

The Lost Time Question



“Here are several important declarations: 1. We have the preparation day, which was the sixth day. Ex. 16:5. 2. Following this, we have the next day, ‘the Sabbath day according to the commandment.’ 3. And the next day was the first day of the, week.’ This is the language of Inspiration, hence there is no discount upon it; therefore that day was the first day of the week.’ Hence, we are still on the right track, and know that we have not lost the days of the week. This fact is made doubly sure by the inspired declaration that the day before the first day of the week was ‘the Sabbath day according to the commandment.’ Here, again, we know that we have the correct Sabbath day, the one enjoined in the commandment; for Inspiration says so.

The Sabbath day ‘according to the commandment’ could be no other day than the one which that commandment enjoined, which we have shown is none other than the very day upon which God rested. After this, the Sabbath is frequently mentioned in Acts. (See chapters 13:15; 15:21 ; 16:13; 17:2; 18:3.) The last time it is named is in Revelation 1:10, 96 AD., which brings us to the close of the Bible and of the first century. Now we have spanned 4,100 years of the world’s history, and found no place for the Sabbath to be lost yet.

THE JEWS BEAR UNANSWERABLE TESTIMONY

“But has not time been lost since ‘the year 96 AD., perhaps

during the Dark Ages? Let us see. At the time of Christ, and ever since, the Jews were and have been great sticklers for the Sabbath-very careful in observing it. In 70 AD., about forty years after the resurrection of Christ, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews were led away captive into all nations, thus fulfilling Luke 21:20-24; Deuteronomy 28:25, 37, 64. Though eighteen hundred years have passed, the Jews are still a scattered nation, and yet a distinct people. In every country, in every clime, in every nation, and in almost every city, today may be found the Jew. During these eighteen long centuries, under every vicissitude, they have still tenaciously clung to the Sabbath. Every person of intelligence knows that the Jews all keep the Sabbath on Saturday. Thus Webster, under the word 'Sabbath,' says: 'The Sabbath of the Jews is on Saturday.' M. A. Berk, in his 'History of the Jews,' page 335, says: 'According to the Jewish computation of time, the day commences at sunset. On Friday evening, and about an hour before sunset on this evening, all business transactions and secular occupations cease, and the twenty-four hours following are devoted to the celebration of the holy Sabbath.'

"Now that they have not lost the Sabbath day, but have kept the days of the week correctly, is easily demonstrated. Scattered as widely apart as they have been all this time, had they lost the correct numbering of the days of the week, they would now be found to disagree among themselves as to which was the true Sabbath day. Some would claim that it was Saturday; others, that it was Monday; still others, that it was Thursday, etc., etc. But there is no such disagreement among them, as every one knows. In Asia and in Europe, in Africa and in America, all agree on the same day, namely, Saturday. Now any one can readily see that the Jews, being for eighteen hundred years so widely scattered, even on opposite sides of the globe, could not lose the correct Sabbath, and yet all continue to keep the same day. It would be 'the very height of absurdity to suppose that all the millions of the Jews so far separated should lose just the same number days,

and at the same time, and in the same direction, that by adding to, or dropping out, a day or more.

“Take a simple illustration: Seven men go out into the wilderness, hunting. At a certain point they all separate, going a different direction. After several weeks, maybe months, they all meet again. Now the question arises, Have you kept the days of the week correctly, or have they lost the Sunday so that they cannot positively tell when it does come? They begin to compare reckonings. A says, Today is Monday. No, says B, today is Thursday. Both wrong, replies C, today is Sunday. And you are mistaken, too, exclaims D, today is Friday. And thus, to the end, they all differ. This would prove that they certainly had lost the day. No one would question that. But, on the contrary, suppose all unanimously agreed on the day that it was Monday, for instance. It would be as sure as a mathematical demonstration that none had lost the day.

“So of the Jews. Their unanimous agreement on the day shows that they have kept it correctly. None who are not willingly blind can fail to see this. We shall, then, put down the five millions of Jews now in the world as so many living witnesses that Saturday is the true seventh-day Sabbath. Indeed, I believe, and it is evident, that the leading object of the Lord in scattering the Jews among all nations and yet preserving them a distinct people, was to make them witnesses of the truth of His word, and to preserve the knowledge of His holy Sabbath among all nations. Their strict and continued observance of the Sabbath in all ages and among all nations, forms an insurmountable argument which can never be set aside by those who assert that the Sabbath has been lost. God has preserved a whole nation of witnesses, and sent them into all parts of the world to bear testimony to the existence and correct preservation of the knowledge of His holy Sabbath day.

CANRIGHT QUOTES RABBI WISE

“In response to an inquiry on this point, addressed to Isaac

M. Wise, of Cincinnati, Ohio, probably the most learned Jewish Rabbi in this country, he returned to me the following communication:

Rev. D. M. Canright.

DEAR SIR:

“ ‘There is no century in authentic history not covered by Jewish tradition. Hence, one might just as well argue, Sunday is not the first day of the week or the third after the crucifixion, or the Hebrew Bible is not the literature of the ancient Jews, or any other fact or facts, as to maintain that the Jews forgot the order of the days, when the Sabbath was so holy to them. . . .

“The Jews, having no names of days, called them first, second, etc., to Sabbath. If they had forgotten to count in any one locality where they were dispersed since 800 B. C, some would have done it in another locality, and a dispute among themselves about the right Sabbath must have occurred.’

“With these facts well considered, the reader will agree with the learned rabbi that it is an absurdity to claim that the Sabbath has ever been lost.

ENTIRE WORLD AGREEMENT ON DAYS OF WEEK

“Some two or three centuries after Christ, Christians began to regard the first day of the week as a sacred day. In a short time, this practice became almost universal among Christians. Christendom is now divided into three great branches; viz., the Greek Church, numbering 66,000,000, the Catholic Church, numbering 170,000,000, and the Protestant churches, numbering 88,000,000, making a total number of 324,000,000.

“All these have always been, and are now, unanimous in teaching that Sunday is the first day of the week, the resurrection day, and that Saturday is the old, original, seventh day Sabbath. No one ever thought of disputing this

fact till of late, when it is found that there is no proof for first-day sacredness. But here are 324,000,000 witnesses who, by their hymns, their prayers, their sermons, their books, their customs, and all their traditions, teach that Sunday is the first, and Saturday the seventh, day of the week.

“The Mohammedans, and long before them the Saracens, adopted the sixth day for their Sabbath. Numbering 160,000,000, they all still keep Friday. Gilfillan, in ‘The Sabbath,’ p. 359, says: ‘Before Mohammed’s time, the Saracens kept their Sabbath on Friday, and from them, he and his followers adopted the custom.’ Rev. Robert Morris, who has traveled in Palestine, and written so extensively concerning the Holy Land, also confirms the same fact. (See The Holy Land for January, 1871.) Here, again, we have 160,000,000 more witnesses that the days of the week have been correctly kept.

“All the laws of Christendom recognize the fact that Sunday is the first day of the week, and Saturday the seventh. Thus, the Sunday law of Iowa reads: ‘If any person be found on the first day of the week... engaged in any riot, fighting,’ etc. – ‘Statute Law of Iowa, ‘Revision of 1860, chap. 175, art. 2, sec. 1, P. 751. The venerable old family Bible, in its timetable, teaches the same thing. It reads thus...

“DAYS OF THE WEEK

“1st day of the week Sunday

“2d day of the week Monday

“3d day of the week Tuesday

“4th day of the week Wednesday

“5th day of the week Thursday

“6th day of the week Friday

“7th day of the week, or Sabbath, Saturday.

“Turn to your large family Bible, and see if it does not so read. So far, then, as we can rely upon this it corroborates the fact that Saturday is the old Sabbath, the original seventh day. Could we ask a better witness?

“Webster’s great dictionary bears its testimony to the same

undoubted fact. Thus: 'Sunday, n. First day of the week.' 'Monday, n. The second day of the week.' 'Saturday, n. The last day of the week. . . . the Jewish Sabbath.' Do all these great authors have no authority for what they say? Have they all conspired to tell a lie?

"Take up a family almanac, and it will teach us the same undoubted and universally acknowledged truth, that Saturday is the original Sabbath day. Look at your almanac and see Sunday marked first day of the week, and Saturday the seventh or last day.

ASTRONOMY BEARS TESTIMONY THAT NO TIME HAS BEEN LOST

"But now the science of astronomy comes in and settles this whole matter beyond the shadow of a doubt. Every one is familiar with the fact that eclipses of the sun or moon can be so exactly calculated as to tell to a minute just when they will occur, long beforehand. Indeed, they can be calculated a thousand years ahead as well as one year. So they can be calculated backward just as easily. Before the Christian era, and all along at different times since, eclipses have occurred and have been recorded. By calculating back, it would soon appear if even one day had been lost, as the recorded eclipse would not have come when it ought to. Such calculations have been made, and no such loss of time appears.

"In answer to a question upon this point which I addressed to a celebrated astronomer, I received the following:

—OGDEN, UTAH, Sept. 24, 1873.

"'ELDER D. M. CANRIGHT: Back computations of eclipses of the sun give the year right. Since Ptolemaeus (about 500 B. C.) there cannot be one day lost, because his equinoctiums and those composed now back to that time agree. A change or loss of one minute would be found out in. this way.

"(Signed) 'DR. F. KAMPF,

'Astronomer of the U. S. Corps of Engineers.' "This is good testimony from the highest authority. It shows that we have positive scientific proof that not a day has been lost at

least since 500 years before Christ.

“Indeed, when we come to the real matter of fact, it is simply impossible to lose the days of the week, even though we had no almanacs, no records, no histories. Look at the facts in the case. Take our own nation, for example. How could we lose the days of the week? Suppose one family in town should forget and lose the days of the week. Sun comes and they go to work, plowing, washing, etc. How would it be before their neighbors would come along and tell them their mistake? Such instances do occur; but seldom does a person get through the day without discovering his error.

“Again, suppose a whole village should make the same, mistake at the same time, which of course is impossible, and all lose the day of the week. Sunday they all go to work, as usual; stores are opened, shops run, etc. Soon, people from the country come in to meeting and find them all at work. The result would be that they would compare reckonings and count back and see what they had done on each of the last six days. In this way the error would be immediately discovered. And so we might go on with the illustration. If one family loses the day, the whole town is against them, and will correct them; if a whole town makes the mistake, the rest of the country is against them, and would soon correct – them. In short, the established rest day in each week coming so often and being kept by all the people, it is absolutely impossible to lose it. No candid person who will look at the facts can believe that the Sabbath day has ever been lost. . . .

“Was not the Sabbath day thrown out of its order, was not a day lost, when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still? No. The record says: ‘The sun stood still in the midst of the heaven, and basted not to go down about a whole day.’ Joshua 10:12-14. . . . That day was about as long as two ordinary days, but yet it was only one day, the sun set only once. The Lord required us to keep only the seventh day, not the seventh part of time. The day is to be reckoned from sunset to sunset. Gen. 1:5; Lev. 23:32; Deut. 16:6; Mark 1:32. Hence this was to

be counted only one day, and in no manner affects the reckoning of the week. The same principle holds good in the case where the sun turned back ten degrees in the time of Hezekiah. Isa. 38:8. It appears that this day also was longer than usual. Yet it was only one day, as in the case of Joshua.

CHANGE TO THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

“Was not the Sabbath lost in changing from the Old Style to the New Style of reckoning time? No. It did not affect the Sabbath in the least, one way or the other. But what is Old Style and New Style? Let us see.

“The Julian Calendar, so called, or that which was established by Julius Caesar, by which every fourth year was made to consist of 366 days, and the other years of 365 days, is called Old Style. By this mode of computation, the years were made to average something over eleven minutes too much; so that in the course of a few centuries there would be a perceptible disarrangement of the equinoxes; i.e., the sun would actually arrive at an equinoctial point several days, perhaps, before the time indicated by the day of the month on which it should annually recur. It will be seen that if such a mode of computation were to be continued, a complete displacement of the seasons of the year would eventually be wrought. Pope Gregory XIII, 1582 A. D., in order to correct the equinoxes at that time, or bring back the vernal equinox to the same day as at the Council of Nice, 325 A. D., found it necessary to retrench ten days. He accordingly retrenched that number of days in October, 1582 A. D., which was done by simply calling the fifth day of the month the fifteenth.

“This reformation of the Julian Calendar by Pope Gregory was adopted in Great Britain by act of Parliament, 1751 A. D., at which time it was necessary to retrench eleven days. Accordingly eleven days were retrenched in the month of September in the following year, simply by reckoning the third day as the fourteenth. This method (by which every year divisible by four, unless it be divisible by 100 without being

divisible by 400, has 366 days, and all other years 365 days) is what is called New Style. By reckoning according to this ingenious mode, there can never occur any perceptible disarrangement of the equinoxes, as would continually occur under the former calendar, or Old Style. (See Thompson's Higher Arithmetic, p. 157.)

"It may be readily seen that this did not in the least affect the reckoning of the days of the week. October 5 was simply called October 15. Suppose that before the change that day was Friday; what day of the week would it be after the change? Would it not be Friday still? Most certainly. The regular succession of the days of the week and of the Sabbath continues to come just the same, whatever change may be made in the reckoning of the year or month.

"But why talk about lost time on that occasion? How was it lost? Do we not know just when it occurred? Yes. Do we not know just how it happened? Yes. Do we not know just how many days were dropped? Yes. Is there not an authentic record of the whole thing? Yes. In the name of common sense, then, how was any time lost?

"Suppose I have just one hundred dollars in my pocket. I go into my bedroom, carefully count out ten dollars and put it into the drawer. Then I come out and tell my family that I have lost some money. They ask, When? I say, Today. Where? In the bureau drawer in the bedroom. How much? just ten dollars. Would they not say I was jesting or insane? just so about lost time at the change from Old Style to New Style. When was it lost? October 5, 1582. How much was lost? Ten days. Strange loss this! ...

THE EVIDENCE SUMMED UP

"To sum up the evidence: The Sabbath was given to the head of the human family at creation; it was observed by the patriarchs. Three of whose lives cover the period from Eden to Abraham's old age, and hence the knowledge of the Sabbath was easily handed from father to son. The Sabbath was again miraculously pointed out by God, in the falling of the manna

at the Exodus. Strictly guarded by law and kept by the whole Jewish nation for eight hundred years; best of evidence is given that it was not lost in Babylon. It was strictly kept for five hundred years till Christ. He gave no intimation of any loss up to His time. Taught that it was the correct Sabbath; positive statement is made by Inspiration that the Jews had the days of the week and the old Sabbath day correct at the death of Jesus; often mentioned in the New Testament till 95 AD. 5,000,000 Jews today bear witness that it has not been lost. 60,000,000 Greek Christians, 170,000,000 Catholics, and 88,000,000 Protestants all agree that Saturday is the old seventh day. 160,000,000 Mohammedans agree to the same fact; the laws of the land, the old Family Bible, Webster, the almanac and astronomy, all unanimously agree that no time has been lost, but that Saturday is the old Sabbath day.

“What proof do they bring against all this mass of evidence? None whatever. They want it so. They hope it is so, and hence assert that it is so. Time is lost. Why? Because. How do you know? Because it has been lost. This is the evidence, and the only evidence I ever heard. A man’s mere assertion against the evidence of the world!!

“In conclusion, reader, are you weekly violating God’s holy Sabbath under the vain plea that you cannot tell when it does come? Is not this a mere excuse adopted to evade the cross? Are you willing to risk your soul upon such a sandy foundation? Are not the preceding evidences overwhelming that Saturday is the original seventh day? Even granting, which, however, we do not believe is the case, that it is not positive proof beyond any doubt, yet you must admit that, so far as there is any evidence, it all goes to show that Saturday is the original Sabbath day. Shall we reject all this mass of testimony and retain a day for which there is not a particle of evidence? Will such a course stand ‘the test of the judgment?’”

D.M. Canright, “The Lost-Time Question”, (1873)

