

# The Athenian Mercury :

Tuesday, May 11. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether a Friendship contracted by single Persons may continue with the same Zeal and Innocence if either Marry?

Ans. That excellent Person, the Reverend Bishop Sanderson has a Case very near akin to this, if not Nicer, which the Persons concern'd will find extreamly well worth their reading and consideration.—In the mean time we Answer—It may, tho' Ten to One if it does; since in those Circumstances there will be a great hazard that either the Innocence will spoil the Zeal, or the Zeal the Innocence: Not but that there's a great deal depends on the Characters of the Persons concern'd; a Friendship may perhaps be innocent where 'tis not safe; but hardly either long, in this Case, unless between those of great Prudence and Vertue, since 'tis oftentimes only a pretence, and as such one of the most dangerous things in the World. In the mean time, as generosity may be criminal, so suspicion is base, and one infallibly ruins Friendship as the other may Vertue and Honour, ttho' a prudent Caution may perhaps be a Medium between both. The worst on't seems to be here—that seeing Friendship can be only in the height (as we have formerly described it) between two, how shall it remain with equal Zeal and Innocence, at least Justice, when one is Marry'd? For either there must be more or less tenderness for the Friend than for the Wife or Husband—If more, 'tis Injustice; for People ought not to Marry any but such as are fit to make Friends; if less, the former Friendship must be diminish'd, as if the Marriage be happy it generally, perhaps always is. If I amn't mistaken, the pinch is here, and the Solution accordingly, That if the Friendship between the Persons marry'd have but the ascendant, and if that be continued with the highest degree of Zeal, any lower measure of that and Friendship may innocently remain where it was before planted.

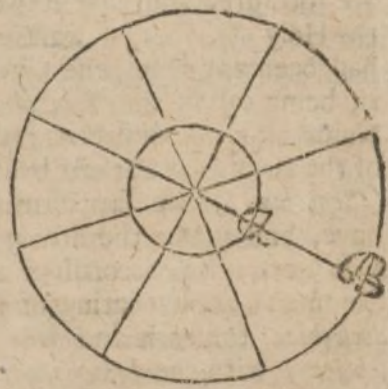
Quest. 2. What is the Reason that when Women with Child long for Fruits, &c. the Mark of that which they long for is often imprinted in some part of the Child's Body?

Ans. By the power of Imagination all agree, but how that which we may very near say is not, or has of it self no real Being shou'd produce such strange undeniable effects, is not so easily sol'd. I indeed very much doubt the Truth of some prodigious Instances which are brought on this Head, and still must take leave to do so, till we have some more unquestionable Authority for't than Sir K. D's, who being a Traveller as well as the famous Sir H. B. has been thought by some to take as great a Liberty in Physicks as the other in History.—Nor, supposing some of those instances true, does it seem possible to account for 'em without recourse to supernatural Causes—For Example—that which is told of the Woman, who being present at an Execution where the Malefactor was beheaded, immediately came home with the impression of it so strong on her Fancy, that in a short time after she fell in Travail, and was deliver'd of a Child without a Head, that part being freshly bleeding, and newly separated from the Body—(which if true, the suffering Women to be present at the Execution of our Traytors, may have worse effects than is easily imagin'd) And as such instances as these seem impossible to be accounted for, so the others, tho' of more undoubted Truth, are not very easily clear'd: What appears probable, and sufficiently plausible on this Head, as to the common Marks and Signatures which several Children receive from their Parents, and bear on their Bodies till they go out of the World, is to this purpose—The Imaginations of pregnant Women, their Humours being extreamly stirr'd and disturb'd, must needs be very strong and lively: That of some Men is so powerful, that it has produced real Pains in several parts of their Bodies; nay, we are told of some whom Fancy only has kill'd. The Fætus in the Womb is a sort of a Vegetable, joyn'd to the Mo-

ther as a Branch to the Root, or rather as the Plants of the Indian Figg-tree to one another by a small String or Ligament. All its nourishment it must therefore receive from her, together with which nourishment, and by the same way, the spirits find a passage, and the Blood circulating through the Fætus, may as 'tis chang'd by Degrees into the Flesh, form such Impressions there, as it before receiv'd from the Mother: For to speak Truth, the Mother seems to have as much power over the Child's Body, nay, more than she has over her own. Now it must be by the Animal Spirits that the Soul works on the Body, commanding it as it pleases, to move a Foot, an Arm, or any other part—and yet more Power the Mothers Soul has on the tender Fætus—it impresses thereon all its Passions, its Joys and Pains, as Mothers Experience, and accordingly, any Object being strongly fix'd on the Mothers Fancy, 'tis thence transferr'd to the Childs Body.

Quest. 3. What's the Reason that the extream part of the Wheel (B) in running round does not move faster in the Semidiameter than the internal part (A) which is nearer the Axis, and hath a lesser way to goe?

Ans. There's no Particle or Atom in Nature so little, but it may have right Lines drawn from it to the greatest distances, as well as a bigger Body: Wherefore, a little Body and the middle of a great one are equally centrali. Now the Center being the Constitutive place of Motion, and not the Extremity of the Wheel, (as is evident if the Extremity be cut off by a lesser Circle, the same Center serves for both) it follows the Supposition is just contrary to what it should be, viz. Why B moves faster than A? the reason of which is—the whole Wheel has but one effective Motion, which is in the middle of it, which produces contrary effects to what it would, if there were two Motions, or one Motion upon the side; for 2 or more diametrical Lines increase in distance as they do in Extension, and by Consequence the Motion arising from the Centre, the Extream Circle (B) must move faster than the Internal Circle (A) to keep the Rectitude of the Diameter, for this Reason is the unequal Motion of a Ship in a Storm, and every cunning Passenger will choose his Cabbin as near the middle as he can, which is nothing near so much toft as the ends. But if there were two Centres and two Circles upon motion, the Case is very different, as in a little and great Coach-wheel, where the little one runs a great deal faster about, to keep the great one Company, because the inequality of Diameters causes the inequality of Circumference and Measures.



Quest. 4. Whether it was a real Serpent that was made use of for the tempting of our First Parents?

Ans. The Naturalists tell us of Serpents, and other Creatures that have humane faces, and we are not without Instances of this in Madagascar, where some of our Ships trade: But whether it was such a Serpent as this, is not material; but we are really perswaded it was a true Serpent which some envious Angel did actuate. Our Reasons are, 1. The Text expressly mentions it to be a Serpent, and adds the Qualification of a Serpent, viz. Subility. 2. Adam knew very well the Nature of all Beasts that he had given names to, and amongst the rest this Serpent: therefore it would be a less surprize to him to see the Serpent act so cunning a part. 3. Adam could not be afraid of it having not yet sinn'd, Sin being the Cause of Fear. 4. 'Twas the Angels cunning to act in that Crea-



Creature, which would least surprize our Parents in, not in an humane shaye; for *Adam* knew there was no more men besides himself; nor are we perhaps so sure as 'tis generally thought, that the *Angels* were actually fallen when *Adam* was tempted. May we not rather think the Tempter was some envious Angel, who with the rest of his Confederates, by giving God the Lye, and seducing *Adam*, fell, and were made Devils: And 'tis not unlikely this is pointed at where the Devil is called a *Deceiver*, and a *Liar* from the beginning: But as to this see Number 7. about the *Fall of Angels*, and the same Question you may expect again at the end of our First Volume.

Quest. 5. *What's the Original Cause of the Gout?*

Ans. The Gout is the product of *Excess*, and irregularities, especially in drinking some *French Wines*, and other sorts of *Liquors* that are saline and acid, which appears by their settling in Casks. This salitude and sharpness causes a *Pungency* and pains in making its way to the pores, where Nature would eject it, and it has been often known to break out in the Fingers ends in a dry calceous or Lymy Substance: 'Tis hereditary sometimes, and something like it is caused by excessive Heats and Colds. I knew a great Lady that in thirty years scarce ever used her hands by reason of the Gout; but being reduced by misfortunes into a mean Condition, an abstemious forced Dyet perfectly freed her from the Companion of her Excesses.

Quest. 6. *Whether it was a real Apple our Parents did eat in Paradise?*

Ans. That our Parents did both eat and transgress we are too sure, and that it was an Apple we doubt not, the Holy Ghost not wanting words to express it, if it had been any thing else; and as for the Tree that bare it, being called the *Tree of Life*, rather than any other Name usual amongst Naturalists, (which had made some of the Primitive Fathers believe both Tree and Apple were Allegorical,) we say it might be such a Tree as we have, and yet be the *Tree of Life*, it being the Object of Life or Death, according as *Adam* kept or broke the Command about eating of it. *Gorop. Betan* in his *Indoeychica*, thinks it an *Indian Figg*. *Paladanus* (upon *Linscholen*) with the *Indians* and *Arabians* have a Fig-tree bearing a kind of fruit which they call an *Apple of Paradise*, or the Evil Fruit. *Malum* signifying both an Apple and Evil; and 'tis remarkable, that an Apple cut cross has in it ten several Cells, which some will have to denote the ten Commands. &c. *Boskheir* holds it to be an *Indian Wheat*.

Quest. 7. *Whether a Circle may be squared; that is, what demonstration can be made of the Equality betwixt a Circle and a Square.*

Ans. We have received two Questions of this Nature, one from *Cambridge*, and one by a Penny Post. Our Answer to both is, that there can never be a demonstration of squaring a Circle, because the first Circle that was ever found equal to a square, was not found by any Caution but by tryal, till an equal Content was found, and then a near proportion (for no body ever yet pretended an exact one) was laid down. Just so 'tis possible to find the Content of the most irregular Vessel by measuring the water that will fill it: But in these and several other Cases we must rest contented with no better demonstration than an Unmathematical matter of fact.

Quest. 8. *The grounds of Friendship being placed Numb. 7. Qu. 4. either in Benefits or Inclination, whether will your Description of it hold, that it must be only between two Persons, since one of those Causes may oblige me to one man, another to a second, &c.*

Ans. Notwithstanding this the Description still holds good, and this Objection was there foreseen and obviated, by granting there might be a partial, tho' not an entire or proper Friendship for several Persons at the same time; and so in effect in common Speech we call those our Friends who are either related to us, or have obliged us, or we find our selves inclin'd to oblige and love them. But then, as has been said, the more causes in this case meet together, the stronger and more entire will the Friendship be which they produce. Thus Benefits and Inclination, where united, will generally speaking, move more forcibly than where they are separate; as, to use a familiar Illustration, two Horses will

*ceteris paribus*, draw more strongly than one. If it be ask'd whether of these two Causes are the more powerful, it requires a more prolix disquisition than the present room will afford it. Sometimes Inclination is the stronger, and at others Benefits: Nor is't easie to give a general rule, tho' Inclination may seem to carry it from the other with a generous man, if we consider only the part which Interest has in those Benefits; yet Gratitude comes in agen of that side, and reduces things very near an Equilibrium.

Quest. 9. *What are become of the seven Churches of Asia?*

Ans. They are now in the *Turks* Dominions, but overrun with Ignorance, Error, and Barbarism. Some say that the *Waldenses* and *Alligenes* are of this dispersion; but however amongst those that we are certain are of this dispersion, there is this observable, That they Excommunicate the Pope for usurping the Name of Catholick, and Head of the true Church, as do also the *Greeks*.

Quest. 10. *Whether Stones are porous?*

Ans. There is no sort of Earth, Stones or Minerals, but are porous. Gold is the closest Body, and yet we find it may be contracted into a lesser room, and also refined.

Quest. 11. *Whether the Sky is a Substance, and may be felt?*

Ans. Whatsoever the Querist means by the Sky, as Air, Clouds, Firmament, or all together, he shall be satisfied in our new System.

Quest. 12. *Who was the most Righteous man, Noah, Daniel, or Job?*

Ans. The Question is very improper, and might with as much reason have been thus: Whether this little Vessel or that greater is fuller of water when both are under water. Righteousness consists in Sincerity, not in Quantity; but if the Querist means, which was most susceptible of this righteousness; or had the greatest share, we refer to the order of words in the Text for priority, knowing no better a Medium for Information.

Quest. 13. *How ought those Men to be treated, who through Malice and Ignorance degrade those Works they understand not?*

Ans. With Contempt, as they deserve. This Question is fair enough, if it did not squint at something more than it expresses. We understand some Persons are very angry that we have treated a certain late famous Gentleman after such a manner, as if we had a less esteem for his Works than either they have for him, or he had for himself: But as we think it as unhandsome as criminal to abuse either the Dead or the Living, so we esteem it a debt to sacred Truth to mention with that Infamy it deserves the Memory of one who was a greater Enemy to the Christian Name than either a *Celsus* or a *Julian*: this we are ready to prove, and need not be called upon, but shall of our own accord perform it as soon as occasion offers.

## Advertisements.

WE designing (as we promised in our last Paper) in one of our Volumes, a New System of Elementary Philosophy, (i. e. of the four Elements) we desire all Scholars and others, especially those that have sent to us about other Subjects from *Cambridge* and *Oxford*, that they will send us all the Questions they can possibly think on in ten days time.

The Gentleman that has sent six Questions from *Cambridge*, may expect to hear from us at the end of our first Volume, which will be published about the latter end of May, as was mentioned in our last.

The Ladies pleasant question about Fleas, &c. shall be answered as soon as we have opportunity to make Experiments necessary, to decide the doubt proposed.