

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, March 12. 1692.

1. **W**ho is the Author of the Book of Job, what Age of the World did he live in, and where's the Land of Uz?

Ans. In Numb. 10. Quest. 5. of this present Volume, we hope we have already given a full Account of this matter, to which we refer our inquisitive Reader. We shall add here a few remarks upon a late Authors Judgment of this matter, who indeed begins with a very handsome Account, as that *Origen*, *Julian*, and *Gregory* suppos'd the Book of *Job* to be written by *Job* himself; others, that *Moses* was either the Author, or at least translated it out of the *Aramaic* or *Syriack* Tongue, according to the Opinion of the Author of one of the Commentaries upon *Job*, who suppos'd to be *Origen*, (which by the by contradicts the first.) The *Thalmudists*, the *Rabbins*, *Isidorus* in *Photius* and *Nicetas* upon *Job* are of the same Opinion, as is also *St. Jerome*; *Gregory Nazianzen* ascribes it to *Solomon*, but nothing is certainly determined upon the point.

Our Author supposes him to be an *Idumean*, because 'tis mention'd in the Greek Edition, acknowledg'd by *Thodorian*, than which (adds our Author) we have no Ancienter Testimony of *Job*; but this shows that he has not examined all, nor consider'd what himself has unluckily advanc'd a little after, to wit, that *Ezekiel* makes mention of *Job*. Next he refutes their Error, that would have the History of *Job* to be feigned, and immediately after he endeavours to re-establish it again in these very words, "What is undoubtedly true in this History is, that there was a considerable person whose Name was *Job*, who having been reduced to the Extremity of Affliction and Misery, by the Loss of his Goods and Children, as also by the Severity of a sharp lingering Distemper, supported himself under all these pressures with incredible patience, and at last came to be re-establish'd in prosperity. But (adds he) the manner wherein it is related, the style in which it is written, the Discourses with the Devil, and the long Conversations that are held between *Job* and his Friends, make it appear, that this History has been mightily amplified and adorned with several feigned Circumstances, to render the Narration more useful and agreeable." A very fair position for the Interest of Atheism, where by a sly insinuation, a part of the Sacred Writ is publicly maintain'd to be FEIGN'D to bring all the rest into Question, and so into Contempt; for not only *Job*, but also *Ezekiel*, and *St. James* are in this one assertion branded with the Character of feigned, since they mentioning so ill an Authority as *Job*, must necessarily be ill themselves.

We have further to add for the satisfaction of all such as are Curious about this Question of *Job*, that the time when *Job* lived, was undoubtedly before the Covenant of Circumcision, or *Moses* Law, and the Book was writ by *Job* himself, for these Reasons following. — 1. His Friends were not Idolaters, since *Job* clears himself, viz. *Neither have I kissed my hand at the rising of the Sun*, *Job* 31. 27. that is as Idolaters worshipp'd the Sun. Then it is plain they were of the true Religion, which was Natural, because they were no small breach to charge him withall, *Job* 20. 4. 7. as injustice, Bribery, they did believe it was impossible a Man should be so punished, but for some Sin, as impossible as a rush to grow without mud and moisture.

And that they argued from Natural Religion, is plain, because they referr'd *Job* to the Ages before, viz. *He is but of Yesterday*; and was ever any punished but for Sin? Was not the old World drowned, but it was for Sin? They said who is the Almighty? what good or hurt can he? and for that Atheism he overwhelmed their Founda-

tions with a Flood, *Job* 8. 8, 9. *Job* 22. 15, 17, 16. And *Job* clears himself of their Charge, *Job* 31. and sums it all up, and yet not one word is mention'd about this branch of the Covenant of Circumcision, or *Moses* Law; which they could not have avoided, if it had bin then the dispensation; neither could his Relations have bin ignorant of it, nor would they have lost their best ground to charge him withall, therefore its undeniable, that *Job* and his Friends lived before Circumcision, and before the Law, and that he was no Idolater, and his Longevity argues that he was near the long lived Patriarchs. And 'tis more than probable, that *Job* himself wrote that Book, and because he might well do it when he was well, for he lived so long after, that he cou'd not forget his desire, *Job* 19. 23. and he was best able to write what he so earnestly desired.

Quest. 2. *Moses* is always spoke of in the Pentateuch in the third Person, but what is more observable, he is praised in several places, particularly in 12. Chap. of Numbers, where he is called the meekest of Men, how cou'd this be, and yet *Moses* be the Author himself?

Ans. This is urg'd as Reason by those who deny that *Moses* wrote the Pentateuch, but 'tis very Common for an Author to speak freely of himself in the third Person, especially the Authors of Holy Writ, who as they were immediately inspir'd, they were certain of what they spoke, and that it was not prejudice or self-love, that cou'd have a partial influence upon 'em as it has of other Persons. Thus most of the Sacred Writers have occasion sometimes to commend themselves, as our Saviour himself, the Apostles, *St. John*, *St. Paul*, *Jeremiah*, and most of the rest, and 'tis frequent amongst Heathen Writers, as *Caesar*, *Horace*, &c.

Quest. 3. Pray the meaning of these two Verses in Virgil, 11 *Aeneid*?

*Nec Drances potius, five est haec ira Deorum,
Morte luat, five est virtus, & Gloria, tollat.*

Ans. In a Council of War call'd by King *Latinus*, *Turnus* (the General) shou'd either make a peace with the *Trojans*, or fight a single Combate with *Aeneas*, and this in an Eloquent Stile; *Turnus* checkt him, and told him he was fitter to plead at the Bar, than to come into the Field; He granted the Siege was pressing, but not so much but that he had formerly vanquish'd greater dangers: You *Drances* (says he) would extoll the power of an Army that has been twice overcome, and do what in you lyes to dishearten ours, by telling us, that Death threatens us all, and you accuse me for the common Calamity.

Formidine Crimen Acerbat.

No *Drances*, I'm not the Author, nor will I entertain thoughts below my self, and which are only fit for the mean Breast of *Drances*; *Turnus* then directs his Speech to *Latinus*, *Nunc ad te, &c.* *Magne Pater*, by answering his Objections too, who was for finding out some Mean between the Counsel of *Drances*, and resolution of *Turnus*. If (says *Turnus*) we have no further hope, if no more Succors, if by flying we must dye, and if Fortune will never return, then lets sue for Peace: But if we have untry'd Youth, *Italian* Succours, &c. then why fear we? will not (adds he) such and such help us? But (continues he) if after all the *Trojans* are contented, that I only and *Aeneas* shou'd decide the Quarrel, I'm willing to devote my self to it for your safety.

Solum *Aeneas* vocat, & vocet, Oro.

Does *Aeneas* call upon me to do it? let him do so, I wish it. *Nec Drances potius*, but let not such a vile Coward as *Drances* call upon me, (let the period be here.) *Sive est haec ira Deorum, Morte luat: Sive est ver-*

et Gloria, Tollat. Either this determination is the Anger of the Gods; if so, *Morte luat*, let me be the Sacrifice to appease it; or else, it is Vertue and Glory, if so, *Tollat*, let it take away (or put an end to) the common Calamity. Indeed the place is very difficult, but we see no Interpretation more Genuine, since *Drances* never offer'd to interpose or fight for *Turnus*, or to take the danger upon himself, as is suggested by divers Interpreters upon the place, but this is offer'd with submission to the Learned.

Quest. 3. *A certain Gentleman, who desires to be nameless, about 2 months ago bought a very pretty Mare in Smithfield, which it seems a Friend of his had had a great fancy for long before. Seeing therefore his dearly beloved Mare in another Mans possession, he pines, and languishes, and keeps his Bed like any thing. The Physicians declare, that he must certainly die, if he does not one way or other compass his Neighbours Mare. The Gentleman, rather than lose his Friend, and withal being desirous to indulge his Passion, freely consents to let him have the Mare at the same price it cost him: But his Friend won't hearken now to that Proposition, but only desires the Gentleman to lend him his Mare for a night or two, and that will do his business full as well, otherwise he is resolv'd to starve himself, and die. The Gentleman, mightily discomposed at this odd humour of his Friend, desires your Advice on this juncture; for he still finds in himself a strong panchant (as the French call it) or an Inclination for his Mare, and yet is not willing to sacrifice his Friend?*

Ans. This Question we have answer'd already, in a more humane dress, but neither that nor this will bribe the penalty of the last of X.

Quest. 5. *An Acquaintance of mine made a solemn Vow to touch no Flesh this Lent; and his Wife being lately come out of the Countrey to Town, he is earnest to know whether she be comprehended in his Vow?*

Ans. Actions, if not immediately prohibited, are only ill as they are Circumstanced, not otherwise: 'Tis only the immoderate Use of any enjoyment of a thing, that turns it into an Abuse, and so into Sin.

Quest. 6. *Whether Mr. Crowns Daneids ought not to be bound up in the same Calves-skin with the Dutch Hubibras?*

Ans. We have nothing to do with the Merit of the Question, and as to the Humour, let the Bookseller and Buyer agree. A wise Man will take what pleases him best, without condemning what he dislikes.

Quest. 7. *You seem to grant that Josephus's Testimony was Spurious, and 'tis not altogether satisfactory, that you should bring a great many Ancient Writers that are also thought to be Authores in Nubibus; as Paul Horatius, who some confidently averr never wrote any thing, as also that some Names are divided, and that Phlegon Trallianus is brought for a Grecian, as also the Enemies of Christianity for a proof, and some other such things, which you'd do well to give the World a better satisfaction of.*

Ans. We never granted that Josephus's Testimony of our Saviour was spurious; but said, that we might safely grant it without prejudicing the Cause of Christianity, since there are so many Ancient Authors that have been so copious on this Subject, which we shall presently speak more largely of.

But since we are call'd upon again for our thoughts upon that passage, we affirm it to be Natural and Genuine, and Josephus's own.

1. It being granted on all hands that it is now in Josephus's History, it lyes upon the Adversaries of this Testimony to prove the whole History to be spurious, or to prove that this particular passage was inserted in it; bare Suspensions won't take with persons of sober Judgments, it must be matter of Fact, which it cannot be, without particularizing the Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, &c. but instead of this 'tis alledg'd, Objection 1. *The Style differs.* Obj. 2. *That it breaks off the Series of a Discourse.* Obj. 3. *That it speaks too favourably of our Saviour, in owning his Miracles.* Obj. 4. *That this passage was unknown to the Authors who preceeded Eusebius, and that Origen formally deny'd it.* Obj. 5. *Photius who Abridg'd Josephus mention'd it not.* Obj. 6. *Some Ancient Miscellanies (perhaps) now Extant don't speak of it.*

We shall answer these in their Order. Ans. To the

1. He has a very sharp faculty that can discern it; if it shoud be so, it proves not what it was brought for, no more than that an Authors Expressions must all equal, or they are not his own; which every now extant wou'd confute. Ans. 2. To this we answer it is false, for it comes in as Naturally as any thing the World can do: Our Author had before related the Massacre of the Jews by Pilate, and then comes to speak of our Saviour, saying, *About this time*, there was Jesus, &c. that is about the Time of the Massacre, which is as Natural a digression as can be, and then returns again to his proper Subject, the Calamities of the Jews. Ans. 3. The owning the Miracles of our Saviour, but the same thing that our Modern Jews do, who say our Saviour was an Impostor, tho' Josephus had much Reason to believe our Saviour to be the Christ, any Jew whatever, since he being one of the Priests knew the Prophecies, knew his Death, the Recording Pilate himself gave to Tiberius, and many more things; besides, being out of the Jewish Nation who he writ his History, he might speak the more boldly without being afraid of the rest of the Jews. Ans. How cou'd Origen formally deny that which he knew to be true? This is also a poor Argument, if we consider that Phlegon made his Abstract, when every Body knew the passages in Josephus, tho' some of Phorperies Disciples might quarrel with it because 'twas against his Principles. Ans. 'Tis well the word perhaps is in, but Josephus's Authority is good when attackt only with perhaps. Suppositions, Prejudices, Cavils, &c. but 'tis no wonder (for we know the Authors of this Query) that such persons deny the Authority of Job, James, Ezekiel, &c. in the question that of Josephus. See Vol. 3. N. 27. Q. 1.

Now for our Citations of Paul Horatius, Phlegon, &c. Paul was the Secretary of Octavian, every body almost knows that in his Writings he mentions the River of Oyl that broke forth in a publick Inn at Rome, when our Saviour was born. As to the 2d. we mention not Phlegon Trallianus, but Phlegon the Greek Historian, of whom Suidas makes frequent mention; why we brought the Enemies of Christianity for the proof of the Christian Religion, needs not be askt by any Persons of common Sense, for an Enemies Testimony is always better than a Friends; such Persons as will see the Evidence of Porphyry, Lucian, Julian, &c. for Christianity, let 'em read the Works of Lactantius, Cyprian, and other of the Ancient Fathers, and they will find the dispute about it, where those Heathens endeavour to maintain, that tho' our Saviour did such Miracles, yet they were but Fuggles, Cheats and Impositions upon the People; which argues there were such things, true or false, and that as much as we desire of their Writings, for the division of Names, 'tis the fault of the Press.

* * The Questions concerning a broad and long Spheroid, Juvenal Apuleius, the best Preface, and the Algebraic Canon, for which a Body, &c. shall be all 5 answered next Tuesday.

¶ The Works of the Learned, written by Mr. De la Croix in the Month of February, Printed for J. Duntton at the Raven in the Poultry.

AN-ADVERTISEMENT to all our Querists.

Finding that publishing of our Mercuries four times a Week would quite clog our Undertaking, and render it tedious, we shall for the future only publish 'em on

Tuesdays and Saturdays — } as formerly.

And that we may render our Undertaking perfect, we promise Querists, that in case any Person should intertere with us in the design of Answering Questions, that they shall constantly find our Saturdays Mercury answers to all his Questions whatever, and our Querists may not be put to double Charges, (by buying the Questions twice answered, nor the Coffee-houses burthened with many Papers) but more of this if there should ever be any occasion for it. Continue sending in your Questions as formerly to the Coffee-house in Stocks-market, or to the Rotterdam Coffee-house in Finch-lane, till we give notice to the contrary.

A Catalogue of Books, consisting of Divinity, History, Law, Voyages, Travels, and other miscellaneous Treatises on various Subjects, will be sold by Auction on Monday the 14th. day of this Instant March, 1692. in the Town of Maidstone in Kent. Catalogues of which are delivered gratis at the Coffee-houses in Dover, Canterbury, Wexham, Ashford, Rochester, and at the Auction-house in Maidstone. At which Place you may have ready money for any parcel or Library of Books.

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