FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY

An Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity

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The Pontifical Gregorian University Press
Rome 1977

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[3] You can also download From Sabbath to Sunday, which is my PDF of the book. Its footnotes are continuous whereas Bacchiocchi starts each chapter with footnote 1, and so our footnotes do not line up with his.

PREFACE

From Sabbath to Sunday by Samuele Bacchiocchi

compiled by Avram Yehoshua[4]

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

The attraction that the problem of the origin and of the observance of Sunday has exerted on students of the Early Church in the last two or three decades is by no means exhausted. This, we believe, is due to two principal reasons. On the one hand, the ever-increasing non-observance of the Lord's Day as a result of the radical transformation of the weekly cycle caused by the complexity of modern life and by the scientific, technological and industrial progress, demands a serious reexamination of the significance of Sunday for the Christian today. To accomplish a sound theological reappraisal of Sunday it is necessary to investigate its biblical basis and its historical genesis.

On the other hand, the many studies on this topic, though excellent, have not given a fully satisfactory answer because of the lack of consideration of some of those factors, which in the Church of the first centuries contributed to the concrete genesis and development of a day of worship different from the Jewish Sabbath.

On account of this, the new work of Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi is to be welcomed. He takes up again the study of this suggestive theme and, by analyzing critically the various factors—theological, social, political, pagan-religious—which have somehow influenced the adoption of Sunday as the day of Christian worship, he makes an effort to provide a complete picture of the origin and progressive configuration of Sunday until the fourth century. It is a work that recommends itself because of its rich content, the rigorous scientific method, and the vast horizon with which it has been conceived and executed. This is indicative of the author's singular ability to encompass various fields in order to capture those aspects and elements related to the theme under investigation.

We gladly mention the thesis that Bacchiocchi defends regarding the birth-place of Sunday worship: for him this arose most probably not in the primitive Church of Jerusalem, well-known for its profound attachment to Jewish religious traditions, but rather in the Church of Rome.

The abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday as the Lord's Day are the result of an interplay of Christian, Jewish and pagan-religious factors. The event of Christ's resurrection, which occurred on that day,[5] had naturally significant importance. Following the order of redemptive history the author begins his investigation with the Messianic typology of the Sabbath in the Old Testament and proceeds to examine how this found its fulfilment in the redemptive mission of Christ.

The strict scientific orientation of the work does not prevent the author from revealing his profound religious and ecumenic concern. Conscious that the history of salvation knows not fractures but continuity, he finds in the rediscovery of the religious values of the biblical Sabbath a help to restore to the Lord's Day its ancient sacred character. This is in reality the exhortation that already in the fourth century the bishops addressed to the believers, namely to spend Sunday not in outings or watching shows, but rather to sanctify it by assisting at the eucharistic celebration and by doing acts of mercy (St. Ambrose, *Exam*. III, 1, 1).[6]

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[4] This is the Preface for Samuele Bacchiocchi's, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), pp. 7-8. All my comments, whether in the main body of the text or in the footnotes, begin with 'Avram:'

[5] Avram: The Scriptures are silent as to the day when Messiah rose from the dead (see The Resurrection and Mark 16:9).

[6] Monachino, attributing the term, *the Lord's Day* to Sunday is not biblical, as Bacchiocchi brings out (Chap-

Rome, June 29, 1977

Vincenzo Monachino, S.J.

Chairman of the Church History Department

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ter IV, pp. 111-131 of this book). Also, Bacchiocchi would not agree with him about transferring the biblical theme and concepts of the 7th day Sabbath to Sunday.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The Present Crisis of the Lord's Day

The cycle of six working days and one for worship and rest, though the legacy of Hebrew history, has in time prevailed throughout almost all the world. In fact, Jewish and Christian worship find their concrete expression in one day, recurring weekly, wherein adoration of God is made possible and more meaningful by the interruption of secular activities.

In recent times, however, our society has undergone much radical transformation because of its technological, industrial, scientific and spatial achievements. Modern man, as Abraham Joshua Heschel asserts, "lives under the tyranny of things of space."[7] The growing availability of leisure time, caused by shorter work weeks, tends to alter not only the cycle of six days of work and one of rest, but even traditional religious values, such as the sanctification of the Lord's day. The Christian today therefore is tempted to consider time as a thing that belongs to him, something which he may utilize for his own enjoyment. Worship obligations, if not totally neglected, are often reduced to easy dispensability according to the whims of life.

The Biblical notion of the "holy Sabbath," understood as a time to cease from secular activities in order *to experience the blessings of creation–redemption by worshiping God and by acting generously toward needy people*, is increasingly disappearing from the Christian view. Consequently, if one contemplates the pressure that our economic and industrial institutions are exerting to obtain maximum utilization of industrial plants–by programing work shifts to ignore any festivity—it is easy to comprehend how the pattern transmitted to us of the seven day week, with its recurring day of rest and worship, could undergo radical changes. The problem is compounded by a prevailing misconception of the meaning of God's "holy day." Many well-meaning Christians view Sunday observance as the *hour* of worship rather than as the *holy day* of the Lord. Having fulfilled their worship obligations, many will, in good conscience, spend the rest of their Sunday time engaged either in making money or in seeking pleasure.

Some people, concerned by this widespread profanation of the Lord's day, are urging for a civil legislation that would outlaw all activities not compatible with the spirit of Sunday.[8] To make such legislation agreeable, even to non-Christians, sometimes appeal is made to the pressing need of preserving natural resources. One day of total rest for man and machines would help safeguard both our power resources and the precarious environment.[9] Social or ecological needs, however, while they may en-

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[7] Abraham Joshua Heshel, *The Sabbath, its Meaning for Modern Man,* 1951, p. 10. The same author underlines the notion that "Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time" (ibid., p. 8).

This is Chapter I of Samuele Bacchiocchi's, *From Sabbath To Sunday* (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), pp. 9-16.

[8] On the historical development of the Sunday legislation see: H. Huber, *Geist und Buchstabe der Sonntagsruhe,* 1958, who traces this development until the Middle Ages. A similar treatment is provided by J. Kelly, *Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations,* dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1943. For the Puritan view, see J. Bohmer, *Der Christliche Sonntag nach Ursprung und Geschichte,* 1951. Ronald Goetz, "An Eschatological Manifesto," *The Christian Century* 76 (Nov. 2, 1960): 1275, argues that the principle of separation of church and state is overlooked by the advocators of Sunday laws (cf. John Gilmary Shea, "The Observance of Sunday and Civil Laws for its Enforcement." *The American Catholic Quarterly Review,* 8, (1883): 152ff.

[9] Harold Lindsell comes close to proposing Sunday as a national rest day in his editorial in *Christianity Today*

courage resting on Sunday, can hardly induce a worshipful attitude.

Might not more hopeful results be expected from educating our Christian communities to understand both the Biblical meaning and experience of God's "holy day"? To accomplish this, however, it is indispensable, first of all, to articulate clearly the theological ground for Sunday observance. What are the Biblical and historical reasons for Sunday-keeping? Can this day be regarded as the legitimate replacement of the Jewish Sabbath? Can the fourth commandment be rightly invoked to enjoin its observance? Should Sunday be viewed as the *hour of worship* rather than the *holy day of rest* to the Lord?[10]

To provide an answer to these vital issues it is indispensable to ascertain, first of all, "when…where, and why" Sunday rose as a day of Christian worship. Only after reconstructing this historical picture, and having identified the main factors which contributed to the origin of Sunday, will it be possible to proceed with the task of reassessing the validity and significance of Sunday observance.

The Problem and Objectives of this Study

The problem of the origin of Sunday observance in early Christianity has aroused in recent times the interest of scholars of differing religious persuasions. The numerous scientific studies, including several doctoral dissertations, which have appeared over the last two decades are clear evidence of renewed interest and effort put forth to find a more satisfactory answer to the ever intriguing question of the time, place and causes of the origin of Sunday-keeping.[11]

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of May 7, 1976, entitled "The Lord's Day and Natural Resources." He argues that the only way to achieve the dual objective of Sunday observance and the conservation of energy would be "by force of legislative fiat through the duly elected officials of the people." The opposition to the editorial by Sabbatarians, who view Lindsell's proposal as a violation of the rights guaranteed to Americans under the First Amendment, apparently induced the editor to come up with a counterproposal in another editorial in the same journal of November 5, 1976. According to Lindsell's new proposal, Saturday rather than Sunday should be enforced as a day of rest for all people. Seventh-day Adventists emphatically rejected even the latter proposal on the ground that the forced observance of any day of the week would bring hardship and deprive of religious freedom some segments of (the) population (cf. Leo R. Van Dolson, "Color the Blue Laws Green," *Liberty,* 72 [1977]: 30).

[10] W. Rordorf, *Sunday. The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church,* 1968 (hereafter cited as *Sunday),* p. 296, holds that "right down to the fourth century the idea of rest played absolutely no part in the Christian Sunday." Since in Rordorf's opinion Sunday rest was not an original or indispensable component of Sunday worship but an imperial imposition (p. 168), he raises the question "whether it is an ideal solution for the day of rest and the day of worship to coincide" (p. 299). He prefers to assign to Sunday an exclusive cultic function which can be realized in the gathering of the Christian community, in any moment of the day, for the eucharistic celebration.

[11] The following are some of the most recent and significant studies: W. Rordorf, *Sunday;* by the same author, "Le Dimanche, jour du culte et jour du repos dans l'Église primitive," *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, pp. 91-111 (hereafter cited as "Dimanche"); *Sabbat et dimanche dans l'Église ancienne* (compilation and edition of texts), 1972 (hereafter cited as *Sabbat);* C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica dalle origini fino agli inizi del V Secolo,* Analecta Gregoriana vol. 170, 1969 (hereafter cited as *Storia della domenica);* J. Danielou, "Le dimanche comme huitième jour," *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, pp. 61-89; by the same author, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 1964, pp. 222-286; Pacifico Massi, *La Domenica nella storia della salvezza, saggio pastorale,* 1967 (hereafter cited as *La Domenica);* Francis A. Regan, "Dies Dominica and Dies Soils. The Beginning of the Lord's Day in Christian Antiquity," unpublished dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1961 (hereafter cited as *Dies Dominica);* H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour duSeigneur," *New Testament Essays. Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson,* 1959, pp. 210-218; the article appears with minor changes as a chapter "The Sabbath and the Lord's Day," in *The Gospel Tradition: Essays by H. Riesenfeld,* 1970, pp. 111-137; C. W. Dugmore, "Lord's Day and Easter," *Neotestamentica et Patristica in honorem sexagenarii O. Cullnmann,* 1962, pp. 272-281; Y. B. Tremel, "Du Sabbat au Jour du Seigneur," *Lumiere et Vie* 58(1962): pp. 29- 49; J. M. R. Tillard, "Le Dimanche, jour d'alliance," *Sciences Religieuses* 16 (1964): pp. 225-250; by the same author, "Le Dimanche," *La Maison-Dieu* 83 (1965); *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39,

The tendency in recent studies, however, has been to make Sunday observance either an exclusive and original creation of the apostolic community of Jerusalem[12] or a too-pagan adaptation of the *"dies solis—Sun-day"* with its related Sun-worship.[13] But any investigation and conclusion which takes into account only a few causal factors is patently unilateral and poorly balanced. If we recognize, as J. V. Goudoever does, that of "all parts of liturgy the feasts are perhaps the most enduring: it is practically impossible to change the day and form of festival,"[14] we should expect that only complex and deep motives could have induced the majority of Christians to abandon the immemorial and prominent Jewish tradition of Sabbath-keeping in favor of a new day of worship. In any attempt therefore to reconstruct the historical process of the origin of Sunday, attention ought to be given to the greatest number of possible contributory factors—theological, social, political and pagan—which may have played a minor or greater role in inducing the adoption of Sunday as a day of worship.

This study has two well definable objectives. First, it proposes to examine the thesis espoused by numerous scholars who attribute to the Apostles, or even to Christ, the initiative and responsibility for the abandonment of Sabbath-keeping and the institution of Sunday worship. Consideration will be given to Christ's teachings regarding the Sabbath, to the resurrection and the appearances of Christ, to the eucharistic celebration and to the Christian community of Jerusalem, in order to determine what role, if any, these played in establishing Sunday observance.

Our purpose will be to ascertain whether Sunday worship originated during the lifetime of the Apostles in Jerusalem or whether it started sometime later somewhere else. This verification of the historical genesis of Sunday-keeping is of great importance, since it may explicate not only the causes of its origin, but also its applicability to Christians today. *If Sunday indeed is the Lord's day*, all Christians, yes, all mankind should know it.

Secondly, this book designs to evaluate to what extent certain factors such as anti-Judaic feelings, repressive Roman measures taken against the Jews, Sun-worship with its related "day of the Sun," and certain Christian theological motivations influenced the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption by the majority of Christians of Sunday as the Lord's day.

This study, then, is an attempt to reconstruct a mosaic of factors in a search for a more exact picture of the time and causes that contributed to the adoption of Sunday as the day of worship and rest. This is in harmony with C. W. Dugmore's suggestion that "it is sometimes worth reconsidering what most people regard as a *chose jugee,* even if no startling conclusions can be definitely proved."[15] To re-

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1965; Ph. Delhaye–J. L. Lecat "Dinianche et sabbat," *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* (1966): 3-14 and 73-93; by the same author, "Le dimanche," *Verbum Caro* (1966); A. Verheul, "Du Sabbat au Jour du Seigneur," *Questions Liturgiques et paroissiales* (1970): 3-27; Pierre Grelot, "Du Sabbat juif au dimanche chr6tien" *La Maison-Dieu* 123-124 (1975): 79-107 and 14-54; other studies will be cited in the course of the study.

[12] This exclusive approach is reflected, for instance, in the methodology of W. Rordorf, when he states: "There are in principle two possible solutions to this problem: *either* we conclude that the observance of Sunday originated in Christianity, in which case we have to ask what factors contributed to its emergence: *or* we are convinced that the Christian Church adopted its observance of Sunday from elsewhere. We must come to one conclusion or the other in our search for the origin of the Christian observance of Sunday, for it cannot have been both devised and adopted by Christians" *(Sunday,* p. 180). Rordorf tenaciously defends the first solution, but his method and conclusions are criticized even by C. S. Mosna, see p. 5, note 14. Similarly J. Danielou writes: "Sunday is a purely Christian creation, connected with the historical fact of the Resurrection of the Lord" *(Bible and Liturgy,* pp. 222 and 242). This view is examined especially in chapters 3, 5 and 9.

[13] See, for instance, H. Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verstandnis des Neuen Testaments,* 1910, pp. 74f.; A. Loisy, *Les Mystères paiens,* 1930, pp. 223f; also *Les Èvangiles synoptiques,* 1907, I, pp. 177f.; R. L. Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism,* 1944; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday,* 1933, p. 130f.

[14] J. V. Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars,* 1959, p. 151. C. S. Mosna criticizes W. Rordorf for giving "to the rise of Sunday festivity a too-Christian origin, neglecting other useful elements and detaching it from its Jewish context" *(Storia delia domenica,* pp. 41 and 5).

examine accepted solutions and hypotheses, submitting them anew to critical scrutiny, is not a simple academic exercise, it is rather a duty to be performed in the service of truth.

Our study does not concern itself with the liturgical or pastoral aspects of Sunday observance in primitive Christianity inasmuch as such problems have already been treated exhaustively in recent monographs.[16] We shall examine solely those texts which can help to establish the time and the causes—formal and material, immediate and remote—of the origin of Sunday worship. Our concern is limited to the problem of origins.

With the exception of a few incidental references to later texts, the documents we shall examine fall within the first four centuries of our era. Patristic testimonies will be examined until this late a period in order to verify the historical validity of the motivations which appear in the scanty documents of the earlier part of the second century. This is the period in which Sunday worship moved from a nebulous beginning to an established practice. This being the period in which ecclesiastical institutions are still in an embryonic stage, the student who reads the few available documents with later ecclesiological criteria may easily be led astray.

The sources have been analyzed by taking into account chronological, historical and geographical factors. Significant passages have been submitted to careful scrutiny since often their textual and contextual problems have been either bypassed or interpreted unilaterally. This creates the unwarranted impression, for instance, that there exists, as stated by N. J. White, "an unbroken and unquestioned Church usage" of the phrase, "Lord's day—*kuriake hemera*," to refer to Sunday since the earliest apostolic times.[17]

The documents available for the present research are of a heterogeneous nature such as letters, homilies and treatises. Their derivation, authenticity and orthodoxy are not always certain, but since they are all that we have, everything of value must be wrung from them. According to the canons of scientific rigor, objection could be made to the use of a document such as, for instance, Pseudo-Barnabas. However, if one should limit himself only to the analysis of archival documents, of archeological monuments and other pieces of undisputed authenticity, it would be impossible to make any real progress owing to their scarcity. It is therefore necessary to examine the rich patristic and apocryphal literature while keeping in mind its limitations.

To make the present study accessible also to the lay reader, both the New Testament and Patristic texts have been quoted in English from reputable translations. The Revised Standard Version has been used, but when necessary the Greek text of E. Nestle and K. Aland has been inserted. In the case of patristic texts of particular relevance, various available critical editions have been examined. Where an English edition is not available or is unsatisfactory, the author has translated. Significant Greek or Latin words have been placed within brackets.

The frequent references to the recent monographs of W. Rordorf, F. A. Regan and C. S. Mosna are symptomatic of their importance as well as of the necessity that was felt to challenge some of their conclusions. Undoubtedly the working hypotheses which have made possible the present research, after having undergone the sieve of the critics, will necessitate in their turn modifications and emendations. This study largely represents an abridgement of a doctoral dissertation presented in Italian to the Department of Ecclesiastical History at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. The material has been substantially condensed and rearranged. This re-elaboration has been motivated by the desire to

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[15] C. W. Dugmore (p. 4, note 11), p. 274.

[16] For the pastoral aspects of Sunday observance see V. Monachino, *La Cura pastorale a Milano, Cartagine e Roma nel secolo IV,* Analecta Gregoriana 41, 1947; and *S. Ambrogio e la cura pastorale a Milano nel secolo IV,* 1973; C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* part IV, deals with the liturgical and pastoral aspect of Sunday both in the East and the West; for the question of Sunday rest, see H. Huber, *Spirito e lettera del riposo domenicale,* 1961; J. Duval, "La Doctrine de l'Église sur le travail dominical et son evolution," *La Maison-Dieu* 83 (1965): 106f.; L. Vereecke, "Le Repos du dimanche," *Lumière et vie* 58 (1962): 72f.

[17] *A Dictionary of the Bible,* ed. James Hastings, 1911, s. v. "Lord's Day," by N. J. White.

make the study comprehensible even to lay readers. To achieve this often the discussion of technical questions has been placed in footnotes.

It is the hope that the present work may furnish for theologians indispensable historical data necessary for reflections on the significance of Sunday, and that it may arouse also the interest of historians to reconsider the question of the origin of Sunday in the attempt to come nearer to "truth." It is also the hope that earnest readers may be stimulated through a better understanding of the meaning of God's holy day to search for a deeper fellowship with the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28).

Chapter II

CHRIST AND THE LORD'S DAY

The expression, "Lord's day—*kuriake hemera*," which first appears as an undisputed Christian designation for Sunday near the end part of the second century, denotes a day which belongs exclusively to the "Lord—*kurios*."[18] Since Sunday has been traditionally viewed by many Christians as the day of which Christ is Lord and which is consecrated to Him, we may well begin our historical enquiry into the origin of Sunday observance by ascertaining if Christ anticipated the institution of a new day of worship dedicated exclusively to Him.

The sayings of Christ found in the Gospels do not contain the expression "Lord's day." The Synoptics (Mt. 12:8; Mk. 2:28; Lk. 6:5), however, contain a similar locution, namely "Lord of the Sabbath—*kurios tou sabbatou*," a phrase used by Christ at the end of a dispute with the Pharisees over the question of legitimate Sabbath activities.

Various authors have sought to establish a causal relationship between Christ's proclaiming himself "Lord of the Sabbath" and the institution of Sunday as the "Lord's day." C. S. Mosna, for instance, emphatically states that "Christ proclaimed Himself master of the Sabbath specifically to liberate man from formal burdens like the Sabbath, which had become unnecessary."[19] He sees in this pronouncement Christ's intention to institute His new day of worship. Wilfrid Stott similarly interprets Christ's logion as an implicit reference to Sunday: "He is the Lord of the Sabbath and in this expression, quoted by all three of the Synoptics, there is a covert reference to the Lord's day. He, as Lord, chooses his own day."[20]

To assess the validity of these assumptions we must determine Christ's basic attitude toward the Sabbath. To put it forthrightly, *did Christ genuinely observe or intentionally break the Sabbath?* If the latter were the case then we would need to find out if Christ, by His words and actions, intended to lay the foundations for a new day of worship which would eventually replace the Sabbath.

Form critics would regard this investigation as futile since they view the Gospels' report of Christ's Sabbath teachings and activities, not as authentic historical accounts, but as later reflections of the primitive Church. What Jesus Himself may have thought, they claim, is impossible to ascertain.[21] We

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[18] On the usage of the terms "Lord—*kurios*" and "Lord's—*kuriakos*," see W. Foerster, *TDNT* III, pp. 1086-1096. The first undisputed occurrence is found in the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter,* where twice the expression "*he kuriake*—the Lord's day" (35; 50) is used as a translation of "the first day of the week," which we find in Mark 16:2 par. The Gospel is dated in the second half of the second century since Serapion of Antioch, about AD 200, refuted its docetic teachings (cf. Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* I, p. 180). Melito of Sardis (d. ca. AD 190), according to Eusebius *(HE 4,* 26, 2), wrote a treatise "On the Lord's day—*peri kuriakes logos*," but unfortunately only the title has survived. For other references see Dionysius of Corinth, cited by Eusebius, *HE 4,* 23, 11; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7, 12, 76, 4; *Fragment 7 of Irenaeus, ANF* 1, p. 569; Origen, *In Exodum homiliae 7,* 5; *Contra Celsum* 8, 22; Eusebius, *Commentaria* in Psalmos 91; *HE* 3, 25, 5; *De Solemnitate paschali* 7; Tertullian uses the Latin equivalent *"dominicus dies"* in *De oratione* 23 and *De corona* 3. This became the official designation for Sunday in the Latin languages (cf. *domenica, dimanche).*

This is Chapter II of Samuele Bacchiocchi's, *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 17-73.

[19] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 174.

[20] Wilfrid Stott, "A Note on the Word *KYPIAKH* in Rev. 1.10," *NTS* 12 (1965): 75; P. K. Jewett assumes a middle-of-the road position, interpreting Jesus' claim to be Lord of the Sabbath as implying liberty with respect to the Sabbath, but not necessarily an obligation to worship on the first day of the week. He maintains however, that "Christians would never have come to worship on another day, apart from this freedom respecting the observance of the Sabbath, a freedom bequeathed to them by the Lord himself" *(The Lord's Day, A Theological Guide to the Christian Day of Worship,* 1972, p. 43; hereafter cited as *Lord's Day).*

see no justification for such historical skepticism, especially since a new quest for the historical Jesus has begun which casts shadows on previous methodologies and promises to find in the Gospels a much larger number of genuine deeds and words of Jesus.[22] However, *even if the sabbatical materials of the Gospels represent later reflections of the Christian community* (which to us is inadmissible), this point *would not diminish their historical value*. They would still constitute a valuable source for studying *the attitude of the primitive Church toward the Sabbath*.[23] In fact, the considerable space and attention given by the Gospel writers to Christ's Sabbath healings (no less than seven episodes are reported)[24] "and controversies, *are indicative of how important the Sabbath question was at the time of their writing*.

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[21] For Rudolf Bultmann the Sabbath conflicts reported in the Gospels are all ideal scenes reconstructed by the primitive community on the basis of an oral tradition. His classic treatment is found in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition,* ET 1963. Prior to Bultmann's work had appeared K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu,* 1919 and M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel,* ET 1934.

[22] A recent reappraisal of the Sabbath material of the Gospels has been done by E. Lohse, who, contrary to Bultmann, shows that many of the *"logia"* are authentic words of Christ ("*sabbaton*" *TDNT* VII, pp. 21-30; also, *"Jesu Worte iiber den Sabbat," Judentum-Urchristentum-Kirche, Festschrift fiür I. Jeremias* (BZNW 26), 1960, pp. 79-89; W. Rordorf has carried the work of Lohse further, arguing for additional authentic recollection of historical events from the life of Christ. He is willing to accept the historicity of the account of the plucking of the ears of corn by the disciples (Mark 2:23f. par.) and of Christ's sayings preserved in Mark 2:27-28. He does not however recognize, for instance, John 15:17" (perhaps 5:17?) "as genuine words of Jesus *(Sunday,* pp. 54-74; cf. also "Dimanche," p. 103).

[23] If the Gospel writers were already observing Sunday rather than the Jewish Sabbath, why would they report so many Sabbath healings and pronouncements of Jesus? Their concern over Christ's Sabbath activity and teaching hardly suggests their observing Sunday. L. Goppelt, *TDNT* VI, p. 19, fn. 53, criticizes R. Bultmann's view that "the primitive community put the justification of its Sabbath practice on the lips of Jesus," by raising this significant question, "But how could this situation [Matt. 12:1-8] be invented by the Palestinian community with its zeal for the Law (Acts 21:20f.)?" The loyalty of the Palestinian Church to Jewish religious customs will be discussed below in Chapter IIII.

Avram: The use of the term *Palestinian* for the people of Judah/Israel speaks more of 20th century theologians than actual geographical and historical facts. The term *Palestine* was given to Judah/Israel by the Romans in 135 AD, after they had fought their second major war against the Jewish nation (67-70 AD and 132-135 AD). After the second war Judah lost its nationhood and Rome changed the name of their province, to further humiliate the Jews, knowing that the ancient Philistines were the mortal enemies of Israel. *Palestine* is the anglicized version of *Philistine*. The so-called Palestinians today, who are of Arab descent, are no relation to the ancient Philistines, who were originally part of the Sea People, meaning that they most likely came from islands in the Mediterranean Sea, or came by sea to Israel from southern Turkey. In Jer. 47:4 they are called the people of Kaftor (i.e. ancient Crete). They weren't Semites and so they couldn't have been Arabs or 'Palestinians.'

[24] The seven Sabbath healings in the Gospels are:

1. The Demoniac in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Lk. 4:31-37).

2. Peter's mother-in-law (Mt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-34; Lk. 4:38-39).

3. The man with the withered hand (Mt. 12:9-21; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).

4. The crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17).

5. The man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-4).

6. The invalid at Bethesda (John 5:1-18).

7. The man born blind (John 9:1-41).

The Sabbath's Typology and its Messianic Fulfillment

A good place to start our enquiry into Christ's concept of the Sabbath is perhaps the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel. Here we find excerpts from the sermon Christ preached in the synagogue of Nazareth on a Sabbath day upon inauguration of His public ministry. It is noteworthy that in the Gospel of Luke the ministry of Christ not only begins on the Sabbath—the day which, according to Luke (4:16), Christ habitually observed—but also ends on "the day of preparation as the Sabbath was beginning" (23:54). The sabbatical ministry of Jesus, which provoked repeated rejections (Luke 4:29; 13:14, 31; 14:1-6), appears to be presented by Luke as a prelude to Christ's own final rejection and sacrifice.

In His opening sermon Christ refers to Isaiah 61:1-2 (cf. 58:6), which says,

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord…" (Luke 4:18-19)

Practically all commentators agree that the "acceptable year of the Lord" (4:19), which Christ is officially ordained ("anointed") to proclaim, refers to the sabbatical year (i.e. the seventh year)[25] or the Jubilee year (i.e. the fiftieth year, after seven Sabbaths of years). At these annual institutions the Sabbath became the liberator of the oppressed of the Hebrew society. The land was to lie fallow, to provide free produce for the poor, the dispossessed and the animals.[26] The slaves were emancipated if they so desired and debts owed by fellow citizens were remitted.[27] The jubilee year also required the restoration of property to the original owner.[28] That the text of Isaiah, read by Christ, refers to these sabbatical institutions is clear by the context which speaks of the liberation of the poor, captives, blind (or prisoners), oppressed."

It is significant that Christ, in His opening address, announces His Messianic mission in the language of the *sabbatical* year. His brief comment on the passage is most pertinent: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21). As P. K. Jewett aptly remarks, "the great Jubilee Sabbath has become a reality for all those who have been loosed from their sins by the coming of the Messiah and have found an inheritance in Him."[29]

We may ask, why did Christ announce His mission as the fulfillment of the sabbatical promises of lib-

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[25] Cf. for instance, the commentaries on Luke by Herschel H. Hobbs, Henry Burton, W. Robertson Nicoll, Wilfrid J. Harrington, R. C. H. Lenski, F. Godet, Alfred Loisy, M. J. Lagrange.

[26] On the Sabbath for the land see Ex. 23:11; Lev. 25:6f.; Deut. 24:19-22; Lev. 19:9-10. Cf. Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath,* SBL Dissertation Series 7, 1972, p. 214. He suggests two motives for the sabbatical year: regeneration for the land and liberation for man.

[27] On the remission of debts owed by fellow citizens see Deut. 15:1-6; on the release of slaves see Ex. 21:2-6 and Deut. 15:12-18.

[28] The jubilee year was apparently an intensification of the sabbatical year, with the main emphasis on restoration to its original owner of all property, particularly real estate (Lev. 25:8-17, 23-55; 27:16-25; Num. 36:4). The complexity of city life (Lev. 25:29-34) made it difficult to put into operation the jubilee year. We have however, indications that the sabbatical year was observed (Jer. 34:8-21; 2 Chron. 36:21; Lev. 26:43). For information on the post-exilic period, see E. Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ,* 1885, I. pp. 40-45. On the relationship between the Sabbath and the sabbatical jubilee year see Niels-Erik A. Andreasen (p. 10, note 26), pp. 217-218.

[29] P. K. Jewett, *The Lord's Day,* p. 27; W. Rordorf similarly comments that, "By means of this quotation from the prophet, Luke's Gospel does therefore describe the effect of Jesus' coming as the inauguration of the sabbath year" *(Sunday,* p. 110). Wilfrid J. Harrington, *A Commentary, The Gospel according to St. Luke,* 1967, p. 134, also remarks that, "seizing upon this, the gladdest festival of Hebrew life, Jesus likens Himself to one of the priests, who with trumpet of silver proclaims 'the acceptable year of the Lord.' He finds in that jubilee a type of His Messianic year, a year that shall bring, not to one chosen race alone, but to a world of debtors and captives, remissions and manumissions without number, ushering in an era of liberty and gladness."

eration? Did He intend to explain, perhaps in a veiled fashion, that the institution of the Sabbath was a type which had found its fulfillment in Himself, the Antitype, and therefore its obligation had ceased? (In such a case Christ would have paved the way for the replacement of the Sabbath with a new day of worship.) Or did Christ identify His mission with the Sabbath in order to make the day a fitting memorial of His redemptive activities?

To answer this dilemma we need, first of all, to remind ourselves of the Messianic redemptive implications of the Sabbath. Inherent in the institution of the Sabbath is the assurance of divine blessings, "God *blessed* the seventh day" (Gen. 2:3 cf. Ex. 20:11). The Old Testament notion of "blessing" is concrete and finds expression in full and abundant life. The blessing of the Sabbath in the creation story (Gen. 2:3) follows the blessing of the living creatures (Gen. 1:22) and of man (Gen. 1:28). Therefore, it expresses God's ultimate and total blessing over His complete and perfect creation (Gen. 1:31). By blessing the Sabbath, God promised to be man's benefactor during the whole course of human history.[30]

The blessings of the Sabbath, in the unfolding of the history of salvation, become associated more specifically with God's saving acts. For instance in the Exodus version of the commandments, Yahweh introduces Himself as the merciful Redeemer who liberated Israel "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2). To guarantee this newly granted freedom to all the members of the Hebrew society, the Sabbath commandment enjoins that rest be granted to all, including even the animals (Ex. 20:10).

"In the Deuteronomic version of the decalogue the redemption motif not only appears in the preface (Deut. 5:6) to all the commandments (as in Exodus 20:1), but also is explicitly incorporated into the Sabbath commandment itself. It was perhaps to drive home the immediate relevancy of the Sabbath commandment to the Israelites and to all ensuing generations, that in this reiteration of the commandments, the Sabbath is grounded not" (only) "in God's past act of creation (as in Exodus 20:11), which does not always speak to people's immediate concerns, but rather in the divine act of redemption:"

> "You must remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).[31]

Here the reason for observing the Sabbath is, as well stated by Hans Walter Wolff, "that affirmation which was absolutely fundamental for Israel, namely, that Yahweh had liberated Israel from Egypt. On every Sabbath Israel is to remember that her God is a liberator."[32] This call to remember the exodus deliverance through the Sabbath was for the Israelites a concrete experience which involved extending the Sabbath rest to all those who were not free to observe it. The resting on the Sabbath,

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[30] K. Barth interprets the creation Sabbath rest of God as the prefiguration and inauguration of the redeeming work of Christ *(Church Dogmatics,* ET 1956, III, p. 277). He does so however by projecting back into the *perfect* creation and the Sabbath rest, the triumph of grace, thus denying the original *status integritatis (Church Dogmatics,* IV, p. 508). H. K. La Rondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism* (1975)**,** pp. 81-83, provides a penetrating analysis of Barth's notion of God's Sabbath rest, and shows how Barth swallows up "the reality of Biblical protology into its soteriology." G. C. Berkouwer acknowledges that the Sabbath rest "illustrates preeminently the close relationship existing between creation and redemption" *(The Providence of God,* ET 1952, p. 62). He sees in the "maintenance of the Sabbath after the fall…a token of the coming salvation of the Lord (cf. Ezek. 20:12)" (ibid., p. 64). His interpretation however is determined not (as in Barth) by a destruction of the ontological reality of man's perfection in creation, but by the recognition of the *"unsuspected* and *surprising* character of God's redeeming grace in view of the salvation-historical reality and offensiveness of *sin,* and by the dynamic function of personal Faith" (La Rondelle, op. cit., pp. 82-83; cf. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth,* 1956, pp. 381-383).

[31] Henrique Renckens, *La Religion de Israel,* 1970, p. 225: "By keeping the Sabbath the Israelite was to remember regularly Yahweh as Creator and Redeemer of the people." Cf. S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy,* 1895, p. 85.

[32] Hans Walter Wolff, "The Day of Rest in the Old Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43 (1972): 500.

however, was not designed merely as a mnemonic aid to help Israel recall her historical exodus deliverance, but rather, as Brevard S. Childs observes, it meant experiencing in the present the past salvation history.[33]

A. M. Dubarle confirms this interpretation when he writes that through the observance of the Sabbath,

> "was effectively realized and actualized during the whole course of time the deliverance accomplished for the first time in the month of Abib. It was not, however, only a question of commemorating by a simple souvenir, but rather a rejoicing resulting from the constant renewal of the initial benefit."[34]

We might say that the Sabbath contained a three-dimensional scope: it commemorated the past, present and future deliverance. The weekly release from the hardships of life, which the Israelite experienced in the present, epitomized also the past Passover liberation as well as the future Messianic redemption. Because of their close nexus, both the Passover and the Sabbath could symbolize the future Messianic deliverance. (It is noteworthy that as the Sabbath became for the Israelites the weekly extension of the annual Passover, so Sunday later became for many Christians the weekly commemoration of the annual Easter-Sunday.)

The redemptive function of the Sabbath was seemingly understood as a prefiguration of the mission of the Messiah. The liberation from the hardship of work and from the social inequalities, which both the weekly and annual Sabbath granted to all the members of the Hebrew society, was viewed as foreshadowing the fuller redemption the Messiah would one day bring to His people. The Messianic age of the ingathering of all the nations is described in Isaiah as the time when "from Sabbath to Sabbath all flesh shall come to worship before me" (66:23).

The mission of the Messiah is also described by Isaiah (in the very passage which Christ applied to Himself in His opening address—Luke 4:18-19) in the language of the sabbatical year (61:13). P. K. Jewett aptly comments that God, in the act of redemption and restoration of the sabbatical and jubilee year,

> "appears again as the Redeemer who guarantees the individual his personal freedom and preserves for the poor a share in the inheritance of his people. Surely this is not a dated, ceremonial conception, for God has supremely manifested himself as Redeemer in Christ the Mediator, the Son who has made us free indeed (John 8:36)."[35]

Another significant Messianic typology of the Sabbath can be seen in the experience of the Sabbath *rest—menuhah,* which A. J. Heschel defines "as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony."[36] Theodore Friedman, in a learned article, shows persuasively that the peace and harmony of the Sabbath is frequently identified both in the writings of the Prophets and in the Talmudic literature with the Messianic age, commonly known as the end of days or the world to come. He notes, for instance, that

> "Isaiah employs the words 'delight' *(oneg)* and 'honor' *(kaved)* in his description of both the Sabbath and the end of days [i.e. Messianic age] (58:13—"And thou shall call the Sabbath (a) delight…and honor it"; 66:11—'And you shall delight in the glow of its honor'). The implication is clear. The delight and joy that will mark the end of days is made available here and now by the Sabbath."[37]

Friedman presents also an informative sampling of rabbinic sayings where "the Sabbath is the anticipation, the foretaste, the paradigm of the life in the world to come [i.e. Messianic age]."[38] A somewhat

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[33] B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel,* SBT 37, 1962, pp. 50-52.

[34] A. M. Dubarle, "La Signification religieuse du Sabbat dans la Bible," *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, p. 46.

[35] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 27.

[36] A. J. Heschel, *The Sabbath, its Meaning for Modern Man,* 1951, p. 10.

[37] Theodore Friedman, "*The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption*," Judaism 16 (1967): 445.

similar interpretation of the Sabbath is found in late Jewish apocalyptic, where the duration of the world is reckoned by the "cosmic week" of six epochs of 1,000 years each, followed by the Sabbath of the end of time. In the overwhelming majority of the passages this eschatological Sabbath is explicitly thought to be the days of the Messiah, which either precede or are identified with paradise restored.[39]

The theme of the Sabbath rest, which appears in Hebrews 3 and 4, may represent another strand of Messianic typology carried over from the Old Testament. G. von Rad notes a development of the theme of "rest" in the Old Testament from the concept of national and political peace (Deut. 12:91; 25:19) to a spiritual and "wholly personal entering into God's rest" (cf. Ps. 95:11).[40] This concept, as we shall later see, is re-proposed in Hebrews, where God's people are invited to enter into the "Sabbath rest" (4:9) by believing (4:3), obeying (4:6, 11) and accepting by "faith" God's "good news" (4:1-2). The author rejects the temporal notion of the Sabbath rest understood as entrance into the land of Canaan (Deut. 12:9; 25:19), since he argues that the land which Joshua gave to the Israelites (4:8), is not the "Sabbath rest" (4:9) which God has made available to His people since creation (4:3, 4, 10). The latter can be experienced by accepting "today" (4:7) the "good news" (4:2, 6) of salvation. The allusion to the Christ-event is unmistakably clear. It is in Him that the Old Testament Sabbath rest finds its fulfillment and it is through Him that it now can be experienced by all the believers.[41]

This brief survey has sufficiently established the existence of an Old Testament Sabbath typology alluding to the Messiah. In the light of this fact the claim that Christ made in His inaugural address to be the fulfillment of the redemptive function of the Sabbath acquires added significance. By identifying Himself with the Sabbath, Christ was affirming His Messiahship. This explains why Christ, as it will later be shown, revealed His Messianic mission particularly through His Sabbath ministry.[42] That this was well understood is evidenced, for instance, by the joint accusation Jewish leaders levelled against Christ: "He not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). In the actual trial it appears that the accusation of Sabbath breaking was not brought against Christ. Apparently, as W. Rordorf well remarks, "His opponents obviously preferred to concentrate on the Messianic claim which was implicit even in His infringements of the Sabbath."[43]

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[38] Ibid., pp. 443, 447-449.

[39] For a concise discussion of the various interpretations of the Sabbath of the end of time in Jewish apocalyptic literature, see W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 48-51. Cf. also Chapter IX, p. 281f.

[40] G. von Rad, "There Still Remains a Rest for the People of God: An Investigation of a Biblical Conception," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays,* 1966, pp. 94-102. Ernst Jenni, *Die theologische Begriindung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament,* ThSt 41, 1956, p. 282, proposes that the Sabbath contributed to the development of the theme of Israel's rest.

[41] P. Spicq, *Commentaire de l'Épitre aux Hebreux,* 1953, II, pp. 102-103, points out that the theme of the Sabbath rest in Hebrews contains both a temporal ideal for the Israelites: the entry into Canaan; and a religious ideal for the Christians: salvation. The passage is examined in this chapter under the sub-heading, *The Sabbath in the Letter to the Hebrews,* which begins on p. 38.

[42] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 71-72, recognizes that "the primitive Church also understood that Jesus' healing activity was, in fact, in the truest possible sense of the word a 'Sabbath' activity: in him, in his love, in his mercy and his help had dawned the Messianic Sabbath, the time of God's own saving activity." He interprets, however, the Messianic fulfilment of the Sabbath as signifying that Christ "replaced the Sabbath for those who believe" (ibid., p. 116). Besides the fact that Christ never alludes to an eventual replacement of the Sabbath, one may ask, why would Christ wish to change it? What new benefit could accrue to Christians by changing the day of worship? Would such an act bespeak *stability* and *continuity* in the divine plan of salvation? In this regard it is important to reflect on Pacifico Massi's question: "Is it ever possible that the ancient economy founded on the weekly cycle of the seventh day, by which God had prepared universal salvation in Christ and had educated his people for centuries, should be wiped out with a stroke by the event of the Resurrection?" *(La Domenica,* p. 25). Contrary to Rordorf, who attempts to make Sunday an exclusive Christian creation detached from the Sabbath, Massi argues that Sunday is the continuation of the meaning and function of the Sabbath, but does a change in the day of worship bespeak continuity?

[43] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 67.

THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST TO THE SABBATH

The fact that Christ claimed to be the fulfillment of the Messianic expectations inherent in the Sabbath raises a most vital question, namely, how did Christ view the actual observance of the Sabbath? Did He uphold the validity of the institution for His followers as the unquestionable will of God? Or did Christ regard the obligation of Sabbath-keeping as fulfilled and superseded by His coming, the true Sabbath?

Some scholars interpret the Sabbath debates and healing activities of Christ as intentional provocatory acts designed to show that the Sabbath commandment no longer had binding force. J. Daniélou holds, for instance, that in the healing episodes, "Christ appears concretely as inaugurating the true Sabbath [i.e. Sunday], which replaces the figurative Sabbath [i.e. Saturday]."[44] W. Rordorf expresses the same conviction, though more emphatically, when he writes that, "the Sabbath commandment was not merely pushed into the background by the healing activity of Jesus: it was simply annulled."[45]

Early Patristic Interpretations

Unfortunately, these conclusions often have not been based on an analysis of what Christ actually did on, or said about the Sabbath, but rather in the light of the early patristic interpretation of the Sabbath material of the Gospels, which has become, and to a large extent still is, a traditional and an undisputed legacy. From the second century onward, in fact, patristic writers produced a list of the "breaches of the Sabbath" mentioned in the Gospels, adding to these constantly new ones in order to build a strong case against the Sabbath. From the Gospels they took up those examples of,

1. alleged "Sabbath-breaking" mentioned by Christ in His debate with the Pharisees, namely: David, who on the Sabbath partook of the forbidden showbread (Matt. 12:3; cf. I Sam. 21:1-7),
2. the priests who, on the same day circumcise (John 7:23) and offer sacrifice (Matt. 12:5)[46] and,
3. God Himself, who does not interrupt His work on the Sabbath (John 5:17).[47] This repertoire was enriched with other "proofs" such as,
   a. the example of Joshua who broke the Sabbath when "he commanded the children of Israel to go round the walls of the city of Jericho,"[48]
   b. of the Maccabees who fought on the Sabbath and,[49]

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[44] Jean Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy, p*. 226.

[45] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 70. C. S. Mosna, *Storia della Domenica,* pp. 175-178, assumes a median position. He sees in the Sabbath debates and discussions the effort of the primitive community to seek a new solution to the Sabbath precept, "even though this was not yet clearly seen in the action of Christ." Basically the same position is held by W. Manson, *The Gospel of Luke,* 1955, p. 81; and by E. Lohse, *Jesu Worte iiber den Sabbat* (p. 9, note 22), pp. 79-89.

[46] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 27, 5; 29, 3; Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 30, 32, 10; Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalnros* 91 *(PG* 23, 1169B); Aphrahates, *Homilia* 13, 7; Ps.-Athanasius, *De semente homilia* 13.

[47] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 29, 3; 23, 3; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis 6,* 16, 141, 7; 6, 16, 142, 1; Origen, *In Numeros homiliae* 23, 4; Chrysostom, *De Christi divinitate* 4 *(PG* 48, 810f); in the Syriac *Didascalia* 26 the polemic is particularly acute: "If God willed that we should be idle one day for six…God himself would have remained idle with all his creatures…For if he would say, 'Thou shalt be idle, and thy son, and thy servant, and thy maidservant, and thine ass,' how does he (continue to) work, causing to generate, and making the wind blow, and fostering and nourishing us his creatures?" (Connolly, p. 236).

[48] Victorinus of Pettau, *De Fabrica mundi* 6 *(ANF* VII, p. 342); cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos* 4; cf. also *Adversus Marcionen 4,* 17 and 2, 21.

[49] Tertullian (p. 14, note 48); Victorinus (p. 14, note 48); Aphrahates, *Homilia* 13, 7; Athanasius, *De sabbatis et*

c. of the patriarchs and righteous men who lived before Moses, supposedly without keeping the Sabbath.[50]

Assuming (without conceding) that these arguments are based on sound criteria of Biblical hermeneutic, would not these exceptions only confirm the binding nature of the Sabbath commandment? Furthermore, should not the person who accepts the early Fathers' interpretation and usage of the Sabbath material of the Gospels, to determine Christ's attitude as well as his own toward the Sabbath, also subscribe, to be consistent, to their negative and conflicting explanations of the meaning not only of the Sabbath, but also of the whole Jewish economy? It would be interesting to find out if any Biblical scholar would concur, for instance,

1. with Barnabas' claim that, "the literal practice of the Sabbath had never been the object of a commandment of God,"[51] or that,

a. "the Jews lost the covenant completely just after Moses received it" (4:7); or with,

2. Justin's view, that God imposed the Sabbath upon the Jews as a brand of infamy to single them out for punishment in the eyes of the Romans;[52] or with,

3. the notion of *Syriac Didascalia* (21), that the Sabbath had been imposed on the Jews as a time of mourning;[53] or with,

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circumcisione 3; Gregory of Nyssa, *Testinronia adversus Judaeos* 13 *(PG* 46, 221). Note however that at the beginning of the Maccabean revolt pious Jews were killed on the Sabbath without offering resistance (1 Macc. 2:32-38; Macc. 6:11; Josephus, *Antiquities,* 13, 317). On account of this terrible event it was decided to allow the use of weapons for self-defense, even on the Sabbath (1 Macc. 2:39-41).

[50] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 19, 6; 23, 3; 27, 5; 46, 2; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4, 16, 2; Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos* 2; Eusebius, *I-fE* 1, 4, 8; *Demonstratio evangelica* 1, 6 *(PG* 22, 57); *Commentaria in Psalmos* 91. The argument, that before Moses, righteous men did not keep the Sabbath, appears to be a fabrication of anti-Sabbath polemic/apologetic since rabbinical tradition emphasizes the remote origin of the Sabbath: God Himself observed the Sabbath *(Gen. R.* 11, 2 and 6; *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 20); Adam was the first man to respect the day *(Gen. R.* 16, 8; *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 20); Abraham and Jacob were scrupulous in its observance *(T. B. Yoma* 286; *Gen. R.* 11, 8; 79, 6); Sarah and Rebecca faithfully lighted the candles on Friday night *(Gen. R.* 60, 15); the Israelites during the Egyptian bondage obtained permission from Pharoah to observe the Sabbath *(Ex. R.* 7, 28; 5:18).

Avram: The writings of the Rabbis concerning 'Sarah and Rebecca faithfully' lighting the Sabbath candles is a rabbinic projection of the customs that the Rabbis were observing in the first century or so, back to the Fathers and the Mothers. It's not something that can be proven from the Word of God, although it seems reasonable to believe that Adam (and Eve, and their children, etc., even to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) would have kept the Sabbath day holy (Gen. 2:1-3). Gen. 26:5 has God speaking of Abraham keeping all His commandments, which would seem to include the Sabbath. The commandments that the Lord referred to in Gen. 26:5 would also have been the commandments of personal obedience (e.g. God telling Abram to leave his country and go to Canaan, etc.).

Israel, though, getting permission from Pharaoh to keep the Sabbath, goes against everything in Scripture that we know about Pharaoh and his cruel slavery of the Hebrews (Ex. 1:7-22; 2:11; 3:7-19, etc.), and of course, there is no mention of the Hebrews keeping the Sabbath then. Also, Ex. 16, four chapters after the Exodus from Egypt, when Israel is in the Wilderness, yet before the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20), speaks of God telling Moses that the 'next day' was going to be the weekly Sabbath (Ex. 16:23-29).

On the other hand, for the so-called Church Fathers like Justin Martyr and Tertullian to deny the validity of the 7th day Sabbath 'before Moses' in order to use it against Sabbath keeping, is a false position based on their hatred of the Jewish people (anti-Semitism) and their desire to justify Sunday, with no New Testament Scripture to support the change of Sabbath to Sunday. See The Feasts of Israel and the Church (2nd paragraph from the end, as well as the last paragraph of the two page article), A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law, and The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection.

[51] I. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 230; cf. *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:6-8. For an analysis of Barnabas' view of the Sabbath see Chapter VII, sub-heading *Barnabas,* page 218f., of the book.

[52] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 16, 1; 19, 2-4; 21, 1; 23, 1-2; 27, 2. Justin's view of the Sabbath is examined in Chapter VII, sub-heading *Justin Martyr,* page 223f., of the book.

4. Aphrahates' concept that the Sabbath was introduced as a result of the fall.[54]

If these interpretations of the meaning and nature of the Sabbath are to be rejected as unwarranted by Old Testament scriptural evidences, then there is no justification for using as "proof" their arguments against the Sabbath, since to a large extent these are based on this kind of fallacious presuppositions. Later in our study we shall notice that a combination of conditions, which heightened the tension between Rome and the Jews (the nation of Judah), and between the Church and the Synagogue in the early part of the second century, contributed to the development of an *"anti-Judaism of differentiation."* This situation expressed itself in a negative reinterpretation of both Jewish history and observances like Sabbath-keeping. We cannot, therefore, evaluate the references to Sabbath in the Gospels in the light of its early patristic interpretation, but rather we must assess Christ's attitude toward the Sabbath by examining the documents exclusively on their own merits.

Early Sabbath Healings

The Gospels of Mark and Luke suggest that Christ at first limited His Sabbath healing activities to special cases, undoubtedly because He was aware of the explosive reaction that would result from His proclamation of the meaning and usage of the Sabbath. In Luke, Christ's initial announcement of His Messiahship as a fulfillment of the Sabbatical year (Luke 4:16-21) is followed by two healing episodes. The first occurs in the synagogue of Capernaum, a city of Galilee, during a Sabbath service and results in the *spiritual* healing of a demon-possessed man (Luke 4:31-37). The second is accomplished immediately after the service in Simon's house, and brings about the *physical* restoration of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). In both cases Christ acts out of necessity and love. In the first instance, it is the necessity to liberate a person from the power of Satan, and thereby restore order in the service, that moves Christ to act. The redemptive function of the Sabbath, which is already implied in this act of Christ, will be more explicitly proclaimed in later healings. In the second instance Christ acts out of deference for one of His beloved disciples and for his mother-in-law. In this case the physical healing makes the Sabbath a day of *rejoicing* for the whole family. It is also noteworthy that the healing results in immediate *service:* "immediately she rose and *served* them" (v. 39). The meaning of the Sabbath as *redemption, joy* and *service,* already present in an embryonic phase in these first healing acts of Christ, is revealed more explicitly in the subsequent Sabbath ministry of Christ. At this early stage, however, the bulk of Christ's healing activities are postponed until after the Sabbath, apparently to avoid a premature confrontation and rejection: "Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them" (Luke 4:40; cf. Mark 1:32).

(Avram: The Jewish people came to Messiah as the sun was setting because the Pharisees said that healing those with chronic diseases was 'work forbidden on the Sabbath,' and wasn't to take place. Only those facing death on the Sabbath could a doctor work on. All seven Sabbath healings that Yeshua did, recorded in the four Gospels, were chronic in nature, thus angering Pharisaic understanding of forbidden 'work' on the Sabbath. Bacchiocchi's assumption, that Yeshua wanted to 'avoid a premature confrontation…' is not correct, as two of the seven Sabbath healings came in Luke 4, the chapter Yeshua began His ministry. In other words, Yeshua didn't wait. Also, the man with the withered hand [Mt. 12:9-21; Mk. 3:1-6], seems to have been early on in the Sabbath ministry of Yeshua.

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[53] *Syriac Didascalia* 21: "Therefore, he bound them beforehand with mourning perpetually, in that he set apart and appointed the Sabbath for them" (Connolly, p. 190).

[54] Aphrahates, *Homilia* 13; he does not view the Sabbath like Justin, as a punishment for the Jews' unfaithfulness, but rather as an institution introduced *after* the fall only to regulate the rest of men and animals.

Avram: The Sabbath, though, was given *before* the Fall of Man (Gen. 1:31–2:1-3; 3:1f.).

The Man with the Withered Hand

The next healing episode of the man with the withered hand, reported by all the three Synoptics (Matt. 12:9-21; Mark 3:1-6), is the test case by which Christ begins His Sabbath reforms. Jesus finds Himself in the synagogue before a man with a paralyzed hand, brought there in all probability by a deputation of Scribes and Pharisees.[55] These had come to the synagogue not to worship, but rather to scrutinize Christ and "see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him" (Mark 3:2). According to Matthew they ask Christ the testing question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" (Matt. 12:10). Their question is not motivated by a genuine concern for the sick man, nor by a desire to explore how the Sabbath is related to the healing ministry. Rather, they are there as the authority who knows all the exemptions foreseen by the rabbinic casuistic, and who want to judge Christ on the basis of the minutiae of their regulations. Christ, reading their thoughts, is "grieved at their hardness of heart" (Mark 3:5). However, He accepts the challenge and meets it fairly and squarely. First, He invites the man to come to the front, saying, "Come here" (Mark 3:3). This step is possibly designed to waken sympathy for the stricken man and at the same time to make all aware of what He is about to do. Then He asks the experts of the Law, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). To bring this question into sharper focus, according to Matthew, Christ adds a second, in the form of a parabolic saying (which appears twice again in a modified form in Luke 14:5; 13:15),

> "What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more *value* is a man than a sheep (Matthew 12:11-12).[56]

These statements raise an important issue. By the question of principle, which Christ illustrated with the second question containing a concrete example, did He intend to abrogate radically the Sabbath commandment or did He aim at restoring the institution to its original divine *value* and function? Most scholars subscribe to the former option. L. Goppelt emphatically states that,

> "Jesus' double question marks the end of the Sabbath commandment: it is no longer a statutory ordinance and it no longer has absolute validity if this all-embracing, overlapping alternative is valid—namely to save life."[57]

This interpretation rests on the assumption that "to save life" is contrary to the spirit and function of

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[55] That the Pharisees used the invalid as a trap for Christ is indicated not only by their role in the episode as spies, but also by their prompt action: "immediately held counsel…how to destroy him" (Mark 3:2, 6). In the *Gospel of the Nazaraeans* the account is embellished by making the case of the man more urgent: "I was a mason and earned [my] livelihood with [my] hands; I beseech thee, Jesus, to restore me to my health that I may not with ignominy have to beg for my bread" (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1963, I, p. 148). This attempt to justify the action of Jesus in view of an alleged acute need, reflects the concern of the Jewish-Christians to retain the Pharisaic casuistic in their observance of the Sabbath. This amplification of the account does reveal the existence of a positive understanding of the Sabbath, deriving from the attitude of Christ (see p. 30, note 107). Hennecke remarks that "the circles in which it arose, those of Syrian Jewish-Christians (Nazaraeans) were clearly not heretical, but belonged, so far as the *Gospel of the Nazaraeans* permits us to make out, to the great Church; in content and character it was more Jewish-Christian than Matthew" (ibid., p. 146). On the Nazarenes, see Chapter V, the sub-heading *The Nazarenes;* pp. 156-157 in the book.

Avram: There's no Scripture to support that the Pharisees 'set' the invalid in the synagogue to intentionally trap the Lord, but rather, that he was part of the congregation, and the Pharisees knew it and wanted to see if Yeshua would heal him. After the healing the Pharisees set out to murder Him because He broke their understanding of what work could, and could not, be done on the Sabbath. In other words, the Pharisees were very angry that Yeshua did something they thought was sin. This is not the only time (cf. Mt. 15:1-2f.).

[56] Emphasis supplied.

[57] L. Goppelt, *Christentum und Judentum im ers ten und zweiten Jahrhundert,* 1954, p. 46, as cited in W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 71.

the Sabbath. Can this be true? It may perhaps reflect the prevailing misconception and misuse of the Sabbath, but not the original purpose of the Sabbath commandment. To accept this supposition would make God guilty of failing to safeguard the value of life when instituting the Sabbath.

W. Rordorf argues for the same conclusion from the alleged "faulty manner of deduction" of Christ's question of principle and of example. He explains that from the question of whether it is lawful to save or to kill, and from the example of rescuing an animal in urgent need,

> "one cannot legitimately draw inferences which are valid also for a sick human being who does not absolutely need immediate assistance on a Sabbath."[58]

The Mishnah is explicit on this regard, "Any case in which there is a possibility that life is in danger, thrust aside the Sabbath law."[59] However, in the case of the man with the withered hand as well as in *each and all the other instances of Sabbath healing*, it is never a question of help given to a sick person in an emergency, *but always to chronically ill persons*. Therefore, Rordorf concludes that the principle of saving life is not a descriptive value of Sabbath observance, but rather a reference to the nature of the mission of the Messiah, which was to extend salvation immediately to all in need. In the face of this "messianic consciousness," then "the Sabbath commandment became irrelevant…it was simply annulled."[60]

This kind of analysis does not do justice to several points of the narrative. In the first place the test question, which had been posed to Christ, was specifically concerned with the matter of proper Sabbath observance, "Is it *lawful* to heal on the Sabbath?" (Matt. 12:10). Secondly, Christ's reply in the form of two questions (one implying a principle and the other illustrating it) also dealt explicitly with the question of what was lawful to perform on the Sabbath. Thirdly, the apparent faulty analogy between Christ's question about the legitimacy "to save life or to kill" (Mark 3:4) on the Sabbath and the chronically stricken man whose life would be neither saved nor lost by postponing the act of healing until after the Sabbath, can be satisfactorily explained by the 'new' value which Christ places upon the Sabbath. This is explicitly expressed in the positive statement reported by Matthew: *"So it is lawful* to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:12). If it is right to do good and to save on the Sabbath then any refusal to do it means to do evil or to kill. We shall later see that this principle is exemplified in the story by two opposite types of Sabbath-keepers. Unfortunately, since Rordorf cannot fit Matthew's positive interpretation of the Sabbath into his scheme, he attempts to solve the problem by accusing him of "beginning the moralistic misunderstanding of Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath." This misunderstanding allegedly consists in assuming

> "that the obligation to love one's neighbour displaces in certain circumstances the command to keep a day of rest."[61]

One wonders whether Matthew *really misunderstood* or *truly understood* Christ's meaning and message of the Sabbath, when he wrote, "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:12). It is true that in post-exilic Judaism an elaborate fence had been erected around the Sabbath to assure its faithful observance. The multitude of meticulous and casuistic regulations (according to Rabbi Johanan there were 1,521 derivative laws)[62] produced to guard the Sabbath, turned the observance of the day

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[58] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 69-70.

[59] Mishnah, *Yoma* 8, 6; Tosefta, *Shabbat* 15, 16; I. Abrahams, *Studies* in *Pharisaism* and *the Gospels,* 1967, p. 129f., argues that Christ's view of the Sabbath is basically similar to that of the Pharisees, especially on respect for life. C. G. Montefiore, *Rabbinical Literature and Gospel Teachings,* 1930, p. 243, rightly retorts that "the words of Jesus go further than the saving of life…in Matthew we find nothing but to do good. That would have been much too wide an extension or application of the Rabbinic principle for the Rabbis to have accepted."

[60] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 70.

[61] Ibid., p. 68; cf. G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew,* 1946, pp. 116-135.

[62] Cf. Moore, II, p. 28; for a concise treatment of the development of the Sabbath in the post-exilic age, see E. Lohse, **"***sabbaton*" *TDNT* VII. pp. 4-14.

into a *legalistic ritual* rather than into a *loving service*. (Avram: this is where Yeshua's words about the Sabbath being made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath [Mk. 2:27] specifically applies because the Pharisees had already made the Sabbath an over-bloated legalistic institution, with all their rules of what could, and what could not be done on it [cf. John 5:7-11].) However, it is a misunderstanding to view the Sabbath exclusively in the light of this later legalistic development.

"The obligation to love one's neighbour" was the essence of the earlier history of the Sabbath and its related institutions. In the various versions of the Sabbath commandment, for instance, there is a recurring list of persons to whom freedom to rest on the Sabbath is to be granted. The ones particularly singled out are usually the manservant, the maidservant, the son of the bondmaid, the cattle, the sojourner and/or alien. This indicates that the Sabbath was ordained especially to show compassion toward defenseless and needy beings.

> "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh you shall rest; that your ox and your ass may have rest and the son of your bondmaid and the alien may be refreshed" (Ex. 23:12).[63]

Niels-Erik Andreasen aptly comments that "the landlord must be concerned with the human value of his subjects, just as Yahweh was when he secured freedom for his people."[64] It is indeed moving that the Sabbath was designed to show concern even for the cattle. But, as well remarked by Hans Walter Wolf, "it is more touching that, of all the dependent laborers, the son of the female slave and the alien are especially singled out. For when such persons are ordered to work, they have no recourse or protection."[65]

This original dimension of the Sabbath, as a day to honor God by showing concern and compassion to fellow beings, had largely been forgotten in the time of Jesus.

(Avram: Really? What evidence does Bacchiocchi present to support his point? Did Peter and John go fishing on the Sabbath and take their workers with them? Did landowners force their servants to work? Of course not. Israel kept the Sabbath as it understood it, but they didn't cause the poor and the alien to work on the Sabbath.)

The Sabbath had become the day when the correct performance of a ritual was more important than a spontaneous response to the cry of human needs (Avram: for the Pharisees, but not necessarily for many other Jewish people, as is clearly seen in many of the Sabbath healings where the Jewish people appreciated the healings, of the man with the withered arm; of the woman bent over for 18 years, etc.).

Our story provides a fitting example of this prevailing perversion by contrasting two types of Sabbath-keepers. On the one side stood Christ, "grieved at the hardness of the heart" of his accusers, and taking steps *to save* the life of a wretched man (Mark 3:4-5). On the other side stood the experts of the Law, who even while sitting in a place of worship spent their Sabbath time *looking for faults* and thinking out methods *to kill* Christ (Mark 3:2, 6). This contrast of attitudes may well provide the explanation to Christ's question about the legitimacy of saving or killing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:4), namely that the person who is not concerned for the physical and spiritual salvation of others on the Sabbath is automatically involved in destructive efforts or attitudes.[66]

Christ's program of Sabbath reforms must be seen in the context of His overall attitude toward the Law.[67] In the Sermon on the Mountain, Christ explains that His mission is to restore the various pre-

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[63] Cf. also Ex. 20:10; Deut. 5:14.

[64] Niels-Erik Andreasen, "Festival and Freedom," *Interpretation* 28 (1974): 289.

[65] Hans Walter Wolff (p. 11, note 32), p. 504.

[66] E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* 1951, pp. 68f., views Christ's question (Mark 3:4) as a sarcastic allusion to the plotting of his opponents, which led to a decision to kill Christ (Mark 3:6); cf. also his *Das Evangelium des Matthiius,* 1956, p. 186.

[67] W. Rordorf finds in Christ's attitude toward the Law two paradoxical principles: "on the one hand, Jesus rec-

scriptions of the Law to their original intentions (Matt. 5:17, 21ff.). This work of clarifying the intent behind the commandments was a dire necessity, since with the accumulation of traditions in many cases their original function had been obscured. As Christ put it, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!" (Mark 7:9). The fifth commandment, for instance, which enjoins to "honor your father and your mother," according to Christ, had been made void through the tradition of the *Corban* (Mark 7:12-13). This apparently consisted in translating a service or an obligation to be rendered to one's parents, into a gift to be given to the Temple. The Sabbath commandment was no exception and unless liberated from the many senseless casuistic restrictions, would have remained a system for self-righteousness rather than a time for loving the Creator-Redeemer and one's fellow beings.

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ognized the Torah and even intensified it, whilst on the other hand, by virtue of his divine authority, he did not hesitate to make great breaches in it, particularly in its ceremonial regulations" *(Sunday,* p. 78). While this conclusion in principle is correct, Rordorf's attempt to reduce the Sabbath to the category of a ceremonial regulation, which Christ "simply annulled" (ibid., p. 70) by His Messianic authority, is altogether unwarranted, since he fails to show that the Sabbath was regarded as a ceremonial rather than as a moral precept. In the Gospels the attitude of Christ toward the Sabbath does not differ from that He manifested toward the other nine (commandments).

(Avram: What law of Moses did Jesus 'breach'? He didn't breach the Sabbath law for inherent within the Sabbath is the theme of redemption [Dt. 12-15], and the Messiah, in healing the chronically ill on the Sabbath, was bringing redemption/healing/freedom to those whom He healed. Therefore, the Lord of the Sabbath did not breach any of its laws nor any other laws because if He did He would have been a sinner. It as Mosaic Law that judged Him sinless. Also, why would the Giver of the Law, all the laws and rules of Moses, break His own rules? It is absurd, to say that 'by virtue of his divine authority, he did not hesitate to make great breaches.' No one is above the Law of Moses, not even Jesus, as He clearly demonstrates. At no time did He say that He broke any laws of Moses. On the contrary, He pointedly asked, "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46 NKJV)

William Hendriksen rightly argues that Christ, when giving the true interpretation of the Sabbath, follows the same method used with the other nine commandments. After surveying the nine, Hendriksen writes, "now Christ reveals the true meaning of the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8-11). Implied in his interpretation, but in this case not stated in so many words, is a condemnation of the false explanation which the Rabbis had superimposed upon this commandment, and which, in the days of Christ's sojourn on earth, was being propagated by Scribes and Pharisees. They were either completely ignoring or leaving insufficient room in their teaching for the following truths, which also summarize Christ's teaching he now presented:

1. Necessity knows no law (Matt. 12:3-4).

2. Every rule has its exception (vv. 5-6).

3. Showing mercy is always right (vv. 7, 11).

4. The Sabbath was made for Man, not vice versa (Mk. 2:27), and

5. Sovereign Ruler of all, including the Sabbath, is the Son of Man (Mt. 12:8; cf. v. 6)."

The Crippled Woman

To gain further understanding into the scope of Christ's Sabbath reforms, we shall briefly consider additional healing episodes. The healing of the crippled woman reported only by Luke (13:10-17) is apparently the last act performed by Christ in the synagogue. The mounting opposition of the authorities must have made it impossible for Christ to continue His Sabbath ministry in the synagogue. This episode, as compared with the previous healing of the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:6-l1), shows a substantial evolution. This can be seen both in the more decided attitude of Christ who automatically moves into action declaring the woman "freed" from her infirmity (13:12) without being asked, and in His public rebuke to the ruler of the synagogue (13:15). The authorities also—in this case the president of the synagogue—protest now not outside the synagogue, but inside, by condemning publicly the whole congregation for seeking healing on the Sabbath (13:14). Finally, the redemptive function of the Sabbath is expressed more explicitly. The verb "to free—*luein*," is now used to clarify the meaning of the Sabbath. It is hard to believe that the verb was used by Christ accidentally, since in the brief narrative it recurs three times, though in the English RSV translation it is rendered each time with a different synonym, namely "to free, to untie, to loose" (13:12, 15, 16).

The verb is used by Christ first in addressing the woman, "you are *freed* from your infirmity" (v. 12). The woman who for eighteen years had been "bent over" (v. 11) at the words of Christ "immediately…was made straight and she praised God" (v. 13). The reaction of the president of the synagogue brings into sharper focus the contrast between the prevailing perversion of the Sabbath, on the one hand, and Christ's effort to restore to the day its true meaning, on the other. "There are six days," the president announced, "on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed" (v. 14). For the ruler, who viewed the Sabbath as rules to obey rather than people to love, healing was a work unfit for the Sabbath. For Christ, who was concerned to restore the whole being, there was no better day than the Sabbath to accomplish this saving ministry.

To clarify this liberating function of Sabbath, Christ twice again uses the verb "to free." First, by referring to a rabbinical concession: "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath *untie* his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it?" (13:15). It should be noticed that the watering of an animal on the Sabbath does not fall into the same emergency category as rescuing a sheep from a pit (Matt. 12:11). Any beast can survive for a day without water though it may result in loss of weight and consequently in less marketing value. One wonders if Christ was alluding to this perverted sense of values, namely that the financial loss deriving from neglecting an animal on the Sabbath was more important to some than supplying the needs of human beings who would bring no financial returns. Perhaps this is reading too much into Christ's words.

(Avram: it certainly is reading too much into Yeshua's words. The ox and/or the donkey that falls into a pit is not one of several thousand that any Jew in that synagogue would have had, and in that, looking to sell it after the Sabbath or whenever, but most likely one of only a handful that he needed for his farm, but the main point is that the animal, not necessarily being in danger of death, would be in 'panic mode,' and it's to this concern that the Jew would free or recue his animal; out of concern for his animal, not concern for an alleged selling of the animal. Also, Bacchiocchi's point about the president of the synagogue, "who viewed the Sabbath as rules to obey rather than people to love," is out of order. Obedience to God, which equates to observing his rules, is a command from God Himself (Ex. 15:26, etc.). The question, in terms of the Sabbath, is how to obey them. The president, following the prevailing understanding of his day concerning chronic healing on the Sabbath wasn't necessarily against loving people. He failed to understand the correct meaning of the day in this specific conceptual aspect in that God allowed for the healing of anyone on the Sabbath day, because of its theme of redemption, not just those in a life threatening situation.)

However, the point Jesus makes is clear, namely, that a basic service is provided on the Sabbath even to animals. Building upon the concept of untying an animal, Christ again uses the same verb in the form of a rhetorical question in order to draw His conclusion: "And ought not this woman, a daughter

of Abraham whom Satan *bound* for eighteen years, be *loosed* from this bond on the Sabbath day" (13:16)? Arguing *a minori ad maius,* that is, from a minor to a greater case, Christ shows how the Sabbath had been paradoxically distorted. An ox or an ass could be freed from his manger on the Sabbath, but a suffering woman could not be released on such a day from her physical and spiritual infirmity. What a perversion of the Sabbath! Christ acted therefore against the normative tradition to restore the Sabbath to God's intended purpose. It should be noticed that in this and in all instances Christ is not questioning the binding obligation of the Sabbath commandment, but rather He argues for its true values, which had been largely forgotten.

The imagery of Christ on the Sabbath loosing a victim bound by Satan's bonds (13:16), recalls Christ's announcement of His mission "to proclaim release to the captives" (Luke 4:18; cf. Is. 61:1-3). The liberation of a daughter of Abraham from the bonds of Satan on the Sabbath represents then the fulfillment of the Messianic typology of the day. Paul K. Jewett perspicaciously comments in this regard,

> "We have in Jesus' healings on the Sabbath, not only acts of love, compassion and mercy, but true "sabbatical acts," acts which show that the Messianic Sabbath, the fulfillment of the Sabbath rest of the Old Testament, has broken into our world. Therefore the Sabbath, of all days, is the most appropriate for healing."[68]

This fulfillment by Christ of the Old Testament 'Sabbath symbology (as in the case of its related institution, Passover) does not imply, as suggested by the same author, that "Christians therefore are…free from the Sabbath to gather on the first day,"[69] but rather that Christ by fulfilling the redemptive typology of the Sabbath made the day a permanent fitting memorial of the reality, namely, His redemptive mission.[70] We may ask, how did the woman and the people who witnessed Christ's saving interventions come to view the Sabbath? Luke reports that while Christ's "adversaries were put to shame" (13:17) by the Lord's justification for His Sabbath saving activity, "the people rejoiced" (13:17) and the woman praised God" (13:13). Undoubtedly for the woman and for all the Jewish people blessed by the Sabbath ministry of Christ, the day became the memorial of the healing of their bodies and souls, of the exodus from the bonds of Satan into the freedom of the Saviour.

The Paralytic and the Blind Man

This relationship between the Sabbath and the work of salvation is well brought out in the two Sabbath miracles reported in the Gospel of John (John 5:1-18; 9:1-41). Owing to their substantial similarity we shall consider them together. The resemblance is noticeable in several ways. The healed men had both been chronically ill: one an invalid for 38 years (5:5) and the other blind from birth (9:2). In both instances Christ told the men to act. To the impotent man he said, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk" (5:8); to the blind man, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (9:7). In both cases the Pharisees formally accuse Christ of Sabbath-breaking and view this as an evidence that He is not the Messiah:

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[68] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 42.

[69] Ibid., p. 82. Though Jewett recognizes and explains well the "permanent interpretative category of redemptive history," which the Sabbath possesses, he maintains that Christians need only retain of the day, the custom of gathering weekly on the first day of the week (bc. cit.). Is it not paradoxical to acknowledge on the one hand, that the Sabbath represents in the New Testament the blessings of Christ's redemption and then, on the other hand, to choose a different day to worship the Redeemer? No satisfactory answer can be given to this dilemma by those who refuse to take a hard look at the biblical and historical validity of Sunday observance.

[70] Ferdinand Hahn, *The Worship of the Early Church,* 1973, p. 15, comments in this regard that "Jesus is concerned that the Sabbath be understood as an expression of God's mercy and beneficence toward man; and so, in the face of law and tradition, he discloses God's true will through his eschatological act." The redemptive meaning of Christ's Sabbath healings can be seen also in the spiritual ministry Jesus provides to those whom He heals (cf. Mark 1:25; 2:5; Luke 13:16; John 5:14; 9:35-38).

"This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath" (9:16; cf. 5:18). In both situations the charge against Christ does not involve primarily the actual act of healing, but rather the breaking of rabbinical sabbatical laws, when ordering the invalid to carry his pallet (5:8, 10, 12) and when preparing the clay (9:6, 14).[71] In both instances Christ repudiates the charge of Sabbath-breaking, arguing that His works of salvation are not precluded, but rather contemplated by the Sabbath commandment (5:17; 7:23; 9:4).

Before examining Christ's justification for His Sabbath saving activities, attention should be drawn to the verb "answered—*apekrinato*" used by John to introduce Christ's defense. Mario Veloso, in his incisive analysis of this passage, notes that this verbal form occurs only twice in John.[72] The first time when Christ replies to the accusation of the Jews (5:17) and the second time when He clarifies the answer given (5:19). The common form used by John over fifty times is "*apekrithe*," which in English is also translated "answered." The special use of the middle voice of the verb "*apekrinato*" implies, on the one hand as Veloso explains, a public and formal defense,[73] and on the other hand, as expressed by J. H. Moulton, that "the agent is extremely related with the action."[74] This means not only that Christ makes a formal defense, but that He also identifies Himself with the content of His answer. The few words of Christ's defense deserve, therefore, careful attention.

What did Christ mean when He formally defended Himself against the accusation of Sabbath-breaking, saying, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17)? This statement has been subjected to considerable scrutiny and some far-reaching conclusions have been advanced. J. Danielou maintains that,

> "the words of Christ formally condemn the application to God of the Sabbath rest understood as idleness…The working of Christ is seen to be the reality which comes to replace the figurative idleness of the Sabbath."[75]

W. Rordorf argues that,

> "John 5:17 intends to interpret Gen. 2:2f in the sense that God has never rested from the beginning of creation, that He does not yet rest, but that he will rest at the end."[76]

In the light of the parallel passage of John 9:4 he conjectures that, "the promised Sabbath rest of God …found its fulfillment in the rest of Jesus in the grave."[77] Therefore, he concludes that,

> "Jesus derives *for Himself* the abrogation of the commandment to rest on the weekly Sabbath from the eschatological interpretation of Gen. 2:2f."[78]

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[71] One of the 39 types of forbidden Sabbath activities was "carrying out from one domain to another" (Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 349). The preparation of clay came also within the restrictions of rabbinic Sabbath laws. Kneading was forbidden (Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7, 2) as well as mixing the feed of animals *(Shabbath* 24). The Rabbis based their prohibition of carrying a burden on the Sabbath on Jer. 17:19-27 and Neh. 13:15-19. Nehemiah, however, makes it perfectly clear that the purpose of the measure was to stop trading on the Sabbath and not to prohibit carrying a needed personal belonging.

[72] Mario Veloso, *El Compromiso Cristiano,* 1975, pp. 118-119. Rodolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary,* 1971, p. 244, also comments: "*apekrinato* occurs only here and in v. 19…perhaps to show the official character of the reply."

[73] Ibid., p. 119.

[74] J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek,* 1908, I, pp. 153, 157. This makes Christ's statement all the more important. G. A. Turner and J. R. Mantey go as far as to say that "this verse (v. 17) is probably the key verse of the entire chapter and also one of the major emphases of the Fourth Gospel" *(The Gospel according to John,* 1965, p. 138).

[75] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 227.

[76] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 98.

[77] Ibid., p. 99. The same position is held by H. Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes,* 1951, pp. 157, 175. Cf. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel,* 1947, p. 267.

[78] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 100.

Paul K. Jewett reproposes Oscar Cullmann's explanation, interpreting the expression, "My Father is working until now," as implying a movement in redemptive history "from promise to fulfillment," that is to say, from the promise of the Old Testament Sabbath rest to the fulfillment found in the day of the resurrection.[79] The argument hinges on the view that "the rest of God was not achieved at the end of the first creation," but rather, as Cullmann puts it, "is first fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ."[80] Sunday, then, as the day of the resurrection, represents the fulfillment and culmination of the Divine rest promised by the Old Testament Sabbath.

To assess the validity of these interpretations we need first to ascertain the meaning of the expression "My Father is working until now—*heos arti,*" and subsequently, to establish its relationship to the Sabbath-Sunday question. There is a wide consensus of opinion for viewing the "working still" (5:17) of the Father as a reference to the work of creation mentioned in Genesis 2:2f.[81] The reasoning behind this interpretation is that since God has been "working until now" in creative activities, He has not as yet experienced the creation Sabbath rest, but a time will come at the eschatological restoration of all things when this will become a reality. Sunday, however, being by virtue of the resurrection, as Jewett says, "the earnest and anticipation of that final Sabbath," is already celebrated by Christians in place of the Sabbath.[82]

The interpretative categories utilized to reach this conclusion are borrowed from the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo, who advocated the idea of continuous creation to avoid a too anthropomorphic view of God's rest. "God never ceased to act," writes Philo, "but as it is the property of fire to warm, so it is of God to create."[83] Apparently, however, Philo distinguished between the creation of mortal

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[79] Paul K. Jewett, *Lord's Day.*

[80] Oscar Cullmann, "Sabbat und Sonntag nach dem Johannes evangelium."*Heos arti,*" *In memoriam E. Lohmeyer,* 1953, p. 131. He argues that the celebration of Sunday in the place of the Sabbath does not represent disobedience to the fourth commandment, since according to John 5:17, "the true 'rest' of God, is first fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ." Is this a legitimate interpretation of John 5:17? Did the "working still" of God cease at the moment of Christ's resurrection? We shall show that this notion is foreign to the Gospel of John. Francis Noel Davey, *The Fourth Gospel,* 1947, p. 267, takes an even more radical view, asserting that the working of God "involves, not the violation of the law of the Sabbath, but its complete overthrow and fulfilment; for its vacuum is filled with the creative, life-giving love of God." *Why should God work to overthrow the Sabbath?* Is God working against Himself? Is not the Sabbath His workmanship (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:8-11)?

Avram: If Cullman and Davey are right, where is Scripture in the NT to support their view? In other words, where does it say that God rested at/after the resurrection? Also if they are right, where does anyone in the NT speak of Sunday replacing the Sabbath because of the resurrection?

[81] Cf. W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 98. B. F. Wescott understands the "works" of the Father as "the upkeeping of the material creation and the redemption and restoration of all things" (cited by M. Veloso [p. 23, note 72], p. 122); P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 85; J. H. Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John,* A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, 1953, pp. 236-237, reviews the ancient interpretation of the text and concludes, "The words express the idea (obvious when it is expressed) that God does not keep the Sabbath *heos arti*, that is, *hitherto*. God's working has not been intermitted since Creation…The rest of God is for the future." Similarly J. N. Sanders, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John,* Harper's N. T. Commentaries, 1968, p. 163, affirms that "Jesus in effect repudiates any crudely anthropomorphic understanding of God's rest after His six days labour of creation, the aetiological myth which explained the command to rest from labour on the Seventh day (cf. Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17)." Hilgenfeld also sees in this saying an *"intentional* contradiction of the idea of God in Genesis" (cited by F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John,* 1886, p. 463). Rudolf Bultmann (p. 23, note 72), p. 246, holds that the notion of the "working until now" of God "is clearly based on the Jewish idea that although God rested from his work of creation (Gen. 2:2f.; Ex. 20:11; 31:17), he is still constantly at work as the Judge of the world." This appears to be, however, a too restrictive view of the "working" of God, especially since in the following verses (21, 25, 28), the giving of life is also presented as the "works" of the Father and the Son.

[82] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 86.

[83] Philo, *Legum allegoriae,* 1, 5-6. We noticed earlier (p. 14, note 47) that this argument was taken over by some Church Fathers to invalidate Sabbath observance. Origen, for instance, using the text of John, writes: "He shows by this that God does not cease to order the world on any Sabbath of this world. The true Sab-

things, which was completed with the divine rest, and the creation of divine things, which still continues.[84] Later (ca. AD 100-130) Rabbis Gamaliel II, Joshua ben Chananiah, Eliezer ben Azariah and Aqiba explicitly declared in Rome that God continues His creative activity.[85]

This notion of a continuous divine creation present in Hellenistic Judaism is, however, foreign to the teachings of the Gospel of John. In harmony with the view of all the books of the Bible, John teaches that God's works of creation were accomplished in a past time known as the "beginning" (1:1). At this beginning, through the Word that was with God (1:1) "all things were made…and without him was not anything made that was made" (1:3). Both the phrase "In the beginning—*arche*" and the aorist form of the verb "*egeneto*—made or came into being," indicate with sufficient clarity that the works of creation are viewed as concluded in an indefinite distant past. Moreover, the fact that in John 5:17 the works of the Father are identified with those performed by Christ on earth indicates that it could not possibly refer to creative works, since Christ at that moment was not engaged in works of creation.[86] To distinguish between the works of the Father and those of the Son would mean to destroy the absolute unity between the two, which is emphatically taught in John's Gospel.

What is then the "working until now" of the Father? There are conclusive indications that the expression refers not to the creative, but to the redemptive activity of God. The Old Testament provides an explicative antecedent. There, as G. Bertram shows, "God's activity is seen essentially in the course of the history of Israel and the nations."[87] M. Veloso well remarks that "it is not a question of a history viewed as a mere succession of human acts, but rather of a history molded by the saving works of God, through which it becomes the history of salvation."[88] In the Gospel of John these works of God are repeatedly identified with the saving ministry of Christ. Jesus says, for instance,

> "the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness, that the Father has sent me" (5:36).

The purpose of the manifestation of the works of the Father through the ministry of Christ is also explicitly stated: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (6:29). And again,

> "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me, but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:37-38 cf. 14:11, 15:24).[89]

This sampling of references clarifies the redemptive nature and purpose of the "working until now" of God mentioned in John 5:17. A brief comparison with the parallel passage of John 9:4 should remove any lingering doubts. Jesus says, "We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work" (9:4). The striking similarity between the two texts is to be seen not only in their content, but also in their context. In both instances Christ defends His Sabbath "works" from the accusation of Sabbath-breaking launched by His enemies. However, in John 9:3-4 the redemptive nature of the works of God is absolutely clear. Not only is the Father described as the One

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bath, in which God will rest from all His works, will, therefore, be the world to come" *(In Numeros homiliae* 23, 4).

[84] Philo, op. cit., 1,16.

[85] H. Strack, P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar,* II, pp. 420-434. Cf. G. Bertram, "*ergon*," *TDNT,* 11, pp. 639-640.

[86] M. Veloso (p. 23, note 72), p. 119, points out that the works of the Father are clearly identified with those of the Son: "The identity of the Father and the Son is clearly presented in the passage of John 5:17-29 by the following elements: Jesus calls God 'my Father' (v. 17), says that what the Father does the Son does likewise *(homoios)* (v. 19), makes Himself equal *(ison)* with God (v. 18), declares that as the Father gives life, so also *(houtos kai)* the Son gives life (v. 21), affirms that all must honor the Son as *(kathos)* they honor the Father (v. 23) and proclaims that as *(hosper)* the Father has life in himself, even so *(houtos)* the Son has life in himself (v. 26)."

[87] G. Bertram (p. 25, note 85), p. 641.

[88] M. Veloso (p. 23, note 72), pp. 124-125.

[89] Cf. also John 6:39; 12:49-50; 4:34, 42.

"who sent" the Son to do His works, thus implying the missionary character of Christ's activity, but the very healing of the blind man is described as the manifestation of "the works of God" (9:3). These evidences force the conclusion that the "working until now" of the Father of John 5:17 does not refer to an uninterrupted creative activity of God, which would nullify any Sabbath observance, but rather to the works of salvation accomplished by the Father through the Son. "Speaking with qualification," to use the well-chosen words of Donatien Mollat, "there is but one 'work of God,' that is, the mission of the Son in the world."[90]

If our identification of the "working until now" of the Father (5:17), as the saving mission of Christ is correct, a conclusion, which to us appears inescapable, then those interpretations mentioned earlier which explain Christ's words as a reference to the creation Sabbath rest, which allegedly God has never kept yet, are altogether unwarranted, since the notion of creation is not present at all in John 5:17.

A question, however, still remains, namely, does not the fact that Christ defends His Sabbath healings on the ground of the uninterrupted saving activities of His Father manifested through Him imply that, as stated by Jewett, "by His redemptive *work,* Jesus sets aside the Sabbath"?[91] To assume that through His Sabbath deeds Christ was announcing (though in a veiled fashion) the end of Sabbath observance, *is to hold the same position of those Jews who accused Christ of Sabbath-breaking* (John 5:16, 18; 9:16). But this is the very charge that Christ consistently refuses to admit. In the healing episodes we noticed earlier how Christ defended His Sabbath saving activities on the basis of the humanitarian considerations foreseen, at least in part, even in their rabbinical Sabbath legislation. Similarly in John, Christ refutes formally, the charge of Sabbath-breaking by a theological argument admitted by His opponents. Before considering Christ's argument, it must be emphasized that Jesus in this and in all the other instances *does not concede to have transgressed the Sabbath*, but rather defends the legality of His action. As aptly stated by M. Veloso, a defense is never intended to admit the accusation, but on the contrary, to refute it. Jesus does not accept the charge of Sabbath-breaking leveled at Him by the Jewish authorities. He is accomplishing the work of salvation, which is lawful to do on the Sabbath."[92]

To understand the force of Christ's defense in John, we need to remember what we already discussed in part, namely that the Sabbath is linked both to the cosmos through creation (Gen. 2:2-3, Ex. 20:8-11) and to redemption through the exodus (Deut. 5:15). While by interrupting all secular activities the Israelite was remembering the Creator-God, by acting mercifully toward fellow beings, he was imitating and obeying the Redeemer-God. This was true not only in the life of the people who, as we noticed, on the Sabbath were to be compassionate toward the lower orders of the society, but particularly in the service of the Temple. There on the Sabbath the priests performed many common

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[90] D. Mollat, *Introduction á l'étude de la Cristologie de Saint Jean,* Mimeographed Edition, Gregorian University, 1970, p. 116. F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John,* 1886, p. 463, sagaciously points out that "the rest in Genesis refers to the work of God in the sphere of nature, while the question here is of the divine work for the salvation of the human race." Luthardt also perceives the redemptive meaning of the "working until now" of God and contrasts this not with the sabbatic institution but with the eschatological Sabbath: "Since up to this time the work of salvation has not been consummated, as it will be in the future Sabbath, and consequently, my Father works still, I also work" (cited by Godet, op. cit., p. 462). F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1964, p. 74, paraphrases John 5:17 as follows: "You charge me with breaking the Sabbath by working on it. But although God's Sabbath began after the work of creation was finished, and is still going on, He continues to work—and therefore so do I." Bruce rightly interprets God's Sabbath rest that "continues still" as the blessings of salvation that "may be shared by those who respond to His overtures with faith and obedience" (bc. cit.).

[91] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 86. To assume that Christ by His mission and declaration overthrew the Sabbath, as well stated by F. Godet, "would contradict the attitude of submission to the Law which He constantly observed during His life…It is impossible to prove in the life of Christ a single contravention of a truly legal prescription" (p. 461, note 73).

[92] M. Veloso (p. 23, note 72), p. 128. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I-XII,* 1966, p. 217, emphasizes that salvation must be provided *especially* on the Sabbath.

works which the Israelites were forbidden to do. For instance, while no baking was to be done in the home on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23), yet in the Temple bread was baked on that day (1 Sam. 21:3-6) to replace the week-old bread of the presence (Lev. 24 8; 1 Chr. 9:32). The same is true of all the works related to the maintenance and sacrificial system of the Temple. Many activities which were common per se, became holy acts on the Sabbath since they *contributed to the salvation of the people*. These saving activities could be performed on the Sabbath, since God Himself, as the Psalmist says, "is from of old working salvation in the midst of the earth" (Psalm74:12).

On the basis of this theology of the Sabbath admitted by the Jews, Christ defends the legality of His Sabbath saving acts, saying, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17). That is to say, I am engaged on the Sabbath in the same saving activity as the Father, and that is perfectly lawful to perform on the Sabbath. To avoid misunderstanding Christ explains the nature of the works of the Father which "the Son does likewise" (5:19). These consist in raising the dead, giving life (5:21) and in conducting a saving judgment (5:22-23). For the Jews who were unwilling to accept the Messianic claim of Christ, this justification of performing on the Sabbath the works of salvation of the Father, made Him guilty on two counts: "He not only broke the Sabbath but also…[made] himself equal with God" (5:18).

This hostile reaction made it necessary for Christ to clarify further the legality of His action. In John 7:21-23 (a passage which most commentators recognize to be related to chapter 5),[93] we find the echo of the controversy. Here Christ elaborates His previous theological justification for His Sabbath acts, by wisely using the example of the circumcision:

> "You circumcise a man upon the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment (7:22-24)."

Why was it legitimate to circumcise a child on the Sabbath when the eighth day (Lev. 12:3) after his birth fell on that day? No explanation is given since it was well understood. The circumcision was regarded as a redemptive act which mediated the salvation of the covenant."[94] It was lawful, therefore, on the Sabbath to mutilate one of the 248 parts of the human body (that was the Jewish reckoning)[95] in order to save the whole person. On the basis of this premise Christ argues that there is no reason to be "angry" with Him for restoring on that day the "whole body" of a man (7:23).[96]

This example clarifies and substantiates Christ's previous statement about the "working still" of His Father, since it suggests that works of salvation are accomplished on the Sabbath not only by the Father in heaven but also by His servants such as the priests on the earth. The Sabbath is then for Christ the day to work for the redemption of the *whole* man. In both healings, in fact, Christ looks for the healed men later on the same day and having found them, He ministers also to their spiritual needs (John 5:14; 9:35-38). His opponents cannot perceive the redemptive nature of Christ's Sabbath ministry because they "judge by appearances" (7:24). They regard the pallet which the paralytic carried on the Sabbath as more important than the physical restoration and social reunification which the object symbolized (5:10-11). They view the mixing of clay on the Sabbath as more significant than the restoration of sight to the blind mind (9:14, 15, 26).[97]

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[93] William Barclay, *The Gospel of John,* 1956, I, p. 252: "Remember this passage [John 7 :22-24] is really part of chapter 5 and not chapter 7."

[94] On the redemptive meaning of circumcision see Rudolf Meyer, "*peritemno*" *TDNT,* VI, pp. 75-76: "the new born boy…is redeemed when his mother circumcises him with the apotropaic cry: 'A bridegroom of blood art thou to me!'"

[95] Cf. *Yoma* 856, Soncino ed., p. 421.

[96] M. J. Lagrange, *Evangile Saint Jean,* 1948, p. 140, says that Christ by the example of the circumcision "tried to show to the Jews that He was not breaking the Sabbath nor the Law of Moses."

[97] This is expressed almost sarcastically in John 9 :26: "They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he

Christ's provocative infringement of rabbinical regulations (such as those dealing with the carrying of a pallet or mixing of clay on the Sabbath) were designed therefore not to invalidate the Sabbath commandment but rather to expose the rabbinic fallacy and to restore the day to its positive function. M. J. Lagrange aptly notes that,

> "Christ was careful to distinguish between that which was contrary and that which was in harmony with the spirit of the Law…Jesus was working like the Father and if the actions of the Father in no way contradicted the rest prescribed by the Scriptures, then the activities accomplished on the Sabbath by the Son were not contrary to the spirit of that institution."[98]

We can conclude that the works of the Father to which Christ refers when He says, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5:17) are not the works of creation which John views as completed, but those of redemption. God rested (ceased from His creative activity) at the completion of creation, but because of sin He is "working still" to accomplish its restoration. These works of salvation, on which the Father is constantly engaged, are contemplated and permitted by the Sabbath commandment. Christ therefore denies having acted against the Sabbath when He restored sick persons, since He was accomplishing the very same saving mission as the Father. Moreover, in John 9:4, Jesus apparently extends to His followers the same invitation to do God's work "while it is day; night comes when no one can work" (9:4). Some interpret the "night" as a reference to the death of Christ[99] which inaugurated the true rest of God by virtue of the resurrection commemorated by Sunday observance. While it is true that for Christ the "night" of the cross was very near, it can hardly be said that the term applies exclusively to Christ's death, since the "night" is described as a time when "no one—*oudes"* can work" (9:4). The death of Christ can hardly be regarded as the interruption of all divine and/or human redemptive activity. Could not this term allude to the end of the history of redemption when God's invitation to accept salvation will no longer be extended? On the other hand, the expressions "the Father is *working still"* (5:17) and *"we must work…while it is day"* (9:4), which were spoken by Christ to defend His saving ministry on the Sabbath day well epitomize the Saviour's understanding of the Sabbath, namely, a time to experience God's continuous salvation by sharing it with others.[100]

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open your eyes?'"

98 M. J. Lagrange (p. 27, note 96), p. 141. Cf. Severiano del Paramo, *Evangelio de San Mateo,* La Sagrada Escritura 1961, I, p. 152.

99 Cf. W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 99; H. Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johann es,* 1951, pp. 157, 175; Francis Noel Davey, *The Fourth Gospel,* 1947, p. 267. In the *Syriac Didascalia* 21 the Sabbath is regarded as "the sleep of our Lord" (Connolly, p. 190). Augustine also associates the rest of the Sabbath with Christ's "rest in the grave" *(De Genesi ad litteram 4,* 11; *Epistola* 55 *ad lanuarium* 9, 16). However, the "night…when no one can work" (9:4) can hardly be exclusively Christ's rest in the tomb, since His death did not suspend all redemptive activities.

100 Note that in John 9:4 Christ's followers are enjoined to do God's work while there is time to do it. Undoubtedly we must do God's work every day, but is not the Sabbath the time when we can best fulfill our "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18) since on that day we commemorate and experience the "working still" of God?

Avram: Another understanding of what Yeshua said (the night is coming when no man can work) is that of this present age where we don't see the Messiah nor His awesome power to heal everyone. He was the Light, the 'day' so to speak, and when He was in Israel all who came to Him were healed, and all whom He went to were healed, like the man born blind, but that healing virtue, that ability to heal *all* whom we pray for, is not the same for us as it was for the Messiah. That's not to say that there is no healing in His Name, but only to stress that His words about working while it was still day may well have referred to Him as the day, and the night as that time when He isn't physically with us.

The Plucking of Ears of Corn

This redemptive function of the Sabbath is further clarified in the episode of the plucking of the ears of corn by the disciples on a Sabbath day (Mark 2:23-28; Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5). An argument ensued between Christ and the Pharisees, who held Jesus responsible for the action of the disciples. Some scholars interpret Mark's expression, "the disciples began to make [their] way *odon poiein* plucking ears of grain" (Mark 2:23) as meaning the clearing of a pathway for Christ through the cornfield. Thus the ire of the Pharisees would have been caused by the great quantity of grain being harvested. While it must be admitted that the expression, "to make a way—*odon poiein,"* taken literally could support such conclusion, in the light of the context this can hardly be the case. If the disciples' intention was to clear a pathway through the cornfield for their Master[101] they would have trodden down or cut down the corn with a sickle, not merely plucked ears of corn by hand. Moreover, if the disciples had actually dared to clear a pathway through a cornfield they would have been charged not solely with Sabbath breaking, but also with trespassing, destroying and stealing private property. The plucking of ears of corn, therefore, occurred not "to make a way" for their Master, but rather, as translated by the RSV, "as they made their way" (Mark 2:23) along a path that went through the fields.[102]

In the opinion of the Rabbis, however, by that action the disciples were guilty on several counts. By plucking the ears of grain they were guilty of *reaping,* by rubbing them in their hands they were guilty of *threshing,* by separating the grain from the husk they were guilty of *winnowing;* and by the whole procedure they were guilty of *preparing a meal* on the Sabbath day.[103] Therefore, regarding their action as an outright desecration of the Sabbath, the Pharisees complained to Christ, saying, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" (Mark 2:24)

One wonders, first of all, why the disciples were assuaging their hunger by eating raw ears of grain plucked along the hedge of a field. And also, where were they going on a Sabbath? The fact that the Pharisees made no objection to the distance being covered by their journey suggests that theirs was no more than a Sabbath day's journey of approximately two-thirds of a mile.[104] The texts provide no hint about their destination, but the presence of the Pharisees among them on a Sabbath day suggests the possibility that Christ and the disciples had attended the service at the synagogue and, having received no dinner invitation, they were making their way through the fields to find a place to rest. If this were the case, then Christ's reply to the Pharisees, particularly the quotation, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12:7), could well contain a veiled rebuke to their negligence to practice Sabbath hospitality. An important aspect of the preparation of the Sabbath meal was in fact that of planning for eventual visitors. Christ then apparently, as well stated by R. G. Hirsch,

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[101] This is the opinion of W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 61: "In this way it is easier to explain why the disciples caused such a stir"; cf. P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 37…perhaps better to make a path for him."

[102] Sherman E. Johnson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark,* 1960, p. 67: "The Law permitted gleaning the corners of fields (Lev. 19:9; 23:22; Ruth 2) and no one would object to a few handfuls of grain being taken by wayfarers (cf. Mishnah *Peah* 8, 7); Heinrich A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Hand Book to the Gospels of Mark and Luke,* 1884, p. 33: "Jesus passed *through* the corn-fields *alongside of these,* so that the way that passed through the fields led Him on both sides along by them;" William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 1958, II, p. 23, provides a cogent explanation: "In Palestine in the time of Jesus the cornfields and the cultivated lands were laid out in long narrow strips; and the ground between strips was always a right of way, along which the paths ran. It was on one of these strips between the cornfields that the disciples and Jesus were walking when the incident happened. There is no suggestion whatever that the disciples were stealing. The Law expressly laid it down that the hungry traveller was entitled to do just what the disciples were doing, so long as he only used his hands to pluck the ears of corn and did not use a sickle (Deut. 23:25)."

[103] All of these acts were among the thirty-nine major types of labor prohibited on the Sabbath. The complete list is provided by E. Lohse (p. 9, note 22), p. 12; cf. Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7, 2.

[104] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20, 8, 6, mentions that the Mount of Olives was 5 furlongs from Jerusalem, about 3,033 ft. In Acts 1:12 this distance is regarded as "a Sabbath day's journey away."

> "answers their charge with another charge. For the act of the disciples there was some excuse; for the Pharisees' neglect to provide the Sabbath meals, there was none."[105]

The motivation for the action of the disciples (which in Mark is implied in Christ's defense of their act) is explicitly stated by Matthew when he says, "His disciples were hungry" (Matt. 12:1). W. Rordorf argues that Matthew's mention of the disciples' hunger provides no justification for their breach of the Sabbath, since (1) it implies negligence on their part in "not having prepared their meals on the previous day as everyone else"; (2) "they could have fasted for the whole day" if on account of their missionary commitments they had been unable to prepare their food ahead of time; and (3) the disciples were not "in danger of life through sheer exhaustion."[106] Our author reasons as a skilled rabbi, but he fails to recognize that Matthew's justification for the conduct of the disciples is not based on the rabbinical view of the Sabbath, but rather on that of Christ. The sayings and examples of Christ reported by Matthew present the Sabbath not as an institution more important than human needs, but as a time of "mercy" (12:7) and service to humanity (12:12). In this perspective the hunger of the disciples could legitimately be satisfied on the Sabbath.[107]

A closer look at the various arguments put forward by Christ to meet the criticism of His opponents, will provide additional insight into Christ's concept of the Sabbath. First of all, Christ reminded the Pharisees of David and his men, who once assuaged their hunger by eating the showbread which was forbidden except to the priests (1 Sam. 21:1-7). The implication is clear. If it was right for David to allay his hunger by eating of the bread consecrated to *holy use,* then it was legitimate also for the disciples to provide for their needs by plucking ears of grain during the *holy time* of the Sabbath.[108] In

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[105] *Jewish Encyclopedia,* 1962, s. v. "Sabbath."

Avram: This understanding, that the Pharisees failed to invite Yeshua and His Apostles to lunch, fails to realize that the Pharisees lived in Jerusalem or thereabouts, not in the Sea of Galilee area, and so, they were only visiting the area and had not home/s to invite the Lord and His disciples back to for lunch. The charge against the Pharisees, of being inhospitable, is incorrect (cf. Mt. 11:20, 23, 25; 12:1).

[106] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 61.

[107] Since W. Rordorf cannot accept this positive meaning and function of the Sabbath, he charges Matthew with "beginning…a new Christian casuistry" and a "moralistic misunderstanding of Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath (that the obligation to love one's neighbour displaces in certain circumstances the command to keep a day of rest)" *(Sunday,* pp. 67-68); cf. also G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew,* 1946, p. 116f. Is it not arrogance for a modern scholar to claim greater understanding of the teachings of Jesus than that of a Gospel writer? Moreover, whatever the merits might be of Matthew's understanding of Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath, it does represent for us a valuable testimony, which reflects the prevailing conceptions of the Sabbath among the earliest Palestinian Christian community. The existence of this view is testified, for instance, by the *Epistle to Diognetus 4,* 3 (see p. 43); cf. *The Gospel of the Nazaraeans* (cited above, p. 17, note 55); the Oxxyrhynchus Papyrus I (ca. AD 200), lines 4-11 read: "If you do not fast (as to) the world, you will not find the kingdom, and if you do not keep the Sabbath as Sabbath you will not see the Father" (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* I, p. 106). The saying is found also verbatim in the Logion 21 of the *Gospel of Thomas*. The first part suggests a spiritualized interpretation of the Sabbath. In a more spiritual fashion the same thought appears in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis,* 4, 6, 29, 3: "According to the gnostic ascending scale, it is by beneficence that the love, which is lord of the Sabbath, proclaims itself." Another indirect witness of the positive understanding of the Sabbath may be found in the spiritual interpretation given to the Sabbath by the Fathers. They viewed the Sabbath, for instance, as a symbol of abstention from sin, doing works of mercy and justice and meditation upon righteousness and truth (Justin, *Dialogue* 12, 3; Irenaeus, *Epideixis* 96; *Adversus haereses* 4, 8, 2; Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos* 4; *Adversus Marcionem 4,* 12 and 2, 21; Origen, *In Numeros homiliae* 23, 4; 4, *Contra Celsum* 8, 23; Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* 5, 12 *(SC* 24, 60); *Syriac Didascalia* 26; for further references and discussion on the interpretation of the Sabbath by the Fathers, see C. S. Mosna, *Storia della Domenica,* pp. 185, 201; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 100-108.

Avram: In the disciples desire to satisfy their hunger with fresh grain there is only the breaking of the Pharisaic rules. The disciples didn't transgress the Sabbath commandment, so, Matthew saying that they were hungry, as true as that is, only shows us that was the reason why they did it, not the justification for it.

[108] Heinrich A. W. Meyer (p. 29, note 102), p. 34, acutely observes: "The demonstrative force of this citation depends upon a conclusion *a majori ad minus*. David in a case of necessity dealt apparently unlawfully even

both instances, holy bread and holy time were used exceptionally to meet human needs. Their use was justified by the fact that the intention behind all divine laws is not to deprive, but to ensure life. The exception, therefore, does not nullify, but corroborates the validity of the commandment.[109]

The contrast between the case of David and that of Christ adds force to the argument. David's followers were soldiers (1 Sam. 22:2) while those of Christ were peaceful men. David, to allay his hunger, ate of the forbidden showbread which is far less lawful to be touched than ears of corn. David's hunger, in fact, set aside a specific divine regulation (Lev. 24:5; Josephus, *Antiquities,* 3, 10, 7) while the disciples' hunger set aside mere rabbinical notions. By appealing to an exception approved by countless generations[110] ("Have you never read….Mark 2:25) Christ reasons a *majori ad minus* to demonstrate that His disciples were guiltless (Matt. 12:7), since like David, they had obeyed the higher law of necessity.[111] The point to observe, however, is that Christ does not minimize the infraction of the precept by introducing a more liberal casuistry. (He sees that all forms of casuistry enslave man.)[112] On the contrary, Christ states explicitly and strikingly that David's action was "not lawful" (Mark 2:26). The disciples too, He implies, by their action had broken the Sabbath law of complete rest. Nevertheless in both instances they were blameless because the larger obligation overruled the lesser, that is to say, mercy was more important than sacrifice.

This concept is further elaborated in Matthew by Christ's saying regarding the priests who "profane the Sabbath" (12:5) by performing in the Temple a host of activities illegal for the ordinary person, yet are innocent (12:5). On the Sabbath, in fact, the work in the Temple was augmented by the double amount of offerings (Num. 28:9-10).[113] Why were the priests "guiltless" (12:5) though working more intensely on the Sabbath? The answer lies, as we noted earlier, in the redemptive nature of their Sabbath work, designed to provide forgiveness and salvation to needy sinners. The priests performed activities on the Sabbath which per se were rightly condemned by the commandment, yet they were guiltless because they were fulfilling the purpose of the Sabbath which is to supply the spiritual needs of the people. But, how could Christ defend His actions as well as those of His disciples by this example of the service performed by the priests on the Sabbath, when neither He nor His disciples were fulfilling the divine law of sacrifices on that day? The answer is found in the subsequent statement Christ made, "I tell you something greater than the Temple is here" (Matt. 12:6).[114] The symbolic

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with shewbread of the Temple, which is yet far less lawful to be touched than the ears of grain in general."

[109] Joseph Schmid, *The Gospel according to Mark,* The Regensburg New Testament, 1968, p. 71, supports this view: "By pointing out some similar action in the Scriptures, one could show that even a form of work in itself forbidden could be permitted in certain circumstances.'

[110] The formula is frequently used by Christ, cf. Mark 12 :10, 26; Matt. 12:5; 19:4; 21:16.

[111] For Joseph Schmid (p. 31, note 109), p. 72, Jesus shows that "it cannot be God's will that his children should suffer hunger because of a mere cultic precept."

[112] Charles R. Erdman, *The Gospel of Mark,* 1945, p. 55, recognizes that "Jesus does not try to answer the Pharisees by saying that picking a few grains of wheat is not work; he admits that the Law has been broken but insists that under certain circumstances it is right to break the Sabbath law of complete rest. Works of necessity break that law, but involve no fault or guilt"; G. A. Chadwick, *The Gospel according to St. Mark,* 1900, p. 68, similarly states: "They [the disciples] were blameless, not because the Fourth Commandment remained inviolate, but because circumstances made it right for them to profane the Sabbath."

Avram: Yeshua doesn't 'admit' or 'imply' that His disciples had broken the Sabbath law. He reasons that if David had done what he did in transgressing a written precept of the Law and wasn't charged with sin, how could the disciples be charged with sin when there was no written prohibition against picking a little grain for one's hunger on the Sabbath? Messiah's speaking of *mercy* was directed to the merciless way the Pharisaic precepts were enforced, without any consideration for the person. Bacchiocchi speaks of the disciples breaking the Sabbath law 'of complete rest' by picking the grain, but here he seems to be siding with the Pharisees in their accusation of the disciples. Picking grain, as they did, is tantamount to plucking an apple from a tree and eating it on the Sabbath—both fall within God's parameters for what is lawful, and so, the disciples didn't break the 'rest' of the God's Sabbath.

[113] Cf. Ezek. 46:4-5, 10; 2 Chron. 31:3; I Chron. 9:32; I Sam. 21:6; Roland de Vaux, *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice,* 1964, p. 36.

function of the Temple and its services had now found its fulfillment and were superseded by the service of the *True High Priest*. Therefore, on the Sabbath, and even by preference on the Sabbath, Christ also must intensify His "sacrificial offering," that is to say, His ministry of salvation on behalf of needy sinners; and what He does His followers, the new priesthood, must do likewise. We found in John 7:22-23 that Christ expresses the same concept. As the priest on the Sabbath by the redemptive act of circumcision extended the blessing of the covenant to the newborn, so Christ on the Sabbath must work for the salvation of the entire human being. Christ finds in the Temple and its services a valid frame of reference to explain His Sabbath theology, since their redemptive function best exemplified both His Messianic mission and the divine intended purpose for the Sabbath. In fact by identifying His saving mission with the Sabbath, Christ reveals the ultimate divine purpose of the commandment, namely, fellowship of man with God. The Sabbath becomes through Christ a time not only to commemorate God's past creation, but also to experience the blessings of salvation by ministering to the needs of others.

The humanitarian dimension of the Sabbath unfortunately had largely been forgotten in Christ's day. The claims of rituals had taken the place of the claims of service to human needs. In the statement reported by Matthew, Christ openly attacks this perversion of the Sabbath, saying, "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12:7). For Christ the disciples are "guiltless" though they had contravened the Sabbath law of complete rest, because the true meaning of the commandment is ''mercy and not sacrifice.'' What do ''mercy" and "sacrifice" stand for? The prophet Hosea, from whose book these words are quoted, rebukes his people for "seeking the Lord…with their flocks and herds" (5:6) as if God could be propitiated by the many costly sacrifices (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22). The prophet reminds them that what God desires is "mercy and not sacrifice" (6:6). This mercy desired by God is characterized both in the Old and New Testament, as noted by R. Bultmann, not by a vague "disposition," but rather by a concrete attitude that finds expression in "helpful acts."[115] In the Gospel of Matthew, especially, "mercy" denotes the acts of aid and relief that members of the covenant community owe to one another (Matt. 5:7, 9:13; 12:7, 23:23). As well expressed by I. R. Achtemeier,

> "Members of a community, no matter who they be—Scribes, Pharisees, tax collectors, sinners—are to give love and aid and comfort to one another."[116]

It was this pity and sympathy for anyone in distress that the Pharisee's lacked. Therefore, the hunger which plagued Christ and His disciples did not kindle within their hearts any feeling of tenderness or eagerness to help. Instead they were condemning the disciples.

This showing of love by acts of kindness represents for Christ the true observance of the Sabbath, since it acknowledges the very redemptive activity of God, which the day commemorates. In fact, as

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[114] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 226, argues that "the analogy with the Temple shows us that the two institutions are parallel. Jesus shows that He is greater than the Temple, and He clearly is also greater than the Sabbath. The Sabbath and the Temple are gone by because Christ Himself, the Sabbath and the Temple of the New Testament, is here." Did Christ (and/or Matthew) equate the Temple with the Sabbath, viewing both as doomed and superseded by His Messianic coming? While this is true of the Temple, whose destruction Christ foretells (Matt. 24:2) and whose curtain "was torn in two" (Matt. 27:51) to signify that type had met the antitype in Christ's sacrifice, this can hardly be said of the Sabbath. In fact, according to the Gospels, Christ proclaims Himself Lord of the Sabbath, declares that the day was made for man (Mark 2:27-28), reveals its redemptive function (Luke 4:16-18; 13:12, 15-16; Matt. 12:12; John 5:17) and alludes to its future observance (Matt. 24:20).

Avram: The Temple and its sacrifices will be reinstated when Messiah Yeshua returns to rule as King of Israel from Jerusalem for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6; cf. Ezk. 40–48). For more on Mosaic sacrifice and its return see these two articles, *Mosaic Sacrifice and the Blood of Jesus*, and *Sacrifice in the New Testament*. The earthly Temple and its sacrifices, although 'on hold,' won't end or be superseded until these Heavens and this Earth pass away (Matt. 5:17-19).

[115] R. Bultmann, "*eleos*," *TDNT,* II, p. 479.

[116] *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* 1962 ed., s. v. *"Mercy."*

memorial of the divine redemption from both the bondage of Egypt (Deut. 5:15) and the bonds of sin (Luke 5:18-19; 13:16; John 5:17), the Sabbath is the time when believers experience God's merciful salvation by expressing kindness and mercy toward others. Therefore, the order of the true Sabbath service which Christ sets up requires first the living-loving service of the heart and then the fulfillment of cultic prescriptions. It is a sobering thought that in the Gospels less is said about the preaching ministry of Christ on the Sabbath in the Synagogue and more about His ministry of compassion and mercy on behalf of needy sinners.

This fundamental value of the Sabbath is emphasized by Christ in another saying pronounced in conjunction with the same episode, but reported only by Mark, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (2:27).[117] Some authors have interpreted this famous pronouncement of Christ as meaning that "the well-being of man is superior to the Sabbath rest"[118] and since the Sabbath "no longer spelt blessings but hardship, it had failed in its divine purpose, and as a consequence rebellion against it or disregard of it was no sin.[119] The least that can be said of this interpretation is that it attributes to God human shortsightedness, since from this viewpoint He would have given a law that could not accomplish its intended purpose and consequently was forced later to abolish it. By this reasoning the validity of any God-given law is determined not by its intended purpose but rather by the way human beings use or abuse it. Such a conclusion would make man and not God the ultimate arbiter who determines the validity of any commandment.

What did Christ actually mean by the affirmation that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)? To interpret this saying as meaning that "the well-being of man is superior to the Sabbath rest" would imply that the Sabbath rest had been imposed arbitrarily upon man to restrict his welfare. But this interpretation runs contrary to the very words of Christ. "The Sabbath," He said, "was made on account of (*dia*) man and not man on account of the Sabbath." This means that the Sabbath came into being (*egeneto*) after the creation of man, not to make him a slave of rules and regulations but to ensure his physical and spiritual well-being. The welfare of man, then, is *not restricted,* but *guaranteed* by its proper observance. As aptly stated by Charles R. Erdman,

> "Herein lay the error of the Pharisees. They had so interpreted the Sabbath day and so loaded it with minute, absurd and vexing requirements and restrictions, that its observance was no longer a delight, but a burden. The Law, instead of being a servant, had been transformed into a cruel master, and under its tyranny men were groaning."[120]

By this memorable affirmation "the Sabbath was made on account of man," Christ then does not abrogate the original Sabbath commandment, foreseeing the institution of a new day, but rather He strikes off the shackles imposed by the rabbinical Sabbath theology of post-exilic Judaism which had exalted the Sabbath above human needs. To require the disciples to deny their needs in order to keep the Sabbath is to pervert its intended function, namely, to be a day of blessing, not one of hardship.

Some have argued that when Christ says that the Sabbath was made for man, He means to condemn the prevailing Jewish exclusivistic notion that the Sabbath was not for the Gentiles, but only for Israel and thereby proclaims its universal scope.[121] While undoubtedly Christ takes this wider view of the Sabbath, this meaning is quite alien to the context of the passage where the question discussed is not

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[117] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 65, concludes on the basis of the alleged "weakening" of Mark 2:28, that "in Mark 2:27 an authentic saying of Jesus has been transmitted to us."

[118] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 173.

[119] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 63.

[120] Charles R. Erdman (p. 31, note 112), p. 56

[121] Jubilees 2:31, "He allowed no people or peoples to keep the Sabbath on this day, except Israel only; to it alone he granted to eat and drink and keep the Sabbath on it," cf. *Mechilta* 109b; Mishnah, *Yoma* 8, 6; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Saviour and His Sabbath," *The Ministry* (Feb. 1975): 12, holds that "against this restrictive position, which limits the Sabbath to one nation, Jesus took the wider view of the Sabbath." Cf. Henry Barclay Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark,* 1902, p. 49: "Our Lord's words rise higher, and reach further: at the root of the Sabbath-law was the love of God for mankind, and not for Israel only."

the universal scope of the Sabbath rest, but rather its fundamental function.[122]

To sanction with His Messianic authority His interpretation of the Sabbath, Christ adds a memorable pronouncement reported by all the Synoptics, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28 par.). This conclusion has been thought by some to be logically disconnected in Mark from the previous statement (2:27) where the Sabbath is related to man in general and not to Christ. Since it was the disciples and not the Son of Man who had been accused, it is argued that Christ's proclamation of lordship over the Sabbath would not justify His disciples' breaking it. It is suggested, therefore, that the formula "Son of Man" could be a mistranslation of the Aramaic *barnasha,* which can mean *man* as well as "Son of Man." In this case Christ originally said, "'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So *man* [not the Son of man] is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).[123] The change from "man" to "Son of Man" was made allegedly by the primitive Church because she was afraid to assume personal responsibility for the violation of the Sabbath and, therefore, timidly sought only in Christ the freedom from its obligation.[124]

The idea that the formula "Son of Man" is a mistranslation of an Aramaic phrase is gratuitous. "If the Aramaic is mistranslated in v. 28," as D. E. Nineham aptly remarks, "why not in v. 27?"[125] We find however that the phrase occurs earlier in the chapter (2:10) when Christ in a similar dispute with the Pharisees designates Himself "Son of Man" to affirm His authority to forgive sin. This is in fact Christ's favorite designation for Himself (it appears in the Gospels some 80 times) because seemingly it denotes His Messiahship. Therefore the interpretation that "Son of Man" is equivalent to "man," as well stated by Josef Schmid, "runs counter not only to the literary use of Mark, in whom the words 'Son of Man' are found only as a title whereby Jesus designates Himself, but also to the fact that Jesus Himself recognized the Sabbath as something instituted by God."[126] In fact, it would be difficult to reconcile Christ's affirmation that the Sabbath was established by God for man (v. 27) with the conclusion that man in general is lord of the Sabbath, that is to say, free from its obligation.[127] In this case v. 28 would not 'make v. 27 more intelligible, but on the contrary, would represent a negation of its principle.

Moreover, even granting that, as perspicaciously pointed out by Richard S. McConnell in his dissertation,

> "the original meaning of Jesus' words was that man is the Lord of the Sabbath, it is

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[122] This view is well stated by P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 38.

[123] This is the rendering of W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 64; several hold the same view: O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship,* 1966, p. 88; also *The Christology of the New Testament,* 1959, pp. 152f; J. Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien,* 1911, p. 129; also *Das Evangelium Marci,* 1909, p. 20; P. K. Jewett, Lord's Day, p. 38. Conversely T. W. Manson, *Conjectanea Neotestamentica in honorem A. Fridrichsen,* 1947, pp. 138f., suggests that originally "Son of Man" stood in both vv. 27 and 28.

[124] This view is advocated by several authors: W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 65: "The primitive Church obviously found man's fundamental freedom with regard to the Sabbath enunciated by Jesus in this passage to be something monstrous"; he argues, therefore, that "the primitive Church interpreted this freedom in a messianic sense and did not claim it for itself"; cf. Joseph Schmid (fn. 92), 73; E. Lohse (p. 9, note 22), p. 22; E. Kaesemann, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen,* 1960, p. 207; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus,* 19652, p. 70.

[125] D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of Mark,* 1963, p. 108.

[126] Joseph Schmid (p. 31, note 109), p. 72.

[127] Joseph Huby, *Evangile selon Saint Marc,* Verbum Salutis, 1948, p. 68, provides a wise criticism of the attempt to reduce "Son of man" to "man" in order to grant to the latter power to dispose of the Sabbath: 'The first mistake of this exegesis is that it empties the unique expression, *Son of Man,* of all messianic meaning, contrary to the constant use of the New Testament and to the sense of the parallel texts of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. Moreover it would mean to falsify the thought of Saint Mark and to force the consequences of the principle enunciated in v. 27 that grants to man an absolute lordship over the Sabbath: circumstances can release [a person] from the obligation in certain cases, but no mere human power can claim the right to dispense or to abrogate the divine law according to his pleasure."

> doubtful whether this means that the Sabbath law was no longer binding at all, as Rordorf maintains. The meaning could be that Jesus gave the disciples the right to decide how they could honor and worship on the Sabbath. The disciples were not the servants of the Law, but they were given authority to determine by their Master's example how to fulfill the intention behind the Sabbath law."[128]

To interpret the saying of Christ as the effort of the primitive Church to justify the replacement of the Sabbath by a new day of worship, is to read into the passage an issue which is not there. The controversy is not Sabbath versus Sunday, but rather over the conduct of the disciples who, according to the charge of the Pharisees, were "doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath" (Mark 2:24 par.). We noticed that Christ refutes this criticism by putting forth several arguments to demonstrate that the action of satisfying the hunger by plucking ears of corn was in harmony with the intended function of the Sabbath. After enunciating the fundamental purpose of the Sabbath, namely a day established to ensure man's well-being, Christ concludes by affirming His Lordship over the day.

It is claimed that the two clauses "the Sabbath is made for man, and *so* the *Son* of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" do not fit, since the latter represents "a weakening and a limitation"[129] of the former. This conclusion rests on the sole comparison of "man with Son of Man," without taking into account what is said about each of them. The train of thought, however, becomes clear when one focuses on what is said about the two. Of man it says that the Sabbath was *made* (*egeneto*) for him, and of the Son of Man that He is the *Lord* (*kurios*) of the Sabbath. The inference *"so—hoste"* depends on the fact that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (v. 28) because He *made* the day for man's benefit (v. 27). The emphasis in the Greek construction is in fact not on the Son of 'Man but on the predicate "Lord" which is rightfully placed first. Its English literal translation reads, "therefore Lord is the Son of Man also of the Sabbath."[130] Christ's lordship over the Sabbath is grounded, then, on the previous affirmation that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit.

Some may ask, how can the instituting of the Sabbath for man's benefit constitute the ground of Christ's lordship over the day? The answer is found in the fact that the Son of God can rightfully claim both to have created man and also to have instituted the Sabbath to ensure his well-being. Ultimately, therefore, Christ's lordship over the Sabbath represents His authority over man himself.

Seen in this perspective the two clauses do fit logically, the latter representing not a weakening, but a strengthening of the previous statement. Several exegetes acknowledge this logical dependency of the two clauses. Henry Barclay Swete writes for instance, "In Mark the sequence of thought is clear. The Sabbath, being made for man's benefit, is subject to the control of the ideal and representative Man, to whom it belongs.[131] Similarly Joseph Huby explains the nexus between the two clauses, saying, "The Sabbath having been made for the welfare of man depends upon the lordship of the Son of Man whom God has ordained as arbiter of what is suitable for the spiritual well-being and for the salvation of

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[128] Richard S. McConnell, *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel,* Dissertation, University of Basel, 1969, pp. 71-72; Charles R. Erdman (p. 31, note 112), p. 56, makes a penetrating comment: "It is surprising and saddening to see how widely this saying has been misunderstood and misinterpreted in the interest of Sabbath desecration. There are those who even try to suggest that by it Jesus actually abolished the Sabbath, or transformed it from a holy day into a holiday. *This is to interpret the teaching of Jesus, in the interests of license, quite as absurdly as the Pharisees interpreted the Sabbath law in the interest of legalism*." Note also Erdman's subsequent explanation of the positive function of the Sabbath.

[129] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 65; cf. E. Kiisemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes,* ET 1964, p. 39; H. Braun, *Spdtjiidischhiiretischer und friihchristlicher Radikalismus* II, 1957, p. 70, note 1.

[130] This meaning is well explained by R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel,* 1946, p. 130: "The emphasis is on the predicate which is, therefore, also placed first. He who as 'lord' thus stood at the top of all these laws and institutions was now here to fulfill all that they meant (Matt. 5:17). He who with the Father as Son of Yahweh himself had instituted the Sabbath with its religious observances for man's benefit was now here to honor the Sabbath and do this by fulfilling the divine Sabbath Law. He would be the very last to let his disciples become guilty of any violation of the Sabbath."

[131] Henry Barclay Swete (p. 33, note 121), p. 50.

men.[132] Therefore, by proclaiming Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," Christ is not granting to His disciples "fundamental freedom with regard to the Sabbath,"[133] but rather He is affirming that, as stated by Richard S. McConnell, "He has the authority to determine in what manner the Sabbath is to be kept so that God is honored and man is benefited."

We have noticed that Christ's defense of His disciples' plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath is a rather long speech built up by stages as argument is added to argument. Five basic thoughts are reported by the Synoptics to demonstrate not only the innocence of His disciples, but especially the true meaning of the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8-11).

1. First, Christ refers to the case of David to clarify the general principle that necessity knows no law. Holy bread or holy time can be used exceptionally in order to sustain life.
2. Second, Christ moves from a general principle to a specific example of exceptional use of the Sabbath by the priests to prove that the commandment does not preclude, but contemplates ministering to the spiritual needs of people. Being Himself the superior Anti-type of the Temple and its priesthood, Christ as well as His followers, like the priests, must also intensify on the Sabbath their ministry of salvation to needy sinners.
3. Third, by citing Hosea's statement, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," Jesus explains that the order of priorities in the observance of the Sabbath is first a loving service of kindness to needy people and then the fulfillment of ritual prescriptions.
4. Fourth, Christ reaffirms the fundamental principle that the Sabbath was instituted to ensure man's well-being, and therefore, any denial of human needs on account of the Sabbath commandment would be a perversion of its original purpose.
5. And last, Christ provides the final and decisive sanction of the conduct of His disciples and of His interpretation of the Sabbath commandment by proclaiming His Messianic lordship over the Sabbath. Guiltless, therefore, are the disciples who accepted Christ's lordship and were doing what He allowed them to do, but condemned are those who thought to honor the Sabbath by adhering to often foolish rabbinical traditions, while dishonoring its intended purpose and its Lord.

In the light of this Messianic proclamation of lordship over the Sabbath, it is well to consider the meaning of Christ's summons recorded in Matthew as a preface to the subsequent Sabbath conflicts. The Saviour says,

> "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest* (*anapauso*). Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find *rest* (*anapausin*) for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light (Matt. 11:28-30)."

Twice in this invitation Christ promises *rest* to those who come to Him and learn from Him. This pronouncement, as several commentators have noted, was apparently made on a Sabbath and should be connected with the subsequent Sabbath material, since the following verse begins with, "At that time—*en ekeino to kairo*" (12:1).[134] The possibility exists, therefore, that the rest that Jesus promises is, as stated by J. Danielou, "the *anapausis* [rest] of the true Sabbath."[135] In this case Christ's Sabbath rest is viewed as an easy yoke" and "light burden," possibly by contrast with the heavy yoke of rabbinical requirements, which weighed heavily upon the people.[136] This figure was familiar to Christ's

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[132] Joseph Huby (p. 34, note 127), p. 69; a similar view is expressed by Hemrich August Wilhelm Meyer (p. 29, note 102), p. 35.

[133] As claimed by W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 65; for others who hold a similar view see p. 34, note 124.

[134] The connection is recognized by W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 109; J. Danielou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 226; E. Jenni (p. 13, note 40), p. 39. Among the Fathers, Jerome, *Comm. in Esaiam* 16 (on 58:13); Augustine, *Epistula 55 ad lanuarium* 12, 22.

[135] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 226.

hearers, since the rabbis referred to the Law as a "yoke," and to the disciples as those who put their neck under the "yoke."[137]

What is the new "Sabbath rest" that Christ promises to those who labor in vain to procure rest for themselves by fulfilling burdensome legal obligations? In our previous analysis of the Sabbath material of the Gospels, we noticed that Christ made the Sabbath the fitting symbol of His redemptive mission. Not only did Jesus announce His mission as the fulfillment of the sabbatical time of redemption (Luke 4:18-19), but on the Sabbath He intensified His works of salvation (John 5:17; 9:4) on behalf of needy sinners, so that souls whom "Satan bound" (Luke 13:16) would experience and remember the Sabbath as the day of their liberation. Moreover, it was on a Friday afternoon that Christ completed His redemptive mission on this earth and having said, "it is finished" (John 19:30), He hallowed the Sabbath by resting in the tomb (Luke 23:53-54; Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15 :42, 46). As the Sabbath rest at the end of creation (Gen. 2:2-1) expressed the satisfaction and joy of the Godhead over a complete and perfect creation, so the Sabbath rest now at the end of Christ's earthly mission expresses the rejoicing of the Deity over the complete and perfect redemption restored to man. In the light of Christ's teaching and ministry the Sabbath rest epitomizes the blessings of salvation, which the Saviour provides to burdened souls.

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[136] James J. C. Cox, "'Bearers of *Heavy* Burdens,' A Significant Textual Variant," *AUSS* 9 (Jan. 1971): 12-14, recognizes not only the link between the pericope of Matt. 11:28 and the Sabbath teachings of Matt. 12:1-14, but also emphasizes "the Matthaean apologetical/polemical understanding of the *logia* concerned Matt. 11:28." Matthew would contrast the light yoke of Christ's teaching (cf. *Didache* 6, 2 where the "teaching of the Lord" is referred to as the "yoke of the Lord") with the heavy burdens of the Law required by the Rabbis. Cox reaches this conclusion by comparing the text of Matthew with the parallel passage in the *Gospel of Thomas (Logion* 90) and in the *Syriac Didascalia* (1, 6, 10; 2, 34, 7; 6, 12, 11; 6, 17, 6); J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew,* 1963, p. 187, similarly suggests that, "By those who labour and are heavy-laden is probably meant those who find the Law, as it was expounded by the scribes and Pharisees, too difficult to keep. *I will give you rest:* The weekly Sabbath rest was thought of as an anticipation of the final rest of the messianic age."

[137] Cf. Mishnah, *Aboth* 3, 5; *Berakoth* 2, 2.

THE SABBATH IN HEBREWS

The echo of this redemptive meaning of the Sabbath is found in Hebrews, to which we alluded earlier, where God's people are reassured of the permanence of the blessings of the "Sabbath rest—*sabbatismos*" (4:9) and are exhorted to accept them (4:11).[138] The author of Hebrews is laboring with a community of Jewish Christians who apparently shared the conviction that the blessings of Sabbath-keeping were tied to the Jewish national covenant. Sabbath observance was associated in fact with the material prosperity which only the members of the covenant community would enjoy in a state of political peace.[139] To wean these Jewish-Christians away from such an exclusive and material view of the Sabbath and to establish its universal, redemptive and spiritual nature, the author welds together two Old Testament texts, namely Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 95:11. By the former he traces the origin of the Sabbath rest back to the time of creation when "God rested on the seventh day from all His works" (Heb. 4:4; cf. Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17). The fact that the Sabbath rest originated with God gives to it universal and eternal validity. "This Sabbath of God," as well stated by Adolph Saphir, "is the substratum and basis of all peace and rest—the pledge of an ultimate and satisfactory purpose in creation."[140] By the latter (Psalm 95:11) he explains the scope of this "Sabbath rest," which includes the blessings of salvation to be found by entering personally into "God's rest" (4:10, 3, 5).

To demonstrate this universal redemptive scope of the "good news" (4:2) of the Sabbath rest which "came to us just as to them (i.e. the Israelites)" (4:2), and which can be appropriated personally by "faith" (4:2), the author of Hebrews draws several remarkable conclusions from Psalm 95.

1. First, he reasons that God's swearing in Psalm 95:11, that the Israelites should not enter into His rest indicates that God has promised *a Sabbath rest* which, however, the wilderness generation "failed to enter (i.e. in the promised land of rest) because of disobedience" (4:6; cf. 3:16-19).[141] "Therefore," he argues, "it remains for some to enter it" (4:6).

2. Secondly, he proceeds to show that God's Sabbath rest was not exhausted even in the following generation when the Israelites under Joshua did enter the land of rest, since "David so long afterward" (4:7) says, *"Today,* when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 4:7, cf. Ps. 95:7). The fact that long after the original proclamation of the good news of the Sabbath rest, even in David's time, God "again" renews His promise by saying "today," indicates that the promise of entry into 'God's Sabbath rest (*sabbatismos)* still "remains…for the people of God" (4:9).[142]

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[138] By emphasizing that the creation Sabbath rest of God still remains (*apoleipetai*) for the people of God (Heb. 4:6, 9), the author of Hebrews testifies to the fundamental and indissoluble unity of God's work in creation and redemption. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* ET 1958, 111, p. 257: "From creation—preceding and superseding every human decision of obedience or disobedience—there remains *(apoleipetai)* for the people of God, the Sabbath rest *(sabbatismos),* the divinely willed and ordered fellowship, relationship and agreement between His own and human freedom;" cf. C. Spicq, *L'Epitre aux Hebreux,* 1953, 11, p. 83.

[139] Isaiah 58:13-14 reflects the concept that genuine Sabbath observance guarantees the blessings of the covenant. By arguing that another Sabbath rest remains for God's people besides the one given by Joshua to the Israelites, Hebrews 4 appears to refute a prevailing view that the blessings of Sabbath-keeping were (only) tied to the Jewish national covenant. For the development of this idea see G. von Rad and Ernst Jenni (p. 13, note 40). Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1899, p. 162 suggests that the author of Hebrews endeavors "to wean the Hebrews from its external observance by pointing out its spiritual end." Francis S. Sampson, *A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1866, p. 156, also sees in Hebrews 4 a refutation of a prevailing "exclusive view" of the blessings of the Sabbath covenant.

[140] Adolph Saphir, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1946, p. 184.

[141] G. von Rad (p. 13, note 40), p. 95 argues that the concept of the Sabbath rest understood not simply as peace of mind, but as "altogether tangible peace granted to a nation plagued by enemies and weary of wandering," originated in Deuteronomy (12:9f.; 25:19). The theme is adopted and developed subsequently (cf. Josh. 21:43-45; I King 8:56; I Chron. 22:9; 23:25; II Chron. 15:15; 20:30; 6:41-42).

3. Lastly, the writer implies that, as well stated by G. von Rad, "the 'today' in which the Psalm renews God's offer of rest has dawned with the coming of Christ" (4:7).[143] By this line of reasoning he is able to demonstrate that the Sabbath has a three-dimensional meaning:

a. It commemorates first the completion of creation.

b. Later it came to symbolize the promise of entry into the land of rest and its temporal realization.

c. Lastly, "these two meanings," which, as noted by J. Daniélou, were "the prefiguration and the prophecy of another *sabbatismos,* of a seventh day, which had not yet come about," have been fulfilled and become a reality for the people of God through Christ.[144] By the juxtaposition of the two texts (Gen. 2:2; Ps. 95:11), the writer of Hebrews provides unshakable assurance that God's people, through Jesus Christ, share at length in the whole purpose of creation and redemption epitomized by the Sabbath rest.

It may be argued that since the author of the Epistle is not discussing the actual observance of the Sabbath, but rather the permanence and fulfillment of its blessings, no inference can be drawn regarding its literal observance. Such observation is hardly justified since the Epistle is addressed to a Jewish-Christian community that highly regarded Jewish observances such as Sabbath-keeping.[145] The fact that the author is not engaged in a *polemic* defense of the validity of Sabbath observance, but rather in an *exhortation* to experience its blessing which "remains…for the people of God" (4:9), makes his testimony all the more valuable, *since it takes its observance for granted*. What the recipients of the Epistle needed to know was not the binding obligation of the Sabbath commandment, but rather its true (greater) meaning in the light of the coming of Christ.

The majority of commentators, by interpreting the "Sabbath rest (or the keeping of a Sabbath) that remains for the people of God" (4:9), *as an exclusive future realization, have failed to grasp the implication of the exhortation for its present observance*. Samuel T. Lowrie suggests a plausible explanation for the prevailing misunderstanding of the teaching of the Epistle concerning Sabbath-keeping. The Epistle won canonical recognition (in the West in about the 4th century) only long after the existence of "churches made up of converted Hebrews." The result has been that Gentile interpreters, unfamiliar with the circumstances of the original readers of the Epistle, have missed the points that would be apprehended by primitive Jewish converts.[146]

It should be noted that while the reassurance of a "Sabbath rest 'that' remains…for the people of God" (4:9) and the exhortation "to enter that rest" (4:11) can suggest a future realization of its blessings, the *whole passage also contains several significant indications of a present Sabbath-keeping experience*. In verse 3 for instance, the writer emphatically states, "for we who have believed *are entering* (*eiserkometha*) into the rest." The present tense here, as noted by R.C.H. Lenski, is not expressing an abstract universality, for then it should read "they enter."[147] The personal form, "we enter," refers to the writer and readers who "having believed" (4:3), enter in the *present,* into the "rest," which is qualified in the following verse as being God's Sabbath rest, available since the creation of the world (4:3-4). Similarly the verb "remains—*apoleipetai*" (4:6, 9), which literally means, "to leave behind," is a present passive, and therefore, does not necessarily imply a future prospect. Verse 9 can be literal-

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[142] This point is well made by John Brown, *Hebrews, The Banner of Truth*, 1862, p. 208.

[143] G. von Rad (p. 13, note 40); p. 99.

[144] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 299; W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* 1956, p. 279: "Under the promise of a land in which to rest, the Israelites who came out of Egypt were brought in contact with the redeeming grace and favour of God."

[145] This is implied in the effort made by the author of Hebrews to assert the superiority of the Christian dispensation over that of the Old Covenant as well as by his thorough familiarity with Jewish worship.

[146] Samuel T. Lowrie, *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1884, p. 114.

[147] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James,* 1946, p. 130.

ly translated, *"Then a Sabbath rest is left behind for the people of God,"* since Joshua's generation did not exhaust its promises (v. 8). *The present tense emphasizes its present permanence rather than its future possibility.*

The force of the two, "Today—*semeron*" in verse 7, is also significant. The "today" of the Psalm in which God renews the "good news" (4:6) of His rest, indicates to the writer that since the gospel of the Sabbath rest was re-offered in the days of David,[148] it does extend to Christian times. The condition for accepting it is the same: "Do not harden your hearts…when you hear his voice" (4:7). *This is not a future, but a present "today" response to the "good news."* This response well epitomizes the meaning of Christian Sabbath-keeping. In verse 10 this concept is further clarified by means of the analogy between the rest of God and that of man, (literally), "for whoever entered God's rest also rested from his works as God did from his." Both verbs "entered—*eiselthon*" and "rested—*katepausen*" *are not future, but aorist tense*, indicating therefore, not a future experience, but one which, *though it occurred in the past, continues in the present*. In the RSV both verbs are given in the present ("enters–ceases") apparently *since the context underlines the present and timeless quality of God's rest* (4:1, 3, 6, 9, 11). The failure to see this has misled some expositors to interpret this rest as the rest of death[149] or the future celestial inheritance of the believers. This can hardly be the author's sole design, since he is laboring to show that *a Sabbath rest still remains* in the *present* for the people of God (4:9).

The point of the analogy in v. 10 is not the works themselves, since God's works are good while man's are evil (cf. Heb. 6:2 "dead works"); rather the analogy is made in terms of man's imitation (*osper*) of God's *resting* from work. This is a simple statement of the nature of the Sabbath, since cessation from work is its essential element, for it is written that "God rested on the seventh day from all his works" (Heb. 4:4). The author therefore explains the nature of the Sabbath rest—*sabbatismos*—that remains for the people of God (4:9) by referring to its basic characteristic, namely cessation from work (4:10). But what does this mean? Is the author of Hebrews merely encouraging his readers to interrupt their secular activities on the Sabbath? Being Jewish-Christians, they hardly needed such a reminder. Moreover this yields only a negative idea of rest, and the blessings of the Sabbath rest can hardly be only a pure negation. Obviously the author attributes a deeper meaning to the resting on the Sabbath. This can be seen in the antithesis between those who failed to enter into its rest because of "unbelief—*apeitheias*" (4:6, 11)—that is, *faithlessness which results in disobedience*—and those who enter into it by *"faith—pistei"* (4:2, 3), that is, *faithfulness that results in obedience*. The act of resting on the Sabbath represents then, the stopping of one's *doing* in order to be able *to experience the being saved by faith* (4:2, 3, 11). Believers, as Calvin expresses it, are "to cease from their work to allow God to work in them."[150] By resting on the Sabbath after the similitude of God (4:10), the believer, as K. Barth puts it, "participates consciously in the salvation provided by Him" (God).[151]

The Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God (4:9), is for the author of the Epistle, not a mere day of idleness, but rather an opportunity renewed every week to enter *God's rest,* that is to say, to

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[148] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 112, emphasizes the force of "Today:" "We shall misunderstand the burden of the passage if we do not hear in it the decisive significance of the 'Today.' The new day of the 'Today' has dawned in Christ (v. 7). On this new day it is possible to enter into the rest, and yet more: on this new day this rest has become a reality for those who believe." Note the similarity with the "today" of Luke 4:19 and John 9:4.

[149] The rest (*katapausin*) of God (Heb. 4:10) can hardly be the rest (*anapausin*) of the grave referred to in Rev. 14:13.

[150] J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 1972, II, p. 339.

[151] K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* ET 1958, III, p. 50; cf. C. K. Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology,* ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube, 19642, p. 372: "(Heb. 4:11) implies, to enter into God's 'rest' is the opposite of unbelief and disobedience; it means that man shares at length in the perfection of God's ultimate purpose for mankind." F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* 1964, pp. 74, 78, associates the Sabbath rest of God referred to in Hebrews 4 with Christ's words in John 5:17, arguing that it implies not primarily a future bliss, but the blessings of salvation ever available by faith since creation (see p. 26, note 90).

make oneself free from the cares of work in order freely to accept by faith, God's total blessings of creation-redemption. It should be noted, however, that this Sabbath experience of the blessings of salvation is not exhausted in the present, since the passage goes on to say that we should "strive to enter that rest" (4:11). This orientation toward the future corresponds to, or even may be caused by, the anticipation of the final redemption, which the Sabbath epitomizes. Both in the Old Testament and in rabbinical literature, the Sabbath is viewed also as a type of the world to come.[152] Thus, in its own way, the *Epistle to the Hebrews* expresses the essence of Sabbath-keeping (which is also the core of the Christian life), namely, the tension between the experience in the present, of the blessing of salvation, and the eschatological consummation in the heavenly Canaan.[153]

"This expanded interpretation of Sabbath-keeping was apparently designed to wean Jewish Christians away from" (just) "an external and material conception of its observance. We do not know how far our author was acquainted with the Sabbath material of the Gospels, but we cannot fail to perceive in his interpretation a reflection of Christ's redemptive view of the Sabbath discussed earlier. The meaning of the *permanence of God's Sabbath rest* of Hebrews 4 (cf. vv. 3, 4, 5, 10) is for instance well implied in the Lord's words in John 5:17, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.'"[154] The *rest of God* is indeed His uninterrupted *saving* activity designed to restore fallen man to Himself. Christ, as the One sent by the Father to *redeem* and to restore man, *is the supreme manifestation of God's rest*. Hence Christ's great promise to give rest (*anapausis*) unto all that come to Him (Matt. 11:28), is the core of the Sabbath rest (*sabbatismos—katapausis*) available to the people of God (Heb. 4:1, 3, 6, 9, 11). These blessings of salvation, which we enjoy by faith even now on the Sabbath, will be fully experienced at the end of our earthly pilgrimage. The fact that in Hebrews 4 we find a reflection of Christ's view of the Sabbath *as the time to experience the blessings of salvation*" (and the New Creation) "goes to prove that primitive Christians (at least some) interpreted Christ's teachings as implying not the literal abrogation, but the spiritual valorization of the commandment.

An Admonition of Christ Regarding the Sabbath

We shall conclude this survey of the Sabbath material of the Gospels by considering briefly Christ's unique warning given to His disciples, when predicting the destruction of Jerusalem: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath—*mede sabbato*" (Matt. 24:20).

Several explanations have been advanced to explain the reason for Christ's singular admonition. The flight on a Sabbath could be hindered, for instance, by closed city-gates, by a mood psychologically adverse to fleeing, by the refusal on the part of strict observers to help those in need, by the fear of breaking rabbinical regulations which allowed only a short Sabbath day's journey of two-thirds of a mile, or by the rage of "fanatical Jews who would become furious at a supposed desecration of the Sabbath."[155]

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[152] See p. 12, note 37, 38 and 39; *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:8.

[153] This view is well expressed by Alexander Balmain Bruce (p. 38, note 139), pp. 160, 161: *"Sabbatism…*felicitously connects the end of the world with the beginning, the consummation of all things with the primal state of the creation. It denotes the *ideal* rest, and so teaches by implication that Christians not only have an interest in the gospel of rest, but for the first time enter into a rest which is worthy of the name…God rested on the *seventh day,* and by the choice of this name the writer happily hints that it is God's own rest into which Christians enter…Christ discarded the rabbinized Sabbath, and put in its place a humanized Sabbath, making man's good the law of observance, declaring that it was always lawful to do well, and justifying beneficent activity by representing Divine activity as incessant, and Divine rest therefore as only relative."

[154] F. F. Bruce (p. 40, note 151) clearly recognizes that the redemptive meaning of the Sabbath rest found in Hebrews 4 "is implied by our Lord's words in John 5:17."

[155] The last explanation is by R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel,* 1943, p. 939; cf. J. C. Fenton (p. 37, note 136), p. 387; Theodore H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 1928, p. 197; William Hendriksen (p. 20, note 67), p. 859; H.A.W. Meyer (p. 29, note 102), p. 416.

Some argue, however, that since the words "neither on a Sabbath—*mede sabbato"* are omitted in Mark 13:18, they represent a later Jewish-Christian interpolation.[156] Even granting such possibility, the fact remains that the interpolator *regarded the Sabbath as binding at the time of his writing*. Taking into account, however, Matthew's respect for Jewish institutions, and the Jewish-Christian composition of his readership,[157] there appears no reason to question the authenticity of the phrase. Mark's (13:18) omission could be explained by the fact that he was writing to a different audience, not impeded by Jewish restrictions, and therefore he did not have to retain Christ's reference to traveling on the Sabbath.

Others believe that this passage reflects "the uncertainty with regards to the Sabbath precept" of the Jewish-Christian community which was endeavoring to solve the Sabbath problem but had not yet abandoned its observance.[158] The text really offers no reflection regarding the observance of the Sabbath, since it deals exclusively with the future flight, and the winter and the Sabbath are introduced incidentally only as possible obstacles. The uncertainty is not about the observance of the Sabbath, but rather regarding the arrival of the great "tribulation" (Matt. 24:15, 21). The fact that the Sabbath is mentioned not polemically but incidentally as an element unfavorable to a flight, implies that Christ did not foresee its substitution with another day of worship, *but rather that He took for granted its permanence after His departure*.

It could be argued that the statement taken by itself hardly reflects Christ's view of the Sabbath, since it is inconsistent with the Savior's defense of use of the Sabbath to sustain life. But is Christ, in this instance, actually prohibiting fleeing on the Sabbath? His admonition is to pray for conditions favorable to a flight. The winter and the Sabbath are introduced merely as external circumstances that could interfere with a hasty flight. Christ in no way implies that fleeing in winter or on a Sabbath would be unlawful. He is solely expressing His sympathetic concern for His followers, who might be hampered in their flight by these adverse elements. The considerations for the plight of women pregnant or with nursing babies (Matt. 24:19) as well as for the travel difficulties caused by the winter and by the Sabbath (v. 20) are not judgmental values, but only indications of Christ's tender concern for human frailty. From the standpoint of His disciples, Christ sees the Sabbath as a time inappropriate for fleeing, since, being a day of rest, Christians would be unprepared for a flight and fanatical Jews would possibly hamper their flight.[159] Christ, therefore, in this admonition is not defining Sabbath behavior, but merely exhorting His disciples to pray for favorable circumstances. The fact, however, that Sabbath-keeping is taken for granted, presupposes, on the one hand, that Christ foresaw the permanence of its observance and, on the other hand, that, as stated by A. W. Argyle, "the Sabbath was still observed by Jewish Christian when Matthew wrote."[160]

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[156] Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship,* 1966, p. 10; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday,* 1933, pp. 604; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 68, conjectures that "the addition *mede sabbaton* in Matt. 24:20 (or the whole verse?) derives from a late Jewish (Maccabean?) milieu"; cf. E. Lohse (p. 9, note 22), p. 30.

[157] Cf. for instance Matt. 5:18; 10:6, 23; 19:9; 23:3, 23.

[158] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 179; cf. E. Lohse (p. 9, note 22), p. 30; J. Schmid, *The Gospel according to Matthew,* 1968, p. 34.

[159] William Hendriksen (p. 20, note 67), p. 859: "Christ's own teaching on the subject of Sabbath observance (Matt. 12:11; Mark 2:27) was sufficiently generous to make allowance for escape on that day. But the many man-made rules and regulations by means of which the scribes and Pharisees had created the impression that man was indeed made for the Sabbath would have resulted in refusals on the part of many a strict observer" (Avram: or a strick Jewish Christian observer) "to help those in need. So the Lord urges his disciples to pray that they may not have to flee in winter or on the Sabbath."

[160] A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel according to Matthew,* 1963, p. 183; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 120, also remarks: "The very fact, however, that this saying was preserved among Jewish Christians is sufficient proof of the high regard in which they held the Sabbath"; E. Lohse (p. 9, note 22), p. 29: "Matt. 24:20 offers an example of the keeping of the Sabbath by Jewish Christians."

Conclusions

Several conclusions emerge from this analysis of the Sabbath material of the Gospels. The ample report of the Gospel writers of the conflicts between Christ and the Pharisees on the manner of Sabbath observance is indicative, first of all, of the serious estimate in which the Sabbath was held both in Jewish circles and in primitive Christianity. The extensive accounts of Christ's Sabbath pronouncements and healing activities presuppose, in fact, that primitive Christians were involved in debates regarding the observance of the Sabbath. We found, however, that they understood Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath not as a veiled forecast of a new day of worship, but rather as a new perspective of Sabbath-keeping. This consisted both in a *new meaning* and a *new manner* of observance of the Sabbath.

Concerning the latter, the Sabbath was viewed not as a time of passive idleness, but of active, loving service to needy souls (Mark 3:4; Matt. 12:7, 12; John 9:4). This new understanding is attested in as early a document as the *Epistle to Diognetus* (dated between AD 130-200). The Jews are here charged with "speaking falsely of God" when claiming that "He [God] forbade us to do what is good on the Sabbath days—how is not this impious"?[161]

We found this positive and fundamental value of Sabbath-keeping to be forcefully established by Christ through His program of Sabbath reforms. The Lord, we noticed, on the Sabbath *deliberately* acted contrary to prevailing restrictions in order to liberate the day from the multitude of rabbinical limitations and thereby restore it to its original divine intention, namely, to be a day of physical and spiritual well-being for mankind. We noted, however, that Christ presents the showing of love, by acts of kindness on the Sabbath, to be not merely the fulfillment of the humanitarian obligations of the commandment, but primarily the expression of the believer's acceptance and experience of the divine blessing of salvation (John 9:4; Matt. 11:28).

This relationship between the Sabbath and redemption we found brought out in the Gospels in several ways:

1. God's Sabbath rest, for instance, is presented by Christ, not as a time of idleness, but as His "working until now" (John 5:17) for man's salvation.

2. Likewise the priests' legitimate use of the Sabbath to minister to needy sinners (Matt. 12:5; John 7:23) is presented by Christ as an indication of the redemptive function of the Sabbath.

   a. (Avram: It wasn't to needy sinners that the priests 'worked twice as hard on the Sabbath and were guiltless' (Mt. 12:5), for it involved the sacrificing of twice as many animals on the Sabbath as it did on the other days, as this was the national sacrifices that Yeshua spoke of; cf. Num. 28:1-15).

3. But we found the supreme revelation of its redemptive meaning in the Messianic claims and Sabbath ministry of Christ.

   a. The Saviour not only inaugurated (Luke 4:16) and closed (Luke 23:53-54) His ministry on a Sabbath,

   b. but He also explicitly announced His Messianic mission to be the fulfillment of the promises of redemption and liberation of the sabbatical time (Luke 4:18-21).

   c. Moreover, on the Sabbath Christ intensified His saving ministry (John 5:17; 9:4; Mark 3:4) so that sinners whom "Satan bound" (Luke 13:16) might experience and remember the Sabbath as the day of their salvation.

The Sabbath, then, in Christ's teaching and ministry, was not "pushed into the background" or "sim-

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[161] *Epistle to Diognetus 4,* 3, *ANF* I, p. 26; for further references and discussion of the patristic interpretation of the Sabbath see p. 30, note 107.

ply annulled" to make room for a new day of worship, but rather was made by the Saviour the fitting memorial of His salvation rest available to all who come to Him in faith (Matt. 11:28).[162]

This redemptive meaning of the Sabbath we found exemplified in the fourth chapter of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Here the "Sabbath rest" that "remains…for the people of God" (4:9) is explained to be not a material experience reserved exclusively for the Jewish nation (4:2, 8) but rather a permanent and spiritual blessing available to all who enter by faith into *God's rest* (4:2, 3, 11). By ceasing on the Sabbath from one's labor after the similitude of God '(4:10), the believer makes himself available to receive, by grace and not by works, the foretaste of the blessings of the final redemption which, through Christ, have already become a certainty (4:7). This positive interpretation of the Sabbath indicates that the primitive Church understood Jesus' Messianic pronouncements (Mark 2:28; Matt. 12:6; John 5:17) and His healing activities, not as the supersession of the Sabbath by a new day of worship, but as the true revelation of the meaning of its observance: a time to experience God's salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ.

[162] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 70.

Chapter III

THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

The Resurrection

The most common theological motivations presented in recent studies to explain the origin of Sunday-keeping are the resurrection and/or the appearances of Jesus which took place on the first day of the week.[163] C. S. Mosna, for instance, in his recent doctoral dissertation, concludes:

> 'Therefore we can conclude with certainty that the event of the resurrection has determined the choice of Sunday as the day of worship of the first Christian community.'[164]

It is argued, as stated by J. Daniélou, that 'what made Sunday was the synaxis which took place only on the Lord's day…in commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ.'[165] Right from the very inception of the Church, the apostles allegedly chose the first day of the week on which Christ rose, to commemorate the resurrection on a unique Christian day and by the celebration of the Lord's supper as an expression of genuine Christian worship.

If, on the one hand, a careful investigation of all the New Testament texts mentioning the resurrection, reveals the incomparable importance of the event,[166] on the other hand it does not provide any indication regarding a special day to commemorate it. In fact, as Harold Riesenfeld notes,

> 'in the accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels, there are no sayings which direct that the great event of Christ's resurrection should be commemorated on the particular day of the week on which it occurred.'[167]

Moreover, as the same author observes,

> 'the first day of the week, in the writings of the New Testament, is never called 'Day

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[163] This is Chapter III of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 74-89.

[164] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 44; cf. pp. 15, 20, 25, 27f., 51f., 54f., 77f., 88; P. Massi, La Domenica, p. 43, states categorically: 'The resurrection is the only plausible explanation for the origin of Sunday'; P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day*, p. 57: 'What, it might be asked, specifically motivated the primitive Jewish church to settle upon Sunday as a regular time of assembly? As we have observed before, it must have had something to do with the resurrection which, according to the uniform witness of the Gospels, occurred on the first day of the week'; F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 191: 'From the study of the above texts one may reasonably conclude that during the earliest days of the Church there was only one liturgical feast and this feast was the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ'; cf. Josef A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great*, 1959, pp. 19-21; also *The Mass of the Roman Rite, Its Origin and Development* 1951, I, p. 15; Bishop Cassien, *Le Jour du Seigneur dans le Nouveau Testament*, *Le Dimanche, Lex Orandi* 39, 1965, p. 30; Y. B. Tremel, *Du Sabbat au Jour du Seigneur*…(1962): 441

[165] J Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, p. 243; earlier he writes: 'The Lord's Day is a purely Christian institution; its origin is to be found solely on the fact of the Resurrection of Christ on the day after the Sabbath' (ibid., p. 242; cf. also p. 222).

[166] The resurrection of Christ is presented in the New Testament as the essence of the apostolic proclamation, faith and hope; cf. Acts 1:22; 2:31; 3:75; 4:2, 10,33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:33-37; 17:18,32; 24:15,21; 26:8; I Cor. 15:11-21; Rom. 10:9; 1:1-4; 8:31-34; 14:9; I Thess. 1:9-10.

[167] H. Riesenfeld, *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, The Gospel Tradition: Essays by H. Riesenfeld, 1970, p. 124.

of the Resurrection'. This is a term which made its appearance later.'[168]

Therefore 'to say that Sunday is observed because Jesus rose on that day,' as S. V. McCasland cogently states, 'is really a *petitio principii*, for such a celebration might just as well be monthly or annually and still be an observance of that particular day.[169]

Lord's Supper

The very 'Lord's Supper—*kuriakon deipnon'* which allegedly gave rise to the 'Lord's day—*kuriake hemera*' by creating the necessity to commemorate the resurrection with a unique Christian worship and on a purely Christian day, was not celebrated, according to the New Testament, on a specific weekly day nor was the rite understood as commemorative of the resurrection.[170]

It could be argued that Christ's death and resurrection cannot be rightly separated since they constitute two acts of the same drama. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Paul, who claims to transmit what he 'received from the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:23), states explicitly that by the eating of the bread and by the drinking of the cup Christians 'proclaim the Lord's death till he comes' (1 Cor 11:26).[171] It is then not Christ's resurrection, but rather His sacrifice and *parousia* which the Lord's Supper is explicitly designed to commemorate.[172]

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[168] H. Riesenfeld, *Sabbat et Jour du Seigneur,* in A. J. B. Higgins, ed., N.T. Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson, 1959, p. 212

[169] S. V. McCasland, *The Origin of the Lord's Day*, JBL 49 (1930): 69; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1933, p. 79, affirms: 'There is nothing in the idea of the Resurrection that would necessarily produce the observance of Sunday as a Day of Worship'; C. W. Dugmore, *Lord's Day and Easter*…0. Cullmann, 1962, p. 273, raises the question: 'Are we right in assuming that Sunday was everywhere observed by Christians from apostolic age onwards as the chief occasion of public prayer, or that it was a day on which the Eucharist was celebrated weekly from the beginning?' His reply is that the commemoration of the resurrection was initially an annual and not a weekly event. He maintains that 'It is not until about AD 150 that we find any clear and unmistakable reference to a regular meeting of Christians for worship, including the Eucharist, on the 'day of the Sun' (Justin, I Apology 67) (ibid., p. 280).

Petitio principii–a fallacy in which a conclusion is taken for granted in the premises; begging the question.

[170] Cf. Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, 1959, p. 21; W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 221: 'We have, therefore, every reason for assuming that there existed an inner connection between *kuriake hemera* and *kuriakon deipnon*…. It seems probable that the whole day on which this 'Lord's Supper' took place received the title the 'Lord's day.' If this is, in fact, the case (and this conclusion is almost irresistible) we can infer that the Pauline Lord's Supper was celebrated on Sunday, since Sunday would not otherwise have received its title the 'Lord's day.' Rordorf endeavors to reduce even the reference to the 'daily—*kath'hemera*' breaking of bread of Acts 2:46 to a Sunday evening celebration (ibid., pp. 225-228). He bases his view on three basic arguments: (1) In the Western text the 'daily' of Acts 2 :46 is transposed to v. 45, thus allowing a different interpretation; (2) The assembling together for the breaking of bread 'was a technical term for the coming together of Christians for their meal of worship'; (3) It would have been impossible for the community to assemble 'in its full numerical strength on every evening for the breaking of bread,' therefore 'the community breaking of bread did not take place daily…it was celebrated on Sunday evening (ibid., pp. 227, 228). C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 52, rightly rejects Rordorf's interpretation, affirming that 'there is no evidence in Acts 2:42-46 and 1 Cor. 11 :20f. to indicate that in the earliest Christian communities already existed the custom of a sole weekly celebration of the Eucharist…and even more that this occurred on Sunday night.' 0. Betz, in his review of Rordorf's book (JBL (1964): 81-83) attacks fiercely the author's emphasis on the Sunday evening Eucharist. R. B. Racham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1957**,** p. 38, emphasizes that Acts 2:42-46 represents a community meal and not a Lord's Supper. J. Daniélou, *Nouvelle Histoire de l'Église*, 1963, I, p. 42: 'It is not certain that the Christian gatherings always took place at night. It is very likely that they occurred at different hours.'

[171] The allusion to Christ's sacrifice is clear also in the Synoptics' account of the Last Supper: Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20.

[172] E. B. Allo, *Première épitre aux Corinthiens*, 1934, p. 296, well observes regarding the Lord's Supper of I Cor. 11:20: "The idea of the Passion fills all the eucharistic ceremony of Corinth…It is in reality an 'act'

In the same chapter the Apostle takes pains to instruct the Corinthians concerning the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, but on the question of the time of the assembly no less than four times he repeats in the same chapter, 'when you come together—*sunerkomenon*' (1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33, 34), thus implying indeterminate time and days. If the Lord's Supper was indeed celebrated on Sunday night, Paul could hardly have failed to mention it at least once, since four times he refers to the coming together for its celebration.

Furthermore, if Sunday were already regarded as the 'Lord's day,' by mentioning the sacredness of the time in which they gathered, Paul could have strengthened his plea for a more worshipful attitude during the partaking of the Lord's Supper, but though Paul was familiar with the adjective 'Lord's—*kuriakos*' (since he uses it in v. 20 to designate the nature of the supper), he did not apply it to Sunday. In the same epistle in fact, in a passage we shall later discuss,[173] he refers to the day by the Jewish designation 'first day of the week' (1 Cor. 16:2).

The meaning of the Lord's Supper is derived from the Last Supper, which Christ celebrated with His disciples. While the Synoptics differ from John in designating the time of its celebration,[174] they all agree that Christ ate the Passover with His disciples according to the prevailing custom. On that occasion, however, Christ infused into the rite a new meaning and form.

It is noteworthy that the dominant motif emphasized by Christ during the institution of the rite is not His resurrection, but rather His expiatory death. He attributes to the bread and the wine the symbolic

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which remembers the death of Christ and not simply the union of the faithful in the spirit and worship of the resurrected Christ."

Parousia means 'the second coming' of Messiah Yeshua.

[173] Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 90-91.

[174] According to the Synoptics the Last Supper was celebrated on the night when the Jews ate the Passover (Mark 14:12; Matt. 26:17; Luke 22:7), while according to the Fourth Gospel the Jews celebrated the feast on the following day, the night following the crucifixion (John 18:28; 19:14-31). J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu*, 19492, p. 34f., defends persuasively the view that the Last Supper was celebrated at the time of the Jewish Passover. Lately it has been suggested that at the time of Christ there existed two Passover traditions: (a) the priestly (normative) circles held it on Nisan 14, a date derived from the well-known, but variable lunar calendar, and (b) the Qumran sectarians kept it regularly on Wednesday according to the ancient solar calendar of 364 days advocated in the book of Jubilees. Some scholars have argued that these divergent calendar systems explain the difference in the dating of the Passover between Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel; see B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartodecimaner*, 1953; J. Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, pp. 165, 174, 175; W. Rordorf, *Zum Ursprung des Osterfestes am Sonntag*, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962): 167-189; E. Hilgert, *The Jubilees Calendar and the Origin of Sunday Observance*, AUSS I (1963): 44-51; A. Jaubert, *La date de la Cane*, 1957.

While the existence of these two divergent calendar systems is a well-established fact, the use of the solar sectarian calendar by primitive Christians is far from certain. There are indications that the Jerusalem Church (see pp. 142-50) in the first century AD followed closely the normative calendar of the Temple. Moreover, no adequate explanation has yet been provided for how the Jubilees' calendar kept abreast with the official one of the Temple. We know that official Judaism intercalated one month whenever needed to keep the calendar synchronized with the seasons, since the annual feasts were all tied to the agricultural year, but how was the Jubilees' calendar (which was one and one quarter days too short) intercalated to keep in phase with the seasons? No one really knows. The theory that 35 or 49 days were intercalated every 28 or 49 years (cf. R. T. Beckwith, *The Modern Attempt to Reconcile the Qumran Calendar with the True Solar Year*, Revue de Qumran 7, 27 [Dec. 1970]: 379-387) is difficult to accept, since that would place the calendar several weeks off the annual seasons. The result would be that the Qumran Passover did not fall within the same week as the official Jewish Passover. How can this be reconciled with the fact that the feasts observed by Christ and the Apostles apparently coincided to a day with the normative calendar of the Temple? Furthermore, why should the Synoptics have used the sectarian calendar of Qumran? Did not Luke and Mark, according to tradition, write for Gentile audiences? Was not Matthew a former Roman tax collector? What reasons would they have for using an obscure sectarian calendar? Cf. the cogent arguments presented by William Sanford LaSor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 1972, pp. 203-205.

Avram: For why John 13 is the Passover and why it was celebrated on the same night as the Synoptics, see *Passover and the Apostle John*.

value of His body and blood 'poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matt. 26:28; cf. Mark 13:24; Luke 22:15, 17, 19). That Christ intended to give not only a new meaning, but also a weekly recurrence to the festivity, cannot be inferred from the Gospels, since there are no such allusions. The only appointment in time that Jesus offers to His disciples is 'until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom' (Matt. 26:29; cf. Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

In the immediate post-New Testament literature, the resurrection is similarly not cited as the primary reason for the celebration of the Lord's Supper or for the observance of Sunday. The *Didache*, regarded as the most ancient source of ecclesiastical legislation (dated between AD 70-150),[175] devotes three brief chapters (chs. 9, 10, 14) to the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper. In the thanksgiving prayer to be offered over the cup and bread, mention is made of life, knowledge, church unity, faith, immortality, creation and food (chs. 9, 10), but no allusion is made to Christ's resurrection.

In Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, known as 'the earliest Christian document that has come down to us outside the New Testament' (dated about AD 95),[176] four chapters deal with the theme of the resurrection (24-27). The writer, seeking to reassure the Christians of Corinth that 'there is to be a resurrection, of which he made the Lord Jesus Christ the first fruits' (24:1), employs three different and effective symbols: the day-night cycle, the reproductive cycle of the seed (24) and the legend of the phoenix from whose corpse allegedly another bird arose (25).

The omission of the Lord's Supper and of Sunday worship—the most telling symbols of all—is certainly surprising, if indeed, as some hold, the Eucharist was already celebrated on Sunday and had acquired the commemorative value of the resurrection. What more effective way for the Bishop of Rome to reassure the Corinthian Christians of their future resurrection than by reminding them that the Lord's Supper, of which they partook every Sunday, was their most tangible assurance of their own resurrection? Clement, on the contrary, not only omits this rite which later became commemorative of the resurrection, but even speaks of 'the sacrifices and services' offered 'at the appointed times' in the Temple of Jerusalem as 'things the Master has commanded us to perform' (40:2-4).[177]

By manifesting such a profound respect for and attachment to Jewish religious services, Clement hardly allows for a radical break with Jewish institutions like the Sabbath and for the adoption of a new day of worship with well defined new theological motivations. On the other hand, a few decades later we find in Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin not only the opposite attitude toward Jewish institutions, but also the first timid references to the resurrection, which is presented as an added or secondary reason for Sunday worship.[178]

The secondary role of the resurrection in earlier sources is recognized even by scholars who defend its

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[175] E. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, p. 286, proposes that the Latin fragments represent a translation of the original text composed about AD 100, and the text published by Bryennius represents an expansion produced about AD 150 with the help of an abbreviated form from Barnabas. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 1950, I, pp. 36-37, maintains that the manual was produced between AD 100 and 150, because the complex nature of the ordinances described (such as baptism by infusion), would require some time for their stabilization. Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL, 1952, I, p. 307, similarly suggests that the "original 'Teaching' is probably early second century." Jean Paul Audet, *La Didache, Instructions des Apotres*, 1958, p. 219, is of the opinion that the *Didache* is contemporaneous to the Synoptics, and therefore to be dated between AD 50 and 70.

[176] E. J. Goodspeed (see p. 48, note 175), p. 47.

[177] In chapter 41 Clement reiterates the necessity of respecting 'the appointed rules of his ministration' by referring again to the services of the Temple: 'Not in every place, my brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered or the free-will offerings, or the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, but only in Jerusalem, and there also, the offering is not made in every place, but before the shrine, at the altar' (v. 2; Kirsopp Lake, see p. 48, note 175, p. 79). The reference to the Temple sacrificial services reflects not only the high esteem in which they were held by some Christians, but also continuance of sacrifice, though in a reduced form, after AD 70; cf. K. W. Clark, *Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after AD 70*, NTS 6 (1959-1960): 269-280; J. R. Brown, *The Temple and Sacrifice in Rabbinic Judaism*, 1963.

[178] See chapter VII, where the testimonies of these three Fathers are examined.

influence on the origin of Sunday. C. S. Mosna notes, for instance, that while in the fourth century the Fathers established 'an explicit link' between the resurrection and Sunday observance, 'in the first three centuries the memory of the resurrection was hardly mentioned.'[179]

Passover

The observance of the Passover in the primitive Church provides additional indications that initially the event of the resurrection was not explicitly associated with the feast, which apparently was not celebrated on Sunday. The injunction to observe Passover is found in the New Testament only once, in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8:

> 'Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ our paschal lamb has been *sacrificed*. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'[180]

Note that in this text the celebration of the Passover is explicitly motivated by the fact that Christ, the true paschal lamb, 'has been sacrificed.' Any reference to the resurrection is absent. The passage, moreover, provides support for a literal observance of the festival, because Paul here, as W. D. Davies observes, 'is not thinking of a specific Christian Passover day, but of the Christian dispensation as such as a feast.'[181] This implies that Christians at that time observed Passover.

The fact that Paul himself spent the days of Unleavened Bread at Philippi (Acts 20:6) and that he 'was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost' (Acts 20:16; cf. 1 Cor. 16:8) suggests that the Apostle still respected and regulated his life by the normative liturgical calendar of the Temple. Moreover we know from the Quartodeciman's sources (i.e. those who kept Passover on *Nisan* 14 according to the Jewish reckoning), which apparently represent a direct continuation of the custom of the primitive Church, that the paschal feast was indeed observed by Christians. Its celebration, however, did not take place on Sunday, as we might expect if it was intended to commemorate the actual day on which the resurrection occurred, but rather, as well stated by J. Jeremias,

> 'at the same time as the Jewish Passover, that is, on the night of the 15th of Nisan, and by the date rather than the day.'[182]

In a passage we shall later examine, Epiphanius (ca. AD 315-403) suggests that until AD 135 Christians everywhere observed Passover on the Jewish date, namely, on Nisan 15, irrespective of the day of the week.[183] If our informer is correct, this would mean that prior to that time, no necessity had been felt to institute a Sunday memorial (whether annual or weekly) to honor the resurrection.

This conclusion is supported indirectly also by the two earliest documents mentioning the Passover celebration, since both emphasize the commemoration of the death rather than of the resurrection of

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[179] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 357; W. Rordorf, *Sabbat* (texts), p. xvi, in spite of his endeavor to defend an opposite thesis, also admits: 'we can indicate with reasons that the justification for Sunday on the basis of the resurrection of Jesus, does not appear until the second century and even then very timidly.'

[180] Emphasis supplied…J. Jeremias, *Pasca*, *TDNT* V, p. 900, argues cogently that the casual way in which Paul refers to Christ as 'paschal lamb,' implied that such a 'comparison was already familiar to the Corinthian church.' The identification of Christ's death with the Passover sacrifice possibly goes back to Jesus Himself, since in the Last supper He compares Himself with the paschal lamb. That the sacrifice of Christ was the core of the rich Passover typology in the primitive church is widely admitted: cf. J. Bonsirven, *Hoc est corpus meum, Biblica* 29 (1948): 205-219; A. Walther, *Jesus, das Passalamm des Neuen Bundes*, 1950, pp. 38-91; A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the NT*, 1952, p. 49ff.

[181] W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism*, n. d., p. 75.

[182] J. Jeremias (see p. 49, note 180), p. 902.

[183] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 70, 10, PG 42, 355-356; the text is cited and examined below, see pp. 161-162, 200-203.

Christ. The Ethiopic version of the apocryphal *Epistle of the Apostles* (dated ca. AD 150) says, 'and you therefore celebrate the remembrance of my death, i.e. the Passover' (ch. 15). In the Coptic version the passage is basically the same, 'And you remember my death. If now the Passover takes place' (ch. 15).[184]

The second document, the *Sermon on the Passover* by Melito,[185] Bishop of Sardis (died ca. AD 190), provides the most extensive theological interpretation of the meaning of the Passover celebration for the early Christians. The Bishop, in a highly rhetorical fashion, explains in his sermon how the ancient Passover has found its fulfillment in Christ. It is significant that the biblical setting is still the Exodus story (12:11-30), which the author reenacts as in the Jewish Passover *haggadah*. The recurring theme is 'the suffering of the Lord' (v. 58) which the author finds 'predicted long in advance' (v. 58) not only by 'the sacrifice of the sheep' (vv. 3, 4, 6, 8, 15, 16, 32, 33, 44), but also in many other Old Testament types:

> 'This one is the Passover of our salvation. This is the one who patiently endured many things in many people. This is the one who was murdered in Abel and bound as a sacrifice in Isaac, and exiled in Jacob, and sold in Joseph, and exposed in Moses and sacrificed in the lamb, and hunted in David and dishonored in the prophets (v. 69).
>
> This is the lamb that was slain. This is the lamb that was silent. This is the one who was born of Mary, that beautiful ewe-lamb.
>
> This is the one who was taken from the flock, and was dragged to sacrifice, and was killed in the evening, and was buried at night; the one who was not broken while on the tree, who did not see dissolution while in the earth, who rose up from the dead and who raised up mankind from the grave below (v. 71).'

Though Melito in his sermon makes a few passing references to the resurrection, it is clear from the context that these function as the epilogue of the passion drama of the Passover. The emphasis is indeed on the suffering and death of Jesus which constitute the recurring theme of the sermon and of the celebration.[186] This is evidenced also by the very definition of the Passover which the Bishop pro-

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[184] The two versions are given in parallel columns in E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1963, 1, p. 199. The date of the composition is discussed on pp. 190-191. Note the same emphasis on the death as found in 1 Cor. 5:7 and 11:26.

[185] The work was first published in Greek with an English translation in 1940 by Campbell Bonner, *Melito of Sardes, the Homily on the Passion, with Some Fragments of Ezekiel, Studies and Documents 12*, 1940. The present quotations are taken from Gerald F. Hawthorne, *A New English Translation of Melito's Paschal Homily*, in Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation, ed., G. F. Hawthorne, 1975, pp. 147-175.

[186] E. Lohse (see p. 47, note 174), p. 75, points out that in the Quartodeciman Passover both the death and resurrection were celebrated, since Melito does refer a few times to the resurrection. W. Rordorf (see p. 47, note 174), pp. 167-168, also holds that the commemoration of the resurrection was implicit in the Quartodeciman Passover. Such a conclusion is hardly warranted by Melito's *Paschal Homily*, since the Bishop presents Christ's resurrection primarily in the closing remarks of his sermon (vv. 100 to 105) not to explain the reason for the Passover celebration, but only as the logical epilogue of the passion drama. That Passover was viewed as the commemoration of the sacrifice and suffering of Christ is clearly indicated in Melito's homily by: (1) the detailed correlation established between the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb and Christ (vv. 1-8); (2) the reiteration of the Old Testament procedure in the selection, sacrifice and consuming of the lamb (vv. 11-16); (3) the description of what happened to the Egyptians who were found without the blood of the sheep (vv. 17-29); (4) the explanation that Israel's safety was due to 'the sacrifice of the sheep, the type of the Lord' (vv. 30-33); (5) the explicit and repeated identification of Christ as the Antitype fulfilling the type (vv. 34-45); (6) the categorical definition that Passover "is derived from 'to suffer'" (v. 46); (7) the Old Testament predictions of Christ as a suffering lamb (vv. 57-65); (8) the description of the passion of Christ as of a lamb sacrificed (vv. 66-71); (9) the vituperation of Israel for the murder of the Lord (vv. 72-99). Practically the whole sermon interprets the Jewish Passover in the light of the suffering of Christ. We would therefore concur with J. Jeremias that 'in the early Church the resurrection was not an annual festival' and that among the Quartodecimans, Passover 'was generally related to the recollection of the passion' (see p. 49, note 180,

vides: "What is the Passover? Indeed its name is derived from that event—'to celebrate the Passover' (*tou paschein*) is derived from 'to suffer' (*tou pathein*). Therefore, learn who the sufferer is and who he is who suffers along with the sufferer" (v. 46).[187]

The resurrection, however, did emerge in time as the dominant reason for the celebration not only of the annual Easter-Sunday, but also of the weekly Sunday. The two festivities, in fact, as we shall later see, came to be regarded as one basic feast commemorating at different times the same event of the resurrection.[188]

It would seem, therefore, that though the resurrection is frequently mentioned both in the New Testament and in the early patristic literature, no suggestion is given that primitive Christians commemorated the event by a weekly or yearly Sunday service. The very fact that Passover, which was later transformed by the Church, became the annual commemoration of the resurrection held on Easter-Sunday, initially celebrated primarily Christ's passion[189] and was observed by the fixed date of *Nisan* 15 rather than on Sunday,[190] makes it untenable to claim that Christ's resurrection determined the origin of Sunday worship during the lifetime of the Apostles.

The Appearances of the Risen Christ

Another similar, and yet different explanation, for the origin of Sunday observance has been popularized by W. Rordorf in his recent monograph on the origin and early history of Sunday, which has been translated and published in several languages. The author, with a brilliant, but tortuous argumentation interrelates Christ's Last Supper, the meals which the risen Lord consumed with His disciples on Easter Sunday, the breaking of the bread practiced in the earliest community, and the Lord's Supper described in I Corinthians 11:17-34.[191] He concludes that all these have their

> 'roots in the Easter meal, when the risen Lord was present in visible form with His disciples, and we can assign a definite point in time to the Easter meal: it happened on Sunday evening!'[192]

Moreover, the fact that Christ appeared and ate with the disciples

> 'not only on Easter-Sunday evening, but also on the following Sunday (John 20:26)

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p. 902-903). Tertullian supports this conclusion when he says: 'The Passover affords a more than usually solemn day for baptism; when, withal, the Lord's passion, in which we are baptized, was completed' (*On Baptism* 19 ANF 111, p. 678; cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, 72).

187 Irenaeus provides a similar definition: 'Of the day of His passion, too, he [Moses] was not ignorant, but foretold Him, after a figurative manner by the name given to the Passover, and at that very festival, which had been proclaimed such a long time previously by Moses, did our Lord suffer, thus fulfilling the Passover' (*Against heresies* 4, 10, 1, ANF 1, p. 473). The explanation that 'Passover—*pascha*' derives etymologically from 'to suffer—*paschein*' is unfounded, since in Hebrew the term 'Passover—*pesach*' means 'passing over,' that is, 'sparing' and it was used to refer to a whole range of ceremonies related to the Feast. Could not, however, this erroneous definition represent an apologetic argument devised to justify the Christian interpretation of the feast, namely, the commemoration of the suffering of Christ?

188 See pp. 204-205.

189 The expectation of the *parousia* was also an important meaning of the primitive Christian Passover celebration as indicated by the fast which was broken on the morning of the 15th *Nisan* (cf. *Epistle of the Apostles* 15); see J. Jeremias (see p. 49, note 180), pp. 902-903.

190 The question of the origin of Easter-Sunday is discussed on pp. 198-204.

191 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 221; P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day*, pp. 64-67, adopts and defends Rordorf's view; also P. Massi, *La Domenica*, p, 40. C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, pp. 52-58, excludes the possibility that Christ's appearances influenced the origin of Sunday, but argues that they may have determined the time of the synaxis, namely the evening hour.

192 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 233.

and perhaps even on other Sundays after that (Acts 10:41),'[193]

is interpreted as the setting of a regular pattern for a regular eucharistic celebration on every Sunday night. Therefore, Sunday allegedly would derive both its name 'Lord's day—*kuriake hemera* and its eucharistic cult from the 'Lord's Supper—*kuriakon deipnon,* which on Easter evening underwent 'a second institution' when the risen Lord celebrated the rite anew with His disciples.[194]

Is it possible that the meals consumed by the risen Christ with His disciples on the occasions of his various appearances, as Otto Betz puts it, became 'the basis for a revolutionary new cult among the earliest Christians'?[195] The Gospels accounts of the event significantly discredit such an hypothesis. The disciples, for instance, had gathered on Easter-Sunday night 'within shut doors' (John 20:19) still confused and disbelieving the resurrection (Luke 24 :11), not to celebrate the Lord's Supper, but 'for fear of the Jews' (John 20:19).

John, though he wrote by the end of the first century,[196] when allegedly Christians were celebrating the Lord's Supper on Sunday, makes no reference to any meal which Christ took with his disciples on Easter evening. The omission of this detail can hardly be justified if the Easter-meal was regarded as the crucial starting point of Sunday-keeping. Furthermore, the fact that John does mention a meal which Christ consumed with His disciples on an early week-day morning on the shore of the lake of Galilee (John 21:13), strongly suggests that no particular significance was attributed to Christ's Easter-Sunday evening meal.[197]

It is hard to believe that the disciples viewed the Easter evening meal as 'a second institution of the Lord's Supper,' when Luke, the only reporter of the meal, 'makes no mention,' as C. S. Mosna notes, 'of a *fractio panis*,' that is, of a breaking of bread.[198] The disciples, in fact, 'gave him [i. e. Christ] a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them' (Luke 24:42-43). There is no mention of bread or of wine, nor of ritual blessing. The disciples did not receive the eucharistic elements from Christ, but 'they gave Him a piece of broiled fish' (v. 42). Only Christ ate, why? The answer is explicitly provided by the context (vv. 36-41) where Christ asks not for bread and wine, but for 'anything to eat' (v. 41) in order to reassure the disciples of the physical reality of His resurrected body.[199]

The mention of Christ's appearance 'eight days later' (John 20:26), supposedly the Sunday following

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[193] Ibid., p. 234.

[194] Ibid., p. 233; Joseph A. Jungmann (see p. 45, note 164), p. 21, perceives also a causal relationship between the 'Lord's day' and the 'Lord's supper;' cf. also Bernard Botte, *Les Dénominations du Dimanche dans Ia tradition chrétienne, Le Dimanche, Lex Orandi 39*, 1965, p. 13.

[195] Otto Betz, *Review of W. Rordorf Der Sonntag*, in JBL (1964): 83. Betz rejects such an hypothesis as does C. S. Mosna, though in a milder way (*Storia della domenica*, pp. 52-58).

[196] The time of the composition of the fourth Gospel is generally placed before the end of the first century, since, according to the tradilion of the early Church, John lived into the reign of Trajan (Irenaeus, *Against heresies* 2, 25, 5; 3, 3, 4; Clement of Alexandria, cited by Eusebius, TIE 3, 25, 5); cf. Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, 1958, p. 319.

[197] Pacifico Massi, *La Domenica*, p. 40, speculates that the appearance by the lake of Tiberias reported by John (21:1-19) also occurred on the first day of the week 'since it took place after a day of rest (John 21:1-3).' Granting such an hypothesis, which is not altogether unlikely, it would mean, however, that Peter and several of the disciples went fishing Saturday night (note they spent the night fishing, John 21:3) after having observed the Sabbath. Fishing on Sunday can hardly be regarded as intentional observance of the day.

[198] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 52.

[199] Acts 10:41 is another significant example where the eating and drinking of Christ with His disciples is presented as the crucial proof that Christ was no phantom.

Bacchiocchi errs in saying that 'only Christ ate,' and that there wasn't any bread there. John 21:9 states, 'they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and *bread*,' and in v. 12 "Yeshua says to them, 'Come and *eat breakfast*,'" while v. 13 says, 'Yeshua then came and took the *bread* and gave it to them and likewise the fish.' Bacchiocchi is right, though, that the 'eucharist' cannot be projected into this event. There is no wine and since when is fish served with the 'eucharist'? It was a breakfast, as John records, not a time of the eating and drinking of His body and blood.

His resurrection,[200] can hardly suggest a regular pattern of Sunday observance, since John himself explains its reason, namely, the absence of Thomas at the previous appearance (v. 24). Similarly on this occasion John makes no reference to any cultic meal, but simply to Christ's tangible demonstration to Thomas of the reality of his bodily resurrection (vv. 26-29). The fact that 'eight days later' the disciples were again gathered together is not surprising, since we are told that before Pentecost 'they were staying—*hesan katamenontes*' (Acts 1:13) together in the upper room and there they met daily for mutual edification (Acts 1:14; 2:1).

The appearances of Christ do not follow a consistent pattern. The Lord appeared to individuals and to groups not only on Sunday, but at different times, places and circumstances. He appeared in fact to single persons such as Cephas and James (1 Cor. 15 :5, 7), to the twelve (vv. 5, 7), and to a group of five hundred persons (v. 6). The meetings occurred, for instance, while gathered within shut doors for fear of the Jews (John 20:19, 26), while traveling on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-35) or while fishing on the lake of Galilee (John 21:1-14).

No consistent pattern can be derived from Christ's appearances to justify the institution of a recurring eucharistic celebration on Sunday. In fact, with only two disciples at Emmaus, Christ 'took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them' (Luke 24:30). This last instance may sound like the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but in reality it was an ordinary meal around an ordinary table to which Jesus was invited. Christ accepted the hospitality of the two disciples and sat 'at the table with them' (Luke 24:30). According to the prevailing custom, the Lord 'took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them' (v. 30). This act, as explained by J. Behm, was 'simply a customary and necessary part of the preparation for eating together.'[201] No wine was served or blessed, since the meal was abruptly interrupted by the recognition of the Lord 'in the breaking of the bread' (v. 35; cf. 31).

To view any meal that Christ partook with the disciples after His resurrection as a 'second institution' of the Lord's Supper would conflict also with the pledge Jesus made at the Last Supper;

> 'I tell you I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom' (Matt. 26:29; cf. Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

Since all the Synoptics unanimously report Christ's promise not to partake again of the sacred elements with His disciples in this present world, they could hardly have viewed any later meal taken with Christ as a reenactment of the Last Supper without making their Master guilty of inconsistency or contradictions.

Lastly, we should note that according to Matthew 28:10 and Mark 16:7, Christ's appearances occurred not in Jerusalem (as mentioned by Luke and John), but in Galilee. This suggests that, as S. V. McCasland rightly observes,

> 'the vision may have been as much as *ten days later*, after the feast of the unleavened bread, as indicated by the closing fragments of the Gospel of Peter. But if the vision at this late date was on Sunday it would be scarcely possible to account for the observance of Sunday in such an accidental way.'[202]

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[200] The expression used in this passage, 'after eight days,' need not mean Monday, since it was customary to count the days inclusively, as we shall note below (chapter IX) in conjunction with the designation eighth day; cf. R. J. Floody, *Scientific Basis of Sabbath and Sunday*, 1906, pp. 125-126.

[201] J. Behm, 'Klao' TDNT III, p. 728.

The meal obviously took place within the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (since Messiah had died only three days earlier at the beginning of the Feast), and therefore, the 'bread' that Messiah broke that evening (which would be a Sunday night) had to be *matza* (unleavened bread). That the two disciples immediately 'recognized' Him in the breaking of the *matza*. The symbolism is clear–Messiah Yeshua is seen in the breaking of the *matza* of Passover because *matza* is a perfect type of Messiah due to it being a pierced bread, and because it has no leaven in it, it speaks of the sinless purity of Yeshua.

See Passover at http://seedofabraham.net/Passover.pdf and the Feast of Unleavened Bread at http://seedofabraham.net/The-Feast-of-Unleavened-Bread.pdf for their relationship to, and honoring of Messiah Yeshua.

While it may be difficult to explain the discrepancies of the narratives in the Gospels,[203] yet the fact that both Matthew and Mark make no reference to any meal or meeting of Christ with his disciples on Easter-Sunday implies that no particular importance was attributed to the meal Christ shared with his disciples on the Sunday night of his resurrection.

As for Christ's appearances, therefore, while on the one hand they greatly reassured the disheartened disciples of the reality of Christ's resurrection, they could hardly have suggested, on the other hand, a recurring weekly commemoration of the resurrection. They occurred at different times, places and circumstances, and in those instances where Christ ate, He partook of ordinary food (like fish), not to institute a eucharistic Sunday worship, but to demonstrate the reality of his bodily resurrection.

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[202] S. V. McCasland (see p. 46, note 169), p. 69.

[203] The time-schedule of the Gospel of Peter which places the return of the disciples with Peter to the lake of Tiberias after the festival of the unleavened bread (i.e. eight days later) suggests a possible solution to the two divergent accounts; cf. W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 228.

Chapter IV

THREE NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

Three well-known New Testament passages generally are cited as evidence for Sunday observance in the apostolic time: 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; Acts 20:7-11 and Revelation 1:10.[204] An analysis of these passages is therefore imperative in order to establish whether Sunday observance is presupposed, or even alluded to, in the the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 16:1-3

In the spring of AD 55 or 56, Paul recommended a unique plan to the believers of Corinth (similar to instructions he had given to the churches of Macedonia and Galatia) to ensure a substantial contribution to the general fund raising campaign on behalf of the poor of the Jerusalem church.[205] The plan is so stated:

> 'On the first day of every week each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come' (1 Cor. 16:2).

Various scholars see in this text a reference to, or at least an implicit indication of, a regular Christian Sunday gathering. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, for instance, in their comment on this verse affirm:

> 'This is our earliest evidence respecting the early consecration of the first day of the week by the apostolic church.'[206]

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[204] The four Gospels report unanimously that the resurrection of Christ occurred on the 'first day of the week' (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). The writers, however, provide no hint that on such days a new cult was celebrated in honor of the risen Christ. Apparently it is on account of this fact that most recent researchers on the origin of Sunday examine exclusively 1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7f., and Rev. 1:10 as alleged testimonies of Sunday observance in apostolic time.

Bacchiocchi is mistaken when he says that the Gospels report Messiah resurrecting on Sunday. The Gospels speak of Messiah first being seen on Sunday, but nowhere in the Gospels, or the New Testament, does any angel or writer say that Yeshua rose on Sunday. The New Testament is silent as to the day and the hour when Messiah rose. The angel says to the women who come to the Tomb on Sunday that 'He is risen!' Yeshua did rise on Sunday (cf. 1st Cor. 15:20, 23 where Paul calls Yeshua the First Fruits to rise from the dead, which speaks of a Sunday resurrection; see First Sheaf), but His Sunday resurrection cannot be used as justification for Sunday replacing the Sabbath (see The Resurrection and Mark 16:9, Sabbath Denigration and Sunday—The Catholic Sabbath).

The article is Chapter IV of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 90-131.

[205] The arrangement was apparently made in conjunction with the trip described in Acts 18:23, as is confirmed by the allusion to such a contribution in Gal. 2:10; cf. 2 Cor. 9:2f; Rom. 15:26.

[206] A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians,* 1911, p. 384; cf. A. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians,* 1858, p. 344: 'This is the earliest mention of the observance of the first day of the week. The collections were to be made on that day, as most suited to the remembrance of their Christian obligations.' F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *the Acts of the Apostles,* 1945, p. 187: 'The earliest mention of *the first day* as being connected with a Christian assembly as in 1 Cor. 16:2, where St. Paul suggests that on that day a collection should be made for the poor at Jerusalem.' *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scriptures,* 1953, 1040-840: 'It is clear from 1 Cor. 16:2 that Sunday had already become the day for the

They justify this conclusion by interrelating the laying aside of funds on the first day with Christ's interpretation of the positive function of the Sabbath:

> 'If it was right to do good on the Jewish Sabbath (Mt. 12:12; Mk. 3:4), how much more on the Lord's day? for it reminded them of the untold blessings which they had received.'[207]

This attempt to read into the private and individual Corinthian laying aside of funds on Sunday an indication of the transference of the Gospels' Sabbath theology to Sunday is indeed ingenious, but as we shall see, gratuitous. Pacifico Massi prefers to interpret the Corinthians' offering simply as a weekly expression of the Easter-Sunday faith:

> 'Sunday is the weekly Passover and the day of the assembly. Could there be a better occasion to make such an offering to the risen Christ?'[208]

Pierre Grelot associates this weekly setting aside of money at home, as recommended by Paul, with 'the Jewish weekly gathering of bread for the poor at the vigil of the Sabbath.'[209] In both instances, Grelot notes, it was a question of supporting the poor of the mother-church. There is, however, a significant difference between the two, since in Judaism, at least according to the school of Shammai, no collection was taken on the Sabbath. Contributions for the poor were forbidden since they conflicted with the future material abundance which the day symbolized.[210] Besides, in Corinth it is not a question of food, but of money that is collected. These differences mater little to Grelot, since he argues that the collection for the Christians 'was not only an expression of liberality (2 Cor. 8:6-7), but the service of a sacred offering (2 Cor. 9:12),' and consequently an integral part of the Sunday service.[211]

C. S. Mosna draws the same conclusion by reasoning that since Paul designates the 'offering' in 2 Corinthians 9:12 as 'service–*liturgia*' the collection must have been linked with the Sunday worship service of the Christian assembly. Furthermore, he speculates that since the designation,

> 'first day of the week' is 'a Semitism, it indicates a jewish origin, presumably from Jerusalem, of such a day.'[212]

In all these explanation one notices a common effort to interpret the 'collection' as related to the Sun-

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Christian assembly and Eucharist.' E. B. Allo, *St. Paul, premiere epitre aux Corinthiens,* 1956, p. 456, is of the opinion that the 'first day of the week here refers to Sunday worship, which by the time of the composition of the epistle had already replace the Sabbath.' F. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 15, supports this view.

[207] A. Robertson and A. Plummer (see p. 55, note 206), p. 384.

[208] P. Massi, *La Domenica*, p. 283.

[209] Pierre Grelot, *Du Sabbat Juif au Dimanche Chretien, La Maison-Dieu, 124* (1975): 31-32.

[210] "Beth Shammai says: 'Contributions for the poor are not allotted on the Sabbath in the synagogue, even a dowry to marry an orphan man to an orphan young woman'…Beth Hillel permits these activities." (Tosefta, Shabbat 16:22); cf. Theodore Friedman, *The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption, Judaism 16* (1967), 448. James Moffat, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians,* 1947, p. 271, also suggest that 'possibly Paul agreed with the school of Shammai that no alms should be handled at worship.' Can it be true that Paul had transferred to Sunday such an extreme rabbinical regulation which applied to the Sabbath? This hardly seems possible since the admonition is given to Gentile believers to whom Paul allowed considerable freedom on matters of religious traditions (cf. Rom. 14:1-16; Gal. 4:8-10; Co. 2:16).

[211] Pierre Grelot (see p. 56, note 209), p. 32.

[212] C. S. MOsna, *Storia della domenica,* pp. 7-9. C. Callewaert, *La Synaxe eucharitique a Jerusalem, berceau du dimanche, Ephemerides Theological Lovanienses 15* (1938), 43, similarly argues tha the designation implies that Sunday originated in the primitive community of Jerusalem. W. Rordorff, *Sunday,* pp. 41-42, objects to this explanation o the basis of his belief that the planetary week had not yet been adopted, and therefore, Paul had no other name at his disposal to designate a recurring day. The objection fails to convince, first because there are evidences that the planetary week did exist a the time, and secondly, because we know that Christians continued to use the Jewish names of the week for a long time. In fact, the planetary names first appear only in Christian literature addressed to the pagans (cf. Justin Martyr, *I Apology 67;* Tertullian, *Apology 16; Ad Nationes 1*).

day worship service. It is felt, as Charles Hodge expresses it, that,

> 'the only reasons that can be assigned for requiring the thing to be done on the first day of the week, is, that on that day the Christians were accustomed to meet, and what each had laid aside from his weekly gains could be treasured up, i.t. put into the common treasury of the church.'[213]

These attempts to extrapolate from Paul's fund raising plan a regular pattern of Sunday observance reveal inventiveness and originality, but they seem to rest more on construed arguments than on the actual information the text provides. Several facts deserve consideration. Observe first of all that there is nothing in the text that suggests public assemblies, inasmuch as the setting aside of funds was to be done 'by himself–*par howto*.' This phrase implies, as stated by A. P. Stanley, 'that the collection was to be made individually and in private.'[214]

It is objected that the directive 'by himself or at his own house' has no sense, since this would require a later collection of money and this is precisely what Paul wanted to avoid (1 Cor. 16:2).[215] The objection is, however, unfounded, since the verb that follows, namely, 'storing up or treasuring up–*thaysauridzon*' clearly implies that the money was to be treasured up in each individual's house until the Apostle came for it. At that time the collection of what had been stored up could be quickly arranged.[216]

Equally unsatisfactory is the explanation that the money was laid aside privately since at that time there was no church treasury.[217] The very first institution of the apostles was the election of Hellenistic deacons to administer the continuous stream of gifts coming in and in turn, passing out to the needy (Acts. 6:1-16). Paul recognizes the office of the deacon and presents a list of the qualities a person aspiring to such an office should possess (1 Tim. 3:8-13).[218] To the same Corinthian community he mentions 'the helpers and administrators' (1 Cor. 12:28) among God's appointed offices, thus implying the existence in the local church of persons capable of administering funds. Moreover the fact that the Apostle expects the Corinthians themselves to select and approve the persons who were to take the money to Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:3-4) indicates that the church was competent in financial matters.

It is also observed that the laying aside of funds was done privately since public worship places did not yet exist.[219] Such argument is, however, discredited by the fact that Paul expects his plan to be carried out not only *privately,* but also on an *individual* basis: 'each of you by himself–*hekostos humon par howto*' (v. 2). Besides, while it is true that Christians assembled in private homes, Paul does not regard such gatherings as private because of the nature of the place. In fact, in the same epistle he says repeatedly: 'when you assemble as a church' (1 Cor. 11:18; cf. vv. 20, 33-34), thus clearly differentiating between a private laying aside of money at one's home and the public gatherings which also took place in private homes.

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[213] Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 1959, p. 364. James Moffat (see p. 56, note 210), p. 271, 'It may be that the sums were brought to the Sunday service.' W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 195, maintains that Paul proposed the first day of the week saving plan 'because the Christians had already begun to fix their calendar by reference to the weekly Sunday.'

[214] Arthur P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 1858, p. 344.

[215] J. Nedbal, *Sabbath und Sonntag im Neuen Testament*, diss. 1956, pp. 156f.

[216] Arthur P. Stanley (see p. 57, note 214), p. 344: "The word, *thaysauridzon*, 'hoarding,' or 'treasuring up,' also implies that the money was to remain in each individual's house till the Apostle came for it.' R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians,* 1946, p. 759: "Each member is to keep the growing amount 'by him,' *par howto,* in his own home, and is not to deposit it with the church at once.'

[217] Lenski (see p. 57, note 216), p. 760. A. Robertson and A. Plummer (see p. 55, note 206), p. 384: 'It is improbable that at that time there was any Church treasury.'

[218] Hermann W. Beyer, *diakonus, TDNT* 11, p. 90: 'Deacons are not to be double tongued or avaricious–qualities necessary in those who have access to many homes and are entrusted with the administration of funds.

[219] This view was expressed by Vincenzo Monachino in his critique of my dissertation.

If the Christian community was worshiping together on Sunday, it appears paradoxical that Paul should recommend laying aside at home one's gift. Why should Christians deposit their offering at home on Sunday, if on such a day they were gathering for worship? Should not the money have been brought to the Sunday service? Chrysostom's reason, that the money was to be laid in store at home "lest one might feel ashamed of offering a small sum" is hardly justified.[220] This would imply that Christians are to avoid the embarassment of giving little, by giving only when they can show a substantial gift.

Equally deficient is James Moffat's suggestion that "possibly Paul agreed with the school of Shammai that no alms should be handled at worship."[221] This would attribute to Paul a rabbinical narrow-mindness which hardly befits his liberal spirit. Moreover, as pointed out by William Barclay, "Paul uses no fewer than nine different words to describe this collection."[222] Some of these, such as "fellowship" (*koinonia*—2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13), "service" (*diakonia*— 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13), "ministration" (*leitourgia*—2 Cor. 9:12) and "offering" (*prosfora*—Acts 24:17) are explicitly liturgical terms associated with a religious service. Thus, the Apostle could hardly view the giving or the depositing of an offering during a church service as a secular act.[223] It would appear, then, that Paul's recommendation to take up a private, rather than a collective congregational collection on Sunday, suggests that on such a day no regular public services were conducted.

If Paul regarded the first day of the week as the Christian day of worship, presumably he would have designated such a day as "Lord's day—*kuriake hemera*" since he was familiar with, and did use, the adjective "Lord's—*kuriakos*" in the same epistle (1 Cor. 11:20) to designate the name and the nature of the Lord's Supper. If the Apostle had done so, then the claim that the Lord's Supper, gave both its name and its cult to the Lord's day, would appear altogether plausible. But the fact that Paul employs the adjective "Lord's" to describe only the eucharistic supper and not Sunday suggests that the term was known and used, but was not yet applied to the first day of the week.[224]

Regarding the time of the Lord's Supper celebration, we have already noticed that in the same epistle the Apostle repeatedly leaves the question indeterminate (1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33, 34; cf. 14 :23, 26). Presumably the Lord's Supper was celebrated in different days and homes, according to private arrangements made every week by the community. This plan may have been encouraged by the fact that Christians' evening assemblies were mistaken for meetings of *hetaeriae*. The latter were gatherings of illegal societies (clubs of friends), which were forbidden by the Roman law since they were centers of political intrigue.

A letter from Pliny, governor of Bithynia, (dated AD 112) to the Emperor Trajan, sheds light on this question.[225] There the governor, who asks the Emperor to instruct him on the procedure to follow in processing the Christians, reports what he had found out about the Christians' "guilt" through long interrogations united with torture. He states that Christians on "an appointed day *(stato die)* had been accustomed to meet before daybreak" for a religious service. Later on the same day (apparently in the evening) they met again to partake of "ordinary and harmless food." He then adds, "from all these

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[220] Chrysostom, *Homily 43 on I Corinthians (PG* 61, 367): "Paul says, 'Let each lay by him in store,' not, 'Let him bring it to church, lest one might feel ashamed of offering a small sum.'" This view is advocated by J. Kosnetter, "Der Tag des Herrn im Neuen Testament," *Der Tag der Herrn,* 1958, p. 384.

[221] See p. 56, note 210.

[222] William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 1956, pp. 182-183.

[223] A century later Justin Martyr reports that during the Sunday service "they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president" (I *Apology* 67, *ANF* I, p. 186).

[224] J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 1885, II, p. 129, referring to Sunday, aptly remarks: "The day is commonly called μια των σαββατων [first day of the week]' in the New Testament. As late as 57 AD. the designa- tion occurs in St. Paul (I Cor. 16:2) where we should certainly have expected (*kuriake* [Lord's day]) if the word had then been in common use."

[225] *The Letters of Pliny,* Book X, 96.

things they desisted after my edict which, in accordance with your orders, prohibited the associations *(he taeriae)."*[226] It is clear that Christian gatherings came under the suspicion of the *hetaeriae* because they shared an obvious resemblance, namely, both assembled for their communal meals in the evening of appointed days.

We are not informed to what extent the prohibition of the *hetaeriae* was applied in the whole empire.[227] It would appear however that any kind of fraternity was viewed with suspicion. Trajan (AD 117-138), for instance, turned down Pliny's request for permission to constitute a firemen guild that would not exceed one hundred and fifty members, in order to protect the city of Nicomedia from future fires. The Emperor's rationale is that "whatever title we give them, and whatever our object in giving it, men who are banded together for a common end will all the same become a political association before long."

That Christians came under this kind of suspicion is indicated by the protest of Tertullian (ca. AD 160-225) against the insinuation that the Christian *agape* meal was a "factio" (a meeting of the *hetaeria's* kind). After describing the nature of the *agape* feasts, the North African Bishop writes: "Give the congregation of the Christians its due, and hold it unlawful, if it is like assemblies of the illicit sort: by all means let it be condemned, if any complaint can be validly laid against it, such as lies against secret factions. But who has ever suffered harm from our assemblies? We are in our congregations just what we are when separated from each other…when the pious, when the pure assemble in congregation, you ought not to call that a faction but a *curia—i.e.,* the court of God."[228]

This prevailing suspicion that the Christians' religious meals were a kind of illegal assemblies, cou-

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[226] W. Rordorf argues that the prohibition of the *hetaeriae* affected only the "second gathering of Christians" and not "their meeting in the morning" *(Sunday,* pp. 203-204). From this he reaches the following farfetched conclusion: "Under pressure from the state, Christians had to give up their observance on Sunday evening, but because at that time they already had an observance on Sunday morning, they could transfer to the morning their eucharistic celebration which they could not have possibly renounced" (ibid., p. 252). The Sunday morning service would have arisen then, by the trans- position of the Lord's Supper from the evening to the morning, caused by Trajan's prohibition of the *hetaeriae*. If this were true, the Sunday morning service would derive from external political pressures rather than from genu- ine theological reasons. But the question is, Did the Roman prohibition of associations apply at that time to the whole empire to cause a unanimous shift everywhere of the celebration of the Lord's Supper from Sunday evening to the morning? (Note C. S. Mosna's criticism of Rordorf's view in *Storia della domenica,* pp. 101-105). More important still, did the prohibition apply exclusively to the evening meeting? This can hardly be construed from the statement: *"quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum,"* which is translated by A. Mannaresi, "from all these things they desisted after my edict" *(L'Impero Romano e il Cristianesimo,* 1914, p. 107). This being the conclusion of the confession *(adfirmabant)* regarding their gatherings, it obviously refers to both the earlier and later meetings. This is corroborated by another letter of Trajan to Pliny, where the Emperor categorically refuses to grant permission even for such a legitimate association as a firemen guild (Book X, 39). Because of the peculiar situation of Bithynia, as Marta Sordi points out, Trajan prohibits even those lawful associations "which were permitted and encouraged in the rest of the empire" *(Il Cristianesimo e Roma,* 1965, p. 143). It would seem only logical then that the prohibition in Bithynia extended to all forms of Christian meetings. If this conclusion is correct (which to us appears irresistible) Pliny's letter provides no indications regarding the origin of the Sunday morning service. In fact, we shall show that Pliny's "appointed *day—stato die"* can hardly refer to Sunday at all; see below pp. 98-99.

[227] *The lex iulia de collegiis* as well as the *Senatus consultus* of 64 B.C. prohibited the assemblies of the *hetaeriae* (associations of friends) but its application depended on prevailing circumstances; cf. Cicero, *De senectute* 13, 44f. For a discussion of the *hetaeriae,* see Marta Sordi (fn. 23), pp. 142-144.

[228] Tertullian, *Apology* 39, *ANF* III, p. 47; cf. also *Apology* 37 where Tertullian pleads for a legal recognition of Christians' assemblies saying: "Ought not Christians…to have a place among the law-tolerated societies, seeing they are not chargeable with any such crimes as are commonly dreaded from societies of the illicit class?" *(ANF* III, p. 45). The pagan Cecilius in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix repeatedly charges Christians with congregating and speaking secretly (cf. ch. 9 and 10, *ANF IV,* 177-178). Lucian of Samosata (ca. AD 165) in his satire describes Peregrinus, during his brief flirtation with Syrian Christianity, as a Christian *thiasarches* (i.e., leader of an association—On *the Death of Peregrinus,* LCL, p. 11). Celsus also (ca. AD 175) regards Christians' associations as "secret societies" (Origen *Contra Celsum* 1, 1).

pled with the accusation that these were Thyestean banquets,[229] could explain the reason for Paul's indefinite references to the time of the gatherings. To avoid giving rise to such suspicions, the Christians in Corinth may well have changed from week to week both the day and the place of their evening Lord's Supper meals.

Almost all authors maintain that the "appointed day—*stato die"* on which according to Pliny Christians gathered, is Sunday.[230] W. Rordorf, for instance, holds that "*Stato die* cannot easily be satisfactorily understood except as a reference to Sunday."[231] If this prevailing interpretation is correct, then Rordorf's conclusion that "Paul ordered the setting aside of money to take place on Sunday…because the Christians had already begun to fix their calendar by reference to the weekly Sunday,"[232] would deserve consideration. (Note however that about fifty years separate the two documents and during that period of time, as we shall notice, changes could readily have occurred).

But, does *"stato die"* necessarily refer to a regularly recurring Sunday meeting? The term *"status"* (a participle of *sisto)* which means "appointed, established, fixed, determined, regular" does not exclusively imply a fixed recurring day, when used in reference to time, but also one which is appointed or established. The gathering then could recur periodically but not necessarily on the self-same day.

The context suggests also several reasons why *"stato die"* could possibly be a day fixed from week to week. Christians were denounced, processed and condemned in the province. This is indicated by the fact that Pliny upon his arrival found the problem already existing. To avoid giving cause of suspicion it is possible that Christians every week changed the day and place of their gathering. Moreover, the governor by means of interrogation and torture had obtained detailed information regarding the time of the day and the manner in which the Christian assembly was conducted. But in regard to the actual day he found out only that they gathered on a "stated day."

If Christians in Bithynia were already gathering regularly on Sunday, they would have confessed this as they disclosed the rest of their worship activities. We shall notice that a few decades later (ca. AD 150) Justin Martyr explicitly and emphatically informs the Emperor that Christians gathered on "the day of the Sun,"[233] apparently as a means of creating a favorable impression. Let us note also that Pliny was cautiously appealing to the Emperor for a more humane application of the anti-Christian law which by condemning Christians indiscriminately was causing their killing without regard to their age, sex or attitude.[234] If Pliny had found that they gathered on the day of the Sun, would he not presumably have mentioned this fact in order to present the Christian worship in a more favorable light? We shall later show that the day of the Sun enjoyed in the Roman world a certain prestige and veneration.

In the light of this excursus we conclude that the "appointed day" of Pliny is not necessarily the self-same day of the week, unless it was the Sabbath, which possibly Pliny prefers not to mention to avoid placing Christians in a worse light by associating them with the Jews. The latter revolted during Trajan's time in Libya, Cyrene, Egypt, Cyprus and Mesopotania. Extensive massacres took place before these revolts were crushed.[235] To report to Trajan that the Christians gathered weekly on the day of

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[229] On the accusation pagans levelled at the Christians see Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 26, 7; Athenagoras, *Supplicatio* 3; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolicum* 1, 3,4; Tertullian, *Apology* 2; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 8.

[230] Cf. L. C. Mohlberg, "Carmen Christo quasi Deo," *Rivista di Archeologia cristiana* 14 (1937): 95; C. S. Mosna, *Storia della dornenica,* p. 98; A. Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwblf Apostel,* 1884, p. 53; A. A. McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year,* 1953, p. 18.

[231] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 202-203.

[232] Ibid., p. 195.

[233] Justin Martyr, *Apology* 67; For text and discussion see pp. 230f.

[234] For a profound analysis of Pliny's letter see Vincenzo Monachino, *Le Persecuzioni e la polemica pagano-cristiana,* 1974, pp. 43-50: "the letter is indeed a protest made with prudence and grace against the existing juridical norm" (ibid., p. 50).

[235] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 69; see the well documented account by A. Fuks, "The Jewish Revolt of 115-17,"

Saturn like the Jews would have encouraged the Emperor to take harsher measures, the very thing Pliny's letter wished to discourage. Any attempt therefore to draw support for Paul's first-day collection plan from Pliny's testimony appears unwarranted.

Returning now to our passage, the question still to be considered is, why did Paul propose a first-day deposit plan? The Apostle clearly states the purpose of his advice, "so that contributions need not be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2). The plan then is proposed not to enhance Sunday worship by the offering of gifts, but to ensure a substantial and efficient collection upon his arrival. Four characteristics can be identified in the plan. The offering was to be laid aside,

1. *periodically* ("on the first day of every week"—v. 2),

2. *personally* ("each of you"—v. 2),

3. *privately* ("by himself in store"—v. 2) and

4. *proportionately* ("as he may prosper"—v. 2).

To the same community on another occasion Paul thought it necessary to send brethren to "arrange in advance for the gift…promised, so that it may be ready not as an exaction but as a willing gift" (2 Cor. 9:5). The Apostle was desirous to avoid embarassment both to the givers and to the collectors when finding that they "were not ready" (2 Cor. 9:4) for the offering. To avoid such problems in this instance he recommends both a time—the first day of the week—and a place—one's home.[236]

Paul's mention of the first day could be motivated more by practical than theological reasons. To wait until the end of the week or of the month to set aside one's contributions or savings is contrary to sound budgetary practices, since by then one finds himself to be with empty pockets and empty hands. On the other hand, if on the first day of the week, before planning any expenditures, one sets aside what he plans to give, the remaining funds will be so distributed as to meet all the basic necessities. While it is difficult at present to determine what economic significance, if any, was attached to Sunday in the pagan world, it is a known fact that no financial computations or transactions were done by the Jews on the Sabbath.[237] Since the Jewish custom of Sabbath-keeping influenced even many Greeks and Romans to some extent,[238] and since the Sabbath was indeed the last day of the week (as indicated by the fact that Sunday was then known as "the first day of the Sabbath [i.e. week—*mia ton sabbaton*]," it appears reasonable that Paul should recommend the Christians to plan on the very first day of the week—that is, right after the Sabbath—for the special fund-raising contribution, before other priorities might diminish their resources. The text therefore proposes a valuable weekly plan to ensure a substantial and orderly contribution on behalf of the poor brethren of Jerusalem, but to extract more meaning from the text would distort it.

Journal of Roman Studies 51 (1861): 98-104.

[236] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 194, wisely points out that since the money was not for immediate distribution "it was psychologically better to leave the money with the individual contributor…for this particular collection it was better that the church should not meet (as for other collections or as hitherto)."

[237] A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East,* 1927, p. 309, speculates that in the Roman world the first day of the week was perhaps a payday for many members, but he admits that there are no testimonies to support this conjecture. On the prohibition of contributions on the Sabbath, see p. 56, note 210.

[238] Philo in Alexandria boasts that while "every country and nation and state show aversion to foreign institutions," this is not the case with the Jewish Sabbath. Referring to "the whole inhabited world," he then raises a hyperbolical question: "Who has not shown this high respect for the sacred Seventh Day by giving rest and relaxation from labor to himself and his neighbors, free-man and slave alike, and beyond these to his beasts?" *(Vita Mosis* 2, 20); similarly Josephus in Rome affirms: "There is not any city of the Grecians, nor of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the Seventh Day has not come" *(Against Apion* 2, 39); Seneca, referring to the Jews, also laments: "Meanwhile, the customs of this accursed nation have gained such an influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors" (cited by Augustine, *City of God,* 6, 11); note how Tertullian chides the Romans for their adoption of the Jewish Sabbath *(Ad Nationes* 1, 13).

Acts 20:7-12

The second scripture crucial for our investigation is a firsthand report by Luke ("we-passage"—Acts 20:4-15) of a gathering at Troas which occurred on the first day of the week. The writer, who rejoined Paul's traveling party at Philippi (Acts 20:6), reports now in the first person plural and with considerable detail the meeting which occurred at Troas on the eve of Paul's departure. He writes:

> [7]'On the first day of the week (*mia ton sabbaton*) when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow (*te epaurion*); and he prolonged his speech until midnight.
>
> [8]There were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered. [9]And a young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window. He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer; and being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.
>
> [10]But Paul went down and bent over him, and embracing him said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."
>
> [11]And when Paul had gone up and broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.
>
> [12]And they took the lad away alive, and were not a little comforted.'

Fundamental importance is attributed to this passage inasmuch as it contains the only explicit New Testament reference to a Christian gathering conducted "on the first day of the week…to break bread" (Acts 20:7). F. F. Bruce, for instance, affirms that this statement "is the earliest unambiguous evidence we have for the Christian practice of gathering together for worship on that day."[239] P. K. Jewett similarly declares that "here is the earliest clear witness to Christian assembly for purposes of worship on the first day of the week."[240] Statements like these which view Acts 20:7 as the first "unmistakable evidence of the observance of Sunday" could be multiplied.[241]

These categorical conclusions rest mostly on the assumption that verse 7a represents "a fixed formula" which describes the habitual *time* ("On the first day of the week") and the *nature* ("to break bread") of the primitive Christian worship.[242] Since, however, the meeting occurred in the evening and "the breaking of the bread" took place after midnight (vv. 7, 11) and Paul left the believers at dawn, several questions need to be considered before making any conclusive statement. Was the time and nature of the Troas gathering *ordinary* or *extraordinary,* occasioned perhaps by the departure of the Apostle? Since it was an evening meeting, does the expression "first day of the week—*mia ton sabbaton*" indicate Saturday night or Sunday night?

In other words, does Luke reckon his days evening to evening according to Jewish usage, or midnight to midnight by Roman custom? (According to the former, the evening before Sunday was considered as the evening of the first day, and according to the latter the evening following Sunday was the evening of the first day.) Was the phrase "to break bread" already used as a fixed formula to designate

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[239] F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts,* 1954, pp. 407-408.

[240] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 61.

[241] Cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship,* 1953, pp. 10f., 88f.; R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 1964, p. 377: "Here there is unmistakable evidence of the observance of Sunday or *the first day of the week";* J. A. Alexander, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* 1956, p. 689: "The observance of the first day of the week, as that of our Lord's resurrection, had already become customary"; F. J. Foakes-Jackson (p. 55, note 206), p. 187; Charles W. Carter, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 1963, pp. 305-306; R. J. Knowling, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 1942, p. 424: "The statement here proves that this day had been marked out by the Christian Church as a special day for public worship and for 'the breaking of bread.'"

[242] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 199; P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* pp. 60-61.

exclusively the eucharistic celebration? Did "the breaking of bread" occur only on the first day of the week? In the light of the context, was the "breaking of bread" performed by Paul at Troas part of the habitual Sunday celebration of the Lord's Supper? Or was it perhaps a fellowship supper (*agape*) organized to bid farewell to Paul? Or was it a combination of both? In an attempt to answer these fundamental questions several considerations deserve attention.

A good number of scholars hold that the meeting occurred on Sunday night because Luke, who had mingled with the Gentiles and was writing for them, used the Roman computation which reckoned the day from midnight to midnight.[243] On such reckoning, as we noted above, an evening meeting on the first day of the week could only be on Sunday night. The passages which supposedly support the Roman system are found in Acts 4:3; 20:7; 23:31-32. In each instance the term "morrow—*te epaurion* or *te aurion"* is mentioned in the context of an evening occurrence. The reasoning is that since Luke speaks of the morrow as being a new day in the evening, when according to Jewish reckoning the new day had already begun, this means that he uses not the Jewish but the Roman time reckoning. (According to the latter the new day starts after midnight.)

The weakness of the argument lies in the fact that the expression "*te epaurion* or *te aurion"* does not exclusively mean "on the following day" but can be equally translated "on the next morning." Both alternatives are legitimate translations of the Greek. In fact the word "*aurion*" is derived from "*eos*" which means "dawn." Therefore, the word per se, as pointed out by Pirot-Clamer, "designates the following morning without prejudging whether or not this morning belongs to a new day."[244] In fact the word "day—*hemera"* must be either added to or implied in "morrow—*te epaurion*," to translate it "on the following day." All of this goes to show that the evidences for a Roman time reckoning are weak indeed.

However, even granting that Luke employed the Roman computation, this would mean that the believers came together on Sunday evening and consequently the "breaking of bread" (allegedly the essential part of the Sunday worship) which took place after midnight, would have occurred during Monday's time limit. In such a case the time of the celebration of the Lord's Supper would provide no direct support for Sundaykeeping. R.C.H. Lenski acknowledges this dilemma when he says, "It is true that this is the first Christian service held on a Sunday, that is recorded in Acts; yet little can be proven from it since it was a special service in every way; and Paul and his company left early Monday morning…If this had been a Sunday morning service, it would be of more help to us in establishing Sunday as the regular day of worship in the apostolic congregation."[245]

This author endeavors to solve the problem by claiming gratuitously that "indeed a morning service was held at Troas on this Sunday although no mention of it is made by Luke. We also think that Paul purposely started his journey on Monday."[246] This effort to accommodate the story in order to build a case for Sunday worship is ingenious indeed, but unfortunately it is based on what the passage does not say.

Why should Luke have neglected to mention the earlier morning meeting, when he as an eyewitness provides so many details of the event? Why should the "breaking of the bread" have been postponed until after midnight if the believers had met earlier in the morning for their Sunday worship? Moreover, it is hard to believe that Paul, out of respect for Sunday, postponed his departure until Monday morning when at Philippi he "sailed after the days of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 20:6) and arrived in

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[243] F. F. Bruce (fn. 36), p. 408; Theodor Zahn, *Die Apostlelgeschichte des Lukas;* 1927, p. 706; *Geschichte des Sonntags,* 1878, p. 3; H. J. Cadbury, and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity,* 1933, IV, p. 255; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 201-202; G. Ricchiotti, *Gli Atti degli Apostoli,* 1952, p.336; C. Marcora, "La vigilia nella liturgia," *Archivio Ambrosiano* 6 (1954): 24-29; J. Nedbal (fn. 12), p. 156; H. Dumaine, *DACL* IV, col. 887.

[244] Pirot-Clamer, *Actes des Ap6tres,* 1949, p. 276. J. Morgenstern, "The Reckoning of the Day in the Gospels and in Acts," *Crozer Quarterly* 31 (1949): 232-240, argues that both systems are used in the New Testament.

[245] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles,* 1944, p. 825.

[246] Loc. cit.

Troas presumably on Sunday since he stayed there "for seven days" (Acts 20:6) prior to his departure on the following first day.[247]

To argue for Luke's use of the Roman day-reckoning and thus place the Troas meeting on a Sunday night, undermines the very efforts aimed at gaining support from the passage for a regular Sunday observance. C.S. Mosna states well this reason when he asserts: "Either one holds that the Eucharist was celebrated within the limits of Sunday's time, and therefore in the night between Saturday and Sunday, or the specification of the day by Luke has no value and the text has nothing to say as far as Sunday worship is concerned."[248]

We have reasons to believe that Luke uses consistently in his narrative the Jewish time reckoning. According to such a system, as we mentioned earlier, the first day began on Saturday evening at sunset, the night part of Sunday preceding the day part. The evening of the first day on which the meeting occurred would then correspond to our Saturday night.[249]

This view is supported by the fact that Luke, though a Gentile, uses the Jewish system in his Gospel when reporting the burial of Christ: "It was the day of preparation [i.e. Friday], and the Sabbath was beginning" (Luke 23:54). In Acts also he repeatedly shows his respect for the Jewish calendar and religious customs. He mentions, for instance, that Herod arrested Peter "during the days of Unleavened Bread" and that he intended "after the Passover to bring him out to the people" (12:3-4). He reports that he himself left Philippi with Paul on the morrow of the complete rest which marked the last day of the Unleavened Bread (20:6; cf. Luke 22:1, 7).

He does not hesitate on repeated occasions to show how Paul respected Jewish customs (Acts 16:1-3; 18:18; 20:16; 21:24). He says, for instance, that Paul "was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost" (20:16). Later he reports how in the city, the Apostle under pressure purified himself, and "went into the Temple to give notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled" (21:26). To these could be added Luke's frequent references to the Sabbath meetings which Paul attended with both "Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4; cf. 17:2, 16:13; 15:21; 13:14, 42, 44). In the light of these indications it would appear that Luke respected the Jewish liturgical calendar and used it quite consistently when reckoning time.

According to such a system, as we noted earlier, the 'first-day' meeting at Troas occurred on Saturday night. It is suggested by some that this was a convenient time for a Christian gathering after the close of the Sabbath.[250] The restraints of the Sabbath did no longer apply and both Jewish (as Paul and Timothy) and Gentile Christians could freely engage in social and spiritual activities. The weakness of this observation is that it implies that Christians observed the Sabbath according to restrictive rabbinical conceptions. Such a view hardly harmonizes with the positive and spiritual understanding of the Sabbath we find in the Gospels.

If the gathering at Troas occurred during the night of Saturday-Sunday it is hardly likely that it was a formal and regular Sunday service. Paul would have observed with the believers only the night of Sunday and traveled during the day time. This, as we know, was not allowed on the Sabbath and

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[247] Pierre Grelot (p. 56, note 209), p. 34; R. B. Rackham (p. 62, note 241), p. 376.

[248] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 15; C. W. Dugmore, "Lord's Day and Easter," *Neotestamentica et Patristica in honorem sexagenarn,* Oscar *Cullmann,* 1962, p. 275: "If the gathering at Troas occurred during the night of Sunday-Monday it is less likely to have been a formal Eucharist."

[249] H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur," *New Testament Essays. Studies in Memory of T. M. Manson,* 1958, pp. 210-217. E. Jacquier, *Les Actes des Apotres,* 19762, p. 598; C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament,* 1961, p. 16; J. Dupont, *Les Actes des Apotres,* n.d., p. 171; P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Calendar,* 1952, p. 38: "We must take the night to be Saturday night which was regarded as the beginning of Sunday"; cf. also his *The Early Christian Church,* 1957, p. 153; C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 14; H. Leclercq, *DACL* XIII, col. 1523; F. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 89f.; J. Danielou, Review of W. Rordorf, *Sunday* in *Recherches de science religieuse* 52 (1964): 171f.; *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (1915), s.v. "Lord's Day," by J. J. Clemens; R. B. Rackham (p. 62, note 241), p. 377.

[250] This view is well expressed by Pierre Grelot (p. 56, note 209), pp. 33-34; cf. H. Riesenfeld (p. 64, note 249).

would not have set the best example of Sunday-keeping either. The passage seems to suggest, as noted by F. J. Foakes-Jackson, that "Paul and his friends could not as good Jews, start on a journey on a Sabbath; they did so as soon after it as was possible, v. 12. at *dawn* on the 'first day'—the Sabbath having ended at sunset."[251]

Bearing in mind also that Paul "as was his custom" for three weeks at Thessalonica (Acts 17:2-3), for eighteen months at Corinth (Acts 18:4, 11), and for shorter periods in other places, expounded the Scriptures on the Sabbath to Jews and to Greeks, both in the synagogue and in the open air (Acts 16:13; 13:44, 42, 14), it would seem reasonable to suppose that at Troas also he met on the Sabbath with the believers. It is hard to believe that Paul spent seven days at Troas without meeting with the believers until the eve of his departure. The first-day evening meeting must then be regarded as the final farewell gathering organized "to break bread" with Paul.

It could be argued that whether Luke used Jewish or Roman time reckoning is of relatively little importance to the question of Sunday observance, since he clearly says that the meeting took place on "the first day of the week…to break bread." Whether it was the evening before Sunday (Jewish method) or the evening following Sunday (Roman method), it was still the first day on which the meeting occurred. This fact is undisputable. However, it is to be observed that the "breaking of bread" took place after midnight (Acts 20:7, 11). Such an unusual time would suggest more an *extraordinary* occasion than a habitual custom. If the purpose of the gathering was to celebrate the Lord's Supper, as various scholars hold, why then did Paul postpone the rite until after midnight when many, like Eutychus, were dozing, and then resume talking until dawn? We would think that its logical time, if indeed that was the purpose for the meeting, would have been either during the opening session or just prior to Paul's departure, as a farewell expression of unity in Christ.

The fact that the "breaking of bread" occurred, on the contrary, within a prolonged discourse of several hours, when the believers were hardly awake, strongly suggests that its function was more social than cultic. In fact, extremely few words are employed to describe what allegedly was to have been the core of the meeting. Moreover no direct indications are given of any communal participation: "And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while… and so departed" (v. 11). The verbs used are *all* in the *singular*. It appears that it is primarily Paul, the guest of honor, who talks, breaks bread, eats, and talks again until departure, while the believers, perhaps too many to be cared for, look on, satisfied to be nourished spiritually. It is hard to escape the conclusion, as expressed by the historian Augustus Neander, that "the impending departure of the apostle, may have united the little Church in a brotherly parting-meal, on the occasion of which the apostle delivered his last address, although there was no particular celebration of a Sunday in the case."[252]

The technical expression "to break bread—*klasai arton*" deserves closer attention. What does it actually mean in the context of the passage? As Henry J. Cadbury and Kirsopp Lake ask, "with the meaning of 'having supper,' or of celebrating the Eucharist?"[253] They hold that "the former seems more probable." J. Behm in his specialized article explains that "the breaking of bread is simply a customary and necessary part of the preparation for eating together. It initiates the sharing of the main course in every meal…It is the description of a common meal in terms of the opening action, the breaking of bread (i.e. the blessing). Hence the phrase is used for the ordinary table fellowship of members of the first community each day in their homes (Acts 2:42, 46) and also for the common meals of the Gentile Christian communities (Acts 20:7, cf. 1 Cor. 10:16)."[254]

The author notes however that later the expression "breaking of bread" became the technical designation for the Lord's Supper.[255] While it must be admitted that such a usage occurs in the post-apostolic

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[251] F. J. Foakes-Jackson (p. 62, note 241), p. 187.

[252] Augustus Neander, *The History of the Christian Religion and Church,* 1831, I, p. 337.

[253] Henry J. Cadbury and Kirsopp Lake (p. 63, note 243), pp. 255-256.

[254] J. Behm, "*klao*," *TDNT* III, pp. 728-729.

literature, this hardly seems to be its exclusive meaning or usage in the New Testament. In fact the verb "to break—*klao*" followed by the noun "bread—*artos*" occurs fifteen times in the New Testament:[256]

1. Nine times it refers to Christ's act of breaking bread,
   a. when feeding the multitude,
   b. when partaking of the Last Supper and
   c. when eating with His disciples after His resurrection,[257]
2. twice it describes Paul's commencing and partaking of a meal,[258]
3. twice it describes the actual breaking of the bread of the Lord's Supper,[259]
4. and twice it is used as a general reference to the disciples' or believers' "breaking bread" together.[260]

It should be noticed that in none of these instances is the Lord's Supper explicitly or technically designated as "the breaking of bread." An attempt could be made to see a reference to the Lord's Supper in the two general references of Acts 2:46 and 20:7. However, as far as Acts 2:46 is concerned, the phrase "breaking bread in their homes" obviously refers to the daily table-fellowship of the earliest Christians, when, as the text says, "day by day…they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people (vv. 46-47.)[261]

Such daily table-fellowship, though it may have included the celebrations of the Lord's Supper, can hardly be regarded as exclusive liturgical celebrations of the Lord's Supper. The equivalent statement found in Acts 20:7, "we were gathered together to break bread," similarly need mean no more than "we were gathered to eat together." In fact, as C. W. Dugmore acutely observes, "there is no mention of a cup, nor even of any prayers or chants: Paul's discourse does not follow the reading of Scripture lection."[262] We may add also, as noted above, that Paul alone broke bread and ate. No indication is given that he ever blessed the bread or the wine or that he distributed it to the believers.

Furthermore, the breaking of bread was followed by a meal "having eaten—*geusamenos*" (v. 11). The same verb is used by Luke in three other instances with the explicit meaning of satisfying hunger (Acts 10:10; 23:14, Luke 14:24). Undoubtedly Paul was hungry after his prolonged speech and needed some food before he could continue his exhortation and start his journey. However, if Paul partook of the Lord's Supper together with a regular meal, he would have acted contrary to his recent instruction to the Corinthians to whom he strongly recommended satisfying their hunger by eating at home before gathering to celebrate the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:2, 22, 34).

The conjecture that at Troas Paul reversed the usual order (i.e. meal followed by Lord's Supper) by partaking of the Lord's supper before the fellowship meal, in order to correct the prevailing disorders (1 Cor. 11:18, 22), rests on a slim foundation.[263] First, because the Apostle clearly admonishes to satis-

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[255] Ibid., p. 730; cf. *Didache* 14, 1; Ignatius, *Ephesians* 20, 2; *Acts of Peter* 10; *Clemen tine Homilies* 14, 1; *Acts of John* 106, 109; *Acts of Thomas,* 27, 29, 50, 121, 133, 158.

[256] Cf. Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible,* 22nd Edition, s.v. "to break" and "breaking."

[257] Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 8:6,19; 14:22; Luke 22:19; 24:30; 24:35.

[258] Acts 20:11; 27:35.

[259] I Cor. 10:16; 11:24.

[260] Acts 2:46; 20:7.

[261] J. Behm (p. 65, note 254), p. 731: "Acts 2:42, 46, refers to the daily fellowship of the first Christians in Jerusalem and has nothing to do with liturgical celebration of the Lord's Supper."

[262] C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), p. 274.

[263] The hypothesis is advanced by R. B. Rackham (p. 62, note 241), p. 378: "S. Paul had heard at Ephesus of the disorders which occurred at the Eucharist in Corinth, which arose from its coming after the Agape. He wrote

fy hunger at home and not during the Lord's Supper celebration (1 Cor. 11:27, 34). Postponing the meal until immediately after the rite could hardly have cured the abuses and enhanced the celebration. Secondly, because the two verbs "had broken bread and eaten" (v. 11) are not necessarily describing two distinct rites, but rather the same one. Bearing in mind that there is no mention of eating before midnight, the breaking of bread appears to be the customary preparation for eating together. This suggests then that Paul participated in a farewell fellowship supper (rich indeed with religious overtones) but not strictly in what he himself designates as "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor.11:20).

The New Testament does not offer any indications regarding a fixed day for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Acts 2:42-46, for instance, describes the table-fellowship gatherings of the Jerusalem believers, in which the "breaking of bread" took place "daily—*kath'hemera*."[264] Similarly we noticed that Paul, while he recommends to the Corinthian believers a specific day on which to privately set aside their offerings, concerning the celebration of the Lord's Supper he *repeatedly* says in the same epistle and to the same people, "when you come together" (1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33, 34), implying *indeterminate* time and days. The actual mention of the "first day of the week" could well have been motivated, not by the custom of gathering on such a day but, as A. Wiokenhauser observes, "by the accident which happened on that occasion.[265]

It should be noted that the Eutychus' incident is the main episode recorded of Paul's seven-day stay at Troas and occupies by far the greater part of the narrative (vv. 9, 10, 12). By comparison the description of the "breaking of bread" is very brief, limited exclusively to one verb, "had broken bread" (v. 11). It is possible therefore that the resurrection of Eutychus occurring the very day the community had gathered for a parting-meal in honor of Paul, motivated Luke to specify the very day on which the whole thing happened. Such an unusual occurrence undoubtedly left a lasting impression on the believers.

Another reason for Luke's reporting that the breaking of bread occurred on the first day of the week could possibly be his desire to provide the reader with sufficient chronological references, for following more readily the itinerary of Paul's trip. In chapters 20 and 21 Luke writes as an eyewitness in the first person plural ("we-section"—20:4-15; 21:1-18) and gives no less than thirteen time references to report the various stages of Paul's journey.[266] It is probable therefore that the mention of the gathering on the first day of the week, rather than being a notice of habitual Sunday-keeping, is one of a whole series of chronological notes with which Luke fills the narrative of this voyage.

In the light of these considerations the probative value of Acts 20:7-12 for regular Sunday-keeping seems rather insignificant. The occasion, the time and manner in which the meeting was conducted are all indicative of a *special* gathering and not of a regular Sunday worship custom. The simplest way to explain the passage is that Luke mentions the day of the meeting not because it was Sunday, but

1. because Paul was "ready to depart" (20:7),
2. because of the extraordinary experience and miracle of Eutychus, and
3. because it provides an additional significant chonological reference to describe the unfolding of Paul's journey.

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that he would set these matters in order when he came; and one of his 'orders' may have been the transposition of the Eucharist and Agape."

[264] For a discussion of Rordorf's interpretation of this passage see Chapter III, p. 76, note 7.

[265] A. Wickenhauser, *Atti degli Apostoli,* 1968, p. 300; R. B. Rackham (p. 62, note 241), p. 376: "The service of that Sunday was stamped upon S. Luke's memory by an incident so remarkable that he proceeds to relate it in detail."

[266] Cf. Acts 20:3, 6-7, 15-16; 21:1, 4-5, 7-8, 10, 15, 18.

Revelation 1:10

The third crucial New Testament passage widely used to defend the apostolic origin of Sunday observance is found in the book of Revelation. John, exiled on the island of Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9), writes: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day—*en te kuriake hemera*" (Rev. 1:10). The importance of this text derives from the fact that, as claimed by R. H. Charles, "this is the first place in Christian literature where *the Lord's day* is mentioned."[267] It is to be observed that the Seer does not use the expression "day of the Lord—*hemera tou kuriou*" which is uniformly found in the Septuagint and the New Testament to translate the Old Testament *"yom YHWH,"* but a different phrase, "Lord's day—*kuriake hemera*." What is the meaning of this new formula?

The problem is to establish in the light of this text and of its context, whether John was "caught away by the power of the Spirit into an ecstasy"[268] on a Sunday "at a time when," as held by Oscar Cullmann, "the Christian community was gathered together"[269] to worship, or whether the expression carries a different meaning. The former represents indeed the prevailing interpretation.[270] Wilfrid Stott, to cite one, in a recent article concludes that "Revelation 1:10 must be taken as the first example of the Christian name for the first day of the week, the day of Christian worship."[271] However, at least two other possible interpretations of the phrase "Lord's day" have been recognized and defended by other scholars.

Recently some have suggested that the words refer not to the ordinary Sunday but to Easter-Sunday and that it was at the time of this annual celebration of the resurrection that John found himself rapt in the Spirit.[272] A third interpretation is that the words are the equivalent of "the day of the Lord" of the Old Testament, understood as the eschatological day of Christ's *parousia* and judgment.[273] In this case the Seer finds himself transported by the Spirit into the circumstances of that glorious day and from that vantage point he is shown by prophetic symbols the events preceding and following Christ's com-

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[267] R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John, ICC,* 1920, p. 23. For later testimonies to the use of "Lord's day" for Sunday, see Chapter II, p. 17, note 1.

[268] This translation is by Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John,* 1967, p. 435.

[269] O. Cullmann (p. 62, note 241), p. 7*;* cf. Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John,* 1940, p. 11, who maintains that "in mentioning the time of his vision, *the Lord's day,* John is once again quietly emphasizing a common participation in the Christian life."

[270] Cf. B. B. Allo, *L'Apocalypse,* 1933, p. 11: "The 'Lord's day' is not the great 'Day of Yahweh' where the Prophet found himself transported in spirit…but rather Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord"; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John,* 1906, p. 13; Isbon T. Beckwith (p. 68, note 268), p. 435; B. Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes,* 1953, p. 15; T. F. Glasson, *The Revelation of John,* 1965, p. 21; B. A. Dowell, *The Meaning of the Book of Revelation,* 1951, p. 31; J. Bonsirven, *L'Apocalypse,* 1951, p. 95; D. Mollat, "La liturgia nell'Apocalisse," *Studi Biblici Pastorali* 2 (1967): 136-146.

[271] W. Stott, "A Note on the Word *KYRIAKIT* in Rev. 1:10," *NTS* 13 (1967): 75.

[272] A. Strobel, "Die Passab-Erwartung in Lk 17:20," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 49 (1958): 185, writes that the expression "Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10 "certainly does not merely mean any ordinary Sunday…but 16 Nisan;" cf. also C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), p. 279; J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars,* 1961, pp. 169f; and from a different perspective K. A. Strand, "Another Look at the Lord's Day in the Early Church and Rev. 1:10," *NTS* 13 (1967): 174-181.

[273] Fenton J. A. Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John,* 1908, p. 15; A. Deissmann, "Lord's Day," *Encyclopedia Biblica,* III, p. 2815; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 1885, II, p. 129; E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse,* 1935, pp. 9-14; Philip Carrington, *The Meaning of the Revelation,* 1931, pp. 77-78; William Milligan, *The Book of Revelation,* 1940, p. 13; Louis Talbot, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,* 1960, pp. 19-20; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,* 1966, p. 42; *Clark's Foreign Theological Library,* 1851, XXII, p. 89; Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ,* 1948, p. 36; cf. also the Commentaries of Wetstein, Ziillig, Maitland and Todd on the Apocalypse, *in loc*. Others incorporate the eschatological motif in the Sunday worship, cf. A. Feuillet, *L'Apocalypse,* 1962, p. 71; O. Cullmann (fn 9 66), pp. 12-15; W. Stott (p. 68, note 271), p. 74.

ing. A brief survey of the evidences marshaled in support of each of these three interpretations is necessary before drawing any conclusive statement on the meaning of the word.

Sunday

The equation of Sunday with the expression "Lord's day" is based not on internal evidences of the book of Revelation or of the rest of the New Testament, but basically on three second-century patristic testimonies, namely, *Didache* 14:1, Ignatius' *Epistle to the Magnesians* 9:1, and *The Gospel of Peter* 35; 50. Of the three, however, only in the *Gospel of Peter* is Sunday unmistakably designated by the technical term "Lord's—*kuriake*" In two different verses it reads: "Now in the night in which the Lord's day (*He kuriake*) dawned…there rang out a loud voice in heaven" (v. 35); "Early in the morning of the Lord's day (*tes kuriakes*) Mary Magdalene…came to the sepulchre" (v. 50-51). In this apocryphal Gospel, dated in the second half of the second century,[274] the use of the abbreviated form "Lord's" without the noun "day—*hemera*" implies, as L. Vaganay rightly observes, *"une façon courante,"*[275] that is, a common usage of the term.

In *Didache* 14:1 and in *The Epistle to the Magnesians* 9:1, as we had occasion to show elsewhere,[276]

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[274] Cf. Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1969, I, p. 180: "at the latest the second half of the second century, since Serapion dates this gospel back about a generation at least"; cf. also P. Gardner-Smith, "The Date of the Gospel of Peter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1976): 401f.; Johannes Quasten, *Patrobogia,* 1967, I, p. 108.

[275] L. Vaganay, *L'Évangile de Pierre,* 1930, p. 292.

[276] These crucial passages are analyzed in my Italian dissertation, *Un Esame dei testi biblici e patristici dei primi quattro secoli allo scopo d'accertare it tempo e le cause del sorgere della domenica come Giorno del Signore,* Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1974, pp. 99-120; cf. also the fifth chapter of the dissertation, published under the title, *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday,* 1975, pp. 90-93. The passage of Ignatius is also examined, see pp. 213-217. The crucial passage of *Didache* 14:1 translated literally reads: "On (or according to) the Lord's of the Lord (*kata kuriaken de kurios*) come together, break bread and hold Eucharist, after confessing your transgressions that your offering may be pure." The expression "Lord's of the Lord" is enigmatic and three basic solutions have been proposed to clarify its meaning:

(1) J. B. Audet replaces the "Lord's—*kuriaken*" by the word "day—*hemeran*" translating the passage: "On the day of the Lord come together…*(La Didache, Instruction des Apôtres,* 1958, p. 460);

(2) C. W. Dugmore argues that "since every Sunday is the Lord's Day, the Sunday of the Lord can only mean the Sunday on which he rose from the dead, i. e., Easter-Sunday" (fn. 45, p. 276);

(3) Jean Baptiste Thibaut shows persuasively that "Lord's—*kuriaken*" is used as an adjective and not as a substantive and that the issue is not the time but the manner of the celebration of the Lord's Supper: "If it was a question of time, in that case the genius of the Greek language would have simply required the use of the dative: *te kuriake*. The preposition *kata* marks here a relation of conformity. Consequently the word which is implied and to which the qualifying *kuriaken* applies, is not *hemeran* (day) but another term which can be easily supplied, namely the word *didaken* (doctrine) present in the title of the work…The initial phrase of chapter 14…should be translated literally, 'according to the sovereign doctrine of the Lord' *(La Liturgie Romaine,* 1924, pp. 33-34).

We subscribe to Thibaut's interpretations for the following additional reasons:

(1) Chapter 14 deals not with the question of time but with the prerequisites to accede to the Eucharist, namely confession of sin (14:1) and reconciliation with fellow beings (14:2);

(2) the quotation from Mal. 1:10 again emphasizes not the specific time ("In every place and time"), but the manner of the sacrifice ("offer me a pure sacrifice"—14 :3);

(3) the *Didache* contains numerous exhortations to act *"according to—kata"* the commandment or doctrine (1:5; 2:1; 4:13; 6:1; 11; 13:6);

(4) in view of the fact that the Didachist wishes to justify his instruction with the authority of the Lord, *kata* with the accusative establishes a relation of conformity and not of time;

(5) *Didache* 14:1 is linked by the conjunction "and—*de*" to the previous chapter, which closes with the exhortation to "give according to the commandment" (13 :7). The repetition of "according to—*kata*" could

the adjective "Lord's—*kuriake*" does not seem to qualify or imply the noun "day—*hemera*." In the first instance it expresses the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, namely "according to the Lord's doctrine or commandment." In the latter passage Ignatius is not contrasting days as such, but rather ways of life. The immediate reference of the Old Testament prophets and the absence of the substantive "day—*hemera*" justifies "Lord's life" as a more plausible translation than "Lord's day."[277] There are, however, beginning with the latter part of the second century, irrefutable examples where the expression "Lord's day" or simply "Lord's" is used as a current designation for Sunday.[278]

The crux of the problem is, was Sunday already designated "Lord's day" by the end of the first century when Revelation was written, or did such a name arise at a slightly later period? That the adjective "*kuriakos*" was then known is attested by the monumental and papyri inscriptions of the imperial period where it means "imperial." "Lord—*kurios*" was used for the Emperor, the noun as a title for him and the adjective for that which pertained to him.[279]

The use of the two terms, as pointed out by A. Deissmann, shows a marked "parallelism between the language of Christianity and the official vocabulary of Imperial law."[280] It should be noted, however, that Christians did not transfer such titles to Christ solely as a reaction to the imperial cult, since they were fully familiar with the name "Lord—*Kurios*" through their Greek Old Testament (LXX) where it is used constantly as the most common name of God.

No indications have been found of the existence of an imperial "Lord's day" in the pagan environment that could serve as an exact analogy for that of the Christians. Nevertheless it has been frequently suggested that Christians devised the designation "Lord's day" in conscious protest to the "Emperor's day—*Sebaste hemera*," which apparently occurred monthly or perhaps even weekly.[281]

The use of the "Emperor's day" is confirmed for Asia Minor, and this is significant since it is there that the expression "Lord's day" appears first to have been used. R. H. Charles explains this view, saying, "Just as the first day of each month, or a certain day of each week, was called "Emperor's Day," so it would be natural for Christians to name the *first day* of each week, associated as it was with the Lord's resurrection and the custom of Christians to meet together for worship on it, as "Lord's Day."[282]

While it is plausible to assume that the worshiping of the Emperor as "Lord—*kurios*" induced Christians to apply the term exclusively to Christ, it is hard to see a connection between the "Emperor's day" and the Christian's "Lord's day." First because, as noted by G. Thieme, it cannot be proven "that the Emperor's day is equivalent with the beginning of the month."[283] Even if this could be established, the time cycle would still be different. Secondly, because the two adjectives "Imperial—*sebastos"* and "Lord's— *kuriakos*" are radically different. As pointedly observed by W. Rordorf, if a nexus between the two existed "one would at least have expected that first of all the title *sebastos,* by conscious contrast, would also have been applied to Jesus."[284]

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have caused the omission of the word "commandment" or "doctrine;"

(6) the Didachist exhorts to "be frequently gathered together" (16:2). This hardly suggests exclusive Sunday gatherings.

[277] See Chapter VII, pp. 214-216.

[278] Examples are given in Chapter II, p. 17, note 1.

[279] Cf. Theodore Racine Torkelson, *An Investigation into the Usage and Significance of the Greek Adjective KYRIAKOS During the First Four Centuries of the Christian Era,* thesis 1948, pp. 29f.; A. Deissmann (p. 61, note 237), p. 358; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday,* 1933, p. 122.

[280] A. Deissmann (p. 61, note 237), p. 357.

[281] A. Deissmann (p. 61, note 237), pp. 359f.; also *Bible Studies,* 19032, pp. 218-19; P. Cotton (fn. 76), p. 126; E. Lohmeyer, *Die Of fenbarung des Johanties,* 1953, p. 15.

[282] R. H. Charles (p. 68, note 267), p. 23.

[283] G. Thieme, *Die Inschrif ten von Magnesia am Meander und das Neue Testament,* 1905, p. 15.

[284] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 207.

Moreover even the existence of a recurring "Emperor's day" could hardly have constituted a sufficient reason to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday and then to designate the latter "Lord's day," in contradistinction to the one of the Emperor. By such an action Christians would have provoked the resentment of their pagan neighbors, the very thing they were cautious to avoid. We must conclude therefore that Christians used this expression not in conscious contrast to the Augustus day but as an expression of their faith in their "Lord—*kurios*" a title deeply rooted in the Old Testament.

The question we still face is to ascertain if the expression "Lord's day" could have been employed before the end of the first century as a common denomination for the weekly Sunday. Wilfrid Stott presents linguistic and theological explanations to defend this very view. The adjective "Lord's," he notes, was used by the early Fathers (until AD 450) to mean "belonging to" or "given by" Christ. This would imply that the "first day of the week belonged to the Lord…and would be the day instituted by Christ; the day was his gift to the Church."[285]

Moreover he argues that "the resurrection proclaimed Christ as Lord" and in Revelation He "is given the title 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'" (Rev. 19:16). Therefore he concludes, "On the Lord's Day then they would not only be proclaiming Christ as the one who at the resurrection had been shown as Lord, but also looking forward to his final triumph at the *parousia*. On the Lord's Day there would then not only be the proclamation 'Jesus is Lord,' but also the triumphant cry Maranatha, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'"[286]

Such a positive and comprehensive formulation of a theology for Sunday (Resurrection-Parousia) indeed deserves admiration. But does this interpretation reflect the thinking of apostolic times or of later theological constructions? In our previous study of the role of the resurrection appearances of Christ in relation to the origin of Sunday, we found no traces of apostolic allusions to a weekly or annual commemoration of the resurrection.

In a later chapter it will be shown that even the earliest theological motivations that appear in documents such as those of Barnabas and Justin Martyr lack such an organic view of Sunday observance.[287] Their explanations are in fact of differing nature deriving from divergent sources. The resurrection per se is only timidly mentioned. We cannot therefore legitimately determine the meaning of the expression "Lord's day" by leaning on its later usage and explanations. This is particularly true, as we shall see, in the light of changes that occurred in the early part of the second century in the Christian reappraisal of Judaism and its religious observances.

It remains for us to define the meaning of the 'Lord's day' of Revelation 1:10 solely in the light of the text, context, and the teaching of the New Testament. Assuming that the Seer intended to specify that on a Sunday he found himself rapt in the Spirit, *would he have designated such a day as "Lord's day"?* Because in the New Testament this day is *always* called "the first day of the week;" is it not strange that in this one place the writer would use a different expression to refer to the same day?

More important still, if, as many exegetes maintain,[288] John the Apostle wrote at approximately the same time both the Revelation and the fourth Gospel, then would it not seem reasonable to expect him to employ the same expression even in his Gospel, especially when reporting the first-day events of the resurrection and appearances of Jesus (John 20:1, 19, 26)?

In the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter,* written several decades later, we notice for instance that the day of the resurrection is designated not as "first day of the week" but as "Lord's—*kuriake*" since the latter had by then become the term commonly used. If Sunday had already received the new appellation "Lord's day" by the end of the first century when both the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation

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[285] Wilfrid Stott (p. 68, note 271), p. 73.

[286] Ibid., p. 74.

[287] See Chapter VII, p. 213f.

[288] This position is widely held especially by Catholic exegetes; see Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction,* 1958, pp. 283-290, 319, 547-557.

were written, we would expect this new name for Sunday to be used consistently in both works, especially since they were apparently produced by the same author at approximately the same time and in the same geographical area. If a new term prevails and is more readily understood, a writer does not confuse his readers with archaic time designations.

Moreover, if the new denomination already existed and expressed the meaning and nature of Christian worship, a Christian writer could hardly legitimately use a Jewish designation instead. Therefore, the fact that the expression "Lord's day," used in the New Testament only by John, occurs in his apocalyptic book but not in his Gospel where the first day is explicitly mentioned in conjunction with the resurrection (John 20:1) and the appearances of Jesus (John 20:19, 26), weakens the claim that "John by *'dominica dies'* [i.e. Lord's day] (Rev. 1:10) wishes to indicate specifically the day in which the community celebrates together the eucharistic liturgy."[289] Additional reasons will be submitted below in connection with the third interpretation.

Easter Sunday

Others maintain that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 must be understood as a designation for the annual Easter-Sunday rather than the weekly Sunday.[290] We shall mention some of the basic arguments of this thesis.

C. W. Dugmore in a recent study argues that the designation "Lord's day" as used in the earliest Christian literature denotes Easter-Sunday rather than the weekly Sunday. He notes that there is little evidence in "the New Testament and in the literature of the Sub-apostolic age that Sunday was the most important day in the Christian week." Moreover, certain allusions to the "Lord's day" such as found in the *Didache* 14:1 and *Apostolic Constitutions* 7:30, can be taken to refer more readily to Easter-Sunday.[291] The application of the term "Lord's day" to the first day of the week would represent, as stated also by A. Strobel, "a secondary development.'[292] This supposedly occurred "after Sunday had become a regular day of worship among the Christians and had come to be thought of as a weekly commemoration of the Resurrection."[293]

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[289] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 21.

[290] See p. 68, note 272, for references.

[291] These points are presented by C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), pp. 274-278. K. A. Strand (p. 68, note 272), p. 177, submits an additional reference attributed to Irenaeus to support the view of an earlier application of "Lord's day" to the annual Easter, "from which a later Christian Sunday drew its basic characteristics." The passage reads: "This [custom] of not bending the knee upon Sunday, is a symbol of the resurrection…it took its rise from apostolic times, as the blessed Irenaeus, the martyr and bishop of Lyons, declares in his treatise *On Easter,* in which he makes mention of Pentecost also; upon which [feast] we do not bend the knee, because it is of equal significance with the Lord's day, for the reason already alleged concerning it" *(Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus* 7, in *ANF,* I, pp. 569-570). Strand concludes that in this reference "there is no doubt that the 'Lord's Day' refers to an annual Easter-Sunday, for the term is placed in comparison with another annual Sunday, Pentecost-Sunday" (bc. cit.). Is this conclusion correct? It seems to us that the comparison here is not between Easter and Pentecost, but rather between the weekly Sunday and the annual Easter season (which included Pentecost). What it says is that Christians do not bend their knees at Easter because the feast "is of equal significance with the Lord's day [i.e., weekly Sunday], for the reason already alleged concerning it." What is the reason already given? "Sunday is a symbol of the resurrection." Tertullian provides a similar statement: "On Sunday it is unlawful to fast or to kneel while worshipping. We enjoy the same liberty from Easter to Pentecost" *(De corona* 3, 4; cf. also Augustine, *Epistula* 55, 28 *CSEL* 34, 202, where the resurrection is explicitly given as reason for the custom). Irenaeus' statement, therefore, does show the close nexus existing between the two feasts, but it hardly suggests an earlier application of the term "Lord's day" to Easter-Sunday. The weakness of Strand's conclusion from this reference does not invalidate his hypothesis of an earlier origin of Easter-Sunday. This we shall ourselves defend as a most plausible explanation; see Chapter VI, p. 198f.

[292] A. Strobel (p. 68, note 272), p. 185, note 104, writes "kuriake as a term applied to Sunday represents, as it is generally acknowledged, a secondary development."

This thesis of an earlier application of the name "Lord's day" to Easter day has some merits. We shall later show by using different sources and reasons that the weekly Sunday worship apparently did develop in conjunction with the Easter-Sunday festivity, owing to similar causes.[294] It is to be observed however that such a conclusion can hardly be defended from *Didache* 14:1 (the work is variously dated between AD 60 to 150)[295] where the adjective "Lord's—*kuriake*" is related not to the *time* but to the *manner* of the Lord's Supper celebration. Even granting that it referred to time, the mention of the confession of sins (14:1), of the reconciliation between brothers (14:2) and the appeal through the words of Malachi (1:11) to offer "in every place and time a pure sacrifice" (14:3) hardly bespeak an annual celebration.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions 7,* 30, 1, which largely reproduces *Didache* 14, the statement is found, "On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together." C. W. Dugmore interprets this "Lord's day" as a designation of "Easter-Sunday which was still known to Christians of the third quarter of the fourth century in Syria as *he kuriake* [the Lord's]." From this he concludes, "Why should we doubt that the phrase *en te kuriake hemera* [on the Lord's day]' (Rev. 1:10) of the Jewish-Christian Seer, writing just before the close of the first century, equally refers to Easter-Sunday?" The weakness of this conclusion is that it rests on the false assumption that the "Lord's day" in the cited passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions* refers exclusively to Easter-Sunday.[296] This can hardly be proven from the context, where the admonition to assemble together to offer in every place a pure sacrifice hints clearly of the weekly Sunday gathering. In an earlier chapter however Easter-Sunday is designated "Lord's day" (15, 19)[297] but this only goes to show that the same term was used to denominate both festivities.

C. W. Dugmore believes that additional support for "the preeminence of Easter-Sunday over other Sundays is shown in the fact that catechumens were normally baptised and made their first communion at Easter." Furthermore, Melito's *Paschal Homily,* where mention is made not only of the sacrifice but also of the resurrection of Jesus, according to our author, indicates that "primitive Christian commemoration of the Cross and Resurrection was an annual and not a weekly event."[298] But such reasoning is faulty. To say that Melito's sermon indicates that the celebration of the "Resurrection was an annual and not a weekly event" is to fail to recognize that the document does not deal at all with weekly Sunday observance since it is strictly a *Passover Homily*. Moreover, as we have shown earlier, the core of the sermon is the reenactment of the suffering and death of Jesus, the resurrection being mentioned only incidentally by way of epilogue.

J. van Goudoever uses internal evidences of the book of Revelation to interpret chapter 1:10 as a reference to Easter. He refers specifically to the harvest scene described in chapter 14:14f., and argues that, since in Palestine harvest did actually begin on 16 Nisan, then Revelation 1:10 could be a reference to Easter day."[299] To determine a dating on the basis of agricultural symbolism is hazardous,

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[293] C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), p. 279.

[294] See Chapter VI, p. 198.

[295] E. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 1950, p. 286, is of the opinion that the Greek *Didache* published by Bryennius was composed soon after AD. 150; Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers LCL,* 1952, I, p. 331, advocates the same date; I. P. Audet (p. 69, note 276), p. 219, places its composition at the time of the Synoptics between AD 50 and 70. This date must be regarded as too early, inasmuch as the complex ecclesiastical ordinances (such as baptism by infusion) presuppose, as J. Quasten (p. 69, note 274), pp. 40-41 points out, "a period of stabilization of a certain length."

[296] C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), p. 277.

[297] A*postolic Constitutions* 5, 19 admonishes not to break the Passover fast before the "daybreak of the first day of the week, which is the Lord's day" *(ANF* VII, p. 447). The same designation appears again further down in the same chapter: "From the first Lord's day count forty days, from the Lord's day till the fifth day of the week, and celebrate the feast of the ascension of the Lord." Even in these instances the "Lord's day" is hardly used for Easter day only. The phrase "from the first Lord's day" implies that subsequent Sundays shared the same appellation.

[298] C. W. Dugmore (p. 64, note 248), p. 278.

since, as aptly observed by W. Rordorf, in the same chapter (14:17-20) an autumn vintage scene is described "in exactly parallel terms…Is it then a question of spring or of autumn?"[300] The conclusion is obvious. Apocalyptic imagery of agricultural seasons cannot be used as valid criteria to justify the interpretation of the ''Lord's day" as a reference to "Easter-Sunday."

Kenneth Strand submits additional arguments on behalf of the Easter-Sunday interpretation of Revelation 1:10. He points out that "in the Jewish Boethusian and Essene traditions there was an *annual Sunday* celebration of the first-fruits wave sheaf…Since the early Christians considered Christ in His resurrection as the antitypical First-fruits, that particular segment of early Christianity which followed the sectarian rather than the Pharisaic reckoning…would readily have adopted an *annual* Sunday celebration honoring Christ's resurrection…By way of contrast, no liturgical or even psychological background can be deduced from practices in Judaism for an early Christian weekly Sunday…We are readily led to conclude that in the earliest period of Christian history the only kind of Sunday 'Lord's Day' observed by the Christian community was indeed an annual one, and that the weekly Sunday celebration somehow developed from the annual.[301]

While Strand defends the priority of the application of the term "Lord's day" to Easter-Sunday over the weekly Sunday, at the same time he wisely recognizes that the foregoing discussion does not apply to Revelation 1:10, since the document derives from the Quartodeciman area of the province of Asia. The Christians in that province to whom John addressed his book, according to Polycrates, who claims to be following the tradition of the same Apostle, strongly rejected the Easter-Sunday custom, holding fast to the Quartodeciman reckoning.[302] Therefore, it would be paradoxical if John, who kept

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[299] J. van Goudoever (p. 68, note 272), pp. 169f.

[300] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 209.

Avram: It must be an autumn harvest as this is the Lord's end-time harvest, not His beginning or spring harvest, nor His summer or mid-harvest.

[301] K. A. Strand, "The 'Lord's Day,'" in *Three Essays on Early Church History,* 1967, p. 42. The basic weakness of Strand's argument is that it assumes that primitive Christianity was influenced by the sectarian calendar of Qumran in determining its feasts. We have found no indications of this. On the contrary, it appears that the earliest Christians followed the normative calendar of the Temple. See our discussion in Chapter III, p. 77, note 11, and in Chapter V, p. 148f. Furthermore, Strand assumes that Easter-Sunday was already widespread in John's time, but we shall show that this is not the case; see Chapter VI, pp. 198-206.

Avram: Pentecost always fell on Sunday, but not because the Jewish people or the Jewish Apostles followed the Qumranites or the Boethusians. We now know, through the examination of the passages on First Fruits in the Talmud by Jewish authorities, that what is written in the Talmud about First Fruits being celebrated on the second day of Passover week, which meant that it could take place on any day of the week (i.e. Monday, Tuesday, etc.), is false. Those sections were written by Rabbis, many years after the Temple was destroyed, to give the impression that they were the authorities in such matters. The truth is that they weren't. The Temple, and therefore, the Feasts of Israel, followed the Sadducean Priesthood understanding for First Sheaf (Fruits) and it was always celebrated on the Sunday of Passover week, so, point one of Strand's argument is based on a false assumption and is wrong.

For more on why the Talmud cannot be trusted concerning issues dealing with the Second Temple (e.g. when the dating of the First Sheaf, and therefore, *Shavu'ot* [Pentecost] would be) and why Jewish experts on the Talmud, such as Jacob Neusner, an internationally recognized authority on the Talmud, say that the Talmud is not a reliable authority, please ask for the three page article (PDF), *Talmud–is it Trustworthy?*

[302] Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 6-7. K. Strand (p. 68, note 272), p. 180, advances an interesting hypothesis, namely that the "Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10 might refer to the seventh-day Sabbath. He bases this conjecture on a passage of the *Acts of John* (composed apparently in Asia Minor in the third century, see E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1965, II, p. 214), where in describing John's trip to Rome as a prisoner watched by Roman soldiers, it says: "And on the seventh day, it being the Lord's day, he said to them: Now it is time for me also to partake of food" *(ANF* VIII, p. 561). Strand argues that the seventh day cannot refer to the seventh day of the journey, since that would mean that John fasted on the intervening Sabbath, a practice prohibited in the eastern church. While the observation is valid in general (see Chapter VI, pp. 188-189), it does not seem to apply to this particular document because of its Gnostic flavor (cf. J. Quasten [p. 69, note 274], p. 136). We know that gnostics encouraged Sabbath fasting (see Chapter VI, pp. 186-187). Moreover what excludes Strand's interpretation is another reference found at the conclusion of the *Acts of John,* the so-called *Metas-*

Passover by the fixed date of Nisan 14, wrote to Christians of the same Quartodeciman area that he "was in the Spirit on Easter-Sunday." J. Danielou recognizes this fact and timidly admits that "in the Apocalypse (1:10), when Easter takes place on the 14 Nisan, the word does not perhaps mean Sunday."[303]

The Day of the Lord

The identification of the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 with the eschatological day of the Lord understood as the day of Christ's judgment and *parousia* appears to us as the most plausible.[304] Several indications justify such an interpretation.

The immediate context which precedes and follows Revelation 1:10 contains unmistakable references to the eschatological day of the Lord. In the preceding verses Christ is portrayed as the One who "is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him" (v. 7) and as the One "who is and who was and who is to come (v. 8). In the following verses John describes the vision of the glorious and triumphant "Son of Man" who has "the keys of Death and Hades" (vv. 12-18). The same "Son of Man" appears again later to John with "a sharp sickle in his hand…for the harvest of the earth" (14:14-15), where unquestionably the reference is to a future time of judgment. The immediate context is clearly eschatological. This suggests that John felt himself transported by the Spirit to the future glorious day of the Lord.

It could be objected, as Louis T. Talbot points out, that if John "was projected into 'the day of the Lord,' how, then, could he write of this present church age, as he does in chapters two and three?[305] The same author explains that the answer is found in verses 10 and 12 of the same chapter: "I…heard *behind* me a great voice…and *being turned,* I saw…' First, he looked forward into "the day of the Lord," then he turned back, as it were, and saw this church age in panorama, before looking forward again into the future at things which will surely come to pass.[306]

This threefold dimension of the vision of the Lord's day is brought out in v. 19 where John is told, "write what you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter." From the vantage point of the Lord's day, then, John is shown first what the glorious Son of Man is already doing ("what you see; v. 19) for the seven churches which He holds in His right hand (vv. 16, 20); secondly, what is the immediate

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tasis, where it says: "John therefore kept company with the brethren rejoicing in the Lord. And on the next day, as it was a Sunday (*kuriake*) and all the brethren were assembled" (E. Hennecke, *The New Testament Apocrypha,* 1965, II, p. 256). The "*kuriake*" here is translated "Sunday," since it is followed by the eucharistic celebration described in chapters 107-110. Mario Erbetta, *Gli Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamen to,* 1966, II, pp. 63-64, provides the following reconstruction of the Sunday eucharistic service: "(1) preaching (ch. 106); (2) prayer (ch. 108); (3) blessing, breaking and partaking of bread (ch. 109); (4) benediction: 'Peace be with you, beloved' (ch. 110). That the expression "Lord's day—*kuriake*" was used at that time in Asia Minor as a technical designation for Sunday, is attested by the *Gospel of Peter,* 35, 50, 51 (cited above p. 113). This is also confirmed by a later document, the *Acts of Peter* (dated ca. AD. 190) where the author even more explicitly affirms: "And on the *first day of the week,* that is *the Lord's day,* a crowd gathered and many sick persons were brought to Peter that he might heal them" (Coptic fragment, cf. Mario Inserillo, *Gli Evangeli Apocrifi,* 1964, pp. 151-152; also E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1965, II, p. 314).

[303] J.Danielou, *The First Six Hundred Years,* 1964, p. 74. The failure to recognize the Quartodeciman setting of Asia has misled Clark into the erroneous conclusion that Easter-Sunday "was introduced there on the authority of John" *(Clark's Foreign Theological Library,* 1851, XIII, p. 91). However, his observation that "the celebration of the weekly festival is hardly to be conceived without that of the yearly" (Ic. cit.), is valid indeed. But in the case of the province of Asia where the Quartodeciman practice was rigorously guarded, this would hardly bespeak an early introduction of Sunday observance. It could be argued that John could have designated "Lord's day" Nisan 15, but we have found no other testimony to support it.

[304] Advocators of this view are cited above, see p. 68, note 273.

[305] Louis T. Talbot (p. 68, note 273), p. 20.

[306] Loc. cit.

condition of the Church ("the things which are;" v. 19); and lastly the events ("what is to take place hereafter;" v. 19) that will transpire until the return of Christ in glory and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

A thematic study of the content of the book of Revelation corroborates that the day of the *parousia* constitutes the focal point of every vision and the fundamental theme around which the whole book revolves.[307] The book is introduced in fact as "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants *what must soon take place"* (v. 1). After the dedication of the book to the seven churches of Asia Minor, John announces the nature of this revelation in unmistakable terms: "Behold, *He is coming* with the clouds and every eye shall see him" (v. 7).

The same announcement is found in the last chapter at the conclusion of the revelation received: "Behold, *I am coming soon"* (22:7, 12); "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come'" (22:17). The vision of the throne, of the seven seals, of the seven trumpets, of the woman, the beast and the lamb, of the seven last plagues, of the harlot and Babylon, of the destruction of Satan and the establishing of the New Jerusalem, all describe events leading to, or following, the coming of Christ.[308] The context of the whole book then strongly suggests that the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 represents not a literal 24-hour day, but rather the great day of the Lord to which John was transported in vision to be shown by symbolic imagery the events preceding and following Christ's coming.

That the day is symbolic rather than literal is also presupposed by the many scenes which John could hardly have received in a single session. We note that he is taken in vision "on the Lord's day" in the first chapter and a chain of visions is shown him to the very last chapter, where he declares: "I, John, am he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me…" (22:8).

This apparently suggests that the angel showed to John all the various scenes to the very end, when in gratitude he fell down to worship him.[309] Were all the visions actually shown to John in the same day and context, supposedly on a Sunday morning? Since the scenes are many and with different themes, "it would seem a rather strange phenomenon," as Fred B. Jensen rightly notes, "if John's mind could have received this entire revelation in one day."[310] J. F. Walvoord similarly observes that "it is questionable, in any case, whether the amazing revelation given in the entire book could have been conveyed to John in one twenty-four hour day and it is more probable that it consisted of a series of revelations."[311]

The expressions like "I saw, I looked, I was shown," which occur frequently throughout the book, do imply that the scenes were shown at different times. In fact in chapter 4:2 John explicitly mentions for the second time and with the identical words found in chapter 1:10: "I was in the Spirit—*egenomen en pneumati*." This obviously indicates a different time and session in which he was taken in vision. Therefore it is hard to conceive that "the Lord's day" on which John was shown the whole series of visions that comprise the entire book denotes a literal day since, as we noticed, many scenes with different themes were shown to him on separate occasions. It appears to be more consistent with the context to assume that John was transported in vision to the future day of the Lord and that from that vantage point "he heard" and "saw" the many scenes that were "showed" him in several sessions.

Wilfrid Stott objects to this interpretation because, though, the adjective "Lord's—*kuriakos*' is employed extensively in the patristic literature with nouns such as "head, body, flesh, soul, blood, passion, cross, burial, sayings and teachings, parables, commands, power and authority and name," only

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[307] A thematic outline of Revelation is presented in my Italian dissertation (note 73), pp. 90-92.

[308] Rev. 4:8; 6:10, 17; 11:15; 14:14; 16:15, 20; 19:7, 17; 20:11; 21; 22:7, 17.

[309] This is corroborated by the fact that the angel that makes known the revelation to John in chapter 1:1 appears again at the close of the revelation in chapter 22 :8.

[310] Fred B. Jensen, *An Investigation of the Influence of Anti-Judaism Affecting the Rise of Sunday in the Christian Tradition,* thesis 1949, p. 43.

[311] J. F. Walvoord (p. 68, note 273), p. 42.

in one instance does it occur with an eschatological meaning, namely in Origen, *Commentary,* S. John 10:35: "When all these things will be resurrected in the great Lord's [day]—*kuriake*."[312] The observation is valid indeed, but why not concede an exception in usage? After all, the expression "Lord's Day—*kuriake hemera*" is only a minor variation from the commonly used phrase "day of the Lord—*hemera* (*tou*) *kuriou*.[313] The adjective "Lord's—*kuriakos*," as we have noticed, occurs only twice in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10), an indication thus of a still limited usage in comparison with the name "Lord—*kurios*" which is employed over 680 times.

It is worth noting that even the phrase "Lord's Supper—*kuriakon deipnon*" in 1 Corinthians 11:20 is unique per se and is used only by Paul in that instance. The rite, in fact, which at first was referred to as "the breaking of bread," later came to be known as "Eucharist—*eucharistia*".[314] We are confronted here with the use of an adjective which has no parallel in the vocabulary of the New Testament. It would seem legitimate to conclude therefore that just as the expression "Lord's Supper" was used once by Paul as an exception of what apparently was known as "the breaking of bread," it is possible also that the phrase "Lord's day" was employed once by John as an exception and variation of the common expression "day of the Lord." The context, as we have seen, certainly justifies such interpretation.

Additional support for this interpretation is provided by the fact that John mentions twice again the day of judgment and of Christ's coming, and in each instance he uses a somewhat different expression: "the great day of God—*tes hemeras megales tou theou*" (16:14) and "the great day of wrath—*he hemera he megale tes orges*" (6:17).

These variations in the designation of the day of Christ's coming indicate that the event was of such a great importance that it could be designated in a great variety of ways without the risk of being misunderstood. No less than thirty times John refers explicitly to it in his book.[315] In the New Testament, in fact, the day of Christ's coming, which is regarded as the foundation and consummation of the Christian faith, hope and living, is described by a wide variety of expressions, such as "the day of judgment,"[316] "the day,"[317] "that day,"[318] "the last day,"[319] "the great and notable day,"[320] "the day of wrath and revelation,"[321] "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ…the day of Christ,"[322] "the day of the Lord,"[323] "the great day,"[324] and "the great day of God."[325] Christ himself calls the day of His coming "his day—*hemera autou"* (Luke 17:24). The fact that such a broad diversity of expressions is used to name the day of Christ's coming, and the fact that John himself refers to it with different appellatives, make it

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312 Wilfrid Stott (p. 68, note 271), p. 71.

313 Furthermore. note that the day of Christ's coming is referred to in a great variety of ways; see p. 77f., notes 113 to 122.

314 Cf., for instance, *Didache* 9:1; Ignatius, *Ephesians* 13:1; *Philadelphians* 4: *Smyrnaeans* 8:1; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apology* 66, 1; *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne,* 1907, s.v. "Fractio panis" by F. Cabrol, col. 2105f; *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* 1962, s.v. "Lord's Supper" by M. H. Shepherd: "Christian writers from the second century on (e. g., the Didache, Justin, Ignatius, Irenaeus) preferred the title 'Eucharist' derived from the thanksgiving over the principal act of the Lord's Supper."

315 Besides the texts already quoted, see the references given on p. 76, note 308.

316 Matt. 10:15; 12:36; Mark 6:11; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17, Jude 6.

317 Luke 17:30; Matt. 25:13; Rom. 13:12.

318 Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32; 14:25; Luke 10:12; 17:31; 21:34; 1 Tim. 1:12.

319 John 6:39-40; 11:24; 12:48.

320 Acts 2:20.

321 Rom. 2:5; Rev. 6:17.

322 I Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2 Thess. 2:2.

323 I Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10.

324 Rev. 6:17; Jude 6; Acts 2:20.

325 Rev. 6:14.

altogether plausible that "the Lord's day" is simply one of the many different designations for the same event.[326]

Considering the predominant place which "the day of the Lord" occupies in the thinking and life of the early Christians, being regarded as the consummation of all their hopes (1 Thess. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:23, 52), as well as the very incentive for ethical conduct (1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Peter 3:10-12), it would seem natural that John would refer to it at the very outset of his work (1:1, 7, 8) and 'be taken in vision to that very day (1:10). What more than the vision of Christ's coming could bring reassurance to John, who was suffering tribulation "on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9)? Together with the souls "who had been slain for the word of God," John undoubtedly was crying, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth" (6:10)? "Little wonder," aptly remarks Walter Scott, "that the gaze of the aged and honored prisoner was directed onward to the glory and strength of the kingdom, when right would be vindicated and wrong punished."[327]

The use of the adjective *"Lord's* day" rather than the noun "day of the *Lord"* should also be noticed. E. W. Bullinger draws attention to the fact that in Greek as in modern languages, using the adjective rather than the noun of the same root does not change the *meaning* but the *emphasis*. The author explains: "The *natural* way of qualifying a noun is by using an adjective, as here " *kuriake*—Lord's," and when this is done, the emphasis takes its natural course, and is placed on the noun thus qualified ("day"). But when the emphasis is required to be placed on the word "Lord," then, instead of the adjective, the noun would be used in the genitive case, "of the Lord." In the former case (as in Rev. 1:10) it would be "the Lord's DAY." In the latter case it would be "THE LORD'S day." The same day is meant in each case, but with a different emphasis."[328]

John's use of the adjective rather than of the noun may well reflect his desire to emphasize the *very day* of Christ's glorious coming into which he was taken by the Spirit. This is suggested also by the use of the verb "*egenomen*." Its English (RSV) rendering "I was" does not fully convey the meaning of the Greek verb, which, though susceptible of a variety of modifications of meaning, expresses for the most part the idea of generation, transition, or change of state. In Revelation 8:8 for instance the same verb is translated "became" ("a third of the sea became blood").

Our text can be literally translated, "I came to be in (or by) the Spirit on the Lord's day." Since the verb denotes the ecstatic condition into which the Seer was brought by the Spirit, we would expect the "Lord's day" to represent not the *time* but the *content* of what he saw. A somewhat similar parallel can be seen in Paul's ecstatic experience. He reports, "I fell (*genesthai*) into a trance and I saw him [i.e. the Lord]" (Acts 22:17; cf. 2 Cor. 12:3). The verb used (*ginomai*) is identical and the immediate result of the vision was for Paul, a view of the Lord, while for John, that of the Lord's day.

The immediate hearing by John of "a loud voice like a trumpet" (1:10) may also be an allusion to the eschatological day of the Lord. "The Trumpet Voice," as Philip Carrington remarks, "recalls at once the Angel with the Trumpet who was expected in Jewish mythology to sound the reveille for the Judgment Day."[329] Though trumpets were used in the Old Testament for calling people together on several important occasions (Num. 10:2, 9, 10; Ex. 19:19),[330] the instrument was especially associated with

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[326] Cf. Gerhard Delling, "*hemera*" *TDNT* II, p. 952: "In Paul as in the Gospels, Christ is the Lord of this *hemera* [i.e., day of His *parousia]."*

[327] Walter Scott (p. 68, note 273), p. 36.

[328] E. W. Bullinger (p. 68, note 273), p. 12

[329] Philip Carrington (p. 68, note 273), p. 78

[330] Note that the Day of Atonement, which was viewed as a day of judgment, was announced by the blowing of trumpets, Num. 29:1.

Avram: in Exodus 19:19 it's not a trumpet, but a heavenly shofar that is blowing louder and louder, announcing the coming of the King of Israel descending upon Mt. Sinai in fire and smoke,lighting and thunder. It's reasonable to assume that it will also be a heavenly shofar when Messiah returns, also announcing the com-

"the day of the Lord" (Joel 2:1, 15; Zech. 9:14). In Zephaniah "the great day of the Lord" is called "a day of trumpet blast" (1:14-16).

In the New Testament the trumpet is particularly associated with the second advent of Christ. It calls the members of God's Church before Christ (Matt. 24:31), it announces Christ's descent from heaven (1 Thess. 4:16) and it resurrects the dead (1 Cor. 15:52). In Revelation the seven visions announced by the seven trumpets (8:2, 6-8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15) present a series of cataclysmic events which culminate with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which proclaims, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15).

This close association between the voice of the trumpet and the second coming of Christ suggests the possibility that "the loud voice like a trumpet" (1:10) that John heard "on the Lord's day" (1:10) was a manifestation of that very event. In fact, as the Seer turned "to see the voice" (1:12) he gazed in rapture at the Son of Man in power and majesty in the midst of the churches. This vision is a fitting prelude to the coming of the "son of man with a golden crown on his head" (14:14) as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16).

A final indication of the eschatological nature of "the Lord's day" is provided by the unique parallelism between chapter 4:1-2 and chapter 1:10. In both instances John "was in the Spirit—*egenomen en pneumati*" (1:10 cf. 4:2), heard "a voice like a trumpet" (1:10, cf. 4:1) and was shown a member of the Deity in His glory (1:12-18 cf. 4:2-11). On both occasions Christ is proclaimed as the One "who was and is and is to come" (1:8 cf. 4:8). However, in chapter 4:1 we find an additional helpful detail. Before John is taken in vision, he is told, "Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this" (4:1). In the very next statement John says, "At once I was in the Spirit" (4:2). The reason then for John's being taken up in vision is here clearly stated: so that he may see "what must take place after this" (4:1).

In chapter 1:10, however, when John is taken up in vision such a reason is not explicitly expressed but in its stead we find the expression "on the Lord's day." It would seem reasonable to conclude, then, by virtue of the striking parallelism found between the two chapters where similarities of expressions, context and content occur, that the phrase "on the Lord's day" of chapter 1:10 ought to be understood in the light of the parallel expression, "what must take place after this" of chapter 4:1. We might say that in chapter 1:10, John first names the background against which he saw the vision—namely, the Lord's day—and then he proceeds to describe the events related to it, while in chapter 4:1 John is explicitly told that the ensuing vision has to do with future events.

In the light of the above considerations, it seems very unlikely that the phrase "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10 refers to Sunday. It rather appears to be a variation of the expression "the day of the Lord" which is commonly employed in the Scripture to designate the day of the judgment and of the *parousia*. We would therefore concur with J. B. Lightfoot in concluding that "there is very good, if not conclusive evidence, for thinking that the day of judgment was intended."[331]

Conclusion. The foregoing analysis of the three New Testament references commonly submitted as proof for Sunday observance in apostolic times has shown convincingly that no probative value can be derived from them. In both 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 and Acts 20:7-12, we found that the first day of the week is mentioned to describe respectively a private fund-raising plan and an extraordinary gathering of the Troas believers with Paul. Similarly, we noticed that the expression "Lord's day" of Revelation 1:10, in the light of its immediate and wider context can be best interpreted as a designation for the day of judgment and of the *parousia*.

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ing of the King of Israel. For more on this day and the shofar see *The Feast of Trumpets* at http://seedofabraham.net/Truah-The-Feast-of-Trumpets.pdf.

[331] J. B. Lightfoot (p. 68, note 273), p. 129; cf. A. Deissmann, "Lord's day," *Encyclopedia Biblica,* III, p. 2815, who similarly identifies the "Lord's day" with "the day of Yahweh" and "the day of judgment."

Chapter V

JERUSALEM AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

Though the three New Testament references commonly quoted to substantiate an apostolic origin of Sunday observance belong to the geographic area of the Greek-speaking Christian communities of Greece (1 Cor. 16:2) or Asia Minor (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10), there is a marked tendency in recent studies to attribute to the Apostolic community of Jerusalem the initiative and responsibility for the abandonment of the Sabbath and the institution of Sunday worship. J. Danielou affirms, for instance, that "the institution of Sunday goes back to the very first community and is a purely Christian creation."[332] In another study, the same author declares that "the custom of gathering together on this day [i.e. Sunday] appears in the very week following the Resurrection, when we find the Apostles gathered in the Cenacle. Sunday is the continuation of this weekly reunion."[333]

C. S. Mosna concludes his investigation on the origin of Sunday worship stating, "We can conclude without doubt that Sunday was born in the primitive community of Jerusalem before than in the Pauline community."[334] W. Rordorf similarly claims that,

> "several arguments can be cogently advanced for the opinion that the Christian observance of Sunday is a genuinely Christian creation which reaches back into the oldest period of the primitive community and even to the intention of the risen Lord himself."[335]

This thesis rests on several basic assumptions. P. K. Jewett notes, for instance, that "it seems very unlikely that Paul pioneered in the observance of Sunday, when he is the only New Testament writer who warns his converts against the observance of days (Col. 2:17; Gal. 4:10; Rom. 14:6)."[336] The same author sagaciously remarks that,

> "if Paul had introduced Sunday worship among the Gentiles, it seems likely that Jewish opposition would have accused his temerity in setting aside the law of the Sabbath, as was the case with reference to the rite of the circumcision (Acts 21:21)."[337]

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[332] J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity,* 1964, p. 342

This is Chapter V of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 132-164.

[333] J. Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy,* 1966, p. 243.

Avram: The Cenacle is a Latin name for the room in which the last Passover ('Last Supper') of Yeshua was held. The term 'Last Supper' strips it of its Hebraic connotations.

[334] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 53. The same conclusion is reached through a different reasoning by H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur," *New Testament Essays. Studies in Memory of T. M. Manson,* 1958, pp. 213f.; Y. B. Tremel, "Du Sabbat au Jour du Seigneur," *Lumiére et Vie* (1962): 44f.; Pierre Grelot, "Du Sabbat juif au dimanche *chrétien," La Maison-Dieu* 124 (1975): 28-31.

[335] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 237. Among others who have already advocated that Sunday observance originated within the primitive Church of Jerusalem, see H. Dumaine, "Dimanche," *DACL* IV, col. 892f.; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday,* 1931, p. 71; J. Nedbal, *Sabbat und Sonntag im Neuen Testament,* dissertation 1956, pp. 170f.; C. Callewaert, "La synaxe eucharistique *h* Jerusalem, berceau du dimanche," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 15 (1938): 34-73.

[336] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 56. The crucial Pauline references to the Sabbath (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:10; Rom. 14:6) are examined in Chapter XI, the Appendix.

[337] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 57.

"Moreover Paul, as noted by W. Rordorf,

> "would have referred more to the observance of Sunday and…would have answered the objections of a Judaizing opposition."[338]

It is assumed therefore that,

> "Paul found the custom of worship on the first day of the week established among the Christians when he began his Gentile mission; that is to say, first-day worship is of Judaeo-Christian origin."[339]

It is also assumed that since the events of the resurrection and/or appearances of Jesus occurred and were experienced in Jerusalem on Sunday, therefore it must be there that the Apostles first instituted Sunday worship to commemorate these very events by a distinctive Christian day and with a unique Christian liturgy. Moreover it is presumed that a change in the day of worship, and its subsequent adoption by many Christians everywhere, could only have been accomplished by the apostolic authority exercised in Jerusalem, the Mother Church of Christendom.[340] The principle implied in this observation is valid indeed, and is one we need to bear in mind in our quest for the genesis of Sunday observance. Christians at large would hardly have accepted the injunction to change the day of their weekly worship or the date of their annual Passover celebration from any one church, except from the one that enjoyed universal and undisputed position of leadership. The Passover controversy, as we shall see, provides a most fitting example.

Another significant argument is the alleged necessity that was immediately felt by the earliest Christians in Jerusalem to have a special time and place for their worship, since it is claimed, they "no longer felt at home in the Jewish Sabbath worship."[341] C. S. Mosna reasons, for instance, that the Apostles instituted Sunday "long before Paul might think about its institution," since,

> "the *first* Christians found themselves in the necessity to have a special day of worship because the content of the Sabbath was by then insufficient to the exigencies of the new faith."[342]

W. Rordorf expresses the same conviction in similar words when he says that,

> "the practical necessity for a regular time of worship in the Christian communities does therefore point to a pre-Pauline origin for the observance of Sunday."[343]

Eusebius' (ca. AD 260-340) account of the Ebionites—a Jewish-Christian sect of early Christianity—is submitted by several scholars as an additional evidence for an apostolic origin of Sunday. The historian reports that the liberal wing of the Ebionites "observed the Sabbath and the rest of the discipline of the Jews but at the same time, like us, they celebrated the Lord's day as a memorial of the resurrection of the Saviour."[344] The contention is that these Jewish Christians retained the original Sunday practice of the Jerusalem Church, since they would hardly have borrowed it from the Gentile Church

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[338] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* 218.

[339] P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 57. J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite,* 1950, I, pp. 20f., argues that the replacement of the Sabbath with Sunday occurred between the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the year AD 44 as a result of the Jewish persecution. We shall notice that this view is discredited by the information available on the Jerusalem Church.

[340] Cf. W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 232-237.

[341] *Ibid*., p. 218.

[342] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* 53.

[343] Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 218.

[344] Eusebius, *HE* 3, 25, 5, *NPNF* I, 159; the same account is given by Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium,* 2, 1, *PG* 83, 389.

Avram: The Ebionites were a heretical sect because they denied the deity of Yeshua. The Ebionites split off from the Nazarenes, the Jewish believers in the congregation in Jerusalem that the Apostles founded.

after they broke away from it.[345]

These arguments appear persuasive indeed, but their validity must be tested in the light of the historic information provided by the New Testament and by the early patristic literature regarding the ethnic composition and the theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church. This we shall now investigate, extending our inquiry to AD 135, that is, up to the time of the destruction of the city by Hadrian. At that time, as we shall see, both city and the Church there underwent radical changes caused by the Emperor's edict of expulsion of Jews and Jewish Christians. This struck the final blow, not only to the Jewish aspiration of national independence from the Romans, but also to the position of leadership of the Jerusalem Church. In fact, subsequently the role of the Church there was too insignificant to be able to influence the rest of Christendom.

The Jerusalem Church in the New Testament

What information does the New Testament provide regarding the attitude of the Jerusalem Church toward Jewish worship services and liturgical calendar? Does it suggest, as some hold, that the Church "no longer felt at home in the Jewish Sabbath worship: therefore it had to assemble by itself and at a special time"?[346] We shall endeavor to answer these questions by considering first the place and time of the earliest Christian gatherings, and secondly the ethnic composition and theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church.

The Place of Christian Gatherings

The meeting places most frequently mentioned in the book of Acts are the Temple, the synagogue, and private houses (once, a gathering in the open air).[347] In Acts 2:46 the report that Christians were "attending the Temple together and breaking bread in their homes" suggests a possible distinction between the public evangelistic preaching and private fellowship gatherings. However in chapter 5:42 it says that "every day in the Temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as Christ." This would imply that no formal distinction existed between public evangelistic meetings and the private fellowship gatherings.[348] The picture that emerges from Acts is indeed of an intense communal life of the new converts who "with one accord" (Acts 1:14) would often gather to share their faith both *publicly* in the Temple, under Solomon's portico, or in the synagogues, as well as *privately* in houses.[349] But presumably a difference did exist between these two types of gatherings. In the Temple and synagogue the primitive community could proclaim the Gospel (Acts 3:11f.; 5:12f.) as well as participate in the prayer (Acts 3:1; 22:17; 2:46-47) and instruction from the Scriptures. In the private meetings, on the other hand, believers could receive personal instruction from the Apostles (Acts 6:42; 1:14) as well as express their bond of fellowship by partaking together of food and of the Lord's

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[345] H. Dumaine, "Le dimanche," *DACL* IV, col. 893, is of the opinion that the observance of Sunday among the Ebionites "has all the chances of being the survival of the custom of the primitive Church of Jerusalem. This institution, therefore, has really nothing of Hellenistic Christianity"; cf. C. Callewaert (p. 80, note 335), p. 51; C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* pp. 54-55; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 216-218; P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 57.

[346] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 218.

[347] Temple: Acts 2:46; 3:4; 5:12, 20, 25, 42; Synagogue: Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14, 42; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8; Houses: Acts 1:13; 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; 20:7; by the riverside: Acts 16:16.

[348] O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship,* 1966, p. 10, reasons that since even private houses were regarded as "church—*ecclesia*," the expression "in the Temple" could signify "in the house." It is difficult to accept this explanation since two very distinct terms existed and were used to designate respectively "the Temple—*hieron*" and "the church—*ecclesia*."

[349] Cf. Acts 3:11; 5:12; John 10:23.

Supper.[350]

The private gatherings of the primitive community, though designed to express more freely and fully the content of their faith in the risen Lord, are not presented as conflicting with the services of the Temple and synagogue but rather as complementing them. Ralph P. Martin remarks that

> "in the early days of the Church's life, there seems to have been no desire to leave the parent religion—at least as far as the outward practice of the faith was concerned."[351]

The author points out that "the earliest Christian Church looked like a party within the Jewish fold" and was explicitly designated as the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). The same word "sect—*hairesis*" is used in Acts to describe both the Christian party (Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22) and the official Jewish parties of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17) and Pharisees (Acts 15:5; 26:5). Therefore, Martin concludes that,

> "there was nothing, on the face of it, which would strike strange about the congregating of like-minded Jews as a band of Nazarenes."[352]

Some scholars even suggest that externally the primitive community may at first have resembled a special synagogue, since according to the Mishnah it only required ten male Jews to form a synagogue anywhere.[353] Christ's followers, it says in Acts 1:14, "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer (*proseuke*)." The Greek term employed here is the one that designates the regular "prayer-assembly" of the synagogue (cf. Acts 16:13, 16). The use of a synagogal appellation to describe the devotional gathering of the first believers suggests the possibility that Christian gatherings could have been regarded as a type of synagogue meeting.

It is a fact that the synagogue is the place of worship most frequently mentioned. We have found this to be true in Christ's ministry since he taught and worshiped in the synagogues on the Sabbath (Mark

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[350] H. Riesenfeld (p. 80, note 334), p. 212, suggests that "obviously Christians assisted in the Jewish capital at the worship of the Temple and of the synagogue, because of the reading of the Scriptures and prayers. Through the sacrifices they understood ever better that these had been replaced by the death of Christ. After participating in the worship at the Temple, they gathered among themselves (Acts 2:46; 5:42), that is to say in a private house, such as the upper room (Acts 1:13), and there the Christians listened assiduously to the teaching of the Apostles, participating loyally in the brotherly communion, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers (Acts 2:42; cf. 6:1-2)."

[351] Ralph P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church,* 1974, p. 18; cf. T. W. Manson, "The Jewish Background," *Christian Worship: Studies in its History and Meaning,* ed. N. Micklem, 1936, p. 35.

[352] Ralph P. Martin (p. 83, note 351), p. 19.

[353] F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity,* 1933, I, p. 304; Karl L. Schmid, "*Ecclesia*," *TDNT* III, pp. 501-536. Ferdinand Hahn, *The Worship of the Early Church,* 1973, p. 41, rejects the theory that the "church" developed out of the model of the synagogue, because he says, "the Christians took great liberties with the whole tradition of Old Testament Judaism." Hahn argues that initially primitive Christians detached themselves from the Jewish worship, but that subsequently, especially under James the brother of the Lord, they developed a "strict observance of the Law, fidelity to the cult, and a markedly particularistic attitude" (bc. cit.). Why would primitive Christians break away at first from Jewish worship and then be attracted to it again later? The New Testament provides no indications to support this theory. Hahn says, for instance, that "the appointment of a presbyterate during the forties was likewise a conscious return to Jewish practice. Similar dependence must not be presupposed for the initial period, as though primitive Christian worship were directly related to the synagogue worship" (ibid., pp. 51-52). Is the appointment of a presbyterate by the Jerusalem Church really indicative of a return to Jewish practice? Does it not suggest rather a development in the organizational structure of the Church after the existing Jewish model? What about the election of the Hellenists to care for the social welfare of the needy (Acts 6:1-6)? Was not their function similar to the Jewish "collectors of alms who for their part had no connection with the conduct of worship"? (Hermann W. Bayer, "*Diakonos,*" *TDNT* II, p. 91). The election of new officers must be seen in the context of the development of the local structure of the Church determined by the growth of the community. Existing Jewish organizational and liturgical structures provided a valid model which Christians adapted to their exigencies. Mario Fois, *Collegialità, Primato e Laicato nella Chiesa Prirnitiva,* Gregorian University, 1973, pp. 52-75, shows cogently how the development of the ecclesiastical structures in the primitive Palestinian Church were patterned after existing Jewish models.

1:21-28; 3:1-6; 6:2; Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:15, 16-30, 31ff., 44; 6:6; 13:10-17; John 6:59; 18:20). Similarly in Acts, the record of Christian attendance at the synagogue is most impressive. Paul met in the synagogue regularly with "Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4, 19; 13:5, 14, 42, 44; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17), and even Apollo, when he arrived at Ephesus, met with the believers at Ephesus in the synagogue (Acts 18:24-26). C. W. Dugmore, to whom we are indebted for an exhaustive study on the influence of the synagogue upon the Christian service, shows persuasively that the,

> "synagogue did influence both the form of service and the times at which Christians met together for public prayer in the first four centuries of our era to a much greater extent than has sometimes been recognized."[354]

Did the acceptance of the Messiah as Lord and Savior create an immediate exigency to adopt a new place and time of worship in order to give expression to the new Faith? It is easy and tempting to interpret the fragmentary record of the Jerusalem Church in the light of the later separation which occurred between the Church and the Synagogue. This effort may be motivated by the commendable desire to minimize the attachment of the Jerusalem Church to the Jewish religious customs and thus defend the uniqueness of content and expression of the Christian faith right from its inception. While such objectives may be praiseworthy, they hardly justify an inaccurate reconstruction of the early worship customs of the Jerusalem Church.

The frequent references to the Temple, the synagogue, prayer and preaching, suggest that Christian worship arose not as an *ex novo* institution but rather as a continuation and re-interpretation of the Jewish religious services. Peter and John, for instance, after the Pentecost experience, go up to the Temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1). Attendance at the Temple and at the synagogue still continues, though complementary private meetings are conducted. Similarly the language of the Jewish worship—sacrifice, offering, priest, elder—remains in use. It is obvious that all of these were reinterpreted in the light of their Messianic fulfillment—of the Christ-event. There is no hint however that their new faith caused the immediate abandonment of the regular worship places of the Jews.

The Time of Christian Gatherings

We need now to consider the time of the worship services of the Jerusalem Church. Did the first Christians respect and use the Jewish liturgical calendar or did they purposely reject it, choosing rather new days and dates for their weekly and annual festivities? Oscar Cullmann maintains that the gatherings of the earliest Christians,

> "took place daily (Acts 2:46; 5:42; see also Luke 24:53). The Sabbath too may still have been observed here and there. However…already in the earliest times the primitive Christian service created for itself a specifically Christian setting in which *one* day was specifically marked out as the day for the Church services—the Lord's Day. That is not the Jewish Sabbath but in deliberate distinction from Judaism, the first Christians selected the first day of the week, since on this day Christ had risen from the dead, and on this day he had appeared to the disciples gathered together for a meal."[355]

According to our author—a position widely supported by many scholars—the gatherings of the primitive community occurred daily, sporadically on the Sabbath and regularly on Sunday to commemorate the resurrection and the appearances of Christ. We need not take time to consider again the claim of a

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[354] C. W. Dugmore, "Lord's Day and Easter," *Neotestamentica et Patristica in honorem sexagenarii O. Cullmann,* 1962, p. 272; also *The Influence of the Synagogue upon Divine Office,* 1944, pp. 7f.; W. O. E. Qesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy,* 1925; P. P. Levertoff, "Synagogue Worship in the First Century," *Liturgy and Worship,* ed. W. K. L. Clarke, 1932.

[355] O. Cullmann (p. 82, note 348), pp. 10-11.

regular Sunday observance in the earliest days of the Church, since in our previous chapters we have established that such a thesis rests basically on three misconstrued New Testament passages and on theological motivations absent in the apostolic literature.

Regarding the daily gatherings, Luke in at least three instances refers to the Apostles and/or believers who "daily—*kath'hemera—pasan hemeran*" (Acts 2:46; 5:42; cf. Luke 24:53) came together for instruction and fellowship. It is possible that in the enthusiasm of Pentecost, for some time the believers did gather daily around the Apostles, but obviously only the Apostles could sustain a continuous daily program of teaching in the Temple and in the homes (Acts 5:42). As H. Riesenfeld aptly remarks, "for those who were not Apostles this must be an hyperbole."[356] These daily gatherings were undoubtedly evangelistic in nature, designed to proclaim the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Possibly new converts participated in these meetings, but there is no indication that the whole community was expected to participate in daily services.

The Sabbath, according to O. Cullmann, representative of a popular view, was observed "here and there" but since the earliest times the Church chose the first day of the week as the new day of worship "in deliberate distinction from Judaism."[357] In a later chapter we will have occasion to show that the exigency to differentiate from the Jews did indeed contribute substantially to the adoption of Sunday observance in the place of the Sabbath. But this is a later development which did not occur in the early days of the Jerusalem Church.

C. S. Mosna reasons that the Christians in Jerusalem detached themselves very early from the Temple and synagogue because of the persecution from the religious leaders:

> "After the stoning of Stephen, they are searched in the houses (Acts 8:3) and the persecution contributed to isolate them from the Jews and their practices (Acts 9:2)."[358]

There is no doubt that Jewish persecutions contributed in time to isolate Christians from Jewish religious services and customs, but as will be shown below, such a break did not take place so drastically or so immediately. Paul, for instance, after the martyrdom of Stephen, went searching for Christians in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:2; cf. 22:19), presumably because they still met there. In his later ministry the Apostle himself "as was his custom" (Acts 17:2) met regularly on the Sabbath in synagogues or open air, not only with the Jews (Acts 13:14; 17:2; 18:4) but also with the Gentiles (Acts 13:44; 16:13, 18:4). This was possible because no radical separation had yet occurred from Jewish places and times of gatherings.

It should also be observed that the first Jewish persecution reported in Acts 6–8 was apparently directed not against the whole Church but primarily against the "Hellenists." These, according to recent researches, were a non-conformist group of Jewish Christians seemingly quite different from the main body of the Church.[359] This is suggested by Acts 8:1 where it is reported that when "a great persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem…they were scattered…except the apostles." The fact that the Apostles were allowed to remain in the city proves, as noted by O. Cullmann, "that the whole community did not share in the very peculiar and bold ideas of this group [i.e. Hellenists]."[360] Howev-

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[356] H. Riesenfeld (p. 80, note 334), p. 213.

[357] O. Cullmann (p. 82, note 348), p. 9.

[358] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* pp. 179-180. He sees indications of this detachment from the synagogue already in the Gospel of Matthew (4:23; 10:17; 12:9) where the expression "in their synagogues" occurs.

[359] Cf. O. Cullmann, "Dissensions Within the Early Church," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (1967): 83; M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church,* 1958, p. 113, is of the opinion that these Hellenists influenced the Ebionites. This seems hardly possible, since we shall later show (see p. 93) that the Ebionites possibly represent a later development of Jewish Christianity. E. Lohmeyer, *Galilda und Jerusalem,* 1936, distinguishes between the Jewish and Galilean theology of the early Christians; cf. H. R. Baltz, *Methodische Problem der neutestamentlichen Christologie,* 1967, pp. 171f.

[360] O. Cullmann, "Courants multiples dans Ia communauté primitive," *Judéo-christianisme,* ed. Joseph Moingt, 1972, p. 58.

er, it should be mentioned to the credit of the Hellenists that their bold and vocal missionary activity resulted in the evangelization of Samaria (Acts 8:1-40).

Some suggest that this group of Christian Hellenists (Greek speaking Jews) "publicly claimed for themselves Jesus' own freedom with regard to the Sabbath"[361] and adopted Sunday observance. Even granting such an assumption which rests on gratuitous conjectures, it should be observed that these Hellenists represented only a radical group that was early detached from the mother Church where the Apostles resided. Inasmuch as they were not the spokesmen of the Church, they could hardly have enjoined the Church at large to accept a new day of worship. Moreover, if indeed Sunday observance was one of the distinguishing marks of their religious practices, this would have stirred a sharp controversy within the Church, especially in view of their "vocal" missionary activity.[362] But no echo of such a polemic can be detected in Acts. At the Jerusalem council, for instance, Sabbath observance was not among the issues of the day. In fact, we now shall consider overwhelming indications of its regular observance, particularly in the ultra-conservative Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem.

The Theological Orientation of the Jerusalem Church

A study of the ethnic composition and theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church provides perhaps the most significant data by which to test the validity of the thesis claiming Jerusalem as the birthplace of Sunday observance. The Church originated in the city around the nucleus of the twelve Apostles. Since these as well as their first converts were, as well stated by T. W. Manson, "Jews by birth and upbringing…it is *a priori* probable that they would bring into the new community some at least of the religious usages to which they had long been accustomed."[363]

Luke reports that among the many Jewish converts, there were a great many of the priests" who "were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). F. A. Regan well notes that "Luke gives no hint that their conversion in any way conflicted with the adherence to the Old Law."[364] In fact, possibly, as suggested by B. Bagatti, "they naturally continued to exercise their ministry."[365] Their ministry may well have been needed, in view of the fact that, as Luke relates, there were many thousands…among the Jews of those who believed" (Acts 21:20). It seems plausible to identify these converted priests with the "Elders" who assisted James and the Apostles in the administration of the Church (Acts 15:4, 22-23; 16:4; 20:1-18). F. F. Bruce advances the hypothesis that "there may have been seventy of them, constituting a sort of Nazarene Sanhedrin, with James as their president."[366] This information provided by Luke reveals that the Jerusalem Church not only was composed mostly of Jewish converts but possi-

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Avram: It could also mean that the Hellenists, because they were Greek speaking Jews with Hellenistic cultural backgrounds and mannerisms, would be easily identified by the non-believing Jews of Jerusalem.

[361] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 127; cf. p. 217. Rordorf's assumption rests primarily on Acts 6:14, where false witnesses accuse Stephen of having said: "This Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." He conjectures gratuitously that the "customs" could include also the Sabbath; cf. also M. H. Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse,* 1960, p. 17. Note however that these are not the words of Stephen but of false accusers. A similar charge was made against Paul: "You teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their sons or observe the customs" (Acts 28:21). Paul, however, denied such an accusation: "I have done nothing against the people or the customs of our Fathers" (Acts 21:17). Apparently Paul could say this in good conscience because he had never urged Jews, for instance, to abandon the circumcision. The exemption was extended only to the Gentiles (Acts 15:23). *It is a significant datum* that while Paul was accused by the Jews with regard to the circumcision, *no charge is ever made against Paul of Sabbath-breaking*. Similarly in the charge made against Stephen, there is a generic reference to the Temple, Law and customs but no specific allusion to the Sabbath.

[362] The expression is found in E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte,* 1959, p. 226.

[363] T. W. Manson (p. 83, note 351), p. 35.

[364] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 4.

[365] B. Bagatti, *The Church from the Circumcision,* 1971, p. 67.

bly was even administered by ex-priests according to the familiar Jewish model of the Sanhedrin. Their basic attitude toward Jewish religious observances is best expressed by Luke's terse statement, "they are all *zealous for the Law"* (Acts 21:20).[367]

The choice and exaltation of James provides further confirmation of the "Jewish" theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church. Why was James, "the Lord's Brother" (Gal. 1:19) and not an Apostle, chosen to be the leader of the Church? Apparently in the choice of a leader for the Church the blood factor was regarded as more important than any previous relationship with Christ. This reason, already implicit in the references of Luke and Paul[368] to James, is explicitly brought out in several later works of Judaeo-Christian origin.

Hegesippus, a second-century Jewish convert native of Palestine, and various anonymous authors who produced works such as *The Protoevangelium of James,* the *Gospel of the Hebrews,* the *History of Joseph the Carpenter,* the *Gospel of Thomas,* the divers *Apocalypses of James* and the *Clementine Recognitions* and *Homilies,* highly exalt the figure of James.[369] In these works James is glorified as the legitimate representative of Christ,[370] as the real brother of Christ to whom he first appeared,[371] as the head of the Church,[372] as the one "for whose sake heaven and earth came into being,"[373] as the priest

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366 F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts,* 1954, p. 429; Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 1905, p. 322, support the same view: "It appears likely that the Jerusalem church was organizationally patterned after the Jewish Temple. James may have had a body of seventy elders, corresponding to the Sanhedrin, to assist him in the administration of the Judean Church."

367 Lino Randellini, *La Chiesa dei Giudeo-cristiani,* 1967, p. 27, holds that the Jerusalem Church was composed for an indeterminate time period of circumcised Hebrews who appeared as "a sect within Judaism. They frequented the Temple, celebrated the feasts, observed the Sabbath and fastings, submitted themselves to legal prescription and had their children circumcised"; Cabrol and Leclerq, *Monumenta ecclesiae liturgica,* 1902, I, p. XVI, similarly point out that in the first expansion of the Church which occurred after the death of Stephen, "almost the whole administration originated from the Jerusalem Church, in which the authority and domination of the Judaizers, as they are called, far exceeded the influence of the Hellenists"; C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence* (p. 84, note 354), p. 44, emphasizes that Gentile-Christians, though in time they influenced the customs of the Church, "joined a Church which was essentially Jewish in origin and nucleus"; Mario Fois (p. 83, note 353), p. II, acutely remarks that Christians, in establishing their structures, could not avoid "to look at the existing Jewish and Hellenistic-Roman models"; cf. D. Judant, *Judaisme et Christianisme, Dossier patristique,* 1968, p. 15.

Avram: Bacchiocchi writes 'ex-priests,' which may be an unconscious error on his part for he's just quoted Regan and Baggati who said, and rightfully so, that basically they remained priests with their new faith. There's nothing to suggest that they gave up their priesthood. They could, and did, remain priests ministering in the Temple as well as be believers in their Messiah.

368 Cf. Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12; I Cor. 15:7; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18.

369 For a concise survey of the exaltation of James in these works, see B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), pp. 70-78.

370 *The Protoevangelium of James,* 18.

371 *The Gospel to the Hebrews,* "And when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, he went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he should see him risen from among them that sleep. And shortly thereafter the Lord said: Bring a table and bread! And immediately it is added: he took bread, blessed it and brake it and gave it to James the Just and said to him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from among them that sleep" (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1963, I, p. 165; cf. *The Protoevangelium of James* 18; *The Kerygmata Petrou* 1:1 "Peter to James, the lord and bishop of the holy church" (E. Hennecke, op.cit., II, p. III).

Avram: Of course, this 'Gospel' isn't inspired, but is one of many later writings by men who wrote what they wanted to write. This is easily seen in that Yeshua's half-brother James wasn't at the last Passover, so, all that is written in *The Gospel to the Hebrews*, that Bacchiocchi quotes above, is a fabrication. This doesn't mean that James wasn't highly respected for his lineage to Yeshua and his walk with his Messiah, but only that writings like this alleged *Gospel* are not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

372 Cf. *II Apocalypse of James* III-IV (found at Nag Hammadi). In the *Recognitions of Clement* 1, 68, James is designated as "the chief of the bishops" *(ANE* VIII, p. 94). In the same document the following instruction is given: "Observe the greatest caution, that you believe no teacher, unless he brings from Jerusalem the testi-

who alone "was allowed to enter the Sanctuary…to implore divine pardon for the people," as the son of a priest and as "a saint from his mother's womb."[374] It appears therefore that in the eyes of Judaeo. Christians, as well summarized by B. Bagatti,

> "James…was superior to Peter and Paul, because he was a descendant of David, of the same blood as Jesus, and therefore the legitimate representative of the sacerdotal race; and finally he had observed the Law to the point of heroism. No other apostle could claim such prerogatives."[375]

While this exaltation of James represents a later development, motivated apparently by the necessity to enhance the position of the Jerusalem Church at a time when she had faded into obscurity, the fact remains that James was seemingly chosen because he could claim blood relation to Christ and thus fulfill the role of a legitimate Christian "high-priest." This reveals how Jewish-oriented the new Christian "priesthood" and leadership really were in the city. More enlightening still for our investigation into the possible origin of Sunday observance in Jerusalem is the basic attitude of James and his party toward Jewish legal obligations.

In the year AD 49-50 the leaders of the Christian Church met in Jerusalem to deliberate on the basic requirements to be fulfilled by Gentiles who accepted the Christian faith. The Council was occasioned by the dissension which arose in Antioch when certain agitators came to the Church there from Judea, teaching: "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). These Judaizers apparently claimed to speak in the name of James, though he distinctly denied having authorized them to do this (Acts 15:24). To settle the dispute it was found necessary for Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem to discuss the problem with the "apostles and elders" (Acts 15:3). At the meeting there was "much debate" (Acts 15:7) and discourses were made by Peter, Paul and Barnabas (vv. 7, 12). At the end James, who appears to have acted as the presiding officer, proposed that Gentiles who became Christians were to be exempted from circumcision, but they were to be notified "to abstain from the pollutions of idols and unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood. For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues" (vv. 20-21).

The proposal was approved by "the apostles and elders" (v. 22) and immediate measures were taken

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monial of James the Lord's brother, or of whomsoever may come after him" (4, 35 *ANF* VIII, 142). The same attribution of primacy to James is found in the introduction of the *Epistle of Clement to James:* "Clement to James, the Lord, and the bishop of bishops, who rules Jerusalem, the holy church of the Hebrews, and the churches everywhere" *(ANF* VIII, p. 218).

Avram: This writing is an historical fact.

373 *Gospel of Thomas,* Logion 12: "The disciples said to Jesus: 'We know that thou will go away from us. Who is it who shall be great over us?' Jesus said to them: 'Wherever you have come, you will go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being'" (E. Hennecke [p. 87, note 371], I, p. 290).

Avram: This is another false saying because we know that 'heaven and earth' didn't come into being for Yeshua's half-brother James.

374 Hegesippus cited by Eusebius, *HE* 2, 23, 5-6; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20, 9, 1, who reports that equitable Jewish citizens denounced the High Priest Ananus to the procurator Albinus for his arbitrary execution of James. Apparently James enjoyed great favor with the Jewish people in the city. In a passage attributed to Josephus, the AD. 70 destruction of Jerusalem is seen as the right chastisement for the unjust death of James (see Eusebius, *HE* 2, 23, 20).

Avram: James wasn't a priest, and therefore, he wasn't a High Priest, so wouldn't have been able to have gone into the Holy of Holies. Also, what Josephus seems to have written about James's death being the punishment for Jerusalem's destruction, may have been inserted by someone other than Josephus.

375 B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), p. 70. The tradition that James transmitted to the Church both royal and sacerdotal power is found, for example, in *The History of Joseph the Carpenter* which makes Joseph a priest; Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses, PG* 41, 393-4; *Apocalypse of James* VII, 2, places on the mouth of the dying James these words: "The light proceeding from the light shall crown me" (cited by Bagatti [p. 86, note 365], p. 74).

to ensure its implementation. The decision of the council, which is mentioned three times (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25) with slight variations, provides some insight into the attitude of the Jerusalem Church toward the Jewish Law. Several points are noteworthy.

The exemption from the circumcision was granted *only* "to the brethren who are of the Gentiles" (v. 23). No innovation occurred for the Jewish Christians, who still circumcised their children. This is indicated not only by the existence after the council of a circumcision party, apparently supported by James (Gal. 2:12), that constantly harrassed the Gentile communities evangelized by Paul (Gal. 3:1; 5:12; 6:12; Phil. 3:2), but also by the explicit charge that "James and the elders" reported to Paul (approximately ten years later), namely: "You teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs" (Acts 21:22). The concern of the leaders of the Jerusalem Church for such a rumor (even at such late day, about AD 58) and their proposal to Paul to silence the accusation by undertaking a vow of purification at the Temple (Acts 21:24), reveals how profoundly attached they still were to Jewish institutions like circumcision.

Moreover, the very provisions proposed by James and adopted by the Council indicate that the Gentiles were not granted indiscriminate freedom from the Law. Of the four precepts of the decree, in fact, one is moral (abstention from unchastity") and three are ceremonial (abstention "from pollution of idols and from what is strangled and from blood"—v. 20). This undue concern for ritual defilement and food laws is reflective indeed of the great respect which still prevailed for the ceremonial law. To avoid offending the prejudices of Jewish Christians, Gentile converts were to abstain from eating anything offered to idols and even from accepting or participating in a Gentile domestic feast where food with idolatrous associations might be served. They also were to follow the Jewish food laws by not eating the flesh of animals killed by strangulation. This excessive concern of James and of the Apostles (Acts 1 :22) to respect Jewish scruples regarding food and association with the Gentiles, hardly allows us to imagine that a weightier matter such as Sabbath observance had been unanimously abrogated.[376]

But how can some interpret the silence of the Council on the Sabbath question as "the most eloquent proof that the observance of Sunday had been recognized by the entire apostolic Church and had been adopted by the Pauline Churches"?[377] That such a drastic change in the day of worship had been unanimously accomplished and accepted, without provoking dissension, is hard to believe in view of several factors. The prevailing attitude of the Jerusalem Church, as we have already noticed, was characterized by intransigent respect and observance of Jewish customs and institutions. In such a climate it was practically impossible to change the date of a millenarian institution like the Sabbath, which was still highly respected.

The statement which James made to support his proposal is also significant in this regard: "for from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues" (Acts 15:21). The connection between James' proposal (v. 20) and this explanatory statement (v. 21) has been variously understood. Some take it as meaning that Jewish Christians need not fear that Gentile freedom would undermine the observance of the Mosaic laws, "being still read every Sabbath in the Christian synagogues or congregations.[378] Others understand the verse as

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[376] The concern of the circumcision party, apparently supported by James (Gal. 2:12), even after the Jerusalem Council, to urge circumcision upon Gentile converts, is indicative of little change in the attitude of Jewish Christians toward Mosaic regulations (cf. Gal. 5:12; 6:12; Phil. 3:2; Acts 15:1-2, 5).

Avram: Bacchiocchi's understanding of the four rules of James (Acts 15:20), is a standard Christian interpretation. The rules, though, are an inherent oneness as all four speak of, and prohibit, the thing that would sever the Gentile believer from His Lord and salvation. The four rules are acts of sacrificial-sexual idolatry. For more on this see *The Lifting of the Veil: Acts 15:20-21* by Avram Yehoshua. You can read it at http://seedofabraham.net/The-Lifting-of-the-Veil.pdf.

[377] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 219; P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* pp. 56-57, similarly argues that "the fact that we find no hint of such [i.e., controversy over the Sabbath], especially at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), indicates that in this matter the entire apostolic church, including the Jewish party, was in agreement. First-day worship, then, was not a Pauline invention."

meaning that since the precepts of the Law of Moses were diligently taught every Sabbath, Gentile Christians must be careful not to offend the prejudices of their Jewish fellow-believers.[379] Still others interpret it as meaning that the Gentiles would certainly not find the prohibition arbitrary or harsh since they were well acquainted with the Levitical regulations from their habitual attendance at the synagogue on the Sabbath.[380] F. F. Bruce thinks that James,'

> "observation was perhaps intended to calm the apprehensions of the Pharisaic party in the Jerusalem Church, in whose eyes it was specially important that the whole Torah should be taught among the Gentiles."[381]

Though the above interpretations apply James' remark to different people (Gentile Christian, Jewish Christian, both, and the Pharisaic party) they all recognize that both in his proposal and in its justification James reaffirms the binding nature of the Mosaic Law which was customarily preached and read every Sabbath in the synagogues. The manifestation of such an excessive respect by the Council for the Mosaic ceremonial law, and James' explicit reference to the customary reading and preaching from it on the Sabbath in the synagogues, exclude categorically the hypothesis that the Sabbath had already been replaced by Sunday.

The last visit of Paul to Jerusalem (AD 58-60), to which we alluded earlier, further evidences the commitment of the Jerusalem Church to the observance of the Law. Luke's mention that Paul "was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16) and that they had spent the days of "Unleavened Bread" at Philippi (Acts 20:6), indicates that Christians still regulated their lives by the normative Jewish liturgical calendar. More enlightening, however, is the account of what happened in Jerusalem itself. James and the Elders, after Paul had "related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry" (Acts 21:19), reported to Paul:

> "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed: *they are all zealous for the Law,* and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs" (Acts 21:20-21).

The profound loyalty of the leadership of the Jerusalem Church to Jewish religious traditions is self-evident. Not only James and the elders informed Paul that the many thousands of Jewish members of their Church were *"all zealous for the Law"* (Acts 21:20), but they even confronted the Apostle with the rumor that he dissuaded *Jewish* believers from practicing ancestral customs such as the circumcision handed down by Moses. Wishing to believe that their misgivings were unfounded (and indeed there is no evidence for their truth), James and the elders proposed that Paul discredit the malicious accusation and prove that he himself *"lived in observance of the Law"* (Acts 21:24) by undergoing a purificatory rite at the Temple together with four Church members who apparently had contracted ceremonial defilement. By this, it was felt, the multitude of Jerusalem believers as well as the rest of the population in the city could see for themselves that the Apostle still conformed to the Law of Moses.

This concern of the leadership of the Church to reassure the Jewish believers in Palestine of Paul's respect for ancestral customs suggests, as noted by R. C. H. Lenski, on the one hand, that members had suffered possibly because of false rumors regarding Paul, and on the other hand that "they still retained their Jewish way of living, circumcised their children, ate kosher, kept the Sabbath, etc."[382]

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[378] Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* 1956, p. 548. The author provides a concise synthesis of the various views.

[379] Cf. F. F. Bruce (p. 87, note 366), p. 312, note 41: "A variant interpretation of v. 21 makes James mean that, since Jewish communities are to be found in every city, their scruples are to be respected."

[380] Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church,* 1975, pp. 236- 237: "Perhaps all that James wanted to do was to underscore the fact that Gentiles who had been in the habit of attending the synagogue (available almost everywhere) were well acquainted with the Levitical regulations applicable to Gentiles, so the request of the Council should not be regarded as arbitrary or harsh."

[381] F. F. Bruce (p. 87, note 366), p. 312.

This undoubtedly facilitated the conversion of "many thousands" (Acts 21:20) of Jews, inasmuch as the acceptance of the Gospel did not require significant changes in their life style.

This excessive attachment of the Jerusalem Church to Jewish religious customs may perhaps perplex the Christian who regards the Mother Church of Christendom as the ideal model of his religious life. One must not forget, however, that Christianity sprang up out of the roots and trunk of Judaism. The early Jewish converts viewed the acceptance of Christ *not as the destruction of their religious framework, but as the fulfillment of their Messianic expectations which enhanced their religious life with a new dimension*. The process of separating the shadow from the reality, the transitory from the permanent, was gradual and not without difficulty.

Paul's conduct also deserves consideration. Did he violate his conviction by accepting the proposal to purify himself at the Temple? It hardly seems so since, for instance, he was not ashamed to mention the incident when defending himself before Felix (Acts 24:17-18). Some suggest in fact that since the Apostle had earlier assumed a Nazirite vow on his own initiative (Acts 18:18) at Cenchreae, he was already planning to offer sacrifice at the Temple to complete his vow. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that there is no reference to Paul's taking a vow in Jerusalem.[383] Furthermore, as F. J. A. Hort remarks, "the time spoken of appears too short for him to begin and complete a vow.[384] It seems plausible to assume therefore that Paul had purposely planned to bring to his "nation alms and offerings" (Acts 24:17) to draw the Jewish and Gentile wings of the Church closer together.[385] To accomplish this objective, he evidently felt that he needed to provide also a tangible demonstration of his personal loyalty to Law and customs. This concern of the Apostle to reassure the Jewish believers of his respect for the Law reveals not only the loyalty of the latter to Jewish religious customs, but also Paul's unwillingness to offend his Jewish brethren on such matters (if a question of principle was not involved). This attitude of the Apostle suffices to discredit any attempt to attribute to him the responsibility for the abrogation of the Sabbath and introduction of Sunday observance.

Christ's pericope regarding the flight from Jerusalem is also significant in this regard. In Matthew, a Gospel addressed to Jewish-Christians, Christ's admonition is reported thus: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath" (24:20). In our earlier analysis of this text we concluded that the passage, as stated by E. Lohse, "offers an example of the keeping of the Sabbath by Jewish Christians."[386] This saying may well reflect the concern of the Jerusalem Church for the observance of the Sabbath not simply on account of its actual reference to the *city,* but especially because according to the tradition of the early Church the Gospel of Matthew was composed in Aramaic (Avram: Hebrew) for the Jewish Christians of Palestine (sic: Israel; Mt. 2:20; 8:10; 9:33; 10:23, etc.).

The foregoing analysis of the New Testament sources regarding the Jerusalem Church has firmly established that the primitive Christian community there was composed primarily of and administered by converted Jews who retained a deep attachment to Jewish religious customs such as Sabbath-keeping. It is therefore impossible to assume that a new day of worship was introduced by the Jerusalem

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[382] Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 878. The author suggests that "these Jewish believers in Palestine suffered because of false rumors regarding Paul" (bc. cit.).

[383] Richard B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 1964, p. 414, remarks: "Indeed the proposal itself was probably suggested by his [i.e., Paul's] own conduct. For on his last visit to Jerusalem he had fulfilled the vow of a Nazirite (Acts 18:18): and as he speaks of himself (in Acts 24:17) as having come 'to make offerings,' it is not unlikely that he was bound on this occasion also under some vow of thanksgiving."

[384] F. J. A. Hort, *Judaistic Christianity,* 1890, pp. 109-110. His conclusion is that "though not mentioned in Acts, he [Paul] was already proposing to offer sacrifice in the Temple on his own account, possibly in connection with a previous vow, possibly also, I cannot but suspect, in connection with the Gentile contribution to the Jewish Christians, not mentioned in chapter 21, but clearly mentioned in 24:17."

[385] Everet F. Harrison (p. 90, note 380), p. 328, points out that Paul "could not have rested content with handing over the fund that his churches had raised if the real objective of the trip—a unifying of the Jewish and Gentile wings of the church—was not achieved."

[386] E. Lohse, *"Sabbaton" TDNT* VIII, p. 29. The passage is discussed in Chapter II, pp. 69-71.

Church prior to the destruction of the city in AD 70. We might add that in view of the enormous influence exerted on the Church at large by the Jewish Christian leadership and membership, it would have been practically impossible for any Church anywhere to introduce Sunday observance prior to AD 70. W. D. Davies, a well-recognized specialist on early Christianity, concisely and sagaciously summarizes the religious situation of the time:

> "Everywhere, especially in the East of the Roman Empire, there would be Jewish Christians whose outward way of life *would not be markedly different from that of the Jews*. They took for granted that the gospel was continuous with Judaism; for them the new covenant, which Jesus had set up at the Last Supper with his disciples and sealed by his death, did not mean that the covenant made between God and Israel was no longer in force. *They still observed the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles; they also continued to be circumcised, to keep the weekly Sabbath and the Mosaic regulations concerning food*. According to some scholars, *they must have been so strong that right up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 they were the dominant element in the Christian movement*."[387]

The Jerusalem Church After AD 70

The question may be raised at this point, is it possible that the Christian community of Jerusalem introduced Sunday worship in the place of Sabbath-keeping after the exodus from the city which occurred prior to its destruction in AD 70? The historical significance of the Jewish-Christian abandonment of the city and migration to Pella (a Transjordan city in the northern region of Perea) must not be underestimated. J. Lebreton conveniently summarizes the importance of the event:

> "The exodus had decisive consequences for the Church of Jerusalem: the last link was broken which bound the faithful to Judaism and to the Temple; down to the end they had loved its magnificent construction, its ceremonies and its memories; now there remained of it not a stone upon stone; God had weaned them from it. And this exodus finally alienated Jewish opinion from them; they had abandoned Jerusalem at the hour of its greatest tribulation; their faith was, then, not that of their nation, and they were seeking salvation elsewhere."[388]

Did the abandoning of the city by the Judaeo-Christian community result in their alienation also from Jewish institutions such as the Sabbath? F. A. Regan assumes this very position in his dissertation and suggests that the year AD 70 marks the decisive break between Sabbath and Sunday. He writes:

> "Can one point to any one event in particular, in which the decisive break occurred between the Sabbath and the day we call Sunday? A most likely date would probably be the year AD 70 with the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem."[389]

Undoubtedly the exodus and the destruction of Jerusalem had decisive effects on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. There are however significant historical indications which exclude

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[387] W. D. Davies, "Paul and Jewish Christianity," *Judéo- christianisme,* 1972, p. 72.

[388] J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller, *The History of the Primitive Church,* 1949, I, p. 306. Three scholars especially have in recent times challenged the historicity of the account of the flight to Pella given by Eusebius *(HE* 3, 5, 2-3): J. Munck, "Jewish Christianity in Post-Apostolic Times," *New Testament Studies* 6 (1959-60): 103-104; G. Strecker, *Das Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen,* 1958, pp. 229-231; 5. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church,* 1951, p. 169. The objections to the migration to Pella are based on an analysis of the references found in the *Clementine Recognitions,* Josephus, Epiphanius and Eusebius. M. Simon, "La migration à Pella. Légende ou réalité," *Judéo-christianisme,* pp. 37-54, shows how objections cannot stand if one takes into account the contamination of the community by heterodox sects which settled around Pella and the nexus of the flight with the martyrdom of James.

[389] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 18.

the possibility that already back in the year AD 70 or soon afterwards the Judaeo-Christians of Palestine broke away from Sabbath-keeping and introduced Sunday observance. We shall briefly consider some of the more pertinent historical data.

The historians, Eusebius (ca. AD 260-340) and Epiphanius (ca. AD 315-403), both inform us that the Church of Jerusalem up to the seige of Hadrian (AD 135) consisted of converted Hebrews and was administered by 15 bishops from the "circumcision," that is, of Jewish extraction.[390] Their basic attitude seems to have been *one of deep loyalty to Jewish religious customs*. Eusebius, for instance, reports that both the conservative and the liberal wings of the Ebionites (a Judaeo-Christian group) were "*zealous* to insist on the *literal observance of the Law*."[391]

The Ebionites

Some argue that Eusebius' statement that the liberal group of the Ebionites observed not only "the Sabbath and the rest of the discipline of the Jews" but also "the Lord's day as a memorial of the resurrection of the Saviour," means that some Jewish Christians must have observed Sunday from the earliest times. The assumption is that these Jewish Christians would not have appropriated the worship day of the Gentile Church after they had broken away from it.[392] The weakness of this thesis is that it rests on several gratuitous suppositions. It is assumed, for instance, that the liberal group of the Ebionites who observed Sunday represent the followers of the "original Sunday practice of Jewish Christianity" while the conservative group who kept the Sabbath represent some backsliders who "for some reason or other may have later given it [i.e. Sunday] up."[393] In the light of the profound respect for the Law which, as we noticed above, characterized the primitive Jewish Christians, it is indeed hard to believe that these who began as liberals turned into conservatives later and not vice versa. It should be noted that Eusebius wrote his account of the Ebionites almost two and a half centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem, *without specifying the time of their adoption of Sunday observance*. Note that though Irenaeus (ca. AD 130-200), a much earlier source, provides a report almost identical to that of Eusebius, he makes no mention of any Sunday observance.[394] It is possible therefore that a group of Jewish-Christians, desiring to join the main body of the Church, adopted Sunday observance at a later date while still retaining their Sabbath-keeping.

Another false supposition is that the Ebionites represent or at least can be related to the primitive Jewish-Christians. It is true that both stressed the importance of the observance of the Law, but they differed radically from each other on their view of the nature of Christ. The Ebionites' Christology was in fact like that of the Gnostics, regarding Christ as a plain and common man "who was the fruit of the intercourse of a man with Mary."[395] Such a Christological error can hardly be attributed to the primitive Jewish-Christians. Therefore, on account of such a fundamental doctrinal difference the Ebionites, as well noted by J. Daniélou,

> "should not be confused purely and simply with the heirs of the first, Aramaic-

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[390] Eusebius, *HE* 4, 5, 2-11; Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 70, 10, *PG* 42, 355-356.

[391] Eusebius, *HE* 3, 27, 3, trans. by Kirsopp Lake, *Eusebius*, *The Ecclesiastical History,* 1949, I, p. 263. (Hereafter cited as Lake, Eusebius History.)

[392] Advocators of this view are listed above, see p. 82, note 345.

[393] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 217-218; cf. P. K. Jewett, *Lord's Day,* p. 57.

[394] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 7, 26, 2, *ANF* I, p. 352, writes: "Those who are called Ebionites…practice circumcision and persevere in those customs according to the Law and Jewish way of life and pray toward Jerusalem, as if it were the House of God."

[395] Eusebius, *HE* 3, 27, 2, *NPNF* I, 159; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1, 26, 2, *ANF* I, p. 352, explicitly associates the Ebionites' view of Christ with that of Gnostics such as Cerinthus and Carpocrates. Both "represented Jesus as having ***not*** been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation."

speaking Christians who fled to Tranjordan after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70."[396]

Marcel Simon, in fact, argues on the basis of information provided by Epiphanius that,

> "the sect of the Ebionites appears to be the result of a confluence between original Jewish Christian and a pre-Christian Jewish sect."[397]

The origin of this heterodox Jewish-Christian sect can hardly be placed in New Testament times. We know for instance that at the time of Justin, Jewish-Christians were characterized not by Christological heresy, but by two opposite tendencies toward the Law: some who did not demand Gentile Christians "to be circumcised, or to keep the Sabbath or to observe any other such ceremonies; "others who wanted "to compel Gentiles…to live in all respects according to the Law given by Moses."[398] Note should be taken of the fact that according to Justin's account, both the milder and the stricter class of Jewish-Christians stressed the observance of the Sabbath. No mention is made of their keeping Sunday. If the Jewish Christians already had adopted Sunday in addition to their Sabbath-keeping, Justin almost certainly would have alluded to it sometime in his repeated debates on the Sabbath issue reported in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. What better way to encourage his Jewish friend Trypho and his people to observe Sunday than by pointing to their kinsmen, the Jewish Christians, who were already doing so! But the absence of any reference to Sunday observance by Jewish Christians, coupled with the very efforts Justin makes to show from the Old Testament the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath, presupposes that in his time Sunday observance was alien to both Jews and Jewish-Christians.

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[396] J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity,* 1964, p. 56. This distinction is made also by H. J. Schoeps, *Aus Frühchristlicher Zeit,* 1950, p. 282.

Avram: For centuries many scholars wrongly thought that Aramaic was the common language of the people of Israel in the days of Messiah Yeshua and the Apostles, but because of recent archeological finds scholars now are convinced that Hebrew was the language of Israel in those days. For an article on this ask Avram for *Yakov Spoke Hebrew.* The 'Yakov' in the title of the article is the half-brother of Yeshua, known also as James, who was the *Nasi* (Prince) over all the Jewish believers in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13f; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9; cf. James 1:1ff.).

[397] M. Simon (p. 92, note 388), p. 48. Simon bases his conclusion on the striking similarity between the beliefs of the Ebionites and those of a pre-Christian Jewish sect called "Ναασαραιοι—Nasarenes" (to be distinguished from the modern Christian Church of the Nazarenes) reported by Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 1, 18. He rightly affirms that "it is impossible to attribute…to the community of Jerusalem the very same particular doctrines professed by the Ebionites of the Pseudo-Clementine" (ibid., p. 48, note 27).

[398] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 47, *ANF* I, 218. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace recognize this fact and emphasize that while at the time of Justin, Jewish-Christians were distinguished not by "doctrinal heresy" but by "two opposite tendencies" toward the Jewish Law, a few decades later, at the time of Irenaeus, "the distinction which Justin draws between the milder and stricter class is no longer drawn: all are classed together in the ranks of heretics" *(NPNF* I, p. 158, note 7). The two writers also note that "it has been the custom of historians to carry this distinction [i.e., between Ebionites and Nazarenes] back into apostolic times, and to trace down to the time of Epiphanius the continuous existence of a milder party—the Nazarenes—and of a stricter party—the Ebionites; but this distinction Nitzsch *(Dogmengesch,* p. 37f.) has shown to be entirely groundless. The division which Epiphanius makes is different from that of Justin, as well as from that of Origen and Eusebius" (bc. cit.). It is possible that the Ebionites developed into a heterodox sect adopting Gnostic views of Christ, as a result of their being rejected by Gentile Christians. The separation was apparently encouraged by the existing repressive measures of Rome against the Jews which we shall discuss below in Chapter VI, pp. 171-184. Justin mentions in fact that in his time there were many Gentile Christians who did not "venture to have any intercourse with or extend hospitality" to those Jewish-Christians who "believed in and obeyed" Christ but who also observed Jewish institutions. He hastens to add, however: "I do not agree with them" *(Dialogue* 47, *ANF* I, 218). It is possible, therefore, that some Jewish-Christians, rejected by the main stream of Christendom, drew closer at this time to Jewish Gnostic sects, adopting their heretical Christology and Sunday observance (some at least). By the time of Irenaeus they had come to be known as "Ebionites," since the Bishop identifies them explicitly by that name *(Adversus haereses* 1, 26, 2).

The Nazarenes

That primitive Jewish Christians did not observe Sunday is supported also by the testimony of Epiphanius regarding the "orthodox" Jewish Christian sect of the Nazarenes. The Bishop reports that,

> "the sect originated after the flight from Jerusalem, when the disciples were living in Pella, having left the city according to Christ's word and migrated to the mountains because of its imminent siege. Therefore in this manner it arose when those of whom we spoke were living in Perea. From there the heresy of the Nazarenes first began."[399]

These Nazarenes, whose existence in the fourth century is attested even by Jerome,[400] appear to be the direct descendants of the Christian community of Jerusalem which migrated to Pella. M. Simon well assesses their identity when he writes that,

> "they are characterized essentially by their tenacious attachment to Jewish observances. If they became heretics in the eyes of the Mother Church, it is simply because they remained fixed on outmoded positions. They well represent, though Epiphanius is energetically refusing to admit it, the very direct descendants of the primitive community, of which our author knows that it was designated by the Jews by the same name of Nazarenes."[401]

If the Nazarenes, as most scholars maintain, are indeed the "direct descendants of the primitive community of Jerusalem," we would expect these (and not the Ebionites) to have retained the original practice of Jewish Christianity. One should read what Epiphanius has to say about them, particularly with regard to their day of worship. In spite of the Bishop's attempt to denigrate them as "heretics" in the rather extensive account that he gives of their beliefs, there is nothing heterodoxical about them. After identifying them with the Jews for using the same Old Testament books (hardly a heresy!), he continues:

> "The Nazarenes do not differ in any essential thing from them [i.e. Jews], *since they practice the custom and doctrines prescribed by the Jewish Law*, except that they believe in Christ. They believe in the resurrection of the dead and that the universe was created by God. They preach that God is one and that Jesus Christ is his Son. They are very learned in the Hebrew language. They read the Law…Therefore they differ both from the Jews and from the Christians; from the former, because they believe in Christ; from the true Christians because *they fulfill till now Jewish rites as the circumcision, the Sabbath and others*."[402]

This picture of the Nazarenes matches very well that of the Jerusalem Church we have reconstructed earlier. The possibility exists therefore that *the Nazarenes represent the survival of both the ethnic and theological legacy of primitive Jewish Christianity*.[403] The fact that they retained Sabbath-keeping as one of their distinguishing marks shows persuasively that this was the original day of worship of the

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[399] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 29, 7, *PG* 42, 402.

[400] Jerome reports to have come across the Nazarenes in "Beroes, a city of Syria" *(De Viris ill*. 3, *NPNF* 2nd, III, p. 362).

[401] M. Simon (p. 92, note 388), pp. 47-48; cf. B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), pp. 31-35; J. Danielou (p. 94, note 396), p. 56, also views the Nazarenes as the descendants of the Aramaic-speaking Christians who fled to Transjordan and who "separated from the rest of the Church because they regarded the Jewish observances of Sabbath and circumcision as still of obligation."

[402] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 29, 7, *PG* 41, 402.

[403] B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), pp. 30-31, remarks: "The Nazarenes always considered themselves the equal of the other Christians of Gentile stock, and they wished, as one of their exponents, the writer Hegesippus, says, to appear as true Christians distinct from the heretics, even those of their own stock" (Avram: i.e. the Ebionites).

Jerusalem Church and that no change from Sabbath to Sunday occurred among Palestinian Jewish Christians after the destruction of the city.

The Malediction of the Christians

Another indication of the survival of Sabbath observance among Jewish-Christians in Palestine is provided, though indirectly, by the test introduced by the rabbinical authorities to detect the presence of Christians in the synagogue. The test consisted in a curse that was incorporated in the daily *prayer—Shemoneh Esreh—and* was to be pronounced against the Christians by any participant in the synagogue service. Marcel Simon reports the Palestinian text of the curse and suggests also the date of its introduction, which most scholars accept:

> "It is on the suggestion of R. Gamaliel II, a little after the fall of Jerusalem and very likely in the neighborhood of the year AD 80, that was inserted in the *Schemoneh Esreh* the famous formula against the *Minim:"*
>
> 'May the apostate not have any hope and may the empire of pride be uprooted promptly in our days. May the Nazarenes and the Minim perish in an instant, may they all be erased from the Book of Life, that they may not be counted among the righteous. Blessed be Thou, Oh God, who bringest down the proud.'[404]

That this malediction was regularly pronounced in the synagogues is confirmed by the testimonies of several Fathers.[405] Jerome, for instance, writes explicitly, "three times daily in all the synagogues under the name of the Nazarenes you curse the Christians.[406] The purpose of the formula was not simply to curse the Christians as apostate, but as Marcel Simon observes, it constituted "a truthful test" to discover them. He explains that,

> "since all the members of the community could be called upon in turn, in the absence of the official priests, to officiate in the public worship, the method was certain: the participant contaminated with heresy had necessarily to hesitate to pronounce, with this benediction, his own condemnation. The Talmud stated very clearly:"
>
> > 'Whenever someone made a mistake in any benediction of the *Minim,* he was to be called back to his place because supposedly he was a *Min*.'[407]

The fact that after the destruction of Jerusalem a test was introduced by the Palestinian rabbinical authorities to bar the Christians' presence and/or participation in the synagogue service, indicates that many Jewish-Christians in Palestine still considered themselves essentially as Jews.[408] Their accep-

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[404] M. Simon, *Verus Israel: etudes sur les relations entre chrétiens et juif s dans l'empire romain,* 1964, p. 235. The date AD 80-90 for the introduction of the malediction is accepted by practically all scholars. For an extensive bibliography see W. Schrage, "*aposunagogos*" *TDNT* VII, p. 848; James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue,* 1934, pp. 77-78 corroborates the date of the curse by the following argumentation: "This declaration, the Birkath-ha-minim, was composed by Samuel the Small, who lived in the second half of the first century. His exact date we do not know, but he was a contemporary of Gamaliel II, who presided at Jabne from 80 to 110, and was also acquainted with two rabbis who were killed in the capture of Jerusalem in 70. We may therefore conclude that he was older than Gamaliel, and date the malediction which he composed to between 80 and 90"; cf. also C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence* (p. 84, note 354), p. 4.

[405] Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 16; Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 29, 9, *PG* 41, 404-405; Jerome, *In Isaianr, PL* 24, 87 and 484.

Avram: Actually, it wasn't Gentile Christians that the curse was directed to, but Jewish believers in Yeshua because they still remained Jewish, kept Torah and believed in Yeshua as the Messiah. The Rabbis could have cared less about what Gentiles believed or didn't believe.

[406] Jerome, *In Isaiam* 5, 18, *PL* 24, 87.

[407] M. Simon (p. 96, note 404), p. 236.

[408] James Parkes (p. 96, note 404), p. 78, notes that "the fact that the test was a statement made in the synagogue

tance of Christ as the Messiah did not preclude their attending the Sabbath services at the synagogue. The existence of this situation discredits therefore any attempt to make Jewish-Christians responsible at this time for the substitution of Sunday worship for Sabbath-keeping.

Hadrian's Policy

Additional indirect indications of the permanence of Sabbath observance in the Jerusalem Church after AD 70 are provided by the events connected with the destruction of the city by Hadrian in AD 135. The Emperor, after ruthlessly crushing the Bar Kochba revolt (AD 132-135), rebuilt on the ruins of Jerusalem a new Roman city, *Aelia Capitolina*.[409] At this time harsh restrictions were imposed on the Jews. They were expelled from the city, forbidden categorically to re-enter it and prohibited to practice their religion, particularly their two characteristic customs, the Sabbath and circumcision. The rabbinical sources speak abundantly of the restrictions imposed by Hadrian, whose reign is commonly referred to as "the age of persecution—*shemad*" or "the age of the *edict—gezarah*."[410] The following quotation is a sample of statements often found in the Talmud regarding Hadrian's anti-Jewish policies:

> "The Government of Rome had issued a decree that they should not study the Torah and that they should not circumcise their sons and that they should profane the Sabbath. What did Judah b. Shammu'a and his colleagues do? They went and consulted a certain matron whom all the Roman notables used to visit. She said to them: 'Go and make proclamation of your sorrows at night time.' They went and proclaimed at night, crying, 'Alas, in heaven's name, are we not your brothers, are we not the sons of one mother? Why are we different from every nation and tongue that you issue such harsh decrees against us?'"[411]

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service shows that at the time of making it the Judaeo-Christians still frequented the synagogue." This conclusion is shared also by Ernest L. Abel, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism,* 1943, p. 131: "The Jewish Christians…felt that their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah did not preclude their following the precepts of Judaism and they continued to attend the synagogue. Since they were Jews themselves, there was no way in which they could be identified unless they personally indicated their beliefs. As a result, the Jewish leaders adopted special methods for the detection of heretics. Foremost among these was the *Birkath-ha-Minim,* which was written by Shemuel ha-Qaton around AD 80."

[409] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 59, 12, 1, *LCL* VIII, p. 447, writes: "At Jerusalem he founded a city in the place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it *Aelia Capitolina,* and on the site of the Temple of the god he raised a new Temple to Jupiter."

[410] S. Krauss, "Barkokba," *Jewish Encyclopedia,* 1907, II, p. 509, synthesizes the dramatic situation, saying, "The Jews now passed through a time of bitter persecution; Sabbaths, festivals, the study of the Torah and circumcision were interdicted and it seemed as if Hadrian desired to annihilate the Jewish people…The subsequent era was one of danger (*sha'at hasekanah*) for the Jews of Palestine, during which the most important ritualistic observances were forbidden; for which reason the Talmud states (Geiger's 'Jud. Zeit.' i. 199, ii, 126; Weis, 'Dor,' ii, 131; Rev. Et. Juives,' xxxii. 41) that certain regulations were passed to meet the emergency. It was called the age of the edict ('gezarah') or of persecution ('shemad,' Shab. 60a; Caut. R. ii, 5)"; see also H. Graetz, *History of the Jews,* 1940, II, p. 425; 5. Grayzel, *A History of the Jews,* 1947, p. 187; 5. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* 1952, II, pp. 40-41, 107.

[411] *Rosh Hashanah* 19a in *The Babylonian Talmud,* trans. I. Epstein, 1938, XIII; p. 78; *Baba Bathra* 60b similarly states: "a Government has come to power which issues cruel decrees against us and forbids to us the observance of the Torah and the precepts…." *(Babylonian Talmud,* XXV, p. 246); see also *Sanhedrin* 11a, 14a; *Aboda Zarah* 8b; the anti-Jewish edicts of Hadrian regarding worship, which are found in the rabbinical sources have been brought together by Hamburger, in *Real-Encyclopaedie für Bibel and Talmud,* 2 ed., s.v. "Hadrianische Verfolgungsedikte"; J. Derenbourg, who provides a well documented treatment of Hadrian's war and policies, writes: "The government of Rome prohibited, under penalty of death, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath and the study of the Law" *(Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine,* 1867, p. 430; see p. 97, note 410 for additional rabbinical source references); referring to Hadrian's anti-Jewish edicts, Jean Juster similarly notes: "Their existence cannot be disputed since the rabbinic sources are in

These repressive measures taken by the Emperor against Jews affected not only the general attitude of Christians at large toward the Jews, but especially the ethnic composition and theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church. On the latter Eusebius reports:

> "And thus, when the city had been emptied of the Jewish nation and had suffered the total destruction of its ancient inhabitants, it was colonized by a different race, and the Roman city which subsequently arose changed its name and was called Aelia, in honor of the emperor Aelius Adrian. And as the Church there was now composed of Gentiles, the first one to assume the government of it after the bishops of the circumcision was Marcus."[412]

The fact that as a result of Hadrian's edict Judaeo-Christian members and bishops were replaced by Gentile ones, indicates that a clear distinction was made at that time between the two. We would assume that the distinction was limited not only to the racial factor, but that it included also a new theological orientation in particular toward characteristic Jewish festivities such as Passover and the Sabbath. This hypothesis is supported by the testimony of Epiphanius, who in his lengthy report about the controversy over the date of the celebration of Passover states:

> "The controversy arose [*etarakthe*—literally, was stirred up] after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision [A. D. 135] and it has continued until our time."[413]

The Bishop makes specific reference to the fifteen Judaeo-Christian bishops who administered the Church of Jerusalem up to AD 135 and who up to that time had practiced the Quartodeciman Passover since they based themselves on a document known as the *Apostolic Constitutions—diataseis ton apostolon*—where the following rule is given:

> "you shall not change the calculation of time, but you shall celebrate it at the same time as your brethren who came out from the circumcision. With them observe the Passover."[414]

Though Epiphanius is not always a trustworthy source, his information about the observance of the Quartodeciman Passover by the Jerusalem Church up to AD 135, and about the controversy which arose at that time deserves credibility for several reasons. The report harmonizes well with what we know about the theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church from the sources we examined earlier. Moreover, in this instance the Bishop is merely reporting what the Audians[415] (a sect that refused to

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agreement on the matter; the deep hatred which is shown toward Hadrian—which is deeper even than that shown to Titus—all of this shows that Hadrian must have done very grievous things against the Jews" *(Les Juif s dans l'empire romain* 1965, p. 226, note 3); in the *Midrash Rabbah* (eds. H. Freedman, M. Simon, 1939) also occur frequent references to Hadrian's decree. As a comment to *Exodus* 15, 7, it says for instance: "For even if an enemy decrees that they should desecrate the Sabbath, abolish circumcision or serve idols, they [i.e., the Jews] suffer martyrdom rather than be assimilated" (93:170); under *Ecclesiastes* 2, 17, it says: "Imikanton wrote to the emperor Hadrian, saying, 'If it is the circumcision you hate, there are also the Ishmaelites; if it is the Sabbath observer, there are also the Samaritans. Behold, you only hate this people [Israel]'" (8:66-67); cf. also S.W. Baron (p. 97, note 410), II, p. 107.

[412] Eusebius, *HE* 4, 6,4, *NPNF* 2nd, I, pp. 177-178.

[413] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 70, 10, *PG* 42, 355-356.

[414] Ibid., *PG* 42, 357-358; in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* a similar statement is found: "It behooves you then, our brethren, in the days of the Pascha to make inquiry with diligence and to keep your fast with all care. And do you make a beginning when your brethren who are of the People keep the Passover" *(Didascalia Apostolorum,* 21, 17, ed. R. H. Connolly, 1929, p. 187. Some scholars because of this similarity identify the *Apostolic Constitutions* quoted by Epiphanius with the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. The text quoted by Epiphanius, however, differs substantially from that of the Syriac Version of the *Didascalia* which has come down to us. For a discussion of the problem, see M. Richard, "La question pascale au IIe siecle," *L'Orient Syrien* 6 (1961): 185-186.

[415] Concerning the Audians see *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique,* 1903, s.v. "Audiens" by A. Bareille; *Dictionnaire d'histoire et géographie ecclesiastique,* 1931, s.v. "Audée" by A. Reignier.

accept the decree of the Council of Nicaea on the Paschal reckoning) believed, namely, that they were following the Apostles' example and authority (as expressed in the *Apostolic Constitutions)* by observing Passover on Nisan 14. Epiphanius does not challenge the authenticity of this alleged Apostolic decree, but argues gratuitously that the Audians had misunderstood its meaning, since it was the intention of the Apostles that all should come to the unity of faith by eventually adopting the Easter-Sunday date in place of Nisan 14. The weakness of such an interpretation is shown by his very mention (of what apparently was a known and accepted fact) that the controversy over the date of the celebration of Passover *"arose after the time of the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision*," thus clearly implying that prior to that time the Quartodeciman reckoning was unanimously followed.[416]

The Passover controversy, which we shall later examine, was apparently provoked by a minority group who refused to abandon the Quartodeciman practice and to accept the Easter-Sunday innovation.[417] The fact that the controversy over the Passover date arose not prior to, but at the time when the new anti-Judaic policy of the Emperor caused a reconstitution of the Jerusalem Church with Gentile members and leaders, suggests, first, that up to that time the Church, composed primarily of Judaeo-Christians, *had been loyal to basic Jewish religious institutions, such as Passover and the Sabbath*; and secondly that certain changes, particularly in the liturgical calendar, *were occasioned by the new repressive measures taken by the Emperor against Jewish religious practices*. This question will receive further consideration in our study of the relationship between Easter-Sunday and the weekly Sunday. We shall notice then that apparently both festivities, which were and still are interrelated, originated contemporaneously in the same place and owing to the same causes.[418]

These historical data which we have briefly considered discredit any attempt to make the Jerusalem Church, prior to AD 135, the champion of liturgical innovations such as Sunday worship. We have found that of all the Christian Churches, this was seemingly both racially and theologically the one closest and most loyal to Jewish religious traditions.[419] After AD 135 when Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan Roman colony—Aelia *Capitolina*—it lost its political and religious prestige for both Jews and Christians. It would be vain therefore after this time to probe further into the origin of Sunday observance among the small new Gentile Church in the city, of which nothing is known for the second century with the exception of few uncertain names of bishops.

Our investigation into the origin of Sunday observance has so far assumed a negative approach. It has shown how unfounded is the claim that the primitive community of Jerusalem instituted Sunday worship to commemorate the Easter resurrection and/or the appearances of Christ by means of the Lord's Supper celebration. This effort, however, has not provided an alternative answer to the question of the place, time and causes of the origin of Sunday keeping. To this task therefore we shall now address ourselves, endeavoring to reconstruct a picture which we contend is historically accurate.

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[416] For a more detailed discussion of Epiphanius' testimony see my *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday,* 1975, pp. 45-52.

[417] B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), p. 10, is of the opinion that the Passover con- troversy in Jerusalem was provoked by the return of Judaeo-Christians to the city, since about sixty years later Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, facing opposition from Quartodecimans, appealed for help to his teacher Clement of Alexandria *(PG* 9, 1490). This does not exclude the possibility that even among the new Gentile membership some refused to accept the new Easter-Sunday date. The question is discussed further below pp. 199-203.

[418] See below pp. 198f.

[419] B. Bagatti (p. 86, note 365), p. 33, provides additional indications for the survival of the "Jewish imprint" in the Jerusalem Church even after the time of Hadrian. He writes: "On the 'Jewish' character that remained in the church at that time we have various testimonies, as that of Bardesanus (180-223) who speaking *(PS* 2, 605) of his disciples, affirmed that they observe Sun- day and not the Sabbath, and that they do not circumcise 'as the Christians of Judea'. A letter inserted into the pseudo*Clementine Books (PG* 2, 31-56) under the name of Clement, given the title: 'To James, Lord and Bishop of Bishops, who rules the holy Church of the Jews of Jerusalem.'" Bagatti continues submitting significant historical data indicating the presence of two rival communities (one Jewish and the other Gentile Christian) till well into the 5th century (see pp. 10-14). The survival in Jerusalem of such strong Judaeo-Christian influence for centuries after the first destruction of the city, discredits any attempt to make AD 70 the historical breaking point between Sabbath and Sunday.

Chapter VI

ROME AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

In examining the possible origin of Sunday observance among primitive Jewish-Christians, we have just concluded that it is futile to seek among them for traces of its origin because of their basic loyalty to Jewish religious customs such as Sabbath-keeping.[420] We shall therefore direct our search for the origin of Sunday to Gentile Christian circles. We would presume that these, having no previous religious ties with Judaism, and being now in conflict with the Jews, would more likely substitute for Jewish festivities such as the Sabbath and Passover new dates and meaning.

The adoption of new religious feast days and their enforcement on the rest of Christendom could presumably be accomplished in a Church where the severance from Judaism occurred early and through an ecclesiastical power which enjoyed wide recognition. The Church of the capital of the Empire, whose authority was already felt far and wide in the second century, appears to be the most likely birth-place of Sunday observance.[421] To test the validity of this hypothesis, we shall now proceed briefly to survey those significant religious, social and political conditions which prevailed both in the city and in the Church of Rome.

Predominance of Gentile Converts

Paul's addresses in his Epistle to the Romans, particularly the last chapters, presuppose that the Christian community of Rome was composed primarily of a Gentile Christian majority (chapters 11, 13) and a Judaeo-Christian minority (14f.). 'I am speaking to you Gentiles' (11:13), the Apostle explicitly affirms, and in chapter 16 he greets the majority of believers who carry a Greek or Latin name.[422] The predominance of Gentile members and their conflict with the Jews, inside and outside the Church, may have necessitated a differentiation between the two communities in Rome earlier than in the East.

Leonard Goppelt, in his study on the origin of the Church, supports this view when he writes: 'The Epistle presupposes in Rome, as one would expect, a Church with a Gentile Christian majority (11,

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[420] This is Chapter VI of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 165-212.

[421] The role of leadership of the Church of Rome in the second century is discussed on p. #f.

[422] This *per se* is not a decisive argument, since, as Harry J. Leon demonstrates from archeological inscriptions of ancient Rome, many Jews preferred Latin and Greek names. He submits a compilation of 254 examples of Latin names and 175 examples of Greek names used by Jews in ancient Rome (*The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 1960, pp. 93-121). That the majority of the members in Rome were pagan converts is clearly indicated by Paul's statement in Romans 1:13-15, where he says: 'I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome…in order that I may reap some harvest among you *as well as among the rest of the Gentiles*' (emphasis supplied). Apparently this Gentile Christian community of Rome had limited contacts with the Jews prior to Paul's arrival. This is suggested, for instance, by the fact that when Paul met with the Jewish leaders three days after his arrival, they told him: 'We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brethren coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you' (Acts 28:21). Marta Sordi, *Il Cristianesimo e Roma*, 1965, pp. 65-72, argues persuasively on the basis of several statements of Paul (Phil. 1:12-14; 4:22; 1:17; Col. 4:10-11), of the inscription of *lucundus Chrestianus* (a servant of the daughter-in-law of Tiberius) and of Tacitus' testimony (*Annales* 12, 32) regarding Pomponia Graecina (the wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, and an early convert to Christianity), that a 'clear separation' existed between the Church and the synagogue in Rome. Christians apparently gathered in the home of converted nobles 'avoiding any conflict with the local Judaism' (p. 69). Apparently Paul came in conflict with Jewish circles, since he could name only three 'men of the circumcision among his fellow workers' (Col. 4:10-11).

13) and a Judaeo-Christian minority (14f.) This co-existence of the two parties provoked some difficulties comparable to those known at Corinth at the same time…The situation of the Church of Rome in relationship to Judaism, as far as the Epistle to the Romans allows us to suspect, is similar to the one presented us by the post-Pauline texts of Western Christianity: a chasm between the Church and Synagogue is found everywhere, one unknown in the Eastern churches which we have described above. Judaism does not play any other role than the one of being the ancestor of Christianity.'[423]

The Jewish-Christians, though a minority in the Church of Rome, seem to have provoked 'disputes' (Rom. 14:1) over questions such as the value of the Law (2:17), the need for circumcision (2:25-27), salvation by obedience to the Law (chs. 3, 4, 5), the need to respect special days[424] and to abstain from unclean food (chs. 14-15). However, the predominance of Gentile members primarily of pagan descent, and their conflict with the Judaeo-Christians inside the Church and with Jews outside, may have indeed contributed to an earlier break from Judaism in Rome than in the Orient. The abandonment of Sabbath-keeping and the adoption of Sunday could then represent a significant aspect of this process of differentiation.

Early Differentiation Between Jews and Christians

In the year AD 49 the Emperor Claudius, according to the Roman historian Suetonius (ca. AD 70-122), 'expelled the Jews from Rome since they rioted constantly at the instigation of Chrestus'[425] (a probable erroneous transcription of the name of Christ).[426] The fact that on this occasion converted Jews like Aquila and Priscilla were expelled from the city, together with the Jews (Acts 18:2) proves, as Pierre Batiffol observes, 'that the Roman police had not yet come to distinguish the (Jewish) Christians from the Jews.'[427] Fourteen years later, however, Nero identified the Christians as being a separate entity, well distinguished from the Jews. The Emperor, in fact, according to Tacitus (ca. AD 55-120),

> 'fastened the guilt [i.e. for arson upon them] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abomination, called Christians by the populace'[428] (which would have included Jewish Christians).

This recognition on the part of the Romans of Christianity as a religious sect distinct from Judaism seems to be the natural result of attempts made on both sides to differentiate themselves in the eyes of the Roman authorities. If initially Christians identified themselves with Jews, to benefit from the pro-

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[423] Leonard Goppelt, *Les Origines de l'Église*, 1961, pp. 202-203.

[424] Avram: These 'special days' aren't Feast or holy days, but rather days of fasting. For more on Rom. 14 ask me for my article, *Romans 14*.

[425] Suetonius, Claudius 25, 4; H. J. Leon (p. 100, note 422), pp. 23f., advocates an earlier date (closer to AD 41); some scholars however think that 'Chrestus' is simply the name of an agitator and it has therefore no relation to the Christian propaganda; see Marta Sordi (p. 100, note 422), pp. 64f.; see also S. Benko, T*he Edict of Claudius of AD 49 and the Instigator Chrestus*, Theologische Zeitschrift 25 (1969): 406-418. Dio Cassius (AD 150-235), *Historia* 60, 6, does not mention Claudius' expulsion, but refers to an edict which prohibited the Jews from gathering according to their customs.

[426] Tacitus, *Annales* 15, 44, in his report of the Neronian persecution, spells the name in such a manner. On the evolution of the name, see A. Labriolle, *Christianus*, Bulletin du Cange 5 (1929-1930): 69-88; A. Ferrua, *Christianus sum*, La Civiltà Cattolica 2 (1933): 552-556; and 3 (1933):13-26; Tertullian in his *Apology* 3 chides the pagans, saying: "[The namel Christian…is wrongly pronounced by you 'Chrestianus' (for you do not even say accurately the name you despise)."

[427] Pierre Batiffol, *Primitive Catholicism*, 1911, p. 19. This hypothesis is supported, for instance, by the attitude of the proconsul of Achaia, Anneus Novatus Gallio, brother of Seneca, who upon hearing the ruler of the synagogue accusing Paul of being a renegade of the Law, said, 'since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own Law, see to it yourselves' (Acts 18:15; cf., 13:29; 24:5).

[428] Tacitus, *Annales* 15, 44.

tection which the Roman law accorded to the Jewish faith and customs,[429] toward the sixties, as F. F. Bruce observes, 'it was no longer possible to regard Christianity (outside Palestine) as simply a variety of Judaism.'[430] The Jews themselves may have taken the initiative to dissociate from the Christians, whose majority in the empire was now composed of uncircumcised.

The circumstances seem to have been favorable to force such a distinction particularly in Rome. After the year 62, in fact, Jewish influence was present in the imperial court in the person of the Empress Poppea Sabina, a Jewish proselyte and friend of the Jews, whom Nero married that year.[431] A. Harnack thinks in fact that Nero, in order to exculpate himself from the people's accusation of having provoked the fire, at the instigation of the Jews, put the blame on the Christians.[432] It is a fact that though the Jewish residential district of Trastevere was not touched by the fire, as P. Batiffol remarks,

> 'the Jews were not suspected for an instant of having started it, but the accusation fell on the Christians: they were, then, notoriously and personally distinct from the Jews.'[433]

The Christians did not forget the role played by the Jews in the first imperial and bloody persecution they suffered, and the Fathers did not hesitate to attribute to them the responsibility of having incited Nero to persecute the Christians.[434]

The fact that the Christians 'by 64 AD,' as F. F. Bruce comments 'were clearly differentiated at Rome,' while it 'took a little longer in Palestine (where practically all Christians were of Jewish birth)'[435] is a significant datum for our research on the origin of Sunday. This suggests the possibility that the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday as a new day of worship may have

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[429] Avram: and because Christianity was walking in Torah at that time.

[430] F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, 1958, p. 140; Leonard Goppelt (p. 101, note423), p. 42, similarly remarks: 'In the imperial city Christians are distinguished from Jews by AD 64, but not as early as AD 49. The State's recognition of their separate status occurred somewhere between these two dates according to the Roman sources.

[431] Flavius Josephus, *Life* 3, relates that in AD 63 while visiting Rome he was introduced to the Empress, who showed a liking for him. In *Antiquities* 22, 8, 11, he mentions that she was a Jewish proselyte. Cf. Tacitus, *Historia* 1, 22.

[432] A. von Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, 1908, pp. 51, 400. J. Zeiller, *The History of the Primitive Church*, 1949, I, p. 372, also entertains this possibility. He asks, "Did the protégés of Poppea, admitted into the circle immediately surrounding the emperor, think that they would serve Nero as well as themselves 'by pointing out as the authors of the crime the Christians' who took pleasure, it was said…'in the ideas of heavenly vengeance, a universal conflagration, and the destruction of the world.'"

[433] P. Batiffol (see p. 101, note 427), p. 20; Ernest Renan, *The Antichrist*, 1892, p.112 similarly observes, 'The Roman usually confounded the Jews and the Christians. Why was the distinction so clearly made on this occasion? Why were the Jews, against whom the Romans had the same moral antipathy and the same religious grievances as against the Christians, not meddled with at this time?' He suggests that the 'Jews had a secret interview with Nero and Poppea at the moment when the Emperor conceived such a hateful thought against the disciples of Christ' (bc. cit.).

[434] Cf., Tertullian, *Apology* 21; *Commodian, Carmen apologeticum*, PL 5, 865; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 17, 3; a text in Clement's letter *To the Corinthians* (5:2) could preserve the remembrance of the hostile Jewish intervention: 'Because of jealousy and envy the greatest and most upright pillars of the church [i.e., Peter and Paul] were persecuted and condemned unto death' (trans. by K Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers, An American Translation*, 1950, p. 51). J. Zeiller (see p. 102, note 432), p. 373, pointedly observes:

'In any case, from that day the Christians began to be distinguished by the Roman authorities from the Jews, who remained in possession of their privileges, while Christians were arrested, judged and condemned.' Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church*, 1969, p. 47, underlines the fact that while the Romans took notice of Christianity after its separation from Judaism, it was actually the Jewish persecution, being 'an *intra muros* controversy,' which had the more creative role, obliging Christians to become a separate entity and to cause themselves to be recognized as such by the Roman authorities.

[435] F. F. Bruce (see p. 102, note 430), p. 157.

occurred first in Rome as part of this process of differentiation from Judaism. Additional significant factors present in the Church of Rome will enable us to verify the validity of this hypothesis.

Anti-Judaic Feelings and Measures

Following the death of Nero, the Jews, who for a time had experienced a favorable position, soon afterwards became unpopular in the empire primarily because of their resurgent nationalistic feelings *which exploded in violent uprisings almost everywhere*. The period between the first (AD 66-70) and second (AD 132-135) major Jewish wars is characterized by numerous anti-Jewish riots (as in Alexandria, Caesarea and Antioch) as well as by concerted Jewish revolts, which broke out in places such as Mesopotamia, Cyrenaica, Palestine, Egypt and Cyprus.[436] They made their last pitch to regain national independence, but it resulted in the desolation of their holy city, in the loss of their country, and consequently, in their being no longer strictly a nation, but simply a homeless people with a religion.

The description that the Roman historian Dio Cassius (ca. AD 150-220) provides of these uprisings reveals the resentment and odium that these provoked in the mind of the Romans against the Jews. For example, of the Cyrenaica revolt he writes:

> 'Meanwhile, the Jews in the region of Cyrene had put a certain Andreas at their head, and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would eat the flesh of their victims, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood and wear their skins for clothing; many they sawed in two, from the head downwards; others they gave to wild beasts, and still others they forced to fight as gladiators. In all, two hundred and twenty thousand persons perished. In Egypt, too, they perpetrated many similar outrages, and in Cyprus…'[437]

(Jewish) Christians often suffered as victims of these outbursts of Jewish violence, seemingly because they were regarded as traitors of the Jewish faith and political aspirations and because they outpaced the Jews in the conversion of the pagans. Justin, for instance, reports:

> 'In the recent Jewish war, Bar Kochba ordered that only the (Jewish) Christians should be subjected to dreadful torments, unless they renounced and blasphemed Jesus Christ.'[438]

Roman Measures and Attitudes

The Romans, who had previously not only recognized Judaism as a *religio lecita,* but who had also, to a large extent, shown respect (some even admiration) for the religious principles of the Jews,[439] at this time reacted against them militarily, fiscally and literarily. Militarily, the statistic of bloodshed, as provided by contemporary historians, even allowing for possible exaggerations, is a most impressive

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[436] For a concise account of the Jewish insurrections and wars, see Giuseppe Ricciotti, *The History of Israel*, n. d., II, pp. 402-461; Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, 1940, II, p. 393; see also the well documented account by A. Fuks, T*he Jewish Revolt of 115-117*, Journal of Roman Studies 51 (1861): 98-104.

[437] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 69, LCL, p. 421; cf., the similar account given by Eusebius, *HE* 4, 2 and *Chronicon* 2, 164.

Avram: Of course, this account is wild propaganda designed to incite the Romans against the Jews. Jews don't eat the flesh of human beings and they wouldn't smear blood on themselves, etc.

[438] Justin Martyr, I *Apology* 31, 6, trans. by Thomas B.. Falls, *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr, The Fathers of the Church*, 1948, p. 67 (hereafter cited as, Falls, *Justin's Writings*); cf. *Dialogue* 110.

[439] See above, p. 102, note 35.

evidence of the Roman's angry vengeance upon the Jews. Tacitus (ca. AD 33-120), for instance, gives an estimate of 600,000 Jewish fatalities for the AD 70 war.[440]

In the Bar Kochba war, according to Dio Cassius (ca. AD 150–235), 580,000 Jews were killed in action, besides the numberless who died of hunger and disease. 'All of Judea,' the same historian writes, 'became almost a desert.'[441] Besides military measures, Rome at this time adopted new political and fiscal policies against the Jews. Under Vespasian (AD 69-79) both the Sanhedrin and the office of the High Priest were abolished and worship at the temple site was forbidden. Hadrian (AD 117-138), as we noted earlier, went so far as to prohibit any Jew, under the threat of death, to enter the area of the new city. Moreover, *he outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion* and particularly the observance of the Sabbath.[442]

Also significant was the introduction by Vespasian (AD 69-79) of the *fiscus judaicus*, which was intensified by Domitian (AD 81-96) first, and by Hadrian (AD 117-138) later.[443] This Jewish 'fiscal tax' of a half shekel, which previously had formed part of the upkeep of the temple of Jerusalem, was now excised for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, even from those, according to Suetonius (ca. AD 70-122) 'who without publicly acknowledging that faith, yet lived as Jews.'[444] Christian members could easily have been included among them. E. L. Abel aptly points out that,

> 'although the amount was insignificant, the principle was important since no other religious group in the Roman society paid such a tax. It was clearly discriminatory and marked the beginning of the social deterioration of the Jews in society.'[445]

The sources do not inform us of any specific action taken by the Christians at this time to avoid the payment of such a discriminatory tax. However we may suspect, as S. W. Baron perspicaciously remarks, that in connection with this redefinition of the fiscal obligations as resting only upon profess-

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[440] Tacitus, *Historiae* 5, 13; Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 6, 9, 3 specifies that 97,000 Jews were taken captive and 1,000,000 were either killed or perished during the siege.

[441] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 69, 13; he acknowledges, however, that even the Roman army suffered great losses. Hadrian, in fact, in his letter to the Senate omitted the customary opening expression, 'If you and your children are in health, it is well. I and the legions are in health' (bc. cit.).

[442] See, pp. 160-161, fns. 79-80. Some scholars maintain that sacrifices still continued at the temple after AD 70, though in a reduced form; cf. K. W. Clark, *Worship in the Jerusalem Temple after AD 70*, *NTS* 6 (1959-1960): 269-280; see also J. R. Brown, *The Temple and Sacrifice in Rabbinic Judaism*, 1963. On the pathetic attempts of the Jews to visit their ruins, see Jerome, *Commentarius in Zephanaiam* 1. 15-16, *PL* 25, 1418f.; other patristic sources are analyzed by R. Harris, 'Hadrian's Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem,' Harvard Theological Review 19 (1926): 199-206; cf. also W. D. Gray, 'Founding of Aelia Capitolina,' American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 39 (1922-1923): 248-256.

Avram: what Gentile, with the outlawing of Torah by Hadrian, would want to keep Sabbath and Passover, distinguishing marks of both Torah and the Jewish people? This, the hatred of the Roman Empire toward the Jews and Torah, would be the foundation from which Gentile Christians in Rome and Alexandria, Egypt would jettison Torah in favor of Sunday, Easter and ham, so they wouldn't 'look like' the Jews.

[443] J. Zeiller (see p. 102, note 432) pp. 384-385, remarks concerning Domitian: 'His antipathy toward the Jews was in harmony with his financial necessities, for his Tresaury was exhausted after the excessive expenses he had incurred in the embellishment of Rome. Accordingly, he caused to be levied with great strictness the tax of the didrachma.'

[444] Suetonius, *Domitianus* 12, *LCL*, p. 365; the historian relates how, as a youth, he had personally witnessed 'a man ninety years old examined before the procurator and a very crowded court, to see whether he was circumcised' (ibid., p. 366); Heinrich Graetz (see p. 103, note 436, p. 389, points out: 'Severe, however, as he was toward the Jews, Domitian was doubly hard toward the proselytes and suffered them to feel the full weight of his tyrannical power'; cf. also E. M. Smallwood, 'Domitian's Attitude toward the Jews and Judaism,' *Classical Philology* 51 (1956); 1-14. Nerva (AD 96-98), as one of the first acts of his administration 'removed the shameful [extortion] of the Jewish tax,' as it reads on the legend of a coin he struck to commemorate the occasion; see Dio Cassius, *Historia* 58, 1-2. Under Hadrian (AD 117-138), according to Appian, a contemporary historian, the Jews were subjected at that time to a 'poll-tax…heavier than that imposed upon the surrounding people' (Roman History, *The Syrian Wars* 50, *LCL*, p. 199.

[445] Ernest L. Abel, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 1943, p. 97.

ing Jews, the growing Christian community secured from Nerva exemption from the tax and, indirectly, official recognition of the severance of its ties with the Jews' denomination.[446]

The introduction of Sunday worship in place of 'Jewish' Sabbath..keeping—the latter being particularly derided by several Roman writers of the time—could well represent a measure taken by the leaders of the Church of Rome to evidence their severance from Judaism, and thereby, also avoid the payment of a discriminatory tax.

The Roman intelligentsia also resumed at this time their literary attaok against the Jews. Cicero, the renowned orator, in his defense of Flaccus—a prefect of Asia who had despoiled the Jewish treasure—already a century earlier (59 B.C.) had immortalized his attack against Judaism, labeling it a 'barbaric superstition.'[447] In the following years literary anti-Semitism was kept scarcely alive by the few sneers and jibes of Horace (65-8 B.C.), Tibullus (d. ca. 19 B.C.), Pompeius Trogus (beginning of first century AD) and Ovid (43 B.C.-AD 65).[448] With Seneca (ca. 4 B.C.–AD 65), however, a new wave of literary anti-Semitism surged in the sixties, undoubtedly reflecting the new mood of the time against the Jews. This fervent stoic railed against the customs of this 'accursed race—*sceleratissime gentis*,' and especially their Sabbath-keeping:

> 'By introducing one day of rest in every seven, they lose in idleness almost a seventh of their life, and by failing to act in times of urgency, they often suffer loss.'[449]

Persius (AD 34-62) in his fifth satire presents the Jewish customs as the first example of superstitious beliefs. The Jewish Sabbath, particularly, is adduced as his first proof that superstition enslaves man.[450] In a fragment attributed to Petronius (ca. AD 66), the Jew is characterized as worshiping 'his

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[446] S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 1952, II, p. 106. Baron also notes that 'unlike the later period, when capitation taxes became universal, a head tax at that time had by itself a discriminatory character' (ibid., p. 373, see p. 104, note 442). The author provides bibliographical references of special studies on the Roman capitation tax (bc. cit.).

[447] Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28, 67. In his oration he said: 'The practice of their sacred rites was at variance with the glory of our empire, the dignity of our name, the custom of our ancestors. But now it is even more so, when that nation, by its armed resistance, has shown what it thinks of our rule; how dear it was to the immortal gods is shown by the fact that it has been conquered, let out for taxes, made a slave' (ibid., 28, 69; the translation of this and of the subsequent texts of Roman authors, is taken from the convenient collection of Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 1974, I, p. 198).

[448] Horace ridicules Jewish superstitions, and in one instance, he mentions the case of his friend Aristius Fuscus who refused to discuss some private affairs with him, saying: 'I'll tell you at a better time. Today is the thirtieth day, a Sabbath. Would you affront the circumcised Jews?' 'I have no scruples,' said I. 'But I have. I am a somewhat weaker brother, one of many. You will pardon me; I'll talk another day'' (*Sermones* 1, 9, 65-70, M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], p. 325; cf. also pp. 323, 324, 326, for other examples).

Tibullus, in a poem, blames himself for leaving in Rome his beloved Delia. He regrets not having sought excuses such as portents against the journey, presaging birds or the day of Saturn: 'Either birds or words of evil omen were my pretexts, or there was the accursed day of Saturn to detain me' (*Carmina* 1, 3:16-18, Stern [see p. 105, note 447], p. 319). For the identification of Saturn with the Jewish Sabbath, see Tacitus, *Historiae* 5, 4. Ovid in three references urges not to let the Jewish Sabbath hinder activities: 'Persist, and compel your unwilling feet to run. Hope not for rain, nor let foreign Sabbath stay you, nor Allia well-known for its ill-luck' (*Remedia Amoris* 219-220; cf., *Ars Amatoria* 1, 75.80; 413416, M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], pp. 348-349). Pompeius Trogus, in his distorted reconstruction of Jewish history, makes the well-known statement that the ancestors of the Jews were lepers and that Moses 'from a seven days' fast in the desert of Arabia, for all time, consecrated the seventh day, which used to be called Sabbath by the custom of the nation, for a fast-day because that day had ended at once their hunger and their wanderings' (*Historiae Philippicae* 36 in Justin's *Epitoma* 1:9-3 :9, M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], pp. 337-338).

[449] Seneca, *De Superstitiones*, cited by Augustine, *The City of God* 6, 11. Seneca also says: 'Meanwhile the customs of this accursed race have gained such influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors.' He then adds what he thought of Jewish sacred institutions: 'The Jews, however, are aware of the origin and meaning of their rites. The greater part of the people go through a ritual not knowing why they do so' (loc. cit., M. Stem [see p. 105, note 447], p. 431).

[450] Persius, *Saturae* 5, 176-184.

Pig-god' and as cutting 'his foreskin with a knife' to avoid 'expulsion by his people—*exemptus populo*' and to be able to observe the Sabbath.[451] The anonymous historians who wrote about the history of the Great War (AD 66-70) of the Jews with the Romans, according to Josephus, 'misrepresented the facts, either from flattery of the Romans or from hatred of the Jews.'[452]

Quintilian (ca. AD 35-100) alludes to Moses as the founder 'of the Jewish superstition' which is pernicious to other people.[453] Similarily, for Martial (ca. AD 40-104), the circumcised Jews and their Sabbath are a synonym of degradation.[454] Plutarch (ca. AD 46-1 19) labeled the Jews as a superstitious nation and singled out their Sabbath-keeping (which he regarded as a time of drunkenness) as one of the many barbarian customs adopted by the Greeks.[455] Juvenal, in a satire written about AD 125, pitied the corrupting influence of a Judaizing father who taught his son to eschew the uncircumcised and to spend 'each seventh day in idleness, taking no part in the duties of life.'[456] Tacitus (ca. AD 55-120), whom Jules Isaac labels as 'the most beautiful jewel in the crown of anti-Semitism,'[457] surpassed all his predecessors in bitterness. The Jews, according to this historian, descend from lepers expelled from Egypt and abstain from pork in remembrance of their leprosy (a disease which, according to prevailing beliefs, was common among pigs). Their indolence on the Sabbath commemorates the day

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[451] Petronius, *Fragmenta* 37. The passage reads: 'The Jew may worship his pig-god and clamour in the ears of high heaven, but unless he also cuts back his foreskin with the knife, he shall go forth from the people and emigrate to Greek cities, and shall not tremble at the fasts of Sabbath imposed by law' (M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], p. 444; cf. also texts on pp. 442-443). On the misconception of the Sabbath as a fast day, see Pompeius Trogus [see p. 105, note 448] and Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 76.

[452] Josephus, *War of the Jews* 1, 2. He further criticizes these historians for representing 'the Romans as a great nation, and yet they continually depreciate and disparage the actions of the Jews' (Ibid., 1, 7-8). Minucius Felix in his *Octavius* 33, 2-4 mentions Antonius Julianus, possibly the procurator of Judea in AD 70, who wrote on the Jewish war: 'Consult Antonius Julianus on the Jews and you will see that it was their own wickedness which brought them to misfortune, and that nothing happened to them which was not predicted in advance, if they persisted in rebelliousness' (M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], p. 460).

[453] Quintillian, *Institutio oratoria* 3, 7, 21, M. Stern (see p. 105, note 447), p. 513: 'The vices of the children bring hatred on their parents; founders of the cities are detested for concentrating a race which is a curse to others, as for example the founder of the Jewish superstition.'

[454] Martial, *Epigrammata* 4, 4, mentions the odor 'of the breath of fasting Sabbatarian women' among the most offensive stenches. For other references of Martial, see M. Stern (see p. 105, note 447), pp. 523-529. Damocritus (first century AD), another military historian, according to Suda, wrote a work *On Jews*, in which 'he states that they used to worship an asinine golden head and that every seventh year they caught a foreigner and sacrificed him. They used to kill him by carding his flesh into small pieces' (Suda, *Damocritus*, M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], p. 531).

[455] Plutarch, *De superstitione* 3, M. Stern (p. 105, note 447), p. 549: 'Greeks from barbarians finding evil ways!' Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, 764, because of superstition, such as smearing with mud, wallowing in filth, keeping the Sabbath [*sabbatismos*—cf. Heb. 4:9].' Plutarch associates the Sabbath with the Dionysiac feasts: 'I believe that even the feast of the Sabbath is not completely unrelated to Dionysius. Many even now call the Bacchants Sabi and utter that cry when celebrating the god…You would not be far off the track if you attributed the use of this name Sabi to the strange excitement that possesses the celebrants. The Jews themselves testify to a connection with Dionysius when they keep the Sabbath by inviting each other to drink and enjoy wine' (*Questiones convivales* 4, 6,2, M. Stern [see p. 105, note 447], pp. 557-558)

[456] Juvenal, *Satirae* 14, 96-106. Juvenal not only repeats the common charges against Jewish customs (Sabbath, circumcision, horror for the porcine flesh and worship of the sky) but also denounces the exclusive spirit and solidarity of the Jews (cf. Tacitus, p. 107, note 458). He rues the unfortunate offspring who 'accidentally has had as a Father a Sabbathkeeper: he will worship only the clouds and the divinity of the sky and will make no distinction between human flesh and that of pork, which his father does not eat. In the same way he is circumcised. Brought up to despise the Roman laws, he only learns, observes and respects the Jewish law and all that Moses has handed down in a mysterious book: not to show the way to a traveller who does not practice the same ceremonies, not point out a well (of water) to the uncircumcised. The cause of all this is that his father spends each seventh day in idleness, taking no part in the duties of life' (bc. cit.; cf. Theodore Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs Grecs et Romains relatif s au Judaisme*, 1963, pp. 292-293; additional statements of Juvenal [*Satirae* 3, 5, 10; 3,5,296; 6, 156; 6,542] are given on pp. 290-293).

[457] Jules Isaac, *Genése de l'Antisémitisme*, 1956, p. 46.

they left Egypt. 'All their customs,' Tacitus writes, 'are perverse and disgusting' and as a people they are 'singularly prone to lust.'[458]

After Tacitus, as F. L. Abel points out, 'anti-Jewish literaturc declined.'[459] The historian Dio Cassius (ca. AD 130-220) is perhaps an exception. In describing the Cyrenaican Jewish uprising (ca. AD 115), Dio expresses, as we read earlier, his resentment and hatred against the Jews, presenting them as savages who ate their victims' flesh and smeared their blood on themselves.[460] The fact that practically all the above mentioned writers lived in the capital city most of their professional lives and wrote from there, suggests that their contemptuous remarks about the Jews—particularly against their Sabbath-keeping—reflect the general Roman attitude prevailing toward them, especially in the city. (We should not forget that the Jews were a sizable community, estimated by most scholars at about 50,000, already at the time of Augustus.)[461]

> 'The feeling against the Jews was strong enough' for instance, as F. F. Bruce writes, 'to make Titus, when crown prince, give up his plan to marry Berenice, sister of Herod Agrippa the Younger.'[462] The Prince, in fact, because of the mounting hostility of the populace toward the Jews, was forced, though 'unwillingly—*invitus*,' to ask her to leave Rome.[463]

That hostility toward Jews was particularly felt at that time in Rome is indicated also by the works of the Jewish historian Josephus. He was in the city from ca. AD 70 to his death (ca. 93) as a pensioner of the imperial family, and he felt the compulsion to take up his pen to defend his race from popular calumnies. In his two works, *Against Apion* and *Jewish Antiquities*, he shows how the Jews could be favorably compared to any nation in regard to antiquity, culture and prowess.

Christian Measures and Attitudes

In the light of these repressive policies and hostile attitudes prevailing toward the Jews (particularly felt in the capital city), what measures did the Church of Rome take at this time to clarify to the Roman authorities her severance with Judaism? Any change in the Christians' attitude, policies or customs needs to be explained not solely on the basis of the Roman-Jewish conflict, but also in the light

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[458] Tacitus, *Historiae* 55. The passage continues attacking particularly the Jewish apartheid policy: 'The most degraded out of other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contribution and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews, as also did the fact that among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to show compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful.' Tacitus adds: 'Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice [i. e., circumcision], and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise gods, to disown their country and to set at nought parents, children and brethren. Still they provide for the increase of their numbers' (trans. by A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb, *The Annals and the Histories* by P. C. Tacitus, 1952, p. 295).

[459] Ernest L. Abel (see p. 104, note 445), p. 79.

[460] See p. 103, note 437.

[461] For a discussion of the Jewish population in Rome in the early Empire see Harry J. Leon (see p. 100, note 422), p. 135, note 1.

[462] F. F. Bruce (see p. 102, note 430), p. 267; 5. W. Baron (see p. 105, note 446), p. 203, similarly states: 'The anti-Jewish feeling in Rome and Italy also rose to a considerable height the moment this group of foreigners [i.e., the Jews] started to proliferate rapidly. With their special way of life, they were a strange element, even in the cosmopolitan capital. The literature of the age reflects the partly contemptuous, and partly inimical, attitude prevailing among the educated classes in the imperial city.'

[463] Suetonius' expressive *invitus invitam* (Titus 7, 1, 2) indicates that the separation was difficult for both of them. Titus' love affair with Berenice is also reported by Dio Cassius, *Historia* 66, 15, 3-4 and by Tacitus, *Historiae* 2, 2; cf. E. Mireaux, *La Reine Bernice*, 1951; J. A. Crook, American Journal of Archaeology 72 (1951), pp. 162f.

of the relationship which Christians had both with Rome and with the Jews. To this we shall briefly address our attention before considering specific changes in religious observances which occurred in the Church of Rome.

A survey of the Christian literature of the second century bears out that by the time of Hadrian most Christians assumed an attitude of reconciliation toward the empire, but toward the Jews they adopted a policy of radical differentiation. Quadratus and Aristides, for instance, for the first time, addressed treatises (generally called 'apologies') to Hadrian (AD 117-138) to explain and defend the Christian faith. The early apologists, as J. Lebreton notes, 'believed in, and worked for, the reconciliation of the Church to the Empire.'[464]

Though they were unable to provide a definite formula of reconciliation with the Empire, as A. Puech brings out, they were confident that the conflict was not incurable.[465] Undoubtedly their positive attitude must have been encouraged by the Roman policy toward Christianity, which particularly under Hadrian (AD 117-138) and Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161) may be defined as one of 'relative imperial protection.'[466] Hadrian, in fact, as Marcel Simon observes, while 'he reserved his severity for the Jews…he felt himself attracted with sympathy for Christianity.' In his *Rescriptus* the Emperor provided that no Christian was to be accused on the basis of public calumnies.

On the other hand, how different at that time was the attitude of many Christian writers toward the Jews! A whole body of anti-Judaic literature was produced in the second century condemning the Jews socially and theologically. It is beyond the scope of the present study to examine this literature. The following list of significant authors and/or writings, which defamed the Jews to a lesser or greater degree, may serve to make the reader aware of the existence and intensity of the problem:

1. *The Preaching of Peter*,
2. *The Epistle of Barnabas*,
3. Quadratus' lost *Apology*,
4. Aristides' *Apology*,
5. *The Disputation* between Jason and Papiscus concerning Christ,
6. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*,
7. Miltiades' *Against the Jews* (unfortunately lost),
8. Apollinarius' *Against the Jews* (also perished),
9. Melito's *On the Passover*,
10. *The Epistle to Diognetus*,
11. *The Gospel of Peter*,
12. Tertullian's *Against the Jews*,

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464 J. Lebreton, *La Chiesa Primitiva*, l957, p. 540.

465 A. Puech, *Les Apologistes grecs du IIe siécle de notre ère*, 1912, p. 5.

466 Hadrian's attitude toward Christianity is revealed primarily by his *Rescriptus to Minucius Fundanus* written probably about 125-126. The Emperor did not prohibit the prosecution of the Christians, but he demanded that the accusation be made before a tribunal in a regular process. Popular protestations against the Christians were not to be accepted and false accusers were to be severely punished (*The Rescriptus* is quoted by Justin, I *Apologia* 68 and by Eusebius, *HE* 4,9). While Hadrian's *Rescriptus* is somewhat ambiguous in his formulation, perhaps intentionally, basically however the Emperor manifested a moderate attitude toward Christianity; for some significant studies on Hadrian's *Rescriptus*, see C. Callewaert, 'Le rescrit d'Hadrien à Minucius Fundanus,' *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* 8 (1903): 152-189; Marta Sordi, 'I rescritti di Traiano e Adriano sui cristiani,' *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 14 (1960). 359-370; W. Schmid, 'The Christian Reinterpretation of the Rescript of Hadrian,' *Maya* 7 (1953): 1f. According to Lampridius, an authority not too convincing, Hadrian was disposed to offer Christ a place in the Pantheon (see *Vita Alexandri Seven* 43, 6).

13. *Origen's Against Celsus*.[467]

F. Blanchetiere, in his scholarly survey of the problem of anti-Judaism in the Christian literature of the second century, persuasively concludes:

> 'From this survey, it results that 'the Jewish problem' regained interest *by the thirties* of the second century, that is, Hadrian's time. In fact, the writings of the Apostolic Fa-

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[467] For an excellent survey of Christian anti-Jewish literature of the second century, see F. Blanchetiére, 'Aux sources de l'anti-judaïsme chrdetien,' *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse* 53 (1973): 353-398. In the *Preaching of Peter* (*Kerygma Petrou*), of which we possess only a few fragments dated in the first half of the second century, the Jewish worship of God is rejected as absurd as that of the Greeks: 'Neither worship him in the manner of the Jews, for they also, who think that they alone know God, do not understand, worshipping angels and archangels, the months and the moon. And when the moon does not shine, they do not celebrate the so-called first Sabbath…What has reference to the Greeks and Jews is old, but we are Christians, who as a third race worship him in a new way' (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1965, II, p. 100).

Regarding Quadratus, our only information is Eusebius' statement that he addressed to Hadrian 'a discourse containing an apology for our religion because certain wicked men had attempted to trouble Christians' (*HE* 4, 3, 2, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 175). If the 'wicked men,' as argued by H. Graetz (*Geschichte der Juden*, 1911, IV, p. 169), are Jews spreading slanderous reports about the Christians, then the apology could have been a refutation of Jewish charges.

The Apology of Aristides (dated AD 143; cf. J. R. Harris, *The Apology of Aristides*, 1891, pp. 6-13) though it commends Jewish monotheism and philanthropy, condemns their worship as irrational: 'In their imagination they conceive that it is God they serve, whereas by their mode of observance it is to the angels and not to God that their service is rendered—as when they celebrate sabbaths and the beginning of the months…which things, however, they do not observe perfectly' (ch. 14, Syriac, *ANF* X, p. 276). All that we know of *The Disputation between Jason and Papiscus* is what Origen (ca. AD 248) wrote to refute Celsus (ca. AD 178), a heathen philosopher of Rome, who affirmed that the treatise 'was fitted to excite not laughter, but hatred.' Origen confutes the charge saying that 'if it be impartially perused, it will be found that there is nothing to excite even laughter in a work in which a Christian [i.e., Jason] is described as conversing with a Jew on the subject of the Jewish Scriptures, and proving that the predictions regarding Christ fitly apply to Jesus' (*Against Celsus* 4, 52, *ANF* IV, p. 251). This work, as noted by F. Blanchetière (art. cit., p. 358) could be 'a forerunner of, or at least a parallel attempt, to the *Dialogue of Justin*.'

Miltiades, a contemporary of Justin, according to the account of Eusebius, 'composed [treatises] against the Greeks and against the Jews, answering each of them separately in two books' (*HE* 5,17, 3, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 234). Note that, now, Judaism and paganism are treated in two distinct apologies, undoubtedly because of their importance. This appears as a new development. About Apollinarius, Eusebius reports that besides the *Apology* addressed to Marcus Aurelius, he wrote five books: '*Against the Greeks*, *On Truth*, a first and second book, and *Against the Jews* also in two books' (*HE* 4, 27, 1). It is noteworthy that Apollinarius devotes two treatises *Against the Jews* and only one *Against the Greeks*. On Melito see above pp. 82-84, and on Justin Martyr see below pp. 223f.

The Epistle to Diognetus (dated by H. I. Marrou ca. AD 200) provides us with an exceptional and eloquent testimony of the definite break which had taken place between the Church and the Synagogue and of the prevailing contemptuous attitude of Christians against the Jews. Jewish sacrificial worship is labelled 'an act of folly' (ch. 3). 'As to their scrupulosity concerning meats and their superstition as respects the Sabbaths and their boasting about circumcision and their fancies about fasting and the new moons, which are utterly ridiculous and unworthy of notice—I do not think that you require to learn anything from me' (ch. 4, *ANF* I, p. 26; cf., H.I., Marrou, A Diognéte, *SC* 33, pp. 112-114).

In the fragments of the *Gospel of Peter* (ca. AD 180) the Jews are portrayed as executing the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ mercilessly (cf. 2:5; 3:6-9; 6:21; 12:50, E. Hennecke, op. cit., I, pp. 184-186). Tertullian's *Adversus Judaeos* is the first systematic attempt to refute Judaism which has come down to us. Less versed in Judaism than Justin, Tertullian endeavors to demonstrate the obsoleteness of the Mosaic dispensation. Origen (ca. AD 248) formulates explicitly the doctrine of the divine punishment of the Jewish race: 'We say with confidence *that they will never be restored to their former condition*. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race in that city where they offered up to God a worship containing the symbols of mighty mysteries. It accordingly behooved the city where Jesus underwent these sufferings to perish utterly, and the Jewish nation to be overthrown and the invitation to happiness offered them by God to pass to others—the Christians' (*Against Celsus* 4, 12, *ANF* IV, p. 506). For a convenient survey of later anti-Jewish literature, see A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos, A*

> thers give the impression of almost a total lack of interest of their authors for such a question. Meanwhile, at that time, the *Kerugma Petrou* felt the necessity to clarify the relationship between Jews and Christians. With the *Epistle of Barnabas* [which he dates ca. AD 135] appeared a whole group of writings, treatises and dialogues, a whole literature '*Against the Jews—Adversos Judaeos*' attacking this or that Jewish observance, when it is not a question of the foundation of Judaism itself. Moreover we must notice that the *Eastern Roman areas have not been equally involved*.'[468]

While disparaging remarks about the Jews and Judaism are already present in earlier documents,[469] it is not until the time of Hadrian, that there began with the Epistle of Barnabas, the development of a 'Christian' theology of separation from, and contempt for, the Jews. The Fathers at this time, as F. Blanchetière aptly states,

> "did not feel any longer like Paul 'a great sorrow and constant pain' (Rom. 9:1-5) in their hearts, nor did they wish any longer to be 'anathemas' for their brethren…Without going to the extreme example of abusive language as used by the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Justin, in the same manner as Barnabas, only knew that Israel throughout its history had been hard-hearted, stiff-necked and idolatrous…Israel, murderer of the prophets, is guilty of not having recognized the Son of God…It is only justice, therefore, that Israel be collectively and indistinctly struck, condemned and cursed.'[470]

The adoption of this negative attitude toward the Jews can be explained (but not necessarily justified!) by several circumstances existing particularly at the time of Hadrian. First, the relationship between Rome and the Jews was extremely tense. The latter, as we noted earlier, were subjected to repressive and punitive measures.[471] Secondly, a conflict existed between the Church and the Synagogue. Christians were not only barred from the synagogues, but often denounced to the authorities and, whenever possible, directly persecuted by the Jews.[472]

Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance, 1935.

[468] F.Blanchetière (see p. 109, note 467), p. 361 (emphasis supplied).

[469] The *Didache*, for instance, warns Christians not to fast 'on the same days with the hypocrites, for they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you must fast on Wednesday and Friday. And do not pray like the hypocrites, but pray thus, as the Lord commanded in his gospel' (8:1-2, trans. by E. J. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, pp. 14, 15). The use of the New Testament designation of the Scribes and Pharisees ('hypocrites,' Matt. 23:13-19) implies that the reference is directed against the Jewish leadership. Ignatius (ca. AD 110) also in his letters to several Christian communities of Asia Minor, warns repeatedly against Judaizing (see below p. 213).

[470] F. Blanchetière (see p. 109, note 467), pp. 396-397. The author notes that between the patristic literature of the first, and that of the second century, there is more of a break than a continuity. He finds this break in several ways. First in the sources of inspiration. The Apologists do not use the Gospels or the Pauline epistles, but almost exclusively the invectives of the Old Testament prophets against the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. Second, there is a break in the theme of the plan of salvation. While in the New Testament salvation is extended to all people, for Barnabas and Justin, for instance, after the apostasy of Israel of the golden calf, the Jewish people are purely and simply rejected: 'The Law is not any longer a teacher as for Paul, but a medicine to be used only by the Jews.' Third, there is a break in attitude and style. Though in the New Testament there are some virulent remarks against certain factions of Judaism, in the Apologists of the second century there is only a uniform and consistent condemnation of the Jewish people and Judaism. Finally, there is a break in perspective. There is no more crying over Jerusalem for the rejection of salvation, but condemnation (see Barnabas, Justin, Diognetus, Melito) of Israel as murderer of the prophets and despiser of the Son of God. A valuable discussion of the 'Theology of Separation' is provided also by Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews*, 1965, pp. 35-43; cf., also Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, pp. 17-25.

[471] See p. 103f.

[472] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 17, 1, laments the fact that the Jews falsely represent the Christians, accusing them as traitors and sacrilegious: 'The other nations have not treated Christ and us, His followers, as unjustly as have you Jews, who, indeed, are the very instigators of that evil opinion they have of the Just One and of us, His disciples.' In chapter 96 of the same work, Justin adds: 'In your synagogues you curse all those who

Third, a certain degree of imperial protection was granted to the Christians. Possibly Rome recognized that Christians had no nationalistic aspirations, and consequently, posed no political threat.[473] Fourth, the influence of Judeo-Christians was felt within the Church. *By insisting on the literal observance of certain Mosaic regulations*, these encouraged dissociation and resentment.[474]

Such circumstances invited Christians to develop a new identity, not only characterized by a negative attitude toward Jews, but also by the substitution of characteristic Jewish religious customs for new ones. These would serve to make the Roman authorities aware that the Christians, as Marcel Simon emphasizes, 'liberated from any tie with the religion of Israel and the land of Palestine, represented for the empire irreproachable subjects.'[475] This internal need of the Christian community to develop what may be called an 'anti-Judaism of differentiation' found expression particularly in the development of unwarranted criteria of Scriptural hermeneutic through which Jewish history and observances *could be made void of meaning and function*.

Regarding Jewish history, it is noteworthy that while the Apostolic Fathers do not make explicit or implied references to it, the Apologists reinterpret and interrelate past and present Jewish history (often by using an a posteriori scriptural justification) to prove the historic unfaithfulness of the Jews, and consequently, the justice of their divine rejection.[476] Barnabas, for instance, attempts to demolish the historical validity of Judaism by voiding its historical events and institutions of their literal meaning and reality. Though the covenant, for example, was given by God to the Jews, 'they lost it completely just after Moses received it' (4 :7) because of their idolatry and it was never reoffered to them.

For Barnabas the ancient Jewish economy has lost its sense or rather makes no sense. Justin, similarly,

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through Him have become Christians, and the Gentiles put into effect your curse by killing all those who merely admit that they are Christians' (Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 173 and 299).

The existence of a general climate of mistrust and hostility is indicated by recurring expressions such as:

1. 'You hate us' (*I Apology* 36: *Dialogue* 39,1; 82, 6; 133, 6; 136, 2; 134, 5);

2. 'You curse us' (*Dialogue* 16,4; 93, 4; 95, 4; 108, 3; 123, 6; 133, 6);

3. 'Jesus…whose name you profane, and labour hard to get it profaned over all the earth' (*Dialogue* 120, 4);

4. 'You accuse Him of having taught those godless, lawless, and unholy doctrines, which you mention to the condemnation of those who confess Him to be Christ' (*Dialogue* 108, 3; cf. 47, 5);

5. 'Our teachers [Rabbis] laid down a law that we should have no intercourse with any of you, and that we should not have even any communication with you on these questions' (*Dialogue* 38, 1; 112, 4; 93, 5).

The hostility in some instances reached the point of putting the (Jewish) Christians to death, whether directly as during the Bar Kochba revolt (*Dialogue* 16, 4; 95, 4: 133, 6; *I Apology* 31) or indirectly by helping the Romans (*Dialogue* 96, 2; 110, 5; 131, 2). Cf. also Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 10: 'The synagogues of the Jews—fountains of persecution'; cf. *Ad Nationes* 1, 14; Origen, *Contra Celsum I*, reports at length the accusations which Celsus' Jews launched against the Christians.

[473] It is noteworthy that, according to Eusebius, Domitian tried for political plotting the relatives of Christ, but after examining them 'he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church' (*HE* 3, 20, 7); see p. 108, note 466.

[474] Justin reports, for instance, that *there were Jewish Christians who 'compelled those Gentiles who believe in this Christ to live in all respects according to the law given by Moses'* (*Dialogue* 47, *ANE* I, p. 218). The extreme anti-Judaic movement of Marcion also contributed to develop an anti-Judaism of differentiation; see below pp. 189f.

[475] M. Simon, *Verus Israel: études sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain*, 1964, p. 128, Robert M. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine*, 1970, pp. 104-105, points out that the apologetic movement started under Hadrian, prompted by the Hellenizing efforts of the Emperor and by the effects of the Bar Kochba revolt. Leon Poliakov (p. 110, note 470), p. 21, similarly remarks: 'At the time of Hadrian's prohibition of the circumcision and of the bloody Bar Kochba rebellion in 135, the first Christian apologists were attempting to prove that the Christians, having no link with Israel and the land of Judea, were irreproachable subjects of the empire.'

[476] For a concise and cogent analysis of the apologists' reinterpretation of Jewish history, see F. Blanchetiere (p. 109, note 467), pp. 373-385.

by a tour de force, establishes a causal connection between the 'murdering of Christ and of His prophets' by the Jews, and the two Jewish revolts of AD 70 and 135, concluding that the two fundamental institutions of Judaism, namely circumcision and the Sabbath, *were a brand of infamy imposed by God on the Jews* to single them out for punishment they so well deserved for their wickedness.[477] Melito, whom E. Werner calls 'the first poet of deicide,'[478] in his *Paschal Homily*, in highly rhetorical fashion, reinterprets the historical Exodus Passover to commemorate the 'extraordinary murder' of Christ by the Jews:

> 'You killed this one at the time of the great feast. (v. 92) God has been murdered, the King of Israel has been destroyed by the right hand of Israel. Oh frightful murder! Oh unheard of injustice! (vv. 96-97)[479]

The history of Israel is viewed therefore as a sequel of infidelities, of idolatries (particularly emphasized are Baal Peor and the golden calf) and of murders (of the righteous, of the prophets and finally of Christ). Consequently the misfortunes of the Jews, especially the destruction of the city, their expulsion and dispersion and their punishment by Rome, represent a just and divine chastisement.

This negative reinterpretation of Judaism, motivated, as we have succinctly described above, by factors present inside and outside the Church, particularly affected the attitude of many Christians toward Jewish religious observances. In view of the fact that Judaism has rightly been defined as an 'orthopraxis' (deed rather than creed) and that religious observances such as the circumcision and the Sabbath were not only outlawed by Hadrian's edict, but also consistently attacked and ridiculed by Greek and Latin authors, it should not surprise one that many Christians severed their ties with Judaism by substituting for distinctive Jewish religious observances, such as the Sabbath and the Passover, new ones. In this process, as we shall now see, the Church of Rome, where, as we noted above, the break with Judaism occurred earlier and where anti-Judaic hostilities and measures were particularly felt, played a leadership role. This can be best exemplified by a study of her stand on the Sabbath and Passover questions.

The Church of Rome and the Sabbath

The adoption and enhancement of Sunday as the exclusive new day of worship presupposes the abandonment and belittling of the Sabbath. We would presume, therefore, that the Church where Sunday worship was first introduced and enforced adopted some measures to discourage Sabbath observance. While it must be admitted that we have evidence for the observance of both days, particularly in the East,[480] this must be viewed as a compromise solution on the part of those who wished to retain the old Sabbath, while at the same time accepting the new Sunday worship. Their very concern to preserve some type of Sabbath observance disqualifies them as pioneers of Sunday-keeping, since they

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[477] Cf. *Dialogue* 16, 1 and 21, 1. These and other passages are quoted and discussed below, pp. 226-227. F. Blanchetiere (p. 109, note 467), p. 377, observes that Justin is the first to establish 'an explicit link between the defeat of the rebellions of 70 and 135 and their consequences—ruin of Jerusalem, deportation, implantation of non-Jewish population in Palestine, on the one hand, and their direct responsibility for the death of Christ on the other' (cf. p. 382).

[478] E. Werner, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966): 191-210. The formulae used by Melito, according to Werner, are particularly strong, explicit and unique.

[479] Translation by Gerald F. Hawthorne, 'A New English Translation of Melito's Paschal Homily,' in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, 1972, pp. 171-172. A. T. Kraabel expresses a legitimate surprise when he says: 'I am unable to explain how a generation could read the *Peri Pascha* without calling attention to the implications of this…prolonged, bitter, personal attack on Israel' ('Melito the Bishop and the Synagogue at Sardis: Text and Context,' *Studies Presented to George M. A. Hanfmann*, 1971, p. 81). Kraabel explains that the bitterness of Melito's attack was caused 'by the size and power of the [Sardis] Jewish community' (ibid., p. 83).

[480] For references on the observance of both Sabbath and Sunday in the East, see below p. 234.

could hardly have championed the new day while trying to retain the old.

In the Church of Rome the situation was substantially different. Not only was Sunday worship urged there, but concrete measures were also taken to wean Christians away from any veneration of the Sabbath. These we shall now consider, endeavoring to identify those motives which may have caused such a course of action.

We shall start our investigation with Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100- ca. 165), who taught and wrote in Rome by the middle of the second century. While prior to him, Ignatius in Asia Minor (ca. AD 110) and *Barnabas at Alexandria (ca. AD 135), explicitly upbraided Sabbath-keeping*, it is *Justin who provides the most devastating and systematic condemnation of the Sabbath and the first explicit account of Christian Sunday worship*. Since in the subsequent chapter we shall closely examine Justin's views on the Sabbath and Sunday, here we need only to state his position.[481]

The Sabbath for Justin is *a temporary ordinance derived from Moses*, which God did not intend to be kept literally, for He Himself,

> "'does not stop controlling the movement of the universe on that day.' He imposed it *solely on the Jews as a mark to single them out for punishment* they so well deserved for their infidelities."[482]

The acceptance of this thesis makes God guilty, to say the least, of discriminatory practices, inasmuch as He would have given ordinances for the sole negative purpose of singling out Jews for punishment.

Someone could argue that Justin's position does not necessarily reflect the attitude of the whole Church of Rome toward the Sabbath, especially since Rome was the crossroads of all ideas. While this caution deserves attention, it is well to note that Justin does not represent a solitary voice in Rome against the Sabbath. Similar views were expressed by the renowned heretic, Marcion, who at that time (ca. AD 144) established his headquarters in Rome. The influence of Marcion's anti-Judaic and anti-Sabbath teachings was felt far and wide.[483] More than half a century later, Tertullian still found it necessary to defend the Christians in North Africa from the influence of Marcion's teaching by producing his longest treatise, *Against Marcion*, which he revised in three successive editions.[484]

In Rome particularly, as Justin testifies, 'many have believed him [i.e. Marcion] as if he alone knew the truth.'[485] Regarding the Sabbath, according to Epiphanius, Marcion ordered his followers "to fast on Saturday justifying it in this way: 'Because it is the rest of the God of the Jews… we fast in that

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[481] The views of Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin on the Sabbath-Sunday question are discussed in chapter VII.

[482] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 23, 3; 29, 3; 16, 1; 21, 1. These texts are quoted and discussed below, p. 223f.

[483] K. Bihlmeyer and H. Tuechle, *Storia della Chiesa*, 1969, I, p. 186, remark that Marcion's Church irradiated its influence 'in length and breadth with a surprising rapidity, in a special way in the East as far as Persia and Armenia, thus surpassing in extension and importance all other Gnostic groups.'

[484] Tertullian argues against Marcion concerning the Sabbath, saying: "even if as being not the Christ of the Jews, He [i.e., Christ of the N.T.] displayed a hatred against the Jews' most solemn day, He was only professedly following the Creator, as being His Christ, in this very hatred of the Sabbath; for He exclaims by the mouth of Isaiah: 'Your new moons and your Sabbaths my soul hateth'" (*Against Marcion* 1, 1, *ANF* III, p. 271). The thrust of Tertullian's lengthy and elaborate arguments, presented particularly in books 1, 2, 4, 5 of *Against Marcion*, is to show, contrary to what Marcion taught, that the type of Sabbath-keeping originally intended by the God of the Old Testament is identical to Christ's teachings regarding it. There is, therefore, no contradiction, but harmony between the teachings of the Old Testament and of the New Testament regarding Sabbath-keeping, inasmuch as they both derive from the same God who was the God of both dispensations. Note, however, that in his attempt to defend the oneness of the God of the Old and of the New Testament, Tertullian reduces the Sabbath to an institution which God has always despised. He does so by equating arbitrarily Isaiah 1:13 (a popular *testimonium*) with Christ's attitude toward the Sabbath.

[485] Justin Martyr, I *Apology* 58, *ANF* I, p. 182; cf. I *Apology* 26, *ANF* I, p. 171: 'Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive…by the aid of devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies.' The influence of Marcion was apparently so strongly felt in Rome, even half a century later, as to call for a refutation of his teachings by Hippolytus. Eusebius (*HE* 6, 22) and Jerome (*De Viris illustribus* 61) mention the treatise *Against Marcion* which Hippolytus wrote, but which, unfortunately, has not come down to us.

day in order not to accomplish on that day what was ordained by the God of the Jews.'"[486]

How would fasting on the Sabbath demonstrate hatred against the 'evil' God of the Jews? The answer is to be found in the fact that for the Jews the Sabbath was anything but a day of fast or of mourning. Even the strictest Jewish sects objected to fasting on the Sabbath. The rabbis, though they differed in their views regarding the time and number of the Sabbath meals, agreed that food on the Sabbath ought to be abundant and good. The following statement epitomizes perhaps the typical rabbinic view:

> "'Do you think that I (God) gave you the Sabbath as a burden? I gave it to you for your benefit.' How? Explained Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, 'Keep the Sabbath holy with food, drink and clean garment, enjoy yourself and I shall reward you.'"[487]

That the early Christians adopted this Jewish custom is implied, for instance, by Augustine's rhetorical remark, when referring to the Sabbath, he says: 'Did not the Tradition of the Elders prohibit fasting on the one hand, and command rest on the other?'[488] Further support can be seen in the opposition to the Sabbath fast by Christians in the East, and in some important Western areas, such as in Milan at the time of Ambrose (d. AD 397), and in certain churches and regions of North Africa.[489] The transformation of the Sabbath from a day of feasting and joy to a day of fasting and mourning, as we shall see, represents a measure taken by the Church of Rome to degrade the Sabbath in order to enhance Sunday worship.[490]

It should be noted that Justin and Marcion, though they differ in their theological interpretation of the

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[486] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 42, 3, 4; cf. Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4, 12. 65.

[487] *Yerushalmi, Shabbat* 15, 3, quoted by Nathan A. Barack, *A History of the Sabbath*, 1965, p. 182, note, 70; Barack provides additional sources and a good treatment of the Sabbath meals (ibid., pp. 100 and 182; cf. *Judith* 8:6; *Jubilees* 50:10, 12, 13; *CDC* 11:4, 5; *SB* 1, p. 611ff.

[488] Augustine, *Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 6, *NPNF* 1st, 1, p. 267.

[489] The fact that in Milan Christians did not fast on the Sabbath is attested by the advice Ambrose gave to Monica, Augustine's mother: 'When I am here [i.e., in Milan] I do not fast on Saturday, but when I am in Rome, I do' (Augustine, *Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 32; *NPNF* 1st, I, p, 270; cf. also Augustine's *Epistle to Januarius* 54, 3, *Paulinus, Vita Ambrosii*, ch. 38; the same difference existed in North Africa in the time of Augustine. In fact the Bishop writes: 'It happens, especially in Africa, that one church, or the churches within the same district, have some members who fast and others who do not fast on the seventh day' (*Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 32, *NPNF* 1st, I, p. 270); Tertullian, referring to the Montanists, says that they did not fast 'the Sabbaths and the Lord's days' (*On Fasting* 15, *ANF* 112); Tertullian indicates the existence in North Africa of a similar divergence on the matter of kneeling on the Sabbath—a practice closely allied in meaning to that of the fast; see *On Prayer* 23; for an analysis of the Sabbath fast in early Christianity, see Kenneth A. Strand, *Essays on the Sabbath in Early Christianity*, 1972, pp. 9-15, 25-43.

[490] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 60, raises a significant question: 'Thus, while protecting the practices of the Church from false and misleading influences, nevertheless, the Church of the East was very solicitous in preserving the special reverence due to both Saturday (the Sabbath), and the Lord's Day. How is it then, one may rightly ask, that the day which the Church of the West kept as a fast day, *the Church of the East celebrated as a festival?'* Following the indications of J. Bingham, Regan explains that the veneration of the Sabbath in the East was due to both the influence of the new converts from the Synagogue and a reaction against the teaching of Marcion, who fasted on the Sabbath to show his contempt for the God of the Old Testament, whom he considered evil. J. Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, 1878, 111, p. 1139, points out: 'The Jews, being generally the first converts to the Christian faith, *they still retained a mighty reverence for the Mosaic institutions, and especially for the Sabbath,* as that which had been appointed by God Himself, as the memorial of his rest from the work of creation, settled by their great master, Moses, and celebrated by their ancestors for so many ages, as the solemn day of their public worship, and were, therefore, very loath it should be wholly antiquated and laid aside'; Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite, Its Origin and Development*, trans. by F. A. Brunner, 1959, I, p. 246, holds that the respect for the Sabbath in the East was a means of defence of the Christian community against the Manichean doctrine concerning the wicked nature of created matter; C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office*, 1944, p. 38, believes that veneration for the Sabbath im the East 'was reinforced continually by converts from Judaism'; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1933, p. 66, similarly writes: 'The East was more conservative, more closely in touch with Judaism and Judaistic Christianity.'

Avram: and the East was more 'in touch' with the Apostles and their teaching on the Law still being valid.

Sabbath, both share the same anti-Sabbath attitude: the former devaluates the theological meaning of the day, making it the trademark of Jewish wickedness; the latter deprives the day of its physical and psychological pleasures to show contempt to the God of the Jews.

Marcion was expelled from the Church of Rome because of his dualistic-Gnostic views, but the custom of fasting on the Sabbath was retained. In fact, the historical references from,

1. Hippolytus (ca. AD 170-236),
2. Pope Callistus (AD 217-222),
3. Pope Sylvester (AD 314-335),[491]
4. Augustine (AD 354-430),
5. John Cassian (ca. A. D. 360-435), and
6. Pope Innocent 1 (AD 401-417), all present the Church of Rome as the champion of the Sabbath fast, anxious to impose it on other Christian communities as well.[492]

Did the Church of Rome borrow the custom directly from Marcion? It would seem strange that the Church would have adopted a custom advocated solely by a heretic whom she disfellowshipped and whose motivations for the Sabbath fast were mostly unacceptable. It seems more likely that some, at least, already practiced Sabbath fasting in Rome prior to Marcion's arrival. It has been suggested, in fact, that the weekly Sabbath fast originated as an extension of the annual Holy Saturday of Easter season when 'all' Christians fasted. Tertullian and Augustine, for instance, associated the two, but while they approved of the annual paschal Sabbath fast, they condemned the fasting of the weekly Sabbath, which Rome and a few Western Churches practiced. 'You sometimes,' Tertullian writes, 'continue your station [i.e. fast] even over the Sabbath, a day never to be kept as a fast, except at the Passover season.'[493]

Since Easter-Sunday, as we shall soon show, was apparently introduced first in Rome in the early part of the second century to differentiate the Christian Passover from that of the Jews, it is possible that

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[491] Avram: There's a typo in Bacchiocchi's book that has AD 402-417 for Sylvester.

[492] On Callistus, see *Le Liber Pontificalis, texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. L. Duchesne, 1955, I, p. 141; Hippolytus, *In Danielem commentarius* 4, 20, 3, GCS I, p. 234; Sylvester, cited by S. R. E. Humbert, *Adversus Graecorum calunrnias* 6, *PL* 143, 936; Augustine, *Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 6, *NPNF* 1st, I, p. 267: 'The Roman Church and some other churches, though few near to it or remote from it, observe a fast on that day.' Innocent I, *Ad Decentium,* Epist. 25, 4, 7, *PL* 20, 555: 'We do not deny the fast of the sixth day, but we affirm that it is to be kept even on the Sabbath.' John Cassian, *Institutes* 3, 10, *NPNF* 2nd, XI, p. 218: 'Some people in some countries of the West, and especially in the city [i.e., Rome]…think that a dispensation from fasting ought certainly not to be allowed on the Sabbath because they say that on this day the Apostle Peter fasted before his encounter with Simon (Magus).' Cassian's own comment is that Peter did not intend to establish a permanent canonical rule, but fasted in view of the particular emergency of the time. Augustine similarly reports that though many thought that Peter instituted the Sabbath fast, yet, he adds, 'many Romans maintain that it is false' (*Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 21, *PL* 33, 1168).

[493] Tertullian, *On Fasting* 14, *ANE* IV, p. 112; Augustine similarly associates the fasting of the weekly Sabbath fast with the annual paschal Sabbath fast. He explains, however, that while the weekly Sabbath fast was kept only by 'the Church of Rome and some churches in the West…once a year, namely at Easter, all Christians observed the seventh day of the week by fasting' (*Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 31, *NPNF* 1st, I, p. 270). The fact that the weekly Sabbath fast, which only Rome and a few Western Churches kept, is related by Augustine to the annual one, strongly suggests that the former possibly developed as an extension of the latter. As W. Rordorf well observes, since 'the whole of western Christendom by this time [i. e., Tertullian's time] fasted on Holy Saturday, it would have been easy to have hit upon the idea of fasting on every Saturday (just as every Sunday was a little Easter)' (*Sunday*, p. 143). Rordorf suggests also that Tertullian's position against the Sabbath fast may well reflect 'Montanist influence' (ibid., p. l45); K. A. Strand establishes, by a chronological and comparative analysis of Tertullian's writings, that Tertullian's attitude toward the Sabbath evolved from negative initially, to positive in his later Montanist period (note 66, pp. 25-42); the same prohibition to fast on the Sabbath, with the exception of the annual Paschal Sabbath fast, is found in the *Apostolic Constitutions* 5, 15, 20 and in the *Apostolic Canons* 64.

the weekly Sabbath fast arose contemporaneously as an extension of the annual paschal Sabbath fast. If this was the case, Sabbath fasting was introduced prior to Marcion's arrival in Rome, and he exploited the new custom to propagate his contemptuous views of the God of the Jews.

That the weekly Sabbath fast was introduced early in Rome is clearly implied by a statement of Hippolytus (written in Rome between AD 202-234) which says: 'Even today (*kai gar nun*) some…order fasting on the Sabbath, of which Christ has not spoken, dishonoring even the Gospel of Christ.'[494] While it is difficult to establish whether Hippolytus was referring to Bishop Callistus' decretal concerning the Sabbath fast, or to some Marcionites against whom he wrote a treatise (possibly to both?), the expression 'even today' clearly presupposes that the custom had been known for some time, presumably since the introduction of Easter-Sunday.[495]

Hippolytus does not explain who are those who 'order fasting on the Sabbath.' However, since a liturgical custom, such as Sabbath fasting, could be rightfully enjoined only by official ecclesiastical authority, and since Bishop Callistus, according to the *Liber Pontificales*, did intensify at that time a seasonal Sabbath fast, it would seem reasonable to assume that the writer was indirectly referring to the very hierarchy of the Roman Church as responsible for the ordinance. It might be objected that Hippolytus, by disapproving the custom, weakens the argument of a widespread Sabbath fast in Rome. The objection loses force, however, when we consider the writer's cultural background and position in Rome. In fact, even though he lived in Rome under the pontificate of Zephyrinus (AD 199-217), Callistus (AD 217-222), Urban (AD 222-230) and Pontianus (AD 230-235), he was neither a Roman nor a Latin. His language, philosophy and theology were Greek.[496] Furthermore, after he lost the election to the Papal See (Callistus was elected instead in AD 217), he headed a dissident group and was consecrated antipope. His condemnation of those who ordered the Sabbath fast could then be explained in the light of his Eastern origin and orientation (Sabbath fast was generally condemned in the East because of the existing veneration for the day)[497] and of his conflicts with the hierarchy of the Church of Rome. In other words, both personal and theological reasons could have motivated Hippolytus to oppose the Sabbath fast which by the decretal of Callistus, at that time, was enjoined particularly as a seasonal fast.

The Roman custom of fasting on the Sabbath was not, however, unanimously accepted by Christians everywhere. Opposition to it, in fact, seems to have been known even in Rome, as indicated by Pope Siricius' condemnation (AD 384-398) of a certain priest, Jovinianus, who according to the Pope, 'hates the fastings…saying they are superfluous; he has no hope in the future.'[498] Augustine, who wrote at length and repeatedly on the subject, limits the practice of Sabbath fasting prevailing in his day to 'the Roman Christians, and hitherto, a few of the Western communities.[499] John Cassian (d. ca. AD 440) similarly confines the Sabbath fasting custom to 'some people in some countries of the West, and especially in the city [i.e., Rome].'[500]

Most scholars agree that the custom originated in Rome and that from there it spread to certain Western communities. It should be added that Rome maintained such a custom until the eleventh century, in spite of repeated protests by the Eastern Church. Mario Righetti, in his scholarly *History of Liturgy,*

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[494] Hippolytus, *In Danielem commentarius* 4, 20, 3, *GCS* I, p. 234, Hippolytus' statement, 'Even today they are ordering (*kai gar nun*) the fast on the Sabbath' can hardly be construed to allude to the seasonal fast enjoined by Callistus, since the verb (present indicative) indicates a practice continuing from the past to the present.

[495] The date of composition of Hippolytus' *Commentary on Daniel* is given by various scholars between AD 202 and 234; see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 1953, II, p. 171.

[496] Cf. Johannes Quasten (p. 116, note 495), II, pp. 163-165.

[497] See p. 114, note 490.

[498] Siricius, *Epistula* 7, *Adversus Jovinianuni*, *PL* 13, 1168.

[499] Augustine, *Epistle to Casulanus* 36, 27, *NPNF* 1st, I, p. 268; again in par. 4 of the same letter Augustine limits the practice of the Sabbath fast to 'the Roman Christians, and hitherto a few of the Western communities.'

[500] John Cassian, *Institutes* 3, 10, *NPNF* 2nd, II, 218.

notes, for instance, that,

> 'Rome and not a few Gallican churches, in spite of the lively remonstrances of the Greeks, which were refuted by the polemic works of Eneas of Paris (d. 870 AD) and Retrannus of Corby (d. AD 868), preserved the traditional Sabbath fast until beyond the year AD 1000.'[501]

R. L. Odom has persuasively brought out that the Roman insistence on making the Sabbath a day of fast contributed significantly to the historic break between the Eastern and Western Christian Church which occurred in AD 1054.[502] The fact that the Sabbath fast seemingly originated in Rome is, however, of relatively little value to our present research, unless we understand why such a practice arose in the first place and what causal relationship exists between it and the origin of Sunday.

The sources usually present the Sabbath fast as the '*prolon gation—superpositio*' of that of Friday, making both fasting days commemorative of the time, when to use Tertullian's phrase, 'the Bridegroom was taken away,' that is, when Christ was under the power of death.[503] The Easter-Friday and Sabbath fasts were however designed to express not only sorrow for Christ's death, but also contempt for its perpetrators, namely the Jews.

In two related documents, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (dated in the earlier half of the third century) and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. AD 375), Christians are in a similar vein enjoined to fast on Easter-Friday and Saturday 'on account of the disobedience of our brethren [i.e., the Jews]…because thereon the People killed themselves in crucifying our Saviour[504]…because in these days…He was taken from us by the Jews, falsely so named, and fastened to the cross.'[505]

In the light of the close nexus existing between the annual Paschal Sabbath fast and the weekly one,[506] it is reasonable to conclude that the latter originated in Rome as an extension of the former, not only to express sorrow for Christ's death, but also to show contempt for the Jewish people and particularly for their Sabbath.[507] Pope Sylvester (AD 314-335) in a historic statement, often quoted by his succes-

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[501] M. Righetti, *L'Anno liturgico, manuale di storia liturgica*, 1969, II, p. 39.

[502] R. L. Odom, 'The Sabbath in AD 1054,' *AUSS* 1 (1963): 74-80.

[503] Tertullian, *On Fasting* 13, *ANF* IV, p. 111; L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 1927, p. 231, argues that the Roman Saturday fast originated as a prolongation of the weekly Friday fast. He bases his conclusion on the fact that the Sabbath fast is commonly designated as 'the prolongation—*superpositio*' or by similar expressions, which imply that it was regarded as the continuation of the Friday fast; cf. Victorinus of Pettau, *On the Creation of the World* 5; Tertullian, *On Fasting* 14; Canon 26 of the Council of Elvira (Mansi II, p. 10).

[504] *Didascalia Apostolorum* 14, 19, trans. H. Connolly, 1929, pp. 184 and 190. W. Rordorf points out that 'in the *Didascalia* the institution of the Sabbath is interpreted as a 'preventive punishment' of the Jewish people' (*Sabbat*, p. 40). The Sabbath, in fact, according to the *Didascalia*, was laid upon the Jews as a perpetual 'mourning for their destruction' (ibid., p. 190). Justin, as we shall see, regards the Sabbath in a similar fashion (see below, Chapter VII, p. 226).

[505] *Apostolic Constitutions* 5, 18, *ANF* VII, p. 447. The anti-Judaic motivations for the paschal Sabbath fast appear again in the same document. For instance, while fasting, Christians are 'to bewail over them [i.e., the Jews] because when the Lord came they did not believe on Him, but rejected His doctrine' (5, 15, p. 445). Epiphanius also affirms: 'In fact the very apostles establish, 'when they [i.e., the Jews] feast, we should mourn for them with fasting because in that feast they fastened Christ on the Cross' (*Adversus haereses* 70, 11, *PG* 42, 359-360). P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1933, p. 67, remarks: 'We may well assume that anti-Jewish considerations, so prominent in Victorinus, were by no means absent as a factor in hastening the observance of the Sabbath fast'; similarly Righetti comments: 'One notices in some churches in the East, as well as in Rome and Spain, a strong tendency to emphasize the Sabbath with a fast, probably because of a certain anti-Semitism, as Victorinus of Pettau in Stiria (d. ca. AD 300) leaves us to suppose' (see p. 118, note 509); see also the texts and comments that follow.

[506] See p. 115, note 493.

[507] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 204, suggests that 'the weekly Sabbath fast developed from the fast of Holy Saturday, since Sunday was regarded as a little commemoration of the resurrection. According to Epiphanius (*Adversus haereses* 42, 3, 3) this could have been influenced by Marcion's hate for the Jewish

sors in defence of the Roman Sabbath fast, clearly supports this conclusion:

> 'If every Sunday is to be observed joyfully by the Christians on account of the resurrection, then every Sabbath on account of the burial, is to be regarded in execration of the Jews (*exsecratione Judaeorum*). In fact, all the disciples of the Lord had a lamentation on the Sabbath, bewailing the buried Lord, and gladness prevailed for the exulting Jews. But sadness reigned for the fasting apostles. In like manner we are sad with the saddened by the burial of the Lord, if we want to rejoice with them in the day of the Lord's resurrection. *In fact, it is not proper to observe, because of Jewish customs, the consumption of food (destructiones ciborum) and the ceremonies of the Jews.*'[508]

In this statement, Pope Sylvester places in clear contrast, the difference in theological meaning and manner of observance between Sabbath and Sunday. Christians are enjoined to mourn and abstain from food on the Sabbath, not only on account of the burial' of Christ, but also to show contempt for the Jews (*exsecratione Judaeorum*), and for their Sabbath feasting (*destructiones ciborum*).[509] Apparently the Sabbath fast was intended also to provide greater honor and recognition to Sunday: 'We are sad [on the Sabbath]'…Pope Sylvester wrote, 'to rejoice…in the day of the Lord's resurrection.'

Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau (ca. AD 304), present-day Austria, similarly emphasizes the same function of the Sabbath fast when he writes: 'On the seventh day…we are accustomed to fast rigorously that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving thanks.'[510] The sadness and hunger which Christians experienced even more severely on the Sabbath because their fasting had already started on Friday,[511] were designed, therefore, to predispose the Christians to enter more eagerly and

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Sabbath as well as for the ancient law.'

[508] S. R. E. Humbert, *Adversus Graecorum calumnias* 6, *PL* 143, 937 (emphasis supplied). This treatise was composed in the form of a debate about the year 1054 by Cardinal Humbert. The Cardinal had been sent by Pope Leo IX, early in 1054, as papal nuncio to Constantinople to endeavor to bring back the Greeks into conformity with the religious practices of the Roman (Latin) Church. The mission, however, did not succeed. The treatise was composed as a further attempt to dissuade the Greeks from holding on to certain divergent religious practices *such as the veneration of the Sabbath*. The significance of the document for our study is twofold: (1) it substantiates the existing divergent attitude toward the Sabbath between the East and the West; (2) it quotes the earlier testimony of Pope Sylvester (ca. AD. 314-335) which offers additional insights into the motivations for the Sabbath fast. The authenticity of Pope Sylvester's statement is confirmed (1) by the fact that Humbert quotes accurately other documents, such as the famous decretal of Innocent I (see p. 119, note 514), and (2) by the fact that Popes like Hadrian I (Epist. 70, *Ad Egilam Episcopum, PL* 98, 335) and Nicolas I (Epist. 152, Ad Hincma rum, PL 119, 115f) refer to Sylvester's statement to defend the Roman Sabbath fast.

[509] Augustine, *Epistle to Casulanus* 36,4, *NPNF* 1st, I, p. 266, refutes the charge of an anonymous Roman Metropolitan who claimed that those Christians who eat their meals on the Sabbath 'are sons of the bondwoman…and prefer Jewish rites to those of the Church.' These charges are indicative of the unusual effort put forth by the Church of Rome to discourage the veneration of the Sabbath, regarded as a Jewish institution.

[510] Victorinus, *On the Creation of the World*, 5, *ANF* VII, p. 342.

[511] Note that Victorinus (p. 118, note 510) admonishes also to 'fast rigorously on the *parasceve* [i.e., Friday].' The same injunction is found in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* 21 where Christians are exhorted to fast on 'Friday and the Sabbath' for what the Jews did to Christ, but to 'eat and make good cheer, and rejoice and be glad [on Sunday] because that the earnest of our resurrection, Christ, is risen' (Connolly, p. 190); Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea (Mansi 2:570) orders 'that Christians should not Judaize and should not be idle on the Sabbath, but should work on that day; they should, however, particularly reverence the Lord's day, and if possible, not work on it because they were Christians.' In these texts the order to fast or to work on the Sabbath seems to be designed, on the one hand, to depreciate the Sabbath, and on the other hand, to enhance the prestige and the solemnity of Sunday. We may wonder in what way the Friday fast contributed to avoiding any semblance of Jewish Sabbath observance. The answer seems to be found in the fact that the extension of the Friday fast over the Sabbath made the fast of the second day particularly severe. L. Duchesne (p. 117, note 503), p. 233, notes that 'the Sabbath fast was most severe, since no food could have been eaten since Thursday night.'

joyfully into the observance of Sunday, and on the other hand, as stated by Victorinus, to avoid 'appearing to observe the Sabbath with the Jews, of which the Lord of the Sabbath Himself, the Christ, says by His prophets, that His soul hateth.'[512]

A strict Sabbath fast would naturally preclude also the celebration of the Eucharist, since the partaking of its elements could be regarded as breaking the fast. While some Christians opposed such a view, believing rather that the reception of the Lord's Supper made their fast more solemn,[513] in Rome we know for certain that Saturday was made not only a day of fasting, but also a day in which no eucharistic celebration and no religious assemblies were allowed. Pope Innocent I (AD 402-417), in his famous letter to Decentius, which was later incorporated into the Canon Law, establishes that 'as the tradition of the Church maintains, in these two days [Friday and Saturday] one should not absolutely (*penitus*) celebrate the sacraments.'[514] Two contemporary historians, namely Sozomen (ca. AD 440) and Socrates (ca. AD 439), confirm Innocent I's decretal. The latter writes, for instance, that,

> 'although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.'[515]

Socrates does not explain why, in Rome and Alexandria, there were no eucharistic celebrations on the Sabbath; he states however that the custom went back to 'an ancient tradition.' This would allow us to suppose that the proscription of the celebration of the Mass and the injunction of fasting, because of their close nexus, may well have originated contemporaneously, possibly early in the second century as part of the effort to break away from Jewish rites.[516]

Sozomen's description of the customs prevailing in his day is strikingly similar to the one of Socrates, though he speaks only of religious assemblies, without reference to any eucharistic celebration. He confirms however that while,

> 'the people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week,' such a 'custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.'[517]

In the light of this cumulative evidence, it appears that the Church of Rome played a key role in early Christianity in emptying the Sabbath of its theological-liturgical significance and in urging the abandonment of its observance.[518] The injunction to fast on the Sabbath, accompanied by the prohibition to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to hold religious meetings on this day, represent definite measures

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[512] Victorinus, see p. 118, note 510.

[513] This was the view of Tertullian, *On Prayer* 19, *ANE* III, p. 68. To reconcile the keeping of the fast with the partaking of the Eucharist, Tertullian suggested to those who were troubled in their conscience to take the 'Lord's Body' home and to eat it after the completion of the fast (bc. cit.).

[514] Innocent I, *Ad Decentium*, Epist. 25, 4, 7, PL 20, 555; the letter is passed into the *Corpus Juris*, c. 13, d. 3 *De Consecratione*.

[515] Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 5, 22; *NPNF* 2nd, II, p. 132.

[516] See p. 107f. and pp. 125-126.

[517] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 7, 19, *NPNF* 2nd, II, p. 390.

[518] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 330, aptly remarks: 'In the weekly liturgical celebrations, Rome differentiated herself from all the Eastern communities, as well as from many in the West, drawing nearer somewhat to the usages of Alexandria. First of all, Friday and Saturday were non-liturgical, as far as the celebration of the Eucharist is concerned. Already concerning Alexandria, the testimony of Socrates has been reported. *While in all the Churches of the Christian World it was customary to celebrate the Eucharist on the Sabbath*, the Alexandrians and the Romans, on account of an ancient tradition, refused to do so; this information is confirmed by Sozomen. Further on, *while in all the Churches of the Orient, at Milan and in Africa*, because of the veneration for the Sabbath day, one would not fast, at Rome and in Spain on the contrary, such a day was consecrated to fasting.' He also suggests that Rome influenced the disappearance of the veneration of the Sabbath: 'Perhaps in this, the example of Rome (which never had any special cult on the Sabbath) must have acted and been influential' (ibid., p. 354).

taken by the Church of Rome, on the one hand, to wean Christians away from the veneration of the Sabbath, and, on the other hand, to enhance Sunday worship exclusively. The reason for such an intransigent attitude toward Jewish institutions, such as Sabbath-keeping, can be found in the need for a radical differentiation from Judaism which was particularly felt in the early part of the second century.

We noted above how the fiscal, military, political and literary attacks and measures of the Romans against the Jews encouraged Christians to sever their ties with the latter. This was particularly true in Rome where most Christian converts were of pagan extraction and experienced an earlier differentiation from the Jews than in the East.[519] The change of the date and manner of observance of Jewish festivals such as the Sabbath and Passover would help to clarify to the Roman authorities their distinction from Judaism. The adoption of Easter-Sunday, which we shall now consider, furnishes an additional indication to support this thesis.

Rome and the Easter Controversy

The Origin of Easter Sunday

The historian Eusebius (ca. AD 260-340) provides a valuable dossier of documents regarding the controversy which flared up in the second century over the date for the celebration of the Passover.'[520] There were, of course, two protagonists of the controversy. On the one side, Bishop Victor of Rome (AD 189-199) championed the Easter-Sunday custom (i.e., the celebration of the feast on the Sunday usually following the date of the Jewish Passover) and threatened to excommunicate the recalcitrant Christian communities of the province of Asia, which refused to follow his instruction.[521]

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[519] See above pp. 100-101.

[520] Eusebius' account of the Easter controversy is found in his *HE* 5, 23-24.

[521] It is difficult to accept Eusebius' claim that with the exception of 'the dioceses of Asia…the churches throughout the rest of the world' celebrated Easter on Sunday (*HE* 5, 23, 1), when we consider the following facts:

1. Pope Victor (ca. AD 189-199) demanded the convocation of councils in various provinces to codify the Roman Easter (Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 8), obviously because a divergent custom existed.

2. The bishops of Palestine, who assembled together to discuss the matter, according to Eusebius, 'treated at length the tradition concerning the Passover' and then they formulated a conciliar letter which was sent 'to every diocese that we [i.e., the bishops] may not be guilty toward those who easily deceive their own souls' (*HE* 5, 25, 1). The lengthy discussion and the formulation of a conciliar letter, aimed at persuading and preventing the resistance of the dissidents (possibly Jewish-Christians who had not been invited to the Council), again indicates that in Palestine, by the end of the second century, there were still Christians who persisted in the observance of the Quartodeciman Passover. [Avram: Quartodeciman means 14; quarto, 4 and deciman 10. This was the day, 14 *Aviv* (called *Nisan* today) that the Passover lamb was sacrificed on; Ex. 12:1-10.]

3. The following testimonies of the Fathers indicate a wider observance of the Quartodeciman Passover than conceded by Eusebius:

a. *Epistola Apostolorum* 15 (140-150 AD); two fragments from two works of Hippolytus (one of them was on the Holy Easter) preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale* 6 (*PG* 92, 79) where he states: 'Consider, therefore, in what the controversy consists…' This would imply that the controversy was still alive in his time and felt possibly in Rome.

b. Athanasius of Alexandria (296–373 AD), who mentions the 'Syrians, Cilicians, and Mesopotamians' as observant of the Quartodeciman Passover (see his *de Synodis* 1, 5 and *ad Afros Epistola Synodica* 2).

c. Jerome (347-420 AD), who paraphrases a statement from Irenaeus' work, *On the Paschal Controversy*, where the latter warns Pope Victor not to break the unity with 'the many bishops of Asia and the East, who, with the Jews, celebrated the Passover on the fourteenth day of the new moon' (see *De*

On the other side, Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus and representative of the Asian Churches, strongly advocated the traditional Passover date of Nisan 14, commonly called 'Quartodeciman Passover.' Polycrates, claiming to possess the genuine apostolic tradition transmitted to him by the Apostles Philip and John, refused to be frightened into submission by the threats of Victor of Rome.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (from ca. AD 176), according to Eusebius, intervened as peacemaker in the controversy. In his letter to Victor, Irenaeus not only displays a magnanimous spirit, but also endeavors to show to the Roman Bishop that the predecessors of Soter, namely,

> 'Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus and Telesphorus and Sixtus,' even though 'they did not observe it [i.e., the Quartodeciman Passover]…were none the less at peace with those from the dioceses in which it was observed.'[522]

By stating that Soter's predecessors did not observe the Quartodeciman Passover, Irenaeus implies that they also, like Victor, celebrated Easter on Sunday. By tracing the controversy back to Bishop Sixtus (ca. AD 116-ca. 126), mentioning him as the first non-observant of the Quartodeciman Passover, Irenaeus suggests that Passover began to be celebrated in Rome on Sunday at his time (ca. AD 116-126).

To conclude this from this passing reference of Irenaeus may be rightly deemed hazardous. There are, however, complementary indications which tend to favor this possibility. Bishop Sixtus (ca. AD 116-ca. 126), for instance, administered the Church of Rome right at the time of Emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138) who, as we noted earlier, adopted a policy of repression of Jewish rites and customs.[523] These repressive measures would encourage Christians to substitute for customs regarded as Jewish, new ones. In Jerusalem, we noticed, the Judaeo-Christian members and leaders were at that time expelled from the city together with the Jews, and were replaced by a new Gentile group. It was also at that historical moment that, according to Epiphanius, the Easter-controversy arose. The Bishop of Cyprus writes, 'the controversy arose after the time of the exodus (ca. AD 135) of the bishops of the circumcision and it has continued until our time.'[524]

If, as Epiphanius implies, the controversy was provoked by the introduction, after AD 135, of the new Easter-Sunday celebration, which a significant number of Quartodeciman Christians rejected, then Sixtus could very well have been the initiator of the new custom, since he was Bishop of Rome only a few years before. Some time must be allowed before a new custom becomes sufficiently widespread to provoke a controversy. The references of Irenaeus and Epiphanius appear then to complement one another. The former suggests that Easter-Sunday originated in Rome under Sixtus, and the latter, that

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Viris Illustribus 35, *NPNF*, 2nd, III, p. 370).

d. A fragment of Apollinarius, Bishop of Hierapolis (ca. AD 170) from his work on *Easter*, preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale* 6 (*PG* 92, 80-81), where it says: 'The 14th Nisan is the true Passover of our Lord, the great Sacrifice; instead of the lamb, we have the Lamb of God.'

e. Severian, Bishop of Gabala (fl. ca. AD 400), who strongly attacks those Christians who still maintained the Jewish Passover *ritual* (see his *Homilia* 5 *de Pascha*, ed. J. B. Aucher [Venice: 1827], p. 180.

f. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (ca. AD 315-403) deals extensively with the Quartodeciman controversy in his *Adversus haereses* 50 and 70. The Bishop suggests in various instances that the Quartodeciman custom, which he calls 'heresy,' was widespread. He writes, for instance: 'And another heresy, namely the Quartodeciman, arose—rose up again, in the world—*anekupse palim to kosmo*' (*Adversus haereses* 50, 1, *PG* 41, 883).

On the basis of these testimonies we would concur with Jean Juster's comment that Eusebius is guilty of 'wilful obscurity' when minimizing and limiting the observance of the Quartodeciman Passover only to the dioceses of Asia (*Les Juifs dans l'empire romain*, 1965, p. 309, note 3).

[522] Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 14.

[523] Hadrian's repressive policy toward the Jews is discussed above pp. 159-162.

[524] Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 70, 9 PG 42, 355-356; the passage is examined in my Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday, 1975, pp. 45-52; cf. above Chapter Five, p. 161.

the new custom was introduced in Jerusalem by the new Greek bishops, thus provoking a controversy. Both events occurred at approximately the same time.

Marcel Richard endeavors to show that the new day was introduced at this time, not by the Church of Rome, but by the Greek bishops who settled in Jerusalem. Owing to Hadrian's prohibition of Jewish festivals they would have pioneered the new Easter-Sunday date to avoid appearing 'Judaizing' to the Roman authorities.[525] While we accept Richard's conclusion that Easter-Sunday was first introduced in Hadrian's time, we find it hard to believe that it was the new Gentile leadership of the Jerusalem Church that introduced the new custom, and to cause a large segment of Christianity to accept it, especially at a time when the Church in the city had fallen into obscurity. There is a wide consensus of opinion among scholars that Rome is indeed the birthplace of Easter-Sunday. Some, in fact, rightly label it as 'Roman-Easter.'[526] This is suggested not only by the role of the Church of Rome in enforcing the new custom, and by Irenaeus' remarks,[527] but also by later historical sources. In two related

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[525] M. Richard, 'La question pascale au IIe siècle,' L'Orient Syrien 6 (1961): 185-188. Richard's view that Easter-Sunday was first introduced by the Greek bishops of Jerusalem is difficult to accept, not only because these did not enjoy sufficient authority to influence the greater part of Christianity, but also because the necessity of a differentiation from Judaism arose, as we have seen, earlier in Rome than in Palestine. However, Richard's conclusion that the Easter-controversy started at the time of Hadrian with the introduction of Easter Sunday, deserves credibility, since our informer, Epiphanius, a native of Palestine, was interested in the traditions of his country and possessed documents which have since disappeared. He mentions, for instance, the conflict between Alexander of Alexandria and Crescentius on the problem of Passover, which is not reported by others (*Adversus haereses* 70, 9, PG 42, 356B). For a thorough analysis of the thesis of Richard, see Christine Mohrmann, 'Le conflict pascal au lie siécle,' Vigiliae Christianae 16 (1962): 154-171; see also p. *Nautin*, *Lettres et écrivains chrètiens des IIe et IIIe siècles*, 1961, pp. 65-104.

[526] The expression 'Roman-Easter,' as a designation of Easter-Sunda,y is frequently used by C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, pp. 117, 119, 333; cf. also M. Righetti (p. 117, note 501), II, pp. 245-246. This does not mean that in Rome only Easter Sunday was observed. A statement of Irenaeus suggests otherwise. He says: 'The presbyters before thee who did not observe it [i.e., the Quartodeciman Passover], sent the Eucharist to those of other parishes who observed it' (cited by Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 15). The Eucharist (a small piece of consecrated bread called '*Fermentum*'), was in fact sent by the Bishop of Rome as a symbol of *communio* to the main churches—*tituli*—inside and outside the city and to not-too-faraway bishops (for a discussion of the problem, see C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 333; V. Monachino, *La Cura pastorale a Milano, Cartagine e Roma nel secolo* IV, 1947, p. 281; L. Hertling, *Communio*, 1961, p. 13; cf. Hippolytus, *Traditio Apostolica* 22). The fact that the Eucharist was sent to Quartodeciman Christians living in Rome, or in its outlying districts, indicates not only that they were present in Rome, but also that the predecessors of Victor had maintained Christian fellowship with them. C. J. Hefele explains the aversion of Victor against the Quartodeciman Passover as a reaction against a certain Blastus, who according to Tertullian (*De prescriptione* 53) 'wanted to introduce Judaism secretly' (*A History of the Christian Councils*, 1883, I, pp. 312-313). Canon 14 of the Council of Laodicea forbade the sending of the Eucharist to other parishes, which shows that the custom prevailed till the fourth century.

[527] Eusebius writes that the churches which celebrated Easter on Sunday leaned on an 'apostolic tradition' (*HE* 5, 23, 1). Irenaeus, however, though a supporter of the Roman-Easter, does not refer to the Apostles, but to 'earlier times–*kai polu*,' mentioning specifically Bishop Sixtus (ca. AD 116-125) as the first non-observant of the Quartodeciman Passover. It is possible then that 'earlier times' might refer to Sixtus' time.

W. Rordorf, 'Zum Ursprung des Osterfestes am Sonntag,' T*heologische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962): 167-189, argues for the apostolic origin of the Roman Easter. B. J. Van Der Veken, 'De primordis liturgiae paschalis,' *Sacris Erud*. (1962): 500f., holds, on the contrary, that while the Quartodeciman Passover has an effective apostolicity, less probable is that of the Roman-Easter. Kenneth A. Strand (*Three Essays on Early Church History with Emphasis on the Roman Province of Asia*, 1967, pp. 33-45), advances persuasive arguments in support of the thesis that possibly 'Rome and other places, where Peter and Paul labored, did indeed receive from these apostles a Sunday-Easter tradition, whereas Asia received from John a Quartodeciman observance' (p. 36). Strand's arguments are basically the following:

1. The 364-days fixed solar 'priestly' calendar used by various sectarian groups, like the Qumranites, where the day of omer or first fruit was celebrated always on Sunday, could well have been adopted by a segment of Early Christianity.

Avram: We now know, through the examination of the passages on First Fruits in the Talmud by Jewish authorities, that what is written in the Talmud about First Fruits being celebrated on the second day of Passover

documents, namely the conciliar letter of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325)[528] and Constantine's personal conciliar letter addressed to all bishops,[529] the Church of Rome is presented as the prime example to emulate on the matter of Easter-Sunday, undoubtedly because of her historical position and role in championing its observance.

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week, which meant that it could take place on any day of the week (i.e. Monday, Tuesday, etc.), is false. Those sections were written by Rabbis, many years after the Temple was destroyed, to give the impression that they were the authorities in such matters. The truth is that they weren't. The Temple, and therefore, the Feasts of Israel, followed the Sadducean Priesthood understanding for First Sheaf (Fruits) and it was always celebrated on the Sunday of Passover week, so, point one of Strand's argument is based on a false assumption and is wrong.

For more on why the Talmud cannot be trusted concerning issues dealing with the Second Temple (e.g. when the dating of the First Sheaf, and therefore, Shavu'to [Pentecost] would be) and why Jewish experts on the Talmud, such as Jacob Neusner, an internationally recognized authority on the Talmud, say that the Talmud is not a reliable authority, please ask for the three page article (PDF), *Talmud–is it Trustworthy?*

2. A Roman innovation could not have 'so successfully and universally supplanted an apostolic tradition at so early a period, especially at a time when the flow of Christian tradition was still definitely from East to West rather than vice versa' (p. 35).

Avram: This is another false point because by 100 AD, when Israel had rebelled in 70 AD, with the Temple and Jerusalem being destroyed and more than 1,000,000 Jews killed, and with Jewish rioting after that throughout the Roman Empire, the Roman church was already distancing itself from the Sabbath and Torah so as not to be seen as Jewish and be persecuted by the Empire at Rome.

3. Irenaeus, reared in Asia, a disciple of John and defender of the apostolic tradition, would hardly have yielded to the Quartodeciman tradition for the Easter-Sunday, if the latter had no apostolic authority.

Avram: This assumes that Irenaeus followed a biblical concept of doing what was written, and not the Roman Catholic concept that the Church of Rome had authority to override the biblical concept.

4. The geographical distribution of the two customs given by Eusebius (supposedly only the Asian Christians observed the Quartodeciman Passover) fits with the geographical sphere of influence traditionally attributed to Peter and Paul.

While it must be admitted that these arguments have been cogently formulated, it would seem to us that they do not take into account the following facts:

1. Various sources (see p. 120, note 521 and p. 122, note 526) suggest that the Quartodeciman Passover was far more widespread than Eusebius is willing to admit. In fact, prior to Pope Victor's time, it seems to have been practiced by some Churches even in Rome (see p. 122, note 526). The fact that Irenaeus refers to 'the presbyters before Soter' (Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 14), by-passing the latter, as examples of Bishops who allowed the observance of the Quartodeciman Passover, suggests that the change in the Roman policy on the Easter question took place at the time of Soter.

L. Duchesne, a renowned Hellenist, notes in this regard that 'under Soter, successor of Anicetus, the relations seem to have been more tense' (*Histoire ancienne de l'Église*, 1889, I, p. 289. In Gaul, however, the two divergent Easter celebrations seem to have co-existed, even at the time of Irenaeus, without causing major problems. In fact Irenaeus testifies: 'We also live in peace with one another and our disagreement in the fast confirms our agreement in the faith' (*HE* 5, 24, 13).

2. The Easter controversy, as we have noticed (see above pp. 161-162), according to Epiphanius, '*arose after the time of the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision*' (*PG* 42, 355, 356). This statement seems to imply that prior to that time, Easter-Sunday was unknown in Palestine and probably was practiced only by a few Christians in the rest of the world. If this were so, then Irenaeus' reference to Sixtus (ca. A. D. 115-125) as the first non-observer of the Quartodeciman Passover (*HE* 5, 24, 14) should be regarded not as a passing or casual example, but rather as accurate historical information.

3. It is rather inconceivable that a man like Paul could have been influenced by a sectarian calendar that laid stress on days and that he should have introduced it in the areas where he labored, since, as P. K. Jewett notes, 'he is the only New Testament writer who warns his converts against the observance of days (Col. 2:17; Gal. 4:10; Rom. 14:6)' (*Lord's Day*, p. 56). Furthermore, it should be noticed that Paul respected the normative Pharisaic-rabbinic calendar (Avram: actually, the Sadducean calendar), as is indicated by the fact that he hastened to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16; cf., I Cor. 16:8). In fact, Paul's free public ministry ended (ca. AD 58-60) at the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost while undergoing the rite of purification to demonstrate to the Jewish brethren that he also was living 'in observance of the law' (Acts

Easter Sunday and Weekly Sunday

What is the relationship, one may ask, between the annual Easter-Sunday and the weekly Sunday? Were the two feasts regarded perhaps as one similar feast that celebrated at different times the same resurrection event, or were they considered as two different feasts which fulfilled different objectives? If the two were treated as one similar feast, it would seem plausible to suppose that the birthplace of Easter-Sunday could well be also the place of origin of the weekly Sunday observance, since possibly the same factors acted in the same place to cause the contemporaneous origin of both.

In numerous patristic testimonies the weekly and annual Easter-Sunday are treated as basically the same feast commemorating the same event of the resurrection. In a document attributed to Irenaeus it is specifically enjoined not to kneel down on Sunday nor on Pentecost, that is, the seven weeks of the Easter period, 'because it is of equal significance with the Lord's day.'[530] The reason given is that both feasts are a symbol of the resurrection.' Tertullian confirms that custom, but adds the prohibition of fasting as well: 'On Sunday it is unlawful to fast or to kneel while worshiping. We enjoy the same liberty from Easter to Pentecost.'[531] F. A. Regan comments on the text, saying:

'In the season extending from Easter to Pentecost, the same custom was followed,

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21:25; see above pp. 148-51).

4. Concerning Irenaeus, while on the one hand it is true that he had been reared in Asia and that he was a defender of the apostolic succession, on the other hand it should be noted:

(a) that he always advocated peace and compromise as indicated not only by his letter to Bishop Victor, but also by his embassy to Bishop Eleutherus, Victor's predecessor, on behalf of the Montanists (see Eusebius, *HE* 5, 4, 1; 5, 3, 4);

(b) that he had studied in Rome and was serving the Church in the West (Bishop of Lyons from ca. AD 177);

(c) that he greatly respected and supported the Church of Rome founded 'by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul' and with which 'every church should agree, on account of its preeminent authority' (*Adversus haereses* 3, 2, *ANF* I, 415).

5. The authority that the Bishop of Rome exerted by the end of the second century should not be underestimated. It is worth noting that even though Polycrates disagreed with Victor on the observance of the Passover, he complied with the Bishop's order to summon a council. In fact he states: 'I could mention the bishops who are present, whom you required me to summon and I did so' (Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 8). Similarly, Irenaeus did not challenge Victor's right to excommunicate the Asian Christians, but only advised a more magnanimous attitude (see p. 126f.).

6. The conflict and tension between Judaism and the Empire, which became particularly acute under Hadrian, may well have induced Bishop Sixtus to take steps *to substitute those distinctive Jewish festivities as the Passover and the Sabbath* with new dates and theological motivations, in order *to avoid any semblance of Judaism*. The anti-Judaic motivations for both the Paschal and weekly Sabbath fast would seem to provide additional support to this hypothesis (see p. 117f.). All these indications seem to challenge and discredit the hypothesis of an apostolic origin of the Roman-Easter tradition.

[528] The conciliar decree of the Council of Nicaea specifically enjoined: 'All the brethren in the East, who formerly celebrated Easter with the Jews, will henceforth keep it at the same time as the Romans, with us and with all those who from ancient times have celebrated the feast at the same time with us' (Ortiz, *De Urbina*, *Nicèe et Constantinople*, 1963, I, p. 259; cf. Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1, 9).

[529] Constantine, after having deplored the disagreements existing concerning such a renowned feast, exhorts all the bishops to embrace 'the practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome, and in Africa; throughout Italy, and in Egypt' (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 19, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 525); cf. *Chronicon Paschale*, PG 92, 83 where it is reported that Constantine urged all Christians to follow the custom of 'the ancient church of Rome and Alexandria.'

[530] Fragments from the *Lost Writings of Irenaeus* 7, *ANF* I, pp. 569-570.

[531] Tertullian, *De Corona* 3, 4, CCL 2, 1043; in the treatise *On Idolatry* 14, Tertullian, referring to the pagans, similarly writes: 'Not the Lord's day, not Pentecost, even if they had known them, would they have shared with us; for they would fear lest they should seem to be Christians' (*ANF* III, p. 70).

thus showing the relation between the annual and weekly feasts.'[532]

Origen explicitly unites the weekly with the yearly commemoration of the resurrection: 'The resurrection of the Lord is celebrated not only once a year, but constantly every eight days.'[533] Eusebius similarly states:

> 'While the Jews, faithful to Moses, sacrificed the Passover lamb once a year…we men of the New Covenant celebrate every Sunday our Passover.'[534]

Pope Innocent I, in a letter to Bishop Decentius of Gubbio, confirms the unity existing between the two feasts:

> 'We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only at Easter but in actuality by the single weekly cycle [i.e. every Sunday].'[535]

In the light of these representative statements it would appear that when the weekly and yearly Easter-Sunday gained acceptance, they were regarded by many as one feast that commemorated at different times the same event of the resurrection. Though the resurrection is not presented in earlier sources as the dominant motivation for Sunday observance, there seems to be no question as to the basic unity of the two festivities.

At this point it is important to ascertain what in Rome caused the abandonment of the Quartodeciman Passover and the introduction of Easter-Sunday. We would presume that the same causes motivated also the repudiation of the Sabbath and the introduction of Sunday-keeping, since the latter was regarded by many Christians as an extension of the annual Easter. (Today Italians still refer to Sunday as '*pasquetta*'—which means little Easter.)

Scholars usually recognize in the Roman custom of celebrating Easter on Sunday, instead of the 14th of Nisan, to use J. Jeremias' words, 'the inclination to break away from Judaism.'[536] J. B. Lightfoot holds, for instance, that Rome and Alexandria adopted Easter-Sunday to avoid 'even the semblance of Judaism.'[537] M. Righetti, a renowned liturgist, points out also that Rome and Alexandria, after,

> 'having eliminated the Judaizing Quartodeciman tradition, repudiated even the Jewish computations, making their own time calculations, since such a dependence on the Jews must have appeared humiliating.'[538]

The Nicene conciliar letter of Constantine explicitly reveals a marked anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the Quartodeciman Passover. The Emperor, in fact, desiring to establish a religion completely free from any Jewish influences, wrote:

> 'It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. *Let us then have nothing in common with the detestabte Jewish crowd,* for we have received from our Saviour a different way…Strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men…All should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to

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[532] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 97.

[533] Origen, *Homilia in Isaiarn* 5, 2, *GCS* 8, 265, 1.

[534] Eusebius, *De solemnitate paschali* 7, 12, *PG* 24, 701A; cf. also 706C.

[535] Innocent I, see p. 119, note 514; cf. Athanasius, *Epistolae paschales*, *PG* 26, 1389.

[536] J. Jeremias, '*Pascha*' *TDNT* V. p. 903, note 64.

[537] J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1885, II, part I, p. 88. The full statement reads: 'In the Paschal controversy of the second century, the (Gentile) bishops of Jerusalem, Caesarea, Tyre and Ptolemais ranged themselves not with Asia Minor, which regulated the Easter festival by Jewish passover, but with Rome and Alexandria, thus avoiding even the semblance of Judaism.'

[538] M. Righetti (p. 117, note 501), II, p. 246.

demand, and in *avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jew*.'[539]

The anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the Jewish reckoning of Passover could not have been expressed more explicitly and forcefully than in the letter of Constantine. Nicaea represents the culmination of a controversy initiated two centuries earlier and motivated by strong anti-Judaic feelings and one which had Rome as its epicenter. The close nexus existing between Easter-Sunday and weekly Sunday presupposes *that the same anti-Judaic motivation was also primarily responsible for the substitution of Sabbath-keeping by Sunday worship*.

Several indications have already emerged in the course of our study supporting this conclusion. We noticed, for instance, that some Fathers reinterpreted the Sabbath as the trademark of Jewish unfaithfulness. Specific anti-Sabbath measures were taken particularly by the Church of Rome. The Sabbath was made a day of fasting to show, among other things, contempt for the Jews. Similarly, to avoid appearing to observe the day with the Jews, the eucharistic celebration and religious assemblies were forbidden on the Sabbath. Additional evidence on the role played by anti-Judaism in the abandonment of Sabbath observance will be submitted in chapters seven and nine.

The Primacy of the Church of Rome

In the course of our investigation various indications have emerged which point to the Church of Rome as the one primarily responsible for liturgical innovations such as Easter-Sunday, weekly Sunday worship and Sabbath fasting, but the question could be raised, did the Church of Rome in the second century already exert sufficient authority through her Bishop to influence the greater part of Christendom to accept new festivities? To answer this question, it is necessary to verify the status she enjoyed particularly in the second century.

The process of affirmation of the primacy of the Bishop and of the Church of Rome in the early Church is difficult to trace, primarily because the sources available report facts or events, but do not define the jurisdictional authority exerted at that time by the Church of Rome. However, history teaches us that the authority of Metropolitan Sees was defined not prior to, but after their actual establishment.[540] For the purpose of our study we shall make no attempt to define the nature or extent of the jurisdictional authority of the Roman Church, but simply to describe what appears to be the status quo of the situation in the second century.

About the year AD 95, Clement, Bishop of Rome, wrote a letter to the Church of Corinth to settle a discord which had broken out within the church and had resulted in the deposition of the presbyters (ch. 47). The prestige of the Roman Church in this case is implied by the resolute, and in some cases, even threatening tone of the letter that expects obedience (cf. chs. 47:1-2; 59:1-2).[541] As J. Lebreton observes:

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[539] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 18-19, NPNF 2nd, I, pp. 524-525 (emphasis supplied). The letter is found also in Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1, 9; Theodoret, *Historia Eccl, esiastica* 1, 10. The anti-Judaic motivation for the adoption of a new Easter date is explicitly expressed also in an earlier document, Pseudo-Cyprian, *De Pascha computus*, trans. G. Ogg, 1955, where paragraph I says: 'we desire to show…that Christians need at no time…to walk in blindness and stupidity behind the Jews, as though they did not know what was the day of Passover…' (written ca. AD 243).

[540] A fitting example is provided by the development of the patriarchal authority of the Bishop of Constantinople. At the Council held in that city in AD 381, he was given honorary pre-eminence after the Bishop of Rome, and in 451, in spite of the objections of the Pope, patriarchal powers were formally conferred upon him (canon 28); cf. *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (1908), s.v. 'Constantinople,' by S. Vailhe.

[541] Clement says, for instance: 'If any disobeys what has been said by him [i.e., Christ] through us, let them know that they will involve themselves in no slight transgression or danger' (59:1-2, trans. by E. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, p. 78). Irenaeus acknowledges Clement's authority when he writes: 'In the time of this Clement, the Church of Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians' (*Adversus haereses* 3, 3, 3, *ANF* 1, p. 416).

> "Rome was conscious of its authority and the responsibility which this involved; Corinth also recognized it and bowed to it. Batiffol has described this intervention as 'the Epiphany of the Roman Primacy' and he is right."[542]

The fact that the letter was highly respected and regularly read not only in Corinth, but in other churches as well, so that it came to be regarded by some as inspired, implies, as Karl Baus notes,

> 'the existence in the consciousness of non-Roman Christians of an esteem of the Roman Church as such which comes close to according it a precedence in rank.'[543]

Ignatius, few years later (about AD 110-117) in his *Letter to the Romans*, similarly attributes unusual honorific and fulsomely respectful epithets to the Church of Rome (cf. Prologue). While in his Epistles to the other Churches Ignatius admonishes and warns the members, in his *Letter to the Romans* he expresses only respectful requests. The singular veneration of the Bishop of Antioch for the Roman Church is evident when he says:

> 'You have never envied any one; you have taught others. What I desire is that what you counsel and ordain may always be practiced' (Romans 3:1).

In his prologue, Ignatius describes the Church of Rome as being, 'worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of felicitation, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthily pure and preeminent in love.' In his final recommendation he requests: 'Remember in your prayers the church of Syria, which has God for its pastor in my place. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, together with your love' (Romans 9:11). Though these statements do not define the actual jurisdictional power exerted by the Church of Rome, nevertheless, they do indicate that Ignatius, at the beginning of the second century, attributed to her a precedence of prestige and honor.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (from ca. AD 178), whom we have already met as peacemaker in the Easter-controversy, in his book *Against Heresies* (composed under the pontificate of Pope Eleutherus—AD 175-189), describes the Church of Rome as,

> 'the very great, the very ancient and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul.'[544]

He then states categorically:

> 'For it is a matter of necessity that every church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority (*potentior principalitas*) that is, the faithful everywhere.'[545]

Irenaeus' high regard for the office and authority of the Bishop of Rome is best exemplified in his embassy to Bishop Eleutherus (AD 175-189) intended to solicit his intervention in the Montanist heresy, which was disturbing the peace of the churches of Gaul, as well as in his letter to Bishop Victor (AD 189-199) on the Quartodeciman problem.[546] In the latter instance, it is worth noting that though Irenaeus protested against Victor's excommunication of the Asiatics, as P. Batiffol aptly observes, 'he did not dream of questioning Victor's power to pronounce this excommunication.'[547]

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[542] J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller (p. 102, note 432), p. 413.

[543] Karl Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine*, 1965, p. 152.

[544] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3, 3, 1, *ANF* 1, p. 415.

[545] Loc. cit.

[546] On Irenaeus' mission regarding the Montanist heresy, see Eusebius, *HE* 5, 3, 4 and 5, 4, 1; on his intervention on the Easter controversy, see Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 12-18.

[547] P. Batiffol (p. 101, note 427), p. 227, writes concerning the excommunication that Bishop Victor pronounced against Polycrates: 'The Bishop of Rome condemns their observance of Easter as a usage that is against the Canon of the Apostolic faith, and he cuts them off, not from the Roman, but from the Catholic communion. He is conscious then, that such a sentence on his part is legitimate. Irenaeus protests against the excommunication of the Asiatics, it is true, but he does not dream of questioning Victor's power to pronounce this ex-

The Bishop of Rome demonstrated his unsurpassed authority when enforcing the Roman-Easter. Asian Bishops, such as Polycarp and Polycrates, though they refused to accept the Roman custom, nevertheless, both took cognizance of the request of the Roman Bishops. The former felt the compulsion in AD 154 to go personally to Anicetus of Rome to regulate the Passover question and other matters. The latter complied with the order of Victor to summon a council:

> 'I could mention the bishops who are present,' Polycrates wrote him in about AD 196, '*whom you required me to summon and I did so*.'[548]

When notified of the Asian bishops' refusal to accept Easter-Sunday, Victor drastically 'declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicated.'[549] This is perhaps the most explicit evidence of the authority of the Roman Bishop to enforce a new custom, and even to cut off from the communion of the Church an entire dissident community. P. Batiffol aptly comments in this matter that,

> "It is Rome alone that Ephesus answers and resists. We see the authority Rome exercises in this conflict. Renan has said appropriately in reference to this case: 'The Papacy was born and well born.'"[550]

The undisputed authority exerted by the Church of Rome through her Bishop could be further substantiated by later instances such as:

1. Pope Victor's excommunication of the Monarchian Theodotus;
2. Tertullian's statement that from the Church of Rome 'come into our hands the very authority of apostles themselves;'[551]
3. Callistus's (AD 217-222) excommunication of the heretic Sabellius;
4. Pope Stephen's (AD 245-7) rehabilitation of Basilides of Emerita, in spite of his deposition by Cyprian;
5. Cyprian's request to Pope Stephen to depose Marcion of Arles, a convinced follower of Novatian.

Other indications could be added such as,

1. the designation of the Church of Rome as the 'Chair of Peter—*Cathedra Petri*' by the Muratorian fragment, by Cyprian and by Firmilian of Caesarea;
2. the role played by the Pope in the question of the lapsed, as well as of the heretical, baptism;[552]
3. the introduction and enforcement by the Church of Rome of the date December 25 for the celebration of Christmas.[553]

In the light of these indications, the Church of Rome seems to have emerged to a position of pre-eminence already in the second century. The Roman Pontiff was in fact the only ecclesiastical authority

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communication.'

548 Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 8 (emphasis supplied).

549 Eusebius, *HE* 5, 24, 9, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 242. Some argue that Eusebius does not really say that Victor excommunicated the Asiatic churches. It is hard, however, to understand Eusebius' words to mean anything else than that he did actually cut off communion with them. This is also what Socrates says in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5, 22.

550 P. Batiffol (p. 101, note 427), p. 225.

551 Tertullian, *On Prescription Against Heretics* 26, *ANF* III, p. 260.

552 For a concise discussion of these various historical episodes expressing the consciousness of a preeminent position of the Roman church, see Karl Baus (p. 127, note 543), pp. 355-360; cf. Giuseppe D'Ercole, *Communio-Collegialità-Primato e sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum dai Vangeli a Costantino*, 1964, pp. 157-205, who provides also an extensive bibliography; Jean Colson, *L'Épisco pat catholique*, 1963.

553 The role of the Church of Rome in the adoption of December 25, as the date for the celebration of Christmas, is discussed in Chapter VIII, pp. 256-261.

widely recognized and capable of influencing the greater part of Christendom (even though some churches rejected his instructions) to accept new customs or observances.

Conclusion

The role that the Church of Rome played in causing the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday has been underestimated, if not totally neglected, in recent studies. If one recognizes, as admitted by 0. Cullmann, that 'in deliberate distinction from Judaism, the first Christians selected the first day of the week,'[554] then Rome emerges as the most logical place for the origin of Sunday. It is there that we found both the circumstances and the authority necessary to accomplish such a liturgical change. P. V. Monachino, in the conclusion of his dissertation on the *Pastoral Care at Milan, Carthage and Rome in the Fourth Century*, acknowledges the role of leadership in the West by the Church of Rome. He writes,

> 'we do not think to err if we affirm that the place where this type of pastoral care had been elaborated was the city of Rome, though we must recognize for Milan some influence from the Orient.'[555]

C. S. Mosna specifically admits that Rome was influential in causing the disappearance of the veneration of the Sabbath. He states,

> 'perhaps in this [i.e. disappearance of Sabbath] the example of Rome, which never had any special cult on the Sabbath, must have been influential.'[556]

These conditions did not exist in the East, where Jewish influence survived longer, as evidenced by the survival of a veneration for the Sabbath and of respect for the Jewish reckoning of the Passover.[557]

Our investigation so far has established that Sunday observance arose, as W. D. Davies states, '*in conscious opposition to, or distinction from, the Jewish Sabbath*.'[558] We have found that the change in the day of worship seems to have been encouraged, on the one hand, by the social, military, political and literary anti-Judaic imperial policies, which made it necessary for Christians to sever their ties with the Jews, and, on the other hand, by the very conflict existing between Jews and Christians.

The Church of Rome, whose members, mostly of pagan extraction, experienced a break from the Jews earlier than in the East, and where the unpopularity of the Jews was particularly great, appears to have played a leading role in inducing the adoption of Sunday observance. This we found indicated not only by the introduction and enforcement of the new Easter-Sunday festivity (closely related to the weekly Sunday), but also by the measures Rome took to devaluate the Sabbath theologically and prac-

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554 0. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, 1966, p. 10.

555 P. V. Monachino (p. 122, note 526), p. 407. Leonard Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, 1970, p. 126, writes concerning the role of Rome as follows: 'The Church of Rome had already gained a certain superiority early in the history of the Church. It became prominent *as the church of the capital of the world* (Rom. 1:8, 16:16), as the meeting point of the entire Church (cf. the greetings in Rom. 16; Col. 4; I Peter 5:13), as the abode of Peter and Paul (Ignatius, *Romans* 4, 3; 1 Clem. V. 4f.), and as the first great church to suffer as martyr (Rev. 17:6). Because of all this, as Luke points out, she became to a certain extent the successor of Christian Jerusalem, and as I Clement demonstrates, she thus assumed the responsibility for other churches.'

556 C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 354.

557 Bruce Metzger acknowledges that the need for Christians in the West to separate from the Jews provides 'a reasonable historical explanation' for 'the difference between East and West in the observance of the Sabbath…In the West, particularly after the Jewish rebellion under Hadrian, *it became vitally important for those who were not Jews to avoid exposing themselves to suspicion*; and *the observance of the Sabbath was one of the most noticeable indications of Judaism*. In the East, however, less opposition was shown to Jewish institutions' (*Studies in the Lectionary Text of the Greek New Testament*, 1944, II, sec. 3, p. 12).

558 W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism*, n.d., p. 74.

tically. The Sabbath was in fact re-interpreted to be a temporary institution given to the Jews as a sign of their unfaithfulness. Therefore, Christians were enjoined to show their dissociation from the Jewish Sabbath by fasting on that day, by abstaining from the Lord's supper and by not attending religious assemblies.

In view of the fact that *anti-Judaism has emerged as a primary factor* which contributed to the *introduction of Sunday observance in the place of Sabbath*, it is now important to more fully verify its presence and influence in the Christian literature of the early part of the second century.

Chapter VII

ANTI-JUDAISM AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin, whose writings constitute our major source of information for the first half of the second century, witnessed and participated in the process of separation from Judaism, which led the majority of the Christians to abandon the Sabbath and adopt Sunday as the new day of worship.[559] Their testimonies, therefore, coming from such an early period, assume a vital importance for our inquiry into the causes of the origin of Sunday observance.

Ignatius

According to Irenaeus, Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch at the time of Trajan (AD 98-117).[560] The Bishop argues

> 'against the Judaizing tendencies of his territory, which, not far geographically from Palestine, had suffered the influences of the synagogue and of the Judaeo-Christians.'[561]

His language suggests that the separation from Judaism was in progress, though the ties had not yet been severed.[562] In fact, the tenacious survival and veneration of Jewish institutions such as the Sabbath is explicitly mentioned by this author. For instance, in his *Epistle to the Magnesians,* Ignatius writes,

> 'For if we are still practicing Judaism, we admit that we have not received God's favor. For the most divine prophets lived in accordance with Jesus Christ (ch. 8:1-2).'[563]

In the following chapter he refers again to these Old Testament prophets,

> 'who lived in ancient ways' and who 'attained a new hope, no longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord's life (or Lord's day—*meketi sabbatizontes kata kuriaken zoen zowntes*).'[564]

The necessity to renounce Jewish customs is again urged in chapter 10:3, where the warning is given

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[559] The article is Chapter VII of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 213-235.

[560] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 2, 8, 4

[561] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 95

[562] W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 140, observes with regard to *Magnesians* 9, 1, that 'the real importance of this passage from Ignatius…is that it provides contemporary evidence that many Gentile Christians were being tempted to observe the Sabbath.'

[563] The translation used of Ignatius' letters is that of E. J. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, with the exception of *Magnesian* 9, 1, which is our own.

[564] This concept of a spiritual Christian movement within the Old Testament, of which the prophets were exponents and examples, may seem to us unrealistic, but is indicative of Ignatius' profound respect for the Old Testament. F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 26, notes in this regard: 'Ignatius' insistence on the role of the prophets in preparing the way for Christ and the Church, evidences the prevailing spirit of the authors of Christian Antiquity in their deep reverence for those saintly characters of the Old Testament and their inspired message.'

that,

> 'it is wrong to talk about Jesus Christ and live like the Jews. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity.'

In his letter to the Philadelphians the Bishop similarly admonishes that,

> 'if anyone expounds Judaism to you, do not listen to him. For it is better to hear Christianity from a man who is circumcised than Judaism from one who is uncircumcised' (ch. 6 :1).

These frequent recommendations to abandon the practice of Judaism *imply a strong leaning toward Jewish practices within the Christian communities of Asia Minor*. In this climate it is hardly conceivable that a radical break from Sabbath-keeping had already taken place. On the other hand, the condemnation of Jewish practices such as 'sabbatizing,' that is, the observance of the Sabbath according to Jewish manner,[565] and the exhortation 'to live according to the life of the Lord,' in the course of time, may well have motivated the adoption not only of a way of life, but even of a day of worship which would be different from the one of the Jews. The introduction of Sunday-keeping could then be part of the process of differentiation from Judaism, which became necessary for reasons mentioned earlier.

Was Sunday already observed by few or by many in the province of Asia at the time of Ignatius (ca. AD 115)? This can hardly be established by the problematic passage of *Magnesians* 9:1. The key sentence 'no longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord's life (or Lord's day),' in recent times, has been subjected to considerable scrutiny by various scholars.[566]

To read in the passage a reference to Sunday, it is necessary either to insert the substantive 'day—*hemeran,*' or to assume that the latter is implied by the usage of a cognate accusative, but, as pointed out by Fritz Guy, 'in the seven letters there is no appearance of such a cognate accusative construction.'[567] This would be the only exception. Moreover the noun 'life—*zoen*' is present in the oldest extant Greek manuscript (*Codex Mediceus Laurentinus*); thus 'Lord's life' is the most likely translation.

More significant, still, is the context. As Kenneth A. Strand concisely and incisively remarks, 'Regardless of what 'Lord's Day' may have meant, either in Magnesia or in Antioch, and regardless of whether or not Ignatius intended a cognate accusative, the context reveals that it is not the early Christians who are pictured as,

> "no longer sabbatizing,' but that it is the Old Testament prophets who are described …Surely Ignatius knew that the Old Testament prophets observed the seventh day of the week, not the first! The contrast here, then, is not between days as such, but between ways of life—between the Jewish 'sabbatizing' way of life and the newness of life symbolized for the Christian by Christ's resurrection."[568]

The 'sabbatizing,' then, which Ignatius condemns in the context of the conduct of the prophets, could hardly be the repudiation of the Sabbath as a day, but rather, as R. B. Lewis, asserts, 'the keeping of the Sabbath in a certain manner—Judaizing.'[569] This, in fact, is the sense which is explicitly given to

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[565] See see p. 132, note 569, and also, p. 133, note 570.

[566] Cf. Fritz Guy, 'The Lord's Day in the Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians,' *AUSS* 2 (1964):1-17; Richard B. Lewis ('Ignatius and the Lord's Day,' *AUSS* 6 (1968): 46-59; Wilfrid Scott, 'A Note on the Word KYPIAKH in Rev. 1:10,' NTS 12 (1965): 72.73; Kenneth A. Strand, 'Another Look at 'Lord's Day' in the Early Church and in Rev. 1:10,' *NTS* 13 (1965): 174-181; C. W. Dugmore, 'Lord's Day and Easter,' *Neotestamen tica et Patristica in honorem sexagenarii*, 0. Cullmann, 1962, pp. 272-281; Robert A. Kraft, 'Some Notes on Sabbath Observance in Early Christianity,' *AUSS* 3 (1965): 27-28.

[567] Fritz Guy, see p. 132, note 566 (p. 16).

[568] Kenneth A. Strand, *Three Essays on Early Church History*, 1967, p. 45; cf. his longer study cited in p. 132, note 566.

the text in the interpolated long recension:

> "Let us, therefore, no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness[570]…but let every one of you keep the Sabbath in a spiritual manner, rejoicing in the meditation on the law, not in the relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, nor walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits, which have no sense in them."[571]

The fact that Ignatius urges Christians to stop 'practicing Judaism' (*Magnesians* 8:1) or 'living like the Jews' (10:3), and to follow the example of the prophets in not judaizing on the Sabbath, implies that many Christians were still following traditional Jewish customs, especially in the matter of Sabbathkeeping. If such were the case, it would hardly seem reasonable to presume that Christians in Asia had already radically abandoned the Sabbath and were observing solely Sunday.

Let us note, on the other hand, that Ignatius, by urging Christians to differentiate themselves from Jewish practices such as 'sabbatizing,' offers us significant insight on how the existence of anti-Judaizing attitudes and efforts contributed to the adoption of Sunday observance. We have indications, however, that in the East the substitution of the Sabbath by Sunday worship was gradual since Jewish observances there constituted, as A. P. Hayman points out, 'a perennial attraction…for the Christian.'[572]

The constant influx of converts from the synagogue may well have contributed to maintain a constant admiration toward Jewish rites like the Sabbath.[573] Numerous Eastern Fathers, in fact, fought con-

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[569] R. B. Lewis (see p. 132, note 566), p. 50; Kenneth A. Strand (see p. 132, note 568), p. 45, similarly points out that 'the contrast here, then, is not between days as such, but between ways of life—between the Jewish 'sabbatizing' way of life and the newness of life symbolized for the Christian by Christ's resurrection'; Robert A. Kraft (fn. 7 see p. 132, note 566), remarks in a similar vein: 'It is certainly illegitimate to see behind this context a simple (I) Sabbath! Sunday controversy. It is rather a contrast of two different ways of living—one apart from 'grace' ('judaizing'), the other in the power of the resurrection life.'

[570] Pagan and Christian authors constantly condemned the idleness and the feasting which characterized Jewish Sabbath-keeping. Plutarch (ca. AD 40-120) places the Jewish 'Sabbath-keeping—*sabbatismos*' among the existing wicked superstitions (*De superstitione* 3). He upbraids especially their drinking (*Questiones convivales* 4, 6, 2) and their sitting 'in their places immovable' on the Sabbath (*De superstitione* 8; see above pp. 173-176, notes 24 to 39 for additional references of pagan authors). The author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* denounces the Jewish 'superstition as respects the Sabbaths.' He labels as 'impious' the Jewish teachings that God 'forbade us to do what is good on the Sabbath days' (ch. 4; *ANE* I, p. 26; cf. Justin, *Dialogue* 29, 3; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 6, 16, 141, 7; *Syriac Didascalia* 26; Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses* 66, 23, 7; Chrysostom, *De Christi divinitate* 4). In the light of these constant denunciations, the 'sabbatizing' condemned by Ignatius represents the fanatical and superstitious Jewish Sabbath-keeping, which apparently attracted both pagans (cf. Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1, 13) and Christians.

Avram: it could also have attracted them because the Lord and His Apostles kept the Sabbath and Passover, and the rest of Torah that applied to them. The Lord indirectly revealed that fanaticism of a commandment by some doesn't do away with the commandment.

[571] Pseudo-Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians* 9, *ANF* I, pp. 62-63

[572] A. P. Hayman, ed., and trans., *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite Against a Jew*, *CSCO* 339, p. 75. It is interesting to notice the rationale adopted by those Syrian Christians who, for instance, 'gave oil and unleavened bread to the synagogue' (22:12). Sergius quotes them as saying: 'If Christianity is good, behold, I am baptized as a Christian, but if Judaism is also, behold, I will associate partly with Judaism *that I might hold on to the Sabbath*' (22, 15, p. 77–emphasis supplied). Hayman offers a significant comment to this text: 'It is possible to cite evidence proving that the Disputation of Sergius the Stylite is witnessing here to a situation endemic in Syria from the first to the thirteenth century AD From the warning of the *Didascalia* in the third century, to the canons of the Jacobite church in the thirteenth, the Christian authorities strove to counteract *the perennial attraction of Jewish observances for Christians*. Not only in Syria, but throughout the Orient, and occasionally in the West, the Church was perpetually confronted with the problem of Judaising Christians, as Marcel Simon's comprehensive study of the phenomenon has demonstrated. The Church's anti-Jewish polemic was motivated, not by any abstract theological considerations, but by a very real threat to its position' (ibid., p. 75).

stantly against the Sabbath, which many Christians observed in addition to Sunday.[574] In the West, particularly in Rome, however, we have found that the break with Judaism occurred earlier and more radically, causing the replacement of Jewish festivities such as the Sabbath and Passover.

Barnabas

The *Epistle of Barnabas*, dated by the majority of the scholars between AD 130 and 138,[575] was written by a pseudonymous Barnabas, probably at Alexandria, a cosmopolitan cultural center where the conflict between Jews and Christians was particularly acute.[576] Two major reasons make the epistle important for our present investigation. First, because it does contain the first explicit reference to the observance of Sunday, denominated as 'eighth day.' Second, because it reveals how the social and theological polemics and tensions, which existed at that time between Jews and Christians, played a key role in the devaluation of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday by many Christians.

A careful reading of the *Epistle of Barnabas* reveals that the author purposes to demonstrate the total repudiation on the part of God of Judaism as a true religion. While Ignatius condemns the 'judaizing' of some Christians, Barnabas rejects totally 'Judaism' both as a theological and a social system. It would seem that the author's attacks are directed particularly, as A. Harnack observes, 'against Judaizing Christians who probably wanted to safeguard Jewish religious beliefs and customs.'[577] In fact,

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[573] Regarding the observance of the Sabbath in the early Church, see above the discussion on the Jerusalem Church and the Nazarenes, Chapter V, pp. 135f.; *Gospel of Thomas* 27: '[Jesus said]: If you fast not from the world, you will not find the kingdom; if you keep not the Sabbath as Sabbath, you will not see the Father' (E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1963, I, p. 514). The 'Jewish-Christian' tendencies of this Gospel favor a literal interpretation of Sabbath observance; Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue* 47, differentiates between those Jewish-Christians who do, and those who do not, compel Gentiles to observe the Sabbath, thus clearly implying the existence of Sabbath-keeping Christians; *Martyrdom of Poliycarp* 8, 1 records that Polycarp's death occurred on 'a festival Sabbath day.' The phrase could well reflect Sabbath observance among some Christians in Asia Minor in spite of their hostile attitude to the Jews exhibited by the document (see 12:2; 13:1); see below pp. 234-235 for a discussion of additional references from the *Syriac Didascalia* and of the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*.

[574] Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea (ca. AD 360) explicitly condemns the veneration of the Sabbath and enjoins working on such a day in order to show a special respect for Sunday: 'Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, honouring rather the Lord's day by resting, if possible, as Christians. However, if any shall be found judaizing, let them be *anathema* from Christ' (*Mansi* II, pp. 569, 570). Canon 16, however, recognizes the special nature of the Sabbath since it prescribes that 'the Gospels, along with other scriptures, be read on the Sabbath': cf. also Canons 49, 51; Athanasius, *Epistolae festales* 14, 5 *PG* 26, 1421, exhorts his readers not to fall back again into Sabbath observance; cf. *De Sabbatis et circumcisione* 5, *PG* 28, 139; also Ps-Athanasius, *Homilia de semente* 13, *PG* 28, 162; Cyril, *Catecheses* 4, 37, *PG* 33, 502, warns the catechumens not to fall back into the Jewish religion; Basil considers *heretics* those who advocate the observance of the Sabbath, *Epistula* 264, 4, *PG* 32, 980; *Epistula* 265, 2, *PG* 32, 988; John Chrysostom denounces strongly those Christians who visited the synagogues and celebrated Jewish feasts, particularly the Sabbath, *Adversus Judaeos* 1, *PG* 48, 843, 856 and 941; Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt*, *PG* 46, 309, considers the two days, Sabbath and Sunday, as brothers, and says: 'With which eyes do you look at the Lord's Day, you who have dishonored the Sabbath? Do you perhaps ignore that the two days are brothers and that if you hurt one, you strike at the other?' Palladius (ca. AD. 365425), in his history of early monasticism, known as *Lausiac History*, refers repeatedly to the observance of both Sabbath and Sunday (7, 5; 14, 3; 20, 2; 25, 4; 48, 2); for other references, see C. Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius II, Texts and Studies* 6, 1904, pp. 198f.

[575] Cf. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 1953, I, pp. 90-91; E. Goodspeed, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, p. 19; William H. Shea, 'The Sabbath in the Epistle of Barnabas,' *AUSS* 4 (July 1966): 150; J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1890, I, part 1, p. 349; A. L. Williams, 'The Date of the Epistle of Barnabas,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1933): 337-346.

[576] J. B. Lightfoot comments in this regard: 'The picture…which it presents of feuds between Jews and Christians, is in keeping with the state of the population of that city [Alexandria], the various elements of which were continually in conflict' (*The Apostolic Fathers*, 1926, p. 240).

Barnabas categorically condemns those Christians who leaned toward a position of compromise with the Jews, saying,

> 'take heed to yourselves and be not like some, piling up your sins and saying that the covenant is theirs as well as ours. It is ours, *but they lost it completely just after Moses received it*.' (4:6-7).[578]

In order to persuade these Judaizing Christians to abandon Jewish beliefs and practices, Barnabas launches a twofold attack against the Jews: he defames them as a people and he empties their religious beliefs and practices of any historical validity by allegorizing their meaning. As a people, the Jews are described as 'wretched men' (16:1), who were deluded by an evil angel (9:5), and who 'were abandoned' by God because of their ancient idolatry (5:14). They drove 'his prophets to death' (5:12) and they crucified Christ 'setting him at naught and piercing him and spitting upon him' (7:9).

As to the fundamental Jewish beliefs (such as the sacrificial system, the covenant, the promised land, the circumcision, the levitical laws, the Sabbath and the temple) the writer endeavors to demonstrate that they do not apply literally to the Jews, since they have a deeper allegorical meaning, which finds its fulfillment in Christ and in the spiritual experience of the Christians.[579] The writer, however, as J. B. Lightfoot points out, even though he,

> 'is an uncompromising antagonist of Judaism…beyond this antagonism he has nothing in common with the anti-Judaic heresies of the second century.'[580]

W. H. Shea rightly observes, in fact, that 'on many of the cardinal beliefs of Christendom the author is quite orthodox.'[581]

The repudiation of, and separation from, Judaism on the part of Barnabas represents then, not the expression of a heretical movement, but a necessity felt by the Christian community of Alexandria. However, the allegorical method and extreme attitude of the writer testifies, as J. Lebreton aptly remarks,

> 'not, indeed, to the deep thought of the Church, but at least to the danger which Judaism constituted for it and the Church's reaction to the danger.'[582]

The depreciation of the Sabbath and the introduction of the 'eighth day' is part of this attempt which the author makes to destroy the strongholds of Judaism. His reasoning deserves attention. He writes:

1. "'Further, then, it is written about the Sabbath also in the Ten Words, which God uttered to

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[577] Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 1908, ed. s. v. 'Barnabas' by A. Harnack; cf. also Constantin von Tischendorf, *Codex Sinaiticus*, ed. 8, n. d., p. 66, who similarly points out: 'it is addressed to those Christians who, coming out of Judaism, desired to retain, under the New Testament, certain peculiarities of the Old.

[578] James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue*, 1934, p. 84, observes: 'The whole of the epistle of Barnabas *is an exposition of the Church as the true Israel*. It is *heresy even to try and share the good things of promise with the Jews*. In tones of unusual gravity, and with a special appeal, the author warns his hearers against such mistaken generosity.'

[579] W. H. Shea (see p. 134, note 575), pp. 154-155, provides a concise summary of Barnabas' systematic attack against Jewish fundamental beliefs.

[580] J. B. Lightfoot (p. 134, note 576), p. 239.

[581] W. H. Shea (p. 134, note 575), p. 151; see fn. 10, where the author enumerates the fundamental orthodox Christian doctrines found in the writing of Barnabas.

[582] J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller, *The History of the Primitive Church*, 1949, I, p. 442. The same author offers a reasonable explanation for the vigorous reaction of Barnabas against the danger of Judaism: 'We must remark, in conclusion, that this Jewish danger and the strong reaction against it can be explained by what we know of the great influence of the Jews at Alexandria: previous to the Christian preaching this great influence is shown by the life and work of Philo; in the first centuries of the Christian era it continued and threatened the church: it was at Alexandria above all that the apocryphal Gospels, with their Judaizing tendencies, were read' (ibid., p. 443, note 10).

Moses face to face on Mount Sinai, 'And treat the Sabbath of the Lord as holy, with clean hands and a pure heart.'

2. And in another place he says, 'If my sons keep the Sabbath, I will let my mercy rest upon them.'

3. He mentions the Sabbath at the beginning of the creation: 'And in six days God made the works of his hands, and ended on the seventh day, and he rested on it and made it holy.'

4. Observe, children, what 'he ended in six days' means. This is what it means, that in six thousand years the Lord will bring all things to an end, for a day with him means a thousand years. He himself bears me witness, for he says, 'Behold, a day of the Lord will be like a thousand years.' Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be brought to an end.

5. 'And he rested the seventh day' means this: When his Son comes and destroys the time of the lawless one, and judges the ungodly and changes the sun and moon and stars, then he will rest well on the seventh day.

6. Further he says, 'You shall treat it as holy, with clean hands and a pure heart.' If, then, anyone can now, by being pure in heart, treat as holy the day God declared holy, we are entirely deceived.

7. Observe that we will find true rest and treat it as holy only when we shall be able to do so having ourselves been made upright and had the promise fulfilled, when there is no more disobedience, but all things have been made new by the Lord. Then we shall be able to treat it as holy, after we have first been made holy ourselves.

8. Further he says to them, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You see what it means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to Me, but the one that I have made, on which, having brought everything to rest, I will make the beginning of an eighth day, that is, the beginning of another world.

9. This is why we also observe the eighth day with rejoicing, on which Jesus also arose from the dead, and having shown himself ascended to heaven (ch. 15)."[583]

Three basic arguments are advanced by Barnabas to invalidate Sabbath observance:

1. The rest of the seventh day is not a present experience, but an eschatological rest that will be realized at the coming of Christ when all things will be changed (vv. 4-5).

2. The sanctification of the Sabbath is impossible for man at the present time since he himself is impure and unholy. This will be accomplished in the future 'after we have first been made holy ourselves' (vv. 6-7).

3. God has explicitly declared, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure,' therefore, the present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Him, but only the one which is future. This will mark the beginning of the eighth day, that is, of a new world (v. 8).

With these arguments Barnabas, 'utilizing this weapon of allegorical exegesis,'[584] empties the Sabbath of all its validity for the present age, endeavoring to defend the church from the influence of such an important Jewish institution. His effort to supersede the Sabbath by means of these intricate allegorical and eschatological argumentations is an implicit recognition of the influence that the Sabbath was still exerting in the Christian community of Alexandria. The 'eighth day' is inserted at the end of chapter 15 as an appendix to the discussion on the Sabbath, and two basic justifications are given for

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[583] Translation by E. Goodspeed (p. 134, note 575), pp. 40-41.

[584] J. Lebreton (p. 135, note 582), p. 441; the author observes that 'Barnabas was only following the example of numerous Jewish exegetes, who likewise allegorized the Law' (loc. cit.); cf. Philo, *De migratione Abrahami* 89.

its 'observance':

1. The eighth day is the prolongation of the eschatological Sabbath: that is, after the end of the present age symbolized by the Sabbath, the eighth day marks 'the beginning of another world' (v. 8). 'This is why spend (*agomen*) even (*dio kai*) the eighth day with rejoicing' (v. 9).
2. The eighth day is 'also (*en he kai*) the day on which Jesus rose from the dead' (v. 9).[585]

The first theological motivation for the observance of Sunday is of an eschatological nature. The eighth day, in fact, represents 'the beginning of a new world.' It is here that appears the incoherence of the author—perhaps acceptable at that time. While, on the one hand, he repudiates the present Sabbath inasmuch as this would have a millennaristic-eschatological significance, on the other hand he justifies the observance of the eighth day by the same eschatological reasons advanced previously to abrogate the Sabbath.

It is noteworthy that Barnabas presents the resurrection of Jesus as the second or additional motivation. Sunday is observed because on that day 'Jesus also (en he kai) rose from the dead' (v. 9). Why is the resurrection mentioned as the additional reason for observing Sunday? Apparently because such a motivation had not yet acquired primary importance.

Barnabas in fact, in spite of his sharp anti-Judaism, justifies the 'observance' of the eighth day more as a continuation of the eschatological Sabbath than as a commemoration of the resurrection. This bespeaks a timid and uncertain beginning of Sunday-keeping. The theology and terminology of Sunday are still dubious. There is no mention of any gathering nor of any eucharistic celebration. The eighth day is simply the prolongation of the eschatological Sabbath to which is united the memory of the resurrection.

Later in our study it will be shown that Sunday was initially denominated 'eighth day' not only because it epitomized the eschatological Christian hope of a New World, but above all because in the growing conflict between the Church and Synagogue it best expressed the fulfillment and supersedure of Judaism (of which the Sabbath was a symbol) by Christianity.[586] Jerome (ca. AD 342-420), for instance, explicitly interprets the symbolism of the seventh and eighth days as the transition from the Law to the Gospel, when he writes that 'after the fulfillment of the number seven, we rise through the eighth to the Gospel.'[587]

The polemic arguments presented by Barnabas both to invalidate the Sabbath and to justify the eighth as the continuation and replacement of the seventh, reveal how strong antiJudaic feelings motivated the adoption of Sunday as a new day of worship. However, his paradoxical argumentation, his failure to distinguish clearly between the seventh and the eighth eschatological periods, and his uncertain theology of Sunday all seem to indicate that a distinct separation between Judaism and Christianity as well as between Sabbath and Sunday observance had not yet taken place, at least in Alexandria.[588]

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[585] Avram: There are no Scriptures that speak of Yeshua resurrecting on Sunday. The only one that seems to say that (Mark 16:9), is problematic for two reasons: 1. the Greek sentence can equally be read to mean that Yeshua first appeared to Mary on Sunday, which is Scripture, and 2., Mk. 16:9 wasn't written by Mark…it's not authentic. For more on this read *The Resurrection and Mark 16:9* at http://seedofabraham.net/The-Resurrection-and-Mk.-16.9.pdf, but Yeshua did rise on Sunday, for Paul speaks of Him as the First Fruits to rise from the dead (1st Cor. 15:20, 23).

[586] See Chapter IX, pp. 285f.

[587] Jerome, *In Ecclesiastem II*, 2, *PL* 23, 1157.

[588] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 26, aptly remarks that Barnabas' intricate and *irrational* argumentation is indicative 'of the effort which Judaeo-Christians were making to justify their worship.'

Justin Martyr

Philosopher and Christian martyr, of Greek culture and extraction,[589] Justin Martyr offers us the first extensive treatment of the Sabbath and the first detailed description of Sunday worship. The importance of his testimony derives, above all, from the fact that our author, a trained and professing philosopher, in the treatment of the problem of the Sabbath, as F. Regan observes, 'does strive for a perceptive and balanced approach.'[590] Moreover, since he lived, taught and wrote his *Apologies* and *Dialogue with Trypho* in Rome, under the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161), he allows us a glimpse of how the problem of Sabbath and Sunday was felt in the capital city.[591] His assessment of both is indeed valuable to our in vestigation.

The attitude of Justin toward the Jewish Sabbath appears conditioned both by his concept of the Mosaic Law and by his feeling toward the Jews—the latter having possibly colored the former. Barnabas, of Jewish extraction,[592] with his allegorical method, attempted to empty such Jewish institutions as the Sabbath and circumcision of all temporal and historical value, attributing to them exclusive spiritual or eschatological significance. Justin, on the contrary, being of Gentile origin, ignored the moral and corporal value of the Mosaic legislation, and regarded the Law, as James Parkes states,

> 'an unimportant portion of the Scriptures, a temporary addition to a book otherwise universal and eternal, added because of the special wickedness of the Jews.'[593]

For example, to Trypho, Justin explains:

> 'We, too, would observe your circumcision of the flesh, your Sabbath days, and in a word, all your festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, namely, because of your sins and your hardness of heart.'[594]

While Paul recognizes the educative value of the ceremonial law, Justin considers it 'in a negative manner as the punishment for the sins of Israel.'[595] He confirms this thesis repeatedly. After arguing, for instance, that the holy men before Moses[596] did not observe either the Sabbath or the circumcision,

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[589] Tertullian speaks of him as a 'philosopher and martyr' (*Adversus Valentinianus* 5). In the first chapter of *I Apologia*, Justin introduces himself as 'Justin, the son of Priscus and grandson of Bacchius, of the city of Flavia Neapolis in Syria-Palestine'; cf. Eusebius, *HE* 4, 11, 8.

[590] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 26.

[591] Eusebius, *HE* 4, 12, 1: 'To the Emperor Titus Aelius Adrian *An toninus Pius Caesar Augustus*…I, Justin, son of Priscus…present this petition'; Johannes Quasten (p. 116, note 495), p. 199, with reference to the two Apologies, writes: "Both works are addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. It seems that St. Justin composed them between the years 148-161 because he remarks (*Apology* I, 46): 'Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago under Quirinus.' The place of composition was Rome." Concerning the *Dialogue*, Quasten observes: 'The *Dialogue* must have been composed after the *Apologies* because there is a reference to the first *Apology* in chapter 120' (ibid., p. 202). Even though Eusebius (*HE* 4, 18, 6) indicates Ephesus as the place where the conversation was held, probably at the time of the Bar Kochba revolt, mentioned in chapters 1 and 9 of the *Dialogue*, it is evident that the *Dialogue* does not report the exact disputation held about 20 years before. It would seem reasonable to assume that Justin makes of an actual disputation which he held, merely the framework of his *Dialogue*, which, however, he writes in the light of the situation in Rome at that time. The fact that he writes the *Dialogue* in Rome, and not in Ephesus, twenty years after its occurrence, is indicative of the necessity which Justin felt to take up his pen to defend Christianity from Jewish accusations in Rome.

[592] Avram: I question whether the writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas* was Jewish. Allegorical writing was not confined to the Jews, and there's nothing that I've read that leads me to believe the author was a Jewish believer in Yeshua.

[593] James Parkes (p. 135, note 578), p. 101; cf. *Dialogue* 19 and 22.

[594] Justin, *Dialogue* 18, 2, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 175.

[595] W. Rordorf, *Sabbat*, p. 37, note 1.

he concludes: 'Therefore, we must conclude that God, who is immutable, ordered these and similar things to be done only because of sinful men.'[597] The Sabbath then, according to Justin, is a temporary ordinance deriving from Moses, enjoined to the Jews on account of their unfaithfulness for a time, precisely until the coming of Christ.

The acceptance of this thesis is indispensable for Justin, in order to safeguard the immutability and the coherence of God. He explains:

> 'If we do not accept this conclusion, then we shall fall into absurd ideas, as the nonsense either that our God is not the same God who existed in the days of Henoch and all the others, who were not circumcised in the flesh and did not observe the Sabbaths and other rites, since Moses only imposed them later, or that God does not wish each succeeding generation of mankind always to perform the same acts of righteousness. Either supposition is ridiculous and preposterous. Therefore, we must conclude that God, who is immutable, ordered these, and similar things, to be done only because of sinful men.'[598]

The Christian Church has never accepted such a false thesis. To say, for instance, that God commanded the circumcision and the Sabbath solely on account of the wickedness of the Jews 'as a distinguishing mark, to set them off from other nations and from us Christians' so that the Jews only 'might suffer affliction,'[599] makes God guilty, to say the least, of discriminatory practices. It would imply that God gave ordinances with the sole negative purpose of singling out the Jews for punishment. Unfortunately, it is with this frame of mind that Justin argues for the repudiation of the Sabbath. The following are his basic arguments:

1. Since 'before Moses there was no need of Sabbaths and festivals, they are not needed now, when in accordance with the will of God, Jesus Christ, His Son, has been born of the Virgin Mary, a descendant of Abraham.'[600] The Sabbath, therefore, is regarded by Justin as a temporary ordinance, deriving from Moses, enjoined on the Jews because of their unfaithfulness, and designed to last until the coming of Christ.
2. God does not intend the Sabbath should be kept, since 'the elements are not idle and they do not observe the Sabbath,'[601] and He Himself 'does not stop controlling the movement of the universe on that day, but He continues directing it then as He does on all other days.'[602] Moreover, the Sabbath commandment was violated in the Old Testament by many persons, such as the chief priests who 'were commanded by God to offer sacrifices on the Sabbath, as well as on other days.'[603]
3. In the new dispensation Christians are to observe a perpetual Sabbath, not by idling during one day, but by abstaining themselves continually from sin: 'The New Law demands that you observe a perpetual Sabbath, whereas you consider yourselves pious when you refrain from work on one day of the week, and in doing so, you don't understand the real meaning of that precept. You also claim to have done the will of God when you eat unleavened bread, but such

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[596] In chapter 19 of the *Dialogue*, Justin cites specifically Adam, Abel, Noah, Lot and Melchisedek. In chapter 46 he submits a somewhat different list of names.

[597] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, p. 234, comments on Justin's reasoning, saying: 'We can see from the foregoing that God could suppress the Sabbath without contradicting Himself in any way, *since He was led to institute it* only because He was forced to do so *by the wickedness of the Jewish people*, and in consequence, He had the desire to make it disappear as soon as He had accomplished His purpose of education.'

[598] Justin, *Dialogue* 23, 1, 2, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 182.

[599] Justin, *Dialogue* 16, 1 and 21, 1.

[600] Justin, *Dialogue* 23, 3, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 182.

[601] Loc. cit.

[602] Justin, *Dialogue* 29, 3.

[603] Loc. cit.

practices afford no pleasures to the Lord our God. If there be a perjurer or thief among you, let him mend his ways; if there be an adulterer, let him repent; in this way he will have kept a true and peaceful Sabbath.'[604]

4. The Sabbath and circumcision are not to be observed since they are the signs of the unfaithfulness of the Jews, imposed on them by God to distinguish and separate them from other nations: 'The custom of circumcising the flesh, handed down from Abraham, was given to you as a distinguishing mark, to set you off from other nations and from us Christians. The purpose of this was that you, and only you, might suffer the afflictions that are now justly yours; that only your land be desolated and your cities ruined by fire, that the fruits of your land be eaten by strangers before your very eyes; that not one of you be permitted to enter your city of Jerusalem. Your circumcision of the flesh is the only mark by which you can certainly be distinguished from other men…As I stated before, it was by reason of your sins, and the sins of your fathers that, among other precepts, God imposed upon you the observance of the Sabbath as a mark.'[605]

One wonders what caused Justin to strike at institutions such as the Sabbath and circumcision and to make these—the symbol of the national Jewish pride—the mark of the divine reprobation of the Jewish race. Is it possible that this author was influenced by the intense anti-Judaic hostilities, which we found present particularly in Rome? A reading of *Dialogue* leaves us without doubt. Though Justin apparently seeks to dialogue dispassionately and sincerely with Trypho,[606] his superficial description

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[604] Justin, *Dialogue* 12, 3, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 166.

[605] Justin, *Dialogue* 16, 1 and 21, 1, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 172, 178. The mention of circumcision and the Sabbath by Justin, as distinguishing marks designed to prohibit the Jews 'to enter your city of Jerusalem' (*Dialogue* 16), seems to be an implicit reference to Hadrian's decree, which forbade every Jew from entering the city (cf. *Dialogue* 19, 2-6; 21, 1; 27, 2; 45, 3; 92, 4); in chapter 92 of the *Dialogue* the reference to Hadrian's edict appears even more explicit. In fact, Justin plainly states that the circumcision and the Sabbath were given because 'God, in His foreknowledge, was aware that the people [i.e., the Jews] would deserve to be expelled from Jerusalem and never be allowed to enter there' (Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 294); Pierre Prigent similarly comments that, according to Justin, the circumcision and the Sabbath were given to Abraham and to Moses because 'God foresaw that Israel would deserve to be expelled from Jerusalem and not to be allowed to dwell there' (*Justin et l'Ancien Testament*, 1964, p. 265 and p. 251.

[606] Someone could argue that some of the friendly overtures of Justin toward the Jews are indicative not of tension, but of friendly relations which existed between the Jews and the Christians. Does not Justin entertain the possibility (which, however, as he admits, other Christians rejected) that the converted Jews who kept on observing the Mosaic Law could be saved, as long as they did not persuade Gentiles to do the same? (*Dialogue* 47). Does not Justin call the Jews 'brethren' (ibid., 96) and promise 'remission of sins' to those who repented? (ibid., 94). Does not Justin say that in spite of the fact that the Jews curse the Christians and force them to deny Christ, yet 'we [i.e., the Christians] pray for you that you might experience the mercy of Christ'? (ibid., 96).

While, on the one hand, it cannot be denied that Justin prayed for, and appealed to, the Jews as individuals to repent and accept Christ, on the other hand, it must be recognized that Justin's concern for the salvation of the sincere Jews did not change their status as a people from enemies to friends. In fact, in the very next sentence of chapter 96 of the *Dialogue*, Justin explains the reason for the Christian's attitude: 'For He [i.e., Christ] instructed us to pray even for our enemies.' There is no doubt as to the Jews being the Christians' enemies. Justin explains, however, that the hostile attitude of the Jews toward the Christians is none else than the continuation of their historical opposition to, and rejection of, God's truth and messengers. In chapter 133, for instance, after having reiterated the traditional rebellious attitude of the Jews toward the prophets, he states: 'Indeed, your hand is still lifted to do evil because although you have slain Christ, you do not repent; on the contrary, you hate and (whenever you have the power) kill us…and you cease not to curse Him and those who belong to Him, though we pray for you and for all men, as we were instructed by Christ, our Lord. For He taught us to pray even for our enemies, and to love those that hate us, and to bless those that curse us' (Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 354-355). While Christians, then, prayed for the conversion of the Jews, they recognized at the same time, as Justin says, that the Jews did not repent, and that as a people they were 'a useless, disobedient and faithless nation' (*Dialogue* 130). 'The Jews,' Justin affirms elsewhere, 'are a ruthless, stupid, blind, and lame people, children in whom there is no faith' (*Dialogue* 27). Such a negative evaluation of the Jews and of Judaism reflects the existence of an acute conflict both between Jews and Christians and between Jews and Empire. We noticed, in fact, how Justin interprets the Sabbath and circum-

and negative evaluation of Judaism, together with his vehement attacks on the Jews, reveals the profound animosity and hatred he nourished toward them.

He does not hesitate, for instance, to make the Jews responsible for the defamatory campaign launched against the Christians:

> 'You have spared no effort in disseminating in every land bitter, dark, and unjust accusations against the only guiltless and just light sent to men by God…The other nations have not treated Christ and us, his followers, as unjustly as have you Jews, who indeed, are the very instigators of that evil opinion they have of the Just One and of us, His disciples….You are to blame not only for your own wickedness, but also for that of all others.'[607]

The curse that was daily pronounced by Jews in the synagogue against Christians apparently contributed to heighten the tension. Justin protests repeatedly against such practice:

> 'To the utmost of your power you dishonor and curse in your synagogues all those who believe in Christ….In your synagogues you curse all those who through them have become Christians, and the Gentiles put into effect your curse by killing all those who merely admit that they are Christians.'[608]

The Jewish hostilities toward the Christians seem to have known intense degrees of manifestation at certain times. Justin says for instance, 'You do all in your power to force us to deny Christ.'[609] This provoked an understandable resistance and resentment on the part of the Christians. 'We resist you and prefer to endure death,' Justin replies to Trypho, 'confident that God will give us all the blessings which He promised us through Christ.'[610] The presence of such a profound resentment against the Jews, particularly felt in Rome, would naturally lead Christians like Justin to strike at a cardinal Jewish institution like the Sabbath, and turn it, as F. Regan remarks, into a mark to single them out for punishment they so well deserved for their infidelities.'[611]

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cision, as the marks of unfaithfulness imposed by God on the Jews so that they only might suffer punishment and be 'expelled from Jerusalem and never be allowed to enter there' (*Dialogue* 92, see p. 140, note 605). It might be worth noticing also that *Justin's appeals to the Jews in the context of a systematic condemnation of their beliefs and practices*, is similar to *Celsus' appeal to the Christians to participate in the public life and pray for the Emperor*, in the context of the most systematic and vehement demolition of the fundamental truths of Christianity. Could it be that Justin and Celsus (both professional philosophers) used sensible appeals to make their attacks appear more reasonable?

607 Justin, *Dialogue* 17, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 174, 173; the fact that the Jewish authorities actively engaged in publicizing calumnies against the Christians is substantiated (1) by Justin's threefold repetition of the accusation (cf. *Dialogue* 108 and 117); (2) by the similar reproach made by Origen (*Contra Celsum* 6, 27; cf. ibid., 4, 32); (3) by Eusebius' testimony who claimed that he found 'in the writing of the former days that the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem sent round apostles to the Jews everywhere announcing the emergence of a new heresy hostile to God, and that these apostles, armed with written authority, confuted the Christians everywhere' (*In Isaiam* 18, 1, *PG* 24, 213A); (4) by the debate between the Jew and the Christian preserved by Celsus, which perhaps contains the most complete catalogue of the typical accusations hurled by the Jews at the Christians at that time. For further discussion of the role of the Jews in the persecution of the Christians, see W. H. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, 1965. pp. 178-204.

608 Justin, *Dialogue* 16 and 96, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 172, 299; the fact that Justin refers at various times to the curse that was daily pronounced against the Christians (see chapters 47; 93; 133) daily in the synagogues, suggests that the practice was well known and widespread at that time. Epiphanius (*Adversus haereses* 1, 9) and Jerome (*In Isaiam* 52, 5) confirm the existence of the practice at their time; see also above pp. 35-38.

609 Justin, *Dialogue* 96, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 299; it is worth noting that, according to Justin, Jewish proselytes, in comparison with ethnic Jews, preserved a double portion of hatred for the Christians. He writes: 'The proselytes…blaspheme His name twice as much as you [i.e., Jews] do and they, too, strive to torture and kill us who believe in Him, for they endeavor to follow your example in everything' (*Dialogue* 122, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 337).

610 Justin, *Dialogue* 96.

This repudiation and degradation of the Sabbath presupposes the adoption of a new day of worship. What better way to evidence the Christians' distinction from the Jews than by adopting a different day of worship? It is a fact worth noting, that in his exposition of the Christian worship to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, Justin twice underlines that the assembly of the Christians took place 'on the day of the Sun:'

> 'On the day which is called *Sunday* (*te tou eliou legomene hemera*) we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as there is time.
>
> '*Sunday*, indeed, is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and prime matter, created the world, and our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified him on the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples and taught them the things which we have passed on to you also for consideration.'[612]

Why does Justin emphasize that Christians worship 'on the day of the Sun'? In view of his resentment toward the Jews and their Sabbath, is it not plausible to assume that he did so to make the Emperor aware that Christians were not Jewish rebels, but obedient citizens? Bearing in mind, as will be shown in the next chapter, that the Romans, already at that time, venerated the day of the Sun, Justin's explicit and repeated reference to such a day could well represent a calculated effort to draw the Christians closer to the Roman customs than to those of the Jews. This appears substantiated by the very reasons he advances to justify Sunday observance. We shall synthesize the three basic ones as follows:

1. Christians assemble on the day of the Sun to commemorate the first day of creation 'on which God, transforming the darkness and prime matter, created the world.' (67, 7). Is the nexus between the day of the Sun and the creation of light on the first day a pure coincidence? It hardly seems so, especially since Justin himself in his *Dialogue with Trypho* explicitly compares the devotion pagans render to the Sun with that which Christians offer to Christ, who is more radiant than the sun:

   a. 'It is written that God once allowed the Sun to be worshiped, and yet you cannot discover anyone who ever suffered death because of his faith in the Sun, but you can find men of every nationality, who, for the name of Jesus, have suffered and still suffer all kinds of torments rather than deny their faith in Him. For His word of truth and wisdom is more blazing and bright than the might of the sun, and it penetrates the very depths of the heart and mind.'[613]

   b. Christians apparently noticed early, the coincidence between the creation of light on the first day and the veneration of the Sun, which took place on the self-same day. As J. Danielou well remarks, 'the day consecrated to the Sun was found to coincide with the first day of the Jewish week, and so, with the Christian Lord's Day.…Sunday was seen as a renewal of the first day of creation.'[614] One wonders what encouraged the association of the two themes. Is it possible that Christians, in their search for a day of worship distinct from the Sabbath (the mark of Jewish unfaithfulness), perceived in the day of the Sun a valid substitute since its rich symbology could effectively express Christian truth? Such an hypothesis will be exam-

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[611] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 26; cf. *Dialogue* 19, 2-4; 21, 1; 27, 2; 45, 3; 92, 4.

[612] Justin, *I Apology* 67, 3-7, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, pp. 106-107 (emphasis supplied).

[613] Justin, *Dialogue* 121, Falls, *Justin's Writings*, p. 335; cf. *Dialogue* 64 and 128.

[614] J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, pp. 253 and 255; the causal relationship between the day of the Sun and the origin of Sunday is investigated in the next chapter, Chapter VIII, see especially p. 261f., *The Day of the Sun and the Origin of Sunday*.

ined in the following chapter.

2. Christians worship on the day of the Sun because it is the day in which 'our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead…For they crucified him on the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples' (67, 7). The resurrection of Christ was already felt to be a valid motivation for assembling on the day of the Sun to offer worship to God, but as W. Rordorf admits, 'in Justin's first *Apology* (67, 7), the primary motivation for the observance of Sunday is to commemorate the first day of creation, and only secondarily, in addition, the resurrection of Jesus.'[615] The resurrection, presented by both Barnabas and Justin as a additional reason for keeping Sunday, will however, gradually become the fundamental motivation for Sunday worship.[616]

3. Christians observe Sunday because being the eighth day it 'possesses a certain mysterious import, which the seventhday did not possess.'[617] For instance, Justin claims that circumcision was performed on the eighth day because it was a 'type of the true circumcision by which we are circumcised from error and wickedness through our Lord Jesus Christ, who arose from the dead on the first day of the week.'[618] Further, the eight persons saved from the flood at the time of Noah 'were a figure of that eighth day (which is, however, always first in power), on which our Lord appeared as risen from the dead.'[619]

Let us note that while in his exposition of the Christian worship to the Emperor, Justin repeatedly emphasizes that Christians gather on the day of the Sun (possibly, as we suggested, to draw them closer to Roman customs in the mind of the Emperor), in his polemic with Trypho the Jew, Justin denominates Sunday as the 'eighth day,' in contradistinction to, and as a supersedure of, the seventh-day Sabbath.[620] The two different designations could well epitomize two significant factors which contributed to the change of the Sabbath to Sunday, namely, anti-Judaism and paganism.

We might say that while the prevailing aversion toward Judaism in general, and toward the Sabbath in particular, caused the repudiation of the Sabbath, the existing veneration for the day of the Sun oriented Christians toward such a day both to evidence their sharp distinction from the Jews and to facilitate the acceptance of the Christian faith by the pagans. This conclusion will become increasingly clear in the next two chapters where we shall examine the influence of Sun-worship and the early theology of Sunday.

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615 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 220.

616 The role of the resurrection on the origin of Sunday is considered in Chapter IX, pp. 270-273.

617 Justin, *Dialogue* 24, 1.

618 Justin, *Dialogue* 41, 4.

619 Justin, *Dialogue* 138, 1; the reference to the 'eight souls' occurs in the New Testament in I Peter 3 :20 and II Peter 2:5. J. Danielou perceives a justification for the eighth day even in Justin's reference (cf. *Dialogue* 138) to the 'fifteen cubits' of water that covered the mountains during the flood ('Le Dimanche comme huitieme jour,' *Le Dimanche*, Lex Orandi 39, 1965, p. 65).

620 J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, p. 257, comments sagaciously that the symbolism of the eighth day, like that of the first day, 'was used by the Christians to exalt the superiority of the Sunday over the Sabbath.' Note that Justin uses the Old Testament, both to maintain the thesis that the Sabbath was a temporary institution, introduced as the sign of reprobation of the Jewish people, and to prove the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath. The Fathers, we shall notice (see Chapter IX, p. 285f.), found additional 'proof' texts in the Old Testament to justify the validity of the eighth day and to use its symbolism as an effective polemic/apologetic device in the Sabbath/Sunday controversy.

Conclusion

This brief analysis of the texts of Ignatius, Barnabas and Justin has confirmed the presence in their respective communities (Antioch, Alexandria, Rome) of strong anti-Judaic feelings, which, augmented by social tensions and theological convictions, created the necessity of avoiding any semblance of Judaism.

Iguatius at Antioch condemns the 'judaizing' of some Christians and particularly their 'sabbatizing' (that is, the observance of the Sabbath according to the manner of the Jews), enjoining Christians 'to live according to the life of the Lord.' Although, according to our evaluation, the text of *Magnesians* 9, 1 refers to the 'Lord's life' rather than to the 'Lord's day,' this does not minimize the fact that the condemnation of 'sabbatizing,' and the invitation 'to live not according to Judaism,' indicate that a separation from Judaism was being urged.[621] These conditions undoubtedly encouraged the adoption of Sunday worship in order to force a clearer distinction from the Jews.[622]

Barnabas in Alexandria, in his effort to neutralize the influence of Jewish customs, assumes a radical position, repudiating, with his allegorical method, the historic validity of Jewish practices and beliefs and 'denying purely and simply that the literal practice of the Sabbath had ever been the object of a commandment of God.'[623] He empties the Sabbath of its significance and obligation for the present age in order to present the eighth day as its legitimate continuation and replacement.

Finally, the testimony of Justin, coming from Rome, confirms what we have already gathered from other sources, namely the existence, particularly in the capital city, of deep anti-Judaic feelings. These apparently influenced Justin in reducing the Sabbath to 'the very sign of the reprobation of the Jewish people.'[624] The adoption of a new day of worship appears to have been motivated by the necessity to evidence a clear dissociation from the Jews.[625]

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[621] Avram: that is to say, a separation from the Law of Moses.

[622] Avram: not only a separation from the Jews who didn't believe in Yeshua, but also a separation from the Jews (and Gentiles) who believed in Yeshua and kept the Law of Moses. This latter is truly the real problem with these 'Church Fathers.' It wasn't just 'the Jews' that they were separating from, but the very ways of the Christ that they professed to follow, for He, and all His Apostles kept the Sabbath and the Torah (Law of Moses) all their lives.

[623] J. Danielou, *Bible and Liturgy*, pp. 230-231.

[624] Ibid., p. 233.

[625] The anti-Judaic motivations for the repudiation of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday appear in the subsequent patristic literature. The probative value of later texts is, however, inferior, inasmuch as they constitute the second moment of reflection on a phenomenon which had already occurred. By way of appendix to the material considered in this chapter, we might mention a few later texts. These may serve to corroborate the conclusions which have emerged.

Origen (ca. AD 185-254) sees in the manna, which did not fall on the Sabbath day, a preference given by God himself to Sunday over the Sabbath, already at the time of Moses: 'If, then, it is certain according to the Scriptures, that God made the manna rain on the Lord's Day and ceased on the Sabbath, the Jews ought to understand that our Lord's day was preferred to their Sabbath and it was then indicated that the grace of God did not in any way descend from heaven in their Sabbath day, nor the heavenly bread, which is the Word of God, came to them…However, on our Sunday the Lord makes rain continually manna from heaven.' (*In Exodum homiliae* 7, 5, *GCS* 29, 1920);

the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* severely denounces the observances of the Sabbath and Jewish festival as an 'impious' superstition (ch. 4);

in the *Syriac Didascalia* (ca. AD 250) the Sabbath is interpreted as a perpetual mourning imposed by God on the Jews in anticipation of the evil which they would have done to Christ: 'He [Moses] knew by the Holy Spirit, and it was commanded him by Almighty God, who knew what the people were to do to His Son and His beloved Jesus Christ, as even then they denied Him in the person of Moses, and said: 'Who hath appointed thee head and judge over us?'—therefore, he bound them beforehand with mourning perpetually, in that he set apart and appointed the Sabbath for them. For they deserve to mourn because they denied their

Is it not true, even today, that the different worship day of the Moslem, the Jew and the Christian makes the distinction among them altogether more noticeable? The diversity of motivations advanced by Justin to justify Sunday worship (the creation of light on the first day, the resurrection of Christ, the eighth day of the circumcision, the eight souls of the ark, the fifteen cubits—seven plus eight—of water that covered the mountains during the flood) reflects the effort being made to justify a practice only recently introduced. As the controversy between Sabbath and Sunday subsided, and the latter became solidly established, the resurrection emerged as the dominant reason for its observance.

The investigation conducted so far suggests that the primary causes that contributed to the forsaking of the Sabbath and to the adoption of Sunday are, to a large degree, social and political in nature. The social tension that existed between Jews and Christians, as well as the Roman anti-Jewish policy, greatly conditioned Christians (Gentiles in Rome and Alexandria)[626] in their negative evaluation of significant Old Testament institutions like the Sabbath.

A question, however, has remained unanswered: namely, why was Sunday, rather than another day of the week (such as Wednesday or Friday, for example), chosen to evidence the Christian separation from Judaism? To answer this question we shall examine in the two following chapters, first, the possible influence of Sun-worship, with its related day of the Sun, and second, the Christian motivation for both the choice and observance of Sunday.

Life and laid hands upon their Saviour and delivered Him to death. Wherefore, already from that time there was laid upon them a mourning for their destruction' (ch. 21, Connolly, pp. 190-191). The author of this document then proceeds to prove, in a subtle manner, that those 'who keep the Sabbath imitate mourning' (bc. cit.). Undoubtedly this was an impressive way to discourage Sabbath-keeping.

Avram: it seems that the ancient writers, who taught that God was punishing the Jews because of what they did to Yeshua, didn't realize that their carnal, rebellious nature also murdered the Messiah. If they had, they wouldn't have condemned the Jews, for God's covenant with the House of Israel will be fulfilled (Romans 11:25-29), to their eternal shame.

Eusebius attributes to the unfaithfulness of the Jews the reason for the transference of the feast of the Sabbath to Sunday: 'On account of the unfaithfulness of these [Jews] the Logos has transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the rising of the light, and he has transmitted to us, as a figure of the true rest, the day of the Saviour, the day which belongs to the Lord, the first day of light, in which the Saviour of the world, after having accomplished all His works among men, and obtained victory over death, passed through the doors of heaven' (*Commentaria in Psalmos* 91, *PG* 23, 1169). F. A. Regan, *Dies Dotninica*, p. 56, rightly points out that Eusebius was a victim of 'gross exaggeration' in affirming that 'it was Christ Himself who instituted the transfer.' Perhaps Eusebius, himself, recognized that he had crossed the limits of the credible, since a few paragraphs later he contradicts what he had previously stated, saying: 'Verily, all the rest, all that was prescribed for the Sabbath, we have transferred to the Lord's Day, inasmuch as it is the most important, the one which dominates, the first and the one who has more value than the Sabbath of the Jews (*tou Ioudaikos sabbatou timioteras*)' (ibid., *PG* 23, 1172). For other references see p. 134, note 574 and Chapter IX, p. 285f.

[626] Avram: not all Gentile Christians, and certainly not the Jewish believers, as many of them were rightly following the Torah and Messiah Yeshua.

Chapter VIII

SUN WORSHIP AND THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY

The choice of Sunday as the new day of Christian worship cannot be explained solely on the ground of negative anti-Judaic motivations.[627] For instance, Christians could have achieved the same objective by adopting Friday as a memorial of Christ's passion. We might say that anti-Judaism[628] created the necessity for substituting a new day of worship for the Sabbath, but it did not determine the specific choice of Sunday. The reasons for the latter must be found elsewhere.

Several significant studies have suggested that Christians may have derived 'a psychological orientation' toward Sunday from the sectarian solar calendar used by Qumranites and similar groups, where the annual omer day and day of Pentecost always fell on Sunday.[629] Though allowance must be made for such a possibility, we are at a loss to find any explicit patristic reference associating Easter-Sunday or weekly Sunday with this sectarian solar calendar.[630] Moreover, if our thesis is correct, that Sunday observance originated in Rome by the beginning of the second century, rather than in Jerusalem in the apostolic period, it seems most unlikely that Christians of pagan background would have derived the date for their annual and/or weekly Sunday festivities from a Jewish sectarian liturgical calendar, especially at a time when new festivals were introduced to evidence separation from Judaism.

The influence of Sun-worship with its 'Sun-day,' provides a more plausible explanation for the Christian choice of Sunday. The chief objection against this possibility is of chronological nature. W.

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[627] The article is Chapter VIII of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 236-269.

[628] Avram: This equates to anti-Torah.

[629] See Chapter IV, p. 119, note 88.

Avram: Pentecost always fell on Sunday, but not because the Jewish people or the Jewish Apostles followed the Qumranites. We now know, through the examination of the passages on First Fruits in the Talmud by Jewish authorities, that what is written in the Talmud about First Fruits being celebrated on the second day of Passover week, which meant that it could take place on any day of the week (i.e. Monday, Tuesday, etc.), is false. Those sections were written by Rabbis, many years after the Temple was destroyed, to give the impression that they were the authorities in such matters. The truth is that they weren't. The Temple, and therefore, the Feasts of Israel, followed the Sadducean Priesthood understanding for First Sheaf (Fruits) and it was always celebrated on the Sunday of Passover week, so, point one of Strand's argument is based on a false assumption and is wrong.

For more on why the Talmud cannot be trusted concerning issues dealing with the Second Temple (e.g. when the dating of the First Sheaf, and therefore, Shavu'to [Pentecost] would be) and why Jewish experts on the Talmud, such as Jacob Neusner, an internationally recognized authority on the Talmud, say that the Talmud is not a reliable authority, please ask for the three page article (PDF), *Talmud–is it Trustworthy?*

[630] J. V. Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 1959, pp. 161-162, argues for the influence on early Christianity of the old calendar of Enoch and Jubilees, by referring to Anatolius (d. Ca. AD 282), Bishop of Laodicea. The Bishop defends the celebration of the Quartodeciman Passover after the vernal equinox by appealing to Jewish authorities such as Philo, Josephus and 'the teaching of the Book of Enoch' (cited by Eusebius, *HE* 7, 32, 14-20). Note, however, that Anatolius is not defending Easter-Sunday, but the Quartodeciman Passover. Moreover, to justify the celebration of the latter after the vernal equinox, the Bishop does not cite only the Book of Enoch, but also several Jewish writers such as Philo, Josephus, Musaeus, Agathobuli who, 'explaining questions in regard to the Exodus, *say that all alike should sacrifice the passover offerings after the vernal equinox, in the middle of the first month*' (Eusebius, *HE* 7, 32, 17). The fact that some of the writers mentioned were not representatives of sectarian Judaism suggests that the insistence on the celebration of Passover after the vernal equinox was common to both sectarian and normative Judaism.

Rordorf, for instance, argues that,

> 'We can consider the possibility that the origin of the Christian observance of Sunday was influenced by some sun-cult only if a 'day of the sun' existed before the Christian observance of Sunday, that is to say if we can prove the existence of the seven-day planetary week in pre-Christian times.'[631]

He maintains, however, that 'since the earliest evidence for the existence of the planetary week [i.e. our present week, named after seven planets] is to be dated toward the end of the first century AD,' at a time when 'the Christians observance of Sunday was a practice of long standing,' any influence of Sun-worship on the origin of Sunday is to be categorically excluded.[632]

There is no question that the existence of the planetary week with its 'Sun-day—*dies solis*' is crucial for determining any influence of Sun-worship on the Christian adoption of Sunday observance, inasmuch as the Sun before the existence of a weekly 'Sun-day' was venerated every morning.[633] It is not indispensable, however, that the planetary week should have originated in pre-Christian times, if Sun-day-keeping was introduced in the early part of the second century. In fact, if it can be proved that the planetary week was in existence in the Greco-Roman world already in the first century of our era, and that the Sun was venerated at that time on Sunday, then the possibility exists that Christians—especially new pagan converts—in their search for a new day of worship to differentiate themselves from the Jews, could have been favorably predisposed toward the day of the Sun. The existence of a rich Biblical tradition that associated God and Christ with the power and splendor of the Sun could well have facilitated an amalgamation of ideas. To verify the validity of this hypothesis we shall briefly consider the following factors:

1. Sun-worship and the planetary week prior to AD 150.

2. The reflexes of Sun-worship in Christianity.

3. The day of the Sun and the origin of Sunday.

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631 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 181; C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica*, p. 33, shares the same view: 'To be able to speak of influence (of Sun-worship) on Sunday, one should demonstrate that the day dedicated to the Sun already existed in the earliest times of the Christian community as a fixed day that recurred regularly every week, and that it corresponded exactly to the day after the Sabbath. For this, one should demonstrate the existence of the planetary week before Sunday.'

632 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 37; note Rordorf's categorical statement: 'If the question is raised whether the origins of the Christian observance of Sunday are in any way connected with the Sunday observance of the Mithras cult, it must be answered with a definite No' (loc. cit.).

633 Regarding Sun-worship in India, Persia, Syria and in the Greek and Roman world, see F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, 19252, pp. 20f., 38f.; for Palestine see *Realencyklopddie far protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 1863, s.v. 'Sonne, bei den Hebräem,' by W. Baudissin; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 1964, s.v. 'Sonne,' by H. Baumann; F. J. Hollis, 'The Sun-cult and the Temple at Jerusalem,' *Myth and Ritual*, 1933, pp. 87-110; that the Sun-cult was widespread before Josiah's reform is well established by passages such as 2 King 23:11, '[Josiah] removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord…and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire'; cf. also Ezek. 8:16 and Wisdom 16:28: 'To make it known that we must rise before the sun to give thee thanks and must pray to thee at the dawning of the light.' Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 3, 27, reports that the Therapeutae prayed at sunrise, seeking for heavenly light.

1. Sun-worship and the Planetary Week Prior to AD 150

Sun Worship

Was Sun-worship known and practiced in ancient Rome in the first century AD, and if so, to what extent? Gaston H. Halsberghe, in his recent monograph *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (part of the series on Oriental Religions in the Roman Empire edited by the living authority on the subject, M. J. Vermaseren), presents persuasive texts and arguments indicating that Sun-worship was 'one of the oldest components of the Roman religion.'[634]

According to his well-founded conclusions, the Sun-cult in ancient Rome experienced two phases. Until the end of the first century AD, the Romans practiced what he calls an '*autochthonous* [i.e. native or indigenous] Sun-cult,' but 'starting in the second century AD, the Eastern Sun-worship began to influence Rome and the rest of the Empire.'[635] A sampling of evidences will suffice to make us aware of its existence and importance.

A calendar of the time of Augustus (the *Fasti* of Philocalus, dated before 27 B.C.), beside the date of August 9th reads: '*Soli indigiti in colle Quirinali*—to the native Sun on Quirinal hill.'[636] Scholarly opinion differs on the interpretation of the phrase 'native Sun—*Sol indiges*' which occurs in few ancient Roman texts, inasmuch as the Romans could well have designated the Sun as their national god, though in actuality it was an imported deity.[637] However, even granting that *Sol indiges* was not really indigenous to the Romans, the fact remains that it was regarded as a Roman god.

After the conquest of Egypt (31 B.C.) Augustus sent two obelisks to Rome and had them 'dedicated to the Sun—*Soli donum dedit*'[638] in the Circus Maximus and in Mars Field to thank the same god for the victory. Tertullian reports that in his time (ca. AD 150-230) 'the huge Obelisk' in the circus was still 'set up in public to the Sun,' and that the circus 'was chiefly consecrated to the Sun.'[639]

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634 Gaston H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, 1972, p. 26. This thesis was proposed earlier by A. von Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur Romischen Religion*, 1909, p. 173.

635 Gaston H. Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), also pp. 27 and 35.

636 *Fasti of Philocalus*, *CIL* I, 2, 324 or *Fasti of Amiternum*, *CIL* IX, 4192. F. Altheim, *Italien und Rom*, 1941, II, pp. 24-25, provides abundant evidences that *Sol Indiges* was worshipped in Rome as early as the fourth century B. C. In the oldest calendar the Sun-god is associated with Jupiter. Marcus Terentius Varro (116-ca. 26 B.C.) *De re rustica* 1, 1, 5, reports that the Sun and the Moon were usually invoked immediately after Jupiter and Tellus. Tacitus (ca. AD 55-120) mentions that in the Circus there was an old temple dedicated to the Sun (*Annales* 15, 74, 1; cf. 15, 41, 1).

637 G. Wissowa, *Religion und kultus der Ramer*, 19122, pp. 31Sf. argues that the expression '*indigiti*-native' could only have designated the Sun-cult as native when the Eastern Sun-cults arose.

638 *CIL* VI, 701; A. Piganiol, *Histoire de Rome*, 1954, p. 229, holds that Augustus favored the worship of the Sun and 'gave priority to the gods of light'; Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), p. 30, is of the opinion that Augustus did not intend to import to Rome the Egyptian solar god, but rather to give credit for the victory to the ancient Roman *Sol*: 'No single deity of the Roman pantheon could more rightfully claim this glorious victory than the ancient Roman *Sol*, since it was achieved through his special intervention and protection. The two obelisks, which were symbols of the Sun god in Egypt, constitute additional support for this interpretation.' Anthony, before Augustus, portrayed the Sun god on his coins, and after marrying Cleopatra, he renamed the two sons of the queen as Helios and Selene (cf. A. Piganiol, op. cit., p. 239; H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire rornain*, I, p. 44, note 73; W. W. Tarn, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., X, p. 68; cf. Dio Cassius, *Historia* 49, 41 and 50, 2, 5, 25. Cicero (106-43 B.C.) shows the high esteem that cultured Romans had for Sun worship when he describes the Sun as 'the lord, chief, and ruler of the other lights, the mind 'and guiding principle, of such magnitude that he reveals and fills all things with his light' (*De republica* 6, 17, *LCL*, p. 271).

639 Tertullian, *De spectaculis* 8, *ANF* III, p. 83; Tacitus (p. 148, note 636) confirms the existence of the temple dedicated to the Sun in the circus.

Several altars of the first century AD have been found dedicated to 'the Sun and the Moon—*Solis et Lunae*.'[640] Nero (AD 54-68) attributed to the Sun the merit for the discovery of the plot against him and erected the famous 'Colossus Neronis at the highest point of the *velia*, representing the Sun, with the features of Nero and with seven long rays around his head.'[641] Hadrian (AD 117-138), who identified himself with the Sun in his coins, according to Elius Spartianus (ca. AD 300) 'dedicated to the Sun' the Colossus Neronis after removing the features of Nero.[642] Tacitus (ca. AD 55-120) also reports that Vespasian's (AD 69-79) third legion 'according to the Syrian custom, greeted the rising sun.'[643]

Halsberghe maintains that from the beginning of the second century the Eastern cult of '*Sol Invictus*—Invincible Sun' penetrated in Rome in two different fashions: privately, through the cult of *Sol Invictus Mithra* and publicly through that of *Sol Invictus Elagabal*.[644] While we disagree with the author on the date of the diffusion of Mithraism, since there are significant indications that it had reached Rome already in the first century AD, [645] the differentiation between the two cults is persuasively demonstrated. Mithraism primarily was a private cult, though it numbered among its adherents magistrates and emperors. *Sol Invictus Elagabal*, on the other hand, was a popular cult with grandiose temples, and during the rule of the young Emperor Elagabalus (AD 218-222), was made the official cult of the whole empire.

These diversified forms of Sun-worship, resulting from the penetration of Eastern Sun-cults, substantiate Halsberghe's conclusion that 'from the early part of the second century AD, the cult of *Sol Invictus* was dominant in Rome and in other parts of the Empire. '[646] The identification and worship of the Emperor as Sun-god, encouraged by the Eastern theology of the 'King-Sun,' and by political considerations, undoubtedly contributed to the diffusion of a public Sun-cult.[647]

Planetary Week

Since the expansion of the Sun-cult is contemporaneous with the origin of Sunday, is it possible that the former influenced the latter? A causal relationship between the two is conceivable only if the planetary week, with its '*dies solis*—day of the Sun,' already existed in the first century AD in the Greco-Roman world. Only in this case the predominant Sun-cult could have enhanced the day of the Sun, and consequently, influenced Christians to adopt it for their weekly worship after reinterpreting its

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[640] Cf. *CIL* I, 327; XIV, 4089; V, 3917; VI, 3719; these texts are discussed by Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), p. 33.

[641] H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, 1940 I, pp. 134 and 171; cf. Tacitus, *Annales* 15, 74.

[642] Elius Spartianus, *Hadrianus* 19, *LCL Scriptores Historiae Augustae* I, p. 61; cf. A. Piganiol (p. 148, note 638), pp. 288, 332-333, explains that Hadrian associated himself with the Sun 'whose image appears on the last coins'; cf. H. Cohen (p. 148, note 638), II, p. 38, notes 187-188.

[643] Tacitus, *Historiae* 3, 24.

[644] Gaston H. Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), p. 35; cf. A. von Domaszewski (p. 148, note 634), p. 173.

[645] According to Plutarch (AD 46-125), *Vita Pompeii* 24, Mithra was introduced into Rome by the Cilician pirates taken captives by Pompey in 67 B.C. Papinius Statius (d. ca. AD 96), in a verse of the *Thebaid,* speaks of 'Mithra, that beneath the rocky Persean cave strains at the reluctant-following horns' (*Thebaid* I, 718-720, *LCL* I, p. 393). Turchi Nicola, *La Religione di Roma Antica*, 1939, p. 273: 'The Mithraic religion was made known through the pirates…but its influence was particularly felt beginning with the first century after Christ'; the same view is expressed by Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, 1956, p. 37; *Textes et Monuments*, 1896-1899, I, p. 338: 'The propagation of the two religious [i.e., Mithraism and Christianity] was approximately contemporaneous' cf. *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, 1952, s.v. 'Mithra e Mithraismo,' by M. J. Vermaseren: 'Mithra entered Rome (67 B.C.) with the prisoners of Cilicia…Its diffusion increased under the Flavii, and even more under the Antoninii and Severii.'

[646] Gaston H. Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), p. 44.

[647] This point is well expressed by Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, 1956, p. 101.

symbolism in the light of the Christian message.

Scholarly opinion differs on the question of the origin of the planetary week. Some view it as a pagan interpretation of the Jewish week, while others regard it as a strict pagan astrological invention.[648] D. Waterhouse argues persuasively in favor of an amalgamation of Babylonian, Greek, Egyptian and Jewish ingredients.[649] For the purpose of our research, the time of its penetration is more important than the causes of its origin.

The existence and common use of the planetary week already in the first century AD are well attested by several testimonies. In the present study we need refer only to a few of them. The Roman historian Dio Cassius, who wrote his *Roman History* between AD 200-220, reports that Jerusalem was captured both by Pompey in 63 B.C. and by Gaius Sosius in 37 B.C. 'on the day even then called the day of Saturn.'[650] That the praxis of naming the days of the week after the planetary deities was already in use before Christ is further corroborated by the contemporary references of Horace (ca. 35 B.C.) to '*dies Jovis*—Thursday,'[651] and of Tibullus (ca. B.C. 29-30) to *'dies Saturni*—Saturday.'[652] Dio Cassius himself speaks of the planetary week as 'prevailing everywhere' in his time to the extent that among the Romans it was 'already an ancestral custom.'[653]

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[648] E. Schürer, 'Die siebentagige Woche im Gebrauch der christlichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte,' *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 6 (1905): 18f., advocates that the planetary week developed independently of the Jewish week, primarily as a result of belief in the seven planets. W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 33, argues persuasively 'that the planetary week as a whole developed in association with the Jewish week.' The diffusion of the Jewish Sabbath in the Greco-Roman world would have attracted astrological belief in the evil influence of the planet Saturn. Subsequently, the other planets were attached to the remaining days of the week. F. H. Colson, *The Week*, 1926, p. 42, maintains that the planetary week is not 'a pagan interpretation of the Jewish week' since the order of the planets is not the real one, but an astrological invention developed by the belief that each individual hour of the day was under the control of a planet. This explanation is given by Dio Cassius (ca. AD 220) in his *Historia* 37, 18-19. Distributing the 168 hours of the week to each of the planets, according to their scientific order, the first hour of Saturday stands under the protection of Saturn, who assumes the control over the day. The first hour of the second day falls to the Sun, the first hour of the third day to the Moon, and so forth. In other words, the planet which controlled the first hour became the protector of the day, dedicated to it. The same explanation is found in the chronographer of AD 354 (*Chronica minora: Monumenta Gernraniae Hist., auctores antiquissimi*, IX, 1892); F. Boll, 'Hebdomas,' *PaulyWissowa* VII, col. 2556f. gives detailed proof that the planetary week did not originate in Babylon.

[649] S. D. Waterhouse, 'The Introduction of the Planetary Week into the West,' *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (to be published by Review and Herald): 'Thus it came about that the ingredients for the planetary week were brought together; the concept 'of planetary gods being taken from the Babylonians, the mathematics having been supplied by the Greeks, and the *dekans* or hours, adopted from the Egyptians. Alexandria, possessing a large, indigenous, and influential Jewish population, was well suited for bringing in a final ingredient, that of the Hebrew weekly cycle.'

[650] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 49, 22, *LCL* 5, p. 389; cf. *Historia* 37, 16 and 37, 17; Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 1, 7, 3 and *Antiquities of the Jews* 14, 4, confirms Dio Cassius' account, saying that the Romans succeeded in capturing the city because they understood that Jews on the Sabbath only acted defensively.

[651] Horace, *Satirae* 2, 3, 288-290, *LCL* p. 177, represents a superstitious mother as making this vow: "'Oh Jupiter, who givest and takest away sore affliction,' cries the mother of a child that for five long months has been ill abed, 'if the quartan chills leave my child, then on the morning of the day on which thou appointest a fast, he shall stand naked in the Tiber.'" The translator H. R. Fairelough explains: 'This would be *dies Jovis* [the day of Jupiter], corresponding to our Thursday' (loc. cit.); cf. J. Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1928, s.v. 'Sunday'; Ovid (43 B.C.-AD 18) refers several times to the seven-day week: 'You may begin on the day…less fit for business, whereon returns the seventh-day feast that the Syrian of Palestine observe' (*Ars Anratoria* 1, 413-416; cf. 1, 75-80; *Remedia Amoris* 217-220).

[652] In one of his poems, Tibullus explains what excuses he could have found for staying in Rome with his beloved Delia: 'Either birds or words of evil omen were my pretexts or that the sacred day of Saturn had held one back' (*Carmina* 1, 3, 15-18). The day of Saturn was regarded as an unlucky day (*dies nefastus*) for undertaking important business. Sextus Propertius, a contemporary of Tibullus, speaks, for instance, of 'the sign of Saturn that brings woe to one and to all' (*Elegies* 4, 1, 8 1-86).

[653] Dio Cassius, *Historia* 37, 18, *LCL* p. 130: 'The dedication of the days to the seven stars, which are called planets, was established by Egyptians, and it spread also to all men not so very long ago, to state it briefly

Two Sabine calendars found in central Italy in 1795, and a third one which came to light at Cimitele, near Nola in southern Italy in 1956 (all three dated no later than the time of Tiberius (AD 14-37),[654] present in the right column the eight letters from A to H of the eight-day Roman *nundinum* market week, and in the left column, the seven letters from A to G, representing the seven-day planetary week.[655] In addition to these calendars should be considered also several so-called '*indices nundinarii*' (some of them dated in the early empire).[656] These give the name of the towns and the corresponding days of the planetary week (which always starts with Saturday—*dies Saturni*), on which the market was to be held.

In the light of these and other indications, the archeologist Attilio Degrassi at the Third International Congress of Greek and Roman Epigraphy (1957) stated:

> 'I wish to insist on my conviction that this planetary week…did not become known and commonly used, as generally believed, only in the first half of the first century AD, *but already in the first years of the Augustan era* (27 B.C.-AD 14)…This is a conclusion that appears inevitable after the discovery of the calendar of Nola.'[657]

Subsequent indications of the widespread use of the planetary week in the first century AD are impressive. A brief listing of them will suffice for our purpose. A stone calendar found in Puteoli (dated first century AD) contains the date and name of three planetary days; '[Mercu]ri—[Wednesday], Jovis—[Thursday], Veneris—[Friday].'[658] Apollonius of Tyana, a renowned wonder-worker, according to his biographer Philostratus (ca. AD 170-245), in a trip he took to India between AD 40-60, received from Iarchas, an Indian sage, seven rings, each named after the 'seven stars,' and he wore them 'in turn on the day of the week which bore its name.'[659]

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how it began. At any rate, the ancient Greeks knew it in no way, as it appears to me at least, but since it also prevails everywhere among all the others, and the Romans themselves…is already to them an ancestral custom.' W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 27 and 37, takes Dio Cassius' statement that the planetary week had come into use 'not so very long ago,' to mean that it did not exist before 'the end of the first century AD' This conclusion, however, is invalidated, first by Dio's own comment that the planetary week was prevailing everywhere, and that the Romans regarded it as an ancestral custom (a new time cycle does not become widespread and ancestral overnight); second, by Dio's mention that already back in 37 B.C., when Jerusalem was captured by Sosius and Herod the Great, the Sabbath 'even then was called day of Saturn' (*Historia* 49, 22). Moreover, note that Dio makes the Greeks, not the Romans, the *terminus ante quem* the planetary week was unknown. We would, therefore, agree with C. S. Mosna, that 'the planetary week must have orginated already in the first century B.C.' (*Storia della domenica*, p. 69).

[654] The Sabine calendars have been dated by T. Mommsen between 19 B.C. and AD 14, see *CIL* 12, 220; this date is supported by Attilio Degrassi, 'Un Nuovo frammento di calendario Romano e la settimana planetaria dei sette giorni,' *Atti del Terzo Congresso Internationale de Epigrafia Greca e Latina*, Rome, 1957, p. 103; the article is included by the author in his *Scritti vari di antichità*, 1962, pp. 681-691; Degrassi is of the opinion that even the newly found calendar of Nola 'is not later than the time of Tiberius' (p. 101).

[655] That the letters, from A to G, stand for the seven days of the planetary week, as stated by A. Degrassi (p. 151, note 654), p. 99, 'has been recognized long ago.' This is proven by the fact that they occur 'for the whole year in the manuscript Philocalian Calendar of AD 354' (bc. cit.). Herbert Thurston explains the Sabine calendars, saying: 'when the Oriental seven-day period, or week, was introduced, in the time of Augustus, the first seven letters of the alphabet were employed in the same way as done for the *nundinae*, to indicate the days of this new division of time. In fact, fragmentary calendars on marble still survive in which both a cycle of eight letters—A to H—indicating *nundinae*, and a cycle of seven letters—A to G—indicating weeks, are used side by side (see *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 2nd ed., I, 220. The same peculiarity occurs in the Philocalian Calendar of AD 35, ibid., p. 256). This device was imitated by the Christians, and in their calendars the days of the year from 1 January to 31 December were marked with a continuous recurring cycle of seven letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G' (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911, s.v. 'Dominical Letter').

[656] A. Degrassi (p. 151, note 654) pp. 103-104; cf. *CIL* 12, 218; one has been found in Pompeii, and therefore, it is prior to AD 79, *CIL* IV, 8863; these calendars are also reproduced by A. Degrassi in his recent edition of *Inscriptiones Italiae*, 1963, XIII, notes 49, 52-53, 55-56.

[657] A. Degrassi (p. 151, note 654), p. 104, (emphasis supplied).

[658] *CIL* X, part I, 199 (No. 1605).

Petronius, a Roman satirist (died ca. AD 66) in his novel, *The Banquet of Trimalchio*, describes a stick calendar, which Trimalchio had affixed on the doorpost with the number of the days on the side and 'the likeness of the seven stars' on the other side. A knob was inserted in the respective holes to indicate the date and the day.[660] Sextus Julius Frontinus (ca. AD 35-103), a Roman soldier and writer, in his work *The Stratagems*, referring to the fall of Jerusalem of AD 70, writes that Vespasian 'attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, on which it is forbidden for them to do anything serious and defeated them.'[661]

In Pompeii and Herculaneum there have been uncovered not only two series of mural pictures of the seven planetary gods in an excellent state of preservation,[662] but also, numerous wall-inscriptions and graffiti, either listing explicitly the planetary gods of the week, or giving the planetary name of the day of a particular date.[663] A two-line mural inscription, for instance, reads: 'the 9th day before the Kalends of June [May 24] the Emperor…it was the day of the Sun.'[664] Such evidence erases all doubt of the widespread use of the planetary week before AD 79, the date of the destruction of Pompeii by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.

A pictorial calendar found on the wall of the ruins of the baths of Titus (AD 79-81) deserves mention on account of its originality. In a square frame there appear in the upper row the pictures of the seven planetary gods. In the center are the twelve signs of the zodiac representing the months, and on the two sides appear the numbers of the days; on the right, the days I to XV, and the left, the days XVI to XXX. Beside each of these there are holes where knobs were inserted to indicate the month, the number of the day and the protecting planetary god. Its location in such a public building is indicative of its popular use.[665]

Plutarch (ca. AD 46-after 119), the celebrated Greek biographer, in a treatise entitled *Symposia*, written in question-and-answer form between AD 100-125, poses the question: 'Why are not the days which have the names of the planets arranged according to the order of the planets, but the contrary?'[666] Unfortunately, only the title of this dialogue has been preserved. However, the question, *per se,* implies not only that the planetary week was commonly used by the end of the first century, but also, that apparently by then, most people could not even account for the differences between the current astronomical order of the planets and that of the planetary week.[667]

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659 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 3,41, *LCL* I, pp. 321, 323.

660 Petronius, *Satyricon* 30, *LCL*, p. 45.

661 Frontinus, *Strategemata* 2, 1, 17, LCL, p. 98; Dio Cassius' account is strikingly similar: 'Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most' (*Historia* 65, 7, *LCL*, p. 271.

662 For a good reproduction of the Pompeiian painting of the planetary gods see Erasmo Pistolesi, *Real Museo Borbonico*, 1836, VII, pp. 116-130, plate 27; cf. 'Le Pitture Antiche d'Ercolano,' *Real Accademia de Archeologia*, III, pp. 257-263; H. Roux Aine, *Herculanum et Pompei: recueil general l des peintures, bronzes, mosaiques*, 1862, pp. 106-109; cf. J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1928, s.v. 'Sunday.'

663 *CIL* I, part 1, 342; *CIL* IV, part 2, 515, no. 4182; at Herculaneum was found inscribed in Greek upon a wall a list entitled 'Day of the Gods,' followed by the names of the seven planetary deities in the genitive form, *CIL* IV, part 2, 582, no. 5202; cf. *CIL* IV, 712, no. 6779; see E. Schiirer (fn. 20), pp. 27f.; R. L. Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, 1944, pp. 88-94.

664 *CIL* IV, part 2, 717. no. 6338.

665 Attilio Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae*, 1963, XIII, pp. 308-309, plate 56; Troianus Marulli, *Sopra un'antica cappella cristiana, scoperta di fresco in Roma nelle terme di Tito*, 1813; I. A. Guattani, *Meinorie enciclopediche per il* 1816, pp. 153f. table 22; Antonius De Romanis, *Le Antic/ic catnere esquiline*, 1822, pp. 21, 59f.

666 *Plutarch's Complete Works*, III, p. 230.

667 According to the geocentric system of astronomy of that period, the order of the planets was as follows: Saturn (farthest), Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon (nearest). In the planetary week, however, the days are named after the planets in this sequence: Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus; for a discussion, see R.L. Odom (p. 152, note 663), pp. 11-17.

Numerous testimonies could be cited in support of the wide use of the planetary week in subsequent centuries, but these would be too late to be relevant to our research.[668] The above brief listing of evidence shows conclusively that the planetary week was known and used in ancient Rome at least since the beginning of our Christian era.[669]

The Enhancement of the day of the Sun. The contemporaneous existence of Sun worship, and of the planetary week, suggests the possibility that with the development of the former, the day dedicated to the Sun took on greater importance.[670] This is corroborated by the process whereby the primacy and prestige of the day of Saturn was transferred to that of the Sun. In fact, initially the day of the Sun 'had nothing to distinguish it from the other days'[671] since it was the second day of the week following Saturn-day, which was the first. In time, however, the day of the Sun came to occupy the first and 'most venerable' position.

The process which led to the enhancement of Sun-day, at the expense of Saturn-day, is difficult to trace because of the lack of explicit information regarding what religious customs, if any, were associated with either day. This may be due, partly at least, to the Roman concept of religion as being social, political and external. Religion was viewed, as V. Monachino explains, 'as a contract between the State and the gods,' rather than as a personal devotion expressed by participation in weekly worship services.[672] The significant official religious ceremonies were attended primarily by aristocrats and dignitaries who displayed their religiosity merely by fulfilling external rituals.

This is not to belittle the preference the day of the Sun received for social and religious purposes. Constantine, in his two constitutions of March 3 and July 3 AD 321, by describing the day of the Sun as 'venerable—*venerabilis*' and as 'famous for its veneration—*veneratione sui celeb rem*,'[673] shows, as aptly noted by Arthur Weigall, 'that he was thinking of it as a traditional sun-festival.'[674] The veneration of the Sun, however, seemingly did not require pagans to participate on Sunday in special public

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668 R. L. Odom (p. 152, note 663), pp. 54-124, surveys the evidences for the planetary week till the third century AD

669 This conclusion is shared by several scholars; see F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. 36: 'Reviewing the evidence discussed above, we see that the planetary week was known in some sense in the Empire as early as the destruction of Pompeii and most people will think a century earlier'; B. Botte, 'Les Denominations du dimanche dans la tradition chrdtienne,' *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, p. 16: 'When Tibullus wrote his Elegy, the use of the planetary week had already entered the customs, but considering, on the one hand, the absence of any allusion prior to this date, and on the other hand, the abundance of indications beginning from the second century, we clearly see that the change took place toward the beginning of the Christian era'; cf. H. Dumaine, 'Dimanche,' *DACL* IV, 911.

670 F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. 75, rightly notes: 'A religion in which the supreme object of adoration was so closely connected, if not identified with, the Sun, could hardly fail to pay special reverence to what even non-Mithraists hailed as the Sun's-day.'

671 W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 35; note that initially the day of the Sun was the second day of the planetary week, following the day of Saturn which was first. This is clearly proved, for instance, by several stone calendars (so-called *indices nundinarii*) where the days of the week are given horizontally, starting with the day of Saturn; see p. 151, note 656. In a mural inscription found in Herculaneum, the 'Days of the Gods' are given in capital Greek letters, starting with '*kronou* [of Saturn], Heliou [of Sun]…' (*CIL* IV, part 2, 582, no. 5202). A similar list was found in Pompeii written in Latin and beginning with '*Saturni* [of Saturn]' (*CIL* IV, part 2, 712, no. 6779). W. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 35, rightly stresses this point: 'It must, however, be emphasized, straight away, that in the planetary week Sunday always occupied only the second place in the sequence of days.'

672 V. Monachino, *De persecutionibus in imperio Romano saec*. I-IV *et de polemica pagano-christiana saec*. II-III, Gregorian University, 1962, p. 147

673 The text of the first law of March 3, 321 is found in *Codex Justinianus* III, 12, 3, and that of July 3, 321, in *Codex Theodosianus* II, 8, 1. Considering the fact that the necessity to legislate on a social custom, such as a day of rest, arises when this endangers public welfare (as suggested by the exception made for farmers), it is plausible to suppose that the veneration of the day of the Sun was already a well-rooted tradition.

674 Arthur Weigall, *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, 1928, p. 236

Sun-worship services.[675] This matter is illuminated by a statement of Tertullian found in his apology *To the Pagans* (written in AD 197). Replying to the taunt that Christians were Sun-worshipers because 'they prayed toward the east' and 'made Sunday, a day of festivity,' he writes:

> 'What then? Do you do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affectation of sometimes worshiping the heavenly bodies, likewise move your lips in the direction of the sunrise? It is you, at all events, who have even admitted the sun into the calendar of the week, and you have selected its day [Sunday], in preference of the preceding day [Saturday], as the most suitable in the week for either an entire abstinence from bath, or for its postponement until the evening, or for taking rest and for banqueting.'[676]

This statement provides significant information:

1. it indicates that at that time both Christians and pagans shared the custom of praying toward the east and of spending Sunday as a feast day;
2. it suggests that the Romans not only had adopted the planetary week, but had also already selected Sunday in the place of Saturn-day as their day of rest and feasting;
3. it mentions the nature of the pagan Sunday-keeping, that is, a social festival marked primarily by abstention from bathing, idleness and banqueting.

When did the day of the Sun come to acquire such a festal character in ancient Rome? No certain indications are available to pinpoint the time. Pliny the Elder (died AD 79), in his *Natural History,* writes that,

> 'in the midst of these planetary gods moves the Sun, whose magnitude and power are the greatest…he is glorious and preeminent, all-seeing and all-hearing.'[677]

Several Mithraea or sanctuaries of the pagan Sun-god Mithra have been found where the Sun occupies a dominant place in the sequence of the planetary gods. In the *Mithraea* of the Seven Portals and of the Seven Spheres (both excavated at Ostia, the ancient port city of Rome),[678] as well as in the Bononia relief,[679] the Sun occupies either the first or the last or the highest place among the planetary

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[675] According to Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine* 4, 18 and 20, Constantine recommended that Christians, including the soldiers, 'attend the services of the Church of God.' For the pagan soldiers, the Emperor prescribed a generic prayer to be recited on Sunday in an open field. (cf. Sozomen, *HE* 1, 8, 12). This imperial injunction cannot be taken as an example of traditional pagan Sunday worship, since the motivation of the legislation is clearly Christian: 'in memory…of what the Saviour of mankind is recorded to have achieved' (*NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 544). Moreover, it should be noted that the Constantinian law did not prohibit agricultural or private activities, but only public. This shows that even at the time of Constantine the pagan observance of Sunday was quite different from the Jewish keeping of the Sabbath.

[676] Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1, 13, *ANF* III, p. 123. W, Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 37, argues that Tertullian does not allude to the day of the Sun, but to that of Saturn, since he later speaks of Jewish customs such as the Sabbath, which pagans had adopted. Unfortunately, Rordorf fails to recognize that Tertullian responds to the charge that Christians are Sun-worshipers, first, by making the pagans themselves guilty of having adopted the day and the veneration of the Sun; and second, by showing them how they had deviated from their tradition by adopting even Jewish customs such as the Sabbath. For an analysis of the passage, see my Italian dissertation, pp. 446-449; F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 35, recognizes that Tertullian refers to Sunday.

[677] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 2, 4, *LCL*, p. 177.

[678] Samuel Laechli, *Mithraism in Ostia*, 1967, p. 11, 13, 14, 38-45, 72-73. The *Mithraeum* of the Seven Doors is dated AD 160-170, while that of the Seven Spheres is dated late in the second century. In the former, the Sun's 'door' is the tallest and widest; in the letter, the Sun's sphere is presumably the last; see Leroy A. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology*, 1968, pp. 300-307, figs. 19 and 20.

[679] On the Bononia relief the planetary gods are placed on the face of the tauroctone arch and they run counter clockwise from *Luna* (Monday) at the right, followed by *Mars* (Tursday), and so on, closing with *Sol* (Sunday) at the left; see F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*,1886-1889, II, p. 261 and I, p. 119; cf. L.A. Campbell (p. 154, note 678), p. 342.

gods. The Epicurean, Celsus (ca. AD 140-180), similarly describes the famous Mithraic ladder of the seven gates to be ascended by regenerated souls, by starting with Saturn and ending with the dominant Sun.[680] This pre-eminence assigned to the *dies Solis*—Sunday, as F. Cumont notes, 'certainly contributed to the general recognition of Sunday as a holiday.'[681]

That the day of the Sun enjoyed preeminence already by the middle of the second century is clearly indicated by the famous astrologer Vettius Valens. In his *Anthology,* composed between AD 154 and 174,[682] in explaining how to find the day of the week of any given birth date, he explicitly states:

> 'And this is the sequence of the planetary stars in relation to the days of the week: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn.'[683]

The preeminence of Sunday is also implied in Justin Martyr's threefold reference to it in his I *Apology* 67. Why, in his brief exposition of the Christian worship, did he mention three times 'the day of the Sun'? Why did he present the creation of light, on the first day, as the first reason for the Christian Sunday gathering? Apparently because the day was venerated by the Romans. By associating Christian worship with both the day and the symbolism of the pagan Sun, Justin, as we suggested earlier, aimed at gaining from the Emperor a favorable appraisal of Christianity.

Though not sufficiently explicit to establish the exact time when the day of the Sun emerged as the first and most important day of the week, these few indications do reveal, however, that it occurred in concomitance with the development of Sun-worship, which became widespread beginning from the early part of the second century.

If the day of the Sun, enhanced by the prevailing Sun-cult, did supplant the day of Saturn in the Roman world by the beginning of the second century, one may ask, did Christians, as well expressed by B. Botte, 'adapt the day of the Sun to the Christian Sunday as they adapted the *natalis invicti* [December 25], making it the symbol of the birth of Christ, Sun of righteousness'?[684] In other words, could not the Christian adoption of Sunday observance, in place of the Sabbath, be contemporaneous and related to the emergence of the day of the Sun over that of Saturn in the Roman world? We shall attempt to answer this question first by briefly considering some general reflexes of the Sun-cult in Christian thought and practice, and then by focusing on the specific influence of the pagan day of the

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[680] In Origen, *Contra Celsunr* 6, 21-22. Celsus lists the planets in the reverse order (Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Moon, Sun), enabling the Sun to occupy a significant seventh position. Note that though the arrangement of the gods of the week-days may vary in Mithraic iconography, the sequential order of the planetary deities is not disrupted and the Sun usually occupies a preeminent position. Priscillian (ca. AD 370) provides a slightly different list, but always with the Sun at the top (*Tractatus* 1, 15). In the Brigetio relief, however, the planetary gods follow the regular sequence of the planetary week from Saturn to Venus; see L. A. Campbell (p. 154, note 678) plate XXXIII.

[681] F. Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, 1912, p. 163; Cumont also comments: 'Each day of the week, the Planet to which the day was sacred was invoked in a fixed spot in the crypt, and Sunday, over which the Sun presided, was especially holy' (*The Mysteries of Mithra*, 1956, p. 167); cf. *Textes* (p. 154, note 679) I, p. 119: 'The *dies Solis* was evidently the most sacred of the week for the faithful of Mithra and, like the Christians, they had to keep holy Sunday and not the Sabbath' (cf. also p. 325). A statement from Isidore of Seville (ca. AD 560-636) best summarizes the priority Sun worship accorded to the day of the Sun: 'The gods have arranged the days of the week, whose names the Romans dedicated to certain stars. The first day they called day of the Sun because it is the ruler of all stars' (*Etymologiae* 5, 30 *PL* 82, 216).

[682] The date is established by Otto Neugebauer and Henry B. Van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, 1959, p. 177.

[683] Vettius Valens, *Anthologiarum* 5, 10, ed. G. Kroll, p. 26. Robert L. Odom, 'Vettius Valens and the Planetary Week,' *AUSS* 3 (1965): 110-137 provides a penetrating analysis of the calendations used by Vettius Valens and shows convincingly that "Vettius Valens, who undoubtedly was a pagan, used the week of seven days, [and] reckoned the seven-day week as beginning with the day of the Sun (Sunday) and ending with 'the sabbatical day' (Sabbath day)" (p. 134); H. Dumaine 'Dimanche' *DACL* IV, 912 defends the same view on the basis of different evidences; cf. W. H. Roscher, 'Planeten,' *Aligeineines Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, 1909, col. 2538.

[684] B. Botte (p. 153, note 669), p. 21.

Sun on the Christian adoption of that day.

2. Reflexes of Sun Worship on Christianity

Christians resented and denied the accusation of being Sun-worshipers (and even suffered horrible martyrdoms rather than offer a pinch of incense on the imperial altars), yet, as Jacquetta Hawkes well puts it, 'with the malicious irony so often apparent in history, even while they fought heroically on one front, their position was infiltrated from another.'[685] For instance, while on the one hand, Tertullian strongly refuted the pagan charge that the Christians were Sun-worshipers,[686] on the other hand he chides the Christians at length for celebrating pagan festivals within their own communities.[687] That Christians were not immune to the popular veneration of the Sun and astrological practices is attested by the frequent condemnation of these by the Fathers.[688]

Three significant reflexes of Sun-worship in the Christian liturgy can be seen in the theme of,

1. Christ-the-Sun,
2. in the orientation toward the east and,
3. in the date of Christmas.

These we shall briefly examine, since they shed some light on the possible causal relationship between Sun-worship and the origin of Sunday observance.

Christ-the-Sun

In numerous pagan pictorial representations which have come down to us, the Sun or Mithra is portrayed as a man with a disk at the back of his head.[689] It is a known fact that this image of the Sun was

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[685] Jacquetta Hawkes, *Man and the Sun*, 1962, p. 199

[686] Tertullian strongly rejected the pagan accusation that the Christians' rejoicing on Sunday was motivated by the worship of the Sun (see *Apology* 16, 1 and *Ad Nationes* 1, 13, 1-5, *ANF* III, p. 31 and p. 122). Similarly Origen regarded Celsus' likening of Christianity to pagan mystery religions, Mithraism included, as absurd and unworthy of either refutation or repetition (see *Against Celsus* 1, 9 and 6, 22, *ANF* IV, pp. 399-400, 583).

[687] Tertullian, *On Idolatry* 14 *ANF* III, p. 70: 'How…wicked to celebrate them [i.e., pagan festivals] among brethren!…The Saturnalia and New Year and Midwinter's festivals and Matronalia are frequented—presents come and go—New Year's gifts—games join their noise—banquets join their din! Oh, better fidelity of the nations to their own sect, which claims no solemnity of the Christians for itself!'

[688] Jack Lindsay, *Origin of Astrology*, 1972, provides in chapter 20 'Pagan and Christians' (pp. 373-400) a valuable and concise survey of the influence of astrological beliefs on early Christianity. Origen complains that many Christians believed that nothing could happen unless it had been decreed by the stars (*Philocalia*, 23). H. Dumaine and De Rossi point out that the names of the planetary week used in Christian funerary inscriptions reflect the prevailing superstition, according to which the day mentioned belonged to the protecting star ('Dimanche' *DACL* IV, 872-875; cf. E. Schürer [p. 150 , note 648], pp. 35-39). The Fathers protested against such beliefs. Philaster, Bishop of Brescia (d. ca. AD 397) condemns as heresy the prevailing belief that 'the name of the days of the Sun, of the Moon…had been established by God at the creation of the world.…The pagans, that is, the Greeks have set up such names, and with the names, also the notion that mankind depends from the seven stars' (*Liber de haeresibus* 113, *PL* 12, 1257). In a document attributed to Priscillian (ca. AD 340-385), anathema is pronounced against those Christians who 'in their sacred ceremonies, venerate and acknowledge as gods the Sun, Moon…and all the heavenly host, which are detestable idols worthy of the Gehenna' (*Tractatus undecim*, *CSEL* 18, p.14); cf. Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum* ed. C. W. Barlow, 1950, p. 189; Augustin, *In Psalmos* 61, 23, *CCL* 39, p. 792.

[689] A number of examples can be seen in F. Cumont, *Textes et monunrents* II, p. 202, no. 29; p. 210, no. 38; p. 241, no. 73; p. 290, no. 145; p. 311, no. 169; p. 350, no. 248; p. 434, no. 379

used in early Christian art and literature to represent Christ, the true 'Sun of righteousness.' In the earliest known Christian mosaic (dated ca. AD 240), found in the Vatican necropolis below the altar of St. Peter (in the small mausoleum M. or the Iulii), Christ is portrayed as the Sun (Helios) ascending on the quadriga chariot with a flying cloak and a nimbus behind his head from which irradiate seven rays in the form of a T (allusion to the cross?).[690] Thousands of hours have been devoted to drawing the sun-disk with the equal-armed cross behind the head of Christ and (from the fifth century) the heads of other important persons.

The motif of the Sun was used not only by Christian artists to portray Christ, but also by Christian teachers to proclaim Him to the pagan masses who were well acquainted with the rich Sun-symbology. Numerous Fathers abstracted and reinterpreted the pagan symbols and beliefs about the Sun and used them apologetically to teach the Christian message.[691] Does not the fact that Christ was early associated in iconography and in literature (if not in actual worship) with the *Sol invictus*—Invincible Sun, suggest the possibility that even the day of the Sun could readily have been adopted for worshiping Christ, the *Sol iustitiae*—the Sun of Justice? It would require only a short step to worship Christ-the-Sun, on the day specifically dedicated to the Sun.

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[690] See E. Kirschbaum, *The Tomb of St. Peter and St. Paul*, 1959, pp. 3Sf.; P. Testini, *Archaelogia Cristiana*, 1958, p. 167. The mosaic came to light during the recent excavations (1953-1957) under the altar of St. Peter's basilica; cf. an artistic reproduction of Christ portrayed as *Sol Invictus* in F. Cumont (p. 156, note 689), I, p. 123, table no. 6.

[691] Justin, *Dialogue* 121, *ANF* I, p. 109 contrasts the devotion of Sun-worshipers with that of the Christians, who on account of the word of Christ, who 'is more blazing and bright than the might of the sun…have suffered and still suffer all kinds of torments rather than deny their faith in Him.' In a document attributed to Melito, Bishop of Sardis (d. ca. AD 190), a striking parallelism is established between Christ and the sun: 'But if the sun with the stars and the moon wash in the ocean, why should not Christ also wash in the Jordan? The king of the heavens and the leader of creation, the sun of the east who both appeared to the dead in Hades and to the living in the world, and this only Sun rose from Heaven' (*On Baptism*, ed. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi*, 1884, 2, 5). Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150-215) elaborates diffusely on the symbol of Christ as true Light and true Sun and applies to Christ a common pagan designation for a heavenly god: '*pantepoptes*'—the one who looks down on all.' Clement skillfully urges the pagans to abandon their rites of divination and be initiated instead into Christ the true Sun and Light (see *Protrepticus* II, 114, 1, *GCS* 1, 80, 16; *Stromateis* 7, 3, 21, 6, *GCS* 3, 15, 28; *Paedagogus* 3, 8, 44, 1, *GCS* 1, 262, 7).

Origen (ca. AD 185-254) manifests the same predilection for the denomination 'Sun of Justice': 'Christ is the Sun of Justice; if the moon is united, which is the Church, it will be filled by His light' (*In Numeros homilia* 23, 5, *GCS* 7, 217, 24; cf. *In Leviticum homilia* 9, *GCS* 6, 438, 19). Cyprian (d. AD 258), Bishop of Carthage, exhorts believers '*to pray at sunrise to commemorate the resurrection*…and to pray at the setting of the sun…for the advent of Christ' (*De oratione* 35, *CSEL* 3, 292). Ambrose (AD 339-397), Bishop of Milan, to counteract the widespread Sun-cult, frequently contrasts Christ '*lumen verum et Sol iustitiae*—true light and Sun of justice' with the '*Sol iniquitatis*—Sun of iniquity' (*In Psalmos* 118, *sermo* 19, 6 *CSEL* 62, 425, 4f). A. J. Vermeulen, *The Semantic Developntent of Gloria in Early Christian Latin*, 1956, p. 170, comments that Christians did not adopt an exclusive apologetic attitude, but 'they took a much easier view of certain pagan customs, conventions and images and saw no objection, after ridding them of their pagan content, to adapting them to Christian thought.' J. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, p. 299, offers a similar observation. Eusebius of Alexandria (ca. AD 500) writes: 'I know many who worship and pray to the Sun. For at the time the sun is rising they pray and say, 'Have mercy upon us,' and not only sun-worshipers and heretics do this, but also Christians, departing from the faith, mingle with heretics' (*PG* 86, 453). That the problem assumed alarming proportions is indicated by the vigorous attack of Pope Leo the Great (d. AD 461) against the veneration of the Sun by many Christians (*Sermon* 27, *In Nativitate Domini, PL* 54, 218). F. J. Dolger, *Sol Salutis. Gebet und Gesang in christlichen Altertum. Mit besonderer Riicksicht auf die Ostung in Gebet und Liturgie*, 1925, provides, especially in chapters 20 and 21, an extensive documentation of the influence of Sun-worship on the Christian liturgy.

Eastward Orientation

The Christian adoption of the East, in place of Jerusalem, as the new orientation for prayer provides an additional significant indication of the influence of the Sun cult on early Christian worship. The Jews (as indicated by Daniel's custom and by Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple)[692] considered praying toward Jerusalem to be an obligation, which determined the very validity of their prayers. That primitive Christians continued to adhere to such a practice is evidenced by the Judaeo-Christian sect of the Ebionites who, as reported by Irenaeus, 'prayed toward Jerusalem as if it were the House of God.'[693]

The Fathers advance several reasons for the adoption of the eastward position for prayer. Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150-215) explains that 'prayers are offered while looking toward sunrise in the East' because the Orient represents the birth of light that 'dispels the darkness of the night' and because of the orientation of 'the ancient temples.'[694] For Origen (ca. AD 185-254), the East symbolizes the soul that looks to the source of light.[695] Others urged Christians to pray looking toward the East to remind themselves of God's paradise and/or of Christ's coming.[696]

Christians who had previously venerated the Sun, facing the necessity of dissociating themselves from the Jews, apparently not only abandoned Jerusalem as the orientation for prayer, but also reverted, unconsciously perhaps, to the direction of sunrise, reinterpreting its meaning in the light of the Christian message. One wonders, was the change of direction for prayer from the Jewish Temple to sunrise interrelated also with the change of the worship day from the 'Jewish' Sabbath to the day of the Sun? While prayer, *per se*, is not a weekly (at least it ought not to be), but a daily religious practice, could not the daily praying toward the Sun have encouraged Christians to worship, also weekly, on the day of the Sun? Moreover, could not the fact that Christ and His resurrection were associated with the rising sun have easily predisposed Christians to worship the rising 'Sun of Justice' on the day of the Sun?

Cultured and well-meaning pagans, according to Tertullian, correlated the Christian praying toward the East with their Sunday observance, presenting both customs as one basic evidence of Christians' Sun-worship. Tertullian denied the charge, attributing to the pagans the very same customs. Note, however, that both the accusers and the refuter interrelate the two customs, presenting them as one basic indication of Sun-worship.[697]

This close nexus between the two customs, admitted even by the pagans, suggests the possibility that Christians could well have adopted them contemporaneously because of the same factors discussed

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[692] Dan. 6:11; 2 Chron. 6:34f; cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1907, s.v. 'Prayer.'

[693] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1,26, *ANF* I, p. 352.

[694] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7, 7, 43, *GCS* 3, 32.

[695] Origen, *De oratione* 32, *GCS* 2, 400, 23.

[696] *Apostolic Constitutions* 2, 57, 2 and 14; specific instructions are given to ensure that both the church building and the congregation face the orient. Moreover, believers are urged to 'pray to God, eastward, who ascended to the heaven of heavens to the east; remembering also the ancient situation of paradise in the east.' (*ANF* VII, p. 42); cf. *Didascalia* 2, 57, 3; Hippolytus, *De Antichristo* 59, *GCS* 1, 2, 39-40; Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (AD 315-386), instructed his baptismal candidates to face first the West, the devil's domain, and facing that direction, they were to say: 'I renounce you, Satan,' and then after 'severing all ancient bonds with hell, the Paradise of God, which is planted in the East is open to you' (*Catechesibus* 1, 9, *Monumenta eucharistica*, ed. J. Quasten, 2, 79). An early Christian Syrian author tells us: 'The Apostles, therefore, established that you should pray toward the east because 'as the lightning, which lighteneth from the east is seen even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be,' that by this we may know and understand that He will appear suddenly from the east' (*Didascalie d'Addai* 2, 1, see F. Dolger (p. 147, note 633) p. 72, n. 3); cf. also Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 27, 64, *PG* 32, 189; Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione Domini* 5, *PG* 44, 1184; Augustine, *De sermone Domini in morte* 2, 5, 18, *PL* 34, 1277.

[697] See p. 154, note 676.

above. This is the conclusion, which also F. A. Regan reaches, after an extensive analysis of patristic references dealing with the orientation toward the East. He writes:

> 'A suitable, single example of the pagan influence may be had from an investigation of the Christian custom of turning toward the East, the land of the rising sun, while offering their prayers…For in the transition from the observance of the Sabbath to the celebration of the Lord's day, the primitive Christians not only substituted the first day of the week for the seventh, but they went even further and changed the traditional Jewish practice of facing toward Jerusalem during their daily period of prayer.'[698]

The strong attraction exerted by the solar cults on the Christians suggests the possibility, therefore, that these influenced not only the adoption of the eastward direction for daily prayers, but also of the day of the Sun for the weekly worship.

The Date of Christmas

The adoption of the 25th of December for the celebration of Christmas is perhaps the most explicit example of Sun-worship's influence on the Christian liturgical calendar. It is a known fact that the pagan feast of the *dies natalis Solis Invicti*—the birthday of the Invincible Sun, was held on that date.[699] Do Christian sources openly admit the borrowing of the date of such a pagan festivity? Obviously not.[700] To admit borrowing a pagan festival, even after due re-interpretation of its meaning, would be tantamount to an open betrayal of the faith. This, the Fathers were anxious to avoid.

Augustine and Leo the Great, for instance, strongly reprimanded those Christians, who at Christmas, worshiped the Sun rather than the birth of Christ.[701] Therefore, it is well to keep in mind that in the

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[698] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 196,

[699] In the Philocalian calendar (AD 354) the 25th of December is designated as '*N[atalis] Invicti*—The birthday of the invincible one' (*CIL* I, part 2, p. 236); Julian the Apostate, a nephew of Constantine and a devotee of Mithra, says regarding this pagan festival: 'Before the beginning of the year, at the end of the month which is called after Saturn [December], we celebrate in honor of Helios [the Sun] the most splendid games, and we dedicate the festival to the Invincible Sun. That festival, may the ruling gods grant me to praise and to celebrate with sacrifice! And above all the others may Helios [the Sun] himself, the king of all, grant me this' (Julian, *The Orations of Julian, Hymn to King Helios* 155, *LCL* p. 429); Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among Greeks and Romans*, 1960, p. 89: 'A very general observance required that on the 25th of December the birth of the 'new Sun' should be celebrated, when after the winter solstice the days began to lengthen and the 'invincible' star triumphed again over darkness'; for texts on the Mithraic celebration of Dec. 25th see *CIL* I, p. 140; Gordon J. Laing, *Survivals of Roman Religion*, 1931, pp. 58-65, argues persuasively that *many of the customs* of the ancient Roman *Saturnalia* (Dec. 17-23) were transferred to the Christmas season. G. Brumer, *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 1935, p. 178f and K. Prumm, *Stimmen der Zeit*, 1939, p. 215, date the festival of December 25 back to the Emperor Aurelian (A. D. 270-275), whose fondness for the worship of the Sun is well known. The hypothesis rests on Augustine's censure of the Donatists (*PL* 38, 1033) for failing to observe January 6th. This, however, hardly implies that Christians celebrated Christ's birthday on December 25th already at that time.

[700] An exception is the comment of an unknown Syrian writer who wrote in the margin of the *Expositio in Evangelia of Bar-salibaeus* (d. AD 1171) as follows: 'Therefore, the reason why the aforesaid solemnity was transferred by the Fathers from the 6th of January to the 25th of December, they explain to have been as follows: It was a solemn rite among the pagans to celebrate the festival *of the rising of the sun on this very day*, December 25th. Furthermore, to augment the solemnity of the day, they were accustomed to kindle fires, to which rites they were accustomed to invite and admit even Christian people. When, therefore, the Teachers observed that Christians were inclined to this custom, they contrived a council and established on this day the festival of the true Rising' (J. S. Assemanus, *Bibliotheca orientalis* 2, 164, trans. by P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1933, pp. 144-145).

[701] Augustine, *Sermo in Nativit ate Domini* 7, *PL* 38, 1007 and 1032, enjoins Christians to worship at Christmas not the sun, but its Creator; Leo the Great (p. 157, note 691) rebukes those Christians who, at Christmas, celebrated the birth of the sun rather than that of Christ.

investigation of the influence of the Sun-cults on the Christian liturgy, the most we can hope to find are not direct, but indirect indications. This warning applies not only for the date of Christmas, but for that of Sunday as well.

Few scholars maintain that the date of the 25th of December was derived from astronomical-allegorical observations. It was the opinion of some Fathers that both the conception and passion of Christ occurred at the time of the vernal equinox on the 25th of March.[702] Reckoning from that date the nine months of pregnancy of Mary, the date of the birth of Christ was computed to be the 25th of December. Oscar Cullmann rightly observes, however, that these computations 'can scarcely have given the initiative.'[703] They seem to represent rather an *a posteriori* rationale advanced to justify an already existing date and practice. To the majority of scholars, as stated by J. A. Jungmann,

> 'It has become progressively clear that the real reason for the choice of the 25th of December was the pagan feast of the *dies natalis Solis Invicti,* which was celebrated in those days with great splendor.'[704]

Gaston H. Halsberghe, in his recent monograph, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, already cited, similarly concludes:

> 'The authors whom we consulted on this point are unanimous in admitting the influence of the pagan celebration held in honor of *Deus Sol Invictus* on the 25th of December, the *Natalis Invicti* on the Christian celebration of Christmas. This influence is held to be responsible for the shifting to the 25th of December of the birth of Christ, which had until then been held on the day of the Epiphany, the 6th of January. The celebration of the birth of the Sun god, which was accompanied by a profusion of light and torches *and the decoration of branches and small trees*, had captivated the followers of the cult to such a degree that even after they had been converted to Christianity they continued to celebrate the feast of the birth of the Sun god.'[705]

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[702] L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 1919, pp. 260f., presents this hypothesis as a possibility. M. Righetti, *Manuale di Storia Liturgica*, 1955, II, pp. 68-69, explains that the date of March 25th, 'though historically unfounded, was based on astronomical-allegorical considerations, namely that on the day of the vernal equinox the world was created.' According to this theory, on the same date of March 25 creation began and Christ, as Augustine says, was 'conceived and crucified' (*De trinitate* 4, 5, *PL* 42, 894); cf. Hippolytus, *In Danielem commentarius* 4, 23, for a similar view.

[703] Oscar Cullmann, *The Early Church*, 1956, p. 29. Cullmann maintains that two factors contributed 'to the separation of the festival of Christ's birth from Epiphany, and to the transference of the former to December 25th,' namely, 'the dogmatic development of christology at the beginning of the fourth century' and the influence of the pagan festival held in honor of the Sun-god on December 25. Theologically, Cullmann argues, it became necessary, after the condemnation at the Council of Nicaea, of the doctrine that God the Son did not become incarnate at his birth, to dissociate the festival of the birth from that of the Epiphany. Both festivals were celebrated, especially in the East, on January 5th-6th (as birth-baptism), and this must have been objectionable, since the birth of Christ commemorated under the common theme of 'Epiphany=appearing,' could easily be misinterpreted heretically. This theological explanation, though very ingenious, hardly justifies the adoption of December 25, especially in the West. In fact, to be able to speak of separation of the two festivities, it is necessary to prove first of all that in Rome, Christians had previously celebrated Christmas on January 6, a fact that we have not found.

[704] Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great*, 1962, p. 147; L. Duchesne (p. 117, note 503), p. 26, also recognizes this as a more plausible explanation: 'A better explanation is that based on the festival of *Natalis Invicti*, which appears in the pagan calendar of the Philocalian collection under the 25th of December.…One is inclined to believe that the Roman Catholic Church made the choice of the 25th of December in order to enter into rivalry with Mithraism'; John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, 1970, p. 239, defends the same view; cf. Franz Cumont (p. 159, note 699), p. 89 and (154, note 679), I, p. 342: 'It appears certain that the commemoration of the nativity was placed on December 25 because on the winter solstice was celebrated the rebirth of the invincible god. By adopting this date…the ecclesiastical authorities purified, somehow, some pagan customs, which they could not suppress.'

[705] Gaston H. Halsberghe (p. 148, note 634), p. 174; O. Cullmann (p. 160, note 703), p. 35, explicitly states: 'The choice of the dates themselves, both January 6th and December 25th, was determined by the fact that

Let us note that the Church of Rome (as in the case of Easter-Sunday, so in the question of the celebration of Christmas), pioneered and promoted the adoption of the new date. In fact, the first explicit indication that on the 25th of December Christians celebrated Christ's birthday is found in a Roman document known as *Chronograph of 354* (a calendar attributed to Fuzious Dionysius Philocalus), where it says: '*VIII Kal. Jan. natus Christus in Betleem Judaeae*—On the eighth calends of January [i.e., December 25th], Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.'[706] That the Church of Rome introduced and championed this new date, is accepted by most scholars. For instance, Mario Righetti, a renowned Catholic liturgist, writes:

> "After the peace the Church of Rome, to facilitate the acceptance of the faith by the pagan masses, found it convenient to institute the 25th of December as the feast of the temporal birth of Christ, to divert them from the pagan feast, celebrated on the same day in honor of the 'Invincible Sun,' Mithras, the conqueror of darkness."[707]

In the Orient, however, the birth and the baptism of Jesus were celebrated respectively on January 5 and 6. Botte, a Belgian Benedictine scholar, in a significant study, concludes that this date also evolved from an originally pagan feast, namely Epiphany, which commemorated the birth and growth of light.[708] It was not an easy task for the Church of Rome to get the Eastern churches to accept the new date of December 25th, since many of them 'firmly adhered to the practice of observing the festival of Christ's birth in its old form as an Epiphany festival on January 5th-6th.'[709]

It would take us beyond our immediate scope to trace the process of adoption by the various Christian communities of the Roman Christmas date. It will be sufficient to notice that the adoption of the date of December 25th, for the celebration of Christ's birth, provides an additional example not only of the influence of the Sun-cult, but also of the primacy exerted by Rome in promoting liturgical innovations.

The three examples we have briefly considered (Christ-the-Sun, the eastward orientation, and the Christmas date) evidence sufficiently the influence of Sun-cults on Christian thought and liturgy. J. A. Jungmann summarizes it well when he writes that,

> 'Christianity absorbed and made its own, what could be salvaged from pagan antiquity, not destroying it, but converting it, Christianizing what could be turned to good.'[710]

These conclusions justify a more direct investigation of the influence of the pagan veneration of the day of the Sun on the Christian adoption of the very same day.

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both these days were pagan festivals, whose meaning provided a starting point for the specifically Christian conception of Christmas'; the same view is emphatically expressed by B. Botte, *Les Origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*, 1932, p. 14; cf. C. Mohrmann, 'Epiphania,' *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques* (1937): 672.

[706] Mommsen, *Chronography of Philocalus of the Year 354*, 1850, p. 631; L. Duchesne, *Bulletin critique*, 1890, p. 41, has established that the calendar goes back to 336, because the *Depositio martyrum* is preceded in the Philocalian by the *Depositium episcoporum* of Rome, which lists Sylvester (d. AD 335) as the last pope.

[707] Righetti (p. 160, note 702), II, p. 67; this view is widely held: see L. Duchesne, p. 160, note 704; Oscar Cullmann (p. 160, note 703), p. 30: 'The Roman Church intentionally opposed to this pagan nature cult its own festival of light, the festival of the birth of Christ.'

[708] B. Botte (p. 153, note 669), p. 14f; see p. 160, note 703.

[709] Q. Cullmann (p. 160, note 703), p. 32; for a concise account of the diffusion of, and opposition to, the Roman Christmas, see M. Righetti (p. 160, note 702), II, p. 70f.

[710] Joseph A. Jungmann (p. 160, note 704), p. 151.

3. The Day of the Sun and the Origin of Sunday

The association between the Christian Sunday and the pagan veneration of the day of the Sun is not explicit before the time of Eusebius (ca. AD 260-340). Though Christ is often referred to by earlier Fathers as 'True Light' and 'Sun of Justices,'[711] no deliberate attempt was made prior to Eusebius to justify Sunday observance by means of the symbology of the day of the Sun. On the other hand, Eusebius, several times, refers explicitly to the motifs of the light, of the sun and of the day of the Sun, to explain the substitution of the Christian Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath.

For example, in his *Commentary on Psalm 91* he writes:

> "The Logos has transferred by the New Alliance the celebration of the Sabbath to the rising of the light. He has given us a type of the true rest in the saving day of the Lord, *the first day of light…In this day of light*, first day and *true day of the sun*, when we gather after the interval of six days, we celebrate the holy and spiritual Sabbaths…All things, whatsoever, that were prescribed for the Sabbath, we have transferred them to the Lord's day, as being more authoritative and more highly regarded and first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath. In fact, it is on this day of the creation of the world that God said: '*Let there be light* and there was light.' It is also on this day that the Sun of Justice has risen for our souls."[712]

Eusebius' two basic reasons for the observance of Sunday, namely, the commemoration of the creation of light and of the resurrection of the Sun of Justice,[713] are reiterated almost verbatim by Jerome (ca. AD 342-420), when he explains:

> 'If it is called *day of the Sun* by the pagans, we most willingly acknowledge it as such, since it is on this day that the *light of the world has appeared* and on this day the *Sun of Justice has risen*.'[714]

In a sermon attributed to Maximus of Turin (d. ca. AD 400-423) we find an extreme development. The very designation, 'day of the Sun,' is viewed as a proleptic announcement of the resurrection of Christ:

> 'We hold the day of the Lord to be venerable and solemn, because on it the Savior, like the rising sun, conquered the darkness of the underworld and gleamed in the glory of the resurrection. This is why the same day was called *day of the Sun* by the pagans, because the Sun of Justice, once risen, would have illuminated it.'[715]

These and similar texts, where the meaning of, and the motivation for, Sunday observance are explicitly interrelated to the symbology of the day of the Sun, come to us from a later period, when Sunday

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[711] See p. 157, note 691.

[712] Eusebius, *Cominentaria in Psalmos 91*, PG 23, 1169-1172; cf. p. 165, note 740.

[713] Note that Justin Martyr, long before Eusebius, alludes to the same two motivations (though not so explicitly) in his *I Apology* 67, see above p. 230 and below p. 265.

[714] Jerome, *In die dominica Paschae homilia CCL* 78, 550, 1, 52; the same in Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 18, 5; *in Sermo* 226, *PL* 38, 1099, Augustine explains that Sunday is the day of light because on the first day of creation "God said, 'Let there be light! And there was light. And God separated the light from darkness. And God called the light day and the darkness night'" (Gen. 1:2-5).

[715] Maximus of Turin, *Homilia* 61, *PL* 57, 371; Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia (ca. AD 400), *Sermo* 9, *De evangelica lectione* 2, *PL* 20, 916 and *De Exodo sermo* 1, *PL* 20, 845, explains that the Lord's day became first in relationship to the Sabbath because on that day the Sun of righteousness has appeared, dispelling the darkness of the Jews, melting the ice of the pagans and restoring the world to its primordial order; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4, 18, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 544, explicitly states: 'The Savior's day, which derives its name from light and from the sun'; cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus in Psalmos* 67, 6, *CSEL* 27, 280; Athanasius, *Expositio in Psalmos 67, 34, PG* 27, 303; Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 4, 2, 7; and *Epistula* 44, *PL* 16, 1138.

was already well established. Since these statements represent later admissions, can they be legitimately utilized to ascertain the influence of the *day of the Sun* on the origin of Sunday observance? We shall answer this question by raising another, namely, is it not possible, as remarked by F. H. Colson, that

> 'what the Christians of a later epoch wrote may well have been said and thought by them of the earlier, even if it was not written?'[716]

Let us not forget that prior to the Edict of Milan (AD 313) Christians were an illegal minority forced to defend their beliefs and practices from pagan accusations and influences. Tertullian, we noticed, though he speaks of the day of the Sun, which both Christians and pagans celebrated, avoids using the sun-symbology to justify the Christian Sunday seemingly for two reasons: first, because that would have supported the pagan accusation that Christians were Sun-worshipers (a charge he strongly resented); second, because he was cognizant of the influence which pagan festivals still had on the Christians.[717]

In his treatise, *On Idolatry*, for instance, Tertullian exclaims: 'How widked to celebrate them [i.e. pagan feasts] among brethren.'[718] Therefore, any attempt to associate the day of the Sun with the Christian Sunday, at a time when the latter was still a young institution, could have been readily misinterpreted by Christians still susceptible to pagan influences. Besides, this would have sanctioned existing pagan accusations. A century later, however, when Sunday observance became well established, the Fathers, at least some, did not hesitate to designate the Christian Sunday as 'the true day of the Sun.'[719]

This denomination should not be regarded as 'a new apologetic technique,' but rather an explicit admission of what had been an implicit recognition.[720] Is it possible that even the biblical notion of the sun and of light predisposed Christians favorably toward the day and the symbolism of the sun? It's a fact that there existed in Judaism, and in primitive Christianity, a rich and long-standing tradition, which viewed the Deity as the True Light and the Sun of Righteousness.[721] Malachi, for example, predicted that 'the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings' (4:2).[722]

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, announced the coming of Christ, saying 'the sun-rising (*anatole*) from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness'[723] (Luke 1:78-79). John, both in his Gospel and in Revelation, repeatedly describes Christ as 'the light of men…the light shining in darkness…the true light,'[724] 'a burning and shining lamp.'[725] Even Christ defined Himself

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[716] F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. 94.

[717] See p. 154, note 676, p. 156, note 686, p. 156, note 688.

[718] Tertullian, *On Idolatry* 14, *ANE* III, p. 70; Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum*, ed. C. W. Barlow, 1950, p. 189, forcefully rebukes Christians, saying: 'What madness it is, therefore, that one who has been baptized in the faith of Christ should not worship on the Lord's day, the day on which Christ rose from the dead, but says rather that he worships the day of Jupiter and Mercury…These have no day, but were adulterers and magicians…and died in evil.'

[719] We found this to be true, also, in the case of Christmas. Only later were Christians willing to explicitly admit the borrowing of a pagan festival; see p. 159, note 700.

[720] This point is well made by F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica*, p. 157.

[721] For instance, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 121, *ANF* I, p. 260, associates Christ with the Sun on the basis of Scriptural texts: "The word of His truth and wisdom is more ardent and more light-giving than the rays of the sun…Hence also the Scripture said, 'His name shall rise above the sun.' And again Zechariah says, 'His name is the East.'"

[722] Psalm 84:11 applies the title *sun* to God Himself: 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield'; Psalm 72:17, alluding to the Messiah, says: 'May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun'; cf. Isaiah 9:2; 60:1-3, 19-20; Zechariah 3:8.

[723] John 1:4-5.

[724] John 1:9

[725] John 5:35.

as 'the light of the world'[726] and urged His followers to 'believe in the light' in order 'to become sons of light.'[727] The book of Revelation closes with the assurance that in the new earth there will be no need of the sun because 'God will be their light.'[728]

The existence of two distinct traditions, one Judaeo-Christian, which associated the Deity with the Light and the Sun, and the other, pagan, which venerated the Sun, especially on Sun-day, could well have produced an amalgamation of ideas within the Christian community. This process could have predisposed those Christians who had previously venerated the Sun, and who now needed to differentiate themselves from the Jewish Sabbath, to adopt the day of the Sun for their weekly worship, since its symbology well expressed existing Christian views. Such considerations were possibly encouraged by the valorization in the Roman society of the *day of the Sun* in place of the preceding day of Saturn.[729]

It should be clearly stated, however, that by adopting the day of the Sun, Christians did not intend to sanction and/or to encourage the worship of the pagan *Sol invictus* (an insinuation that Tertullian emphatically repudiates),[730] but rather to commemorate on that day such divine acts as the creation of light and the resurrection of the Sun of Righteousness. Both events, they noticed, not only occurred on the *day of the Sun*, but could also be effectively proclaimed through the rich symbology of the sun.

Eusebius well exemplifies this in the passage we cited earlier, where referring to the *day of the Sun* he writes,

> "It is on this day of the creation of the world that God said, 'Let there be light and there was light.' It is also on this day that the Sun of Justice has risen for our souls."[731]

In associating the creation of light and the resurrection of Christ with the day of the Sun, Eusebius was expressing explicitly what had been implicitly understood by many Christians for a long time. We noticed, for instance, that almost two centuries earlier, Justin Martyr placed in juxtaposition the creation of light and the resurrection of Christ with the day of the Sun.[732] Why? Presumably because all three (creation of light, resurrection of Christ and day of the Sun) shared a common denominator, namely, association with the Sun-Light of the first day.

How did Christ's resurrection come to be associated with sun-rising? Apparently, because, as we noted earlier, there existed a Judaeo-Christian tradition which described the Deity by means of the symbolism of the sun. Justin, in his *Dialogue with Trypho,* cites several Old Testament passages to prove that Christ is 'more ardent and more light-giving than the rays of the sun.'[733] This theme was undoubtedly encouraged by prevailing solar beliefs, which Christians found to supply an effective symbology to proclaim the Christian message.

Melito of Sardis (d. ca. AD 190), for example, utilizes the common beliefof the daily baptism of the sun and stars in the ocean, and of their daily rising to disperse darkness,[734] to explain the baptism and

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[726] John 8:12; cf. 9:4-5.

[727] John 12:34.

[728] Rev. 22:4. In the inaugural vision, John describes Christ's face, 'like the sun shining in full strength' (Rev. 1:16). Note also that when Christ was transfigured before Peter, James and John, it is said: 'his face shone like the sun and his garments became white as light' (Matt. 17:2). See F.A. Regan, *Die Dominica*, pp. 157-163 for further texts and discussion.

[729] E. Lohse, '*sabbaton*,' *TDNT* VII, p. 29, note 228, admits this possibility: 'A contributory factor was undoubtedly the fact that from the first century B.C., the seven-day week, named after the planets, had been increasingly adopted in the Hellenistic-Roman world. The day of Saturn was generally regarded as an unlucky day while Sunday, which followed it, was a particularly good day.'

[730] See p. 156, note 686.

[731] Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos 91*, *PG* 23, 1169-1172.

[732] Justin, I *Apology* 67; the passage is quoted and discussed in Chapter VII on pp. 230-231.

[733] Justin, *Dialogue* 121, see p. 163, note 721.

resurrection of Christ:

> 'If the sun washes itself with the stars and the moon in the ocean, why should not Christ have washed himself in the Jordan? He, the king of the heavens and the chief of creation, the Sun of the orient, who appeared both to the dead in Hades and to the mortals in the world! He, the only Sun who rose from heaven.'[735]

An earlier indication of the viewing of Christ's resurrection as the rising of the sun, is provided by Ignatius (ca. AD 110) in his *Epistle to the Magnesians*. Referring to what we have concluded to be the Lord's life, he adds, 'on [or by] which also our life arose through him and his death' (9:1). It has been noted that the Bishop here, 'uses a verb, which is regularly applied to the rising of the heavenly bodies (*anatello*) and not that which is commonly used of the resurrection from the dead (*anistemi*).[736] Should we regard this as purely coincidental? B. Botte replies emphatically that 'it is impossible.' He then raises a significant question:

> 'If the resurrection of Christ is presented by the image of a rising star, is it rash to think that Ignatius intended to allude discreetly to the designation of the day of the sun, which had been given to Sunday?'[737]

To conclude that Ignatius was referring to the day of the Sun when he employed the verb commonly used for sun-rising to describe the resurrection is hazardous. The subject of the immediate context, as we noticed, is the prophets, who obviously did not observe the day of the Sun. The fact, however, that Ignatius views the resurrection of Christ as the sun rising, suggests the possibility of an early amalgamation of ideas. In other words, since Sunday was the day of the Sun, and since Christ's resurrection was viewed as the rising of the 'Sun of Justice,' it would only take a short step for Christians to associate the two.

In fact, in their search for a day of worship distinct from that of the Jews, Christians could well have viewed the day of the Sun as a providential and valid substitution. Its symbology fittingly coincided with two divine acts which occurred on that day: the first creation of light and the rising of 'the Sun of the second creation.' F. H. Colson rightly points out that this coincidence could well have been regarded as 'a proof that in this pagan institution the Divine Spirit had been preparing the world for something better. In fact, the devout convert might well rejoice to be able to put a Christian construction on what had been a treasured association of his pagan past.'[738]

These feelings, we noticed, are explicitly expressed at a later date. Maximus of Turin views the pagan day of the Sun as the prefiguration of the 'Sun of Justice' who 'once risen would have illuminated it.'[739] Eusebius similarly clearly states that 'the Savior's day…derives its name from light, and from the sun.'[740] It is true that such bold admissions are not found in earlier sources, but the earlier unwillingness of the Fathers to acknowledge explicitly the adoption of the day of the Sun and/or of its symbology can be satisfactorily explained, as we said above, by the existing necessity to safeguard a recently introduced institution.

Today, for instance, Christians generally do not fear to admit that their Christmas celebration (date,

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[734] Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1, 9, 9 speaks of the sun as, 'opening the day in the orient and closing it in the occident'; Juvenal, *Satirae* 14, 280: 'Herculeus heard the roaring sun in the bottom of the sea' and 'The sun roars when it rises, as when a red hot iron is immersed in water.'

[735] Melito of Sardis, *Fragment* VIIIb, 4, *SC* 123, p. 233; Zeno of Verona frequently uses solar metaphors to explain Christian teachings. He compares the baptism of the neophytes to immersion of the sun in the ocean, and the rising of the sun to the immortal glory promised to the believers (*Liber* II, 46, *PL* 11, 503A and 504).

[736] F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. 92.

[737] B. Botte (p. 153, note 669), p. 21.

[738] F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. 93.

[739] Maximus of Turin, *Homilia* 61, *PL* 57, 371.

[740] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4, 18, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 544.

lights, trees, gifts, etc.) derives from the pagan festivity of the *Natalis Solis Invicti*. Why? Undoubtedly because such an admission would hardly tempt any Christian to commemorate the birth of the Sun-god rather than that of Christ. For early Christian converts from paganism, however, the situation was altogether different. Any explicit acknowledgment that pagan dates and symbols had been borrowed to commemorate Christ's birth and resurrection could readily have encouraged many Christians to relapse (as actually happened) into their recently abandoned pagan practices. It was, therefore, this danger of 'paganizing' a recently 'Christianized' pagan festivity that led the Fathers, initially at least, to avoid, as a precautionary measure, establishing an explicit interdependence between the Christian Sunday and the pagan *day of the Sun*.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have found that all the necessary ingredients for the *day of the Sun* to influence the origin of Sunday observance were already present when the latter made its appearance.

Various Sun-cults were predominant in ancient Rome by the early part of the second century. That these attracted the imagination and interest of Christian converts from paganism, we found evidenced by the development of the theme of Christ-the-Sun, and by the adoption of the eastward orientation for prayer, and of the date of the 25th of December. The existence of a rich biblical tradition, which associated the deity with the Sun and Light, seemingly facilitated, if it did not encourage, such an amalgamation of ideas.

The valorization of the day of the Sun over that of Saturn, as a result of the diffusion of the Sun-cults, possibly oriented Christians (who desired to differentiate themselves from the Sabbath of the Jews), toward such a day.[741] This choice, however, it must be stated again, was not motivated by their desire to venerate the Sun-god on his day, but rather by the fact that its symbology could fittingly commemorate two important events of the history of salvation—creation and resurrection: 'it is on this day that the Light of the World has appeared and on this day that the Sun of Justice has risen.'[742] Moreover, the *day of the Sun* enabled Christians to explain also the biblical mysteries to the pagan world by means of an effective symbology that was very familiar to them.

Our investigation into the origin of Sunday observance has so far focused on two major contributory factors. The first, anti-Judaism, which appears to have caused a widespread devaluation and repudiation of the Sabbath, thereby creating the exigency of a new day of worship. The second, the development of Sun-cults, with the consequent enhancement of the day of the Sun over that of Saturn, a contingency which apparently oriented Christians toward such a day, since it provided an adequate symbolism to commemorate significant divine acts. However, no adequate consideration has yet been given to the theological motivations for Sunday observance presented in the early Christian literature. Since these provide additional insights into this complex question of the origin of Sunday, we shall now direct our attention to them before drawing a final conclusion.

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[741] Several scholars support this conclusion: Franz Cumont (p. 155, note 681), p. 163, affirms: 'The preeminence assigned to the *dies solis* also certainly contributed to the general recognition of Sunday as a holiday'; P. Cotton (p. 159, note 700), p. 130, similarly notes: 'It cannot be denied that the pagan use of Sun-day has had an appreciable effect upon Christianity in bringing the Christian Sun-day into preeminence in the Church as the sole day of worship'; cf. F. H. Colson (p. 150, note 648), p. VI; Oscar Cullman (p. 160, note 703) acknowledges the association between the resurrection and the day of the Sun by the middle of the second century: 'From the middle of the second century the term 'Sunday' occurs for the former 'Lord's Day.' This means that the Christians' thought about the redemptive act of the resurrection of Christ…had already become associated with the symbolism of the sun.' Cullmann, however, fails to prove that the designation 'Lord's day' is prior to that of 'Sunday.'

[742] Jerome, *In die dominica Paschae homilia*, *CCL* 78, 550, 1, 52.

Chapter IX

THE THEOLOGY OF SUNDAY

What are the basic theological motivations advanced by the early Fathers to justify both the choice and the observance of Sunday?

1. Were they developed out of Biblical-apostolic teachings or were they elicited by the existing need to silence opposition coming from Sabbath-keepers?
2. Do the early theological explanations reflect an organic and positive view of Sunday observance or theological uncertainty and polemic?

These are questions we shall bear in mind while surveying the theological reasons adduced by the Fathers to justify Sunday worship. Such an analysis hopefully will enable us to test the validity of the conclusions emerging from our study.

The major motives for Sunday observance which appear in the early patristic literature perhaps can be best grouped around three basic headings:

1. Resurrection,
2. Creation, and
3. Symbology of the Eighth Day.

We shall examine them in this order, bearing in mind that the theological reflections are not static, but dynamic, evolving in the course of time.

Resurrection

In chapter III we already showed that no indication can be found in the apostolic period of efforts made to institute a weekly or yearly commemoration of the resurrection on Sunday. Nevertheless it is a fact that the resurrection did become the dominant reason for Sunday observance. Augustine (AD 354-430) perhaps provides the most explicit enunciation of the resurrection as *the reason* for the origin of Sunday, when he writes,

> "The Lord's day was not declared to the Jews but to the Christians by the resurrection of the Lord and from that event its festivity had its origin."[743]

In another epistle the Bishop of Hippo similarly states that "the Lord's day has been preferred to the Sabbath by the faith of the resurrection."[744] This concise and explicit recognition of the resurrection as *the cause* of the origin of Sunday observance represents the culmination of long theological reflection.

Early in the second century the resurrection is not presented as the first or the sole motivation for Sunday observance. Ignatius, we have found, alludes to Christ's resurrection in his *Epistle to the Magnesians* when speaking of the "divine prophets who lived according to Jesus Christ" (8:2). He says that they "attained a new hope, no longer sabbatizing but living according to the Lord's life, on [or by] which also our life rose up through his death" (9:1). The probative value of the resurrection for Sunday observance is rather negligible in this text, both because the reference to the resurrection of Christ is indirect and because we have shown earlier that Ignatius is not contrasting days but rather ways of

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[743] Augustine, *Epistula* 55, 23, 1, *CSEL* 34, 194.

This is Chapter IX of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 270-302.

[744] Augustine, *Epistula* 36, 12, 14, *CSEL* 34, 4.

life.[745]

In the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ca. AD 135) we found that the resurrection is mentioned by the author as the second of two reasons, important but not dominant. The first reason, which we shall consider subsequently, is eschatological in nature. Sunday, which he designates as the "eighth day," is the prolongation of the Sabbath of the end of time and marks "the beginning of another world" (15:8). The second reason is that Sunday is the day "on which Jesus *also* (*en ha kai*) rose from the dead, and having shown himself ascended to heaven" (15:9). The resurrection of Jesus is presented here as an additional justification, presumably because it was not yet viewed as the primary reason for Sunday observance.[746]

In Justin Martyr (ca. AD 150) the situation is strikingly similar. Like Barnabas he displays a profound antagonism toward Judaism and the Sabbath. In *I Apology* Justin, like Barnabas, presents the resurrection as the second of two reasons:

> "Sunday, indeed, is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and [prime] matter, created the world; and our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day."[747]

For Justin "the primary motivation for the observance of Sunday," as W. Rordorf admits,

> "is to commemorate the first day of the creation of the world and only secondarily, in addition, the resurrection of Jesus."[748]

It is noteworthy that both Barnabas and Justin, who lived at the very time when Sunday worship was rising, present the resurrection as a secondary motivation for Sunday-keeping, apparently because initially this was not yet viewed as the fundamental reason. Nevertheless, the resurrection of Christ did emerge as the primary reason for the observance of Sunday. Several liturgical practices were in fact introduced to honor its memory specifically. The Lord's supper, for instance, writes Cyprian (d. ca. AD 258),

> "though partaken by Christ in the evening…we celebrate it in the morning on account of the resurrection of the Lord."[749]
>
> Similarly, "fasting and kneeling in worship on the Lord's day," according to Tertullian (ca. AD 160-225), were regarded as unlawful."[750]

Though he gives no explicit reason for these practices,[751] (undoubtedly well understood by his contemporaries) other Fathers clearly explain that these were designed to aid in remembering Christ's resurrection. Augustine (AD 354-430) for instance, explicitly states that on Sunday "fasting is inter-

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[745] The passage is discussed at the beginning of Chapter VII.

[746] In Barnabas, the *material cause* of the origin of Sunday is the exigency to break with Judaism (see *Barnabas* in Chapter VII) of which the Sabbath was a chief stronghold. The *formal cause,* on the other hand, is the fact that the eighth day represents eschatologically the beginning of the new world and in the present age it commemorates the risen Christ. The resurrection is not viewed as the first cause, but as the second of two reasons.

[747] Justin, *I Apology 67,* 5-7, Falls, *Justin's Writings,* pp. 106-107. These are not the only motivations, since we noticed that in his polemic with Jews and Jewish Christians Justin argues for Sunday observance on the basis of the eighth day of the circumcision and of the eight persons saved from the flood; see *Justin Martyr,* Chapter VII.

[748] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 220.

[749] Cyprian, *Epistola* 63, 15, *CSEL* 3, 2, 714; Jerome, *Commentarius in epistola ad Galatos* 4, 10, *PL* 26, 404-405, extends the symbol of the resurrection to the daily celebration of the Eucharist as well.

[750] Tertullian, *De corona* 3, 4, *ANF* III, p. 94.

[751] The reason is suggested by Tertullian in his treatise *On Prayer* 23, *ANE* III, p, 689 where he admonishes to stand for prayer on "the day of the Lord's Resurrection" and "in the period of Pentecost" because both festivities were distinguished "by the same solemnity of exultation."

rupted and we pray standing, because it is a sign of the resurrection."[752]

It appears therefore that initially Christ's resurrection was not felt to be the exclusive or the preponderant justification for Sunday worship, but it did emerge rather early as the dominant reason which inspired several liturgical practices.[753] We need, then, to recognize and evaluate the role played by other theological motives as well.

Creation

The commemoration of the anniversary of the creation of the world is a justification often adduced by the Fathers for observing Sunday. We noticed above that Justin Martyr in his *I Apology* 67 presents this as the primary reason for the Christian Sunday gathering:

> "Sunday, indeed, is the day on which we hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming darkness and prime matter, created the world."

In our previous discussion of this passage, we concluded that Justin's allusion to the creation of light on the first day seems to have been suggested by its analogy with the day of the Sun. The statement, however, indicates that even the inauguration of creation on the first day per se was viewed as a valid justification for the Christian weekly gathering. F. A. Regan points out that Justin's creation motif found in chapter sixty-seven is,

> "evolved from the opening lines of chapter fifty-nine where he unfolds the simple account of the original creation of light and the world."[754]

The beginning of creation on the first day of the week is associated by Justin with the resurrection of Christ, apparently because both events occurred on the same day and could be symbolically linked together as representing the beginning of the old and of the new creation.

Justin's effort to establish a nexus between creation and resurrection was not an isolated attempt. We noticed earlier the testimonies of Eusebius and Jerome where the two events are explicitly linked together.[755] Ambrose (ca. AD 339-397), Bishop of Milan, also echoes this teaching in a hymn of praise to Sunday where he says:

> "On the first day the blessed Trinity created the world or rather the resurgent Redeemer who conquered death, liberated us."[756]

This link between creation and resurrection is found even more explicitly in a sermon of Eusebius of Alexandria (ca. AD 500):

> "The holy day of Sunday is the commemoration of the Lord. It is called Lord's (*kuriake*) because it is the Lord (*kurios*) of all days…It was on this day that the Lord established the foundation of the creation of the world and on the same day He gave to

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[752] Augustine, *Epistola* 55, 28, *CSEL* 34, 202; cf. Epistola 36, 2, *CSEL* 34, 32; the same reason is given by Hilary of Poitiers, *Praefatio in Psalmum* 12, *PL 9,* 239; Basil, *lie Spiritu Sanctu* 27, 66, *SC* p. 236 explains that the standing position during the Sunday service helps to remember the resurrection. However, he comments that the origin of the custom is veiled in mystery; cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* 2, 59, *ANF* VII, p. 423: "We pray thrice on Sunday standing in memory of Him who arose in three days."

[753] The fact that in the mind of many Fathers Easter-Sunday and weekly Sunday were regarded as one basic festival commemorating at different times the same event of the resurrection (see *Easter-Sunday and Weekly Sunday* in Chapter VI) suggests the possibility that both of these originated contemporaneously, possibly in the early part of the second century in Rome (see *The Origin of Easter-Sunday* in Chapter VI).

[754] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 86.

[755] See *The Day of the Sun and the Origin of Sunday* in Chapter VIII.

[756] M. Britt, *The Hymns of the Roman Breviary and Missal,* 1948, p. 91; Britt attributes the hymn to Pope Gregory the Great while J. Danielou to Ambrose *(Bible and Liturgy,* p. 249).

> the world the first-fruits of the resurrection…This day is therefore for us the source of all benefits; the beginning (*arkay*) of the creation of the world, the beginning of the resurrection, the beginning of the week. Since this day contains three beginnings, it prefigures the principle of the Trinity."[757]

Additional patristic testimonies could be cited where the inauguration of creation on the first day is presented and defended as a valid justification for the observance of Sunday.[758] This view raises an important question:

> Why would Christians claim that Sunday commemorated creation, when in the Old Testament and in Jewish thinking this was regarded as an exclusive prerogative of the Sabbath? (Avram: Exodus 20:8-11, esp. v. 11)

That this was well understood by early Christians is exemplified by the clear differentiation made between creation and resurrection by those who observed both Saturday and Sunday. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* (*ca*. AD 380), for instance, Christians are enjoined to keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival: "The Sabbath on account of creation, and the Lord's day of the resurrection."[759]

Was perhaps the transference of the commemoration of creation from the Sabbath to Sunday a calculated attempt to deprive the Sabbath of its theological *raison d'être?* Was the creation motive attributed to Sunday in order to silence Sabbath-keepers who were defending the superiority of the Sabbath on account of its commemoration of the completion of creation? The echo of this controversy reverberates in several testimonies. In the *Syriac Didascalia* (ca. AD 250), for instance, the terms of the dispute are most explicit:

> "Cease, therefore, beloved brethren, you who from among the people have believed, yet desire still to be tied with bonds, and say that the Sabbath is prior to the first day of the week because the Scripture has said: 'In six days did God make all things; and on the seventh day he finished all his works, and he sanctified it.'" (Avram: Gen. 2:1-3) "We ask you now, which is first, Alaf or Tau? For that (day) which is the greater is that which is the beginning of the world, even as the Lord our Saviour said to Moses: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'"[760]

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[757] Eusebius of Alexandria, *De die Dominico, PA* 86, 416.

[758] See, for instance, Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 44 In novam Dominicam, PG* 36, 612: "As the first creation began on the Lord's Day (this is clearly indicated by the fact that the Sabbath falls seven days later, being repose from work), so the second creation began on the same day"; Dionysius of Alexandria, *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi 4,* ed. J. B. Pitra, 1883, p. 421: "God Himself has instituted Sunday the first day both of creation and also of resurrection: on the day of creation He separated light from darkness and on the day of the resurrection He divided belief from unbelief"; the author known as the Ambrosiaster, *Liber quaestionum veteris et novi testamenti* 95, 2, *CSEL* 50, 167, proposes a variation on the same theme: "In fact the world was created on Sunday and since it fell after creation, again it was restored on Sunday…In the same day He both resurrected and created.

[759] *Apostolic Constitutions* 8, 33, 1, *ANF* VII, p. 495; cf. ibid. 7, 36, 1, *ANF* VII, p. 474: "Oh Lord Almighty, Thou has created the world by Christ, and has appointed the Sabbath in memory thereof, because that on that day Thou hast made us rest from our works, for the meditation upon Thy laws"; Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians 9* (longer version), *ANF* I, p. 62: "But let every one keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in the meditation on the Law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship or the works of creation of God."

[760] *Syriac Didascalia* 26, ed. Connolly, p. 233; other interesting arguments are submitted to prove the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath. For instance, the author argues that when the first day Sunday was made, "the seventh day was yet unknown…Which is greater, that which had come into being, and existed, or that which was yet unknown, and of which there was no expectation that it should come to be?" Another argument is drawn from the priority enjoyed by the firstborn in the paternal blessings: "Are your last children blessed, or the firstborn? As the Scripture also saith: Jacob shall be blessed among the firstborn"; the author then argues for the superiority of Sunday by quoting Barnabas 6:13: "Behold, I make the first things as the last and the last as the first" and Matthew 20:16: "The last shall be first, and the first last"; he concludes by referring to the contention that Sunday as the "ogdoad [i. e. eighth day]…is more than the Sabbath" (Con-

The issue of the controversy is precise. Jewish converts, some at least, were claiming superiority for the seventh-day Sabbath on the ground that the day symbolized the completion of creation. Sunday-keepers, on the other hand, refuted such an argument by arguing that Sunday is superior to the Sabbath inasmuch as being the first day it commemorates the anniversary of creation. This reasoning appears again, though in a more refined theological form, in the treatise *On the Sabbath and Circumcision,* found among the works of Athanasius (ca. AD 296-373), but probably spurious. The author, rather than arguing for the superiority of Sunday by means of the dualism, anniversary versus completion of creation, presents the two days as symbols of two successive creations:

> "The Sabbath was the end of the first creation, the Lord's day was the beginning of the second in which He renewed and restored the old. In the same way as He prescribed that they should formerly observe the Sabbath as a memorial of the end of the first things, so we honor the Lord's day as being the memorial of the new creation. Indeed, He did not create another one, but He renewed the old and completed what He had begun to do."[761]

Sabbath and Sunday are curiously contrasted here as symbols of the old and new creation. The superiority of Sunday is established by virtue of the nature of the "second creation which has no end," contrary to the first creation commemorated by the Sabbath which "has ended" with Christ. Moreover, since the new creation "renewed and restored the old one," it incorporated the Sabbath and its meaning. By this clever, yet artificial, theological construction, the Sabbath is made a temporary institution,

> "given to the former people [i.e. the Jews], so that they would know the end and the beginning of creation."[762]

This notion of the Sabbath, as announcer of the end of the first and the beginning of the second creation, is totally foreign to the Scriptures. To claim, for instance, that God, by resting on the Sabbath,

> "from all His works wishes to say by this that His works need the completion that He Himself has come to bring,"[763]

is to misconstrue the actual meaning of the divine *otiositas—rest*. In the creation story God's Sabbath rest symbolizes specifically the completion and perfection of creation.[764] What caused some Christians to devise such an artificial and unscriptural doctrine of two successive creations? In the light of the existing polemic, reported by documents such as the *Didascalia,* it would seem that this clever apologetic argument was evoked by the necessity to refute the Sabbath-keepers' claim of the superiority of the Sabbath as memorial of creation.[765]

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nolly, pp. 234-236). The variety and bizarre nature of these arguments is indicative of an ongoing polemic between Sabbath and Sunday-keepers, as well as of an effort put forth by both sides to defend the superiority of their respective day of worship.

761 Athanasius, *lie sabbatis et circumcisione* 4, *PG* 28, 138 B-C.

762 *Loc. cit.*

763 Ibid.

764 J. Danielou, "Le Dimanche comme huitième jour," *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, p. 62: "In the Old Testament…the Seventh Day is the expression of perfection"; Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath* SBL Diss. Series 7, 1972, p. 196: "We must remind ourselves that it is not the rest (cessation from work) which concludes creation, but it is the concluded creation which occasions both rest and the Sabbath"; on the seventh day as symbol of totality, completion and perfection, see Nicola Negretti, *Il Settimo Giorno,* Analecta Biblica 55, 1973, pp. 44-45, 57-58.

765 Another interesting variation of the creation argument is the interpretation of the first day, not as the anniversary of the creation of the world but of the generation of Christ. This idea appears in Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150-ca. 215) for whom "the seventh-day, by banishing evils, prepares the primordial day, our true rest." This first day of creation is allegorically interpreted as "the Word illuminating hidden things," since on that day "He who is the light was brought forth first of all" *(Stromateis* 6, 16, *GCS* 2, 501-502); Eusebius elaborates this concept by explaining that on the first day only light was created, since "there was no other

In the ongoing polemic, the symbology of the first day apparently provided an effective instrument to defend the new day of worship from the attacks of both pagans and Sabbath-keeping Christians. To the pagans, Christians could explain that on the day of the Sun they did not venerate the Sun-god but rather they celebrated the creation of the light and the rise of the Sun of Righteousness, events which occurred on the first day.

To Sabbath-keepers they could show that the first day is superior to the seventh because the day commemorated the beginning of creation, the anniversary of the new creation and the generation of Christ. These were by no means the sole arguments advanced to justify Sunday observance. The symbology of the eighth day provided another valuable arsenal of apologetic techniques to defend the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath. These we shall consider now in order to gain additional information on the motivations for the adoption of Sunday.

The Eighth Day

The speculations on the meaning of the first day have already made us aware of how important numerical symbolism was for early Christians. This type of symbolism, alien to modern thought, provided early Christian preachers and theologians with practical and yet profound argumentations that captivated much of the thinking of Christian antiquity. Since the Sabbath was the seventh day of the Jewish week, Sunday could be considered, as stated by Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329-389), as,

> "the first day with reference to those that followed and as the eighth day with regard to those that preceded."[766]

The latter designation for Sunday, as we shall discover, was employed far more frequently than the former in the Christian literature of the first five centuries.

> *The irrationality of an eighth day in a seven-day week did not seem to bother the ancients.*

An explanation is suggested by the prevailing custom, still common in countries like Italy, to reckon a week by counting inclusively from any given day to the same day of the following week. For instance, an Italian will often set an appointment on a Sunday for the following Sunday, not by saying, "I will meet you a week from today," but rather "*Oggi otto*—eight days today" since both Sundays are counted. By the same principle the Romans called their eight-day marked cycle *"nundinum-ninth day."* That this method of inclusive reckoning was used by Christians is indicated by several patristic testimonies. Tertullian (ca. AD 160-ca. 225), for instance, writes that pagans celebrated the same festival only once a year, but Christians "every eighth day," meaning every Sunday.[767]

The fact that Sunday could be viewed as the eighth day "with reference to those preceding"[768] does not explain why such a name became so popular a designation for Sunday until about the fifth century. The task of tracing its origin is not an easy one, because, as A. Quacquarelli observes, "the octave

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creation that would befit the Word" *(Commentaria in Psalmos, PG* 23, 1173-1176). This concept of the generation of the Word on the first day, which most Christians today would reject as sub-ordinationism, must be regarded as another ingenious attempt to devise a viable theological justification for the observance of the Sabbath.

[766] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 44 *In novam Dominicam, PG* 36, 612C - 613A.

[767] Tertullian, *On Idolatry* 14, *ANF* III, p. 70; *Syriac Didascalia* 26, Connolly, p. 236: "But the Sabbath itself is counted even unto the Sabbath, and it becomes eight [days]; thus an ogdoad is [reached], which is more than the Sabbath, even the first of the week"; it is not clear how the eighth day could be applied to Sunday, when the number is derived by counting from Sabbath to Sabbath; see below p. 290; Justin, *Dialogue* 41, *ANE* I, p. 215: "For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle"; cf. *Dialogue* 138.

[768] See p. 172, note 766.

[i.e., the eighth] provided the Fathers with material for continuous new reflections."[769]

Baptism

W. Rordorf proposes that,

> "Sunday came to be associated with the number eight because baptism was administered on Sunday and we know that baptism was early connected with the symbolism associated with the number eight."[770]

While it is true that baptism came to be regarded as the fulfillment of the typology of the eighth day of the circumcision and of the eight souls saved from the waters of the flood, this connection, however, is not common in the writings of the Fathers before the fourth century. Eusebius (d. ca. AD 340), to our knowledge, is the first to explain explicitly that,

> "the ogdoad is the Lord's day of the resurrection of the Saviour when we believe that the cleansing of all our sins took place. It was on that day that children were symbolically circumcised, but that in reality the whole soul which is born of God is purified by baptism."[771]

This theme of the baptismal resurrection, built on the typology of the circumcision and of the story of the flood, occurs again in the fourth century in several texts[772] and it gave rise to the octagonal shape of Christian fonts and baptistries. "At this moment," however, as J. Daniélou points out, we are very far from its relationship to Sunday."[773] In earlier texts the eighth day of the circumcision and the eight persons saved from the flood are regarded primarily as a prefiguration of the resurrection of Christ on Sunday.

1. Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100-ca. 165), for instance, interprets the eight persons of the ark as "symbol of the eighth day, wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead, for ever the first in power."[774]
2. Cyprian (c. AD 258) flatly rejects the suggestion that children should be baptized on the eighth day in accord with the ancient custom of the circumcision, because, he maintains, "the eighth day, that is to say, the first after the Sabbath, was to be that day on which the Lord would resurrect and vivify us and give to us the spiritual circumcision. "[775]
3. Origen (ca. AD 185-ca. 254) similarly views the eighth day as the symbol of the resurrection of Christ which provided an immediate and global circumcision, namely the baptismal purification of the world. He writes,

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[769] A. Ouacquarelli, *L'Ogdoade Cristiana e i suoi riflessi nella liturgia e nei monumenti,* 1973, p. 45.

[770] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 277. In the New Testament a typological relationship is established between the circumcision and baptism, but there are no allusions to the significance of the eighth day per se; see Col. 2:11-13; cf. O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament,* 1950, pp. 56ff.

[771] Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos 6,* PG 23, 120A.

[772] Ambrose, *Expositia Psalmi* 118, 2:1-3, *CSEL* 62. 4f., teaches that the eighth day of the circumcision is the symbol of baptism, the spiritual circumcision inaugurated at the first Easter; cf. also *De Abraham* 2, 11,79, *CSEL* 32, 631; Gregory of Nyssa, *De octava, PA* 44, 608-609; Athanasius, *lie sabbatis et circumcisione, PG* 28, 140C-141B; Chrysostom, *De circumcisione, PA* 50, 867D.

[773] J. Danielou (p. 171, note 764) p. 88.

[774] Justin, *Dialogue* 128, *ANE* 1, p. 268; cf. *Dialogue* 41, ANF 1, p. 215: "The command of circumcision, again, bidding them always to circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath"; cf. *Dialogue* 23.

[775] Cyprian, *Carthaginense Concilium sub Cypriano tertium* 3,3, 1. *PL* 3, 1053; cf. *Epistola* 64 *CSEL* 3, 719.

> "Before the arrival of the eighth day of the Lord Jesus Christ the whole world was impure and uncircumcised. But when the eighth day of the resurrection came, immediately we were cleansed, buried, and raised by the circumcision of Christ."[776]

In these texts the circumcision is not associated with Sunday baptismal ceremony, but rather with the event itself of the resurrection, to which is attributed cleansing power. Moreover, baptism was not administered in the primitive Church exclusively on Sunday. Tertullian (ca. AD 160-ca. 225) in his treatise *On Baptism,* while he recommended Passover and Pentecost as the most suitable times for baptism, also admits that "every day is the Lord's, every hour, every time is apt for baptism."[777]

Cosmic Week

More plausible appears the explanation that the "eighth day" became a designation for Sunday as a result of prevailing chiliastic-eschatological speculation on the seven-day creation week, sometimes called "cosmic week." In contemporary Jewish apocalyptic literature the duration of the world was commonly subdivided into seven periods (or millennia) of which the seventh generally represented paradise restored.[778] At the end of the seventh period would dawn the eternal new aeon which, though not so designated, could readily be viewed as "the eighth day," since it was the continuation of the seventh.

These speculations were common in Christian circles as well.[779] In the Slavonic *Secrets of Enoch,* for instance (an apocryphon of the Old Testament interpolated by Jewish Christians toward the end of the first century) we find not only the seven-day millennia scheme,[780] but also the first explicit designation

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[776] Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* 118, *PG* 12, 1588.

[777] Tertullian, *On Baptism* 19, *ANE* 111, p. 678.

Avram: While it seems that Tertullian is speaking of the biblical Passover, it's actually the name in English given to the new Easter-Sunday date (*Pascha*; Greek for Passover). This name *Pascha* would give way to *Easter*.

[778] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 48-51, provides a concise summary and an illustrative chart of the prevailing eschatological interpretations of the cosmic week found in late Jewish apocalyptic literature. The eschatological Sabbath, usually viewed as a seventh millennium which would follow the present age (measured in six millennia) was interpreted according to three basic variants:

(1) paradise restored,

(2) an empty time of silence which would follow the Messianic age and precede the new age and

(3) an interim period of the Messiah, which marks the anticipation of the new world.

These divergent interpretations are indicative of the keen interest in late Judaism and in New Testament times, for eschatological-chiliastic problems. F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 212, comments in this regard:

"The Judaic preoccupations with the millennium…gained a wide following during the New Testament era and the centuries immediately preceding it. The coming of the Messianic age, the so-called 'days of the Messiah' with its transition between 'this world' and 'that world to come' as well as the 'end of days' were terms that dotted the vocabulary of the age";

cf. J. L. McKenzie, "The Jewish World in New Testament Times," *A Catholic Commentary on the Holy Scriptures,* 1953, ed. 738t.; J. Bonsirven, *Judaisme Palestinien au temps de Jesus Christ,* 1935, p. 341f.

[779] In the Oriental tradition, as we shall see, the Biblical week was usually interpreted as representing the whole duration of the world in contrast to the eighth day of eternity. In the Western tradition, however, the cosmic week was interpreted historically as representing succession of specific time periods; cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 5, 28, 3; 5, 33, 2; Hippolytus, *In Danielein commentarius* 4, 23-24; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4, 39; *De anima* 37, 4; see J. Danielou, "La typologie mill6nariste de Ia semaine dans le christianisme primitif," *Vigiliae ,hristianae,* (1948): 1-16.

[780] See. J. Quasten, *Patrology,* 1950, 1, p. 109. The prevailing interpretation of the millennium as a thousand years' reign of Christ and of His saints upon the earth, was based upon a misinterpretation of Revelation 20:lf. It was believed that "during this time, intervening before the final end of the world, there would be a

of the new aeon as "the eighth day":

> "And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first created after my work and that the first seven should revolve in the form of seven thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of no-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours."[781]

This eschatological symbol of the eighth day as a type of the new eternal world apparently appealed to those Christians who were trying to break away from the Sabbath, since it provided them with a weighty argument to justify their choice and observance of Sunday.

1. In *The Epistle of Barnabas* (ca. AD 135) we find the first instance of this usage. Here the teaching of the *Book of Enoch* concerning the cosmic week followed by the eighth day is polemically employed to repudiate the Sabbath and to justify Sunday observance."[782]
2. Barnabas interprets the six days of creation as meaning "that in six thousand years the Lord will bring all things to an end, for a day with him means a thousand years" (15:4). The seventh day, he explains, represents the return of Christ that will put an end to the reign "of the lawless one and judge the ungodly and change the sun and moon and stars, then he will rest well on the seventh day" (15:5). Therefore, he argues, the sanctification of the Sabbath is impossible at the present time, but it will be accomplished in that future age (seventh millennium) "when there is no more disobedience, but all things have been made new by the Lord" (15:6-7). Barnabas then closes making a renewed attempt to disqualify the observance of the Sabbath for the present age and to present instead the "eighth day" as a valid substitution:

> "Further" He says to them, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You see what He means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to Me, but the one that I have made, on which having brought everything to rest, I will make the beginning of an eighth day, that is, the beginning of another world. This is why we also observe the eighth day with rejoicing, on which Jesus also rose from the dead, and having shown himself ascended to heaven."[783]

This cosmic-eschatological symbolism of the eighth day employed by Barnabas to justify the observance of Sunday is constantly reiterated and elaborated by numerous Fathers. This bespeaks a widespread tradition that speculated on the duration of the world by means of the cosmic week. The existence of such speculation could readily have encouraged the choice of the "eighth day" because as

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superabundance of spiritual peace and harmony…It can be easily seen how such a theory would fit into a formulation of a Christian *world-day-week"* (F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 214).

Avram: There are many who believe that Rev. 20:1-6f. speaks of the return of the Messiah to Jerusalem to rule this Earth for a thousand years and that this is when 'Ezekiel's Temple' will be built. In other words, Messiah reigning for a thousand years, basing it upon Rev. 20:1-6f., may not be a misinterpretation of the passage.

[781] "Enoch 33 :7, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* ed. R. H. Charles, 1913, 11, p. 451. This millenarian interpretation of the week possibly derived from another apocryphal work, *the Book of Jubilees*. Mario Erbetta comments on this regard: "From the fact that Adam did not attain to the age of one thousand years, *Jubilees* 4:30 concludes that the prophecy of Genesis 2 :17 ("In the day that you eat of it you shall die") was effectively fulfilled. It is clear that such way of reasoning must have led, already before the Christian era, to suppose that one day of the world was equivalent to one thousand years. The transition to a world week of 7000 years: 6000 from creation to judgment and 1000 of rest, did not require much acumen" *(Oh Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento,* 1969, III, p. 31, fn. 67); cf. F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica, p*. 215; P. Prigent, *Les Testimonia dans le christianisme primitif. L'Èpître de Barnabe I-XVI et ses sources,* 1961, pp. 65-71, argues for the presence of the notion of the eighth day already in Jewish apocalyptic.

Avram: See Psalm 90:4 and 2nd Peter 3:8 for one day symbolically equaling a thousand years.

[782] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 215: "The dependency of the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* is also quite evident. In the fifteenth chapter, verse four of this work, we have an exposition of II Enoch 32:2-33."

[783] *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:8-9, trans. Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 1950, p. 41.

symbol of eternity it not only provided a valid justification for Sunday observance, but, in the polemic against Sabbath-keepers, offered also an effective apologetic argument.[784] In fact, as symbol of the eternal new world, the eighth day far surpassed the seventh day which symbolized the kingdom of one thousand years in this transitory world.

Continuation of Sabbath

Some scholars suggest that Sunday was denominated "eighth day" because it originated as a continuation of the Sabbath services which extended into Sunday time.[785] According to Jewish reckoning, the first day of the week began on Saturday evening at sunset. Any worship conducted at that time could readily have been regarded as a continuation of the Sabbath services. Christians who gathered for worship on Saturday night could then have coined the denomination "eighth day," to signify that their worship was the prolongation of that of the Sabbath. *Barnabas* suggests this possibility. We noticed that he defends the eighth day more as a continuation of the eschatological Sabbath than as a commemoration of the resurrection.

The irrationality is striking since *Barnabas* justifies the observance of the eighth day by the very same eschatological reasons advanced previously to abrogate the Sabbath. This effort does suggest however that the "eighth day" (as implied by the number) was viewed at that time not as a substitution, but as an addition to the Sabbath. Note that *Barnabas* says, "This is why we *also* (*dio kai*) observe the eighth day." The adjunctive "also" presupposes that the Sabbath still enjoyed recognition, in spite of the prevailing efforts to invalidate it.[786] It is possible, therefore, that Sunday was initially denominated "eighth day" because, as J. Daniélou realistically explains, the Judaeo-Christians,

> "who celebrated the Sabbath, the seventh day, as the rest of the Jews, after the Sabbath, they prolonged the Jewish liturgy with the specifically Christian eucharistic cult. This was regarded by the Christian community as the continuation of the Sabbath, that is of the seventh day. It was therefore only natural that they should consider it as eighth day, even though in the calendar it continued to be the first day of the week. And the feelings which Christians had to succeed to Judaism, of which the Sabbath was a symbol, must have contributed to confirm this impression."[787]

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[784] Since Jewish Christians belonged to those Jewish apocalyptic circles (see J. Danièlou, p. 171, note 764; p. 71) who attributed great importance to calendric speculations, it is easy to understand why in the controversy between Sabbath-keepers and Sunday-keepers, the latter capitalized on the eschatological value of the eighth day, inasmuch as being a symbol of the eternal new world, Sunday could devaluate the meaning and role of the Sabbath.

[785] J. Danielou (p. 171, note 764), p. 70; the passage is quoted below, see p. 176, note 787; Jean Gaillard, "Le Dimanche jour sacr&" *Cahiers de la vie spirituelle* 76, 1947, p. 524: "Initially Sunday was a Christian complement of the Sabbath, without any thought of supplanting the traditional sacred day of the Jews"; H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur," *New Testament Essays. Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson,* 1958, pp. 210-217, suggests that initially Christians assembled for worship on Saturday evening and later the meeting was shifted to Sunday morning; cf. H. Leclerq, "Dimanche," *DACL,* col. 1523; C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in dig New Testament,* 1961, p. 16. It is possible that Saturday evening was reckoned as Sunday time not only by the Jews but by Christians as well. Augustine, for instance, referring to the vigil of Easter-Sunday, explicitly states: "Then in the evening as the Sabbath was over, began the night which belongs to the beginning of the Lord's day, since the Lord consecrated it by the glory of the resurrection. Therefore we celebrate now the solemn memory of that night which belongs to the beginning of the Lord's day" (S. *Guelf.* 5, 4, *Miscellanea Augustiniana* I, p. 460; cf. *Epistola* 36, 28, *CSEL* 34, 57). C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* pp. 46, 59, observes that Sabbath evening was "a favorable time" for a Christian gathering, since it followed the rest of the Sabbath and Christians at that time were free to meet.

[786] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 26, perceives in this "the effort which Judaeo-Christians were making to justify their worship"; see Chapter VII, at the end of *Barnabas*, for a discussion of the passage.

[787] J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), p. 70.

Superiority of Eighth Day

In the growing conflict between the Church and the Synagogue and between Sabbath keepers the eighth day came to be dissociated from the Sabbath. Its rich symbology became widely used primarily as a polemic argument to prove the fulfillment, the substitution, and the supersedure of Judaism and of its Sabbath as well as the superiority of Christianity and of its Sunday. To accomplish this objective, the Old and the New Testament were searched for references (so called *Testimonia)* which would denigrate the Sabbath and provide some theological justification for the eighth day. *Barnabas* indicates that this process had already begun. He endeavors not only to find theological justifications for the eighth day, but also attempts to invalidate the observance of the Sabbath, by quoting, among other texts, Isaiah 1:13:

> "Further He says to them, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You see what He means: it is not the present Sabbaths that are acceptable to Me" (15:8).

Barnabas' initial endeavor to exhalt the superiority of the eighth day at the expense of the seventh is carried on by several Fathers who enriched this teaching with new *testimonia* and arguments. Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100–ca. 165), for instance, extrapolates from the Scriptures some new interesting "proofs" to show that "the eighth day possessed a certain mysterious import, which the seventh did not possess."[788]

1. The eighth day of the circumcision, the eight persons saved from the flood and
2. possibly the fifteen cubits (seven plus eight) of the flood-waters which rose above all mountains are arbitrarily interpreted a prefiguration of and justification for the observance of the eighth day.

On the other hand, we noticed that Justin reduces the seventh day to a trademark of Jewish infidelity. To prove such a thesis he contends that

1. the Sabbath was not observed before Moses,
2. that God Himself did not keep it and
3. that several persons in the Old Testament, like the priests, legitimately broke it.[789]

These "proofs" became the standard repertory utilized in the controversy not only by the Fathers but even by Gnostic sects. Irenaeus (ca. AD 130–ca. 200) refers to a group of them, known as Marcosians, who defended the doctrine of the "ogdoad" (eighth) not only by arguing from the story of the flood and of the circumcision (already used by Justin), but also from the fact that David was the eighth son and that the fleshy part of man was allegedly created on the eighth day. "In a word," Irenaeus comments, "whatever they find in the Scriptures capable of being referred to the number *eight,* they declare to fulfill the mystery of the ogdoad."[790]

The Gnostics, in fact, who, as J. Danielou points out, "were decided enemies of Judaism, were carried away by this theme [i.e. eighth day],"[791] since it enabled them to do away with the "Jewish" Sabbath. However, they substituted the Judaeo-Christian eschatological view of the eighth day as symbol of the eternal kingdom to come, with the view of the cosmological and spiritual world of rest and eternity found above this world of sevenness. They developed this interpretation by bringing together the Pythagorean notion of the seven spheres, which were embraced by the eighth, immovable firmament, with the prestige attributed by Christians to the eighth day.[792] Thus, for the Gnostic, Sunday became

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[788] Justin, *Dialogue* 24, 1. Falls, *Justin's Writings, p*. 183.

[789] Justin's arguments against the Sabbath and in favor of Sunday are discussed in Chapter VII under *Justin Martyr.*

[790] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1, 18, 3, *ANF* 1, p. 343.

[791] J. Danièlou, *Bible and Liturgy, p*. 258; cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1, 25, 1.

the symbol of full and perfect life attainable here below by "spiritual" people. Theodotus illustrates this in a text reported by Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150-215):

> "The rest of the spiritual men takes place on the day of the Lord (*kuriake*) in the ogdoad which is called the day of the Lord (*kuriake*)"[793]

Here the Lord's day is identified with the ogdoad to designate the super-celestial kingdom inhabited by the soul of spiritual persons.

This heretical Gnosis is reflected in Clement of Alexandria, one of the most liberal minds of Christian antiquity. In a comment on the passage of Ezechiel 44:27, "the priests are purified for seven days" and on the eighth sacrifices are offered, Clement in a neutral fashion summarizes the prevailing meanings attributed to the numbers seven and eight. The former, he explains, represents the seven ages of the world or the seven heavens or the present state of change and sin. The latter, on the other hand, symbolizes the supreme rest in the future world or the super-celestial kingdom or the state of changelessness and sinlessness.[794]

In spite of his syncretistic mind, Clement manifests a clear antagonism toward the number seven, symbol of the Sabbath. In fact, he regards it as "a motherless and childless number." The number eight, on the other hand, not only possessed prestigious qualities but, according to Clement, it is also the day the Lord has made which all men should celebrate.[795]

Returning now to the mainstream of Christianity, we shall notice that the seventh and the eighth day are interpreted more eschatologically than cosmologically. Several other practical meanings are also devised out of the Scriptures and the natural world. The function of all these interpretations is obviously polemic, designed, as noted by F. A. Regan, "to point out the superiority of the Lord's day over the Sabbath, and the fulfillment of the seventh in this eighth."[796]

Irenaeus reproposes the millenarian scheme of *Barnabas*, interpreting the seventh day as the symbol of the judgment and world to come and the eighth as the eternal blessedness.[797] Like Justin, he also

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[792] J. Danièlou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 258, comments: "They [i.e. the Gnostics] borrowed this vision from astrology, which had spread its notions throughout the Hellenistic world of the time and especially in neopythagoreanism. Basic to this idea was the contrast between the seven planetary spheres which are the domain of the *cosinocratores,* the archontes, who hold man under the tyranny of the *heimarmene,* and, beyond the heaven above, that of the fixed stars, which is the place of incorruptibility and repose (Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain,* p. 162)." Danielou then explains how the Gnostics "brought together the supreme dignity of the eighth day in Christianity with the pythagorean view of the planetary spheres. Thus they were led to the conception of the octave as meaning, not the kingdom to come of Judaeo-Christian eschatology, but the world on high, of which all creation is only the degradation" (ibid., p. 259). A significant example is provided by Irenaeus' report of the Gnostic sect, known as Valentinians, who held that "He [the Demiurge] created also seven heavens, above which they say that he, the Demiurge, exists. And on this account they term him Hebdomas, and his mother Achamoth Ogdoads, preserving the number of the first-begotten and primary Ogdoad as the Pleroma" *(Adversus haereses* 1, 5, 2, *ANE* 1, p. 322). In this case the Ogdoad [i.e. Eighth] apparently represents the supreme God.

Avram: The Apostle Paul deals with Gnosticism in his letter to the Colossians, where Paul has to explain that 'in Yeshua' is 'all the fullness' (i.e. everything they will ever need; Col. 1:11-25f.), and one doesn't need to go through spheres (intermediaries, angels and principalities of Gnosticism; Col. 2:1-10, 18-23) in order to *know* God (which in Greek is *gnosis*/knowledge) and be saved.

[793] Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 63, 1 *SC* 23, 185; cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6, 22; especially Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1, 5, 3, *ANF* I, p. 323.

[794] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4, 25; 6, 16.

[795] Ibid., 6, 16, 138.

[796] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 224; J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), pp. 72, 74, explicitly points out that "the doctrine of the ogdoad as heavenly world and future world was developed to seek a justification for Sunday observance. Beginning with this reflection, a search was made for texts announcing the eighth day in the Old Testament…It is an aspect of the anti-Jewish polemic designed to exalt Sunday in order to reject the Sabbath…Initially the opposition is between the Jewish day of worship and that of the Christians."

reduced the Sabbath to an existential meaning, namely, perseverance in the service of God during the whole life and abstention from evil.[798]

Origen (ca. AD 185–ca. 254) continues the Irenaeus tradition by limiting the Sabbath to a spiritual dimension, but differs from him in its eschatological interpretation. Contrary to the Western tradition which interpreted the seven days as the seven millennia of the history of this world, Origen, consistent with the Eastern tradition, views the number seven as the symbol of this present world and the eighth as symbol of the future world:

> "The number eight, which contains the power of the resurrection, is the figure of the world to come, just as the number seven is the symbol of this present world."[799]

Though Origen approaches the controversy over the two days in a philosophical Gnostic fashion, his intention to denigrate the seventh day, and to exhalt in its place the eighth, should not be missed. In the same *Commentary on Psalm 118* he presents the seventh day as the sign of matter, of impurity and of uncircumcision, while to the eighth day he reserves the symbol of perfection, of spirituality and of purification by the new circumcision provided by Christ's resurrection.[800]

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (d. AD 258), free from excessive allegorism or chiliastic speculations, views the eighth day as the "first and sovereign after the Sabbath—*id est post sabbatum primus et* dorninus"—fulfilling both Sabbath observance and the circumcision ritual. The eighth day "preceded in *symbol—praecessit in imagine"* the seven, therefore it represents the fulfillment of and the superiority over the Sabbath.[801]

In the *Syriac Didascalia* (ca. AD 250) the eighth day is curiously obtained by counting inclusively from Sabbath to Sabbath: "The Sabbath itself is counted even unto the Sabbath, and it becomes eight [days]; thus an ogdoad is [reached], which is more than the Sabbath, even the first of the week."[802] Inasmuch as by counting inclusively from Sabbath to Sabbath, the eighth day is still the Sabbath, one wonders how the author could legitimately apply this designation to Sunday. Perhaps he himself

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[797] J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), p. 65, notes: "Irenaeus develops greatly the notion of the seven millennia and of the eighth day. We cite a text, 'And in the seventh day he will judge the earth. And on the eighth, which is the aeon to come, he will deliver some to eternal punishment and others to life. This is why the Psalms have spoken of the octave' (5, 28, 3)."

[798] Irenaeus' concept of the Sabbath is not homogeneous. In some instances he shares Justin's view that the Sabbath and circumcision were given by God to the Jews "for their punishment…for bondage" because "righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt" *(Adversus haereses* 4, 16, 3 and f, *ANF* I, pp. 481-482). Like in Justin, so in Irenaeus, this view was encouraged by the conflict with Jews and Jewish-Christians. Irenaeus however was faced also with the reverse error of the Gnostics who depreciated the Sabbath to justify their view of the evil god of the Old Testament. To refute this Gnostic dualism, Irenaeus defends the positive function the Sabbath fulfills in helping the progressive development of humanity: "These things, then, were given for a sign; but the signs were not unsymbolical, that is, neither unmeaning nor to no purpose, inasmuch as they were given by a wise Artist…But the Sabbath taught that we should continue day by day in God's service" *(Adversus haereses* 4, 16, 1, *ANF* I, p. 481). To this ecclesiastical meaning Irenaeus adds an eschatological sense to the Sabbath: "The times of the kingdom…which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, in which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes" *(Adversus haereses* 5, 33, 2, *ANF* I, p. 562; cf. ibid., 5, 30, 4; 4, 8, 2). Augustine, we shall notice (see below p. 182), at first accepted but later rejected this materialistic interpretation of the seventh millennium. Note that Irenaeus' spiritualization of the Sabbath (widely followed by the Fathers) does not represent a positive effort to enhance the Sabbath, but rather a subtle subterfuge to do away with the commandment while safeguarding at the same time the immutability of God.

[799] Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* 118, 164, *PG* 12, 1624.

[800] Ibid., 118, 1, *PG* 12, 1588; *In Exodurn homiliae* 7, 5, *GCS* 29, 1920, Origen argues: "If then it is certain according to the Scriptures that God made the manna rain on the Lord's Day and cease on the Sabbath, the Jews ought to understand that our Lord's day was preferred to their Sabbath."

[801] Cyprian, *Epistola* 64, *CSEL* 3, 719; cf. *Carthaginense Condiliurn sub Cvpriano tertium, PL* 3, 1053.

[802] *Syriac Didascalia* 26, ed. Connolly, p. 236.

became aware of his irrationality, for when arguing for the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath, he uses exclusively the symbology of the first day. He contends, in fact, that the first day was created before the seventh, that it represents the inauguration of creation, that it was shown to be prestigious by the law of the first-born and that it was predicted that it would take the place of the seventh since it says. "The last shall be first and first last." To devaluate the Sabbath further the *Didascalia* too reiterates the traditional arguments that the patriarchs and righteous men before Moses did not keep the Sabbath and that God Himself is not idle on the Sabbath. He then concludes by stating more explicitly and emphatically than Barnabas that,

> "the Sabbath therefore is a type of the [final] rest, signifying the seventh thousand [years]. But the Lord our Saviour, when He was come, fulfilled the types and…destroyed that which cannot help."[803]

Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers (ca. AD 315-367), perhaps provides the classic example where the eighth day stands explicitly as the continuation and fulfillment of the Sabbath. He writes:

> "Although the name and the observance of the Sabbath had been established for the seventh day, we [Christians] celebrate the feast of the perfect Sabbath on the eighth day of the week, which is also the first."[804]

Later he interprets the fifteen gradual Psalms as "the continuation of the seventh day of the Old Testament and the eighth day of the Gospel, by which we rise to holy and spiritual things."[805]

Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau in Austria (d. ca. AD 304), in his short treatise *On the Creation of the World,* devotes special attention to the meaning of the seventh and eighth days. He explores and synthesizes all the possible uses of the number seven, but can find only that such a number bespeaks of the duration of this present world, of the consummation of the humanity of Christ and of the "seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign." The eighth day, on the contrary, which he finds announced in the title of "the sixth Psalm for the eighth day…is indeed the eighth day of that future judgment, which will pass beyond the order of the seven-fold arrangement." It is on account of this inferiority that, according to Victorinus, the Sabbath was broken by Moses when he commanded

1. "that circumcision should not pass over the eighth day,"
2. by Joshua, when on the Sabbath "he commanded the children of Israel to go round the walls of the city of Jericho,"
3. by Matthias, when "he slew the prefect of Antiochus,"
4. and finally by Christ and His disciples.[806]

What motivated this systematic devaluation of the Sabbath and the consequent enhancement of the eighth day by such bizarre and irrational arguments? Victorinus leaves us in no doubt that this was a calculated attempt to force the Christians away from any veneration of the Sabbath. This is indicated not only by the fantastic arguments which are devised for Sunday and against the Sabbath, but also by the specific injunction to fast on the Sabbath lest Christians,

> "should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that 'His soul hateth.'"[807]

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[803] Ibid., p. 238; see p. 170, note 760.

[804] Hilary, *Tractatus super Psalmos* 12, *CSEL* 22, 11.

[805] Ibid., *CSEL* 22, 14.

[806] Victorinus, *On the Creation of the World, ANE* VII, 342; Asterius of Amasa, *Homilia* 20, 8, *PG* 40, 444-449 defends the superiority of the eighth day by the fact that the number eight is not related to any time cycle. Furthermore he says: "Inasmuch as the first resurrection of the race after the flood happened to eight persons, the Lord has begun on the eighth day the resurrection of the dead."

[807] Victorinus, see p. 180, note 806.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (ca. AD 339-397), reproposes several traditional interpretations of the symbol of the seventh and eighth days while at the same time adding his own practical arguments to the controversy. He claims, for instance, that "the Sabbath was symbol of the ancient economy based on the sanctification of the Law," while the eighth day represents the new economy "sanctified by His [Christ's] resurrection."[808] The Christian's eighth day for Ambrose begins here on the earth below, since,

> "the seventh age of the world has ended and the grace of the eighth which made man not of this world but of above, has been revealed."[809]

However, the full rest of the eighth day, which "Jesus has purchased for His people through His resurrection," according to Ambrose, "is not to be found on earth but in heaven."[810]

In his *Letter to Horontius* Ambrose uses the analogy of the natural and supernatural birth to prove the superiority of the eighth day. A baby born at seven months will face hardship; but the child regenerated on the eighth day will inherit the kingdom of heaven.[811] Then Ambrose rather enigmatically says that in the seventh is found the "name" while in the eighth the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit.[812] Old Testament passages such as Ecclesiastes 11:2, "Give a portion to those seven, and also to those eight," and Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the Lord has made," as well as the rite of the circumcision, are again interpreted as predictions and prefigurations of the eighth day.[813] Like previous Fathers, Ambrose also believes that "God appointed beforehand another day…because the Jews refused through contempt the commands of their God."[814] He urges that Christians therefore leave behind the seventh day, the symbol of the seventh age of the world which has ended and that they enter into the grace of the eighth day: prefigured in the Old Testament, inaugurated by Christ's resurrection, and representing the fulfillment and supplantation of the Sabbath.[815]

Jerome (ca. AD 342-420), like his contemporary Ambrose, sees in the seventh and eighth days the symbol of the passage from the Law to the Gospel:

> "The number seven having been fulfilled, we now climb to the Gospel through the eighth."[816]

Therefore, for Jerome to observe the Sabbath is a sign of retrogression, because he explains (alluding to Ecclesiastes 11:2) that "the Jews, by believing in the Sabbath, gave the seventh part, but they did not give the eighth because they denied the resurrection of the Lord's day."[817]

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[808] Ambrose, *Explanatio Psalmi* 47, *CSEL 64,* 347; cf. *Epistola* 26, 8, *PL* 16, 1088: "Therefore the seventh day represents a mystery, the eighth the resurrection."

[809] Ambrose, ibid., 1140.

[810] Ibid., 1139.

[811] Ibid., 1137.

[812] Ibid., 1137: "Great is the merit of the seventh day by virtue of the Holy Spirit. However the same spirit names the seventh day and consecrates the eighth. In that is the name, in this is the fruit."

[813] Ibid., 1137-1138.

Avram: 'This is the day that the Lord has made,' refers not to the resurrection, which Ambrose (and many others) mistakenly thought occurred on Sunday (for the Scriptures are silent as to the day and the hour of His resurrection), but the Psalmist is referring to the Lord's crucifixion, for it is in His sacrificial death that we are set free from our sins; the resurrection is our guarantee of our salvation, but the crucifixion establishes our salvation. There's nothing in Psalm 118, where 'This is the day…made' (v. 24) that points to Sunday or the resurrection, but to salvation through *the Gate of Yahveh* (i.e. the Messiah's crucifixion; vv. 5, 14-24f., esp. vv. 20, 22-24, 27).

[814] Ibid., 1139.

[815] Ibid., 1140-41.

[816] Jerome, *Commentarius in Ecclesiastem* 11, 2, *PL* 23, 1157.

[817] Jerome, loc. cit.

Augustine (AD 354-430) represents perhaps the maximum speculative effort of the Western Fathers to interpret the seventh and eighth days both eschatologically and mystically. Though his treatment of the subject is relatively free from polemic and captivates the reader by its profound spiritual insights, the Sabbath still retains a temporary and subordinate role which finds its fulfillment in the eighth day. Before the resurrection of Christ, the mystery of the eighth day, according to Augustine,

> "was not concealed from the holy Patriarchs, but it was locked up and hidden and taught only as the observance of the Sabbath."[818]

Like his predecessors he sees in the baptismal symbols of the circumcision and the flood, prefigurations of the eighth day. He explicitly associates the eight persons saved from the flood with the eighth day, saying that they are,

> "the same thing which is signified in different ways by the difference of signs, as it might be by a diversity of words."[819]

Augustine's teaching on the eighth day, as C. Folliet well argues, is inseparable from that of the Sabbath.[820] Following the Western millenarian tradition of Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian and Victorinus,[821] he interprets the creation-week as representing the seven ages of the history of this world, which are followed by the eighth day, the new eternal age. At first Augustine held to a clear distinction between the eschatological meaning of the seventh and the eighth day. He writes, for instance,

> "the eighth day signifies the new life at the end of the ages, the seventh the future rest of the saints on this earth."[822]

Later, as a result of intense and mature reflection, Augustine rejected the prevailing material understanding of the seventh millennium as a time of carnal enjoyment of the saints on this earth and merged the rest of the seventh day with that of the eternal octave.[823]

The eighth day, however, for Augustine represents not only this historical continuation and culmina-

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[818] Augustine, *Epistola* 55, 23, *CSEL* 34, 194.

[819] Augustine, *Sermo* 94, *Biblioteca Nova* ed. May, p. 183.

[820] C. Folliet, "La Typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustine," *Revue des êtudes Augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 371-390.

[821] On Irenaeus see p. 179, note 798; on Victorinus see p. 180, note 806; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem,* 3, 24, and 4, 39 interprets the millennium as a literal period of one thousand years on the earth, in the city of the New Jerusalem rebuilt by God; Hippolytus, *In Danielem commentarius* 4, 23-24 elaborates a scheme of seven ages, speculating on the actual date of Christ's return.

[822] Augustine, *Sermo* 80, *PL* 38, 1197; in this sermon Augustine enumerates distinctly the five ages from Adam to Christ already passed. He then explains: "With the coming of the Lord begins the sixth age in which we are living…When the sixth day has passed, then rest will come…and the saints completed, we shall return to that immortality and blessedness which the first man lost. And the octave shall accomplish the mysteries of God's children." The basic difference between the eschatological seventh and eighth day, according to Augustine, is qualitative: "For it is one thing to rest in the Lord while still being in the midst of time—and this is what the seventh day Sabbath signifies—and another thing to rest endlessly beyond all time with the Artisan of time, as signified by the eighth day" *(Sermo 94, Biblioteca Nova,* ed. May, p. 184); in his *Epistola* 55, 23, *CSEL* 34, 194, Augustine represents the eighth day as a revelation of the resurrection: "Before the resurrection of the Lord, although this mystery of the octave which represents the resurrection was not concealed from the holy Patriarchs, filled as they were with the prophetic spirit, but was reserved, transmitted and hidden by the observance of the Sabbath."

[823] See Augustine, *City of God* 20, 7: "I also entertained this notion at one time. But in fact those people assert that those who have risen again will spend their rest in the most unrestrained material feasts, in which there will be so much to eat and drink that not only will those supplies keep within no bounds of moderation but will also exceed the limits even of credibility. But this can only be believed by materialists' (trans. Henry Bettenson, ed. David Knowles, 1972, p. 907). Augustine did not repudiate totally the notion of the seventh millennium, but fused the rest of the seventh with that of the eternal octave: "The important thing is that the seventh will be our Sabbath, whose end will not be an evening, but the Lord's Day, an eighth day, as it were, which is to last for ever" *(City of God* 22, 30, trans. Henry Bettenson, p. 1091).

tion of the eschatological Sabbath, but also the mystical progress of the soul toward the internal world of peace. In this case the Sabbath which "Christians observe spiritually by abstaining from all servile work, that is to say, from all sin" symbolizes the spiritual "tranquillity and serenity of a good conscience," while the eighth day stands for the greater eternal peace awaiting the saints.[824] Thus, for Augustine the eighth day epitomized the fulfillment of the Sabbath both as historical perspective and as interior reality.

Pope Gregory the Great (ca. AD 540-604), the last great Doctor of the ancient Latin Church, provides perhaps a final example of a speculative and practical effort to use the symbology of the eighth day to prove the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath. The Pontiff denounces in no uncertain terms certain Sabbath-keeping Christians who advocated abstention from work on the Sabbath. He wrote in a letter:

> "It has been reported to me that certain men of a depraved spirit have sown among you the seeds of a perverted doctrine contrary to the holy faith, forbidding to perform any work on the Sabbath day. What shall I say of such men except that they are the preachers of the Antichrist?…This is why we accept in a spiritual way and observe spiritual what is written about the Sabbath. For the Sabbath means rest and we have the true Sabbath, the very Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ."[825]

To find support for the eighth day, Gregory refers to the traditional admonition of Ecclesiastes 11:2, "Give portion to seven and also to eight," interpreting it as a prefiguration of the day of Christ's resurrection, "for He truly rose on the Lord's day, which since it follows the seventh day Sabbath is found to be the eighth from creation."[826] For another Old Testament prediction foretelling the eighth day, the Pontiff turns to the seven sacrifices which Job offered on the eighth day after the feasting of his sons and daughters. He explains that,

> "the story truly indicates that the blessed Job, when offering sacrifices on the eighth day, was celebrating the mystery of the resurrection and served the Lord for the hope of the resurrection."[827]

Gregory also introduces a new and interesting eschatological interpretation of the seventh and eighth days by viewing the Christian life as a mirror of the life of Christ Himself:

> "What the wonderful Saviour experienced in Himself, truly signifies what happens in us, so that we, like Him, might experience sorrow in the sixth and rest in the seventh and glory in the eighth."

The sixth day represents, therefore, the present life "characterized by sorrow and distressing torment." The Sabbath signifies man's repose in the grave when "the soul freed from the body finds rest." The eighth day symbolizes "the bodily resurrection from death and the rejoicing at the glorious reunification of the soul with the flesh." Then Gregory concludes with a veiled allusion to the day of the Sun, stating that, "the eighth day opens to us the vastness of eternity, through the light which follows after the seventh day."[828]

These testimonies reveal a continuity in the usage of the rich symbology of the eighth day. The chief purpose appears to have been primarily to demonstrate the fulfillment and continuation of the Sabbath through Sunday. We have noticed what a wide range of *a posteriori* arguments were devised from the Scriptures, from prevailing calendric speculation and from the natural world, to prove the superiority of the eighth day, Sunday, over the seventh day, Sabbath.

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[824] Augustine, *In Johannis evangelium tractatus* 20, 2, *PL* 35, 1556; cf. *Enarratio in Psalmos* 91, 2, *PL* 37, 1172: "He whose conscience is good is tranquil; and this very tranquillity is the Sabbath of the heart."

[825] Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 13, 6, 1, *PL* 71, 1253.

[826] Gregory the Great, *Moralium* 35, 8, 17, *PL* 76, 759.

[827] Ibid., 1, 8, 12, *PL* 75, 532.

[828] Gregory the Great, *Homiliarurn in Ezechielern* 2, 4, 2, *PL* 76, 973f.

The Detachment of the Eighth Day from Sunday

Beginning with the fourth century a new trend appears where the numeric symbolism of the eighth day is progressively detached from Sunday and is used less as a polemic argument and more as a pedagogical device. It is employed, on the one hand, to preserve among Christians eschatological expectation and thereby keep them from being captivated by material things. On the other hand, it is retained and used as a symbol of the resurrection per se, because as J. Danièlou has well observed, it permitted,

> "to establish a link between the texts of the O. T. where the number eight is found and the resurrection and to see, therefore, in these passages prophecies of the resurrection."[829]

This new trend is particularly noticeable in the East. The three Cappadocian Fathers, for example, though they deal at length with the symbolism of the eighth day, seem to avoid applying its name and meaning to Sunday.[830] They prefer to devote their attention to the implications of the eschatological meaning of the eighth day for the present life.

Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (ca. AD 330-379), regards the eighth day, which, he says, is "outside the time of the seven days" as a figure of "the future life."[831] He prefers, however, to establish the meaning of the future world to come by the number "one" rather than "eighth." He does this by associating the "monad" of Greek thought with the Biblical "one–*mia*," which he derives from the original day of creation, arguing that the week, by returning perpetually on itself (day one) has no beginning or end and therefore is a figure of eternity.[832] Because of this meaning, expressed by both the number "one" and "eight," according to Basil,

> "the Church teaches her children to recite their prayers standing on Sunday so that, by the continual reminder of eternal life, we may not neglect the means necessary to attain it."[833]

This association of the meaning of the eighth with the practice of standing for prayer on Sunday represents a solitary reference. We shall see that it secured no following.

Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329-389), a contemporary of Basil, employs the eighth day, which for him "refers to the life to come, not to encourage Sunday observance but rather to urge "doing good while yet here on earth."[834] This trend is even more pronounced in the other Cappadocian, Gregory of Nyssa (ca. AD 330-395), the younger brother of Basil. Though he wrote a treatise *On the Ogdoad,* as remarked by F. Regan, he does not make "a single reference to the Lord's day."[835] As a philosopher he defines the octave in platonic terms as the future age which is not susceptible of "augmentation or

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[829] J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764) p. 87; cf. by the same author, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 264.

[830] The fact that Sunday came to be viewed no longer as the continuation but rather as the replacement of the Sabbath—the new Sabbath—limited the possibility of applying to Sunday the eschatological symbolism of the eighth day, since the latter implies continuation rather than substitution. Eusebius expresses explicitly this concept of "transference" when he states: "All that had been prescribed for the Sabbath, ***we*** have transferred to the Lord's day, since it is more authoritative, the one that dominates, the first and the one which has more value than the Sabbath" *(Commentaria in Psalmos* 91, *PG* 23, 1172).

Avram: It's very true what Eusebius states, that '***we*** have transferred…' the holiness of the Sabbath to Sunday, as it certainly wasn't God who did it (i.e. it's not found in Scripture).

[831] Basil, *In Hexaemeron* 2, 8, *SC* p. 177; cf. *PG* 29, 52B; *De Spiritu Sancto* 27, *SC,* pp. 236-237.

[832] Basil, *In Hexaemeron* 2, 8, *SC,* p. 180: "Why did he [Moses] not call this day the first, but one?…The week itself constitutes one single day, revolving seven times upon itself. Here is a true circle, beginning and ending with itself. This is why the principle of time is called not the first day, but one day"; cf. *De Spiritu Sancto* 27, *SC* p. 236: "There was an evening and a morning, one day as though it returned regularly upon itself."

[833] Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 27, *SC* p. 237.

[834] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 44, *In novam Dominicam,* PA 36, 612.

diminution" and which does not "suffer either alteration or change."[836] As a mystic he views the ogdoad as "the future age toward which the internal life is turned."[837] In commenting on the eighth beatitude, he finds the meaning of the octave in the Old Testament rites of purification and circumcision, which he explains mystically as representing "the return to purity of man's nature stained by sin…and the stripping off of the dead skins," symbol of the mortal and carnal life.[838] Gregory, therefore, finds in the meaning of the number "eight" not polemic arguments to urge the observance of Sunday in place of the Sabbath, but rather the symbol of the eternal and spiritual life which has already begun here below. His avoidance of any association between the number eight and Sunday observance is perhaps explained by his view (prevailing in the East) that Sabbath and Sunday were not antagonists but brothers:

> "With which eyes do you look at the Lord's day, you have dishonored the Sabbath? Do you perhaps ignore that the two days are brothers and that if you hurt one, you strike at the other?"[839]

The Cappadocians' detachment of the eschatological meaning of the eighth day from the cultic observance of Sunday finds sanction in a surprising statement from John Chrysostom (ca. AD 347-407), Bishop of Constantinople. In his second *Treatise on Compunction,* he makes a startling statement:

> "What is then the eighth day, but that great and manifest day of the Lord which burns like straw and which makes the powers on high tremble? The Scripture calls it the eighth, indicating the change of state and the inauguration of the future life. Indeed, the present life is one week only, beginning on the first day, ending on the seventh and returning to the same unit again, going back to the same beginning and continuing to the same end. *It is for this reason that no one calls the Lord's day the eighth day, but only first day.* Indeed, the septenary cycle does not extend to the number eight, but when all these things come to an end and dissolve, then the course of the octave will arise."[840]

This statement of Chrysostom represents the culmination of the development of the eschatological interpretation of the eight day, which by reflex epitomizes to some extent the vicissitudes which accompanied the birth and development of Sunday observance. The very name "eighth day" and its inherent eschatological meaning, which at first *Barnabas*, and afterwards several Fathers, used to justify the validity and superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath, are now formally and explicitly repudiated since their *raison d'etre* has ceased.[841] The eighth day is retained exclusively as symbol of the age to come and of the resurrection. The search for texts in the Old Testament containing the number eight or fifteen (seven plus eight) continues, but now no longer to prove that "the eighth day possesses a more mysterious import which the seventh did not possess,"[842] but rather that the resurrection event (whether it be the resurrection of Christ or the baptismal resurrection or the eschatological resurrec-

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[835] F. A. Regan, *Dies Dominica,* p. 240; J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), pp. 80- 81 acutely notes: "Basil's effort to retain for Sunday its archaic name of the eighth day will have no following. What will remain will be the eschatological symbolism which was attached to it…This is what we meet in Gregory of Nyssa that is typical of this attitude. In his *Hexaemeron,* he makes no allusion to Sunday."

[836] Gregory of Nyssa, *De octava, PG* 44, 609 B-C.

[837] Gregory of Nyssa, *In Psalmos* 2, 8, *PG* 44, 504D-505A.

[838] Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus, Oratio* 8 *PG* 44, 1292 A-D.

[839] Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus eos qui castigationes aegre ferunt, PG* 46, 309.

[840] John Chrysostom, *De compunctione* 2, 4, *PG* 47, 415 (emphasis supplied).

[841] J. Danièlou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 275, acknowledges this development: "This text of Chrysostom marks the furthest point of the eschatological interpretation of the eighth day, since it formally denies this name to the Lord's Day and reserves it for the age to come."

[842] Justin, *Dialogue* 24, 1.

tion) was already prefigured and predicted by the prophets.[843]

Some significant conclusions regarding the origin of Sunday emerge from this brief survey of the use of the "eighth day" in early Christianity.

The fact that the typology of the eighth day first appears especially in the writings of anti-Judaic polemics, such as the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Dialogue with Trypho,* and that it was widely used as an apologetic device to prove the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath, suggests, first of all,

1. that Sunday worship arose as a controversial innovation and not as an undisputed apostolic institution. The polemic was apparently provoked by a Sabbath-keeping minority (mostly Jewish-Christians) who refused to accept the new day of worship. This we found to be indicated by the very speculations on the eschatological superiority of the eighth day over the seventh, since these contentions had meaning only in a polemic with Jewish-Christians and Jews. In these circles where the Sabbath and the cosmic week played an important role, the opposition to the new day of worship was strong enough to cause the development of the apologetic arguments about the eighth day, in order to refute the claims of these sabbatarians.

2. The wide range of arguments drawn from apocalyptic literature, the Scriptures, philosophy and the natural world to prove the superiority of the eighth day over the seventh, presupposes also that the validity of Sunday observance was being constantly challenged by a significant segment of Sabbath-keeping Christians.[844] In the controversy over the two days, however, the symbolism of the eighth day was found to provide an effective apologetic device, since it could justify Sunday on several grounds.

   a. As the eighth eschatological day, Sunday could be defended in Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic circles as the symbol of the new world, superior to the Sabbath which represented only the seventh terrestrial millennium.

   b. As the Gnostic ogdoad, Sunday could represent the rest of the spiritual beings in the supercelestial eternal world, found above the sevenness of this transitory world.

   c. As the Biblical number eight which the Fathers found in several references of the Old Testament,

      (1) such as, the eighth day of the circumcision,

      (2) the eight souls saved from the flood,

      (3) the fifteen cubits—seven plus eight—of the flood-waters above all mountains,

      (4) the title of Psalms 6 and 11 "for the eighth day,"

      (5) the fifteen gradual Psalms—seven plus eight—

      (6) the saying "give a portion to seven or even to eight" of Ecclesiastes 11:2 and others, Sunday could be prestigiously traced back to the "prophecies" of the Old Testament. Invested with such "prophetic" authority, the eighth day could "legitimately" represent the fulfillment of the reign of the Law allegedly typified by the Sabbath and the inauguration of the kingdom of grace supposedly exemplified by Sunday. Jerome expressed this view well, saying that "the number seven, having been fulfilled, we now rise to the Gospel through the eight."[845]

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[843] For texts, see J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), pp. 87-88.

[844] The existence of Christian Sabbath-keepers in early Christianity has been largely discounted in recent studies. This creates the false impression that Sunday observance was unanimously and immediately adopted by all Christians. What is greatly needed to correct this view, is a comprehensive analysis of all the patristic references providing direct or indirect information on the survival of the practice of Sabbath-keeping in early Christianity. It is the hope of the present author to undertake this study in the near future.

[845] Jerome, *Commentarius in Ecclesiastem* 11, 2, *PL* 23, 1157.

It appears that the denomination "eighth day," coined very early by Christians, epitomizes to some extent the *manner* and the *causes* of the origin of Sunday. It suggests that Sunday worship arose possibly "as a prolongation of that of the Sabbath,"[846] celebrated initially on Saturday evening. Later, due to the existing necessity for Christians to differentiate themselves from the Jews, the service was apparently transferred from Saturday evening to Sunday morning.[847] While we have been unable to document this transference, the fact that the introduction of Sunday worship provoked a controversy, we found to be well attested, especially by the polemic use of the symbolism of the eighth day which was developed out of apocalyptic, Gnostic and Biblical sources to prove the superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath. We also found an indirect evidence for the existence of a controversy over the two days in the fact that the name and the meaning of the eighth day were detached from Sunday and retained exclusively as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ, when the Sabbath-Sunday controversy subsided.[848]

Conclusion

This brief survey of the various early Christian motivations for Sunday observance suggests that the new day of worship was introduced in a climate of controversy and uncertainty. The very memory of the resurrection, which in time became the dominant reason for Sunday observance, we found, initially played only a secondary role. On the contrary, the great importance attached to the symbolism of both the first and the eighth days, is indicative of the polemic which accompanied the introduction of Sunday observance. It appears that because of the exigency which arose to separate from the Jews and their Sabbath, Gentile Christians[849] adopted the venerable day of the Sun, since it provided an adequate time and symbolism to commemorate significant divine events which occurred on that day, such as the creation of light and the resurrection of the Sun of Justice.

This innovation provoked a controversy with those who maintained the inviolability and superiority of the Sabbath. To silence such opposition, we found that the symbolism of the first and of the eighth day were introduced and widely used, since they provided valuable apologetic arguments to defend the validity and superiority of Sunday. As the first day, Sunday could allegedly claim superiority over the Sabbath, since it celebrated the anniversary of both the first and the second creation which was inaugurated by Christ's resurrection. The seventh day, on the other hand, could only claim to commemorate the completion of creation. As the eighth day Sunday could claim to be the alleged continuation, fulfillment and supplantation of the Sabbath, both temporally and eschatologically.

In closing this survey of the theology of Sunday in early Christianity, we need to restate a question we raised at the beginning of this chapter, namely, Do the earliest theological justifications for Sunday observance reflect Biblical-apostolic teachings or rather a *posteriori* arguments solicited by prevailing circumstances?

We need not take time to test the orthodoxy of the various arguments developed, for instance, out of the numeric symbolism of the first and of the eighth day, nor do we need to examine the often ridiculous *testimonia* drawn from the Old Testament to prove that the eighth day was more prestigious than the seventh. The very fact that Sunday-keepers have long ago rejected not only the initially popular

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[846] H. Riesenfeld (p. 176, note 785) p. 213.

[847] See p. 176, note 785; Louis Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrètien,* 1920, p. 48: "Sunday initially was placed in juxtaposition with the Sabbath. As the gulf between the Church and the Synagogue widened, the Sabbath became less and less important until finally it was completely neglected."

[848] J. Danièlou (p. 171, note 764), p. 89 notes this development: "The theme of the eighth…is progressively detached from Sunday and 1oses its liturgical roots when Sunday is no longer in opposition to the Jewish seventh day."

[849] Avram: Initially, as Bacchiocchi as brought out, not all Gentile Christians adopted Sunday, but only those in Rome and Alexandria.

designation “eighth day,” but also the whole train of arguments based on items, such as the creation of light, the new world, the eighth day of the circumcision, the eighth day of purification, the eight souls saved from the flood, Ecclesiastes 11:2, the title of Psalm 6 and others, represents an implicit admission that such arguments were not warranted by sound Biblical exegesis and theology.

What about the motive of the resurrection, which in time became the dominant reason for Sunday observance? Should not this constitute a valid justification for worshiping on Sunday rather than on the Sabbath? To this question we shall address ourselves in our concluding chapter. By reviewing in retrospect the origin of Sunday we shall consider the implications of the early Christian theology of Sunday for the pressing problem of the present observance of Sunday.

Chapter X

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

In introducing our study we posed several vital questions:

1. What are the Biblical and historical reasons for Sunday-keeping?
2. Can Sunday be regarded as the legitimate replacement of the Sabbath?
3. Can the fourth commandment be rightly invoked to enjoin Sunday observance?
4. Should Sunday be viewed as the *hour of worship* rather than the *holy day of rest* to the Lord?

We stated at the outset that to answer these questions, and thereby to formulate valid theological criteria needed to help solve the pressing problem of the widespread profanation of Sunday, it is indispensable to ascertain both the Biblical basis and the historical genesis of this festivity. We believe that this verification was justified by the Christian conviction that any present decision regarding the Lord's day must be based on Biblical authority confronted with the historical developments of primitive Christianity.

Having reached the end of our historical investigation, we summarize its results and consider its implications for the urgent questions of today. We are aware that the conclusions which have emerged in the course of the present study, though the result of an effort which has been intentionally honest and objective, still rest on an inevitable personal interpretation of available evidences. It will be therefore the sieve of the critics that will eventually corroborate or challenge their validity. Nevertheless the fact remains that our conclusions represent the result of a serious effort which has been made to understand and interpret the available sources. The reader will in fact find in the preceding pages extensive discussion and precise reasons for every single conclusive statement which we now submit.

The analysis of the ample Sabbath material of the Gospels has revealed, first of all,

1. the high esteem in which the Sabbath was held both in Jewish circles and in primitive Christianity.
2. We have shown that the Gospels testify that for the earliest Christians, Christ did not, as some contend, "push into the background" or "simply annul"[850] the Sabbath commandment to pave the way for a new day of worship, but rather He enriched its meaning and function by fulfilling its Messianic typology.
   a. This Jesus did, not only by announcing His redemptive mission to be the fulfillment of the promises of liberation of the sabbatical time (Luke 4:18-21), but also through His program of Sabbath reforms.
   b. We noticed that the Lord acted deliberately on the Sabbath, contrary to prevailing rabbinical restrictions, in order to reveal the true meaning of the Sabbath in the light of His work of redemption: a day to commemorate the divine blessings of salvation, especially by expressing kindness and mercy toward others.
3. To make the Sabbath a permanent symbol of His redemptive blessings, we found that Christ identified His Sabbath ministry with that of the priests, whose work in the Temple on the Sabbath was lawful on account of its redemptive function. As the true Temple and Priest, Christ likewise intensified on the Sabbath His saving ministry (Mark 3:4-5; Matt. 12:1-14; John 5:17,

[850] W. Rordorf, *Sunday, p*. 70; speaking of the primitive Christians, Rordorf emphatically states: "They came to understand that this commandment had been fulfilled and *abolished* in Jesus" (ibid. p. 298).

This article is Chapter X of Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 303-321.

7:23, 9:4) so that sinners whom "Satan bound" (Luke 13:16) might experience and remember the Sabbath as the memorial of their redemption.

a. That the apostolic community understood this expanded meaning and function of the Sabbath, we found indicated not only by the Gospel's accounts of Christ's Sabbath pronouncements and healing activities, but also by Hebrews 4, where the Sabbath is presented as the permanent symbol of the blessings of salvation available to all believers by faith.

The object of our study, however, was not to trace the theological development and/or actual practice of the Sabbath among early Christians, but rather to ascertain the historical genesis of Sunday observance. Nevertheless, in examining, for instance, the Biblical and historical data regarding the primitive community of Jerusalem for traces of Sunday observance, we found irresistible proof that both the membership and the leadership of the mother Church of Christendom were mostly Jewish converts deeply attached to Jewish religious observances such as Sabbath-keeping. A convincing evidence was provided by the sect of the Nazarenes, a group descending directly from the primitive community of Jerusalem. These, we found, retained exclusively Sabbath-keeping after AD 70 as one of their distinguishing marks, thus proving that no change from Sabbath to Sunday occurred among primitive Palestinian Jewish Christians.

We submitted to careful scrutiny the three New Testament passages (I Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7-11; Rev. 1:10) generally cited as proof of Sunday observance in apostolic times. We are able to show, however, that they provide no probative indication for the practice of Sunday worship. We found the first explicit but yet timid reference to Sunday in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ch. 15). The author mentions no gatherings, nor any eucharistic celebration, but simply that Christians spent (*agomen*) the eighth day, rejoicing, inasmuch as it represented the prolongation of the eschatological Sabbath to which is united the memory of the resurrection. Since (this) *Barnabas* lived at the crucial time when Emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138) adopted rigorous and repressive measures against the Jews, outlawing their religious observances and particularly their Sabbath-keeping, we checked to see if possibly Sunday observance made its first appearance at that time.

We found that both external pressures and internal needs encouraged many Christians at that time to *break radically with the Jews*. Externally, the existing *conflict* between the Jews and the empire made it *necessary* for Christians *to develop a new identity in order to avoid the repressive* and punitive measures (fiscal, military, political and literary) aimed at the Jews. Internally, the influence of the synagogue and of Judaeo-Christians who insisted on the *literal observance of certain Mosaic regulations*, prompted Christians to sever their ties with Judaism. To develop this new identity, many Christians not only assumed a *negative attitude toward the Jews as a people*, but also substituted characteristic Jewish religious observances such as Passover and the Sabbath with Easter-Sunday and the weekly Sunday. This action apparently would serve to make the Roman authorities aware that Christians liberated from Jewish religious ties represented for the empire irreproachable subjects.

Several indications emerged in the course of our study corroborating this hypothesis. We found, for instance, that with *Barnabas* began the development of a body of "Christian" literature characterized by what we have called an "*anti-Judaism* of differentiation." This found expression in a *negative reinterpretation* of the meaning and function of Jewish history and observances like the Sabbath.

We have shown that the devaluation of the Sabbath was accomplished in several ways. Many, like *Barnabas*,

1. emptied the Sabbath commandment of all temporal meaning and obligation by speculating on the superior symbology of Sunday as the eighth day.

(1) The latter was arbitrarily traced back to several references of the Old Testament where the number eight occurs and was variously interpreted as representing

(a) the eternal new world,

(b) the rest of the spirituals in the super-celestial world,

(c) perfection and spirituality,

(d) the Christian dispensation of grace,

(e) and the resurrection of Christ and of the believer.

Over against this exalted meaning of the eighth day, the Sabbath as the seventh day was,

1. degraded to represent the end of the present age,

2. this transitory world,

3. impurity and matter,

4. the dispensation of the Law,

5. and man's repose in the grave.

Some, like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, concerned to safeguard the consistency of God's nature and Law,

1. preferred to retain the Sabbath as an ecclesiastical and spiritual symbol (namely, perseverance in the service of God during the whole life and abstention from sin)

2. while at the same time denying its literal obligation.

3. Others, as reflected in the *Didascalia,* deprived the Sabbath of its commemorative value of creation by making Sunday

a. the symbol of the anniversary and renewal of the old creation.

Still others, like Justin, assumed the most radical position, reducing the Sabbath,

1. to a sign of divine reprobation imposed on the Jewish people on account of their wickedness.

In all these differing interpretations, one detects a common concern to invalidate the Sabbath in order to justify in its place Sunday observance. These polemic and often absurd arguments fabricated to justify and exalt Sunday at the expense of the Sabbath, substantiate our hypothesis that Sunday observance was introduced in a climate of controversy owing to an existing need to force a break with Judaism.

In the course of our investigation several concomitant factors emerged suggesting that this break with Judaism and with its characteristic festivities occurred first, and to a greater degree, in the Church of Rome. We found, for instance, that in Rome,

1. most Christian converts were of pagan extraction and experienced an earlier differentiation from the Jews than converts in the East.

2. The repressive measures adopted by the Romans against the Jews—particularly felt in the capital city—apparently encouraged the predominant Gentile membership of the Church of Rome to clarify to the Roman authorities their distinction from Judaism

a. by changing the date and manner of observance of characteristic Jewish festivals such as the Passover and the Sabbath, *which most Christians still observed*.

3. We found in fact that the Church of Rome took a definite stand against both festivities.

a. The Quartodeciman Passover was substituted by Easter-Sunday, apparently at the time of Hadrian (AD 117-138),

(1) as suggested by Irenaeus' reference to Bishop Sixtus (ca. AD 116-126)

(2) and by Epiphanius' statement regarding the origin of the controversy at about AD 135.

b. The sources attribute explicitly to the Bishop of Rome the role of pioneering and championing Easter-Sunday in order to avoid, as later stated by Constantine, "all participa-

tion in the perjured conduct of the Jews."

4. The close nexus existing between Easter-Sunday and weekly Sunday (the latter being viewed by many Fathers as an extension of the former) gives us reason to believe that both festivities originated contemporaneusly in Rome *because of the same anti-Judaic motivations*.

a. We found support for this conclusion in the fact that the Church of Rome rigorously enforced fasting on the Sabbath (a custom which apparently originated early in the second century as an extension of the annual Holy Saturday fast) to show, among other things, contempt for the Jews.

b. Similarly, in Rome the eucharistic celebration and religious assemblies were forbidden on the Sabbath, to avoid appearing to observe the day with the Jews.

c. Moreover, we found that in the second century only the Roman Bishop enjoyed sufficient ecclesiastical authority to influence the greater part of Christendom to accept new customs or observance (even though some churches refused to comply with his instruction).

The specific choice of Sunday as the new Christian day of worship, in contradistinction to the Jewish Sabbath, was suggested, however, not by anti-Judaism but by other factors. It appears that anti-Judaism caused a devaluation and repudiation of the Sabbath, thus creating the necessity to seek for a new day of worship, but we found the reasons for the specific choice of Sunday elsewhere.

1. The diffusion of the Sun-cults, which early in the second century caused the advancement of the day of the Sun to the position of first day of the week (the position held previously by the day of Saturn), oriented especially Christian converts from paganism toward the day of the Sun.

2. The choice of the day of the Sun, however, was motivated not by the desire to venerate the Sun-god on his day, but evidently by two different factors.

a. On the one hand, the existence of a rich Judaeo-Christian tradition which associated the Deity with the sun and light, apparently predisposed Christians favorably toward the day and symbolism of the sun.

b. 'On the other hand, Christians realized, spontaneously perhaps, that the venerable day of the Sun provided a fitting symbology that could efficaciously commemorate and explain to the pagan world two fundamental events of the history of salvation—creation and resurrection: "It is on this day that the Light of the World has appeared and on this day that the Sun of Justice has risen."[851]

c. Sunday, moreover, commemorated adequately both the beginning of creation—in contradistinction to the Sabbath, the memorial of its completion—and the resurrection of Christ, viewed as the beginning of the new creation.

d. We have shown that the motif of the resurrection, which initially was not regarded as exclusive or dominant, in time did become the preponderant reason for Sunday worship.

e. Lastly, Sunday was chosen inasmuch as, being the eighth day following the seventh-day Sabbath, it could express the continuation, the fulfillment and the supersedure of the Sabbath both temporally and eschatologically.

The picture then that emerges from the present investigation is that,

1. the origin of Sunday was the result of an interplay of Jewish, pagan and Christian factors.

a. Judaism, as we have seen, contributed negatively and positively to the rise of Sunday.

(1) The negative aspect is represented by the repressive measures adopted by the Romans against the rebelling Jews

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[851] Jerome, *In die dorninicae Paschae homilia,* CCL 78, 550, 1, 52.

(2) as well as by the Jewish hostility toward Christians, *both of which created the necessity of a radical Christian separation from Judaism*.

(3) This need for a differentiation was a determining factor in causing both the repudiation of the Sabbath and the exigency of a new day of worship.

(4) The positive contribution of Judaism to the rise of Sunday we have found possibly (?) in the psychological orientation toward Sunday derived from the sectarian Jubilees' calendar and especially in the Jewish apocalyptic speculations on the cosmic week.

(a) The latter made it possible to defend the choice of Sunday in Jewish and Jewish Christian circles, since as the eighth eschatological day representing the eternal new world, Sunday could be shown to be superior to the seventh terrestrial millennium symbolized by the Sabbath.

2. Paganism suggested to those Christians who had previously known the day and the cult of the sun, the possibility of adopting the venerable day of the Sun as their new day of worship, since its rich symbology was conducive to worship the True Sun of Righteousness, who on that day "divided light from darkness and on the day of the resurrection separated faith from infidelity."[852]

3. Christianity, lastly, gave theological justification to Sunday observance by teaching that the day commemorated important events such as,

a. the inauguration of creation,

b. the resurrection of Christ and

c. the eschatological hope of the new world to come.

It appears therefore that Jewish, pagan and Christian factors, though of differing derivation, merged to give rise to an institution *capable of satisfying the exigencies* of many Jewish and pagan converts.

In the light of these conclusions we ought to consider now those questions raised at the outset regarding the *theological legitimacy of Sunday observance* and its relevancy for Christians today. Our study has shown (we hope persuasively) that,

> the adoption of Sunday observance in place of the Sabbath did not occur in the primitive Church of Jerusalem by virtue of the authority of Christ or of the Apostles, but rather took place several decades later, seemingly in the Church of Rome, solicited by external circumstances.

The earliest theological justifications in fact, do not reflect an organic Biblical-apostolic teaching, but rather differing polemic argumentations. Even those Biblical *testimonia* which were drawn from the Old Testament (references to the numbers eight and one) to prove the legitimacy and superiority of Sunday over the Sabbath were mostly based on unwarranted criteria of Biblical hermeneutic, and consequently they were in time abandoned. This means, to put it bluntly, that *Sunday observance does not rest on a foundation of Biblical theology and/or of apostolic authority*, but on later contributory factors which we have endeavored to identify in our present study.

It is noteworthy (as we were able to show in chapter IV of our Italian dissertation)[853] that Sunday liturgy and rest were patterned *only gradually* after the Jewish Sabbath. In fact, the complete application of the Sabbath commandment of a bodily rest to Sunday was not accomplished before the fifth and

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[852] Dionysius of Alexandria, in *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi* 4, ed. J. B. Pitra, 1883, p. 421.

[853] The chapter is entitled "Jewish Patterns for the Christian Sunday." Basically this chapter is a comparison between the worship and rest structure of the Sabbath and that of Sunday. On the basis of the numerous parallelisms existing between the two days, it is shown that Sunday was gradually structured after the Sabbath, though innovations and modifications occurred. Owing to the limitations of space and time we were unable to incorporate this material in the present study.

sixth centuries.[854] This corroborates our contention that Sunday became the day of rest and worship not by virtue of an apostolic precept, but rather by ecclesiastical authority exercised particularly by the Church of Rome. In the past this explanation has been regarded virtually as an established fact by Catholic theologians and historians. Thomas of Aquinas, for instance, states unambiguously:

> "In the New Law the observance of the Lord's day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept, but by the institution of the Church and the custom of Christian people."[855]

Vincent J. Kelly, in his dissertation presented to the Catholic University of America, similarly affirms:

> "Some theologians have held that God likewise directly determined the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Law, that He Himself has explicitly substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. But this theory is now entirely abandoned. It is now commonly held that God simply *gave His Church the power to set aside whatever day* or days she would deem suitable as Holy Days. The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week, and in the course of time *added other days*, as holy days."[856]

This traditional claim, that the Church of Rome has been primarily responsible for the institution of Sunday observance, though widely challenged by recent Catholic (and Protestant) scholarship, has been amply substantiated by our present investigation. How does this conclusion affect the theological legitimacy and relevancy of Sunday observance? For those Christians who define their beliefs and practices exclusively by the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura,* to observe Sunday as the Lord's day not on the authority of the Scripture but of the tradition of the Church, is a paradoxical predicament. As well stated by John Gilmary Shea,

> "Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the Church, has no good reasons for its Sunday theory, and ought logically to keep Saturday as the Sabbath."[857]

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[854] Earlier traces can be found in Tertullian, *De oratione* 23; *Syriac Didascalia* 13; Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos* 91, *PG* 23, 1169C. Beginning with Ephraem Syrus (p. 198, note 870) the equation of Sunday with the Sabbath becomes explicit. Jerome (p. 192, note 851; ca. AD 342-420) compares Jewish Sabbath-keeping with Christian Sunday observance: "They [the Jews] performed no service works on the Sabbath, we do not on the Lord's day"; ef. Pseudo-Jerome, *Epistola* 3, *PL* 33, 225; Caesarius of Arles (ca. AD 470-542) uses the so called *"quanto magis—how* much more" formula which was later repeated countless times: "If the wretched Jews observed the Sabbath with so much devotion to the extent of abstaining from all earthly work, how much more Christians on the Lord's day must devote themselves only to God" *(Sermo* 13, 3-4, *CCSL* 103, 1 p. 68); Martin of Braga, *Dc correctione rusticorum* 18, defines in details the agricultural activities forbidden on Sunday. For a study on the casuistic of Sunday rest, see M. Zalba, "De conceptu operis," *Periodica* 52 (1963): 124-163; H. Huber, *Geist und Buchstabe der Sonntagsruhe,* 1958, p. 117f; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* pp. 167-173.

[855] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 1947, II, Q. 122 Art. 4, p. 1702.

[856] Vincent J. Kelly, *Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations,* Catholic University of America Press, 1943, p. 2; Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra,* trans. William J. Gibbons, Paulist Press, 1961, p. 76, "The Catholic Church has decreed for many centuries that Christians observe this day of rest on Sunday, and that they be present on the same day at the Eucharist Sacrifice"; John Gilmary Shea, "The Observance of Sunday and Civil Laws for Its Enforcement," *The American Catholic Quarterly Review* 8 (Jan. 1883): 139: "The Sunday, as a day of the week set apart or obligatory public worship of Almightly God, to be sanctified by a suspension of all servile labor, trade, and worldly avocations and by exercises of devotion, *is purely a creation of the Catholic Church*"; Martin J. Scott, *Things Catholics Are Asked About,* 1927, p. 136: "Now the Church…instituted, by God's authority, Sunday as the day of worship."

[857] John Gilmary Shea (p. 194, note 856), p. 152.

Avram: *Sola Scriptural* is Latin for 'only Scripture.' This was the rallying cry of the Protestant Reformers against the Catholic Church because of the many perverse theological doctrines that the Catholic Church practiced (e.g. the sale of 'indulgences,' which is the *buying* of one's forgiveness for sins, which was a widespread abuse during the later Middle Ages). In other words, the Reformers tried to base their Christian belief and theology, and therefore, their practice of Christianity, upon God's Word and God's Word only, which is the biblical and godly thing to do, so, with Sunday, Protestantism is caught in a theological bind because there is no Scriptural basis or justification for the day—the Reformers ignorantly accepted Sunday as bibli-

A dilemma, however, exists also for the Roman Catholic Church, inasmuch as she has traditionally enjoined Sunday observance by invoking the authority of the Sabbath commandment. Pope John XXIII, for instance, in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961) emphasizes the social and religious obligation of Sunday observance by appealing explicitly to the Sabbath precept. He states:

> "In order that the Church may defend the dignity with which man is endowed, because he is created by God and because God has breathed into him a soul to His own image, she has never failed to insist that the third commandment: 'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day,' be carefully observed by all."[858]

This justification of Sunday observance on the basis of the Sabbath commandment raises important theological questions: How is it possible to maintain that the Sabbath "has been fulfilled and *abolished* in Jesus,"[859] and yet at the same time, enjoin Sunday observance by appealing to the same Sabbath commandment? Moreover, how can the fourth commandment (third according to Catholic reckoning) be legitimately applied to Sunday, when it is the seventh, and not the first day, that the commandment demands to keep holy? C. S. Mosna, conscious of this dilemma, in the conclusive remarks of his dissertation proposes that "it would be better to renounce seeking a foundation for Sunday rest in the ancient Sabbath precept."[860]

On what ground, then, can Sunday rest be defended? Mosna finds a "fundamental reason" in the fact that the Church,

> "influenced Constantine's decision to make Sunday a day of rest for the whole empire, and this undoubtedly, in order to give to the Lord's day a preeminent place above the other days." Therefore, Mosna argues that the Church "can claim the honor of having granted man a pause to his work every seven days."[861]

This explanation harmonizes well with the traditional claim that Sunday observance "is purely a creation of the Catholic Church."[862] But if Sunday rest is an ecclesiastical-imperial institution, how can it be enjoined upon Christians as a divine precept? What valid ground can this provide to enable theologians to reassess the meaning and function of the Lord's day for Christians today? One can hardly hope to cope wth the widespread profanation of the Lord's day merely by invoking ecclesiastical authority without providing an adequate theological rationale.

Some argue that a theological justification for Sunday rest is provided by the demands of worship. C. S. Mosna, for instance, asserts that,

> "an essential theological motivation to support resting on Sunday is the fact that this is absolutely indispensable to provide the material time for worship on the Lord's day and to favor its conditions."[863]

That the interruption of work is a prerequisite to worship, is an axiomatic truth, but is a Christian to

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cally correct, just as they did Easter and Christmas, and the 'doing away with' of the Law of Moses.

[858] Pope John XXIII (p. 194, note 856), p. 76; John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan, trans. *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests,* 1958, p. 404: "'Thou shall do no work on it, says the Lord, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates,' Ex. 20:10. These words teach us, in the first place, to avoid whatever may interfere with the worship of God." The Catechism continues explaining in the light of the Sabbath commandment, which works are forbidden and which actions Christians should perform on Sunday.

[859] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 298.

[860] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della Domenica,* p. 367; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 298, shares the same conviction: "Therefore we must ask whether it would not perhaps be better if we were to refrain, so far as possible, from basing the hallowing of Sunday on the Sabbath commandment?"

[861] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della Domenica,* pp. 366-367.

[862] John Gilmary Shea (p. 194, note 856), p. 139.

[863] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della Domenica,* p. 367.

rest on the Lord's day merely to fulfill its worship obligations? If this were the exclusive reason, then why insist on the rest from work for the *entire* day, since the time spent in actual corporate or private worship amounts at most to one or two hours? In other words, if the free time that remains after the Sunday service has no theological significance, one cannot but question the legitimacy of demanding total rest from work on Sunday. In view of the fact that idleness is the beginning of all manner of vices, would it not be more appropriate after the Sunday service to urge Christians to return to their respective jobs or to engage in some purposeful activities? Moreover, if rest is to be taken only to ensure attendance to the Church service, does not the five-day working week already provide ample time to fulfill worship obligations, thus making the notion of Sunday rest altogether irrelevant and anachronistic to modern man?

Should we then conclude that Sunday is to be regarded as the *hour of worship* rather than *the holy day of rest to the Lord?* Apparently it is toward this direction that some Christian Churches are moving. The Catholic Church, for instance, as expressed by C. S. Mosna, "is timidly introducing the custom of hearing the Sunday Mass on Saturday night."[864] Mosna maintains that,

> "such practice is to be encouraged…in order to provide the Sunday blessings to those employees and workers who are not free because of their working schedule, but who as Christians, have the right to participate in the Sunday liturgy."[865]

Note however that the possibility of hearing the Sunday Mass on Saturday night is extended not only to those Catholics, who on Sunday would be impeded to fulfill the precept by unavoidable obligations, but also, as explicitly stated by the Archbishop of Bologna, to,

> "classes of persons such as skiers, hunters, holiday-makers, tourists, and others, who on festivities normally leave home at a time when no Mass is celebrated in the churches, and go to places where churches are either too far or non-existent."[866]

This extension of the prerogatives of Sunday to Saturday evening suggests the possibility of further perplexing developments. Martino Morganti points out, for instance, that,

> "the extension is already insufficient to accommodate all, because…Saturday evening is already fully week-end and for many the exodus out of the cities has already begun."[867]

Owing to the constant reduction of the working-week, it seems plausible to foresee then, that in the future the Catholic Church in her desire to minister to the largest number of vacationers, might anticipate the Sunday Mass precept even to Friday evening. Some radical Catholic theologians feel no

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[864] Ibid. p. 365.

[865] Loc. cit.

[866] *La Civiltà Cattolica* 115 (1964): 511; in the same issue *La Civiltà Cattolica* reports the communique of the Vatican Radio of June 12, 1964, where the following motivation is given for advancing the Sunday Mass to Saturday evening: "Among the considerations that have motivated this concession, we have taken into account the great and ever increasing development of the so-called week-end tourism, and of skiing sports, because the schedule of departure and return make ever so difficult the fulfillment of the Festive precept" (p. 94). Another reason mentioned is the scarcity of priests that makes it impossible for certain areas to have a Sunday Mass. Some Fathers requested during the Second Vatican Council both to define the holy day on the basis of the sunset to sunset principle in order to place the Saturday evening Mass within Sunday legal time and also to allow Christians prevented from hearing the mass on Sunday to fulfill the obligation during the week. The Commission on Liturgy gave "serious consideration—serio *considerata est"* to the proposal of advancing the Sunday Mass to Saturday evening, but the questions of the reckoning of the day and of the make-up of the Sunday Mass during the week, were referred to post-conciliar commissions *(Schema Constitutionis de Sacra Liturgia, Emendationes,* IX, 11). Note that in the decree, *Orientalium Ecclesiarurn,* approved by the Council "it is established that the proper time for fulfilling the precept is from the sunset of the eve till the end of Sunday or a feast day" (n. 15).

[867] Martino Morganti, "La Messa domenicale anticipata al sabato," in *La Domenica,* Liturgica-Nuova Serie, 1968, p. 217.

discomfort with this development, since they argue, as expressed by Th. Martens that,

> "the problem of the *"sliding-scivolarnento"* of Sunday must be resolved not on the basis of theological, historical or traditional principles, but…on the basis of a pastoral judgment that holds together the two extremes: the will of Christ and the situation of the present world. It appears to us that the Gospel and tradition do not specify the actual day of the Lord."[868]

To say the least, this interpretation not only reduces the obligation of the Lord's day to the attendance of a church service, but it even advocates the possibility of anticipating it in order to accommodate the social and recreational priorities of modern Christians. Does this view of the Lord's day as the hour of worship reflect correctly the Biblical teaching of the sanctification of the Sabbath, accomplished by renouncing the utilitarian use of its time? Hardly so, but should Sunday be viewed differently, namely as the embodiment of the theology and obligations of the Biblical Sabbath?

In the light of our investigation into the historical genesis and initial theological basis of Sunday observance, we must reply, "No." We have shown that Sunday arose not as a divine precept demanding the sanctification of time, but as an ecclesiastical institution designed to force a differentiation from Jewish Sabbath-keeping. The very primitive theology of Sunday did not require *total* rest from work on Sunday. As stated by W. Rordorf,

> "until well into the second century we do not find the slightest indication in our sources that Christians marked Sunday by any kind of abstention from work."[869]

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[868] Th. Maertens, *Paroisse et Liturgie* 49 (1967): 193; cf. ibid. 46 (1964): 586; other Catholic theologians do not approve of the extension of the Sunday Mass to Saturday evening. P. Falsioni, for instance, has repeatedly denounced this concession as "the death certificate of Sunday" *(Rivista Pastorale Liturgica* 1967): 311, 229, 97-98; (1966): 549-551. The validity of the Sunday Mass precept has been contested in numerous Catholic studies. Some challenge its Biblical-theological basis; others its relevancy and the difficulty to reconcile the freedom of Christian worship with the obligatory nature of the precept; still others denounce the formalism that the precept generates. An excellent survey of the various arguments and solutions is provided by the special issues of *Lumiere et Vie* 58 (1962), and of *La Maison-Dieu* 83 (1965); cf. ibid. 124 (1975). On the basis of the distinction made by the Commission on Liturgy of the II Vatican Council between the Sunday assembly and the participation at the Eucharistic celebration, Morganti proposes an interesting solution. He maintains that the Sunday assembly cannot be transferred and must take place on Sunday. The believers, who for valid reasons, are unable to attend the service can be dispensed from the assembly, but not from the Eucharist. The absentees, however, can fulfill the latter by participating in a Eucharistic celebration during the week (fn. 18, pp. 223-224). This development, to say the least, creates a striking dichotomy between assembly and Eucharist, besides providing a subtle rationale to justify the absence from the former and the transference of the obligations of the latter. One wonders, what is left of the Sunday precept? It is interesting to notice, by way of contrast, that W. Rordorf, a Calvinist, argues that the Lord's Supper is the very *raison d'etre* of Sunday worship: "If we do not celebrate any Lord's Supper on Sunday, we have basically no right to call Sunday the 'Lord's day' (or *dimanche domenica),* for the very thing which should make it the Lord's day, namely the Lord's Supper, is lacking" *(Sunday,* pp. 305-306). Rordorf's argument derives from his contention that the Lord's Supper was initially celebrated exclusively on Sunday, and thus, it was the core of Sunday worship. While it is true that the Eucharist later became the essence of Sunday worship, we have shown that this was not the case in New Testament times. The rite was then celebrated at *indeterminate* times, and apparently, within the context of a supper meal.

[869] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 157; see p. 194, note 854.

Avram: Clarification on note numbering in Bacchiocchi's book: there's a redundancy in note numbers 17, 18 and 19 in this chapter (Chapter X) of the book. Therefore, this current note of W. Rordorf, correctly numbered in this paper, is actually seen as footnote #17 in the book. This 'mis-numbering' continues throughout the rest of the book's chapter. In other words,

Note 17 on p. 314 of the book is correct.

Note 18 on p. 314 of the book is correct.

Note 19 on p. 315 of the book is correct.

Note 17 on p. 316 of the book should be note 20. (Continued on next page)

The resurrection of Christ, which in time became the dominant reason for Sunday observance, initially was commemorated by a common gathering for worship (Justin, I *A pology* 67) and not by a whole day of rest.

Should not, however, the commemoration of Christ's resurrection constitute a valid justification for consecrating Sunday time to the service of God and of mankind? While this may appear as a worthy motivation, nevertheless it does rest entirely on a subjective interpretation. By virtue of the same reasoning one could defend the worthiness of Thursday, Friday or Saturday as days of rest, since on these days occurred, respectively, Christ's betrayal, death and burial, but where is it stated that those days associated with significant events of Christ's life are to be observed weekly by abstaining from work?

We have shown, for instance, that though Christ's resurrection is greatly exalted in the New Testament, there is no hint suggesting that the event is to be commemorated at a specific time. The very Lord's Supper, which in time became the essence of Sunday worship, initially was celebrated at *indeterminate* times and commemorated Christ's death and *parousia* rather than His resurrection. According to Pauline teaching, the believer is to honor Christ's resurrection existentially, namely by walking after baptism "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12-13).

When later the resurrection became the predominant reason for Sunday observance, even then no attempt was made to make this event the theological basis for total rest on that day. On the contrary, an appeal was made to the Sabbath commandment. Ephraem Syrus (ca. AD 350), to cite an example, urges Christians to rest on Sunday by invoking the Sabbath commandment:

> "The Law ordains that rest be granted to slaves and animals, in order that slaves, serving girls and workers may cease from work."[870]

Note 18 on p. 317 of the book should be note 21.

Note 19 on p. 317 of the book should be note 22.

Note 20 on p. 317 of the book should be note 23.

Note 21 on p. 318 of the book should be note 24.

Note 22 on p. 319 of the book should be note 25.

Note 23 on p. 319 of the book should be note 26.

Note 24 on p. 319 of the book should be note 27.

Note 25 on p. 320 of the book should be note 28.

Note 26 on p. 320 of the book should be note 29.

I've listed this for those who might have the book and want to check and compare the notes in the book and this paper. In other words, those having the book, and also, this single chapter that I've compiled, will see that note 17 on p. 316 of the book should actually be note 20, etc.

[870] Ephraem Syrus, *Hymni et sermones,* ed. T. J. Lamy, T, 1882, pp. 543-544; for other references, see p. 194, note 854.

Avram: Because Bacchiocchi wasn't walking in Torah he didn't realize that God had already set aside a day to honor the resurrection: it's called First Sheaf/Fruits and always occurs on the Sunday of Passover week, the day when Yeshua was first seen alive from the dead. Interesting to note, though, is that this day is not a holy day, which means that, as great as the appearance of Yeshua from the dead was, Passover, which speaks of His death (and our salvation by it), is what God wants us to center on. Again, even though Yeshua was seen on that Sunday, nowhere in Scripture is His resurrection day or time given. In other words, Yeshua could have risen on Saturday late afternoon, which would correspond to the time on Thursday when He died, or Saturday night, or Sunday early morning before anyone came to the Tomb.

The reason why many think that Yeshua was crucified on Friday night is because the Gospels speak of the Day of Preparation and the Sabbath drawing near (Mt. 27:62; Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:54; Jn. 19:14, 31, 42), but in Mark 15:42-46, v. 42, it states: 'And when evening *had already come*, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath' (NASB). The verse should be translated: 'And when the *evening* of Preparation Day came' (which is Thursday night). Why?

Note that it was *already* evening and they are calling it *still* Preparation Day, but if the evening of Friday had already come it would have been the 7th day Sabbath. At *this* time, Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the

The law to which Ephraem refers is obviously that of the Sabbath, since prior to Emperor Leo the Thracian (AD 457-474) no imperial law proscribed agricultural work on Sunday.[871]

The fact that Sunday became a day of rest, not by virtue of its historical genesis or theological meaning, but rather by absorbing gradually the prerogatives of the Sabbath, makes it virtually impossible to construct a valid theological basis to enjoin rest on Sunday. Some may wish to solve this dilemma by altogether divorcing *rest* from *worship*, thus retaining Sunday exclusively as the *hour of worship*. W. Rordorf, who leans toward this solution, asks, "whether it is, in fact, an ideal solution for the day of rest and the day of worship to coincide."[872] He prefers to assign to Sunday an exclusive worship function, which finds its fulfillment when the community gathers together to partake of the Lord's Supper and to hear the preaching of God's Word. Having fulfilled their worship obligations, Christians should feel free to spend the rest of the day engaged in any type of work or legitimate activity.

Does this proposal contribute to solving, or to compounding, the problems associated with Sunday observance in our time? Does not this provide Christians with a rational justification for spending most of their Sunday time either in making money or in seeking pleasure? Is this what Sunday observance is all about? To divorce worship from rest, regarding the latter as non-essential to Sunday observance, it means to misunderstand the meaning of the Biblical commandment, which ordains the consecration not of a weekly *hour* of worship, but of a *whole day* of interruption of work out of respect for God. Undoubtedly, for some Christians, the reduction of Sunday observance to an hour of worship is unacceptable, but our study has shown that both the historical genesis and the theological basis of Sunday observance offer little help to encourage the consecration of the *total* Sunday time to the Lord.

Is there a way out of this predicament? The proposal which we are about to submit may at first appear radical to some, but if it were accepted by Christians at large it could indeed revitalize both the worship and the rest content of the Lord's day. Since our study has shown that Sunday observance lacks the Biblical authority and the theological basis necessary to justify the total consecration of its time to the Lord, we believe that such an objective can be more readily achieved by educating our Christian communities to understand and experience the Biblical and apostolic meaning and obligation of the seventh-day Sabbath. We are not here proposing to reproduce, *sic et simpliciter,* the rabbinical model of Sabbath-keeping, which the Lord Himself rejected, but rather to rediscover and restore those permanent interpretative categories, which make the Sabbath God's holy day for the Christian today.

We cannot here survey the theological thematic development of the Sabbath in redemptive history and its relevancy for the Christian today. The most we can do in our closing remarks is to emphasize the

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body of Yeshua. Pilate checks with the centurion to see if Yeshua is dead, and after ascertaining that He was dead, grants Joseph's request. It's late evening now, which, according to a Friday crucifixion would make it Friday night, which means that the 7th day Sabbath had already begun.

After leaving Pilate, Joseph *buys fine linen* (v. 46). If this were Friday night it would already be the beginning of the 7th day Sabbath–where in Jerusalem would Joseph have been able to buy linen? All the clothes' shops would have been closed for the Sabbath, but if it were Thursday night, which is the time when Preparation Day actually begins, and what Mark is saying, Joseph could buy whatever he wanted, especially as the Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread, an annual holy Sabbath day (Lev. 23:6-7), would have ended at the beginning of dark on Thursday night (i.e. Preparation Day). Then Joseph, after having bought the linen, could wrap Yeshua's body in it and place Him in the tomb, not on Friday night (the 7th day Sabbath), but on Thursday night, for it would be the beginning of the Day of Preparation, as Mark points out.

For those that think that Yeshua died on Wednesday night, as I used to think, please realize that it was just before or on Preparation Day that He was taken down from the tree, and the designation Preparation Day is never used for the day before the Passover, and that the one time that three days and three nights are spoken of (Mt. 12:40) is more than offset and clarified by numerous other cites in the Gospels. For more on this ask for my article, *The Third Day.*

[871] Leo the Thracian justifies the prohibition of agricultural work on Sunday by appealing to the Jewish hallowing of the Sabbath. Cf. T. Zahn, *Geschichte des Sonntag,* 1878, p. 77, note 44.

[872] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 299.

basic difference between Sabbath and Sunday. While the aim of the latter, as we have seen, is the fulfillment of a worship obligation, the objective of the former is the sanctification of time. The main concern and obligation of the Sabbath commandment is for man to rest on this day (Ex. 20:10; 34:21). What is involved in the Sabbath rest? If it were only inactivity or abstentionfrom work, we would question the value of such benefit. Is there anything more depressing than having nothing to do, waiting for the Sabbath hours to pass away in order to resume some meaningful activity?

In the Sabbath commandment, however, "rest" is qualified. It is defined not as a frivolous good time, but as a "solemn rest, holy to the Lord" (Ex. 31:15; 16:23, 25; 35:2; Lev. 23:3). Though the Sabbath is given to mankind (Ex. 16:29; 31:14; Mark 2:27), nevertheless it belongs to Yahweh (Ex. 16:23, 25; 20:10; 31:15; Lev. 23:3). Repeatedly God calls the day "my Sabbaths,"[873] undoubtedly because He "rested…blessed and hallowed it" (Gen. 2:2-3). This particular manifestation of the presence and blessings of God constitutes the ground and essence of the holiness of the Sabbath. The rest of the Sabbath is then not self-centered relaxation—a time when all wishes and desires can be fulfilled without restraint—but rather a divinely-centered rest—a time when a person is freed from the care of work, to become free for God and fellow-beings and thus finds genuine refreshment in this freedom.

The physical relaxation which the rest of the Sabbath provides may be regarded as the preliminary preparation necessary to experience the totality of the divine blessings of creation-redemption which the day commemorates. The themes of the Sabbath spell out and encompass the unfolding of the *Historia salutis* (redemptive history): creation (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17), liberation (Deut. 5:15; 15:12-18; Lev. 25:2-54), covenant-consecration (Ex. 31:13, 14, 17; Ezk. 20:20), redemption (Luke 4:18-21; 13:12, 16; John 5:17; 7:23; Matt. 11:28; 12:5-6; Heb. 4:2-3, 7) and eschatological restoration (Is. 66:23; Heb. 4:11). By evoking and commemorating God's saving activities, the Sabbath provides the believer with a concrete opportunity to accept and experience the total blessings of salvation.

The believer who interrupts his daily routine and dedicates 24 hours to his Creator and Redeemer, as K. Barth puts it, "participates consciously in the salvation provided by Him [God]."[874] In other words, the stopping of one's *doing* on the Sabbath represents the experience of *being* saved by God's grace. It is an expression of renunciation to human attempts to work out one's salvation and an acknowledgment of God as the author and finisher of our salvation.[875]

Chrysostom rebuked the Christians of his day, saying: "You appropriate for yourselves this day, sanctified and consecrated to the listening of spiritual discourses, for the benefit of your secular concerns."[876] Such warning is particularly applicable today, when Christians, owing to the greater availability of time and money, are tempted to question the sacredness of the Sabbath commandment and endeavor to rationalize away its obligations. In our consumer society where time has become a good that many use exclusively for selfish gratification, a rediscovery of the obligations and blessings of Sabbath-keeping could act as a brake or a dike against that insatiable greediness and selfishness of modern humans. The Christian who on the Sabbath day is able to detach himself from his work and concerns, dedicating the day to the glory of God and to the service of his fellow beings, demonstrates in a tangible way how divine grace has delivered him from his self centeredness and has enabled him genuinely to love God and people.

Resting on the Sabbath is an expression of our complete commitment to God. Our life is a measure of time and the way we spend it is indicative of where our interests lie. We have no time for those toward whom we feel indifferent, but we make time for those whom we love. To be able to withdraw on the

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[873] Ex. 31:13; Lev. 19:3, 30; Is. 56:4; 58:13; Ezk. 20:12; 22:26; 23:38; 44:24; Neh. 9:14.

[874] K. Barth, *Church Dogmaticis,* 1961, III, p. 50.

[875] Calvin emphasizes this meaning of the Sabbath rest, saying: "Under the rest of the seventh day, the divine Law giver meant to furnish the people of Israel with a type of the spiritual rest by which the believers were to cease from their works and allow God to work in them…We must rest entirely in order that God may work in us *(Institutes,* 1972, II, pp. 339-340).

[876] Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi homilia* 1, Pa 49, 364. 4; Neh. 9:14.

seventh day from the world of things to meet the invisible God in the quiet of our souls, means to love God totally. "For the Jews," as well expressed by P. Massi,

> "rest was an act of worship, a type of liturgy. This enables us to understand why a series of ritualistic prescriptions were developed to regulate the liturgy of rest."[877]

A. M. Dubarle points out that while the offering of the first-fruits or firstborn animals had the effect of freeing all the rest after that for secular use, in the case of time the situation was the opposite:

> "The offering of time, accomplished on the last day of the week, and not on the first as was the case in the offering of the material goods, had the effect of consecrating the whole time, inasmuch as it tended toward the day of meeting with God."[878]

What does the consecration of the Sabbath time to God actually involve? A superficial reading of the rabbinical restrictions prevailing at the time of Christ may give the impression that the Sabbath was a day of rigorous inactivity. The pious Jews, however, dedicated their Sabbath time to study, prayer, meditation, and acts of mercy. Religious services were conducted in the synagogue on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon, for the reading of the Law and of the Prophets, and for their exposition. We have found, moreover, that Christ provides the supreme example of how to consecrate the Sabbath time to God. He used the Sabbath time to listen to, and to proclaim, the word of God:

> "He went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read…He was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teachings" (Luke 4:16, 31-32; cf. 13:10).

Furthermore, we noticed that Jesus intensified on the Sabbath His redemptive ministry on behalf of man's physical and spiritual needs, in order to make the day the fitting memorial of the salvation-rest available to all that come to Him (Matt. 11:28). According to the example of Jesus, then, the Sabbath for the Christian today is a time to experience the blessings of salvation by worshiping God and by providing the warmth of fellowship and service to needy fellow beings.

Sabbath observance in this cosmic age can well be for modern man the fitting expression of a cosmic faith, a faith which embraces and unites creation, redemption and final restoration; the past, the present and the future; man, nature and God; this world and the world to come; a faith that recognizes God's dominion over the whole creation and over human life by consecrating to Him a portion of time; a faith that fulfills the believer's true destiny in time and eternity; a faith that would treat the Lord's day as God's *holy day* rather than as a *holiday*.

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[877] P. Massi, *La Domenica,* 1967, p. 366.

[878] A. M. Dubarle, "La Signification religieuse du sabbat dans la Bible," *Le Dimanche,* Lex Orandi 39, 1965, p. 52.

Chapter XI

APPENDIX: PAUL AND THE SABBATH

In the Sabbath-Sunday debate three Pauline texts have been traditionally cited (Col. 2:14-17; Gal. 4:8-11; Rom. 14:5-6) to prove that Paul regarded the Old Testament Sabbath as no longer binding, especially for Gentile Christians. Of the three references, Colossians 2:14-17 has been quoted far more extensively than the other two inasmuch as the passage explicitly speaks of Christ's nailing something to the cross (2:14) and warns against paying heed to regulations (*dogmata*) with regard to several things, such as "a Sabbath" (2:16). In view of the importance attributed to these statements we shall conduct our enquiry into Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath by focusing our investigation primarily on Colossians 2:14-17, without neglecting the information provided by Galatians 4:8-11 and Romans 14:5-6.

The Traditional Interpretation of Colossians 2:16-17

A brief historical survey of the interpretation of Colossians 2:16-17 may serve to make us aware that the passage has been quite consistently explained to mean that the Sabbath is a Jewish institution abolished by Christ on the cross. In a fragment attributed to Irenaeus, Colossians 2:16 is quoted to discourage Christians from observing "feasts and fasts" which "are displeasing to the Lord."[879] Tertullian uses this passage to argue against Marcion, that the Law does not derive from another God, but is the shadow belonging to the body, Christ. He asks Marcion:

> "Now tell me, Marcion, what is your opinion of the apostle's language when he says, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, which is a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ?" (Col. 2:16) We do not now treat of the Law, further than (to remark) that the *apostle here teaches clearly how it has been abolished,* even by passing from shadow to substance—that is, from figurative types to reality, which is Christ."[880]

Though Tertullian openly states that his intention is not to discuss the question of the Law, yet in his incidental remark he explicitly reveals his understanding of the text when he says, "the apostle here (Col. 2:16) teaches clearly how it (the Law) has been abolished."

Augustine continues this tradition, applying Colossians 2:16-17 more specifically to the Sabbath. He quotes the passage to show that Christ was not guilty when he broke the Sabbath, because "He was removing the shadows."[881]

Luther took up this tradition saying of Colossians 2:16-17 "Here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name

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[879] Irenaeus, *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus* 38, *ANF* I, 575.

This chapter is the *Appendix: Paul and the Sabbath* in Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 339-369. Avram has made it Chapter XI, to help categorize it.

[880] Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5, 19, *ANF* III, 471, 472 (emphasis supplied).

[881] Augustine, *Sermons on New Testament Lessons* 86, 3, *NPNF* 1st, VI, 515-516: "The Lord did break the Sabbath, but was not therefore guilty. What is that I have said, 'He brake the Sabbath'? He, the Light had come, He was removing the shadows. For the Sabbath was enjoined by the Lord God, enjoined by Christ Himself, who was with the Father, when that Law was given; it was enjoined by Him, but in shadow of what was to come. 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come.' He had now come whose coming these things announced. Why do the shadows delight us?"

and called it a bygone shadow because the body, which is Christ himself, has come."[882]

Calvin similarly understood Colossians 2:16 to mean that "Christ has by his death abolished…the observance of rites."[883] He explains that "the reason why he frees Christians from the observance of them is that they were *shadows* at a time when Christ was still, in a manner, absent."[884] Calvin holds that the distinction between days,

> "was suitable for the Jews, that they might celebrate strictly the days that were appointed, by separating them from others. Among Christians, however, such a division has ceased."[885]

This interpretation, which views the Sabbath in the Colossians passage as a bygone ceremonial shadow of the Jewish dispensation, abolished by Christ on the cross, has come down to our time as the most predominant interpretation. The mention of a few significant scholars will suffice to establish this fact. J. Daniélou, for instance, declares:

> "St. Paul proclaimed the end of the Sabbath (Rom. 14:6). If the Sabbath was to die little by little, this was because it was only a provisional institution and a figure of the world to come. Now this world has come: the figure need only disappear: 'Let no one, then, call you to account for what you eat or drink, or in regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ' (Col. 2:16)."[886]

W. Robertson Nicoll similarly maintains that "the unmistakable teaching" of Colossians is that "the obligation of the Jewish Sabbath has passed away as much as sacrifices and circumcision."[887] Paul K. Jewett likewise comments that

> "Paul's statement (Col. 2:16) comes as near to a demonstration, as anything could, that he taught his converts they had no obligation to observe the seventh-day Sabbath of the Old Testament."[888]

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[882] Ibid., p 203. Martin Luther, "Wider die himmlischen Propheten," in his *Sammtliche Schrif ten,* ed. by Johann Georg Walch, 1890, vol. XX, col. 148. In vol. IX, col. 375 we find a similar statement: "The New Testament tells the Christian that every day is a day of celebration…That is why Paul once in a while calls to the attention of the Christians that they are not bound to any day (Gal. 4:10-11). The same is even clearer in Colossians 2:16-17. We see now that the Sabbath is done away with and the people are free from it."

Avram: For why Gal. 4:10-11 doesn't speak of Mosaic Law or the Sabbath, see Slavery to the Law? Gal. 4:8-11.

[883] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians,* trans. John Pringle, 1948, p. 191.

[884] Ibid., p. 192.

[885] Loc. cit.

[886] J. Danièlou, *Bible and Liturgy,* p. 228; Merrill F. linger, "The Significance of the Sabbath," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123 (1966): 57, "Keeping new moons and Sabbaths, the unique and dominant feature of the Mosaic covenant of legalism—a pedagogue to conduct to Christ—is declared to be completely at variance with the gospel of grace (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-10; Heb. 4:4) now that Christ has come and given us His wonderful salvation."

Avram: Note how Danielou equates the Mosaic Covenant with legalism, something that is not an uncommon concept among Christians who don't seem to understand that there is a vast difference between God's holy Law and legalism.

[887] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Epistle to the Colossians,* The Expositor's Bible, 1908, p. 231; A. S. Peake, *The Epistle to the Colossians,* The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1942, p. 531, similarly comments on Col. 2:17, saying: "The Sabbath is placed on the same footing as the others, and Paul therefore commits himself to the principle that a Christian is not to be censured for its non-observance."

[888] P. K. Jewett, *The Lord's Day,* p. 45, fn. 20; William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon,* New Testament Commentary, 1965, p. 124, comments on the text by raising the following rhetorical question: "What justification could there be for imposing upon converts from the Gentile world the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, when the Bringer of eternal rest is urging every one to come unto him (Matt. 11:28-29;

C. S. Mosna concludes in a similar vein saying that,

> "according to this text (Col. 2:16-17)…the Colossians are in danger of losing their liberty by accepting the Sabbath precept…Among the prescriptions of the Law, even the Sabbath rest was to be abolished."[889]

The interpretation of W. Rordorf is essentially the same. On the basis of Galatians and Colossians, he defines Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath in the following terms:

> "With regard to Gentile Christians, he (Paul) absolutely refuses to countenance any longing eyes cast at the Old Testament Law: they are free from any observance of the Law…In particular there is never any question of them observing the Jewish Sabbath."[890]

These samplings of testimonies exemplify that Colossians 2:16-17 throughout Christian history has been interpreted quite consistently to mean that Paul regarded the Sabbath as an Old Testament typological institution fulfilled by Christ, and therefore, no longer binding on Christians. Since this interpretation has been "hallowed" by history, to submit the Colossians and related passages to a new critical scrutiny may appear as a pretentious undertaking. Yet, this is a service that needs to be rendered to test the validity of any inherited interpretation.

To ascertain Paul's understanding of the Sabbath (as well as of the Jewish festivities in general) particularly in the light of the crucial passage of Colossians 2:14-17, several questions need to be considered. Inasmuch as the warning regarding the observance of sacred days is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy" that the Apostle is refuting, we need,

1. to ascertain first of all what was the basic nature of the false teaching that unsuspectingly risked to "disqualify" (2:18) the Colossian believers?
2. Did the false teachers advocate exclusively a rigorous observance of the ordinances of the Mosaic Law?
   a. Are these to be identified with "the written document—*cheirographon*," which God through Christ "wiped out…removed, [and] nailed to the cross" (2:14)?
3. Can one legitimately infer from the passage that the observance of holy days, such as the Sabbath, is viewed by Paul as Mosaic ordinances "nailed to the cross"?
4. Is the Apostle advocating that Christians are released from all obligation to observe holy days?

We shall endeavor to answer these questions by briefly considering first,

1. the nature of the "Colossian heresy,"
2. secondly, what was nailed to the cross and,
3. lastly Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath and holy days.

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cf. Heb. 4:8, 14)?" This argument fails to convince because, as we have shown in Chapter II, Christ by fulfilling the Messianic typology of the Sabbath did not annul its function, but enriched it, making the day the fitting memorial of the blessings of salvation. Note, also, that if the Sabbath is "Jewish," so is Passover or Easter and Pentecost. Yet, have not all these feasts been taken over by Gentile Christians after changing their dates? Was a new date needed to express their fulfilment?

[889] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* pp. 184, 182.

[890] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 138; cf. also his article "Le Dimanche, jour du culte et jour du repos dans l'èglise primitive," *Lex Orandi* 39, 1965, p. 109, where he states: "The literal observance of the Sabbath…was only a shadow of things to come. Its fulfilment is now present in the person of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:17)"; the same view is expressed by P. Massi, *La Domenica,* pp. 22-23.

The Colossian Heresy

To establish the religious-historical background of the Colossian heresy is not an easy task, inasmuch as the cryptic allusions to such concepts as "tradition–*paradosis*" (2:8), "fullness–*pleroma*" (1:9; 2:9-10), "philosophy–*philosophia*" (2:8), "eating and drinking–*brosei, posei*" (2:16), "principalities and powers–*archai, exousiai*" (2:15), and "elements of the world–*stoicheia tou kosmou"* (2:8, 20), find correspondence both in "gnostic Judaism" and in "Hellenistic syncretism."[891] Both of these are in fact equally used by commentators to define the derivation of the *gnosis* of Colossae. For the purpose of our study, however, we need not enter into the debate regarding the ideological provenance of the Colossian "philosophy" (2:8). It will suffice to reconstruct the main outline of its teachings on the basis of the short quotations and catchwords cited by Paul in chapter 2 in the context of his admonition to the believers.

The false teaching, which Paul refutes in Colossians, is characterized by a *theological* and a *practical* error. Theologically, the Colossian "philosophy" (2:8) was competing with Christ for man's allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul, was man-made "tradition–*paradosis*" (2:8) and its object was to impart true "wisdom–*sophia*" (2:3, 23), "knowledge–*gnosis*" (2:2-3; 3:10), and "understanding–*sunesis*" (1:9; 2:2). To attain such knowledge Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15) and to "the elements of the universe–*ta stoicheia tou kosmou*" (2:8, 18, 20).

What precisely Paul meant by the latter phrase is still much debated. Some interpret "the *elements—stoicheia"* as the "elementary teachings about God belonging to this world," which were present in rudimentary form both in Judaism and paganism.[892] Others view them as "the basic elements of this world," particularly the earth, water, air and fire, from which it was thought all things derived.[893] Most

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[891] Ibid., p. 205. Among the interpreters who define the heresy of Colossae as a "gnosticizing Judaism" are: Jacques Dupont, *Gnosis: La Connaissance religieuse dans les èpêtres de S. Paul,* 1949, pp. 256, 489-93; E. Percy, *Die Problem der Kolsser und Epheserbriefe,* 1946, pp. 137-178; Joseph B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 1879, pp. 73-113; Stanislas Lyonnet, "Paul's Adversaries in Colossae," in *Conflict at Colossae,* ed. Fred O. Francis and Wayne A. Meeks, *SBL* Sources for Biblical Study 4, 1973, pp. 147-162.

On the other hand, Gunther Bornkamm, "The Heresy of Colossians," in *Conflict at Colossae,* p. 126, states categorically: "No doubt seems possible to me, however, on one point: The Colossian doctrine of the elements belongs to the ancient mythology and speculation of the Oriental Aeon-theology, which was widespread and active in Hellenistic syncretism;" cf. Ernst Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser,* 1930, pp. 3f.; M. Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, Epheser, An Philemon,* 1953, excursus on 2:8 and 2:23.

Others interpret the Colossian heresy as a syncretism of Jewish and Hellenistic elements; see Edward Lohse, *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossae and to Philemon,* 1971, pp. 115-116; Norbert Hugede, *Commentaire de l'Èpître aux Colossiens,* pp. 9, 143; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 136: "We are in fact, dealing with the possibility of a whole stream of syncretistic tradition in which Jewish-Christian material is inextricably interwined with material of Hellenistic and oriental provenance;" cf. Handley C. G. Moule, *Colossian Studies,* 1898, who defines the heresy as "an amalgam of Judaism and Gnosticism, in a wide reference of the latter word."

[892] See J. B. Lightfoot (p. 205, note 891), p. 178; E. de W. Burton, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians,* ICC 35, 1897, p. 247; C. F. D. Moule, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 1958, p. 92; W. M. L. DeWette, *Kurze Erklii rung der Brief an die Kolosser, an Philemon, an die Epheser und Philipper* 1847, p. 44; H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Galatians,* 1884, pp. 219-220. This view reflects the exegetical tradition of Tertullian, Jerome, Luther and Calvin. For references and discussion see Herold Weiss, "The Law in the Epistle to the Colossians," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972):294-295. In his doctoral dissertation on *The Law and the Elements of the World* (published 1964), A. J. Banstra argues that *stoicheja tou kosmou* denotes the powers of law and flesh which dominate man in this world; cf. J. Blinzer, in *Studiorum Paulinorum Con gressus Internationalis,* 1961-63, II, pp. 429-443.

[893] Gerhard Delling, "*stoicheion*," *TDNT* VII, p. 684, explains that this was the common understanding of the phrase by ordinary people. Therefore, he defines it as "that whereon the existence of this world rests, that which constitutes man's being." According to this view Paul would have alluded to the weak and impotent

modern exegetes, however, have adopted a personified interpretation of the *stoicheia* (especially on the basis of the parallel passage in Galatians 4:3, 9; cf. 3:19), identifying them with angelic mediators of the Law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2) and with pagan astral gods who were credited with control of the destiny of mankind.[894] To gain protection from these cosmic powers and principalities, the Colossian "philosophers" were urging Christians to offer cultic adoration to angelic powers (2:15, 18-19, 23) and to follow ritualistic and ascetic practices (2:11, 14, 16-17, 21-22). By that process one was assured of access to, and participation in, the divine "fullness–*pleroma*" (2:9-10, cf. 1:19). The *theological* error, then, basically consisted in interposing inferior angelic mediators in place of the Head Himself (2:9-10, 18-19).

The *practical* outcome of these theological speculations was the insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism. These consisted in "putting off the body of flesh" (2:11; apparently meaning withdrawal from the world);[895] rigorous treatment of the body (2:23); prohibition to either taste or touch certain kinds of foods and beverages (2:16, 21), and careful (not careful, but perverse) observance of sacred days and seasons—festival, new moon, Sabbath (2:16) (to justify salvation; "don't let anyone *judge* you"). Christians presumably were led to believe that by submitting to these ascetic practices they were not surrendering their faith in Christ, but rather they were receiving added protection and were assured of full access to the divine fulness. This may be inferred both from Paul's distinction between living "according to the elements of the universe" and "according to Christ" (2:8), and from the Apostle's insistence on the supremacy of the incarnate Christ. "In him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily" (2:9), therefore, Christians attain "the fulness–*pleroma*" of life not through the elements of the universe, but through Christ, "who is the head of all rule and authority" (2:10; cf. 1:15-20; 3:3).

On the basis of this bare outline, we can already establish that the Sabbath is mentioned in the passage not in the context of a direct discussion on the obligation of the Law, but rather in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices (which incorporated elements from the Old Testament, undoubtedly to provide a justification for their ascetic principles)[896] advocated by the Colossian "philosophers." We are not informed what type of Sabbath observance these teachers promoted, nevertheless, on the basis of their emphasis on scrupulous adherance to "regulations," it is apparent that the day was to be observed in a most rigorous and superstitious manner. It is possible, in fact, as we shall discuss later, that astrological beliefs attached to the day of Saturn made the observance of the day all the more superstitious.

If then, as is generally recognized, Paul in Colossians is refuting not the usual brand of Jewish or Jewish-Christian legalism, but rather a syncretistic "philosophy," which incorporated, among others, Jewish elements,[897] is it legitimate to use this passage to define Paul's basic attitude toward the Sab-

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elements which enslaved mankind in pre-Christian religion.

[894] Among the expositors on Colossians and Galatians who advocate a personified interpretation of the *stoicheia* are: Norbert Hugedè, A. B. Caird, F. F. Bruce, E. F. Scott, E. Lohse, H. Schlier, M. Dibelius, Beare, Conzelmann, C. Toussaint. See especially R. K. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* 1951, I, p. 173; H. Schlier, *Principalities and Powers in the New Testament,* 1961; D. E. H. Whitely, *The Theology of St. Paul,* 1964, p. 25.

[895] The phrase suggests the practice of the mystery cults when in the initiation rite the devotee removed his clothes and took a purificatory bath. For texts and discussion see E. Lohse (p. 205, note 891), p. 102. Apparently Paul's reply to those "philosophers," who insisted on circumcision as the true initiation (???), is that the true circumcision is not physical, but metaphorical, namely the surrender of the old life (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3, Eph. 2:11).

[896] A. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison,* 1976, p. 198, points out that the ascetic program advocated by the Colossian false teachers was "foreign to the Jewish mentality…Paul treats it as an offshoot of Judaism, but it was probably put together by Gentile Christians who looked to the Old Testament to provide the justification for their ascetic principles."

[897] In addition to the interpreters mentioned above (p. 205, note 891), several other authors recognize the syncretistic nature of the Colossian heresy. See E. F. Scott, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians,* 1948, p. 51: "Some of the practices he mentions are obviously Jewish; others would seem, just as clearly, to be of Pagan origin"; A. B. Caird (p. 206, note 896), pp. 160-163; H. A. A. Kennedy,

bath? Does Paul's condemnation of a perverted use of a religious observance constitute a valid ground to conclude that the Apostle releases all Christians from its obligation? More important still, does Colossians 2:16-17 actually imply that Paul thought and taught that Christians were no longer under obligation to observe any holy day? Before considering these questions we need to establish what role the Law plays in Paul's refutation of the Colossian heresy. Is the Apostle for instance referring to the moral and/or ceremonial law when he speaks of the "written document–*cheirographon*," which God "set aside, nailing it to the cross" (2:14)? This clarification will help us establish whether in Paul's mind the Sabbath is part of what was nailed on the cross.

What Was Nailed To The Cross?

To understand the legal language of Colossians 2:14 it is necessary, first of all, to grasp the arguments advanced by Paul in the preceding verses to combat the Colossian "philosophy." We noticed that false teachers were "beguiling" (2:4) Christians to believe that the observance of "regulations–*dogmata*" was needed in order to court the protection of those cosmic beings who allegedly could help them to participate in the completeness and perfection of the divinity. To oppose this teaching, Paul emphasizes two vital truths. First he reminds the Colossians that in Christ, and in Him alone, "the whole fulness of the deity dwells bodily" (2:9), and therefore, all other forms of authority that exist are subordinate to Him, "who is the head of all rule and authority" (2:10). Secondly the Apostle reaffirms that it is only in and through Christ that the believer can "come to the fulness of life" (2:10) because Christ not only possess the "fulness of deity" (2: 9), but also provides the fulness of "redemption" and "forgiveness of sins" (1:14; 2:10-15; 3:1-5).

In order to explain how Christ extends "perfection" (1:28; 4:12) and "fulness" (1:19; 2:9) to the believer, Paul, as Herold Weiss has persuasively shown, "does not make recourse to the Law, but to baptism."[898] This represents a significant variation, since the explanation of the significance of the Law is always an integral part of Paul's presentation of the Gospel. The fact then, that in the whole of Colossians 2, the "term 'Law' (*nomos*) is absent…from the controversy,"[899] corroborates what we said earlier, namely that the Colossian heresy was not based upon the usual Jewish legalism, but rather on an unusual (syncretistic) type of ascetic and cultic regulations (*dogmata*), which undermined the all-sufficiency of Christ's redemption.

To combat these false teachings Paul chose to extol the centrality of the crucified, resurrected and exalted Christ, explaining how Christian perfection is the work of God who extends to the Christian the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection through baptism (2:11-13). The benefits of baptism are concretely presented as the forgiveness of "all our trespasses" (2:13; 1:14; 3:13), which results in being "made alive" in Christ (2:13). The reaffirmation of the fulness of God's forgiveness, accomplished by Christ on the cross and extended through baptism to the Christian, constitutes indeed Paul's basic answer to those trying to attain to perfection by submitting to "regulations." To emphasize the certainty and fulness of divine forgiveness (already stated in 2:13), the Apostle utilizes in 2:14 a legal metaphor, namely that of God as a judge, who "wiped out…removed [and] nailed to the cross…the

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"Two Exegetical Notes on St. Paul," *The Expository Times* 28 (1916-1917): 303; Charles R. Erdman, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 1929, p. 73: "The Colossian heresy was essentially Jewish. However, there is no question that it had elements of an Oriental mysticism"; William Hendriksen (p. 203, note 888), pp. 123-124; Herold Weiss (p. 205, note 892), p. 304: "These practices were the expression of a religious syncretism." Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians, and Philemon,* New Century Bible, 1974, pp. 90-91; Charles Masson, *L'Epitre de St. Paul aux Colossiens,* 1950, pp. 130-134.

[898] Herold Weiss (p. 205, note 892), p. 305.

[899] E. Lohse (p. 205, note 891), p. 116; Weiss (p. 205, note 892), p. 307 similarly emphasizes: "I wish to… repeat what was said at the beginning: in the whole of the epistle the word *law* is not used at all. Not only that, but the whole significance of the Law, which appears unavoidable for Paul when he presents his gospel, is completely absent."

written document–*cheirographon*."

What did Paul mean by the *cheirographon* (a term used in antiquity in the sense of a "written agreement" or a "certificate of debt")?[900] Was he referring to the Mosaic Law with its ordinances (*tois dogmasin*), thus declaring that God nailed it to the cross? If one adopts this interpretation, there exists a legitimate possibility that the Sabbath could be included among the ordinances nailed to the cross. There are indeed certain authors who hold this view.[901] Besides the grammatical difficulties, [902] "it hardly seems Pauline," writes J. Huby, "to represent God as crucifying the 'holy' (Rom. 7:6)[903] thing that was the Mosaic Law."[904] Moreover, this view would not add to, but detract from Paul's argument designed to prove the fulness of God's forgiveness. Would the wiping out of the moral and/or ceremonial law provide to Christians the assurance of divine forgiveness? Hardly so. It would only leave mankind without moral principles. *Guilt is not removed by destroying law codes*.

Most commentators interpret the *cheirographon* either as the "certificate of indebtedness," resulting from our transgressions, or a "book containing the record of sin," used for the condemnation of mankind.[905] Both renderings, which are substantially similar, can be supported from rabbinic and apocalyptic literature. "In Judaism," as stated by E. Lohse, "the relationship between man and God was often described as that between a debtor and his creditor."[906] For example, a Rabbi said,

> "When a man sins, God writes down the debt of death. If the man repents, the debt is cancelled (i.e. declared invalid). If he does not repent, what is recorded remains genuine (valid)."[907]

In the *Apocalypse of Elijah* is found the description of an angel holding a book, explicitly called a

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[900] Cf. Moulton-Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament,* 1929, p. 687.

[901] F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul,* 1927, II, pp. 228-229, categorically defends this view. C. Masson (p. 207, note 897), p. 127, lists as advocators of this position Oltremare, Abbott, Haupt and Kittel.

[902] To justify this interpretation the phrase "*cheorographon tois dogmasin*" is translated "the document consisting in ordinances," but, Charles Masson (p. 207, note 897), p. 128, fn. 1, explains that "the grammatical justification for this construction is highly debatable…It should have by rule the preposition *en* (cf. v. 11) to say that the document "consisted in ordinances."

[903] Avram: I think Bacchiocchi means Romans 7:12, 14; not Rom. 7:6.

[904] J. Huby, *Saint Paul: les Èpîtres de la captivite,* 1947, p. 73. Charles Masson (p. 207, note 897), p. 128, mentions that for Schlatter, Huby and Percy, "the idea of the Law nailed on the cross with Christ would have been unthinkable for Paul." (Avram: I think Bacchiocchi means Rom. 7:12; not Rom. 7:6.)

[905] Charles Masson (p. 207, note 897), p. 128, holds that "one must admit with Schlatter, Dibelius, Lohmeyer, and Percy that the 'chirograph' is a certificate acknowledging the debt resulting from our transgressions. The image derives from a rabbinic concept: God—or his angels—record in the books the report of the good and evil actions of men. To this very day, in the prayer 'Avinu Malkenu,' prayer for the ten penitential days that begins the New Year, the Jews say: 'On account of Thy great mercy, erase all the documents that accuse us' (Dibelius, Lohmeyer, p. 116, n. 1, Str. Billerbeck)." Historically this view was held by Origen, *In Genesim homilia* 13, PG 12, 235; Augustine (quotes Chrysostom) *Contra Julianum* 1, 6, 26, PL 44, 658; *Super Epistola ad Colossenses* 2, lectio III. G. R. Beasley-Murray, "The Second Chapter of Colossians," *Review and Expositor* 70 (1973): 471: "The 'bond' is an I.O.U., a signed statement of indebtedness; if it applies to the Jew through his acceptance of the Law, it also applies to the Gentile who recognizes his obligation to what he knows of the will of God. It means, in the picturesque paraphrase of Moule, '*I owe obedience to God's will, signed Mankind*.'" The study of the usage of *cheirographon* in Jewish and Jewish-Christian sources has helped to clarify that the term was used to describe the "celestial book" where sins are recorded. The first inkling of this interpretation came over fifty years ago when P. Batiffol published *Les Odes de Salomon*, 1911, pp. 81-85. J. Danièlou found confirmation for Batiffol's suggestion in the *Gospel of Truth*. A. J. Banstra (p. 205, note 892), pp. 159, reaffirms that the *cheirographon* must be a book in which sins are recorded.

Avram: For the divine Book, see also Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; 139:16; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:8, 12, 15; 21:27; 22:18-19.

[906] E. Lohse (p. 205, note 891), P. 108.

[907] Tanhuma Midrash 140b; cf. SB III, p. 628.

cheirographon, in which the sins of the seer are recorded.[908] On the basis of these, and similar examples, it is quite obvious that the *cheirographon* is either a "certificate of sin-indebtedness" or the "record book of sins," but not the Law of Moses, since the latter, as Weiss points out, "is not a book of records."[909]

What Paul then is saying by this daring metaphor is that God has "wiped out…removed," and "nailed to the cross" through the body of Christ (which in a sense represents mankind's guilt), the *cheirographon,* the instrument for the remembrance of sin. The legal basis of this instrument was the "binding statutes–*tois dogmasin*" (2:14), but what God destroyed on the cross was not the *legal ground* (Law) for our entanglement into sin, but the *written record* of our sins.[910] By destroying the record of sins, God removed the possibility of a charge ever being made again against those who have been forgiven.[911]

This view is supported also by the clause "and this he has removed out of the middle–*kai auto erken ek tou mesou*" (2:14). It has been shown that "the middle" was the position occupied at the center of the court or assembly by the accusing witness.[912] In the context of Colossians, the accusing witness is the *cheirographon,* which God in Christ has erased and removed out of the court. One cannot fail to sense, how through this forceful metaphor, Paul is reaffirming the completeness of God's forgiveness provided through Christ on the cross. By destroying the *evidence* of our sins, God has also "disarmed the principalities and powers" (2:15), since it is no longer possible for them to function as the accusers of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). There is no need therefore for Christians to feel incomplete and to seek to participate in the fulness of the divinity *(pleroma)* through the "regulations–*dogmata*." Those who through baptism have died and have been made alive with Christ, can live now in the certainty of their

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[908] For text and discussion see A. J. Banstra (p. 205, note 892), pp. 159-160. Banstra argues, however, that the book recording the sins of men is mankind's flesh, which Christ took upon himself on the cross. Support for this view is derived from the *Gospel of Truth* where it says: "For this reason Jesus appeared, he took this book for himself. He was nailed to a cross of wood; he affixed the decree (*diatagma*) of the Father upon the cross" (Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha,* 1963, I, p. 237). The identification of the *cheirographon* with mankind's body of flesh, which Christ took on himself to the cross, was first proposed by O. A. Blanchette, *"Does the Chierographon of Col. 2:14 Represent Christ Himself?" Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961): 306-312.

[909] Herold Weiss (p. 205, note 892), p. 302: "It would seem to me that indeed *cheirographon* is to be interpreted in terms of the context provided by the *Apocalypse of Elijah*. In it a book containing a record of sin is used for the condemnation of mankind. This would mean that it is not correct to identify the *cheirographon* with the Law of Moses, which is not a book of records."

[910] Some interpret the phrase "*cheirographon tois dogmasin*" as "the Law with its legal demands." In support of this view the similar text of Ephesians 2:15 is cited where it says: "by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances–*ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin*." However, the similarity between the two is only apparent. In the first place the phrase "the law of commandments," which occurs in Ephesians, is not found in Colossians. Secondly, the dative in Ephesians "*en dogmasin*" is governed by "*en,*" thus expressing that the law was set out "in regulations." Such a preposition does not occur in Colossians. Lastly, the context is substantially different. While in Ephesians the question is how Christ removed what separated Jews from Gentiles, in Colossians it is how Christ provided full forgiveness. The former He accomplished by destroying "the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14—a possible reference to the wall that divided the court of the Gentiles from the Sanctuary proper, cf. Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5, 5, 2; 6, 2, 4) "by abolishing the law of commandments [set out] in regulations" (2:15). The latter, by utterly destroying "the written record of our sins, which because of the regulations was against us." E. Lohse (p. 205, note 891), p. 109, rightly points out that "the words 'because of the regulations' stand first in a position of emphasis in order to call special attention to the *legal basis* for the certificate's witness against us" (emphasis supplied). In Hellenistic Judaism the commandments of God are often called "regulations–*regulations*"–3 Macc. 1:3, "the ancestral commandments–*dogmaton*; cf. 4 Macc. 10:2; Josephus, *Antiquities* 15, 136; *Contra Apionem* 1, 42.

[911] Isaiah 43:25 provides a similar promise: "I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

[912] The legal position of the "middle" is present in the New Testament in texts such as Mark 3:3; 9:36; Acts 4:7. The expression occurs repeatedly in Greek juridical texts; see discussion in Norbert Hugedè (p. 205, note 891), p. 140.

redemption and forgiveness. Therefore, the powers and principalities need no longer concern them.

We have seen that in this whole argument, the Law, as stated by Weiss, "plays no role at all."[913] Any attempt, therefore, to read into the *cheirographon* a reference to the Sabbath, or to any other Old Testament ordinance, is altogether unwarranted. The document that was nailed to the cross contained not moral or ceremonial laws, but rather the record of our sins. Is it not true, even today, that the memory of sin can create in us a sense of incompleteness? The solution to this sense of inadequacy, according to Paul, is to be found not by submitting to a system of "regulations–*dogmata*," but by accepting the fact that on the cross God has blotted out our sins and granted us full forgiveness. We can conclude, then, by saying that Colossians 2:14 reaffirms the essence of the Gospel—the Good News that God has nailed on the cross the record and the guilt of our sins—but it has nothing to say about the Law and the Sabbath.

Paul's Attitude Toward The Sabbath

Having refuted the *intellectual* speculations of the Colossian "philosophy" by reaffirming the supremacy of Christ and the fulness of His redemption (vv. 8-15), Paul now turns to their *practical* consequences, dealing explicitly with certain features of their religious practices:

> [16]"Therefore, let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. [17]These are *only* a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." (Avram: the word 'only' is not in most English translations; in other words, Paul is not denigrating the *shadow*, but contrasting it with the reality).

Since in this admonition the Sabbath is singled out as one of the religious practices which "are a shadow of what is to come," it has been generally concluded that "here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a bygone shadow because the body, which is Christ himself, has come."[914] To test the validity of this traditional interpretation, several questions need to be considered:

1. Are the practices (including the Sabbath?) advocated by this fastidious clique to be regarded as strictly Mosaic prescriptions, or as exaggerated puritanical teachings deriving from a syncretistic ideology?
2. Is the Apostle condemning abstinence from food and drink as well as the use of sacred days and seasons as such, or is he warning against the wrong use made of these?
3. What kind of Sabbath observance did the false teachers advocate?
4. What was Paul's basic attitude toward the Sabbath and Jewish festivals in general?

Nature of regulations

Do the regulations with regard to "eating, drinking, festival, new moon and Sabbath" belong exclusively to the Mosaic Law? While the reference to the observances of "festival, new moon and Sabbath" plainly shows that the false teachers derived some of their teachings from the Old Testament, the restrictions regarding "eating and drinking" can hardly be traced to the same source. The terms "*brosis*" and "*posis*" describe not (as often inexactly translated) "food–*broma"* and "*poma*," but the *act* of "eating and drinking."[915] Therefore, it is not a question, as R.C. H. Lenski points out, "about proper and improper food and drink, some being clean, others unclean, but rules about when to eat

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[913] Herold Weiss (p. 205, note 892), p. 311, note 10. Weiss also comments: "In fact the letter moves in an environment quite removed from that of the Pauline epistles, where at every juncture, there is likely to be a confrontation between Jewish and Gentile Christianity over the question of the Mosaic Law" (loc. cit.).

[914] See p. 203, note 882.

and to drink and to fast."[916] Such dietary restrictions can hardly be traced back to the Levitical law since this does not contemplate an ascetic program, but only 'distinguishes between clean and unclean food. Moreover, the Mosaic Law is silent on the subject of drink, except in the case of the Nazirites and Rechabites, who abstained from intoxicants on account of a special vow.[917] These exceptions, however, entailed a discipline of their own, well distinct from the general provision of the Law.

That the dietary prescriptions mentioned in Colossians 2:16 do not belong to the Mosaic Law is further indicated in v. 21 by the prohibition (regarding apparently the consumption of food) imposed by the proponents of the "philosophy": "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch." Such ascetic restrictions designed to promote "rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body" (2:23) were foreign to normative Jewish teachings. Usually such asceticism arises from a dualistic concept of life, which despises the material part of the world and the human body in order to attain to a higher sanctity. No traces of this dualistic view can be found in the Hebrew concept of man, which is altogether wholistic.

There are 'indications that in Paul's time this form of asceticism was developing within the Church. In Romans 14 the Apostle deals with a dissension caused by an ascetic party, which (similar to that of Colossae) insisted on vegetarianism and abstention from wine (14:2, 21) as well as on the observance of days (14:5-6). A similar party possibly existed at Ephesus, since Paul warns Timothy against those "who forbid marriage and enjoin the abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving" (I Tim. 4:3).

Was this ascetic teaching influenced primarily by sectarian Judaism or by pagan asceticism? It is difficult to answer this question conclusively since we are informed that a vegetarian regime was promoted by

1. Jewish sects such as the Therapeutae and probably the Essenes;
2. Gnostic sects such as the Encratites, Ebionites and Marcionites; and
3. pagan schools such as the Orphic mysteries, the Pythagoreans and the Neo-platonists.[918] Philostratus (ca. A D. 220) reports, for example, that Apollonius of Tyana (d. ca. AD 98), a Neo-Pythagorean philosopher, "declined to live upon a meat diet on the ground that it was unclean and that it made the mind gross; he partook only of dried fruits and vegetables, for he said that all the fruits of the earth are clean."[919] (It is noteworthy that even James, the Lord's brother, according to Hegesippus "was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat *flesh*").[920]

The pagan reasons for practicing asceticism and fasting were many. It was believed, for instance, that

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[915] On "food/eating–*broma*/*brosis*" cf. Johannes Behm, *TDNT* I, pp. 642-645; on "drink/drinking –*poma*/*posis*" cf. Leonhard Goppelt, *TDNT* VI, pp. 145-148.

[916] R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon,* 1946, p. 123. Norbert Hugedè (p. 205, note 891), p. 143, similarly remarks: "It is not then a question of distinction between clean and unclean food as recommended by Lev. 11, but of the practice of fasting according to the custom of pagan ascetics"; A. S. Peake (p. 203, note 887), p. 530: "The question is not altogether between lawful and unlawful food, but between eating and drinking or abstinence. Asceticism, rather than ritual cleanness, is in his mind."

[917] The Nazirite's vow included abstention from all grape products (Num. 6: 2-4). This, however, was a temporary and voluntary vow. Some, such as Samuel (I Sam. 1:11) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) were Nazirite for life, but we have no record of a person taking the vow voluntarily for life. Perpetual vows were taken by parents on behalf of children. The Rechabites led a nomadic life in tents and abstained from wine and all intoxicating drinks (Jer. 35:1-19).

[918] For texts and discussion see G. Bornkamm, "*lakanon*," *TDNT* IV, p. 67.

[919] *Vita Apollonii* 1, 8; cf. Apuleius, *Metamorph*. 11, 28: "abstain from all animal meat."

[920] Cited by Eusebius, *HE* 2, 23, 5, *NPNF* 2nd, I, p. 125. Avram: There's no biblical reason to believe that James "was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat *flesh*." It seems like a mythical effort to build up the character and personality of James.

fasting prepared a person to receive a divine revelation.[921] The belief in the transmigration of souls apparently motivated abstinence from animal meat, since eating it was regarded as a form of 'cannibalism.' Others were led to asceticism by their dualistic view of the world.[922] In the case of the "philosophy" of Colossians, the dietary taboos and the observance of sacred times were apparently regarded as an expression of subjection to, and worship of, the "elements of the universe" (2:20, 18).

Some scholars regard the Colossian false teachings as an offshoot of the teaching of the Qumran community. They point out that the emphasis on dietary rules, festal calendar and the veneration of the angels, tallies completely with the practices of the Qumran sect.[923] The Colossian "philosophy," however, as E. Lohse rightly points out, "does not reveal any signs of the kind of radical understanding of the Law that is advocated by the Qumran community. The term 'law' (*nomos*) is absent, anyway, from the controversy in which Colossians is engaged."[924] The most plausible conclusion held by most scholars is that the false teachings and practices at Colossae were of a syncretistic nature, containing both pagan and Jewish elements. The Old Testament was apparently invoked to provide a justification for their syncretistic beliefs and practices.[925]

If this conclusion is correct (which to us seems hardly disputable), then Paul's reference to the Sabbath and festivities must be understood in the context of the heretic, ascetic and syncretistic practices, which he opposes. In this case, whatever is said about the perverted use of an institution, like the Sabbath, cannot be legitimately used to challenge the validity of the commandment per se. *A precept is not nullified by the condemnation of its abuse*. But before focusing more directly on Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath, we need to ascertain what is actually condemned in Colssians 2:16-17: practices or principle?

Practices or Principle?

Does Paul formally condemn the five ascetic-cultic practices ("eating, drinking, festival, new moon and Sabbath") promoted by the false teachers in Colossae? In view of the fact that these practices were undermining the all-sufficiency of Christ's redemption, we would indeed expect Paul to condemn them outrightly, but is this what the Apostle does?

Let us first consider the verb he uses: "*me ouk tis umas krineto*–let no one continue to judge you." The verb is neutral and it does not mean "to condemn," but "to judge" whether approvingly or disapprovingly.[926] Paul uses the same verb repeatedly in Romans when dealing with a similar problem: "let not him who abstains pass judgment (*me krineto*) on him who eats" (14:3). "One man esteems (*krinei*) one day as better than another, while another man esteems (*krinei*) all days alike" (14:5). The meaning of the verb "*krino*," according to its common usage, is not "to condemn," but rather "to express an opinion, to resolve, to pass judgment." Note, then, that the verb used indicates that Paul is considerably tolerant on this question. He does not condemn the specified practices, but simply insists that no one should be compelled to observe them. As stated by Charles R. Erdman, Paul "leaves the decision to every Christian."[927] A. Lukyn Williams calls attention to this important fact, saying:

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[921] Cf. J. Behm, "*nestis*" *TDNT* IV, p. 297: "The Greeks and Romans knew that abstention makes receptive to ecstatic revelations." See the article for sources and discussion.

[922] References can be found in G. Bornkamm (p. 211, note 918), p. 66.

[923] Among the advocators of this view are Stanislas Lyonnet (p. 205, note 891), pp. 147-153; W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament,* 1957, pp. 167f.; Pierre Benoit, "Oumran et le Nouveau Testament," *NTS* 7 (1960-61): 287. For a more balanced assessment of relationships with Oumran teaching see E. Yamauchi, "Sectarian Parallels: Qumran and Colosse," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 121, 1 (1964): 141-152.

[924] E. Lohse (p. 205, note 891), p. 116.

[925] See p. 206, note 896 and p. 206, note 897.

[926] Cf. Lenski (p. 211, note 916), p. 122; A. S. Peake (p. 203, note 887), p. 530.

> "Observe that St. Paul takes a far wider view than that of forbidding the observance of dietary laws and of festival seasons. He leaves the matter free for the individual person. What he says is that the observance (or, by implication, nonobservance) is not to form a basis for anyone to sit in judgment on the Colossians."[928]

We conclude, then, that in v. 16 the warning is not against the Sabbath, festivals and dietary laws as such, but rather against those who promote these practices as indispensable aids to Christian perfection and as needed protection from "the elements of the world," thus denying the all-sufficiency of Christ.[929] That Paul had no intention to declare these observances worthless is further indicated in v. 17: "These are a shadow of what is to come, but the body belongs to Christ." By acknowledging the holy days of the Old Testament as "a shadow of what is to come–*skia ton mellonton,*" Paul could hardly have "abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a by-gone shadow."[930] E. F. Scott aptly remarks that,

> "Himself a Jew, Paul cannot admit that the most sacred ordinances of Judaism are worthless shadows. His thought is rather that of the writer to the Hebrews, who finds a value in all the ancient ceremonies in so far as they point forward, in a sort of picture-language, to the great consummation (e.g. the Sabbath typifies the perfect rest of God; Heb. 4:11)."[931]

Several commentators, however, unable to see how Paul could view Old Testament holy days and ascetic practices of syncretistic nature, as "shadows" having prophetic meaning and function, have attempted to solve the dilemma by adding arbitrarily the word "only" or "at best" after "shadow," thus making the latter pejorative.[932] Furthermore, the verb *"are* (*estin*) a shadow" is interpreted or translated as "were (*en*) a shadow," thus implying that their function had absolutely ceased with Christ's coming.[933] To justify this interpretation some argue that Paul could not have viewed dietary laws of dubious origin as "shadows of what is to come." Instead, they were a shadow of the Christian religion, but they are no longer so.[934] This interpretation implies that they could serve a legitimate function only prior to, but not after Christ's coming, which of course is not true. How could superstitious dietary taboos be accepted by God at one time and then rejected later?

The most plausible conclusion is that Paul is not disputing about the origin, form or legitimacy of these observances, but rather that he acknowledges their value, apparently because he recognized them to be expressions of noble and sincere—though misguided—spiritual aspirations. What the Apostle does, however, is to place these observances in their proper perspective with Christ, by means of the contrast "shadow—body."[935] In this perspective Paul sees that not only the observance of holy

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[927] Charles R. Erdman (p. 207, note 897), p. 73.

[928] Lukyn Williams, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 1928, p 102.

[929] Ralph P. Martin (p. 207, note 897), p. 90: "The root principle needs to be noted. Paul is not condemning the use of sacred days and seasons…What moves him here is the wrong motive involved when the observance of holy festivals is made part of the worship advocated at Colossae in recognition of the 'elements of the universe', the astral powers which direct the course of the stars and regulate the calendar. And so they must be placated."

[930] See p. 203, note 882.

[931] E. F. Scott (p. 207, note 897), p. 52.

[932] Cf. RSV; Lenski (p. 211, note 916), p. 125: "These things are a shadow *at best."*

[933] For example, A. B. Caird (p. 206, note 896), p. 198, maintains that "the RSV translation, *what is to come* cannot be correct, since, if the fulfilment lay still in the future, the shadow would not yet be superseded." A. Lukyn Williams (p. 213, note 928), p. 104, comments: "*en* [were] would have implied that they had absolutely ceased as facts, which of course they had not." Handley C. G. Moule, *Colossian Studies,* n.d., p. 175, points out that "*esti* is very slightly emphatic by position; I have represented this by indeed.' He means to acknowledge in passing the real place and value of the Festivals as 'shadows'." Cf. Meyer, ad bc.

[934] This argument is advanced by Norbert Hugedé (p. 205, note 891), p. 145.

[935] It is possible that the contrast "shadow-body," which derives from Plato (cf. *Republic* 7, 514 a-517a; 10;

days, but that even dietary scruples can serve as a shadow, preparing Christians for the realities of the world to come.[936] Old Testament festivals have a message for Christians. The Passover (which today we call Easter) commemorates Christ's atoning sacrifice and proclaims His coming (Mark 14:25; I Cor. 11:26); the Unleavened Bread typifies "sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:8); Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4); the Sabbath, as we have seen, the blessings of salvation, which are a foretaste of the eternal rest of God's people.[937] However, Paul warns that shadows must not become a substitute for the reality, which is Christ, the "Body" (v. 17) and the "Head" (v. 19). William Barclay aptly expresses Paul's thought, when he writes:

> "He [Paul] says that…a religion which is founded on eating and drinking certain kinds of food and drink, and on abstaining from others, a religion which is founded on Sabbath observance and the like, is only a shadow of real religion; for real religion is fellowship with Christ."[938]

We frown upon this perverted sense of priorities, yet this problem has constantly afflicted Christianity. All too often religion has been made into rituals and rules to obey. "These," Paul explains, "have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh" (2:23). Any plan of legal piety can only make a Christian into a prisoner of the ''flesh…puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind" (2:18). The solution which the Apostle offers to ascetic and cultic legalism is:

> "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hid with Christ in God (3: 13)."

We conclude, therefore, that Paul in Colossians 2:16 is not condemning abstinence from food and drink or the use of sacred days such as the Sabbath, but the wrong motive involved in their observance. What Paul attacks is the promotion of these practices as auxiliary aids to salvation, and as means to gain protection from the ''elements of the universe."

The Sabbath in Colossians 2:16

The sacred times prescribed by the false teachers are referred to as "a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath–*eortes he neomenia he sabbaton*" (2:16). The unanimous consensus of commentators is that these three words represent a logical and progressive sequence (annual, monthly and weekly) as well as an exhaustive enumeration of the sacred times. This view is validated by the occurrence of these terms, in similar or reverse sequence, five times in the Septuagint and several times in other litera-

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596; *Timeus* 46c; 71b) was employed by the Colossian philosophers to teach that "full reality" *(pleroma)* could be attained only by venerating the "shadow," namely the angels and the elements of the universe, by ascetic regimen. If so, Paul answers their teaching by giving a christological twist to their contrast.

[936] The fact that Paul does not condemn dietary scruples in Romans 14, but rather exhorts to observe them "in honor of the Lord" (14:6) indicates that he recognizes in them some positive function.

[937] J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon,* 1879, p. 195, comments: "The reality, the antitype, in each case is found in the Christian dispensation. Thus, the Passover typifies the atoning sacrifice; the unleavened bread, the purity and sincerity of the true believer; the Pentecostal feast, the ingathering of first fruits; the Sabbath, the rest of God's people; etc."

Avram: Bacchiocchi is wrong when he equates Passover with Easter. The two, in terms of their ceremonies and their themes, are totally different. Passover biblically centers around the death of the Lamb, while Easter allegedly presents the risen Savior.

[938] William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians,* 1959, p. 175.

Avram: It's unfortunate that Barclay divorces the physical Feasts, etc., from the spiritual (Messiah is our rest, etc.), meaning that only the spiritual is 'true religion,' but Hebraic thought sees the two as one. There is no artificial dichotomy. God didn't give Israel at Mt. Sinai a shallow, superficial or false religion, and now, with Messiah, we see the reason and the fullness that has come into the Feasts and the Sabbaths, etc.

ture.[939] There is, however, an exceptional occurrence in Isaiah 1:13-14 where the "new moon" is found at the beginning of the enumeration rather than in the middle, but an exception does not invalidate a common usage.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary interprets the "*sabbaton*–Sabbath days" as a reference to the annual ceremonial Sabbaths and not to the weekly Sabbath (Lev. 23-6-8, 15-16, 21, 24-25, 27-28, 37-38). It is a fact that both the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement in Hebrew are designated by the compound expression *shabbath shabbathon,* meaning "a Sabbath of solemn rest" (Ex. 31:15; 35:2; Lev. 23:3, 32; 16:31), but this phrase is rendered in the Septuagint by the compound Greek expression "*sabbata sabbaton,*" which is different from the simple *"sabbaton"* found in Colossians 2:16. It is, therefore, linguistically impossible to interpret the latter as a reference to the Day of Atonement or to any other ceremonial Sabbaths, since these are *never* designated simply as "*sabbata*."

The cited commentary rests its interpretation, however, not on the grammatical and linguistic use of the word "*sabbaton*," but rather on a theological interpretation of the Sabbath as related to ''shadow in Colossians 2:17. It is argued that,

> "the weekly Sabbath is a memorial of an event at the beginning of earth's history…hence the "Sabbath days" Paul declares to be shadows pointing to Christ cannot refer to the weekly Sabbath…but must indicate the ceremonial rest days that reach their realization in Christ and His Kingdom."[940]

To determine the meaning of a word exclusively by theological assumptions, rather than by linguistic or contextual evidences, is against the canons of Biblical hermeneutics. Moreover, even the theological interpretation which the Adventist commentary gives to the Sabbath is hard to justify, since we have seen that the Sabbath can legitimately be regarded as the "shadow" or fitting symbol of the present and future blessing of salvation.[941] Furthermore, we have noticed that the term "shadow" is used not in a pejorative sense, as a label for worthless observances which have ceased their function, but to qualify their role in relationship to the "body of Christ."

Another significant indication pointing against annual ceremonial Sabbaths is the fact that these are already included in the word "*eortes*–festival" and if "*sabbaton*" meant the same thing there would be a needless repetition. These indications compellingly show that the word "*sabbaton*," as used in Colossians 2:16, cannot refer to any of the annual ceremonial Sabbaths.

Does the plural form "*sabbata*" refer exclusively to the seventh-day Sabbath? The fact that the plural has three meanings, namely,

1. several Sabbaths (LXX Ez. 46:3; Is. 1:13; Acts 17:2),
2. one Sabbath (in spite of the plural—LXX Ex. 20:11; Mark 1:21; 2:23-24; 3:2-4), and
3. the whole week (cf. the titles of Psalms in the LXX, Ps. 23:1; 47;1; 93:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7), has led some to believe that in Colossians the term refers not exclusively to the seventh-day Sabbath, but also to "week-days."[942] This view deserves consideration since the

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[939] Cf. Septuagint, II Chron. 2:4; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; Ez. 45:17; Hosea 2:11. See also Jub. 1:14; *Jos. Ber.* 3:11; Justin, *Dialogue* 8:4.

[940] *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* 1957, VII, pp. 205- 206.

[941] See Chapter II, Christ and the Lord's Day.

[942] Norbert Hugedé (p. 205, note 891), p. 144: "A. Bailly in his dictionary, *ad loc.,* takes pains to point out that if the singular *sabbaton* designates the day of rest of the Bible (*sabbata* can also have this meaning sometimes), the plural *ta sabbata* is the expression used specifically to designate *the week* (*Anthologie,* V. 160); the author cites N.T. texts where the word has this meaning: Matt. 28:1: *eis mian sabbaton* (= the first day of the week); cf. Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7. We see, therefore, that the word already in itself, without taking into consideration the hellenistic context, where we are and which orients us, has but very far relations with the Sabbath day, designated by the Decalogue as the memorial of creation and of the exodus from Egypt.' On the three usages of the plural "*sabbata*" see the explicit explanation of E. Lohse, *TDNT* VII, pp. 7, 20.

enumeration does suggest yearly, monthly and weekly festivities. Moreover the fact that in Galatians 4:10 (cf. Rom. 14:5), where Paul opposes a strikingly similar false teaching, which insisted on the observance of "days, and months, and seasons, and years," the list begins with "days–*hemeras*" (plural), gives us reasons to believe that the "Sabbaths" in Colossians include other days besides the Sabbath. In this case Paul is warning against the observance of yearly, monthly and weekly holy days in general (including the Sabbath). Support for this interpretation is provided also by the juxtaposition in which "eating and drinking" and the observance of sacred times are placed. The same correlation between eating—not—eating and the observance of days is suggested in Rom. 14:2, 5. It is, therefore, altogether possible that the "days" of Romans and Galatians, and the "Sabbaths" of Colossians, are interrelated, including besides the Sabbath other week days characterized by fasting or dietary taboos.

It is well known that not only the Jews, but even the early Christians, fasted on fixed days.[943] In sectarian Judaism fasting was made even more rigorous. Observe that in the *Zadokite Document* the observance of fasts is enjoined together with that of holy days:

> "Keep the Sabbath in its every detail, and the festivals and fasts in accordance with the practice laid down originally by the men who entered the New Covenant in 'the land of Damascus'" *(CD* 6:18).

We know, however, that fasting was not allowed on the Sabbath among both Jews and primitive Christians.[944] This would mean that if, as some believe, the abstention from food spoken of in Colossians and in Romans, can be legitimately correlated with the "days" and "Sabbaths,"[945] then the latter could not be referring 'directly to the seventh-day Sabbath, but rather to certain fasting days of the week.

Assuming for the sake of enquiry that the "Sabbaths" in Cobssians do refer to or include the Sabbath day, the question to be considered is: What kind of Sabbath observance did the false teachers advocate? The data provided by the Letter to the Colossians are too meager to answer this question conclusively. Yet the nature of the heresy allows us to draw some basic conclusions. The rigoristic emphasis on the observance of dietary rules would undoubtedly be carried over to Sabbath-keeping as well. The veneration of "the elements of the universe" would also affect the observance of the Sabbath and of sacred times, since it was commonly believed that the astral powers, which direct the stars, control both the calendar and human lives. Gunther Bornkamm comments in this regard:

> "Paul mentions New Moon and Sabbath (Col. 2:16), days, months, seasons, and years (Gal. 4:10), i.e. in each case days and seasons that do not stand under the sign of the history of salvation, but under the sign of the periodic cycles of nature, i.e. corresponding to the movement of the stars. Thus the *stoicheia tou kosmou* [elements of the universe] provide their content and meaning."[946]

In the context of the Colossian heresy it appears, then, that the Sabbath was observed not as the sign of creation, election or redemption but, as Eduard Lohse points out, "for the sake of 'the elements of the universe,' who direct the course of the stars and thus also prescribe minutely the order of the calendar."[947] Note that this astrological superstition did not prevail only in Hellenistic circles, but also in

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[943] The *Didache* (8:1) admonishes Christians not to fast with the hypocrites on the second and fifth days of the week, but rather on the fourth and sixth.

[944] On Sabbath fasting among Jews and early Christians see *The Church of Rome and the Sabbath* in Chapter VI.

[945] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 137: "It is not certain what we should understand by 'observance of days.' Since the phrase occurs in the context of abstention from food, we might think of it in terms of some kind of fast day"; a similar view is held by M. J. Lagrange, *L'Èpître aux Romains,* 1950, p. 325; Joseph Huby, *Saint Paul, Èpître aux Romains,* 1957, pp. 455-456; James Denney, *Romans,* The Expositor's Greek Testament, 1961, p. 702.

[946] Gunter Bornkamm (p. 205, note 891), p. 131.

Judaism. The Qumran community, for instance, speculated on the relationship between angels, the power of the stars, and the strict observance of sacred times.[948] The Jewish-Christian sect of the Elchasaites (ca. AD 100) provides another example of how the veneration of astral powers affected their observance of the Sabbath. Hippolytus reports:

> "Elchasai speaks thus: 'There exist wicked stars of impiety…Beware of the power of the days, of the sovereignty of these stars and engage not in the commencement of any undertaking during the ruling days of these. And baptize not man or woman during the days of the power of these stars, when the moon (emerging) from among them, courses the sky, and travels along with them…But, moreover, *honour the day of the Sabbath, since that day is one of those during which prevails* (the power) *of these stars*.'"[949]

In later Christian polemic against the Jews we find additional evidence of astral influence on the observance of sacred days like the Sabbath. In the *Epistle to Diognetus,* for instance, we read these scathing rebukes:

> "But as to their [i.e. the Jews] scrupulosity concerning meats and their superstition as respects the Sabbaths, and their boasting about circumcision, and their fancies about fasting and new moons, which are utterly ridiculous and unworthy of notice,—I do not think that you require to learn anything from me."[950]

The fragment of the *Preaching of Peter* contains this blunt warnng:

> "Neither worship ye Him as do the Jews, for they, who suppose that they alone know God, do not know Him, serving angels and archangels, the month and the moon: and if no moon be seen, they do not celebrate what is called the first Sabbath, nor keep the new moon, nor the days of Unleavened Bread, nor the Feast (of Tabernacles), nor the great Day (of Atonement)."[951]

In the pagan world, as we have already noticed,[952] Saturday was regarded as an unlucky day because

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[947] Eduard Lohse (p. 205, note 891), p. 115.

[948] In the Book of Jubilees, of which fragments have been found in the first and fourth caves at Qumran, it is said not only that every kind of angel was created on the first day of creation along with heaven and earth, but also that it was the angel of God that revealed the calendar and taught men the signs of the Zodiac in order to observe the days, month and Sabbaths (Jub. 5:15f). The proper and exact observance of days is of supreme importance. Every misfortune which has befallen Israel is attributed to negligence of the calendar and festivals. References to festivals, months, Sabbaths, and years similar to those in Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16 occur for example in Jubilees 6:32-38; 23:19. The *Zadokite Document* declares that "with those that held fast to His commandments—God ever made good His everlasting Covenant with Israel, *revealing to them the hidden things* concerning which Israel in general had gone astray—even His holy Sabbaths and His glorious festivals, His righteous ordinances, the ways of His truth and the purposes of His will, the which, if a man do, he shall live" (*CD* 3:1; 6:18-19; emphasis supplied).

[949] Hippolytus, *The Refutation of all Heresies* 9, 11, *ANF* V, p. 133; cf. Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 29, 8, 5. Similar astrological superstitions underlie the Sabbath observance of Cerinthus (Filastrius, *Haereses* 36, *CSEL* 38, 19), of Desitheus of Samaria (Origen, *De Principiis* 4, 3, 2), of the Simonians (Ps.-Clement, *Homilia* 2, 35, 3) and of the Hypsistarians (Gregory Nazianzius, *Oratio* 18, 5, *PG* 35, 991); cf. E. Lohse, "*sabbata*," *TDNT* VII, p. 33.

[950] *The Epistle to Dionetus* 4, *ANF* 1, 26.

[951] *The Preaching of Peter;* quoted in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis 6,* 5, 41, 2, trans. M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament,* 1924, p. 17. Aristides writes in his *Apology* 14 (Syriac): "In their [i.e., the Jews'] imagination they conceive that it is God they serve; whereas by their mode of observance it is to the angels and not to God that their service is rendered—as when they celebrate Sabbaths and the beginning of the months, and feasts of Unleavened Bread, and a great Fast; and fastings and circumcision and the purification of meats, which things, however, they do not observe perfectly" *(ANF* X, p. 276). Cf. also Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1, 26.

[952] See *Roman Measures and Attitudes* in Chapter VI and the *Planetary Week* in Chapter VIII.

of its association with the planet Saturn. In view of the prevailing astral superstitions, which influenced the observance of days among both Jews and pagans, it seems plausible to assume that any Sabbath observance advocated by the Colossians' ascetic teachers—known for their promotion of the worship of the elements of the universe—could only have been of a rigorous and superstitious type. A warning against such a type of Sabbath-keeping by the Apostle would have been not only appropriate, but also desirable. But in this case Paul would be attacking not the principle of Sabbath-keeping, but its perversion. Observe, however, that the Apostle is not admonishing against the *form* of these observances, but against their perverted *function*.

The *manner* in which a Christian eats, drinks, of observes days and seasons is (as well stated in Romans 14:5) a matter of personal conviction to be respected, but the *motivation* for observing them is not a matter of personal viewpoint. These observances, are and must, remain a shadow pointing to the substance, which belongs to Christ and must never become the substitute for the reality. It is not therefore the *form or manner* of observance of sacred times that Paul opposes, but their perverted *function* and *motivations,* which adulterated the ground of salvation. The information provided by the other two similar passages (Rom. 14:5-6; Gal. 4:8-11), which we shall now consider, corroborates this conclusion.

The Sabbath in Romans and Galatians

In Rome a fanatical (heretical) ascetic group, strikingly similar to that of Colossae, advocated strict vegetarianism, abstention from wine and the observance of days (Rom. 14:1-10, 21). We suggested earlier that probably Paul is correlating (as in Colossians 2:16) the eating-not-eating, with the observance of days. If this interpretation is correct, then the "days mentioned in Romans 14:5-6 can hardly include the Sabbath, since we know that the latter was regarded as a day of feasting and not of fasting.[953]

The problem in Rome was apparently milder than in Colossae or in Galatia. The ascetic teachers there were probably a less influential minority and were not "propagandists for a ceremonialism that was aimed at the heart of the cross."[954] This is indicated by the tolerant and restrained language of the Apostle:

> "One esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God (14: 5-6)."

The principle of acting according to one's convictions and of respecting a different viewpoint (Rom. 14:3, 10, 13-16, 19-21) on the matter of diet and days, stands out in Romans in obvious contrast to the principle of justification by faith. On the latter, Paul adamantly refuses to compromise, on the former he acknowledges the individual's conscience as the ultimate authority. What accounts for this obvious difference?

The answer is to be found in Paul's understanding of what is essential and what is unessential to salvation. That faith in Jesus Christ is the ground of salvation, is for Paul an unquestionable and essential principle (cf. Rom. 3:22, 26-28, 31; 4:3, 13, 22-25; 5:1). But since faith is experienced and expressed differently in each individual, the way in which faith is practiced is unessential. "Let everyone," Paul says, "be fully convinced in his own mind" (14:6). The basic principle repeatedly laid down by the Apostle to determine the legitimacy of the observance of days or of dietary rules, is to be sure to be motivated by a conscientious desire to honor the Lord ("observe to the Lord–*kurio fronei*"–14:6-7, 18;

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[953] See p. 216, note 944.

[954] John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 1965, p. 173.

cf. 1 Cor. 16:31).

On the basis of this principle, we may ask, could Paul have advocated the abandonment of Sabbath observance? It is hard to believe that he would regard such a practice as a hindrance to honoring the Lord when he himself "customarily" (Acts 17:2) met with "Jews and Greeks" on the Sabbath in the synagogue (Acts 18:4). W. Rordorf argues that Paul assumes a twofold position. With regard to the "weak" Jewish Christians he grants them *freedom to observe the Law including the Sabbath*. On the other hand, to the "strong" Gentile Christians he grants absolute *"freedom from any observance of the Law," particularly from the Sabbath*.[955]

Can this conclusion be legitimately drawn from Romans 14? Observe that the conflict between the "weak" and the "strong" over diet and days is only remotely related (if at all) to the Mosaic Law. The "weak man" who "eats only vegetables" (14:2), drinks no wine, (14:21) and "esteems one day as better [apparently for fasting] than another" (14:5) can claim no support for such convictions from the Old Testament. Nowhere does the Mosaic Law prescribe strict vegetarianism, total abstinence from wine and a preference for fasting days.[956]

Similarly the "strong man" who "believes he may eat anything" (14:2) and who "esteems all days alike" is not asserting his freedom from the Mosaic Law, but from ascetic beliefs apparently derived from sectarian Judaism.[957] The whole discussion, then, is not about freedom to observe the Law versus freedom from its observance, but concerns "unessential" scruples of conscience dictated not by divine precepts, but by human conventions and superstitions. Since these differing convictions and practices did not undermine the essence of the Gospel, Paul advises mutual tolerance and respect in this matter.

The situation in Galatians is radically different. Here Paul strongly reprimands those Gentile Christians who had themselves circumcised (Gal. 6:12; 5:2) and who had begun to "observe days, and months, and seasons, and years" (4:10). He defines their adoption of these practices as a return to the slavery of the "elemental spirits" (*stoikeia*–4:8-9)—cosmic powers credited with controlling the fate of mankind. In many respects the polemic in Galatians 4:8-11 is strikingly similar to that of Colossians 2:8-23. In both places *the superstitious observance of sacred times* is described as slavery to the "elements." In Galatians, however, the denunciation of the "false teachers" is stronger. They are regarded as "accursed" (1:8. 9) 'because they were teaching a "different gospel." Their teaching that the observance of days and seasons *was necessary to justification and salvation*, perverted the very heart of the Gospel (5:4).

Whether or not the Sabbath is alluded to in Galatians depends upon the interpretation of "days–*hemerai*" (4:10). Some critics argue on the basis of the parallel passage of Colossians 2:16, where "Sabbaths" are explicitly mentioned, that "the 'days' certainly indicate even the Sabbaths."[958] We do not deny this possibility, but we have shown earlier that the plural "Sabbaths" used in Colossians, was the common designation not only for the Sabbath day, but also for the whole week. Thus the plural "days" of Galatians could well indicate that the Colossians' "Sabbaths" are "week-days" and not vice versa.

Assuming that the Sabbath is part of the "days" observed by the Galatians[959] the questions to be con-

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[955] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 138.

[956] See p. 211, note 917.

[957] Note that the distinction between clean and unclean food in Romans 14:14 is different from that of Leviticus 11. In the latter, unlawful foods are designated in the LXX by the word "*akathartos*," which means "impure." In Romans, however, the term used is "*koinos*," which means "common." Apparently the dispute was about meat which per se was lawful to eat, but because of association with idol worship (cf. I Cor. 8:1-13) was regarded by some as "*koinos*," thus unfit for human consumption.

[958] C. S. Mosna, *Storia della domenica,* p. 183. Cf. H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Gala ter,* 1962, p. 204-207; he admits however that "days" may have a wider meaning; W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 131; "By *hemera* in v. 10 a reference is certainly being made to the Sabbath days, which recur week by week."

[959] This is altogether possible, especially in view of the fact that the Galatians were causing themselves to be

sidered are: What motivated the observance of the Sabbath and of festivities? Is Paul opposing the Biblical precept which enjoins the observance of the Sabbath and of festivals, or is he denouncing the perverted use made of these religious practices?

It is generally agreed that the Galatians' observance of Jewish festivals was motivated by superstitious beliefs in astral influences. This is suggested by Paul's charge that their adoption of these practices was tantamount to a return to their former pagan subjection to elemental spirits and demons (4:8-9). Apparently, on account of their pagan background, the Galatians, as aptly stated by W. Rordorf,

> "could discern in the particular attention paid by the Jews to certain days and seasons nothing more than religious veneration paid to stars and natural forces."[960]

The fact that in the pagan world, as we already noticed, Jewish Sabbath observance was often attributed to the evil influence of the planet Saturn, may well have contributed to the development of this misconception. It would appear, then, that any Sabbathkeeping practiced by the Galatians would be motivated by a superstitious misconception of the Biblical precept.

Paul's concern, however, is not to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances, but rather to challenge the whole system of salvation which the Galatians' false teachers had devised. By conditioning justification and acceptance with God to things such as circumcision and the observance of days and seasons, the Galatians were making salvation dependent upon human achievement. This for Paul is a betrayal of the Gospel:

> "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the Law—you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

It is within this context that Paul's denouncement of the observance of days and seasons must be understood. If the motivations for these observances would not have undermined the vital principle of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, Paul would only have recommended tolerance and respect (as he does in Romans 14), even if some ideas were foreign to Old Testament teaching. Since, however, the motivations for these practices adulterated the very ground of salvation by dogmatic confidence, the Apostle does not hesitate to reject them. In Galatians, as in Colossians, then, it is not the principle of Sabbath-keeping that Paul opposes, but rather the perverted use of cultic observances, which were designed to promote salvation not by divine grace, but rather by human achievements.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the three Pauline texts generally adduced as proof of Paul's repudiation of the Sabbath as an Old Testament ceremonial shadow, has shown that this interpretation is unwarranted on several counts. In the first place, in all the three texts Paul does not discuss whether or not the Sabbath commandment is still binding in the Christian dispensation, but rather he opposes complex ascetic and cultic practices, which (particularly in Colossians and Galatians) were undermining the vital principle of justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the fact that a superstitious form of Sabbath-keeping may have been part of heretical teachings denounced by Paul does not invalidate the binding nature of the precept since it is a *perversion* and not a *precept* that is condemned. The reproof of the misuse of a Biblical precept cannot be legitimately interpreted as the abrogation of the precept itself.

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circumcised and to become Jews in every respect.

[960] W. Rordorf, *Sunday,* p. 133; on the astral superstition associated with the Sabbath see p. 217, notes 949, 950, and 951.

Avram: The mention of 'the Jews' honoring 'certain days and seasons…to stars and natural forces' should not be seen as 'all the Jews,' but only some Gnostic sects of Jews. This qualification underlies much of what Bacchiocchi and others are speaking concerning 'the Jews,' here. In other words, the majority of the Jewish people didn't keep the Sabbath day and Feasts unto the stars and the angels.

Thirdly, the fact that Paul recommends tolerance and respect, even with regard to differences in diet and days (Rom. 14:3-6) stemming from human conventions, indicates that on the question of "days" he was too liberal to promote the repudiation of the Sabbath commandment and the adoption of Sunday observance instead. If he had done so, he would have encountered opposition and endless disputes with Sabbath advocators. The absence of any trace of such a polemic is perhaps the most telling evidence of Paul's respect for the institution of the Sabbath.

In the final analysis then, Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath must be determined not on the basis of his denunciation of heretical and superstitious observances, which possibly included Sabbath-keeping, but rather on the basis of his overall attitude toward the Law. *The failure to distinguish between Paul's concept of the Law as a body of instruction*, which he regards as "holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12; cf. 3:31; 7:14, 22), *and of the Law as a system of salvation apart from Christ*, which he strongly rejects, is apparently *the cause of much misunderstanding of Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath. (and the Law!* Avram)

There is no question that the Apostle respected those Old Testament institutions, which still had value for Christians. We noticed, for example, that,

1. he worshiped on the Sabbath with "Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4, 19; 17:1, 10, 17),
2. he spent the days of "Unleavened Bread" at Philippi (Acts 20:16),
3. he "was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16),
4. he assumed a Nazirite Vow on his own initiative at Cenchreae (Acts 18:18),
5. he purified himself at the Temple to prove that he "lived in observance of the Law" (Acts 21:24), and
6. he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

On the other hand, whenever any of these or similar practices were promoted as the ground of salvation, he denounced in no uncertain terms their perverted function. We might say, therefore, that Paul rejected the Sabbath as a means of salvation, but accepted it as a shadow pointing to the substance which belongs to Christ.[961]

[961] Last revised on Saturday, October 10, 2026.