

# The Athenian Mercury.

Quest 1. **A** Man Dying worth 7000 l. Willed, That if the Child his Wife went with, proved a Boy, he should have  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the said 7000 l. and his Wife  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; if it proved a Girl, she should have but  $\frac{1}{3}$ , and his Wife  $\frac{2}{3}$ ; but, it happened, his Wife was Delivered of both a Boy and a Girl at one Birth.

I desire to know how the said 7000 l. should be disposed of according to the Testator's Will.

Ans. To be exact, Let the Boy lose  $\frac{2}{3}$  of what he was to have of the 7000 l. as often as the Mother and Daughter lose  $\frac{1}{3}$  a piece of what they were to have, and then the Calculation will be exact, and agreeable to the true Intent of the Will, we can't ha'while to work it out our selves.

Quest. 2. True Religion is grown so inconsistent with these Present Times, that a Pious Soul is now altogether incapable of finding a real Friend in matter of Faith and Conscience; and, upon that account, I desire that Satisfaction from you (which I cannot find elsewhere) viz. Whether after our Dissolution, there be any Locus *Mechius*, or, in Plain Terms, a Purgatory; for, it seems, a very *Mysterious Point*, which we Read in the First Epistle General of St. Peter, the Third Chapter, and the 18th Verse, &c. which runs thus; For Christ hath once Suffered for sins, the Just for the Unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to Death in the Flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also he went and Preached unto the Spirits in Prison; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, &c. Now, we must either conclude, our Saviour's Works (to wit) his Preaching to the Spirits in Prison, ineffectual; or else, we must suppose those Spirits, then in Prison, capable of returning from that place by the means of his Preaching, which argues plainly a Purgatory: I have onely this to desire of you; First, That you'll receive this as from a Young Professor in Divinity; and, Secondly, A very speedy Answer: which, if you'll be so kind as to grant, you'll much oblige yours, &c.

Ans. Indeed this Place has given a great deal of trouble to Interpreters; but, be it what it will, it can never mean Purgatory: since we have so plain Scriptures against any Purgatory, viz. 1. For by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are Sanctified. Which cou'd not be, if there was a Middle-State also, to Perfect, or Purge 'em so, as to make 'em fit for Heaven; our Saviour hath done it sufficiently for all such as believe on him. Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord, (saith St. John) for they rest from their Labours: There's no Purgatory to Torment 'em after Death. But, to the Text, most Interpreters agree (and indeed it can bear no

other sence, That, By that Spirit by which he was quickened he Preached in the days of Noah; or by, or through Noah unto the Spirits in Prison: that is, the Old World; who, being Corrupt and Wicked before God, their Bodies were as Prisons to their Souls; or, as some think, the Whole Man was Imprison'd, in the slavery of Sin and Corruption: Which was the Reason, that God said, My Spirit shall not always strive with Man: and, a little after, It repented him that he had made Man on the Earth, &c. The Prisoners (let it be Spirit, Body, or Both) cannot, at all, be thought to be in Purgatory; since, it is confin'd onely to Those in times past that were disobedient in the days of Noah: Unless you will also make this Inference, That the Spirits in Purgatory were onely such as liv'd before the Flood.

Qu. 3. Meeting the other day with your Mercury, which Treats of Owndle-well, I was in hopes you had been so kind as to have Answered my former Request. But, finding there onely a bare Relation of its Drumming, I am forced to give you this second trouble, to remind you, That my Intreaty was not to be informed of the History of that Noise (which, perhaps, I understood before as well, even as he, from whom you had your Relation) but of the Philosophy and Presignification of it. Let me therefore prevail with you to Answer these following Particulars.

1. Whence so strange a Sound can proceed, the Water yet remaining (as I know it uses to be) almost perfectly smooth?

2. How it should come to be so regular, as to resemble a March?

3. What can be the Cause of its so uncertain returns?

4. Whether they Presignifie any future events? And what those may be conceived to be?

And because your Relator hath omitted one quality of this Well, which is, that it is reckoned much the best Water thereabouts for making Milk-pottage, and is therefore sent for through the several parts of the Town for that use, I am at a loss to know,

5. What there is peculiar to this Water, that makes it so singularly proper for this purpose?

In the same Mercury you seem also not a little pleased, that you have found the number 666. in Ludovicus; here, if it be not too much trouble to you, I would willingly be inform'd.

1. Whether you think this a New Discovery?

2. Whether that Number don't more properly signifie Lewis the First, who was called barely Ludovicus, then Lewis the Fourteenth, whose Name makes the Number 680.

3. Whether



3. Whether this any way appear to be a truer Interpretation of that Number than others have made from that Inscription at Rome, Paulo V. Vice-Deo; or than others long before, from the word *Δαίμων*? And lastly, as a Key of the whole, be so kind as to let me know, Why these Figures must signifie a Latin Name, rather than a Syriack, or Arabick, or Greek, or Hebrew? And if they relate to one in France, why not rather to his French than to his Latin Name.

*Answ.* Qu. 1. As for the Drumming we look upon the Cause to be Natural (though we don't deny it in some sense to be Supernatural) the Cause very probably may be Vapours, proceeding out of the Earth into the Sides of the Well; and it may easily be try'd in the Night by a Candle Let-down (on every side) within the Well: As yet we can give no other Account.

2. If the fore-mentioned Vapours be the Cause, the Eruptions may be so Situated, as to be regular as well as irregular.

3. If the first Supposition be true, it must be the *CRISES* of the Fermentations of the Earth, which feed Vapours, and, according as the Matter comes to such a Quantity, which may be longer or shorter in gathering, accordingly it hath the above-mentioned effect.

4. We can't tell you that, but this we are assur'd, that several Accidents happen immediately after such Events, which would have done so, if those things never had been, because they proceed from another Cause.

5. Water is always better or worse, according as it imbibes the Nature of Places through which it passes; 'twou'd be too long to Treat distinctly of 'em here.

*Answ.* 1. VVe beg your Pardon, Sir, if we tell you your Judgement is a little too precipitate in guessing at our pleasure. VVe have about 80 Names by us, that the Learned have made use of in this Matter; and we, meeting not with this before, 'tis new to us, and we suppose to you too.

*Answ.* 2. As you please for that; if you'll but look over that Paper again, you'll find we left it to every body to make what use they pleas'd, without determining any thing our selves, which might have prevented your trouble.

*Answ.* 3. There's no Man cou'd ever yet determine that; and we have no particular Revelation in this Point.

*Quest.* 4. A Person of good Birth and Quality, having been for a long time Indisposed; upon my Strict enquiry, I find his Distemper to proceed from a troubled and discontented Spirit. Which is occasioned, by his keeping Company with a Gentlewoman, and owning her amongst his Relations and Acquaintance for his Wife (though as yet unmarried.) This Gentleman tells me, he is really Contracted to her, and thinks, in Conscience, he ought to Marry her,

yet, he fears, 'twill prove his Ruine, (she having no Fortune) for he has already exhausted great part of his Estate. He has a Grand-mother, and several other Relations that have their Immediate Subsistence, and their future dependance from him. Now, Gentlemen, I crave your Advice, to shew him, in this Matter, whether he may, with Safety, abandon this Lady, and Match with another; whereby he may repair his Estate, and so provide for his Relations that depend upon him: He is mightily disturbed, has ask'd my Advice; I have taken a Weeks time to Consider; and therefore do earnestly desire, that you will Resolve me in that time. He is resolved to follow my Directions, which (to give him Ease) must be, either to Marry, or quite Forsake, for I perceive he intends to live a Penitent and Religious Life for the future.

*Answ.* Indeed, Sir, it's a little strange, that you should take a Weeks time to Consider, whether you shou'd Advise your Friend to be Guilty or not Guilty of So Great a VVickedness, as an Habitual Adultery, as long as he lives, which he must certainly be, if he Marries any other. It is too late, now, to Consider the Ladies Fortunes; that shou'd have been done before; 'tis better to Retrench his Expences, and Live a little Meanner in the World than he cou'd wish; rather lose his Pomp, than his Peace, his God.

*Quest.* 5. A Gentleman and his Mistress being agreed, in Every Point (besides) Relating to their intended Marriage; The Only Obstruction is, That she fears some future Discontents may arise, by reason of her Sisters Cohabitation with her. Now the said Gentleman is so far from any ill resentment thereof, that he is very well pleased at the Opportunity of shewing his Respect and Generosity to his (intended) Wife, in the Person of her Relation.

*Query,* Whether in reason the said intended Marriage ought to be retarded for so Nice a Scruple?

*Answ.* No truly, if you want our Opinion onely, that shan't hinder your Joys any longer; we think it no reason to retard your Marriage: but that you shou'd both bear your Part in the Chorus. Let the Sun Rise in State, for to Morrow's the Day.

*Qu.* I do desire you to give your Opinion of the last Chapter of St. John, and the last Verse; where 'tis said, That if all the things which Jesus did were Written, the World it self could not contain the Books that should be Written: Now I desire to know, in what Sense you take it, whether in a Common sense or not?

*Answ.* It's an Hyperbole, a way of Speaking common to every Language: We say here in England, An Innumerable Company of Men: An Infinite Number of Cattle, &c. Both which are impossible; for a little Row of FIGURES will Express more than all the Sands, or Drops of Water in the Sea. So that the Meaning is onely, A Great Many.