

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **VV**hat necessity is there for a Christian that professes the Faith, and has lived in the neglect of Baptism, both Infant and Elder, since obliged by Law to receive the Sacrament; whether he may not receive the Sacrament without being baptized.

Ans. No, Baptism is a Foundation. Other Foundation can no Man lay; and therefore the Eunuch, and the first Profelytes demonstrated their belief, by being initiated by Baptism, and made members of the Visible Church; and so this Person must be, before he can receive the Sacrament.

Quest. 2. I know a Young Lady, who has had several very considerable offers in reference to Marriage, but weighing with great consideration the diversity of Cares and Troubles, that a married State is incumbred with; and considering the Freedom and Ease, and Quiet of a single Life; she has made a firm Resolution against altering her Condition, and thereupon she desires your Opinion and Advice, how by a Prudent and Discreet Behaviour, she may avoid those unjust and severe Reproaches, that usually attend those who never Marry: An old unmarried Woman being commonly the Jest and scorn of all Company she comes into, she is one whom Love could never have any Power or Sway over, so that it is from no disappointment of that sort, that she has taken up this Resolution.

I shall look upon it as a particular Favour, Gentlemen, if you will please to give me a speedy Answer, which will oblige me to be very much an humble Servant to your Society.

Ans. Why truly Madam (for we suppose you to be the Lady, you speak so sensibly of it) we think your Resolution, if made upon a due and impartial Consideration of your own Temper and Inclinations, to be very brave and exemplary, and it wou'd be very well for thousands of a contrary Judgment; cou'd they so think and so Act; but People are usually covetous of Marriage Minutes, and are afraid they shan't have time enough to be unhappy in: There's only one thing Madam, that you seem to have a wrong Notion of, we mean the Contempt and Scorn that the World usually has for Old Maids. To this we Answer, a prudent Carriage towards such Persons, as you must necessarily converse with, and the avoiding, as much as can be all occasions that may bring Reputation into Question, will certainly secure you an esteem from the Wise and Good of all Parties, and 'tis not a farthing matter what the Vicious and Fools say of you, their Calumnies are real Encumbrances reverst.

In short, secure your Duty to God, your Acquaintance, and your Self, and then nothing can injure you. Virgins have a particular Prerogative in another Life, Rev. 14. and if St. Paul may be Judge, have no little advantages in this.

Quest. 3. I have had a kindness for a Young Gentlewoman a considerable time, and have made my Addresses to her, and have got her Consent, and likewise her Parents, and I have made a solemn Vow never to have any other Woman but her Self, neither is there any Woman that I can fancy but her (though I have had several offers of a far greater Fortune) now I have discovered it to my Friends, and they are mightily against it, in-somuch that my Father declares, that if I have her, he will do nothing for me; now I am a Young Man just set up in the World, and my Dependance must be very much on him, who (if I desist from this Woman) will do well for me, but if I Marry her will do nothing, and if I have her not such is my affection, that I shall never be at rest: I desire your Opinion in this Case, as soon as you can, and you will very much oblige me.

Ans. You ought not to Marry without your Parents Consent, 'tis the worst of Felonies, tho' we are also satisfied, it is as wicked a thing in Parents to force their Children to Marry where they can't Love; many unhappy Instances we meet with in this last Case, and the Word of God forbids the first: If you can't perswade your Parents, you ought to release one another; and if you can't break off your Esteem, tarry a while to see what time will bring forth; circumstances in the World, Death of Friends, or sometimes of one of the Parties, will put an end to all such Disputes.

Quest. 4. A Lady is troubled about her Responses in the Church, because, Women are commanded to keep silence in the Church, 1 Cor. 14. 34.

Ans. The Apostle there, only speaks of Preaching in the Church, as Quaker Women do; and not against their Joining with the Congregation in Responses, &c.

Quest. 5. What think you, of Phil. 2. 10. That at the Name of Jesus every Knee shou'd bow, &c.

Ans. When we say, in the Name of God, &c. We mean no more than in or thro' his Power, Might, &c. Thus we believe this passage means no more than this, God hath exalted him above all things, and to his Power and Dominion every one shou'd be subject; for the bowing of the Knee is a sign of Obedience and Submission. This Exposition is very safe, and seems to allude to that Passage of our Saviour, a little before his Ascension. All Power is given to me, both in Heaven and Earth, We can't believe the Apostle chiefly intended the articulate sound, or Name of Jesus, nor the bare bowing of the Knee; because the different ways of Worship, Salutations, &c. in all Nations can't be confin'd to this Rule, some Lye prostrate, some Kneel, some Bow, some Sit, to pay and receive Honour

Honour and Respects, nor is it impossible this shou'd be fulfill'd till the day of Judgment. Since there are thousands now that never hear of the Name, and of thousands that do, many never pay any Worship or Honour to him, but the Day will come when the most obdurate Atheist and Reprobate shall submit and tremble before him: The respect that the Church pays to the Name is very expressive of their Obedience to him; and no one can err in it, if they don't believe it an indispensable Duty.

Quest. 6. *It is my Misfortune (if I may so call it) to fix my Affections on a Person, whose Circumstances cannot admit of an Address, being a Wife, which has made me often endeavour to stifle the Passion, but all is in vain: And were it not for an Uncertain, or rather imaginary expectancy, I should fall into Despair, which I am satisfied will produce fatal Consequences.*

Quest. 7. *If the Lady may within the Rules of Modesty, and with a due respect to her own Virtue and Honour, make me a Conditional Promise, in Case she should survive her Husband, without Breach or Violation of the Vow she made him in Marriage.*

Quest. 8. *If such a Request in me be any Breach of the Tenth Commandment, it being only executory after the Death of her Husband.*

Ans. The Relation is a very great Folly and Wickedness. A Folly to wait for any thing, which morally speaking, is two to one Odds; whether it happens or not, since our Lover is not certain, but he, or his Mistress may one or both Die before the Husband; besides 'tis a manifest Breach of the tenth Commandment, and may be of very ill Consequence, for if she condescends to such a Conditional Promise, it necessarily follows (if She's in Earnest, and if in Jest 'tis a Poor Remedy) that it will alienate her Affections from her lawful Husband, and then there's a Gate open to many horrid Practices that don't now shew themselves; such a Person so continuing must certainly be in a state of Damnation; therefore our Advice is, that he repent himself of such a wicked Folly, and evidence the sincerity of his Repentance, by avoiding all such opportunities of Converse, or otherwise, that may renew so vile a Flame.

Quest. 9. *A Gentleman, by a thousand Oaths and Protestations to a Lady, of his Unhappiness and Misery, if she permitted not his Passion, and Vowing if she granted it, to be Eternally true to, and none but hers: She out of gratitude and goodness, at last granted it, and return'd him a resembling one. But this perfidious Man was no sooner sure of his Conquest; but he slights, what before he adored and dy'd for, and now the Lady by too great an Act of Generosity, has removed his Misfortune, and fixt it on her Self, being of too constant a temper to be prevail'd on by such an Example.*

Query, *Whether he can Marry another, and if there be any way to reclaim him, how it may be effected?*

Ans. No he cannot Lawfully do it, but that Lady, I doubt, will be no satisfaction to you, for he that can be base enough to betray so much goodness, we may without injustice affirm, will never consult his Duty, or Conscience, if he has any. As for convincing him of his Error, we look upon it as impossible as 'twas for him to be constant; for it must either proceed from a Levity or some real dislike. Therefore you are now bravely to Resolve and Conquer your Self by Reason, which if you Consult, you'll undoubtedly find more Happiness in, than any thing else can afford you. But if it's only a Tryal, and the Gentleman better than he appears to be, 'twill be no Injustice to your Self, nor Him, to make your Passion submit to your Reason.

Quest. 10. Vol. 4. Numb. 15. Tuesday, Nov. 17. 1691. Quest. 2. *My Friend having, &c. Whereas you doubt of the matter of Fact, and desire more particulars, I thought fit to acquaint you with this, which I am very well perswaded of. In Decemb. 1690. A particular Friend of mine, a Prebend of Durham, came from thence, and told me, that about two or three days, more or less, before he came from Durham, one Mr. Wilson a great acquaintance of his, watering his Horse at the River, by the Rapidity of the Stream, was carried down a considerable way, eight or nine Miles, and drowned. His Horse swimming out, and coming home all wet, caused diligent search to be made all about the River (near the City) and a considerable Reward to be offered to him that should bring tidings of his Body. About ten days after, a foolish Fellow crossing the River, eight or nine Miles distant from Durham, saw a faint Light waft about the River. At the first, saith he, I turned away my Face as being frighted, but at last I took more Courage, and marked a little Bush by the Water side, so this Man came to Durham. And said he had seen the Soul of that great Man that was Dead, and related every particular. Upon this Mr. Wilsons Coachman, went and search'd (with several others) and at the last saw the Lappet of his Coat, lye out of the Water, just by the Bush. The Coachmans Name is John Bowman, who afterward served the Lord Bishop of Durham, and may yet for ought I know. My Lords House is in Southampton-street.*

Ans. We are satisfied in the Account, and believe it to be very Natural, possibly it might be an Exhalation from the Body, which by that time being grown fermentiscible and beginning to corrupt, might emit some unctuous Steams, like those things we call Jack a Lanthorns, &c. Or possibly it might be that very Meteor it self, which accidentally coming that way, might by some small contrary blasts of Wind be drove backward and forward about that place; and 'twas a very natural thought for a Fool or a Child (who knew the Relation of the drown'd Gentleman) to suppose that Exhalation to be his Soul; and being surpriz'd at it, it was impossible the place shou'd not be particularly taken Notice of.