

# The Athenian Mercury:

Resolving WEEKLY all the most

*Nice and Curious Questions*

Propos'd by the I N G E N I O U S.

Saturday, April 18 1691.

Quest. 1. **W** Here was Paradise?

*Answ.* If we find the Rivers, some or all, the Scituation, the very Name *Eden*—we shall go very far toward the discovery of the place itself. For not so much as to mention the whimsys of those who place it in the middle Region of the Air in the Moon, or where their own giddy Fancy pleases, the incomparable Sir *Walter Rawleigh*, one of the greatest Ornaments the Gentry of *England* ever had, has little less than demonstrated to us that 'tis in *Affyria*, in a pleasant Island made by the River *Tygris*. This place is Eastward of the Wilderness, where *Moses* may be supposed to write his History. 'Tis in a Country called *Eden*, (and 'tis the Garden of *Eden*, so says *Moses*, Eastward in *Eden*.) This place is near two of the Rivers mentioned in the Scripture: *Euphrates* and *Tygris* all grant to be *Perath* and *Hiddikel*, and these are joyned by this Isle, and afterwards divided. For the other two Rivers we are thus directed to 'em, one compasses *Havilah*, the other *Chus*, both are near this Island. We have something like *Pison* in the River called *Pasi-Tygris*, and another near the same that circles *Chus* or *Ethiopia*, which therefore may well be supposed to be *Gihon*. If there's no absurdity in all this, and many in any other Hypothesis, what we have here advanced is like to stand till some other advances a better.

Quest. 2. What *Gog* and *Magog* are, and whether yet to be destroyed?

*Answ.* If he means that *Gog* and *Magog* in the *Old Testament*, mentioned by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, it will not be difficult to know who they are by the Company they keep. In one place they are named together with *Meshech* and *Tubal*, in another with *Gomer* and *Togarmah*. 'Twill be a little too far to go seek for *Meshech* in *Muscovy*, or *Tubal* at *St. Ubes* in *Spain*, whom all the most valuable Commentators place a great deal nearer, namely, in some parts of the lesser *Asia*. Here then we ought to seek for *Gog* and *Magog*, and 'tis here, namely, in *Cælosyria*, that *Pliny* himself finds it for us. — *Hierapolis*, says he, a City in

*Cælosyria*, which the *Syrians* call *Magog*.—The same as learned Geographers conclude, which is now named *Aleppo*; in some of the first Ages of the World the most notorious for Idolatry of any other, and a sort of a *Pantheon* for the Heathen Gods, whence it received its Name. For which Reason the Prophet chuses it to express the Enemies of the Church, which should infest it after its Restoration from *Babylon*; as other Prophets both in the *Old* and *New Testament* make *Babylon* it self the head of the Churches Enemies. These People of *Magog*, *Ezekiel* says, should come up and besiege *Jerusalem*, and receive a great overthrow before it; which accordingly happened to a tittle some Ages after, when *Antiochus* or *Seleucus*, Kings of *Syria*, under whose command the forementioned City was, designing to destroy the *Jews*, or at least their Religion, lost so many Armies in the War against 'em, and at length their own Lives by the hand of Heaven. Some indeed think that this Prophecie relates to the same time with that mentioned in the 20th. of the *Revelations*; but the interpretation already brought seems much more natural and easie. If the Proponent means the *Gog* and *Magog* spoke of in the *Revelations*, which shall come up against the *Holy City*, and be destroyed by Fire from Heaven, we answer, It seems probable that by them are meant the whole *Coluwies* of wicked Men, whom the Devil stirs up to disturb the Church toward the End of the World, at the latter end of the thousand years; which whatever is meant by 'em we may undertake almost to demonstrate are not yet past, and therefore *Gog* and *Magog* not yet destroyed.

Q. 3. Whether Monsters are endued with a rational Soul?

*Answ.* The word *Monster* is too general a signification, and ought to have been distinguish'd, whether by *Monster* the Proposer means a monstrous product, from a Natural Generation, as when two of a kind, as Man and Woman, two Monkeys, &c. produce something of the same species, yet with less or more Limbs, or a commixture of both Sexes (for I have seen an *Hermaphrodite* Monkey) or when two Creatures of different Species generate a third betwixt both, as a Man with some other Creature, or a Dog with a Fox, &c. But because of the word rational, we must suppose Humanity concerned in the



the Generation; and then the Question is limited to one of these, a Monster in Humanity, or a Monster partly humane, and partly brute. One answer will serve for both; which is this, As fire is known by the quality of heat, so a rational Soul is distinguishable by its Actions, if the Monster can Number, discourse in Questions and Answers, &c. (which no Creature can be taught but what has the Habit and Act of Ratiocination, it follows, that such a Monster has a rational Soul, and shall be accountable in the day of Judgment for its Actions.

Quest. 4. *Where are Swallows in the Winter-time, and how live they for those six Months?*

Ans. We are informed in History, that as they feel our Region to grow colder, they follow the heat, and visit the Southern Countries, which are more moderate in the Winter-time; just as Beasts and other Creatures in Green-land, for the generality, follow the light to avoid the Solitude of that long and tedious Night: But as some of these by Age, Lameness, or Accident tarry behind, and are starv'd, or are made an unnatural Prey to one another; so those Swallows that tarry behind perhaps from the same Causes, retreat to ruinous Buildings, and subterraneous Caverns, where the Cold makes 'em senseless and void of all appearance of Life, as I have try'd by pricking and dismembring 'em without any sense of Pain; and if they are really dead, as I am satisfied they are, they have no need of Sustenance to maintain what is not, I mean Life. I remember the Royal Society give an Instance of a great cluster of Swallows that were found in a Pond of water, that were joyned together, holding one another by the Legs, Wings and bills, and the Society concludes that they came there by a voluntary choice of that Element; it looks improbable how they should find one another under water, or be all in a mind to fall together; I should rather suppose that they crept into some hollow bank near the Water, which broke and fell in with 'em. If it be ask'd how they can revive again, I answer, the matter of Fact has been proved, not only in them, but Cuckoos. And though I give no great Credit to what Pliny says, that the heat of the Sun does form Creatures in Egypt out of the very Mud; yet I doubt not but that the Sun meeting with Organs already capacitated for Animation, together with some other natural Cause, may revive Swallows, and the rather because by my own Experiment I know that Flies that have been drowned two or three days may be brought to life by the heat of the Sun, or the application of warm Ashes.

Quest. 5. *Whence the Wind has its Force, and the reason of its Changes?*

Ans. From several Causes, the first may possibly be the motion of the Elementary Bodies, as the Sun, Moon, and Stars. The violence of whose Motion (being also such great Bodies) must needs cause a great Agitation of the Winds: if it be objected, That those bodies moving one way, viz. toward the West, we should have always Easterly Winds; We answer, 'tis a mistake, for some move obliquely, and some retrograde; besides the diversity of Exhalations and Clouds cause Repercussions and Changes, by hindring the Course of the Winds. Again, Clouds themselves when they break into Showers, disperse the Winds by falling down, as is evident by the Observation of sudden Winds before Rain.

Quest. 6. *Whether Cambridge or Oxford is the Ancienter University?*

Ans. Oxford by 421 years.

Quest. 7. *What is the cause of Thunder, and what is it?*

Ans. Thunder is generated thus; The heat of the Sun causes an ascension of two sorts of Exhalations, the one of Water, the other of the more Humid and Liquid Parts of the Earth, as the juice of Trees, Plants, Herbs, Manured Fields, and such like, all which have a Natural Salt, or a spiritous sort of Sulphur, which meeting together Coagulate, and are of an inflammable Nature, as appears when they meet with proper Matter, to set them on fire, either by Sympathy or Antipathy, for Fire will produce fire naturally; or Fire may be caused by violent Motion and Rarification of the Air, as when a Flint and Steel are smote together. Now 'tis confessed by all Naturalists that Heat and Cold have the same Effect in many Cases; to mention one, Heat thins and rarifies the Air; or to speak properly, is Air rarified; and so does extremity of Cold, for Cold is but a Privation of Heat, and is no part of the Creation, and the

destruction or change of its Nature terminates again in heat; this being premised, it follows, that Cold which lyes in the middle region of the Air, meeting with its opposite igneous Exhalations, by a kind of an Antiperistasis, the Exhalation is kindled, and the violent strife is the Cause of that Noise we call Thunder-Claps. If we be askt, why a Thunder-bolt is formed like a Pear? (as they have been often found;) We Answer, 'tis natural they should have that shape, for any thing that is liquid, before its Condensation, falls in drops, some bigger, and some lesser, but all drops just as they fall, appear bottled, and shaped like a Pear, so these bituminous, sulphurous, liquid Exhalations, as they are melted by the Extremity of heat, falling (or rather with Violence thrown) through the Air, become hard. That they are composed of a sulphurous Matter, is evident in this, that where a Thunder-bolt falls, there is a strong smell of Sulphur or Brimstone.

Quest. 8. *What are the Clouds, and where when the Air is clear?*

Ans. The Clouds are of two sorts, one an Exhalation of Water, the other of a more Terrestrial Matter, as we have already mentioned; but where such are when the Air is clear, seems a little greater difficulty, though not an impossibility to resolve: Suppose then a Room, through which there are some Chinks for the rayes of the Sun to enter, if you look upon those rayes, you may plainly discern the innumerable Atoms which dance in the Air but if you go out to look for them in the Air, where the whole Body of the Sun has its effect, there's not an Atom to be seen, though there are Atoms there also; from this instance it appears, that the truest representation of light is when a darker Body is by; for no Man can judg of Light without Darkness, nor of Motion without something fixt, &c. *contra*; now the Clouds being rarify'd through an excessive Heat, or drawn up a great distance from the Earth, are invisible to us, and appear like Air through the abundance of Light, without commixture of Darkness, which proportionably contracts our Optick Nerves; this is evident, for after the clearest and hottest day, when the Element begins to be a little darkned, through the approaching Night, the Clouds become visible, and we see what too much light debarred before.

Quest. 9. *Is the Soul Subject to Passion?*

Ans. We never see a dead Man quarrelsome, and the Bodies of the living are but vivified Clay animated by the Soul, so that Passion is an action of the Soul. I cannot possibly tell what the Querist means; he might as well have askt, Whether the Soul is subject to life? or to speak purer Nonsense, Whether the Soul is subject to it self? if the Inquirer please to speak his mind in some other terms, we'll endeavour his further satisfaction.

## Advertisement.

That nothing might be wanting to render our Athenian Project serviceable to the Publick, we shall now give a further Account of what we design'd from our very first engaging in it — which was not only to confine our selves to Answer all manner of Questions whatever that shall be sent us, fit for a Resolution, (which shall also be perform'd from Week to Week either in single Numbers, or at the end of every Volume, for the Reasons hinted in Numb. 2.) but also to give Accounts of most Books transmitted to us from Foreign Parts, in Order whereto we have already settled a Correspondence beyond Sea being resolved to spare no Charges to gratifie the Ingenious.

We design also to insert the Transactions and Experiments of several English Virtuoso's, and what ever else is CURIOUS that shall be sent us from time to time, and to transcribe (that so we may the more fully make good our Title) from the Acta Eruditorum Lipsiæ, the Paris Journal des Scavans, the Giornali de Letterati, Printed at Rome and the Universal Historical Bibliotheque, &c. all that we conceive will be lookt upon here as valuable — A L L which we intend to add at the end of every Volume, they being Licensed and Entered, and now Translating in order to it.

We shall all along publish every Volume (with a Preface and Index to it) as soon as ever we have received Questions enough to fill up Numb. 30. that so those Querists that stay longest for Answers may not think us tedious.

This Paper will be Publisht alwayes on Tuesdays and Saturdayes, the Authors of it having now Obliged themselves to be constant to those two dayes.

After the 20th. of April continue to send your New Questions as directed in the first Gazet, viz. to be left at Mr. Smith's Coffee-house in the Stocks-market.