

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 7. 1692.

An Answer to a Paper entituled, *The Athenian Society Unvail'd: Wherein our former Charge on the Quakers is made good, their Objections Answer'd, and a fuller Account given of the Principles and Practices of those deluded People.*

Being confin'd to the narrow Limits of about a Sheet in *Disquisitions* on the present Controversie, and therein oblig'd to Answer a large double sheet of our *Adversaries*, as well as to enquire into many of their *Authors*, we have neither room or time for such *Harangues* as make their *Porch* almost as big as their *House*, we shall only premise, That we are oblig'd to these People for their publick Challenge, which has forc'd us to look more narrowly into their *Writings* than we had formerly done, and consequently to know 'em better, and like 'em worse; and that we shall save as much room as we can by neither answering nor returning that *fine Language* which in their Paper they so abundantly bestow on us, as well as we find on all their other *Antagonists*.

They begin with a long Harangue, That *Truth is always persecuted*, which will indifferently serve for Turk, Jew or Heathen, as well as themselves, or any other *Hereticks*. However, to requite 'em, we'll prove they themselves are for persecution, take it ev'n in the notion of inflicting penalties for following the *Dictates* of a mistaken Conscience, that they have exercis'd it, that they have advis'd it, and commended it. They have themselves persecuted as far as they can in words and actions: Their words we shall anon give an account of, their actions are, Excommunicating such as will not submit to their *Injunctions*, or as sell any *Books* against 'em; and even Imprisoning those who have disturb'd their Meetings, (See *Francis Bugs*, One blow more, &c. p. 2.) and this against all Law and right, tho' they exclaim so loudly against others for serving 'em after the same manner. That they have advis'd and commended it in others, See *Geo. Fox's Counsel and Advice rejected*, p. 36, 37. his words are these to Oliver, 'Thou shoudst have invited all Nations upon Earth that are against Popery to come in and joyn with thee against Popery, for thou hast had Authority, stand to it, lose it not, nor abuse it, nor let any other take thy CROWN! Let the Souldiers go forth with a free and willing heart, that thou mayst rock Nations as a Cradle: And in another Letter from the same Person to the same Usurper, 'O Oliver! hadst thou bin faithful, and thunder'd down Deceit, the Hollanders had bin thy Subjects and Tributaries, Germany had bin given up to do thy Will, the Spaniards had quiver'd like a dry leaf, the K. of France, Pope, Turk and all [in all his Farness] shoud have smok'd. And this we think is Persecution with a witness, to have conquer'd or destroy'd all Europe, because of a different Religion, for it must have been for that reason, or none at all. But they may say, This is only what he might have done, and to Papists and Foreigners: You are to believe, as their Mouth W. Pen says for 'em, that they were all Loyal to K. Charles the first, and suffer'd for being so: For that see what follows, the same Fox to Oliver, 'Thou shoudst not have stood trifling about small things, (cutting off Kings Heads, &c.) but minded the Work of the Lord. As he began with thee at first, sober men, and True hearts took part with thee. Thy Dread is not all gone, nor thy Amazement, Arise and come forth. Woud you have yet clearer proofs of their boasted Loyalty, unwillingness to persecute, &c? you shall have 'em from another of their Prophets, one George Ross, who thus bespeaks the Usur-

per, 'To thee Oliver Cromwell, thus saith the Lord, I have chosen thee amongst the thousands of the Nations, to execute my Wrath upon mine Enemies; and gave them to thy Sword, with which I fought, for the Zeal of my own Name, and gave thee the Enemies of my own seed, to be a Curse and Reproach for ever, and made thee an Instrument against them, and many have I cut down by my Sword in thy hand, that my Wrath may be executed upon them to the utmost. — And these are the men that boast their Loyalty, that cry out Persecution, and charge others they write against with being concern'd in the Plunders and Murthers of that unhappy Age.

They next blame us for transcribing the *Jesuits maxims*, widening differences, disturbing the peace of Government: What the *Jesuits maxims* are, there's no doubt but the Quakers very well know; but we are sure none of 'em ever lit upon the expedient of widening differences by endeavouring to unite 'em, and taking the right way to do it, by declaring the ill principles of ill men, who oppose the publick Establishment, from their own authentick writings, for which reason we shall pass by their flourish of Satans not being more Holy for being in an Athenian, or in one call'd a Christian; by which last phrase may be we hope they don't mean a Quaker, tho' some will say, if ever he has bin in any in this last Age, 'tis they who must pretend to his Acquaintance, nor do we know of any Quaker among the Athenians.

They blame us for stigmatizing those as silly *Enthusiasts*, who believe 'tis not lawful to swear: We did so, and are still of the same mind, ready to defend what we there asserted, which thus we do. Those are silly *Enthusiasts*, who without reason, by the dictates of their own Fancy, which they call Gods Spirit, oppose such a practice as has been used by the Saints of old, of which 'twas prophesied that it shoud be used under the Gospel, was so by the Apostles of our Saviour, and Primitive Christians, nay, by God himself. This the Quakers do, therefore they are what we have call'd 'em; which will be plain, if we prove Oaths are such a practice: And first, they were used by the Saints in the Old Testament, particularly by Moses the greatest Prophet next our Saviour that ever was, and this not in a sudden passion, but a form'd Sermon, or a Compendium of the Law, to remain with Gods People, Deut. 4. 26. I call Heaven and Earth to witness; that's God and Man, and attesting God to the Truth of any thing, has the formality of an Oath. 'Twas prophesied of Isa. 19. 18. In that day shall five Cities in the land of Egypt swear to the Lord of Hosts. This relates to the times of the Gospel, by what follows, v. 20. He shall send 'em a Saviour and a great one, compared with that other Scripture, Out of Egypt have I call'd my Son: So yet more plainly in other places Oaths were used by the Apostles, many times by St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, Rom. 1. 9. God is my witness, 2 Cor. 11. 31. God knoweth that I lie not, Gal. 1. 20. Before God I lie not. If these are not formal Oaths, we'd fain know what are. The primitive Christians did the same, following and pleading the Apostles Example. Tertullian says they used to swear, tho' they woud not do it by the Genius of the Emperor. Athanasius purged himself by an Oath before the Emperor Constantius, pleading the Apostles Example, and that he had learnt of him to call God to record upon his Soul; nay says, 'Twas the Custom of Christians to do so, and in the Synod of Ephesus an Oath was imposed on Victor and Nestorius; which will teach us to interpret several passages in the Fathers Writings which seem to condemn all swearing, since their practice shows they thereby only intended taking Gods Name in vain, or swearing on any



any other but lawful occasion. Lastly, God himself swears in many places of Scripture, Gen. 22. 16. By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord: And Heb. 6. 13. Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. Now to their Objections: 1. "Whether since the very End of Christ's coming into the World, as is testified, was to take away sin, and finish transgression, he did not thereby supersede the Use of all Oaths? We Answer; No, it did not, for St. Paul himself uses 'em, as is Prov'd, which he would not have done, had there been no need of 'em, unless they'll speak out, and say as they use to do, "That there St. Paul had not the Spirit. But further, the End of his Coming was, we grant, to Atone for all Sin, and take it away as to its force and power, in those who believe and obey him, but not its very Being, as long as the World remains. This is plain, because all that Christ intends, certainly comes to pass: This the Event shows does not come to pass, therefore twas never his End, or he never intended it — Because he Prophecies that Sin should continue to the End of the World, whereas 'tis a doubt whether Faith shall; because this confounds the State of Perfection and Probation.

Their second Query or Objection is, — "Whether if Men did cooperate with the assistance that Christ Jesus lends, and obey the Precepts he has given, they might not thereby obtain the End of his Coming? This is partly clear'd in the last — He came indeed to reform the World, but not to render it sinless 'till that time when his Church is to be presented to his Father without spot or wrinkle; for while we are in this World, in many things we offend all, 3 St. James 2. and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us, 1 St. John 1. 8. and otherwise our Saviour has taught us to mock God, when he bids us to Pray to him — To forgive our Trespases; (nay, resumes that Petition above all the rest) and if they urge, we are not to Pray in the same words, we are at least to do it after that manner — But the Quakers are all better Men than the Apostles, and either are, or think themselves such just Persons that they need no forgiveness, nor ask any in their Prayers; if they do, they contradict their own Principles. If they have any such perfect Men among 'em, let 'em produce them; nay, Name 'em, dead or living; tho' if they have writ any thing, 'tis an easie matter to prove 'em imperfect and erroneous both in Faith and Life.

Their third Query is, "Whether there's any positive Command in the Gospel, enforc'd by words, more comprehensive, full, positive and pertinent, than this of Swear not, &c? In Answer, Let them show us a more positive Command than that, He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that has none; which yet should they literally follow in the Winter-time, would even make 'em look worse than they do already. Both therefore are to be understood with a meaning, (a thing they don't love) and this meaning is clear'd as to Swearing by the Circumstances of the Text and Context, and Practices of Holy Men, from both which we learn that it relates to Swearing frequently, vainly, in common Converse; and therefore is the ensuing Direction added — Let your Communication, &c. Sermo, λόγος, which plainly relates to Ordinary Discourse.

They go on, and Charge us with Malice, Impudence and Wickedness, for misrepresenting them and their Opinions (as their near Kindred did some time since) and Complain, p. 2. col. 1st. "That we affirm the Quakers Opinions are dangerous and detestable, (as indeed, say they, they were, were it true that we afterwards affirm) that they speak contemptibly of the Bible, and will by no means allow it to be God's Word. That they have turned the most sacred truths therein contained into jejune Allegories: That they speak not very honourably of our Saviour, deny the Trinity, and embrace that other Socinian Dream of the Souls sleeping 'till the Resurrection: That they have been e're since their rise lookt upon as By-blows of the Jesuits; deny the plenary Satisfaction of Christ, and rest on their own Merits: That Fanaticism, Enthusiasm and Infidelity together, make up the Creed of a Quaker, they being a Compendium of almost all sorts of Heresies, that they deny the Satisfaction and Divinity of Christ, as also his Humanity; nay, deny An-

gels, Spirits, Heaven and Hell, and the Existence of Souls after Death.

This we acknowledge is the main of our Charge upon them, tho' not so generally worded in our Papers. This then if we can make good, they fairly own that their Opinions are dangerous and detestable, any of these Opinions, without exception, those which we afterwards affirm, to use their own words — all which if we do not clear from their own Writings, (bating but that one of the Souls sleeping, wherein there was some small mistake, tho' we'll give them two worse Heresies in the room on't, which will more than make up the Number) we will publicly acknowledge our selves not only imprudent and mistaken, but guilty of that Malice, Impudence and Wickedness wherewith they Charge us. And now to Business —

The 1st. thing we Charge upon 'em, and they deny, is, Speaking contemptibly of the Bible, which we thus prove against 'em. Those who deny the Bible to be an adequate Rule of Faith and Manners, that is, such a Rule as reaches all Occasions; who deny it to be necessary; who equal the Apocrypha, nay, their own Writings with it; who use the self-same Expressions concerning it with the Papists and Jesuits, calling it a Nose of Wax, a Lesbian Rule, a Dead Letter, those Men certainly speak Contemptibly of it: But this the Quakers do, which we prove — Their famous Barclay, whom they themselves direct us to, in his 2d. Proposition, of immediate Revelation, p. 25. says, "There be many Truths most needfull to be known, which are no wise to be found in the Scripture. And Prop. 3d. p. 38. positively affirms, and afterwards pretends to prove, "That the Scriptures are not the adequate Rule of Faith and Manners — which he prosecutes p. 43. in these words, "That which is given to Christians for a Rule and Guide, must needs be so full, as it may clearly and distinctly Guide and Order them in all things and Occurrences that may fall out: But there are many hundred things which particular Christians may be concern'd in, for which there can be no particular Rule had in the Scripture, therefore the Scripture can't be a Rule to them. In which words he's so far from granting it an adequate Rule, that he as good as affirms 'tis no Rule at all; both of which assertions are exactly contrary to God's Word, 2 Tim. 3. 17. where 'tis not only said, that the Scripture is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, &c. but that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work; which certainly reaches particular Occasions, for every good work admits of no exception.

We are forced here to break off abruptly, for want of room, but shall continue our Discourse in the next Mercury.

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