

20. HAS THE SABBATH BEEN LOST?

SOME persons contend that it is impossible or impracticable to keep a definite, fixed day as the Sabbath. They say that two individuals situated in different longitudes cannot keep precisely the same day. For example, we in California begin our Sabbath several hours later than our friends in New York. The force of the objection is to make it appear that this difference in the time of observing the Sabbath indicates that a definite day is not intended, but only a seventh part of time.

This objection has as much force against a definite Sunday as against the Bible Sabbath. The reason given in the Bible for the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath is that God rested from His creative work upon that day, and that, to follow God's example, we also are to work on the six days on which He worked and rest on the seventh day, His seventh. The reason usually given, without Bible warrant, for the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, is that Christ rose from the dead on that day. Yet if one can keep Sunday in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, can not one keep the seventh-day Sabbath in commemoration of the rest of Jehovah?

It is plain, then, at the start, that any argument against the possibility of observing the seventh-day Sabbath on a round world is exactly the same kind of argument against observing the first day as a Sabbath on this identical round world. The world is just as round on Sunday as it is on the seventh day; and as those who urge this objection against the seventh day observe Sunday, evidently their argument is either a mere evasion, or it is as destructive of their own rest day as it is of the other.

Let it be fully known that there is no commandment in the Bible enjoining the keeping of Sunday, the first day of the week, as a Sabbath. There is, however, a commandment, the fourth among the ten, the direct requirement of God Himself, setting apart the seventh day as the Sabbath; and what shall we say about the candor of an argument which asserts that the seventh day of the week cannot be kept as a Sabbath, but that we ought to keep the first day of the week? Is not the first day as much a definite day as the seventh? If a person can keep the definite Sunday without a commandment from God, can he not keep, and ought he not to keep, instead, the definite seventh day, because of the clear command of God? Whatever God commands us to do we can for His commandments are our enabling.

To say that the fourth commandment now enjoins the observance of the first day of the week in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, instead of the seventh day, is but to say that the Sabbath is moved from one definite day of the week to another. And if one definite day, Sunday, can be a Sabbath, surely the seventh day can be the Sabbath. Then, since one can be kept as readily as the other, so far as the reckoning is concerned, which shall we keep, the one men enjoin without the authority of God or the one that God Himself commands?

Surely God has as good a knowledge of human language as have these objectors to His Sabbath. If God had wished to say, Any seventh part of time that you shall choose is the Sabbath of the Lord; in it you shall not do any work, could He not have thus expressed Himself?

But it is apparent, from the wording of the fourth commandment, that God did not intend to say anything of the kind. That commandment reads: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in the sanction of Heaven. "In it you shall not do any work: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,

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and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

"The seventh day," the day on which the Lord rested, the same one that He blessed and hallowed, is here specified if simply any day, and no one in particular, is meant, then every day has been blessed and hallowed as the Sabbath, and there is no distinction between one day and another. But this would make nonsense of the Lord's commandment, which plainly sets apart one day as distinct and separate from the rest.

The seven-day week is in existence now because God gave it existence at creation. The week today points us back to its origin in the first week, when God worked six days and rested the seventh. And since God worked the first six days of time and rested the seventh, man, in obedience to Him, can work now on the corresponding six days of each week of his earthly life, and rest the seventh, the same definite day that God observed. Thus man follows God's example.

When God gave the manna in the wilderness, it fell every day but the seventh. This set apart the seventh day, making it distinct from all the other days of the week, by a miracle of God, for the long period of forty years. Moreover, that His people might "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," even as the fourth commandment says, God worked a double miracle on the sixth day by sending them twice as much manna as on the other days. Still more, manna gathered on the morning of the sixth day kept over for the next day, the Sabbath; whereas if anyone attempted to keep any over on other days of the week, "it bred worms, and stank."

Thus when God called out a people to be His own peculiar treasure, He left no possibility of any mistake about His Sabbath. He was explicit and strict. There was only one day honored by Him. Furthermore, that we may not misunderstand His purpose in all this, He tells us, in the opening verses of the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, that He wrought the miracles of the manna in this precise, definite way to demonstrate whether His people would walk in His law or not.

And that definite day still is a test whether we are willing to walk in God's law or not.

God says, "the seventh day." When I am at a railway station and am directed to the seventh gate as the one leading to the train that will take me home, all the objections and arguments in the world will not help me if I insist on entering the first instead of the seventh and take a train going in another direction. I would but show my unreason by arguing the matter in such a case. Is it not unreasonable, then, to argue with God that when He says "the seventh," He means the first, or any one of the seven, if I like it better?

But some will say that in crossing the Pacific Ocean, where one has to add a day going west, or drop a day out going east, the days surely become indefinite, and we cannot, under such circumstances, know that we are keeping the definite seventh day. If this argument is sound, then an American, in crossing to China, can no longer observe his own birthday, or the national birthday, the Fourth of July. Have you ever heard of any such confusion? Have you ever heard of a Methodist or a Baptist missionary who, in crossing the date line, became so confused that he no longer attempted to keep Sunday?

If the reckoning of time can be kept for one set of days, it can be kept for another. To say that a person cannot keep the definite seventh day after crossing the date line is to say not only that the seventh day has become indefinite but that every date of history has gone into the same hopeless confusion. He who cannot keep dates, or recognize the days as they pass, is in an utter historical, business, and social muddle, to say the least.

To cross the day line and add or drop a day does not add or subtract a moment of time from any life. For the sake of an illustration, we will say that three men living in the same town were all born on exactly the same day at the same hour; they are of exactly the same age. On a given date one of these men starts east for an airplane trip around the world; at the very same time another goes west for a trip around the world; while the third stays at home. The man who goes east drops out a day; the man who goes west adds a day; the one who stays at home neither adds nor drops a day. Just three weeks from the time of separating, they all three meet again at the same town. Now is one of the men a day older, and another a day younger, than the man who stayed at home? Of course not. Time is something that cannot be changed by us. All three men will be exactly the same age they would have been if they had not made the experiment; and they will all be keeping exactly the same reckoning of time, calling the days of the week by the very same names. The adding or the dropping of a day was to prevent confusion, not to bring it.

"The simple truth is this: We add a day in circumnavigating the earth from east to west; because, going with the sun, and thus prolonging the time that it remains above the horizon, we make each of our days a fraction more than twenty-four hours long, and in the complete circuit of our earth, we thus use up one entire period of twenty-four hours. And we drop a day from our count in going around the world from

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west to east; for as we thus travel in a direction opposite the sun, we make each day a fraction less to ourselves than it would have been had we remained stationary. As we thus take a fraction from each period between successive sunsets, we gain one day as the sum total of these fractions, though we have had no more real time than those who remained at home, whose reckoning is one day less than ours."

The sun rules the day. Genesis 1:16. And each day begins at sunset. Genesis 1:5; Leviticus 23:32; Deuteronomy 16:6; Mark 1:32. The sun shining upon the earth makes one part light while the other remains in shadow and is dark. As the earth rotates on its axis, this light portion of the earth travels around the earth as each part in succession is turned toward the sun. If we were out in space, where we could watch the earth as it rolls on its axis, we could see each day as it travels around the world with one revolution, until a new day would take its place, in turn also to travel around the earth for another twenty-four hours. In this way we could see that the sun rules the day; that each day begins at sunset; and that each day, a wide band of light, is separate and distinct from every other day as it travels around the earth in twenty-four hours of time.

To get the matter graphically in mind, let us suppose that our position in space is above the date line. We will suppose that the first day of the week is dawning. This will be brought about by that part of the earth where the line is located being brought into the light of the sun by the rotation of the earth. And that light portion of the earth is moved by the rotation, so that the dawning of the first day is as definite on every portion of the earth's surface as the separation between dark and light is definite. And the close of the day is brought to all parts of the earth just as clearly and definitely as the darkness gives place to the light. Each day in succession comes thus definitely separated from every other day.

It matters not where we may be, at the equator or the poles, the day is thus definitely marked off for us by the rotation of the earth. All days are definite everywhere. You never heard of travelers going to any part of the world where they could not maintain their reckoning of time. There is no such place on the face of the earth.

When the perpetuity of the creation Sabbath is proved by the Sacred Scriptures, some say: "Time has been lost. No one knows, therefore, which day of the week was the original Sabbath; and the Lord will not hold a person responsible for not keeping the Sabbath, when no one can tell which day of the week is the Sabbath."

Ancient historical records show that the nations of antiquity had and preserved the knowledge of the creation Sabbath and the week of seven days.

A portion of the fifth creation tablet reads thus: "On the seventh day He appointed a holy day, and to cease from all business He commanded." Cunningham Geikie, *Hours With the Bible*, volume 1, Page 35.

"The seventh day is a sacred day; the king of nations may not eat meat roasted by the fire, or food prepared by the fire. He may not hold court, nor may he call in a physician. At night the king should offer his sacrifices that his prayer may be acceptable." Such were the Sabbath laws of Babylonia even before the time of Abraham." - *The Bible and the Spade*, page 86.

Homer says, "Then came the seventh day that is sacred." Again, "It was the seventh day, wherein all things were finished, or perfected."-Robert Cox, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question*, volume 1, Page 275, 276.

Names were given to the seven days of the week ages before Christ. "The first worship of Babylonia and Assyria was directed to the sun, moon, and five planets, from which the week of seven days, and the names of those days, were derived."- Cunningham Geikie, *Hours With the Bible*, Volume 4, page 158.

"The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatever to the celestial motions,-a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity." "The ancient Saxons had borrowed the week from some Eastern nation, and substituted the names of their own divinities for those of the gods of Greece," as follows:

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| Latin | Eng | lish | Saxo | n |
| Dies Solis | Su | nday | Su | n's day |
| Dies Lunae | | Monday | | Moon's day |
| Dies Martis | | Tuesday | | Tiw's day |
| Dies Mercurii | | Wednesday | | Woden's day |
| Dies Jovis | | Thursday | | Thor's day |
| Dies Veneris | Friday | | Frigg's | day |
| Dies Saturni | Saturday | | Seterne | 's day |

The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, article, "Calendar."

William Mead Jones published "A Chart of the Week: Showing the Unchanged Order of the Days and the True Position of the Sabbath, as Proved by the Combined Testimony of Ancient and Modern Languages." On this chart he has given the names of the days of the week in 160 ancient and modern languages, and 108 of these 160 languages call the seventh day "the Sabbath."

Thus is it clearly evident that all over the world there is absolute uniformity in the recognition of the several days of the week. Furthermore, does it not appeal to you as a subterfuge designed to parry the clear evidence in the inspired Book regarding the day that should be observed sacred to Jehovah as His holy Sabbath, when anyone tells you that he does not know which is the seventh day of the week? If we believe in the all powerful God, if we believe Him to be the Creator of the starry universe, if we believe Him to be the Author of the Bible, if we believe that He gave the Sabbath as a blessing to mankind and commanded its observance-then we must also believe that He has power to cause His creatures here on earth to keep definite account of a day that He has so unmistakably and clearly set apart as holy and to be sacredly observed.

The above arguments, based on the Bible and on history, all agree in proving that the septenary succession of weekdays and the Sabbath come down to us unchanged from creation. Our Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is therefore the original seventh day in succession from creation, which was then consecrated for the worship of the Creator. And from Sabbath to Sabbath will all flesh come to worship God on the new earth throughout eternity. Isaiah 66:22, 23.