

How Time Was Counted Before the Time of Christ.

There was a long, long period when there was no counting, or accounting of or for time. In the history of the world, days and nights came and went, the sun rose and set, the beautiful moon shed her light on the earth, the stars shone in their clear brilliancy, men, women, and children lived and died, and took no note of the passing moments.

As intellect became active, some brain quicker than others, probably noticed that the rising and the setting sun marked a point, a day, as we call it. This was a beginning. By and by, those who watched the skies saw that the moon appeared and disappeared at regular intervals. Here was another point gained. The sluggish brain became a little more active. It was millions of years before man learned to count; and then, probably he used his fingers. He noted the round of the seasons. No doubt, he thought he was very wise when he found out that there was a full moon twelve times during the four seasons. The most ancient writings show that old kings counted from the time they began to rule. Then there was counting from the time of some great battle. The Romans dated time from the foundation of Rome, but, it was more than seven years after its founding that they began to count time in this way. Once in four years the Greeks made a great festival of the Olympic games. They called the festival "The Olympiad," and dated from that, it being of national interest. This was before Christ. The first one on record is that of Coraebus, who was a great victor in the games, and this is said to have taken place about 776 B. C.

Different nations have had different dates to count from. The Jews date from what they call the creation of the world, which they think, took place somewhere about 3760 before Christ. The Russians think the world was created about 5508 before the time of Christ, and they count from that period. The Hindus count time from away back, and the Chinese and Japanese reach back in counting years to a far-away period.

There have been many changes in calendars as nations have progressed in knowledge. Studies have been made, and much learned from inscriptions on old monuments, obelisks and pyramids, coins and papyri wrapped around Egyptian mummies. Inscriptions found in the language of the Assyrian and Babylonian nations are hard to read, because the language is dead.

It is not possible to date from the beginning of the world, for no one knows when or how it began, or whether it ever had a beginning.

The date from the time of Christ is not sure, since the exact time of his birth is unknown, and many scholars are doubtful of the real existence of such a being. Similar histories and traditions are found in old religions. A number of radical thinkers object to using the date of the Christian era, and have adopted what they call the Era of Man, making the date from the time of Giordano Bruno, the distinguished Italian scientist, born at Nola, near Naples, about the middle of the sixteenth century, and burned at the stake in Rome on the 17th of February, 1600, on account of his opinions, which have since been demonstrated to be true. A beautiful monument now marks the spot where he was burned alive.

The year 1600 is a good time to date from, and would make this the year 298, Era of Man.— [S. H. W. in Freethinker.]

Col. Ingersoll to Dr. Abbott.

Dr. Abbott is exceedingly kind to admit that the honest man may possibly get to heaven—that an honest man will not be eternally damned because he is an Agnostic—that is, one who does not know.

Let me ask the reverend gentleman, who does know? Does Dr. Abbott know? When did he make the acquaintance of God? Who and what is God? Does his god cause cyclones and earthquakes? Does his god send the pestilence and famine? Did his god fill the water and air with the enemies of life? Did his god create cancer and cholera germs? Did his god allow his enemies to burn his friends?

Did his god so frame the earth that life should feed on life? Did his god so order the affairs of this world that every flower should be a Golgotha, that under every piece of bark life should lie in wait for life, and that in every drop of water there should be pursuit and capture? Did his god make murder universal? I hope Dr. Abbott will have the kindness to give The World all the information he has concerning his god.

If there be a god, only an ignorant savage believes that an honest man is to be tormented forever.

The truth is, that every intelligent human being is an Agnostic. The intelligent man who says that he knows there is a god, must know that he does not know.

At the same time, I congratulate Dr. Abbott on the improvement he is making on the Christian god.— [R. G. Ingersoll, in New York World.]

"Say, mamma, is heaven beautifuler than Aunt May's parlor?"

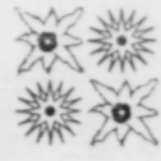
"Oh, ever so much, Johnnie."

"Well, then, I don't want to go there."

"What! Why not?"

"Cause everything'll be too good to sit on!"

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