

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, April 30. 1692.

Quest. 1. **T**here was publisht this Week a Book, Entitled, The History of the ATHENIAN SOCIETY, written by a Gentleman who got Secret Intelligence of their whole proceedings. To this History is prefixt several Poems written by Mr. Tate, Mr. Motteux, Mr. Richardson, and others: Now since I find so many Ingenious Men prefix their Names to it, I desire to know who is the Author of this Book, and whether or no the Athenian Society is not concern'd in the writing of it?

Ans. We do assure the Querist that the Athenian Society was so far from being concern'd in writing the History he here speaks of, that they heard nothing of it till the 9th. Sheet was going to the Press, at which time one of our Members sent a Letter to the Author of it, shewing our utter dislike of the Undertaking, which Letter (contrary to the Rules of Civility) he has insertd in his History, with Remarks upon it, we must therefore say this of him, that tho' his Writings shew him to be a very witty Person, in being able to say so much on so barren a Subject, yet we cannot think he has done by us in this Affair as he wou'd have bin served himself, neither has that Person who secretly gave him Intelligence of our Proceedings acted less ungenerously.

Quest. 2. How old is the custom of saying Grace before meat?

Ans. As old as we can find Men of Reason and Gratitude, for its impossible for a good Man to be ingrateful. A certain Author, whose Talent lyes at Bumpers and Bawdry, wou'd have this Custom as old as Dido, and cites four Verses which the Poet has made her speak in the Nature of an Health, which is the same thing with a Lacedemonian Grace.

Quest. 3. If there were no Light, would there be any darkness, and so of other Contraries?

Ans. Yes certainly, there was nothing else but darkness till the Creation. Indeed we must grant that Darkness cou'd not have been known without its opposite Light, but it wou'd be very ill Logick to say such a thing has not a Being, because it falls not under the perception of our Senses.

Quest. 4. The fourth Book of the Digests, Title the 3. 33. tells us of a Fellow that exposd his Goods to Sale, and had procured a Chapman that liked them, and was bargaining for them; in the interim comes a third person and laid claim to the Goods, upon which the Chapman departed, and the third person afterwards quitted his pretension, but the Sale was frustrated. Ulpian says, That the true owner might bring his Action on the Case, for satisfaction of his Loss; take his words, Rei quam Venalem Possessor habebat, litem proprietatis adversarius movere coepit; & postea quam opportunitatem Emptoris, cui venundari potuit, peremit, diffinit: placuit possessori hoc nomine Auctionem in factum cum sua indemnitate competere. Ulpian lib. 4. Opinio- num — Pray Sirs, how is this matter to be determin'd by our Law?

Ans. Ulpian never said, the true Owner might bring his Action on the Case, in this matter, for the words placuit possessori, &c. cannot be rendred so, but suppose he brought it as an Instance. Our Law says, That if A being a Stranger, doth publish that B hath a right to the Land of C, where he hath none, an Action upon the Case will lye for that false publication; but this hardly comes up to the Answer, for this is but a Report. If the third person claim'd by legal process, he cou'd not be su'd, since if he fail'd in the prosecution, he was to pay Costs and Damages.

Quest. 5. Whether Nutmegs or Moral Honesty, &c.  
Ans. We beg the Readers pardon, if instead of answering this, we ask another: Query, Whether a late Author in making and in answering this Question, has

not forfeited the late pardon he ask'd of all sober Men for starting up ridiculous Questions, and answering 'em as ridiculously?

Quest. 6. How did the Lacedemonians punish Adultery?

Ans. Not at all: A Modern Lacedemonian, who pretends to study in order to arrive to the Honourable Post of a Judge, lays very ill Foundations, in professing himself a Pupil to Lycurgus the Lacedemonian Lawgiver, who because he forbad not Adultery, is by his Scholar styl'd, the Sage Lycurgus, and undertakes to give the admirable reasons why Lycurgus allow'd a Community of Wives, viz. To exclude Jealousie and Suspicion, to reconcile greater Friendships amongst 'em, to remove all Quarrels, Duelling, and the Devil and all: (but we beg his pardon in the last, for Lycurgus as little believ'd there was a Devil, as his Pupil does,) "This surely" (concludes he) kept 'em in Concord and Agreement. A good Consequence, and honest Principles for a Judge! But since this Gentleman is resolv'd to be a Lacedemonian, Query, Whether Lycurgus was not either a Cuckold or a Bastard himself, and therefore made this Law to take off his own reproach, and whether all Lacedemonians since him are not Sons of W.—s.

Quest. 7. A Gentleman who was affronted by another, ordered his Servant to lay wait for him, from whom he received the Affront, and to Bastinado him soundly; it happened that I came by, and the Servant thinking me the person, beat me most unmercifully. Query. If I have not an Action against the Master, or whether Ignorance will excuse the Fact?

Ans. The Law distinguishes betwixt a Natural and Voluntary Act: for Instance, A commands his Man to assault B, but his Man assaults C thro' a mistake, and is therefore only liable to the penalty of the Law himself; and not his Master, since the Servant was a voluntary Agent. But if A shou'd command his Servant to poison B, who goes thro' a mistake and poysons C, the Master is guilty of Murder, because the Poyson is a Natural Agent, and wou'd have acted upon any body else with distinction of Commands, &c.

Quest. 8. Gent. The great honour I bear to your Society makes me resent the abuse put upon your Bookseller, tho' every body of common Sense perceives how strain'd and unnatural it is; as if every Child cou'd not make any person living to be the Beast of Babilon, if we take in six Names, Christian Names, Implies Signs, &c. As for Instance, suppose I shou'd direct a Letter to V.V. Pate, Woollen Draper, just by Fleetstreet, the Numeral letters of this direction would stand thus:

To			
V.V. Pate	X	10	
Woollen	C	100	
Draper	D	500	
just by	vi	6	
Fleetstreet.	L	50	

DCLXVI 666.

Query, Whether Mr. Pate is not as likely to be the Beast mention'd in the Revelations, as any private Person whatever?  
Ans. What we advanc'd about Ludovicus was a publick Person, and may very well be admitted amongst other Interpretations which that number bears; but never any one believ'd it cou'd have any relation to a private person, till a late Author, tho' if private persons cou'd be concern'd in it, the Gentleman mention'd in the Direction has as fair a Title to it as any Man living, if his Principles and Qualifications be consider'd, which we believe we shall one day have occasion to make publick to the World in their true Natural dress.

Quest. 9. Gentlemen, I am resolv'd to Go round the Earth on Foot, I desire to know whether my Head or Feet will Travel most, and how much the one more than the other?

Ans. Pray Sir, which way do you design to travel, that you'll meet with no Water, Mountains of Ice, &c. however Sail or Go, you are desired to tell us how large a Circle you design to take; as also as near as you



you can your height; but besides all this, (which is yet a greater task) pray send to us the way of squaring a Circle; if you cannot do that, we assure you we can't answer the Question exactly, and for Mathematicians to advance any thing that won't bear a demonstration, is worse than doing nothing at all.

Quest. 10. *What is your Opinion of the Story of Simon Magus having a Statue Erected to him by the Roman People, as Justin Martyr relates, and the strange conflict of Miracles between him and St. Peter?*

Ans. 'Tis not a half penny Matter whether it be truth or not, farther than this, that a Supposition of any thing that invalidates the Testimony of the Primitive Fathers in some matters of Fact, wou'd bring in contempt all that they have deliver'd concerning Sacred Writ.

But however, since our Opinion is desired, we believe that its very easie to defend the Testimony of St. Justin against all that has bin said on this point. What has yet bin objected by our Lacedemonian Atheists, is this, That Justin Martyr had but little skill in Latin, (in which Tongue the Inscription was writ) and that he might easily mistake, and this Inscription,

S E M O N I  
S A N C O  
D E O F I D E O  
Sacrum

Sex Pompeius Sp. F.

And instead of it read

S I M O N I  
S A N C T O D E O.

Which first Inscription Ciacconius saw in the Year 1574. upon a Marble Pedestal of a certain Statue in the Insula Tiberina, between the two Bridges. We answer, first as to Justins Latin, we can't tell exactly his knowledge in it; but if he had any at all, (which our Antagonists deny not) he must know Roman Letters, and can any Man of common Sense believe he was such a blockhead as not to see there was a vast difference betwixt the Number of these Letters: Besides, can any one believe that he wou'd write and publish what he must of necessity have bin ridicul'd for by his Contemporaries, and yet we find not one of 'em that contradicts him? if he had been mistaken, it wou'd have bin taken notice of, and not have bin transcrib'd and attested by many of his Followers. Irenæus was not his Junior by 30 years, and he tells us, 1. 20. that *Simon dicebat se esse sublimissimam virtutem*, i.e. Deum, as also, that he was honour'd with a Statue by the Emperor Claudius; which is a quite distinct account from that of Justin Martyr, and therefore not borrow'd from him, as is objected: Besides, Tertullian, Eusebius, Nicephorus, &c. make mention of it, but as for the first Inscription, the ill luck of it is, that 'twas never mention'd till the Year 1574. above a thousand Years after these Testimonies: but suppose the first had been in Justins time, nay and before him, 'tis yet an Argument that that of Simons was placed there out of choice, to rival the other Sabin Divinities, according to Tertullian, who says of him, *Hic ausus est summam se dicere virtutem*. i.e. Deum, Numen, apud Samar: See Tremellius or Junius upon the place: But suppose we had no better Authority than the exposing the weakness of their Argument against the Universal consent of Fathers:

The Inscription of Semoni, &c. is like that of Simoni, Ergo, the last is false.

Or thus, Semoni, &c. is, Ergo, Simoni can't be.

When we find such trifling Arguments to disprove any thing, we may safely venture the Merit of the Cause,

without defending it. As for the latter part of the Question, it has bin receiv'd and never contradicted by the Primitive Fathers, and such as believe it not, are desired to show their Reasons why they dissent, and not put the World off with conjectures against the truth of things that have been as credibly receiv'd, as they have bin positively deliver'd by men of known Sincerity and Piety, such as Justin was, having approv'd himself so by his Martyrdom.

Quest. 11. *What was the occasion of those infinite variety of Lessons we find in the Ancient Manuscripts of the Scriptures?*

Ans. All the World may see that this Question was propos'd out of no good design, especially since the Author of it has publickly rais'd some Objections, thereby to bring the whole Bible into Contempt: But we answer, tho' there are some disagreements which hapn'd thro the fault of the Copyists, yet it follows not, that there are not some true Copies of the Original, both as to the Old and New Testament, which also have bin preserv'd by the Church, and we our selves dare undertake to reconcile any Text whatever, which wou'd be impossible, if there were not a true standard to judge by. We hope we have sufficiently clear'd the Authority of the Hebrew Text in the Young Students Library, which will be publish'd in a little time, and as for the New Testament, that's much easier defended. Our Author has only rais'd 4 Objections, which we shall here Answer: 1. Jonas 3. 5. *Yet 40 days, and Niniveh shall be destroyed*, the Septuagint anciently read it 3 days. 2. The disagreement between Nehemiah and Ezra, about the number of the Jews that came from Babylon. 3. The improbability of 32 Soldiers fighting upon an Elephant, 1 Mac. 6. 37. And 4. Of the Number of the Philistines Chariots and Horsemen, 1 Sam. 13. 5. — To the first, Theodorus upon the place tells us, that the N°. 40. and not 3. was first in the Septuagint agreeable to the Hebrew; and so, its plain there were some true Copies to correct the false ones by, as we said above; or if it was corrected by the Original, it shows we have yet right in the Account. 2. Both Esdras and Nehemiah agree in the total Sum 42360, but in numbring up particular Families, Esdras mentions 494, which Nehemiah speaks not of, and Nehemiah speaks of 1765, which Esdras does not reckon up: Now if you add the Surplus of Esdras's Number to Nehemiah's, and the Surplus of Nehemiah's Number to Esdras's, the sum will be equal. So that there's no contradiction, but a Confirmation of the Truth in divers ways. As to the 3d. we have nothing to do with it, we are only to defend Canonical Books. 4. Obj. Of 30000 Chariots to 600 Horsemen, when Grotius believes it shou'd be but 3000, we must beg Grotius's pardon, (tho' we have a great respect for his Judgment) for he was no Warrior; if it had bin but 3000, it had bin a small Cavalry for so numerous a people as the Philistines to provide, and in humane probability but a very weak strength to cope with their powerful Adversaries.

We have in this Paper, according to our Promise, answer'd all the Questions we have promis'd, and resolve to continue answering all Questions whatever, that so we may render our Undertaking perfect.

The Quest. out of Lucius Florus will be insert'd next Saturday.

### Advertisements.

ON Monday next being the 2d. day of May, 1692. betwixt 3 and 4 in the Afternoon, will be sold by Auction a Collection of Latin, French, and English Books, of Divinity, History, Physick, and on most other Subjects, in all Volumes, at the Black Lyon in St. Pauls Church-yard, amongst the Woollen Drapers. Gentlemen may be accommodated with Catalogues at Mr. Welds betwixt the two Temple-gates in Fleetstreet, at Mr. Clements amongst the Booksellers in St. Pauls Church-yard, at Mr. Manships at the Black Bull against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, and at the Place of Sale.

L O N D O N, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, 1692.