

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, January 2. 1691.

**Quest. 1.** Suppose A, B, and some others are concerned for their shares in a certain Estate, whereof C the Son of B by consent of all parties is made Receiver of the Rents, A being indebted to B very near the value of his share, offers to assign over to him all his part and share which is or should be due to satisfy his debt and interest which his Son might pay him, if he would give A a Covenant to answer for his share in the said Estate, and pay the overplus when his debt and interest was paid, to which B agrees and prepares an Assignment, such as A thought was agreeable to his offer, with a Covenant on A's part to make up the debt and Interest to B, if his share should fall short; the Assignment being sealed and a Witness thereto, A leaves the management of his whole share and interest to them for many years together, during which time B dyes, and makes C his Executor. When A thought the Debt and interest might be overpaid, he desires of C an account of his share, C gives him an account, wherein he omits one considerable branch of A's share, which was known to all concerned to be so, and C could not be thought ignorant thereof himself, having paid the like for another sharer, who claimed equally with A, and must have been allowed him if he had charged it on his Accounts, or demanded it. C says he nor his Father ever received it, and refuses to account for it, saying, the Covenant his Father gave did oblige him to account only for what they should receive of A's share; and not for A's share in the Estate, which perhaps in strictness of Construction in Law may be true, and A thereby lose his right without remedy; and if so, the Question is, if B and C knew or believed A understood the true intent and meaning of the Covenant in the latter sense, and that they believed A thought they did so too, (and that whereupon he left the whole management of his whole share to them, by which means they had it in their power to defraud A, to their own profit, so that the less they received for his share, the more they received for their own: ) Whether the said B and C are guilty of the Sin of deceiving, over-reaching, or defrauding their Brother; and if so, Whether God Almighty can according to his Revealed Will in the Scripture, and the veracity and perfection of his own Nature, pardon B and C upon their bare Repentance, without Restitution?

**Ans.** If the Case be fairly stated, 'tis a cunning Circumvention and Cheat; and if so, C must make restitution, if it be in his power, under the penalty of Damnation, if Sacred Writ may determine the Case. See our answer to another Instance of the same Nature in Vol. 3. N. 2. and Vol. 4. N. 16. 27. This we only say upon a Supposition of the Truth of the Case, which if not fairly stated, we desire C also to send his account of the matter of Fact: So that comparing 'em both together, we may be better enabled to give a stricter judgment, for to give our Opinions absolutely decisive before that, we cannot; knowing, that Justice always leaves one Ear open for the Accused, and that he must be an unjust judge who determines any thing, tho' justly, one party unheard.

**Quest. 2.** Was that Angel that appear'd to Balaam in the way, an Angel from Heaven, or an Angel sent on that purpose figur'd with a Flaming Sword?

**Ans.** We don't well understand the Sence of this Question: But we suppose the Querist may aim at something of the common Doubt in relation to the Existence of Angels, which some Hereticks have deny'd in our own Age as well as those foregoing, attributing what we read related of 'em either to Fantalms or Apparitions, as the Querist here seems to do, or else to meer men, or prophets of God. However 'twas intended, we answer both in this and other such Instances, that 'twas a real Angel which appear'd to Balaam, and that an Angel sent from Heaven, and that Angels a real immaterial Substance, in a distinct rank or order of Beings from that of men. That there are such Beings as these, there's

none can deny who really believe the Scripture, wherein their Existence is unanswerably asserted, as well as their agency, duty and operations often describ'd: And we dare affirm, that they are mention'd at least in 200 places of the Bible, in such a manner, as distinct immaterial Substances must thereby be unavoidably intended. There were Angels which familiarly convers'd with the Patriarchs, with Abraham, with Lot, with Hagar, with Jacob, with Moses, and many others: And as plainly as any where in this History of Balaam, Num. 22. That he was an Angel from Heaven, appears from v. 22. where he's called, The Angel of the Lord. That 'twas not a Providence, a Dispensation, or we know not what, as the Quakers Dream, we may infallibly learn from the History it self, if we indeed believe it: For supposing that Balaam could see, hear, and discourse with a Providence, sure his Ass could not do it, which 'tis said saw him several times, and turned from him as long as she could possibly avoid him. For the Flaming Sword, 'twas undoubtedly as real as the Angel himself, and the power of the Angel might as easily extend to the framing a fiery Meteor into that form, as to condense a Body of Air for his own appearance, tho' both hid from Balaam, not by any small Cloud interposing, which might easily have been done, but by a more compendious way, obstructing his Eyesight; for when he did at last see him, 'tis said the Lord opened his eyes. That this was a real Angel and not an appearance or Fantasm only, we may learn by comparing the History with other places wherein the Existence of Angels is plainly asserted. Thus where the Angels are said to look into the Church; where our Saviour is said to be made a little lower than the Angels, where the Angels of little Children are said always to behold the Face of their Father which is in Heaven: Should we take all this in their sence, either for Fantalms or Providences, what ridiculous assertions and Suppositions must we charge on the infallible Spirit of God? and thereby come too near those who are guilty of Blasphemy against him: It further appears from the Scriptures atoremention'd, as well as many others, that these Angels were not Prophets or men of God, as others have asserted — They are in Heaven as their place of residence, they look into the Church as Strangers, they are Ministers indeed, but ministring Spirits; they appear and disappear at pleasure; nay, as in the case of Manoah, ascend to Heaven in a flame of Fire. Let then the Superstitious Papists on one side, follow the track of the old Hereticks, and worship those Angels whom they only ought to respect and reverence; let others on the contrary as much derogate from those Blessed Spirits, and pretend they are either Apparitions, or Men, or as some of the Quakers have taught, Gods preserving, delivering, comforting Providences — Let 'em be as mad as they please in embracing either of these mad Opinions, yet all the sober and religious part of mankind will still believe Gods Word before either of 'em, which tells us in express terms, That they are all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister to those who are Heirs of Salvation.

**Quest. 3.** What is the Reason of the Strake on every Mules back representing a Crucifix?

**Ans.** The Reason on't is, because an Ass was his Father — If it be ask'd why an Ass has such an one, the Papists will tell you, its because our Saviour rode upon one, and therefore all the kind have been thus mark'd ever since; but there's as much reason that all Fig-trees are curs'd because one was so. Had they bin but so civil to have confin'd the Miracle to all the Strain of that very Ass, the story had then had some Face with it, and might have been as likely to be true, as that of the famous blessed Chicken of Compostella; but since we find it in the whole species, we must either believe the Hair is generally more worn in those places than others;

others; or if it be so in old as well as in young, arises from the particular formation of the parts, and can no more be accounted for than the spots of a Leopard, or the beautiful Strakes on the back, and all the round of the Body of the Creature call'd a Zebra, in some parts of the World.

Quest. 4. *What is the Cause of the continuance of the Bodies of living Creatures without putrefaction?*

Ans. As Salt preserves dead Bodies from putrefaction, for which Reason the poorer sort of the Egyptians made use either of that, or some cheap bituminous Substance to *Souse* up all their Great Grandfathers, which they'd still call by the finer name of Embalming, that or any such strong *astringent*, as it were sealing up the pores, and hardning the Body to such a consistency as prevented Liquefaction; so we shou'd think there might be something of a Natural Salt in Living Bodies, which might have something of the same effect, tho' not exactly in the same manner, were it not for an obvious Objection. How then shou'd they putrifie after Death, when there's, for ought appears, as much Salt in 'em as ever? For which reason we must find some other way to solve it; accordingly must enquire what putrefaction is, and whence it proceeds. And 'tis only a Liquefaction or alteration, and dissolution of the smaller parts of any Body, by a preternatural fermentation or motion therein, which also owes its rise to the want of a due Circulation of the Blood, and juices of the Body in their proper natural ducts, which ducts, or fine passages being by some disease or violence either broken or stop'd, or blended one among t'other, their particular Juices must necessarily stagnate where they are, and being depriv'd of their natural motion, acquire a non-natural one, the smaller parts endeavouring to file off, and fly away as fast as they can in strong sulphureous steams of an unpleasing and fetid savour. To illustrate this by a mean but natural comparison; when the Sewers are kept clean, and the water has a free passage thro' them, they are sweet enough, but if some of those passages are broken down thro' which it shou'd flow, or if the channel otherwise obstructed that it has no passage or vent, the water there immediately tends to putrefaction; which 'tis impossible shou'd e're happen in such Common shores, as we corruptly call 'em, where the Tides come up, or there's free passage for all thats thrown into 'em. Thus the Body of any Living Creature, while all those little parts discharge their peculiar offices, and there's a free Circulation, and a natural motion within, must continue in its natural state, but when this ceases, soon putrifies much after the manner of a Gangrene, which arises from the same cause.

Quest. 5. *Whether a Forreigners Condition, such I mean as the French Inhabitants with us, who have Liberty to inhabit or Trade in any part of England, the Metropolis it self not excepted, and are exempted from all Duties, Customs, Taxes and Rates even to the poor, and have their poor reliev'd by the Contributions of the charitable English, be not rather to be chosen than that of a Free-born Subject?*

Ans. We think not, if we take their Condition all together, tho' in some respects its true they live more easie than we; for tho' they have all these privileges, they are still Exiles, and that whatever we flatter our selves, from a much finer Countrey than ours, and indeed one of the finest in the World were it not incumbered with a Tyrant on its Throne. And as they are Exiles, they have most of 'em lost their All, many of 'em great and noble Estates, nay left 'em behind, and that for the sake of Religion, escaping hither with nothing sav'd but that and their Lives; and finding by the generous Charity of the English to 'em, that they are not that unhospitable people to strangers, which some Apostates of their own have represented 'em. Besides, tho' there may be more of 'em in some places than others, yet their number is not very considerable in respect of all the people of England, where we want hands, the numerousness of Subjects being the strength of a Kingdom. Then they are for the most part Handycraft Trades, set up with little or nothing, live poor and mean, at such a rate as an English man wou'd be very unwilling to change with 'em taking all together.

Quest. 6. *Whether 'twou'd not be a great ease to the Na-*

*tion if they were Naturaliz'd, and bore a part proportionable to their Abilities in the charges of the War?*

Ans. If they were Naturaliz'd, they wou'd in all likelihood tarry here for ever, at least unless they had leave to depart; but if this is not done, when the War is ended, and beter times in their own Countrey, no doubt is to be made but many of 'em wou'd be willing to go home agen, especially those who had Estates, who may then hope to recover 'em, with all such as depend on 'em; which shou'd it happen, wou'd quiet the Clamor of many of our own Handycraft people, who now complain they take the meat out of their mouths, perhaps a true, tho' as things are, an unavoidable Complaint. Besides, its notorious, they are most of 'em poor, they live, and that's all, having no stock to begin with but our Charity and their own Industry, and but a little while yet for its Improvement. — Supposing therefore that they were Naturalized, what shou'd we get by't, and how inconsiderable a part of our own Charity shou'd we wring back agen from those poor Cratures, and how little a way wou'd it go in the Charges of such a War? were they once settled here? — Besides, we might only bring more charge on our selves by endeavouring to avoid it; for if Naturaliz'd, we must then be bound to relieve their poor as well as our own, (indeed theirs wou'd then be so) whereas what we now do is voluntary, and no more but a pure Benevolence. However, were they once fully settled among us, shou'd they grow rich and wealthy, or but come to live at the same rate with our ordinary people, (which unless they are Gentlemen, 'wou'd be much better than ere they did before in their Lives) it might then be just and convenient to oblige 'em to the same rates and Charges with other Subjects; but it looks both like good men, good Hosts, and good Christians to let 'em alone for a little while to take breath and enjoy themselves in our Kingdom, after they have been so many years harass'd by the savage cruelty of their own, remembering that not long since we wanted but little of being our selves just in the same Condition.

Quest. 7. *It is thought Mr. S — is the Author of those lines in Num. 1. Vol. 5. that relate to the late Pastoral Poem?*

Ans. Not to reflect on that Ingenious Person, we have no need of going out of our own fixt Society, which consists of several Members read in all Sciences, some of which have already appear'd publickly in this kind of Study, from whom the World shall soon have a further account.

THE First, Second 3d. and 4th. Volumes of the Athenian Mercury, (resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions propos'd by the Ingenious of either Sex) and the Supplements to 'em; (containing Extracts of the most considerable Books newly Printed in England, and in the Forreign Journals) Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry. Where are also to be had the Preface, Index and 12 Numbers alone, that compleat the first 18 Numbers of the 4th. Volume (in which 12 Numbers are resolv'd many of the Questions lately sent us) or single ones to this time.

\* \* Diatriba de Signo Filii Hominis, & de secundo Messiae adventu; ubi de modo futuræ Judæorum conversionis, nec non de signis novissimis Diei differtur, Authore Crescentio Mathero, V. D. M. apud Bostonienses in Nova Angliâ. Sold by John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

### Advertisements.

THE Accounts that have been sent to us concerning Mr. De la Crose, were undoubtedly drawn up by some malicious hands, for upon Enquiry we find they are but mistakes and misrepresentations, of which we thought fit to give publick notice.

There is now in the Press, The Life of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, written in French by Monsieur and Madame Dacier, Englished by a Person of Quality. Printed for Tho. Bennet, at the Half-moon in St. Pauls Church-yard.