

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, June 4. 1692.

Quest. 1. **W**hat is the Sin against the Holy Ghost?

Ans. The largest Description we have any where of it, is in the 12. St. Mat. 31, 32. *Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. — And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this World, neither in the World to come; — wherein occur three principal Difficulties: 1. What's meant by the Sin or Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. 2. What's intended by it's being never forgiven. And 3. What by these Expressions, neither in this World, nor the World to come.*

There are many Opinions concerning this Sin: Some think 'tis every Sin against our own Conscience, but then all Sins so, are all Sins besides those of Ignorance. Some, that to the conviction of our Conscience must be added that of Malice — but it seems David's Sin against Uriah included both, for here was Conviction, Deliberation, Resolution, and Malice Forethought; joyn'd too with the highest Ingratitude, yet none doubt of his Repentance and Forgiveness: Some think 'tis sinning after Baptism, but who then would be sav'd? Others, that 'tis denying the Truth under Persecution, as the Novatians, but then St. Peter himself had committed it. Lastly, Others believe 'tis an obstinate, malicious opposing the manifest Work of God by his Holy Spirit, in miraculous Signs and wonders, attributing 'em to the Devil, as the Pharisees here did, and wilfully and resolutely doing spite to the Spirit of God, as in the Hebrews. And since we incline to rather than any other, because it seems plainly confirm'd by the whole scope of the place — *Wherefore, says our Saviour, referring to what went before of the Pharisees, all manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven, &c.* Now what Sin, what Blasphemy was that which our Saviour had bin before speaking of, and accusing the Pharisees for? If we can find this, we need make no great doubt but we shall therein find this Sin against the Holy Ghost, but this plain was their attributing the Works of Gods Spirit to the Devil, tho' they knew the contrary. This appears yet with greater Light from the same passage, Mat. 3. 29, 30. *He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; Because they said, He hath an Unclean Spirit, whence nothing can be more clear than that the Pharisees Sin was saying, our Saviour had an Unclean Spirit, or attributing what he plainly wrought by God's Spirit, to the Devil, that Unclean Spirit, and this against the dictates of their own Consciences, with Obstinacy and Malice: And this no doubt was the highest Calumny, Reproach, or Blasphemy, that could be either invented or utter'd, to confound the Author of all good with the Author of all evil.*

Now this being the Sence in which the most Learned Divines, Dr. Hammond, and others, understand this Scripture, and this Sin, it is justly question'd by them whether its now so much as possible for any man to be guilty of it, which they generally conclude in the Negative, because there are not now such miraculous Manifestations to be oppos'd and resisted. There's yet another Difficulty which bears hardest against that Opinion we have last recited, and are our selves inclin'd to embrace, and that is, — *That 'tis not possible for any man ever to Sin maliciously against what he clearly knows to be Truth, founded we suppose on that Maxim, that the Will always necessarily follows the last Dictates*

of the practical Intellect. But to this its answer'd, That if a Man may not suspend this acting of his Will after he is fully and particularly convinc'd in his Understanding, as some not improbably hold, yet it's certain that the Intellect it self may be warp'd and byass'd, and perswade 'em to act in this or that particular, *Pro hic & nunc*, as the Schoolmen say, contrary to their more sober general Judgment, by not adverting to the motives and Arguments which shou'd induce 'em to determine on the right side. Thus here, tho' some of these Pharisees were in general convinc'd by particular Instances too clear to be deny'd, That our Saviours works proceeded from Gods Spirit, yet they either suspended the Act of their Wills, which shou'd immediately have embrac'd them, or adverted so much to carnal motives, their own Grandeur, which they saw was less'n'd by what he taught, that in this particular their Judgments were byass'd to the contrary, and accordingly they contradicted and blasphem'd, no doubt sinn'd against the clear Light of Conscience, and sinn'd maliciously and blasphemously, opposing what they were forc'd to confess the Finger of God.

The 2d. Knot is in those words, *shall never be forgiven.* This some interpret only of the great Difficulty, not absolute impossibility of their forgiveness; but St. Mark carries it beyond any such mitigation, plainly mentioning, *Eternal Damnation.* Its true, our Translation only has it, *shall be in danger of Eternal Damnation*, but 'tis clearer in the Original, which uses the word *ἐνοχος*, a-kin to *Reus* in Latin, signifying guilty, obnoxious to such or such a punishment — as in the fifth of St. Matthew, where 'tis often used — *In danger of the Judgment, in danger of the Council, of Hell-fire* — that is, his Crime deserves these Punishments, and shall consequently suffer them in the present case; for if they are never forgiven, neither will their punishments be so. Which leads to the 3d. Difficulty, in these words, *Neither in this World nor that to come.* Hence the Papists wou'd fain fetch their Purgatory, there being some Sins which they pretend are to be forgiven in the World to come; but this St. Mark clears, explaining it, by being never forgiven, but endangering or rendring obnoxious to *Eternal Damnation.* Its not improbable that the Papists might indeed build their Purgatory out of the Ruines of an old Jewish Tradition, that the Sins of all Israelites, except *Doeg* and two or three more, should be forgiven in *futuro seculo*, in the World to come, though they were not in this. Our Saviour here discourages 'em according to their own Supposition, and cuts off all hope from 'em, by assuring 'em that neither here nor there such Blasphemies shou'd obtain Forgiveness, which is far enough from so much as supposing that any Sin shou'd be there forgiven, though it may suppose the Pharisees thought so, but this of all Sins: Nor have we any more reason to embrace one of their Traditions than another, Purgatory any more than Pre-existence, the latter of which we are sure they believ'd, whatever they did by the former. And thus much of this noble Question, of which more hereafter.

Quest. 2. *There are a great many very excellent Books, written by several Learned and pious men in our own Language to reform Mankind, such as Practical Christianity, Duty of Servants, Winters Evening Conference, &c. But the mischief is, they are least known to those who are most concern'd: — Quere, How shall this be remedy'd?*

Ans. We don't doubt but our old Querist included the Whole Duty of Man in his &c. but think he had better insert that and made an &c. of all the rest, tho' they are Books excellently useful in their several kinds; for

for this Author includes all that's necessary to be known and believed almost for all Conditions; 'tis cheap, 'tis known, and justly and universally valu'd. But for those who have more time, leisure, and Money, they would do well to get the rest here mention'd, especially that of the *Winter-Evenings Conference*, one of the most Ingenious Pieces that has appear'd these late Years, and which can only be equal'd by others of the same Author.

Quest. 3. I've Observ'd that most Women about Town, at least most that I've Convers'd with, are generally for King James — Pray can you tell me the Reason?

Ans. We won't be so uncivil to put another Question of our own instead of Answer to our Querist, nor enquire — What sort of Women his Conversation lyes most amongst — but shall fairly answer by another which we have really receiv'd, and have upon the File to produce, being exactly on the same Subject — and 'tis this — Whether the true Reason why so many o'th' Women o'th' Town don't Love King William, be not because his Souldiers sav'd 'em from being Ravish'd? — But he's an *Unlucky Fellow*, and we'll e'ne leave those who are most concern'd to give him an Answer.

Quest. 4. Was an Eunuch ever in Love, as other Men?

Ans. So *Martial* thought, as appears by his *roguish Verses*, take Love in what sense you will. And so it seems did the *Ladies of Rome* in his time, unless he wrongs 'em. And *Selim* the Emperor was much of the same mind, when from the famous instance of the *Gelding*, &c. he order'd such *clear Work* to be made ever after.

Quest. 5. Pray your Exposition of *ῥεῖγρον* in these two following Verses of *Sappho* about Love?

ὥς ἴδον σε, ῥεῖγρον ἐμὸν ἦν αὐδαῖς
οὐδ' ἐν ἔδ' ἦκα

Ans. *Catullus*, and after him *Monsieur Boileau* have Translated this Passage not over clearly; and such as would know it exactly, ought to have a tollerable acquaintance with the Character of *Sappho*, who was certainly the most Amorous and Passionate of her Sex. We shan't Dispute whether she was call'd *Mascula Sappho*, from her indefatigable Pains in the Prosecution of *Phaon* in her Amours, who fled into *Sicily* to be freed from her, tho' in Vain, (for she pursu'd him in Person in Elegies, &c.) or whether she was so call'd from the desperate Action of throwing her self headlong into the Sea, because of *Phaon's* Neglect; every Body agrees 'twas one of these two things, and if either such an Expression as in the Query, is as proper a result of her Passionate Temper as any thing that cou'd be expected. *Tanaquil Faber* reads it ὥς ῥεῖγρον, as also the Edition of *Longinus* at Oxford. *Vossius* tells us that in the French King's Library ὥς ῥεῖδω σε ῥεῖγρον με φωνῶς, &c. in the *Aolian* Dialect; but be it which way it will, 'tis intelligible enough, and exactly follow'd by the Latin Poet — *Vox faucibus hæsit*, I cou'd not utter what I would have said, when I see, or saw thee, (to follow both) my Words stuck in my Throat.

Quest. 6. Whether Jael did well in killing Sisera? if she did well, will then Infidelity and Treacherous Murder be lawful towards an Infidel? if not, how is it that she is so much praised, even in an Hymn inspired by the Holy Spirit of God?

Ans. Undoubtedly she did well in what she did, since she is Prais'd by the Dictates of that which very well knew the Merit of the Action, we mean the Holy Spirit; but we believe that there might be some particulars omitted in the History about the Circumstances of this War, &c. which would have rendered the relation more commendable and honourable than it is; which since we know not, we may very well sit down contented in the general Suffrage the Holy Ghost has given of her, *Blessed above all Women shall she be in the Tent*; intimating thereby the Action to be just and honourable, tho' the Reasons of her Action are not set down; tho' in the preceeding 23d. Verse, we find the Angel of the Lord Cursing such as refus'd the same Assistance that *Jael* lent.

Quest. 7. In reading Latin Authors I am frequently at a loss about their reckoning their Hours: I desire you would be

pleased to inform me better; and for instance to tell me what a Clock their *Hora Nona* is, according to our Computation?

Ans. The *Romans* reckoned not as we do, twenty four Hours to a Natural Day, but by the Artificial Day, betwixt Sun-rising or Sun-set, so that their Hours were longer or shorter, as their Day was; they alway reckoning Noon, or twelve o'th' Clock, to be the middle of the day, and call'd it their sixth Hour; if so, their Ninth Hour was precisely our three o'th' Clock, if we compute it at such time as the Sun sets at 6 and rises at 6: But if we Compute day when 'tis almost sixteen of our Hours long, or but about Eight Hours short, there must be Allowances made both wayes.

Next Tuesday (in our *Mercury*) will be Published an Answer to a Paper entituled *The Athenian Society* in vail'd, wherein our former Charge on the *Quakers* is made good, and their Objections Answer'd, and a fuller Account given of the Principles and Practices of those deluded People.

Advertisements.

THE YOUNG STUDENTS LIBRARY (will be Publish'd next Monday) containing Extracts and Abridgments of the most Valuable Books Printed in England and in the Foreign Journals, from the Year 1691 to this time: To which is added a NEW ESSAY upon all sorts of Learning, and a Discourse concerning the Antiquity, Divine Original and Authority of the *Hebrew Vowels and Accents* that are placed to the *Hebrew Bible* By the ATHENIAN SOCIETY. Also an EMBLEM of the said Society, and a large ALPHABETICAL TABLE, comprehending the Contents of this Volume, and of all the *Athenian Mercuries* and Supplements, &c. Printed in the Year 1691. This Book will be Advanc'd in Price to those that have not Subscrib'd for it; but to such as have, 'twill be Deliver'd to 'em upon the Terms mention'd in the Proposals, (notwithstanding the Book several Sheets more than was at first Promis'd) provided they deliver up their Receipts, and send in their several Payments to *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*. Of whom is to be had the Entire Set of *Athenian Mercuries*, and Supplements to 'em, for the Year 1691. (single Mercuries to this time.)

Two Discourses: The First concerning the different Wits of Men. The Second, a brief Discourse concerning the Various Sicknesses of Wines, and their respective remedies at this day commonly used; Deliver'd to the Royal Society. By *Walt. Charleton*, M. D. To which is added in this Third Edition, the Art and Mystery of Vintners and Wine-Coopers, containing approved Directions for Conserving and Curing all manner and Sorts of Wines; whether Spanish, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, French, as it is now practis'd in the City of London, Printed for *Will. Whitwood* at the *Angel* and *able* in *Little Britain*. 1692.

** This is to Certifie all Gentlemen and others, that *Glaiz-Painting* is still continued and performed by *Halley*, who is now removed to the *Red-Hart* in *Fleet Lane*.

IN *Grays-Inn-lane* in *Flow-yard*, the third Door, liveth *Thomas Kirlew*, a Collegiate Physician, and Sworn Physician in Ordinary to King *Charles the Second*, until his death who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Business) undertakes to Cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Nose, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leprosies, and Venereal Disease, and nothing until the Cure be finished: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carried evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. Drink is 3 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions for the better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanse the Blood of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropsies, Gouts, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With a Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Disorders without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion of all that writes or comes for nothing.

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