and the brightness and

lustre proper to Pearls and precious Stones; Eve, a Mother, as the Scripture tells us, Issa, which Adam first call'd his Wife when he saw her, Vira, or a She-woman. But this is also very remarkable in the Hebrew Names of all living Creatures, impos'd by Adam, which appear not to be given by chance, or deflected from any other Language, as the Greek, Latin, and all others, but to contain therein the Nature of the Creature, as the Learned and industrious Bochart admirably proves in his Hierozoicon, where he shows that their Names were partly taken from something obvious to the Senses, as their Colour, their Hair, their Stature, and external form; partly from their inward properties and dispositions, which he cou'd neither know by use, nor the Information of others, but by that Original Wisdom wherewith he was created, (by the Socinians leave,) and a great part whereof he lost by the Fall; for which reason these Names are the most noble Monuments of Antiquity we have left in the World. Thus to instance in a few; the Camel, a Creature which keeps its Name almost in all Languages, and which Varro himself grants to be taken from the Syriack Language. 'Tis derived from the Hebrew word Gamal, which signifies to retribute, or repay, either good or evil, for both of which the Camel is still noted as the most tenacious of any animal. The Hebrew name of the Horse is derived from a root, which signifies to rule, to guide, to moderate, and 'tis notorious this Creature is the most docile, and most easily ruled, considering its vast strength, of any other.

The Ass is derived from a word which signifies Red, of which colour they generally are in the East, a White Ass being it seems a Rarity; the Judges and Great persons usually for state riding upon 'em, as we see in the Song of Deborah: another name of the Ass is taken from his strength, which is undeniably more than any other Creatures of the same bulk. The Bull or Oxe derives its Name from a word that signifies firmness, or stability; 'tis in the Hebrew Sor, for which the Chaldees read Thor, the Arabians Thaur, whence undoubtedly the Greek and Latin, ταύρος, and Taurus. The Goat from a word that denotes roughness, — The Swine from another, alluding to the smallness of his Eyes; the Dog Celeb, from the Heb. Club, and the Arabian Calub, which signifie a pair of Tongs or Pincers, from the firmness of his Teeth and holdfast, so remarkable that a true Mastiff will let his Legs be cut off, as has been try'd, before hee'l quit his hold — To instance in no more, tho' 'twere easie from the forementioned Author to run through all sorts of Creatures, and after the same way prove their Originals. And we make no doubt but the same thing might be done by most words as well as the Names of these Creatures; we mean, that all or most other Languages, at least in our part of the World, are deriv'd from thence, as Avenarius has endeavour'd to make good throughout his whole Lexicon, and that in many, and we think most words, with at least as little or less violence than our common Etymologists use in works of that Nature, when they'd fetch the original of their words nearer hand. And tho' it may be true, that Learned Men may sometimes stretch things farther than they'll go, by indulging too much to their Fancies, especially in these Elymologies; yet we think the forecited Great Man (we mean Bochart) has prov'd the Punic and Phœnician Language to be all one, and both a Dialect of the Hebrew, and most of the Names of Countries, Islands, Promontories, and remarkable places in Europe, as well as further, from them to have taken their Originals; as among the rest our own Island, the Elymology of which from Baratanak, answerable to the Cœsciterides of the Greeks, no Learned Man is now ignorant of. However, thus much we are certain of, that all or most other Languages are visibly

deriv'd, at least as has been said, those about us; but as to the Hebrew, it centers in it self, and we can track it no further, for which reason as well as those before mentioned, we conclude it the *Primitive Language*, and spoken by *Adam* in *Paradise*, as to be sure it must be if he nam'd all Creatures there with *Hebrew Names*.

Quest. 3. *How came the two Disciples to know Moses and Elias in the Mount?*

Ans. Its certain they did so, by *St. Peters* calling 'em so readily by their Names, as we find in the History, *Master, let us make here three Tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias*; and how they came to know 'em we think not difficult to be solv'd, there being several ways to do it. They might have seen their Pictures, and thence know 'em: We know 'twill be objected, that the Jews forbid the making of any Images at all, as *Philo* and others tell us, taking the second Command in a too strict Sence at last, when they smarted for the breach on't. But even this seems to admit exceptions; some Jews were not severe, nay, we read in their History of an Image (more than a Picture) which *Michal* put in the Bed in the room of *David*. But supposing they themselves made no Images, their Neighbours round 'em might, (with whom they traded in such things as the Law forbid, as *Swines-flesh*) namely, the *Phœnicians* and others, who knew the History of *Moses*, as appears from their *Sanchoniathon*, and highly honour'd him for his Memory. That's one way, another might be from the Kingly Robe in which *Moses* might appear, at least the Glory on his Face, which to be sure was not lessen'd by his being in *Heaven*; and for *Elias*, 'tis probable since he must appear in some dress, (for we don't think they were naked,) that most likely it should be in that wherein he is described when living; like *John Baptist*, *A hairy Man, or dress'd in a Garment of Camels-Hair, and girt with a Leathern girdle*: With which marks its probable, they the rather appear'd, that the Disciples might know 'em, and be Witnesses of the Reverence which undoubtedly they paid to our Saviour. Agen, our Saviour might himself tell 'em who they were, who as all own, did and said many things not recorded in Scriptures, and some things which happened at the Transfiguration being omitted in some Evangelists, why might not others in all? Lastly, They might know by their Discourse who they were; for 'tis said in one Evangelist, *They talked with him*, and in another more largely, *they talk'd of his Decease, [ἐξοσος,] which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem*. All these ways we esteem probable, but the second and the last the most so of any others.

Quest. 4. *Whether Methuselah was the longest liver, or not?*

Ans. He was the longest Liver, as we learn from the Scripture, tho' he was not properly the Oldest man, because *Adam* being created at perfect Age, which then must amount to near *Sixty*, or in the same State of Body which he wou'd have been in had he bin born as others were, and liv'd 'till 60. Add to this his 930 which he liv'd, and it makes 990, which at that rate amounts to 21 more than *Methuselah*, who dyed at 969.

Quest. 5. *Is not the Sun a Mass of liquid Gold, cupellated by the Influence of the fix'd Stars?*

Ans. This is such a pleasant Question, that we believe the Gentleman cou'd hardly be angry if we shou'd omit to answer it. However, we'll bestow one argument upon't, which will prove the contrary: If the Sun be cupellated by the fix'd Stars, then they must be all so by one another; for 'tis agreed on all hands, that they are all Suns, but we suppose he won't affirm the one, therefore the other must fall to the ground.

Quest. 6. *Whether ever the Sun has been totally eclips'd, if so, what was the Cause, and when?*

Ans. If it has never been totally eclips'd, yet 'tis possible it may be so: for tho' the Moon, 'tis granted, is far less than the Sun, being 42 times less than the Earth, as the Sun 139 times bigger, according to *Tycho*; we say, tho' 'tis so much less, 'tis yet nearer to us, and therefore its apparent Disque may equal that of the Sun, and cover it all from our sight, when the Moon is, as the Astronomers call it, in her *Perigee*, or nearest approach to the Earth. Thus to give a plain instance, I can Eclipse the Sun my self, or cover the Body of it by putting

my hand between my Eyes and it, by which 'tis eclips'd to me, tho' not so in it self; nor indeed is it any more really in it self eclips'd when the Moon gets between that and the Earth, which might more properly be call'd an Eclipse of the Earth than the Sun, since 'tis the Earth only wants light, but the Sun has it as plentifully as ever. But to speak with the vulgar, and take the word *Eclipse* in the common Sence wherein Astronomers use it, we say further in answer to the Question, that if there never was a total Eclipse of the Sun, there has bin however a total darkning of it for 3 hours together, from the 6th. to the 9th, longer by an hour than a Natural Eclipse cou'd continue, which can be but two hours at furthest, at the time of our Saviours Passion. Besides, this cou'd not be a proper or a natural Eclipse, because that can only be in the *New-moon*, but this when the Moon was about 14 days old, and so at Full, as it was to be when the Passover was celebrated. However we can't subscribe to the Opinion of some Learned men, who lessen the Miracle, and wou'd confine it to *Judea* only, which its true is sometimes meant by the word *γην*, which we translate *Land*, tho' none denies that may as well express the whole World; especially since we have the same confirm'd by profane History, as *Eusebius* tells us, one *Phlegon* the Emperors Freeman an Historian, who liv'd at that time, giving an account of 'em in such a manner. Its true, some here urge agen, that these were not the same, that which *Phlegon* mentions happening in the 781 year *Urb. Cond.* and our Saviours Death being not till 784 -- But as to this, a mistake of 2 or 3 years might be easie either in *Phlegon*, or his Transcribers, or even our accounts of the Death of Christ -- then as to the manner on't, we agen dissent from most others, and believe 'twas not such a darknes as overspread *Egypt*, which probably arose from Vapours out of the Earth, but rather by some of those solar spots mentioned above, which have sometimes appear'd so thick, as in *Charlemain's* time, as to make the Stars visible at Noon-day, and design'd, tho' natural, as Comets, for tokens of Gods displeasure.

All Gentlemen who expect the benefit of our Proposals for the Young Students Library, are desired to send in their Money with all speed to John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry: for we having already got a great number of Subscribers, not only in England, but from Foreign parts, shall soon have this Work in the Press. In which such great care will be taken both as to good paper, and as to the accuracy of the Translations, &c. that we doubt not but to give general satisfaction to all Subscribers: For your further information, read the Preface to our 4th supplement, and the Postscript to our last Mercury, which was N. 37. 5.

## Advertisement.

The Preface, Index and 12 Numbers that compleat the first 18 Numbers of our 4th Volume, will be publish'd all together next Monday morning at 12 d. price, that so all those Gentlemen that took in the single sheets from time to time, might have their 4th. Volume entire for 2 s. 6 d. and also that those Coffee-houses that did the like, might have the said Volume sticht up by them for the constant entertainment of their Customers, single sheets being apt to be lost except pasted in a Book. In these 12 Numbers are answer'd many of the Ingenious Questions lately sent us. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, where also is to be had the Supplement to this 4th Volume.

If any Gentleman or Ladies are desirous to Learn to speak Latin or French truly and properly, according to Grammar Rules, and to explain any Author, Mr. Switerdag (recommended to our present King) has invented a very short and easie method, by which they may learn the said Language (if they can but spare 2 or 3 hours in a Week to be with him) in one Year. Those who have learned formerly may recover it in 3 or 4 Months. He offereth to be bound to every one for the performance thereof. He Teacheth Mondays, Wednesdays and Frydays, in High-Holborn, near little Turn-stile, next to the Faulcon; and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in Clements-lane, near Cannon-street, at the Sugar-loaf: Where you may have Grammatical, and Latine, and French Historical Cards, by which he Taught Children of 8 or 9 Years of Age to speak Latine and French fluently in a very short time. Three or four Youths may lodge with him: He teacheth also high and low Dutch, and Italian, in a very short time.