

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **T**Here is a Young Man of my acquaintance who resolves to put on a Clergy mans Habit, and commit all manner of Extravagances therein, as Picking up Women, Drinking, Quarrelling, &c. On purpose to render the Clergy Odious. He has made me acquainted with it, and I have represented the Immorality of such an Action, and used all my endeavours to divert him from it, tho' without success, he being still resolv'd to go on; — The Consequences whereof are so ill, that I desire your advice what further Method I may take to prevent it?

Ans. It's very probable, there may be many such Sparks as this Gentlemans Acquaintance, and a Charitable Person now knows what to believe of any Extravagance which he sees committed under that venerable Habit. The Practice is indeed so very Wicked, that it needs no Exaggeration — The way we think Effectually to prevent it, is to send us his Name, that he may be immediately made as Famous as he deserves.

Quest. 2. Whether to Exercise the Fire of Zeal within, and the Flame of Love without be not most pleasing to God and Man?

Ans. Yes undoubtedly, if we knew where to find 'em together — but there ought to be a little Discretion mixt with both.

Quest. 3. Whether the tedious Law-Suits of Europe, or the Summary Justice of Asia be more beneficial to Mankind?

Ans. We must compare the Conveniences and Inconveniences of both, to give a right Judgment, and consider their Decisions both as to matters of Estate and Life. In Meum and Tuum, the Decision with the Turks and most Asiatics, is immediately made, and there are no such ways of tiring a Man out of his Right, as are too common here: But then the Cadi or Judge being but one, there is more danger of Bribery, which is so Common or rather Universal amongst 'em, than there is with us, especially here in England, where we have in all Cases at least Twelve Judges, by that incomparable Custom of Juries: So that weighing one against t'other, even there we may be pretty even with them, but in Relation to the highest Property, that of Life it self, we far exceed 'em: For the Innocent are as often taken off as the guilty by their Barbarous Justice, or Cruelty rather, it being amongst them, as all know, an unpardonable Crime to be unfortunate, or but to have a powerful Enemy at Court, for either of which Reasons they are sure to be presented with a Black-box, and a Bow-string; here a Man has some Play for his Life, and at least, the Liberty to speak a little before he's throttled; but there the great Officers must be as mute when their Masters will please to send for their Heads, as those are who come for 'em; it having been the

known Policy of that Court for some Ages, that the Visier first hangs his Predecessor, and as many of the great Officers as he can catch, and then those that are left alive, take their turns to hang him in requital.

Quest. 4. Whether it be for the Advantage of England, that the Jews be permitted to live and Trade here?

Ans. That's true of the Jews, which has been said of the Jesuits, (not much better Christians) that they live every where, and yet are every where hated — We may add of both, that they are Wise in their Generations, and grow Rich almost where-ever you throw 'em, notwithstanding (to carry on the Parallel) they are both a fair mark upon any Revolution almost all the World over. They both are foully Belyed, if one does not love the Turk better than the Emperor, and the other the Algerine better than the Englishman — And they have been both guilty of very base Practices, if we may believe either our Chronicles or Eyes, tho' they might have liv'd, notwithstanding our severe Laws in Terrorem, more quietly amongst us than in any Christian or Protestant Countrey in the World. The Jews 'tis true, as well as the other, still retain a deep and bitter Malignity against us, as well as all other Christians, which they'll not stick to express when they may do it with Safety, in the most virulent terms imaginable, of which we have particular Instances within our own Knowledge; but their Party is not strong enough to do us any Publick Mischief, unless they cou'd get altogether, and then 'tis thought there are yet enough of 'em to Conquer all the World, were their Spirits answerable to their Numbers, tho' now they are generally base and dejected: Some where or other, however, it's fit they shou'd be among Christians, in hopes of their Return and Conversion, and it's but just that Shem shou'd now dwell in the Tents of Japhet, as he did formerly in those of Shem — At least till those common Imputations of melting down and transporting our Coin, and of giving the Algerines Intelligence of our Merchants (tho' that last is now ceas'd) be more fully prov'd upon 'em, for which we cou'd never yet see much more than guesses and supposition.

Quest. 5. I am somewhat Passionate, and find it in some Cases, a very hard thing to forgive an offence, so that when I say the Lords Prayer, and come to that Passage, And forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that Trespas against us, I am at a stand, being sure that if God forgives me after the same manner that I then forgive my Enemy, I should come short of that Pardon I stand in need of; therefore (when in that Condition) instead of saying as the Prayer does direct, I say thus, O Lord forgive me my Trespases as I ought to forgive my Enemies theirs,

theirs, and I humbly beseech thee to enable me so to do. Pray Gentlemen, am I safe in this transposing, or rather adding to the Prayer, or were it better for me to pass that Passage over till I am better compos'd. *A She-Biggot of the Church of England; and my self, will be obliged to you for your Answer.*

Ans. Your Resolves to forgive (if sincere) will secure you if you make no Alteration, but you can't be sincere, if you don't make use of all opportunities to put your Resolutions into Practice; perhaps the want of Charity is the greatest want that a Man can possibly be under, since it certainly excludes out of Heaven, where there's nothing else but Love and Praise. I remember one Instance in France which is as true as surprizing: Two Brothers had a very great Difference. The injur'd fell Sick, and upon his Death-bed, sends for his Brother, and told him, Brother, you know you have injur'd me, and yet proceed in your hatred. I find I am a dying Man, and therefore I'm willing to leave the World in Charity, and be reconcil'd to you, altho'tis your Duty to sue to me, and you wou'd do it, if you had any natural goodness in you: *How* (says the other) *does your proud Heart come down now?* Well then (says the other) *I'll never forgive you, neither in this Life, nor that to come?* So he turn'd himself from wards him in a great rage and dy'd immediately. The surviving Brother became extremely troubled in his Conscience, and continu'd so, till the other was buried; when sitting at Dinner the next day amongst his Friends, his Brother appear'd in his Winding Sheet, took him from the Table amongst all the Company into the midst of the Floor where they sank down together, and were never more heard of, and at this day, there's a great Plate of Brass, upon which is engrav'd the Particulars of this dreadful Account.

Gentlemen among others, I beg the favour of your speedy answer to the following Question; you may if you please insert the whole Narrative, which I shall here set down, the latter party concerned, promising to be satisfied with your Decision; I shall look upon it as a great Obligation.

Quest. 6. About seven Years ago, it pleas'd God to deprive me of my Dear Parents by Death, and being left to the Guardianship of a near Relation, till Major; he took me home as his own Son, and I must say, put no difference betwixt us; but what was rather for my Advantage, and in all things improved what belonged to me, and was very careful of my Education; in a short time after his taking me home, his Eldest Daughter, who was then about nine Years of Age, contracted an intire Familiarity with me, and always seem'd better pleas'd with my Company; than with the rest of the house; insomuch that her Father and Mother us'd to call me her Husband, and so She her self, and by degrees the whole Family began insensibly to use that Denomination to both, thus we liv'd for near two Years, till the time approach'd when we were to Travel abroad (I mean my Guardians Sons and I) for our better accomplishment, now the Young Lady became very Pensive, who was formerly of a most facetious Temper, insomuch that every Body wondred and fear'd her inclining to a Consumption; and for my part I was as much concern'd for her as any Body, she

being of such a sweet Temper, for she never refus'd any thing I would intreat her to do: Even when no other Arguments could prevail: I was surpriz'd, when I narrowly watching her one day (for it was usual for her to separate her self from the rest and walk the Garden) I saw the Child both Sigh and Weep, and having surpriz'd her, she blush'd, and had almost fainted; I intreated her to acquaint me if any had disobligh'd her, but she made Answer none, neither for a long time could I get more out of her, till about a Fortnight before our departure: I again met her in the same Place, and after many Arguments and Caresses prevail'd with her, to tell me next Day: But good God, what a surprizal was it to me to hear her say it was I that caus'd that Alteration in her, being afraid I should never return'd I ask'd if it was not rather for her Brother, she said she was concern'd for him, but he was not the cause; so at last she told me downright, if I would not Promise to Marry her at my return, and never engage my self to any other while she liv'd, I shou'd hear of her Death in a short time: So being really afraid for her, and believing it only to be a childish fondness, which absence would cure, promis'd, which she made me vow in as solemn manner as I could imagine, and afterwards seem'd much to alter her humour; one day before we went, at Dinner her Father ask'd me what token I would send my Wife, I promis'd her any thing she would desire; but they wondred when she desired no other, than, that I should be true to her and desired a Ring, which I then wore as a Pledge, I could not, and besides I was afraid, seeing I knew the secret of her Heart, but how they admir'd when she begged a Ring, her Mother then wore, and gave it likewise to me, taking all present as Witnesses, but they only laugh'd at it, not knowing, but it was in Jest, seeing we frequently us'd it, she would never let her Mother take the Ring again, I have it still, so the day of parting coming she was o'rtaken with Tears, but told them it was for her Brother and Husband; they easily believ'd her, for indeed she was of a most kind and passionate Soul, and I assure you I could scarce forbear, being as Childish as she, but at last we parted: Which is now five years ago, I really believing she would quite forget me, seeing she was so Young, and I not hearing from her, but only by her Father in all the time, I understand since it was upon a Punctilio seeing I wrote not first, but Gentlemen, the worst is, a dear Friends Sister of mine, and I am so far engag'd that I cannot go back without she releases me. The other in the Country has wrote to me, and says, she will never give up her right, and indeed her Father has seconded it with his desires, and as I tender his Child's Life, now your Directions what I shall do in case that neither will release me of my Promise, for I fear the last will hardly perform her Word in obeying your Direction.

Ans. Indeed we must speak on the younger Ladies behalf, whose unparall'd Love & Constancy may give the Age an Example; all that can be objected is that what you did, you suppos'd in Jest, because she was young; but that alters not the Case at all on her side, since it had the same effects, as if you had been sincere, besides reserving that Ring and making such solemn Vows, are Obligations which we don't yet see how you can with your Honour and a good Conscience get free off; as for your second obligations, they are certainly cancell'd, if the first Oblige you (which in our Opinion they do) for such a thing can never be valid to two at once, 'tis like a deed of Gift at Law, the first only stands, and if there be ten thousand more they signify nothing. We shou'd be glad to hear of your proceedings in this Case, and you shall have our further advice if desir'd: Indeed we are concern'd for the last Lady, and with it were in our Power to remove her Misfortunes, for if the first won't Consent, we can't help her.