

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, May 24. 1692.

Quest. 1. **P**ray let me know what Sect of Religion you are of, since by your answers to several Questions in your Mercuries you show your selves Enemies to the truly sound, Orthodox and holy Church establishd?

Ans. We'll endeavour to show our selves true Church of England-men, by professing we heartily forgive so unjust and uncharitable a Censure, and by our as boldly owning our tenderness towards all good men, tho' in some things of different Opinions. And we are sure that Charity and Moderation are two main characteristicks of that Church. But if this be not enough, nor all we have formerly written, we'll now once for all satisfy this Gent. and the rest of the World in this matter. The Doctrine of the Church of England we entirely embrace, otherwise we could not be Christians, and either already have, or are ready to subscribe to her Articles, taking all of 'em, as we are verily perswaded, in the same Sence which the Compilers intended. For her Discipline, we believe the Essentials of it, Liturgy and Episcopacy, are agreeable to the Primitive Pattern, and the Word of God, and hope we're able to prove both. For her Rituals, Devotions, &c. we are sure they are the most perfect and pure that any Church in the World now enjoys, and dare almost add, or ever did: and there are not two passages in them which we would desire to have chang'd as to our own private Judgments, tho' should the Authority and Wisdom of Church and State think fit to make any more alterations as to words, and smaller Circumstances, for the sake of Peace and Union, we should think it our Duties modestly and gladly to submit to and embrace 'em: There's our Confession, and let the Bygones make the most on't they can.

Quest. 2. Whether a late Poet, who calls his Poem The Double Descent, ought to be believed above other Poets and Painters?

Ans. I cannot be concluded the French will make a Descent to make this Poets words good, or to convince us the Poem is excellent, and worth reading; yet if we call to mind a \* Panegyrick that the Archbishop of Paris made to that King, "Wherein he applauds his breaking his Oaths to propagate the Catholick Religion, by compelling men to come in, (Luke 14. 23.) to the heavenly Banquet,

\* Printed at Paris. "the Sacrament, with Fire and Sword, and by Draconing to help God Almighty to a Croud of New Converts, that Heaven might ring of this immortal man Lewis le Grand. If we consider this, and that famed passage in the Speech which he repeats several times to this purpose, viz. "The Arms of this King that have assisted God and the Catholick Church so far when they stood in need of it, may we hope one day be employed for the King of England, who wants these Dragoons to reduce his Subjects to the Catholick Religion. This Speech discovered a private League between the two Kings, and was therefore prohibited being printed in England, but notwithstanding the prohibition 'twas privately handed about. Now if we consider all this, and that he has the Irish to spare, and one to send over with them, to see this put in Execution, with the lame assistance of the Jacobites: We might believe this the time to put the Archbishops Prophecy (for so it is called by the Catholicks) in execution by a Descent now or never, had not the Defeat of the French Fleet deprived 'em of all hopes of ever invading us: But adds this Poet,

Suppose they should thro' Clouds of Fire and Smoak Sent from our Fleet — those thundering Sons of Oak,

Rush thro', and make a bold attempt to Land  
Not only Horse and Foot a numerous band,  
Their proud usurping Force would quell;  
But Women ignorant in Arms,  
Dreadless of dangers and of harms,  
With Kitchen-Weapons Spit and Fork,  
Would do a deal of murthering work,  
If these the Enemy repell,  
'Tis fit they should the Glory share,  
And each as badge of Honour wear,  
Close by her side a Frenchmans Nose or Ear.

Quest. 3. Mans Body in 7 years time being no more a part of the then moving Mass, but what was so being scatter'd abroad, and moving in different Spheres: The Question is, If at Death the last Body which the Soul is then possess'd of, be not responsible for all the Sins committed by the dispersed mould before the last Body had a Being?

Ans. That Man talks not much like a Philosopher who supposes the same Man at different Ages to have different Bodies — *Magis* and *minus* its hoped make no essential difference, Man being as much the same, tho' his Body suffers never so many alterations, while the Soul's united to it; nay, his Body, the same Body, tho' it suffer augmentation or Diminution, (which indeed imply the same Subject) as a River is the same, tho' you can show no one place where the same water continues so much as one moment. It then the Union of the Soul with any part or portion of matter which makes the man be that matter less or more to which 'tis united; therefore it can never be properly said while he's alive, that his Body is scatter'd, and moves in different places, because he carries his Body about with him, and it can be but in one place at one time. As to the Question, Whether the last Body is not accountable for the Sins of the dispersed mould before it had a Being? It runs upon two most ridiculous suppositions, one that the same Man has two Bodies, nay a hundred at this rate, if there's another Body every 7 years, many millions of men having liv'd more than 700 years a-piece, one Body at home, and all the rest floating about in the Air, or no body knows where. The 2d. Absurdity is, that he supposes matter *per se*, accountable, or a Subject capable of Rewards and Punishments. There were no Sins at all committed by the Mould, taken alone, any more than by the Mutton, Beef, or Turneps which composed it: — But by the Man there were, the Soul and Body together, and he must answer for 'em at whatever time he committed 'em. He adds, *If the whole Mass were in one Body that belong'd to an old Liver, would it not make a most Gygantic heap of Flesh and Blood?* We answer, Undoubtedly it would, much bigger than any of the Gyants before the Flood, nay perhaps as large as the Rabbi's fancy Og King of Bashan, whom they make at least as tall as the Monument: but tho' we know not the precise Stature or Standard, according to which we shall appear in a better World, yet there's no need of such a monstrous bigness, since much less will suffice to compose the Body of a Man, and of the same Man, which may be done out of some part of his former matter, or perhaps any other.

Quest. 4. Whether enclosing a Common Field, and converting of it from Arable to Pasture, be for the publick Advantage, or otherwise; and whether (competent provision being made for the poor Cottagers) it be any ways against the Laws of God, some having scrupled it as such?

Ans. The Question of Enclosures we find very much agitated by all those who have writ concerning the Improvement of Land. The largest Enclosure we ever heard or read any where mention'd, is that proposed by Sir William P. — in his Political Arithmetick, To have



have a Wall carried round London, including Blackwall, &c. and many thousand Acres of Land which he thinks would be vast profit to the Undertakers, and so we may believe when 'tis accomplish'd. However, in general, tho' nothing can be clearer than that Enclosures are of vast advantage to the owners, a piece of ground letting for twice, 5 times, 10 times the rate when enclosed that it does while 'tis open, yet it seems not at first glance so easie to find the reason of so vast a difference; for how comes a little Hedge between to make one side of a Field worth ten times more than the other? tho' undoubtedly this proceeds partly from the greater warmth, partly from the manure of those Beasts, their Fodder, &c. which are kept in so narrow a room. But tho' this be of sensible and undoubted advantage to private owners, its much question'd whether it be so to the Commonwealth in general, and most are of a contrary Opinion, to which we also encline. The reason back'd with experience, is, That Enclosures certainly depopulate, there being Instances to be given where an open Field having bin enclos'd by the Lords, the Town upon it has decreas'd almost half in half a hundred years, both as to Houses and Inhabitants. Still the Question is, how this comes to pass; for what Influence one would think shou'd four or five long Hedges have upon Christnings and Burials: but besides that, there's no reason valid against indubitable matter of Fact, we may make ashit here to find a reason for this decrease of Inhabitants on Enclosures. There's no Encouragement for men to marry when there's no work for 'em, and Pasture keeps much fewer men employ'd than Arable, (unles a little for Hedging at first) since, as my Lord Bacon observes, one Shepherd and his Dog can manage a thousand times as many Acres of Pasture, as one man can of Arable. With a little Corn a Countrey-man may maintain his Family, may keep Poultry, Swine, &c. which he can't do where there's none, therefore must continue unmarried, be a Servant there, or remove to another place. Besides, the more's the pity, the Cottagers are oftentimes well provided for before these Enclosures are made, but for the most part very poorly afterwards. On the whole, till we see other reasons brought to the contrary, and this reason and Fact answer'd, we must still think Enclosures no advantage to the Community, tho' they undoubtedly are very much so to private persons: For if the strength of a Nation consists in the multitude of people, that must extreemly weaken it which so visibly depopulates and lessens their number.

Quest. 5. Whether the happy News of our Victory over the French Fleet, won't be the greatest means for settling the minds of such Persons as think the King's Taxes a little too hard upon 'em.

Ans. That there have been some such Persons, we are too well assur'd; but what Reasons they had for their Discontents, themselves nor any body else never yet knew, that was acquainted with this Maxim, of two evils choose the least. To pay some Moneys towards the carrying on the War against the Enemies of our Religion and Liberties, is a little uneasie if compar'd with paying none; but to pay some Moneys is a very easie Task; if compar'd to the loss of all that's dear to us. Affairs were brought to this head, that either we must disburse or be ruin'd; now for a Man to stand arguing the Point, like a Child that can't tell whether to choose a Rattle or a Diamond-Stone, is certainly a sign of great weakness. His Majesty had the same Design the last Summer, and 'twas not his Fault that it was not effected; and cou'd the French have declin'd fighting this Summer, you may be assur'd we shou'd have had the same Wild-Goose-Chase after them again, but they knew if they fought us not, we shou'd make other use of our Fleet, which wou'd be as much to their disadvantage. What effect this must have upon the Peace betwixt the Turk and Emperour, is easie to determine; as also that the Ruine of Lewis, and the silence of the Jacobites, is not very far off, nor hard to be effected, and by consequence that there must be a greater Prospect of England's Happiness, both as to Religion, Laws, Merchandise and Common Trading, than ever yet has been; and if so, our Murmurers must be asham'd that they are made happy against their Wills.

Quest. 6. What means Persius by the two concluding Verses of his last Satyr?

depunge ubi Sistam;

Inventus Chrysippe! tui finitor acerve.

Ans. We must confess we are almost of the Fathers mind, who when he cou'd not understand that old crabbed Fellow, fell a stamping upon him. But because the Querist will scarce be contented with such an Answer, we must guess at his meaning, as others have done before us. We see no reason then why that Interpretation shou'd not be true — that the Poet here alludes to that assertion of the Stoicks (among whom Chrysippus is known to be famous) that one Grain makes a heap, fix it where you will — accordingly, says the Poet, who was Stoical enough — depunge ubi sistam, &c. appoint where I shall give over, being at that time the last of the Stoical Writers.

The Questions concerning War amongst Christian Princes, Trees of Knowledge, form of the Serpent in Paradise, Athenians Vindication, Conflagration of Sodom, &c. shall be all answered next Saturday.

We have receiv'd a Letter from the Author of the HISTORY OF THE ATHENIAN SOCIETY, which being too long to insert in our Mercury, our Book-seller has Resolv'd to take another Course, and Print it in his next Monthly Journal, where such as please to peruse it, will find something very new and diverting.

This is to give Notice that the Members of the ATHENIAN SOCIETY, design speedily to review all they have written in their several Volumes, and where they find any Mistakes, or Answers defective (occasioned at any time by the unavoidable Absence of some of their Members, or by that Person who was lately Excluded their Society) they'll rectifie all Mistakes themselves in the 12 Numbers that are to compleat their 7th. Volume, that so their Querists may not at any time be led into Errors by the misrepresentation of any malicious Persons, nor their Undertaking be any wayes imperfect.

## Advertisements.

Gospel Truth stated and vindicated: wherein some of Dr. Crisp's Opinions are considered, and the opposite Truths are plainly stated and confirmed. By Daniel Williams. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

In the above-mention'd Book the Reader is desired to correct these following material Errata's, which were omitted in the last Mercury, for want of room to insert em.

In the 4th. leaf of the Epistle. l. 22. for perfect Faith. imperfect Faith, p. 74. l. 28. for must be, r. must not be.

The Sixth Volume of the Athenian Mercury, is now publish'd, resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions, Propos'd by the Ingenious of either Sex, from Saturday, Jan. 30. to Tuesday, May 10. 1692. Price 2 s. 6 d. This 6th. Volume is neatly done up in Marble Paper, with a General Title, Preface and Index to it. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry: Where is to be had the Entire Sett of the Athenian Mercuries (and the Supplements to 'em) for the Year 1691. (or single ones to this time.)

The Double Descent, a Poem describing both Invasions. Price 6 d.

The Good Old Cause, or the Divine Captain Characterized: In a Sermon not Preach'd, nor needfull to be Preach'd in any place so properly as a Camp. By Edmund Hickeringill, Rector of the Rectory of All-Saints in Colchester, both Printed for J. Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

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