

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, September 17. 1692. Licens'd, E. Bohun.

Quest. 1. **W**hat is your Opinion of the late Earthquakes?

Ans. The Earth is founded upon the Waters, whose subterraneous Channels may be intercepted in some parts of the World by Earth, bituminous and sulphureous Substances; it's evident, some Rocks afford Oyl, as Oyl of Peter, and other Liquors, which will burn like Oyl or Spirits dissolved by subterraneous Heats and Fires, from whence Sulphury, Nitrous and inflameable Vapours are Created, which often take Fire by the Air, which pervades the Caverns of the Earth, then causing a Roaring, the Precursor of an Earthquake or Eruption near: If the Matter in the Volts be much, the Vapours fill the Circumjacent Channels and Cavities so fast, that if they prohibit their passage, the confin'd Wind expands the Concavities, rends the Earth, and the Air intromitting the cracks, fires the Steams, which blows up the Earth, and a fiery Volcano breaks out, or a Sea, or an Island, or hot water, or Pestilence, by the infectious Vapours, or a new River rises, or old River disappears. Dion in the Life of Trajan, has Instances of both. Plato in Tim. assures us the Atlantick Island sunk and became a Sea: And Sabin in his Comment. on Ovid lib. 15. Fab. 3. tells us, in An. 1549. a Ship with its Anchors was found swallowed up in a Mine of the Alps. But most remarkable is that in Sandy's Travels, 29 Sept. 1538. near the Kingdom of Naples, where after several days trembling of the Earth in the Circumjacent Countreys, about the second hour of the Night, the Sea retired, fresh water rose at the bottom of the Shore, and a Mountain visibly ascended, with hideous roarings, vomiting of Stones and Cinders. It also appears by the Monuments of our Histories, that Earthquakes have done much damage in divers parts in England: If the Fire continue in the Volts, the Vapours, or Wind may be successively transmitted throughout the Concavities of the Earth, and cause a trembling in most parts of the World, more or less according as it meets with opposition from other vapours, and untill it expire; and such an Earthquake Eusebius mentions 369, and the late Earthquake here in England, and that in Flanders and Hollaad, might be from vapours dispersed from that in Jamaica. These are some of the Material and Natural Causes, but the final Cause is the Divine Vengeance.

Quest. 2. A Friend of mine bought some things for a Gentlemans Wife, but she dyed before she had 'em; and my Friend gave them me, the value was 5 l. odd money: However, my Friend amongst other things in the Bill which he brought her Husband, reckoned these also, ought I to inform the Gentleman, that if he'll be so generoas not to expose my Friend I will pay him in some time as much as they were reasonably worth when given to me, for my Friend would, and the Gentleman if in his hands must have sold 'em to some loss; if I ought to do this, or otherwise I know not how unless as above, because I dare not urge it to my Friend, for he's angry that I shou'd dispute his honesty or kindness, the last I shall be sure to lose if I for needless Scruples should expose him, and I'm afraid my Repentance cannot be sincere and acceptable till I am satisfied in this?

Ans. You are oblig'd as a Christian, or a good Moral Man, (and 'tis hop'd you are not willing to quit either of those pretensions) either to persuade your Friend who indeed is the chief Aggressor to make Restitution, or else for you to do it your self; for 'tis injustice in you to detain any persons Goods without his Knowledge or Consent, so 'tis double injustice in your Friend to take Moneys for nothing, as also to dispose of what was not his own. Now to ask whether a Continuance in such an ill Action (especially where Restitution may be made) does hinder the Sincerity of a Repentance, is too gross a Question for any one that has learn'd the first Principles of Christianity. You may send the value without discovering the Party, or the Cause, and it is enough.

Quest. 3. Whether Angels be really Corporeal or no, since 'tis asserted by St. Austin, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Bernard, and above twenty more of the Ancient Fathers; besides other Authors living in all times of the Church, and of late by Scheibler, Flud, Webster, Dr. Moor, &c. all learned Men, and able Philosophers?

Ans. We can't deny 'em to have Bodies, after so many great men have asserted the contrary; but what sort of Bodies they carry about 'em, how they move, act, &c. is and will certainly be a Riddle to all of us till the Resurrection, and really 'tis a Matter of no great Consequence to be ignorant till then in a thousand more more such Abstruse Matters.

Quest. 4. We read in many very good Authors, and I my self have known it, it being so common a thing, that before a King, or some great Man dyes, or is beheaded, &c. his Picture or Image suffers some considerable Damage, as falling from the place where it hung, the string breaking by some strange invisible touch?

Ans. Dr. Heylin in his Life of Bishop Laud, (as the Querist had also observ'd) gives such an Instance as this, viz. That the Bishop going into his Study, which no body cou'd get into but himself, found his own Picture lying all along on its Face, which extremely perplexed him, he looking upon it as ominous. As for the manner of the Action, we suppose it may be rank'd under the Classis of Voices, Appearances, raps with invisible Wands upon the Wall, &c. which God Almighty may Commissionate his Angels or Spirits to do, in order to give his Creatures notice of their Change, and to make preparation for it, or for other reasons best known to himself.

1.

Quest. 5. Say if your Studies can devise,
Or what new Methods can you find,
That Men made up of Oaths and Lyes
May yet be Charm'd by Woman-kind?

2.

Or since the Task so hard does prove,
What is't that our poor Sex must do,
While though we would declare our Love,
'Tis yet too dangerous to Wee?

3.

If we Surrender soon our Hearts,
Those easie Conquests you disdain,
Yet rail at all our Female Arts,
And swear that Maids should never feign.

4.

How wretched then is Virgin Youth,
Which neither Path can safely try,
Since Scorn attends on speaking Truth,
And Virtue yet forbids to Lye?

1.

Ans. A brave Resistance gives renown,
Whilst easie Conquests all disdain;
The longer you defend the Town,
The greater Honour still you gain.

2.

Nor ever was't esteem'd disgrace
When there's no Succours in the Field;
Altho' you'll not betray the Place,
On honourable Terms to yield.

3. That

3.

That weak within you need not own
To those who eagerly pursue,
Nor are without our Forces known,
But you Cheat us and we Cheat you.

4.

From Questions by ensnaring Youth
Propos'd, your Wit must set you free,
You need not tell us all the Truth,
You're on your Oaths no more than we.

Quest. 6. This Pindarick Fragment includes a Question
which you are desired to Answer :

Once, with as little Wit as Grace I said
That every Muse
Did but her Language, Sense and Subject too abuse,
Her Flights of Fancy all her humour and her smoothness
When she her Tribute to Religion paid ; (lost,
Such Arguments as these
Fed up the early Error into a Disease:
That Sacred things by strange Poetic rapture to'st
Much of their awful Grandeur lost,
That the becoming Gravity of Matters all-divine
In Poetry are hid, and cannot with their native lustre shine.
At least the sacred Style became
A Prey to Vanity and Fame,
That Numbers did confine
To shallow jingling measures things that are divine ;
Impos'd upon the sense
And narrow'd all the Sacred Eloquence ;
Fetters the vigorous Style with dull Essays of Wit,
Still Paraphrasing what was neither meant nor writ,
'Till the emphatic Strains and lofty Phrase that every where
In Sacred Writ with Majesty appear,
Are by the best of Pens misus'd,
By most abus'd ;
Better'd by none, but hackney'd up and down,
'Till that small Reverence once we paid dwindles away to
(none

1.

Ans. Pardon me all you great inspired Train,
If I your sacred Names assume in vain,
And like Æneas by the Goddess led,
Disturb the quiet Mansions of the dead,
Where mighty Cowley, where sweet Waller lies,
And their own deathless Numbers sing,
Whilst gentle Spirits Divine Nephthe bring,
And drown the sense of mortal miseries.
Arise blest Shades ! arise,
If ought you yet are mov'd with sense of Fame,
If ought with undeserved blame,
Arise and aid — in your own Cause engage
With an ill-natur'd and an impious Age,
Who Wit wou'd fain confine to th' Stage or Stews,
Debauch each Grace, and ravish every Muse ;
And where their Cursed Arts cannot prevail,
Their odious Love soon sours to spite,
Where they before ador'd, blaspheme and rail,
And swear fair Virtue's self's a hypocrite :
Sneaking and dull, and fit to make a Slave,
And Vice alone is witty, wise and brave.
Not all the Colours Verse can give,
Can make it fair, or make it live.

2.

We need no more than your fair works oppose
To these unhandsome Foes ;
How have you made bright Virtue brighter shine !
And while your Noble Art erects its Shrine,
Divinity it self almost seems more divine :
Its Charms so numerous and resistless prove,
We know not which we first shou'd love,
Whether immortal Cowley does rehearse
His Hero in immortal Verse ;
Or bolder in great Pindar's footsteps move,
From Cloud to Cloud still fearless rove,
Nor stops 'till at the glittering Walls of Fove ;
To Light it self new Light he brings,
Like the great Spirit, o're Chaos spreads his Wings,
Loud, as the Cherubs Trump, the Resurrection sings.

Or mighty Milton walks thro' Paths untrod,
And sings the ancient Wars of God,
As on the Stage we see it acted o're,
Almost as lively as before,
Here Turns meet Turns, and grappling fall
Abrupt o're Heaven's high Wall :
Thro' frighted Chaos there,
Like scatter'd drops of dying Light they glare,
And here the brazen Pandæmonium rear.

3.

Sweet Herbert ! who can ever weary be,
That writes or reads, or thinks of thee ?
Thee, or great Sandys, whose illustrious Name
Is ev'n to distant Asia known,
Who stript of his disguise has David shown :
Smooth Patrick, since a partner in thy Fame,
Crasshaw, for whom our love and grief are paid,
Whom Cowley sung, as he the Sacred Maid :
With Norris who from divine Plato brings
Truths which he more divinely sings.
These, and a thousand more in Ages past,
Whose Works shall long as this great Poem last :
Nor here let Envy change its side, and cry,
Why all this waste ? Truth needs no Poetry.
True, yet it more perswades, if neatly told,
Nor is a Jewel worse for being set in Gold.
Wit's only Nature to the life express'd,
In her own unaffected Beautys dress'd ;
Tho' lasting, firm, and noble all,
The Copy can't exceed the Originall :
'Tis a just stroke, a lucky hit,
And Poetry's the Flower of Wit.
If for the Altar we the best prepare,
How can we fail to find acceptance there ?

When we have receiv'd Poetical Questions enough to fill up
a Mercury, you may expect another Entertainment of this
kind.

* * The Ladys Questions will be Answer'd speedily.

☞ All Ingenious Querists are desired to send in their
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