

# THE ADVENT REVIEW, AND SABBATH HERALD.

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"Here is the Patience of the Saints; Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus."

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VOL. VII.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH., THIRD-DAY, DECEMBER, 4, 1855.

No. 10.

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[www.Revelation1412.org](http://www.Revelation1412.org)

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## TIME FOR COMMENCING THE SABBATH

By John N. Andrews

IN determining this question, it is evident that much weight should be attached to the manner in which the Creator regulated the commencement of the day in the beginning. For at the same time at which the first day of time began, there also would it end; and where the first day of time began and ended, there also would the second day begin and end; and so of the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh day. And where the days of the first week began and ended, there would also the days of all succeeding weeks begin and end. Hence the importance of determining, as nearly as possible, the time at which the day commenced in the Creation week.

What are we to understand by the word *day* in the first chapter of Genesis? I answer that it is used with two significations. First, it is used by God in giving name to the light, as distinguished from the darkness which was called *night*. In other words it is applied to that part of the 24 hours which is light. Second, it is used in naming the seventh part of the week, or the entire period of 24 hours. Verse 5 presents an instance in which it is used in each of these senses. "And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day." It is with the second definition, or use of the word day, that we are now interested.

But here some will meet us with the denial that the word day is used for a period of 24 hours, or in other words, that the night is ever in the Scriptures included in the day. It is proper that that point should be briefly noticed. It is said in Ex.xx,11, that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth." This establishes the fact that the six days began with the act of creation: or, to use a different expression, the first day of the week began with God's act of forming heaven and earth. Now it was profound darkness until after the Spirit of God had moved upon the waters. The next act of the Lord was the creation of light. Then having divided the light from the darkness he designates the one as *day*, and the other as *night*. This is a demonstration that night was the first division of the first day, and consequently, if the divine order were followed, the first division of all subsequent days. That the force of this argument may appear, we present the first five verses of Genesis.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Dr. Clarke, in his note on Matt.xxviii,1, states that in Hebrew the same word signifies both *evening* and *night*. He cites Gen.i,5, as an instance of its use in this manner. Hence it appears that the expression, "the evening and the morning were the first day," is the same as though it said, "the night and the morning were the first day." This is a very important fact: for it clearly proves that the

night is reckoned, not only as a part of the day of 24 hours, but as forming its first division. Let it be remembered that by the word *day* as here used I mean one of the seven periods that make up the week. It is worthy of notice that each of the days upon which God wrought in the work of creation, is represented as constituted of the same grand divisions as the first. Thus it is said: Verse 8. "And God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." Verse 13. "And the evening and the morning were the third day." Verse 19. "And the evening and the morning were the fourth day." Verse 23. "And the evening and the morning were the fifth day." Verse 31. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and beheld, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." It is also to be noticed that even the 2300 days are thus constituted. They are 2300 *literal days, symbolizing 2300 years*. The margin, which gives the literal Hebrew, calls each of these days, an "evening morning."

The law of Moses bears direct testimony on the point before us. Or rather it may be said to determine in an authoritative manner, the fact that the night is a part of the day, and that the day begins with the evening. Lev.xxiii,32. "It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." This text defines the tenth day of the seventh month; and in so doing it also defines the other days of that month, and as a consequence, of all other months. It tells us that the tenth day of the seventh month begins with the evening at the close of the ninth day, and that it extends until the next evening. No one can set aside this testimony. In accordance with this fact we read that the Jews, *on the afternoon of the day of preparation*, wished to have the legs of those who were crucified broken, that they might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath. John xix,31. And also that at the time when Jesus was taken down from the cross, on the afternoon of that day, "the Sabbath *drew on*." Luke xxiii,54. It is also said, [John xix,41,42,] "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." The idea is evidently this: that they buried our Lord in a sepulchre *nigh at hand*, that they might accomplish his burial on the preparation-day, and before the Sabbath commenced.

In addition to the foregoing, it may not be improper to present several instances in which the night is reckoned as a part of the day, or as included in the day. We call attention to the following: 1Sam.xxvi,7,8. "So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and behold Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." Here the night is certainly included in the day. The same fact will appear from Ex.xii,41,42. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. We present also the words of the angel, addressed to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Luke ii,8-11. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. In these words the angel certainly recognizes the night as a part of the day. Last of all we present the words of the Lord Jesus. Mark xiv,30. "And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day even in this night, before the cock crow

twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Also Luke xxii,34. "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." With these words of our Lord, the argument that the days of the week begin with the evening, and that they include the whole 24 hours, may be properly closed. It remains to notice one or two objections to what has been already adduced.

It is objected that the day, according to Matt.xxviii,1, begins at sunrise. It reads as follows: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre." But an inference drawn from this text cannot be sufficient to destroy the direct testimony already presented, that the day begins with *evening*. But by turning to John xx,1, we shall find that this inference is inadmissible. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre." In this text it is plainly stated that those who came to the sepulchre "when it was yet dark," came upon the first day of the week. This is direct evidence that the first day of the week includes at least a part of the night which follows the Sabbath. The note of Dr. Clarke on Matt.xxviii,1, contains the following words:

In the end of the Sabbath.] Opse de sabbaton. *After the end of the week*; this is the translation given by several eminent critics; and in this way the word *opse* is used by the most eminent Greek writers. Matthew, therefore states that the women came to the sepulchre after the Sabbath, early upon the first day of the week.

The creation of the sun at the commencement of the fourth day, is supposed to prove that the day should begin with sunrise, or as others suppose, at noon. We quote the words of Moses: Gen.i,14-18. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, and for season, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." Those who argue thus, contend that at creation the sun should be just rising, or as others say should be first seen in mid-heaven. But all such reasoning is fallacious. For at the moment when the sun first appeared in the heavens, from the *most eastern* point at which it could be seen, it would be just rising above the horizon. Hence it is not unreasonable to conclude that at that place in the East, (perhaps the garden of Eden,) where day begins the circuit of the globe, the sun at its creation, was just setting. This gives us a harmonious view of the Creator's work. It began each day with evening; and as it thus began on the fourth day, the sun when first seen was just setting; and as it continued its course westward, it carried sunset with it around the globe. And this view that the day begins in the East, and so travels round the world, is of great importance. It takes away the objection that we cannot keep the Sabbath unless we live in Palestine; for we keep the day as it comes to us; and as the Sabbath makes the circuit of the globe, all the human family have the privilege of observing the Rest-day of the Creator.

We think the Scripture testimony adduced, sufficient to establish the fact that the day begins with the evening. The next inquiry therefore properly relates to the commencement of evening. What is the testimony of the Bible on this? Moses thus defies the commencement of evening. Deut.xvi,6. "But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt." This text seems to settle the question that evening is at sunset. But Ex.xii,6, may be supposed to modify the text just quoted. It reads thus: "And ye shall keep it up until the

fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." The margins reads, "between the two evenings." This purports to be the literal Hebrew, and is therefore entitled to respect. It is said, that "between the two evenings" is at 3 o'clock P. M. If this is correct, it shows that the "going down of the sun," in Deut.xvi,6, is an indefinite expression. But *Gescnius*, in his Hebrew Lexicon, says that between the two evenings, according to the "best supported" opinion, "was the interval between sunset and dark." If this be correct - and there is certainly no higher uninspired authority than *Gescnius* - it removes the apparent contradiction between Ex.xii, and Deut.xvi, and shows that they both agree on sunset. *Greenfield*, in his New Testament Lexicon, says that two evenings "were reckoned by the Hebrews; one from the ninth hour, (3 o'clock,) until sunset; and the other, from sunset until dark. *Robinson's* Lexicon of the New Testament says the same. This would agree very nearly with *Gescnius*.

We next introduce Lev.xxii,6,7, "The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things, because it is his food." This text seems to need no comment. Even seems to be clearly defined "at sunset." The person who was unclean until even, was clean at sunset. See also Deut.xxiii,11; xxiv,13,15.

The following text seems to teach the same thing: Josh.viii,29. "And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until even-tide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day." Josh.x.26,27, defines evening in the same manner. "And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the five trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day." See also Judges xiv,18; 2Sam.iii,35. Evening is also defined in 2Chron.xviii,34. "And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the even; and about the time of the sun going down he died."

The new Testament defines evening at sunset in two places. Three of the evangelists mention the same fact; two of them stating that it occurred at evening, and two of them that it was at sunset. Matt.viii,16. "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." Mark i,32. "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils." Luke iv,40. "Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them." From Mark i it appears that this transaction occurred at the even which follows the Sabbath. Hence the reason is plain why they waited till sunset before bringing out the sick; viz., they waited for the close of the Sabbath.

The following scripture is supposed to prove that the day at some seasons of the year does not commence until *after* the setting of the sun. Neh.xiii,19. "And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath; and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day. Perhaps this arises from a careless method of reading the text. It does not say, "when it began to be dark at Jerusalem;" but it says "when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark." Now the meaning of this I think is simply that toward sunset the *gates* on their east side would begin to be dark, and that at that time they should

be closed so that every thing would be quiet when the Sabbath should commence. This view seems to me reasonable, and it harmonizes the text with all the other testimony presented.

The parable in Matt.xx,1-12 has been adduced to prove that the day begins at 6 o'clock. It is as follows:

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

The argument drawn from this text is this: there are twelve hours in the day; that the third hour is nine o'clock; that the sixth hour is noon; that the ninth hour is three o'clock; that the eleventh hour is five o'clock; and that from this time until evening it was but one hour. Hence evening comes at six o'clock. The defects in the foregoing argument are these: 1st. The hours in the New Testament are not the same as our hours. With us an hour is 60 minutes, and is never more nor less. But in the New Testament it is the twelfth part of the space between sunrise and sunset. Consequently the hours were longer or shorter according to the season of the year. It is true that the sixth hour being the middle of the day would always come at twelve o'clock; but the twelfth hour, or evening, would always come at sunset. 2nd, The division of the day into hours was not of divine appointment, but originated with the heathen!!!

The same argument has been drawn from John xi,9. "Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." It is said that if there are twelve hours in the day, then the sixth hour of the day is noon; and as there would be six hours either side of noon, or twelve o'clock, it follows that the day of twelve hours begins at six in the morning, and ends at six in the evening; and that a day of 24 hours would of course begin and end at six in the evening. This argument would be conclusive if the premises were sound. The same defect exists in this as in the argument drawn from Matt.xx; viz., that the hours were not sixty minutes like ours; but were the twelfth part of the time between sunrise and sunset. Hence the hours were constantly varying in length, but evening would be invariably at sunset. Consequently Matt.xx,1-12, and John xi,9, do not conflict with the testimony presented that the day begins at sunset. It will be expected that we prove the point that the hours were the twelfth part of the space between sunrise and sunset. This we shall now do.

The Jews reckoned twelve hours in the day, and of course each hour of the day, thus reckoned, must have been something longer or shorter, according to the different times of the year in that climate. - [Part of Clarke's note on John i,39.

The Jews, as well as most other nations, divided the day from sunrising to sunsetting, into *twelve equal parts*; but these parts or hours, were longer or shorter, according to the different seasons of the year. - [Part of Clarke's note on John xi,9.

The Jews (by a reckoning adopted from the Greeks) divided their day, or the time from sunrise to sunset, into twelve hours, of course varying a little according to the season of the year. - [Bloomfield's note on John xi,9.

HOUR. - In the books of the New Testament we see clearly the day divided into twelve equal hours, after the manner of the Greeks and Romans. These hours were equal to each other, but unequal with respect to the different seasons. The twelve hours of the longest days in Summer were much longer than those of the shortest days in Winter. - [*Cruden*.

DAY. - The sacred writers generally divide the day and night into twelve unequal hours. The sixth hour is always noon throughout the year; and the twelfth hour is the last hour of the day. But in Summer, the twelfth hour, as all the others were, was *longer* than in Winter. - [*Ency. Religious Knowledge*.

"The day was divided into twelve hours, which, of course, varied in length, being shorter in Winter and longer in Summer." - *Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary*.

"The Jews divided the space from sunrise to sunset, were the days longer or shorter, into twelve parts; so that the hours of their day were all the year the same in number, though much shorter in Winter than in Summer. - Note of the Cottage Bible on John xi,9.

"The Jews reckoned their days from evening to evening, according to the order which is mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis, in the account of the work of creation: The evening and the morning were the first day. Their Sabbath, therefore, or seventh day, began at sunset on the day we call Friday, and lasted until the same time on the day following. When our Saviour was in Capernaum, it was thought wrong to bring the sick to him to be healed, while the Sabbath lasted; 'but *at even, when the sun did set*, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils: and all the city was gathered together at the door.' Mark i,21-35. The time between the rising and the setting of the sun was divided into twelve equal parts, which were called hours. John xi,9. As this period of time, however, is longer at one season of the year than at another, it is plain that the hours would also be of different lengths at different times. In Winter they were, of course, shorter than in Summer. They were numbered from the rising of the sun, and not from the middle of the day, as is common with us. Hours are not mentioned till after the captivity; it is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the Jews borrowed their mode of dividing time from the Chaldeans, from whom also it passed to the Greeks and Romans." - *Nevin's Biblical Antiquities*, pp. 171,172.

The word *hour*, in Scripture, signifies one of the twelve equal parts into which each day was divided, and which, of course, were of different lengths at different seasons of the year. This mode of dividing the day prevailed among the Jews, at least after the exile in Babylon, and perhaps earlier. - *Covel's Bible Dictionary*.

An hour, one of the twelve equal parts into which the day was divided, and which of course were different at different seasons of the year. - *Greenfield's New Testament Lexicon*.

"In New Testament an hour, one of the twelve equal parts into which the natural day and also the night were divided, and which of course were of different lengths at different seasons of the year; probably introduced by astronomers, and first so used by Hipparchus about B. C. 140." - *Robinson's Lexicon of the New Testament*.

These testimonies are amply sufficient to establish the fact that the hours of the New Testament do not correspond to hours measured by a clock. And that they were the twelfth part of the space

from sunrise to sunset. Hence no argument can be drawn from Matt.xx,1-12; John xi,9, which is not in perfect accordance with the testimony already presented that even, with which day commences, is at sunset.

A most important consideration is this; if the Sabbath commences at six o'clock, no one can tell when that hour arrives unless they have a clock or watch. Now these were not invented until about 1658. See *Putnam's Hand Book of Useful Arts*. So that for nearly, the whole space of 6000 years the people of God have been without the means of telling when the Sabbath commenced. But such a conclusion would be a manifest absurdity. And we have already seen that there is not a single testimony of Holy Scripture that can be adduced for the six o'clock time. We conclude this article by summing up the argument as follows:

1. There is no Scriptural argument in support of six o'clock, as the hour with which evening commences.
2. If that is the hour, the people of God for about 5,600 years were unable to tell when the Sabbath commenced.
3. The Bible, by several plain statements, establishes the fact that evening is at sunset. J. N. A. [John N. Andrews]

**TO THE BRETHREN:-** The subject presented in the above article, is one of great importance. The testimony of the Bible relative to the time of commencing the Sabbath is here brought together, that it may speak for itself. The result of the investigation is the firm conviction that the commencement and close of each day is marked by the setting of the sun. It will be asked why this conclusion was not earlier arrived at? The answer is this: the subject has not been hitherto thoroughly investigated. In making this statement I would frankly acknowledge my own fault. It is always duty to correct our errors when we see them; and, however, sincerely we may have acted in the past, we can no longer act so, if when we see a fault as such, or a mistake we refuse to acknowledge it.

It may be proper to state the circumstances under which the above article was written. Last August, brother White and other brethren requested me to give the subject a thorough investigation. This I immediately endeavored to do, devoting to the subject each day, as much time as my strength would admit. In a short time I became entirely satisfied that the unanimous testimony of the Scriptures is, that each day commences with the setting of the sun. The Seventh-day Baptists have always held to this doctrine, but I have never happened to meet with their views. Had I done so, I should not have remained in error on this subject. But it will be asked, Did you not learn the truth from the *Messenger*? I answer, No. The article here presented was written several weeks before the *M.* had published anything on the point. I can have no fellowship for a sheet conducted in the manner that the *M.* has hitherto been. But the testimony of the Bible is equally precious though it may have been presented for the purpose of envy or strife. Besides this, as I now learn a considerable number of our brethren have long been convinced that the Sabbath commences at sunset. J. N. A. [John N. Andrews]

Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 12th, 1855.

### **Time of the Sabbath.**

EQUATORIAL time, or from six o'clock to six o'clock, has been observed by the body of Sabbath-keepers. The truth is, the subject has not been fully investigated till within a few months. We have never been fully satisfied with the testimony presented in favor of six o'clock. While the

various communications received for a few years past, advocating both sun-rise and sunset time, have been almost destitute of argument, and the spirit of humility and candor. The subject has troubled us, yet we have never found time to thoroughly investigate it.

In June, 1854, we urged Eld. D. P. Hall to prepare an article on the subject for the REVIEW. When with him in Penn. last Winter we repeated the request. When in Maine last Summer we stated our feelings on the subject to Bro. Andrews, and our fears of division unless the question could be settled by good testimony. He decided to devote his time to the subject till he ascertained what the Bible taught in regard to it, and his article in this No. is the result of his investigations. Some have the impression that six o'clock time has been taught among us by the direct manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This is a mistake. "From even to even," was the teaching, from which six o'clock time has been inferred. We now rejoice that Bro. Andrews has presented the Bible testimony on this question, in his accustomed forcible, candid manner, which settles the question beyond all doubt that the Sabbath commences not only at even, but at the setting of the sun.

J. W. [James White]

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