

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 13. 1691.

Quest. 1. I Have oftentimes heard and read of the Life of Man being divided into several parts, as Infancy, Childhood, &c. I desire to know at what Age Infancy doth end, at what Age Childhood doth end? &c. I desire also to know your Opinion, when, or at what Age we begin to Commit actual sin?

Ans. The Antients divided Mans Age into seven parts, the first continuing four Years, which they call Infancy; the second continuing from thence till fourteen, which they call pueritia, or Childhood; the third continuing from thence to twenty two, and that they call adolescencia, or youthful Age; the fourth continuing from thence to forty two, and that they call juvenus, or Youth, from whence to help, because during this time the Powers of the Body and Spirits are perfect, and keep their full force; the fifth continuing to fifty six, and that is called the Viril, or manly Age, because Men are then settled and constant in their Actions; the sixth continuing to sixty eight, that they call senectus, or Old Age; the seventh and last Age continuing to fourscore, and that is called feeble and decrepit Age, or bis puer, twice a Child. Of this Opinion in dividing the Age of Man were the Arabians, Chaldeans, Greeks, Latins, but more particularly treated of by Procleus, a Greek Author, Prolemeus and Aliben Rasellus, but these were Astrologers, and referr'd every Age to the Government of a particular Planet. Philosophers, Physicians and Poets are of diverse Opinions. Pythagoras made four divisions of a Mans Life, comparing it to the four Quarters of the Year; Infancy to the Spring, in which all things are in their flower, grow and encrease; Youth to Summer, for the heat and force which Men have in that Age; the Viril or Manly Age to Autumn, because in this time Men are experienc'd and fit for Counsel; Old-Age to Winter, a time without Fruit, troublesome and displeasing.

The learned Roman, Varro, divided Man's Age into five parts, attributing to every one the space of fifteen Years; the first he calls Puerility, or Childishness; the second adolescencia, that is to say, growing, because in that time Men grow; the other fifteen reaches to Forty five Years, and is called juvenus, or Youth, from the Reason above; the next Age reaching from forty five to sixty, he calls such Persons Seniores, in respect of others behind 'em; the next makes up seventy five, or Old-Age. Hypochras divides it into seven Ages, the first and second each of seven Years, which makes fourteen; the third, fourteen Years, which makes twenty eight; the fourth and fifth, seven Years apiece more, which makes forty two; the sixth, fourteen Years more, which makes fifty six, and the rest of the Life he attributes to the seventh Age. Isidore makes six Ages, the two first agreeing with Hypochras; from fourteen to twenty is the third; from twenty eight to forty is the fourth, to sixty the fifth, and the rest of life he calls the sixth Age. Horace agrees with Pythagoras, making the division of Mans Life into four parts; this elegantly describ'd at large in his Poetick Art. But our latter Physicians unanimously agree the Life of Man is most properly divided into three parts, to wit, the growing Age, the Age that continues all in one station, and the declining Age. Thus much for divisions of Life, Answer to the first part of the Question — And as to the second, viz. At what time we begin to Commit actual Sin? We Answer, There can be no limited time for all, since some are sooner capable of sinning than others; but our Opinion is, that the first time that we do ill, and know that we do ill, is actual Transgression, and not before — and this agrees with the Apostle, where there is no Law there is no Transgression. Now Laws only oblige a proper Subject, but a proper Subject cannot be without some Knowledge of the Law, Knowledge being indispensibly prerequisite to Obedience; for I can't Obey I don't know what. I know it may be urg'd,

that a Stranger coming into a Kingdom, shall be subject to the Penalties of such Laws as he knows not of, if he accidentally break 'em. But this is a very different Case, for the Law always presupposes such a one as capable of knowing, because he had Opportunities of knowing before-hand, by Tradition, History, or some other way; but there's no way for Children to know any thing, till the Law of Nature, or the Instinct of Good and Evil writ in their Hearts, declares it to 'em; for we don't at all question but the just Eternal Laws of Nature check 'em before their Parents can instil any Principles of Religion or Virtue into 'em.

I Insert my Name, and where I live, that you may inform your selves when you please of the Truth of what follows: The Maid is a Servant with us, from whom, as likewise from her own Mother and Sister I had it.

S—J—

Fewen-Street, Cripplegate,
October the 7th. 1691.

Quest. 2. A Maid at Windsor dreamt that her Father was killing her Mother, upon which she starts out of her Bed fast asleep, wakes her Sister with great Noises, That her Father was butchering her Mother; she follows her close (being strangely amaz'd) down stairs; the first (tho' still fast asleep) opens two or three Doors, runs through the rain as far as Windsor-bridge, (which was about a Stones-cast) knocks at an Aunts door, and cries out, That she must hast to her Fathers, who was Cutting her Mothers Throat. Her Aunt at last wakes her, yet the Fright which the Dream had upon her Spirits could not persuade her but it was true, till they all return'd and found the contrary.

Query — Seeing that she was in a profound sleep, and that Sleep is a resting of those Spirits which could cause so violent a Motion, by what was she acted? and how hapned that neither the Stones under her naked Feet, her own repeated Cries, and her knocking at the Door, never wak'd her?

Ans. Sleep-walkers are by the Greeks called Hypnoboata; this Affection is rank'd under the symptoms of the Animal Faculty. 'Twas never deny'd but the Imagination acts sleeping as well as waking, and Motion is not unnatural in sleeping, as appears by Respiration, and the Infants stirring in the Mothers Belly, tho' continually asleep. All Dream, more or less, and 'tis no Wonder at all, why some are more active in their Sleep than others, it being only an Effect of a strong Imagination and greater Degree of Constitution, as very Phlegmatick, very Melancholly, &c. tho' Melancholly has the greatest share in Sleep-walking, and 'tis from this reason that Persons when they are asleep can Hear, Smell, Taste, &c. but can't see altho' their Eyes be broad-open; for the hinder-part of the Head being full of Spirits, (especially at the beginning of the Spinal Marrow) are stop't up by the bilous thick Vapours which ascend thither in Sleeping, and hinder all Perception by the Eye. Galen himself records, That he went almost a League in his Sleep, and wak'd not till he stumbled at the Foot of a Tree. Some Persons do believe that Sleep-walkers are actuated by some good or bad Spirit, which get into the Body as into a Ship whose Pilot is asleep, and guides it at pleasure, carrying it any where, and returning it to the same place agen: And to strengthen this Opinion, they tell us of one Levinus Lemnius, who walked with his Feet against the Rafter, with his Head downward, and yet fast asleep; if any such Action ever was, (which we question) we believe it not an Effect of this Distemper, but Possession, and we are very well satisfied that the Instance in the Question, and thousands more like it, proceed from the above mentioned Natural Causes, to wit, Strength of Imagination, and irregular Constitutions; and something may be in the Temper of the Air, it being very remarkable that the Atlantick

tick People never Dream, the Air being so fine and thin, that it helps to digest all Crudities and Vapours which would ascend into the Brain.

Quest. 3. Concerning this following Query, there has been several hot Disputes, and very considerable Wagers laid; but both Parties are very willing to submit to the Opinion of the Athenian Society: If therefore you will give your selves the Trouble, and Mankind the Benefit of an Explanation, you will highly satisfy, and for ever Oblige, Your Humble Querist, &c. — We read Gen. ch. 5. v. 27. that Methuselah lived Nine Hundred sixty and Nine Years. My Query is, Whether or no he completed so many Years, according to our present Computation? and if not, How many?

Ans. We told our Querists in the Preface to our Second Volume (and many times since in our Advertisements) that whoever sends us Questions contrary to the RULES there laid down, will be accessory to their own Disappointment, and therefore 'twas we advised 'em to look over the Indexes of our several Volumes, to see if their Questions be not already Answer'd to their satisfaction, (we having many times the very same Question sent us by 20 distinct Persons.) But notwithstanding all this, many of our Querists do not Observe our Directions, (tho' Method and Order is the only thing that can render a Difficult Enterprize easie to the Undertakers and serviceable to the Publick) of which the Gentleman that sent this Question concerning Methuselah's Years is an Instance; for if he had Consulted our First Volume, Numb. 24. Q. 4. he there would have found a full Answer to it.

Quest. 4. Whose Daughter was Cain's Wife?

Ans. Adam's — for a fuller Answer, see our former Volumes.

Quest. 5. Was Adam a perfect Man, Integraliter, after Eve was Created out of one of his Ribs?

Ans. Eve was not Created but Made out of one of his Ribs. Creation supposes a making of something out of no Præ-existent Matter, but Making alwayes supposes Matter to work upon; as for Instance, the World was Created, because there was no Matter before the World was; but Man was not Created but Made out of Matter or the Clay of the Earth. But to the Question, Man was not a perfect Man, quoad essentiam, after the Loss of his Rib, but quoad generationem. He wanted a part as to his Essence, but not as to generation; he was perfect because the principal Parts of Nature were perfect, as the Brains, Heart, &c. A Man that loses a Finger, a Leg, an Arm, &c. begets Children perfect, and not without a Finger, Leg, Arm, &c.

Quest. 6. Whether there be such a Serpent as an Amphibæna, or double-headed?

Ans. All Naturalists deny a gemination, or doubling of principle Parts; thus doth Aristotle define, when he affirmeth a Monster is to be esteemed one or many, according to its Principle, which he conceived the Heart, whence he derived the Original of Nerves, and thereto ascribed many Acts, which the Physicians assign unto the Brain, and therefore it cannot be called one which hath two Hearts, nor can it be called one which hath two Heads, and this hath the Practice of Christians observed in baptizing their double Births with two Names, conceiving in 'em a distinction of Souls, upon their different Functions, as whilst one wept another laugh'd, while one was silent the other spoke, while one waked another slept; therefore when we hear of such a Creature as an Amphibæna, we conceive that 'twas a monstrous product and not Natural; for the Eggs of Serpents being many, they may by chance conjoin and inoculate one into another: This is our Judgement, and we must continue it till we have ocular Demonstrations to the contrary; and we suppose those Instances to be such as we meet with in Aldrovandus Nicander, and that which Cassianus Pateus showed in a Picture to Johannes Faber, and that which is set down under the name of Amphibæna Europæa in his Learned Discourse upon Hernandez his History of America.

That great Question concerning the Millennium, or the Thousand Years Reign with Christ on Earth, before the Day of Judgment, will be Answer'd next Saturday.

The general Acceptation that the Universal Bibliotheca (Written by the Learned Monsieur le Clerc) the Journal des Scavans, the Acta Eruditorum Lipsiæ, the Nali de Letterati, &c. Printed at Rome, have deservedly among the Ingenious all over Europe, (with the Encouragement that several Gentlemen have given to our late Payments) has Encouraged our Bookseller to Purchase and in the Hall-book all the forementioned Volumes, from the first Publication (which was in the Year 65.) to this time; from whence we design to Translate, and insert (in Volume) all that's Valuable, that so by going backward as well as forwards, we may render our Account of Books more pleat — Of what great Use this Undertaking will be to the Publick, shall be shown at large in our PROPOSALS, which will be Publish'd as soon as ever Our Society has agreed upon all those Books that will be worth a general use, the Titles whereof our Querists may expect among our Proposals when Publish'd.

BOOKS designed for our Third Supplement (besides what have been formerly mention'd) are, viz.

Choice Letters of Mr. Guy Patin, late Professor of Physick in the Royal Colledge of Paris, containing the Life and Letters of Learned Men of this Age; with an Account of their Writings, of many other Curious things, from the Year 45. to the Year 72. enlarged with above 300 Letters. Printed at Cullen. 1691. 3 Volumes.

The Universal Monarchy of Lewis the 14th. Written in Italian by M. Leti. Part I. Wherein is shew'd the Necessity of deposing the French Monarchy, and how it may be done. Part II. Wherein are made particular Observations on the present State of Affairs in Europe.

The History of the Vaudois, newly Translated out of French by Perion of Quality.

Jacob Behmen's Theolophick Philosophy unfolded, with a true account of his Life.

Essays upon several Subjects. Written by Sir Tho. Pope Blount.

Beughem's Bibliography, &c.

Cocceus's Learned Orations.

The History of the Sybils, &c. with the Magick Oracles of the roaster, Jupiter and Apollo, &c.

Mad Wisdom, or Chymical Promises. printed at Amsterdam.

Polyhistor, or Commentaries upon the Knowledge of Antiquities.

Things: Wherein several Counsels and Helps are proposed for the speedy attaining of the Sciences.

Curious Miscellanies, &c. printed at Norimberg.

A Treatise concerning the Use of Reason in Religion. printed at Coning's Vegetable Kingdom, &c.

F. Regius manner of perceiving the Divinity of the Holy Scriptures.

A History of Ancient Monuments. printed at Paris.

A Pharmaceutical Dictionary.

A Genealogical History of the Kings and Peers of Great Britain.

An Historical Abridgement of the Cannon Law.

The Principles of the Civil Law, &c.

A Dissertation upon a Medal of Herod Antipas.

An Historical Account of the Moneys of France, with their Figures from the beginning of that Monarch to this present time.

Bynæus's two books of the Birth of Jesus Christ; to which is added a Dissertation of his Circumcision. Wherein are stated many Curious Questions between the Jews and Christians.

Origins of the chief Hereticks, from the Birth of Christ to the end of the Second Century.

Advertisements.

The Countreys Concurrence with the London Ministers in their late Heads of Agreement's shewing the Nature and Advantages of a GENERAL UNION amongst Protestants: Deliver'd to an Assembly of Ministers in the County of Southampton. By Samuel Chandler, Author of The Excellency of the Christian Religion. Bound 1 s. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, and John Salusbury at the Rising Sun in Cornhill.

In Plow-yard, the third Door in Gray's-Inn-lane, Dr. Thomas Kirlens, 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, except nothing until the Cure be finished: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. The Drink is 3 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanse the Body of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropsies, Gours, Scabs, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With another Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Distempers without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion of all that writes or comes for nothing.

L O N D O N, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry. 1691.