

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, December 15. 1691.

Quest. 1. **T**He Answer in your last Mercury to the Question concerning the Suns Eclipse, gave me such great satisfaction, that it encourages me to ask — What is the continual supply to the Heat of the Sun, and the cause of its continual motion?

Ans. For its Heat, the Sun is now generally believ'd, (and we can go no further than guesses,) by what observation we can make on't by Glasses, to be a vast Body of Fire, unequal in its surface, and compos'd of several parts of a different Nature, some fluid, others solid, that its Disque appears a Sea of Fire, wherein is a perpetual agitation of Waves of Flame. That its Fuel is either supply'd from the Exhalations of other Stars, or, which we esteem more likely, from its own Body, by prodigious Vulcano's, or burning Mountains, which there is no fear shou'd e're be at an End while the World lasts, since even some of ours upon Earth, (for Example *Aëna*) have already lasted to our knowledge, as inform'd by undoubted History, almost two thousand Years, if not full as much, and all this while actually burning more or less, tho' its matter far enough from being yet consumed; beside, it may be of the Nature of some Chymical Fire, so refin'd, that it ne're preys, or but very little, on the matter that sustains it. If any one shou'd here be so silly to ask, How comes it to pass then that the Fire of the Sun shou'd not fall down and burn the World? — We may tell 'em its for the same Reason that the water of the Sea does not fall upwards, and quench that: They are indeed both fix'd by the Almighty to their proper Centers, and as the Earth, if it moves, whirls round with it the Atmosphere, or parts of Air, Earth and Water flying about it, yet all tending to their proper Center, or to speak more sensibly, retain'd in that due posture by the Magnetical Virtue of the Earth; so here wou'd that Fiery Atmosphere of the Sun whirl round together with it, and that more easily than the Earths Atmosphere, or (to put it beyond doubt) that of any of the other Planets, which all grant to be in perpetual motion, since Fire is of greater activity than all the other Elements, to talk for once like a through-paced Aristotelian, when besides nothing but the Flame and Heat is suppos'd to be without the Sun: — But after all, what if the Fire shou'd actually come to us, but by the vast distance, and the Suns perpetual whirling be beat into very small particles or atoms, as water when whirl'd round from a Mop, and so be purely innoxious, unless when many of 'em are contracted together in a burning Glass? This for the Suns heat, next for its motion, the Disquisition whereof we'll yet enlarge in answer to another Question much more full, sent us by another Hand: Wherein the Querist desires to know the Reason of the different motions of the Sun, its diurnal motion being from East to West, its annual from West to East — a third might have bin added, lately discovered by Glasses, from West to East round its own Axis in about 26 Days. The old Ptolemaic System supposes that the Sun and all the Stars are whirl'd round once in every twenty four hours from East to West, by the motion of the Primum Mobile, which according to them, encloses all the other Heavens as one Coat in an Onyon does another, or as one Box enclos'd in another; hence the Sun as well as the rest is dragg'd round from East to West every day, and back agen from West to East obliquely by the Zodiac, in its yearly periodical revolution. And for that third motion, they ne're knew it, and so ne're trouble themselves with it: But the mistake is, all these solid Orbs are nothing but Fancy, for had they bin so, they had been crackt to pieces long ere this, for Mars has bin seen below the Sun, which cou'd ne're be, according to their System, without perfect Penetration of Dimensions. Let's then try whether we can live on any other way of Solution which may appear

more rational than what these advance; and first then for the motion of the Sun. The famous Descartes, tho' Philosopher enough, resolves all motion into the power of God the first Mover, and indeed this was one of the Ancients great Arguments for the Being of a God. But how the particular motions were impress'd upon the Sun and other Planets, Galileo attempts to satisfy the World by this ingenious Supposition; namely, That each Globe of the Universe was at first created at some convenient distance from the place wherein, or the Center about which 'twas afterwards to move: To explain the thing by a Diagram, as suppose A be the globular Body of some Planet created in that place, and the Circle D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M. be designed for the Circle of its future Revolution, whereof C is the Center. Suppose also that it were let fall when perfected, from A, the place of its Creation, with command to go to the place of its design'd residence, nor nearer or farther from the Center of its Revolution than the Semidiameter of the Circle D, C. therefore it must needs fall in the prick'r Line A, D, as Bodies use to do towards their proper Center of Gravity; now when it comes to D, it can no longer proceed in the strait Line towards E, for then 'twou'd go farther off from the Center C, than 'tis allow'd by the aforesaid Command or Law of Nature; therefore it must then begin like a Pendulum, to turn about towards F, that it may keep its due distance, and having acquir'd velocity in its fall from A to D, it continues the same to G, H, I, K, L, M; and there being no natural Impediment, it must continue the same velocity without increase or decrease in continual repeated Rounds in the Circle for ever, unless stop't by a supernatural cause. Such a motion as this, if the Sun moves round the Earth, it must be suppos'd to have, and thus might be acquired; and if the Earth round the Sun 'tis in effect the same, only then the Earth moves from East to West annually. This of the annual or periodical motion, now for the diurnal, 'tis easie to conceive the same thing may have two motions, a progressive motion forward in a greater Circle, and a less round its own Axle, but then they shou'd both be right onward, not one forwards and t'other backwards, one of which wou'd contradict and deaden the other; as if the Wheels of a Coach run backward, that must go back too, tho' forwards indeed they might have a double motion, tho' each the same way. — To avoid this as well as old Ptolomy's solid Orbs, Tycho, and others, have deny'd the Sun, or the rest of the Stars have a double motion; but instead of that introduce one Spiral motion toward the West, that is, as they explain themselves, not directly, by parallel Circles, but obliquely, or by Spiral turns or windings. Lastly, For the motion of the Sun round his own Axis, which none now will deny, being finished in the space of 26, or as some, 27 days, which was first known by the motion of some Spots by the help of the Telescope discover'd on its body, but which moves regularly from East to West; which particular motion of the Sun, which certainly holds whatever that of the Earth does, may be thus explained. Suppose it then created at B, in the former Diagram, and thence dropt and determin'd directly to the Center C, without any such line of distance as D, C, suppos'd already for the annual motion. — When therefore its Center is once come to the right place appointed for it at C, it must there always continue in the same motion wherein 'twas first dropt: And as by these spots we find this motion of the Sun about his own Axis, so might we also be certainly determin'd by the same in the great Question of the motion of the Earth, were they but fix'd and permanent, the contrary whereunto our Glasses inform us: And thus much of this Noble Question concerning the Suns Heat and different motions.



Quest.



Quest. 2. In my Minority I married a Lady contrary to the knowledge of our Parents, and now I'm grown to a State of Maturity, have professed to court this Lady whom I have married: The motion has taken such good Effect, that our Marriage is concluded on: Query, Whether we may lawfully be married again; for if they understand that we have acted without their Consent, 'twill certainly prove our Ruine?

Ans. There's nothing a Sin that is not the breach of some Law; but this is the breach of no Law, Ergo, it is no sin: 'Tis needless as to you two, but not as to the World; Put the Case thus; I promise or vow to such a Person, that I will do so and so ——— If I repeat my promise to him in a New Company, I am not guilty of any breach of promise, but on the contrary it shows my resolution to perform what I first promis'd. Again, it is lawful for any man to say what it is lawful for him to do, as actions are preferable to words: But 'tis lawful for a Man to love, cherish, and be faithful to his Wife, &c. always, Ergo, 'tis lawful to say so always if there be occasion: 'Tis no sin to marry a hundred times to one Wife; nor is it any mocking of God Almighty in this Case, who would have us act so, as we may be accountable to our Fellow Creatures. There's no more difficulty in the Matter than to give several Bonds upon the same proviso's, to be paid at one day. One is sufficient, but more are not amiss for Satisfaction; A dumb man is always marrying, 'tis action that is essential, not words.

Quest. 3. Balaam being a Moabite, how could he understand the Ass speaking unto him in Hebrew?

Ans. Should we suppose him a Moabite, he might yet understand the Hebrew Language, since it would have bin his own, for what Language should the Moabites speak but what they learnt from their Father, and what Moab himself, but that which his Father Lot taught him, which none doubts to have bin the Hebrew, which Abraham, nay in probability, which all the posterity of Heber also spoke. But the Querist was either a little short-sighted, or else not much used to the Bible, when he takes Balaam for a Moabite, when the Text expressly tells us, that he was an Aramite: See Numb. 23. v. 7. The King of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the Mountains of the East. Now this Aram we must here take either for Aram of Damascus, or Aram of Maachab, wherein was the Land of Tob and Ishboth, which is more likely to be his Countrey, because it lay East of Bamoth-Baal where he then was, and besides upon the Edges of the Mountains Gilead and Hermon (Branches of Anilibanus) which he might call the Mountains of the East, between which and the King of Moabs Countrey there was only that of Ammon then in League with him, and Vineyards too thereabouts, as the History reports 'em, there being a Town which takes its name from 'em exactly in the way between, and much about midway thither; which is confirm'd by the King of Moab's coming to meet him — In a City in the Border of Arnon, which is the uttermost coast, as Num. 23. which might be Dibon or Arnon its self, both seated on his very borders, and on the River Arnon. Now supposing the Syrians descended from the first Aram, the Son of Arphaxad, not from him of Ebers Family; yet the Land of Tob being so near Arnon, of the same Language with Moab, and both with the Hebrew, it might easily be understood of Balaam a Borderer, and a Learned and famous man amongst 'em.

Quest. 4. What was it that Eve Spun?

Ans. Nothing at all that we know of, since nothing the Scripture tells us, she was a Sempstress indeed, for so she did, as well as Adam — when they sew'd Fig-leaves together to make 'em Aprons; but no Spinster, whatever Title our Law gives her Daughters.

Quest. 5. A Lady affirmed their Sex to be more excellent than Mans, because let a Man wash his hands never so often, there will be some settled Dirt in the water, and that 'tis not so when a Woman washes: Whether is this true; and if so, what's the Reason?

Ans. That the Fair Sex in some things excell ours, there's hardly any so furly to deny, that the pretty little half-Virtue of neatness or cleanliness, which the Latins call *Munditia*, both better becomes 'em, and is more eminent in, at least most of 'em, is as certain as the other. Accordingly its very likely that a Mans hands which are more used to business, may have more

dirt on 'em than a Woman's, and if 'tis of any long standing, 'twill not easily be remov'd, perhaps not all of it with several washings. But this, its plain, is wholly accidental, for take a Cook-maid and a Gentleman, and let 'em wash their hands, and we doubt not but the Event will be quite contrary to the Ladies observation. After all, we doubt the Querists Hands might not be very clean when he waited on her, for which she was a little pleasant, and put this innocent Fallacy upon him.

A word or two to the Anabaptists.

We find no Question, or any thing else in these 3 Sheets and a half drawn up, and publish'd (as we are inform'd) by the joynt consent of the Principal Anabaptist Preachers in London, or in any other of their Papers, but what we can easily and fully answer; but our promise being to answer the Questions and Scruples of other Persons as well as those sent to us by Anabaptists, we shall (that we may oblige all our reasonable Querists) reserve the answering of 'em till the publication of the 12 Numbers that compleat our 6th. Volume; and then the Anabaptists may expect a full answer to all the Questions in 'em, or to any other Questions or Objections they can send to us between this and the publication of the forementioned 12 Numbers. Only this Remark we shall make at present, that surely had not the Anabaptists (amongst whom we hope there be many good persons; but as to the point of Infant Baptism, they are certainly in a mistake, as we shall shew 'em at large) thought we had advanc'd something of moment in our two mercuries about Infant Baptism, they would never have call'd in such great Assistance for the answering of 'em, or made such a stir about 'em: If any Anabaptists are disobligh'd by the Historical Reflections in our answers concerning those called Anabaptists in Germany, we shall when we come to that part of History, endeavour to put it in its true light, which has never bin done yet, for we'll be impartial to all our Querists.

Mr. John Steer if you send agen, pray pay for the postage of your Letters, or they will not be taken in.

## Advertisement.

THE Fourth Volume of the Athenian Mercury is now Publish'd; Resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions Proposed by the Ingenious of either Sex, from Tuesday, October 17. to Saturday Decemb. 12. Price 2 s. 6 d. This Fourth Volume is neatly done up in Marble Paper, with a General Title, Preface and Index to it. Printed for John Dunton, at the Raven in the Poultry; where are to be had the First, Second and Third Volumes of the Athenian Mercury, (and the Supplements to 'em.) And also the Preface, Index, and Twelve Numbers alone, that compleat the First Eighteen Numbers of the Fourth Volume: In which Twelve Numbers are Answer'd many of the Questions lately sent us.

## ERRATA.

In the General Title to the 4th. Volume, instead of from August 18th. to October 17th. 1691. read from October 17th. to Decemb. 12th. 1691.

In Plow-yard, the third Door in Grays-Inn-lane, Dr. Thomas Kirleus, 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, and nothing until the Cure be finished: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the 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, Gouts, Stones, 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.

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