

FROM SABBATH
TO SUNDAY

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A Study in Early Christianity

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PREFACE

The book that follows is a personal exploration. I have sought to find my way through the facts to a satisfying conclusion.

In this work I confess my indebtedness to many scholars. First of all, I want to express an acknowledgment and appreciation of all those who have in any way contributed to my education. But especially would I acknowledge those who have been of assistance in this dissertation. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Ralph Marcus, of Columbia University, who has given me some much-needed assistance in understanding various phases of Judaism. Others whom I should mention are: Professor Tryon, who has given me valuable suggestions at a number of points, and Professors Moffatt, Scott and Foakes-Jackson, all of Union Theological Seminary, and Professor Schneider, of Columbia University. I should also mention the valued help of a scholar and friend, Rabbi Joseph Marcus, now of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio.

In citations from the Babylonian Talmud I have used the Goldschmidt edition and translation, using the customary designation of numbers to indicate the Mishnah (*e.g.* 4.4) and a letter to indicate the less valuable Gemara (*e.g.* 39b).

I have thought it advisable in Appendix B to give a translation of the most important documents relating to the subject. In general I have sought to place before the reader the facts and not mere assertions, so that he may be able to see for himself what is true.

PAUL COTTON.

Bethlehem, Pa., Oct. 10, 1933.

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From Sabbath to Sunday

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

THE STUDY of Christianity's early development has been found to be far more complex than was formerly imagined. Many discoveries have been made, and many problems have been raised which call for a solution. The discoveries made by comparative religion have shown us that Christianity can not be isolated by itself, but must be studied in relation to other religions.

The question, how far Christianity has been influenced by other religions, has brought forth varying replies. The conservative school of thought emphasizes the distinctive and creative features of Christianity. The liberal group often lays stress upon the Jewish background out of which Christianity arose. The more radical group lays primary emphasis upon the influence of contemporary pagan religions. Each, we must say, has a measure of truth. The real development of early Christianity is to be explained by a combination of the three. No one of these three elements can be disregarded. The difficulty arises in determining the balance of these three factors—the Jewish environment, the creative element, and the pagan or Greek influence.

But the real truth can only be obtained when we leave the general and abstract discussion of Christianity and enter the realm of the concrete. When an individual problem is studied, we are brought face to face with living reality, and errors which can readily lurk in generaliza-

tions are brought to the light when concrete situations are minutely examined.

There is abundant opportunity afforded us for such a study when we seek to trace the development from the Sabbath in Judaism to the use of the Christian Sunday. What were the motives that led the Christians to abolish the Sabbath and to substitute in its place the celebration of Sunday? How could Christianity, which accepted the Old Testament as authoritative, dare to set aside the Sabbath which was established as an institution within the very Ten Commandments, and set up as a kind of substitute the first day of the week to be observed as a sacred day? This problem is not easily solved. But the one who accepts the Bible literally in all its details is faced with insuperable difficulties. Literalists in this question are always compelled to omit certain facts in order that their theories may be preserved entire.

Yet we are greatly indebted to one literalist of the last century who has so eloquently stated the problem. In seeking to invoke all the authority of the fourth commandment for the use of the first day of the week, he has raised a bigger question than he realized when he demanded, "What is there in the nature of the fourth commandment, standing mid-way as it does between the successive announcements of what is due to God and what to man, and practically conducive to the observance of both, that should warrant its being dismembered from its awful resting place? There, the unseen finger of the invisible God inscribed it: where is the hand that shall draw a blot across it? His own adorable Son declared that He came, not to annul or alter, but 'to fulfil'. That same ever blessed Law-giver has left this testimony to the imperishableness of those enactments under his own dispensation of grace, 'Whosoever shall break one of the least of these command-

ments and shall teach men so, the same shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven'. Where then is the authority that shall suffice to tell us that the sabbatic law was so purely of a ceremonial nature—so obviously and exclusively a thing of time and place and circumstances—so unimportant—so utterly inapplicable to Christians, that we may now put asunder what God joined together; and, whilst paying scrupulous obedience to all the rest of the code, forget the one command before which He wrote the word, 'Remember'!"¹ No one could state our problem more eloquently than this. And yet he is blissfully unconscious of the real problem—how could the early Christians do this very thing which he so greatly deploras?

Other literalists have ventured certain solutions. (1). The first group are literalists, but conveniently slough off their literalism when faced with a difficulty. They say that since the seventh day is the Sabbath, any seventh day is sufficient to satisfy the divine appointment. They are compelled to ignore many parts of the Sabbath commandment. (2). Then there is the fiction that God ordained the transfer of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. (3). Certain British Sabbatarians of the last century ventured the suggestion that the original Sabbath, as observed by the Patriarchs, and as ordained by God, was the first day of the week and that the Hebrews on leaving Egypt changed to the seventh day. (4). There is a distinct group in the present day, known as the Seventh Day Adventists, who fully realize the difficulty of the change from the Sabbath to Sunday, and who therefore, in order to save their literalism, go back to the Sabbath of the Jews. They are thereby compelled to ignore the attitude of Paul; they must explain away certain New Testament references to the use of the

¹Tract No. 29, published by the Society for Promoting the due Observance of the Lord's Day, No. 12 Exeter Hall, London.

first day; and they must ignore or explain away the mass of early Christian literature which reveals the presence of the "Lord's Day."

But it is far from our purpose to examine and refute all the various opposing views that have been held on this question. The inadequacy of these explanations should be readily apparent when the facts are studied in detail. But these quite various attempted solutions reveal that there is a problem that must be solved.

In so far as we shall be able to succeed in tracing the development from Sabbath to Sunday, we shall throw light upon many phases of early Christianity. This question can never be completely isolated by itself, but must be studied in relation to other Christian beliefs and practices. In tracing this development, therefore, there will be illumined for us the whole movement of early Christianity. The Sabbath question will afford us a cross-section of the life of the church. It will reveal how Christianity developed from a New Way within Judaism to a distinct religion. We shall also be able to see the Jewish and Greek contributions, as well as the creative elements within Christianity itself.

From the Jewish use of the Sabbath to Constantine's employment of Sunday, there lies a long and interesting development. In estimating all the factors that enter into the situation, we shall try to ascertain the place and character of the Sabbath in Judaism, appreciate the full force of the Christian reaction, and determine the importance of the various factors that brought about the fall of the Sabbath and the rise of Sunday.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN REACTION TO THE SABBATH.

1. THE FIRST CENTURY SABBATH.

MOST inadequate explanations of the change from Sabbath to Sunday are due to the failure to recognize as a cause—a very central feature of Christianity—the revolt against external law. That we may appreciate the nature of this revolt and its underlying causes, we shall turn to the study of the first-century Sabbath.

It must be distinctly realized at the outset that the Sabbath was an integral part of Jewish ceremonial law. Together with circumcision it formed the heart of the Jewish ceremonial system. These two rites were the distinctive badges of Judaism, the marks of distinction from the Gentile world. This day was filled with ceremonies. On the Sabbath, as well as on new moons and at the appointed feasts, there was a special burnt offering.¹ The showbread was prepared every Sabbath.² Of all the ceremonies in the life of the Hebrew nation, none other held such a distinctive place as the Sabbath. Their religious rites centred about this one day. Therefore, in the Christian revolt against Jewish ceremonies, the Sabbath could scarcely escape.

In estimating the place of the Sabbath among the Jews, we should emphasize, not only its ceremonial, but also its political character. Judaism was not a religion merely for individuals. It was for a group of individuals. It was not a private, but a State religion. For Judaism, Church and

¹Numbers 28.9, 10; 2 Chron. 2.4 ²1 Chron. 9.32

State were one. The laws of the Sabbath must therefore be considered, not for their salutary effects upon the religious life of the individual alone, but for their benefits to the total well-being of the State. If, therefore, the Jewish religion seems legalistic, let us remember that a nation must have laws. In the theocracy of Israel, these were merely laws of the State for governing the citizens. These laws must be detailed, controlling every phase of life.

The Sabbath was especially precious to the Jew, because it was a sign of the special favor of God. This day, therefore, not only gave a distinction to his nation from all other races and nations of the earth, but gave it the unique distinction of a chosen nation. The Sabbath was ordained as a perpetual covenant, a sign between God and his chosen Israel forever.¹ This sign, therefore, while involving a fearful penalty for violation, was really to the Jew a guarantee of the mercy of God.

In our consideration of the harsh and often petty provisions of the Jewish Sabbath law, we should bear in mind its cheerful aspects. To the devout Jew, it was a day of joy. Outsiders would stress its prohibitions, but he would stress its privileges. The Scotch Sunday, for example, is popularly supposed to be a joyless time, but it was not so to the observers of this day. One writer said of Sunday, "Surely, if this be not heaven, it must be the way to it;" and another affirmed, "On that day, above all others, streams of gladness flow through myriads of hearts."²

The Book of Jubilees, written shortly before 100 B.C., shows great delight in the Sabbath. The two highest orders of angels enjoy the Sabbath privilege. The Jew has been singled out from among all the peoples of the earth to share

¹Ex. 31.16, 17

²Andrew Thomson, Edinburgh, Paper read at Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Geneva, Sept. 2, 1861.

this privilege. On this day they were to "eat and to drink and to bless him who has created all things." God's commands are not harsh, but rather "ascend as a sweet savor acceptable before Him all the days."¹ When Hosea wanted to point out the future cessation of Israel's mirth, he singled out the cessation of "her feasts, her new moons, and her Sabbaths."² We must not forget the joy that the devout Jew had in his Sabbath. He possessed a day free from toil in which he might delight himself in his God. It was a day of feasting and to be joyful at these feasts was as much a divine commandment as to abstain from laborious occupations. In order to have a better appetite for the Sabbath meal on Friday evening, men ate sparingly on Friday.³

But this joyous privilege which the devout Jew experienced in his Sabbath made it all the more imperative that the Sabbath be observed to the very letter. This, he felt, was a divinely ordained institution. Since it was the sign between God and his people, it was highly important that it be obeyed in every particular. If his nation was to prosper, this law must be obeyed. And we must also realize that in the time of Jesus the Old Testament was regarded on all sides as wholly inspired and completely authoritative. Everything that was contained therein was therefore completely binding upon all Jews. Since God was the author of the laws, no ordinance, however small and trifling, was to be neglected. How much more, then, was the Sabbath, the very cornerstone of Judaism, to be observed with unwavering fidelity! To the Jew, it was, like circumcision, the badge of the acceptance of his religion. To profane the Sabbath, therefore, was to profane his religion. Of so great importance was the Sabbath to the Jewish religion that death was the penalty for its violation.⁴

¹Jub. 2.17-22

²Hos. 2.11

³Pesahim 99b

⁴Ex.31.14

Since the observance of the Sabbath was of such importance, it was necessary to know exactly what was to be performed and what could not be done on that day. But here the Old Testament law was unfortunately vague. In the decalogue, where the people are prohibited from doing "any work" on the Sabbath,¹ no statute is appended saying just what constitutes "work." So it became highly imperative, in the course of time, to state in very explicit terms the extent to which the law applied. In the course of Israel's history the statutes became larger and larger, as various possible cases called for a decision.

There were a few Old Testament precedents which assumed great importance. For example, no fire was to be kindled in their dwellings on the Sabbath.² It is recorded that when a man was once found gathering sticks on this day, his case was considered and, believing themselves to be under the guidance of God, they stoned him to death.³ On the sixth day manna was gathered in the wilderness sufficient for the seventh day and all preparation of the food was done before the Sabbath.⁴ All work, even in plowing time and in harvest was prohibited.⁵ Jeremiah commanded the people not to carry burdens out of their houses on Sabbath days.⁶ These prohibitions assumed a large place in the life of later Judaism and were elaborated in great detail.

To make the law as definite as possible, thirty-nine various acts were prohibited. These acts were obtained from Exodus 35 where in immediate sequence upon the prohibition of "work" on the Sabbath, the same word is repeatedly used in the directions for constructing and furnishing the tabernacle. So by cataloguing the various occupations

¹Ex. 20.10 ²Ex. 35.3 ³Num. 15.32-36 ⁴Ex. 16.22-30 ⁵Ex. 34.21
⁶Jer. 17.21; cf. Neh. 13.15f

specified or implied in the making of the tabernacle, the acts forbidden under the indefinite name "work" could be defined. A few of these as enumerated in the Talmud are as follows: sowing, reaping, threshing, tying a knot, writing two letters (Hebrew consonants), kindling a fire, transferring from one place to another.¹

These provisions in turn underwent endless elaboration. Seemingly every possible case was considered in detail by the rabbis. This detail was accomplished not only because of the importance of the law, but also because of the presence of specialists whose duty was to interpret the law. The ordinary man in everyday life would never have evolved such a mass of detail. He would be content with approximation. But the specialist was content only with legal exactness. If, therefore, the law was developed beyond the point of practicability in everyday life, we need not be surprised. It was the work of men out of touch with everyday affairs, but who were absorbed in their specialty—the legal interpretation of the law. But not only did these specialists evolve endless ordinances which became a burden to practice and even to know, but also, realizing the burdensome character of these laws, many interpreters made exceptions and interpretations designed to make the law humane and practical. These two factors—the development of the legal implications and the effort at humane interpretation—produced a set of laws so large that only specialists could comprehend them all. If all the laws pertaining to the Sabbath, for example, were put into a single volume, it would be much larger than an ordinary book. One writer in the Talmud characterized these regulations as "mountains suspended by a hair," because the Bible verses were few, but the rules were many.²

¹G. F. Moore, *Judaism* 2.28 (Note 1) ²Hagigah 1.8

These Sabbath laws, many of them, seem quite stringent and often petty to us, as we read them today. In the book of Jubilees, written about 100 B.C., we find such regulations as the following: "The man that does any work on it shall die: whoever desecrates that day, whoever lies with his wife, or whoever says he will do something on it. . . . Whoever fasts or makes war on the Sabbaths . . . shall die."¹ It should be remarked that this death penalty seems to have been rarely used, and then only for deliberate and persistent violation. Death by stoning did not necessarily follow even a violation of one of the thirty-nine ordinances, but a sin-offering was substituted.²

The following regulations of the Mishnah, which approximate the first century laws, seem very minute to us: "A woman who braids her hair or paints her eyebrows or uses rouge is, according to R. Eliezer, culpable."³ One could not throw an object in public ground more than 4 ells (about two yards). "If one threw an object within four ells and the object rolled to a greater distance, he is free (from guilt); if he threw a thing outside of four ells and it rolled back within four ells, he is culpable."⁴ If a reptile were found in the Temple on the Sabbath, as a special concession to these sacred precincts, because "an unclean thing must not remain within the Temple," "the priest shall move it out with his girdle."⁵ Among the prohibited actions were—to "climb trees, ride on an animal, swim in water, clap with the hands, strike on the hips, or dance."⁶

The "Sabbath day's journey" affords us an interesting example of the development of Sabbath laws. This was a distance of 2000 cubits⁷ or a half-mile, the extent to which one could go outside the city-wall in any one direction on the Sabbath. This expression was so well known that the

¹Jub. 50.8, 13 ²Baba Kamma 2a ³Shabbat 10.6 ⁴Shab. 11.3
⁵Erubin 10.15 ⁶Bezah 5.2 ⁷Sotah 5.3

author of the Acts could refer to it as a measure of distance.¹ This law is itself a means of escape from a more severe one. At the gathering of the manna where the Sabbath is first mentioned, it was said, "Let no man go out of his place." This law, obviously, had to be defined in order to make it endurable. This was done, and with some ingenuity. The above word, "place," was found also in the law concerning the cities of refuge. And in Numbers the border about one of these cities was given as 2000 cubits.² But even this liberalization was found sometimes inconvenient. So it was contrived that this distance might be extended to 4000 cubits by placing at the end of 2000 cubits provisions for at least two meals, thus constituting a dwelling-place.³ And this contrivance (called an Erub) must be placed just right, for it was said, "Should the Erub roll out of the limit of the Sabbath distance, should a heap of rubbish fall on it, or should it be burned . . . and any or all of this take place while it is yet day (*i.e.*, before the Sabbath set in), the Erub is not valid."⁴ The one who was caught after dark on the Sabbath outside the 2000 cubit limit was at a serious disadvantage and had a great problem on his hands. What should he do? The more strict view held that "one who was overtaken by dusk one ell (cubit) outside the legal limit must not reënter the town." But R. Simeon gave an allowance of 15 ells, for the land-surveyors were not overly careful and due allowance must be made for their error.⁵ A still further contrivance was found that if a man "single out a tree or a stone-wall and say: 'I will take my Sabbath-rest at its base' he may go from the spot on which he stands to the base of the tree or stone-wall two thousand ells and thence to his domicile two thousand ells more; thus it may be seen that a man may go

¹Acts 1.12 ²Strack-Billerbeck Kommentar 2.591(d) ³Erubin 8.2 ⁴Er. 3.4 ⁵Erubin 4.12

four thousand ells after dark."¹ We can thus see the strict and definite character of Jewish law and the ingenious means employed to circumvent it and at the same time not to violate the law.

The bearing of burdens on the Sabbath was a prominent offense in Jewish law. This law goes back to Jeremiah for its authority.² A burden seems to have been defined as anything which could be used for a practical purpose. Therefore, the amount permitted to be carried on the Sabbath was small indeed. We read, "The carrying out of an article of food the size of a dried fig makes one liable (to a penalty)."³ It was prohibited to carry "milk to the quantity of a mouthful, honey sufficient to cover a wound with, oil sufficient to anoint a small limb with, and water in quantities sufficient for a medical bath for the eyes."⁴ The prohibited amount of wood to be carried was "as much as suffices to cook an egg; for spices as much as would suffice to spice such an egg."⁵

One who is overtaken by dusk on the eve of the Sabbath as he returns to his home "must give his purse to a Gentile. If there is no Gentile with him, he must put it on the ass. As soon as he arrives at the outmost court, he must take off all such things as may be handled on the Sabbath; and as for the things which must not be handled, he must loosen the cords, so that they fall off themselves."⁶

If one's house caught afire on the Sabbath, it was permissible to carry some things. The sacred Scriptures might be saved and enough food to last for three meals and a full basket of bread, and one might put on as many clothes as he could wear. But R. Jose said, "One may only put on eighteen pieces of ordinary apparel, but he can come back as often as he chooses and put on the same quantity and

¹Er. 4.7 ²Jer. 17.22 ³Shab. 7.4 ⁴Shab. 8.1 ⁵Shab. 9.5 ⁶Shab. 24.1

carry them off." One may say to a stranger, "Come, save for yourself." If a non-Israelite came to extinguish the fire, one should neither say to him, "Extinguish it," nor "Do not extinguish it," and for the reason that one is not obliged to make him rest. But under this Mishnah, the comment (Gemara) reads: "R. Ani said: During a conflagration one may proclaim: 'The one who extinguishes (the fire) loses nothing'."¹ It is thus apparent what absurdities develop when the effort is made to adapt a rigid law to human needs. All sorts of humorous circumventions of the law are necessary.

The wearing of iron-riveted sandals was also among the interesting prohibitions.² This passage reads: "One is not to go out with iron-riveted sandals, nor with phylacteries, . . . nor with a coat-of-mail, helmet or armor for the legs."³ The context clearly shows that the presence of iron in the shoes was objectionable. But the Gemara, or comment upon this passage, written at a later time when such a prohibition seemed distasteful, sought to explain it by the story of a panic during the persecutions in which a group in a cave were trampled to death, iron in shoes being thus dangerous. The Gemara itself shows wonder that this prohibition should be limited only to the Sabbath, when the need was equally great or more so on other days.

It was quite necessary to find some means to humanize harsh Sabbath laws, without abrogating the law itself. The law forbade carrying burdens in and out of the house. Yet it was contrived that several houses could combine, having a common court. In this way burdens could be carried in and out of the house and in the court.⁴ It was also arranged that one could hand something into the house, if the other took it out of his hand, and the one in the house could hand

¹Shab. 16.1-6 ²This was one of the Jewish laws singled out by Origen for ridicule—De Principiis 4.17 ³Shab. 6.2 ⁴Er. 6.1-8

something out, if the one outside took it out of his hand. But if one extended his hand into the house and put the article in another's hand or took anything out of his hand, he would be guilty of breaking the Sabbath law.¹ The bearing of burdens was also defined as carrying them in the usual manner. But "one who carries out a thing on the back of his hand or with his foot, with his mouth, with his elbow, with his ear, with his hair, with his waist-bag, the opening of which is at the bottom, or between his girdle and his tunic, at the edge of his tunic, in his shoe or sandal, is not culpable, because he carries it in an unusual manner."² This attempt to mitigate the rigors of the Sabbath laws does not appear to us wholly successful. But it does reveal to us the absolute character of these laws, their rigidity, the lack of dependence upon the individual judgment in special circumstances. Because of this, clever contrivances had to be made to evade the law. But to the strict Jew, the law was too important to allow any situation to be left unprovided for. Every conceivable case must be fully covered. And the law's divine authority was so great that human needs must be kept subordinate, and could only be partially cared for by clever evasions.

It is not surprising, considering the great importance attached to the law, and its vagueness in the Hebrew Scriptures, that there should be a great variety of beliefs concerning what was permissible and what was not permissible on the Sabbath. We are not to consider the above Sabbath laws, though standard in the first century, as being practiced in all times of Israel's history or even among all classes of the people at any time.

There were many shades of difference among the learned sects. The schools of Shammai and Hillel, flourishing in the first century, differed on a number of points. For ex-

¹Shab. 1.1 ²Shab. 10.3

ample, the Shammai group would not give their clothes to a Gentile washer unless there was sufficient time for him to finish it while it was day. The Hillel group permitted these clothes to be given as long as the sun was still shining.¹ The Shammai school taught that after a meal on the Sabbath, "Bones and husks may be removed from the table," but the Hillel school taught that the whole table board could be taken away and shaken off.² These minute differences among the rival schools of religious leaders would not fail to impair confidence in the legal system among the common people.

More serious were the differences between the great leaders of the Jews—the Pharisees and Sadducees. The latter believed only those laws to be binding which were contained in the Scriptures. They opposed the traditions of the Pharisees in deriving laws from the Biblical ones. Because many of the Pharisaic laws were for the purpose of making the Law humane, the Sadducees were more strict, and hence not in favor with the multitude.³ The Sadducees disapproved the special contrivances arranged by the Pharisees for carrying burdens from one house to another by means of a common court.⁴ Existing as there were these two great parties, one extremely strict, and the other taking advantage of many contrivances to humanize the law, we may not think it strange that there should arise a group that should go one step further and insist that "the Sabbath was made for man."

This emergence of Christian belief can also be understood when we realize the great difference between the strict or learned group of Jews and the mass of the common people. Long before the first century many of the people were notably lax in their observance of the Sabbath. In

¹Shab. 1.5-9 ²Shab. 21.3 ³Josephus Antiquities 13.10.6
(Ed. Niese 13.297,298) ⁴Er. 6.1, 2

the time of Jeremiah¹ and of Nehemiah² the prophets protested against the bearing of burdens, but their appeal fell on deaf ears. In Ezekiel³ we find that even the priests were neglecting the Sabbath. In the second century B.C. Greek influence was becoming powerful in Palestine. The old bulwarks of Judaism were being steadily undermined. "Many in Israel," we read, "began sacrificing to idols, and profaned the Sabbath."⁴ This process of Hellenization was checked to a considerable extent by the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to force the Jews to give up their religion and adopt Greek practices and worship. The Jewish rebellion that followed in behalf of the Law made it all the more sacred and inviolable to many, since for its sake, they were giving their lives. At first, many refused on the Sabbath even to defend themselves, so a large number were massacred.⁵ Later it was decided that, if they were to preserve the Law at all, they must break the Law, in order to keep themselves alive. The saving of human life henceforward became the sole legitimate reason for transgressing the law. But even with this provision, many grave losses came to them because of their Sabbath. When Pompey laid siege against Jerusalem, he was able to fill up the valley about the temple on Sabbaths unmolested by the Jews, for on those days they only defended themselves "on behalf of their body." And when Pompey by this means was able to take the Temple, so great was the priests' devotion to the Law that they continued in their appointed offerings and were slain at their duties.⁶ These great sacrifices made for their religion would produce among many an almost fanatical zeal for the Law. It was their one true possession that must be kept at all costs.

¹17.21 ²13.15 ³22.26 ⁴1 Maccabees 1.43 ⁵1 Macc. 2.32-38
⁶Jos. Wars 1.7.3-5 (Ed. Niese 1.145-150)

But while this view was held by a number in the first century, it was by no means the unanimous expression of Judaism. The peasant class, called the "people of the land," were in distinct opposition to the pious Jews and especially to the Pharisees.

Because of their indifference toward and ignorance of the law, the pious Jews, the learned, despised these common people. From Talmudic material, much of which goes back to the early part of the second century, we find great hatred between these two classes. It was perfectly abhorrent to a scholar to marry one from the peasant class. The Rabbis taught, "A man shall always sell all that he possesses to marry the daughter of a scholar." But one "shall not marry the daughter of an Am ha'Ares. Concerning their daughters, the passage says, 'Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast'."¹ Rabbi Meir said, "When anyone marries his daughter to an Am ha'Ares, it is just as though he bound her and threw her before a lion."² Some of these statements are no doubt exaggerated, but they reveal very clearly the hostility between the two classes. For instance, R. Eliezer said, "On the Day of Atonement which falls on a Sabbath, one may stab an Am ha'Ares."³ Another rabbi said, "One may tear an Am ha'Ares like a fish."⁴ This attitude toward the common people is mentioned in the Fourth Gospel,² "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed." Equally hostile was the attitude of the common people toward the scholars. It was said, "Greater is the hate of the Am ha'Ares against a scholar than the hate of the people of the world toward Israel, and that of their women is yet greater."⁵ R. Akiba, who rose to the learned class from the ranks of the common people, related, "As I was yet an Am ha'Ares, I said: If one gave me a scholar, I would bite him like an ass." His

¹Pesahim 49b ²7.49

pupils are said to have corrected him—you mean “as a dog.” But he answered, “The one bites and breaks the bone, the other bites and does not break the bone.”¹

This mutual hostility and contempt is to be explained, not only as a result of the knowledge of the law which the scholar possessed, but also in consequence of the difference in attitude on the importance of the law in all its details. From the Rabbinic tradition itself we can gather much regarding the lawlessness of the Am ha'Ares. As a class they were not to be trusted, according to Rabbinic belief. They said, “No testimony is to be entrusted to him; no testimony is to be accepted from him; no secret is to be disclosed to him; he is not to be appointed administrator over the fund for the poor; and he shall not be used as an escort on a journey.”¹ The scholar was not to go on a journey with the peasant, as R. Eliezer said, because there was danger of the Am ha'Ares not sparing the life of his associate.¹ The latter is a little extreme, of course, but it does reveal that there was much carelessness toward the law among the common people. The fact that the detailed laws of the rabbis were not observed by the peasants is clearly shown by the provision that when a daughter of an Am ha'Ares married a scholar, or when a slave of such was sold to a scholar they were compelled to take upon themselves all the obligations of the scholars.² So great was their disregard for the law, that the rabbis declared that divine punishment was meted out upon the world merely on account of the Am ha'Ares.³

Their carelessness toward the law is revealed in the various ways in which individuals have sought to characterize them. Many taught that an Am ha'Ares was one who did not mornings and evenings read the Shema, the confession of faith in one God.⁴ According to others, they were care-

¹Pesahim 49b ²Abodah Zarah 39a ³Baba Batra 8a ⁴Deut. 6.4

less in keeping the words of this Shema as amulets upon their persons, and in keeping them upon the door-posts of their houses, as the Shema itself directed. Some of them did not train their children in the teachings of the law and others did not make use of the scholars.¹ One classification of the groups in Palestine is indicative of the degree of lawlessness. Whoever studied the Scriptures and the Mishnah, but did not consult the scholars was an Am ha'Ares. Whoever read the Scriptures, but had not studied the Mishnah was a Bor, an uncultivated person. But the one who had neither read the Scriptures nor studied the Mishnah was a beast.² Hillel is said to have commented upon two of these classes, saying, “The Bor is not afraid of sin; the Am ha'Ares is not pious.”³

So great was the cleft between the Pharisees and the common people that the clothing of each was considered unclean for the other to touch.⁴ In general, the rabbis considered the common people as unclean.⁵ Because the Am ha'Ares could not be trusted to give tithes of all his possessions, when one bought from him, it was necessary to take out a tenth in order to be sure that it was tithed. A Pharisee was not allowed to eat at the home of an Am ha'Ares, because the food would be unclean if not tithed.⁶

We may well imagine that this group of common people was not few in numbers. In Galilee, especially, we have evidence that their attitude was the prevailing one. Johanan ben Zakkai was a Rabbi in Galilee shortly before the overthrow of Jerusalem, 70 A.D. R. Aula said of him, “Eighteen years he was an officer in this town, Arab, and there only came before him these two cases (to give judgment as to matters of the law). He said, O Galilee, Galilee, thou hatest the Law; thou wilt fall into the hands of rob-

¹Berakot 47b ²Sotah 22a ³Abot 2.6 ⁴Hagigah 2.7 ⁵Hagigah 22b; Bezah 11b ⁶Shab. 13a; Sotah 48a; Demai 2.2.

bers."¹ Not only was indifference to the law shown by the paucity of cases brought for his judgment, but he revealed in striking terms the Galilean hatred of the law.

We have thus seen the development of the law into burdensome, minute details. The peasant class had neither the time nor the inclination even to know all the laws. Their resulting hatred of the law and of the Pharisees was especially strong in Galilee as we have seen. It is not surprising that from such surroundings as these Christianity should arise.

In fact, there is every indication that Jesus' disciples came from this group of common people. In the Fourth Gospel the tradition is plain that neither rulers nor Pharisees were among the number of Jesus' disciples, but "the accursed multitude that know not the law."² This is further evident in the neglect by Jesus and his disciples of the washing of hands before meals.³ But when one enters the higher strata of Jewish society in the ceremony of purification the first step was to take this obligation of hand-washing.⁴ The hatred toward the Pharisee, so characteristic of the Am ha 'Ares, is found so often in the pages of the gospels that no reference is required.

When we seek to estimate the effect of the teachings of Jesus, we are faced with certain difficulties, because Jesus left no writings, and the gospels were in some danger of being colored by the later developments. When one compares, for example, Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath as shown by Luke and as shown by the Fourth Gospel, one finds a great difference in emphasis. Jesus in the latter seems to go out of his way to break the Sabbath law, saying, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."⁵ But in Luke Jesus does not heal on the Sabbath in order

¹J. Shab. 15d ²7.48, 49; cf. Mk. 12.37 ³Lk. 11.37-40; Mk. 7.2
⁴Demai 2.3 ⁵John 5.17

to break the law, but because he felt that in those particular cases human needs superseded the Sabbath. We are justified in assuming that this tradition which is less in harmony with later developments is the truer one.¹

Of one thing we may be sure. Jesus was a true Jew. He was loyal to Judaism. He observed the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. Paul himself had to characterize Jesus as "born under the law."² But like a true representative of the common people Jesus did not feel obligated to follow the leadership and authority of the Pharisees. He differed from them, not in reverence for the law, but in interpretation. He felt that the over-scrupulousness of the Pharisees was defeating the very purpose of the law. While insisting upon external cleanness, they were in danger of neglecting the cleanness of the inner life.³ Their insistence upon the letter of the law threatened to stifle its spirit. He sought to fulfil the law by performing the will of God. It was an insistence like that of many of the prophets upon the spiritual character of religion, upon the law written in the heart.⁴ Jesus believed that the spirit of love was free to overcome the inhibitions of the law when a greater purpose was to be gained. His observance of the law was no blind, pedantic following of an external law, but a spontaneous performance of the will of his Father, as love to God and neighbor would dictate.

¹But we are also to be on our guard against Luke's mildness and conciliatory tendency. His additions to and subtractions from the Synoptic tradition of the Sabbath are quite revealing—Lk. 4.16; 6.5, 11. Although Jesus' death was brought about by the charge that he claimed to be the Messiah, according to Gospel tradition, yet it is not improbable that Jesus' deliberate breaking of the Sabbath and his bold leadership in the attack upon Pharisaism led to a plot for his destruction, as the Gospels suggest. (Mt. 12.14; Mk. 3.6; John 5.18.) ²Gal. 4.4 ³Mk. 7.15 ⁴Jer. 31.33 (32-Hebrew text); cf. Ps. 40.6, 8 (7, 9)

It was here that he differed most from the Pharisees. Both believed in the law. Both sought to meet the needs of humanity. But the eyes of the Pharisees were more closely fixed upon tradition. Every element in the previous traditions must be preserved, and these could only be changed by reinterpretation, by clever loopholes which only their ingenuity could discover. Jesus devised no changes in the law when he wished to break it. According to the Gospel tradition, he regarded the Pharisees as "hypocrites." It was the hypocrisy that only a traditional, literalistic religion can promote.

Central in Jesus' belief was the idea that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."¹ The Sabbath must be subservient to man's needs. If it fails to fulfil his needs, then it has failed of its purpose. To the Pharisees only one need of man superseded the Sabbath—the saving of human life. At a later time a rabbi also made the utterance, "The Sabbath is committed to you, not you to the Sabbath,"² but this applied only to cases where human life was endangered. Thus the rabbis prohibited one from swinging a strained hand or foot in cold water on the Sabbath,³ and from putting a plaster on a wound.⁴

Frequently in the gospels, the breaking of Sabbath laws is justified from both the Hebrew Scriptures and the practices of the Rabbis. The disciples were justified in breaking the Sabbath law of reaping when they picked up grain as they walked along, because David when he was hungry ate the showbread.⁵ Jesus was justified in healing the infirm woman, because the religious leaders themselves led animals away to water them.⁶ When the man with a withered hand was healed the objectors were referred to the

¹Mk. 2.27 ²R. Simeon ben Menasya in Mekilta on Ex. 31.12
³Shab. 22.6 ⁴Er. 10.13; cf. p. 18 (note 4) ⁵Mk. 2.23-26 ⁶Lk. 13.10-15; cf. Er. 2.1f.; 20b

practice of drawing up an animal out of a pit, if it fell in on the Sabbath.¹ But rather, the custom, as tradition has brought it to us, was that either food was brought to the animal or various articles were thrown in, so that the animal might have a foothold and thus be enabled to get out of itself. In this Talmudic reference we find the interesting comment, "Cruelty to animals is a Biblical prohibition" and so supersedes the rabbinical law.² But the early Christians believed it was one-sided to have regard only for animals and not for man. Their quarrel with the Pharisees was that they did not go far enough in their program of humanization, because they were bound by the fetters of tradition.

This early Christian view, while mild and not capable of itself to force the break with Judaism and the resulting decline of the Sabbath, nevertheless was an important factor as an intermediate step. It led easily to more radical views. It made possible a bridge between Jewish Christianity and the more radical Pauline or Gentile Christianity. It made it possible for Am ha 'Ares and Gentile to join hands in the common program of Christianity.

¹Mt. 12.10-12 (Matthew's addition to Mark); cf. Lk. 14.5
²Shab. 128b

2. THE INFLUENCE OF PAUL.

As we have seen, Jesus did not depart from Judaism. His only departure from the Jewish Sabbath was made when he felt that human needs were of prior concern. Paul, in his radical departure from Jesus, had to find some justification. A serious charge could be laid against him that he was not literally following his Master. But Paul experienced no difficulty in justifying himself. His rabbinical training stood him in good stead. He had a ready explanation—Jesus was born under the law in order that he might redeem those that were under the law.¹

Although Paul's departure was radical, it was in a sense a following of Jesus' principles. Jesus had taught that the needs of man should be preëminent. He had laid the emphasis upon the spirit of the law, its original purpose. He had brought before the people the principle generally accepted that love to God and neighbor was the fundamental spirit behind the law. But, thought Paul, if one possessed this spirit of love to God and humanity, there was no need of any external law to govern. The conglomeration of burdensome Jewish laws could be swept aside and one could be directed by the "Spirit." Such was the belief of Paul.

As he was such an influential figure in the life of the church, so representative of the liberal-Christian point of view, we would do well to study him, in order to understand the development of thought. But it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that he was not the only one in the early church to hold liberal views. No doubt there were many before him who had similar ideas. Yet he was influential, and he is for us the spokesman of that period.

¹Gal. 4.4, 5

We will do well to try to understand Paul's point of view. It seems at first unbelievable that one brought up as a Pharisee, trained in the law under the foremost teacher of the time, Gamaliel, should not only forsake Pharisaism, but abandon the law, and become the most outstanding spokesman of the radical wing of Christianity. Whereas before he was a bitter opponent of this religion, he became its most ardent missionary. Paul's temperament helps us to understand this change. He was no half-hearted person. No persecution could daunt him. He lived with great intensity at all times. There was just "one thing" he aimed to know; only "one thing" he aimed to do. His was an either-or mind. He must be either a Jew, zealous for the law, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, persecuting the Christians, or a disciple of Christ, casting away the restraints of Judaism, and insisting that the Gentile-Christians be not entangled in the Jewish yoke of bondage.

We must also realize that his environment called forth to the full this tendency. In his youth he was surrounded with Gentile influences in Tarsus, but at the same time he was brought up in the strictest Jewish manner. The very difficulty of being a Jew in a Gentile environment would add to the sense of struggle and strain. There resulted what Paul later acknowledged as the "burden" of the law. This would also promote in him an opposition to everything Gentile which impeded the Jewish worship. So when Christians displayed heretical tendencies, and when the pure faith of Judaism appeared to be corrupted by liberal thought, Paul, or Saul, as he was then known, was behind no one in his zeal in persecution. But even then there must have been raging within him a serious conflict. Those early Gentile influences could not fail to leave their mark. The beliefs of the Christians must also have been brought home to him. But all his early home training and

his education stood on the other side. It is quite possible that his training in the law contributed toward the final result. The very attempt to observe it was a virtual slavery, as he later recognized.¹ No one else knew better than he how burdensome the observance of the law could be to a conscientious man. But this very struggle that was going on within him only made his persecution of the Christians the more violent, until the vision of Christ transformed his opposition to Christianity into opposition to Judaism. When he was once converted, the change was far-reaching. His was the zeal of the new convert. Among Christian missions today we are told that the greatest denouncers of other religions are not the missionaries or natives who have always been Christians, but those who shortly before were believers in the very religion that now they condemn. It is significant that after Paul's conversion, he did not return to Jerusalem, but went on to Gentile territory. He did not confer with the "Apostles," but with the Christians of Gentile lands. It was after three years that he went up to Jerusalem, and then he stayed only fifteen days, and saw only Peter and James.²

The influence of this three-year period must be given due weight in the development of Paul's thought. There must have been Christians before him who possessed many of his ideas. In fact, we must presuppose Christians even at Jerusalem who were lawless enough for Paul himself to persecute before his conversion. Stephen was radical enough to be stoned. The charge laid against him was that he spoke against the holy place and the law. These were "false witnesses,"³ says Luke, but the Jews evidently had some ground for singling Stephen out for attack. Then a general persecution against the Christians arose, and the most liberal were forced to leave Jerusalem, some going as

¹Gal. 5.1; 4.5²Gal. 1.18, 19³Acts 6.13

far as Antioch.¹ It was here that the disciples revealed themselves as so different from other Jews that they were first called Christians.² At this place the church was so well-organized that there were prophets and teachers.³ Paul was not the founder of this church. Nor was he the leader at first. In fact, Barnabas had to hunt him up at Tarsus and bring him to Antioch. There was, therefore, a great development in Christianity at Antioch⁴ before Paul had opportunity to be of influence. Instead of Paul influencing this church, we must rather say that the church had a great influence upon him.

Not only were the disciples first called Christians at Antioch, but it was there that the Christians first preached to the Greeks.⁵ This would be natural at Antioch, for the Jews and Greeks there at that time were on friendly terms, many of the Greeks being affiliated with the synagogue.⁶ This contact with the Gentiles was destined to have a great influence upon a church which even then was liberal. When Gentiles became Christians it was not necessary for them to become Jews. The Christians realized that there was much in Judaism that was not essentially religious to Gentiles, but rather was racial and political, and confined to Jews. The law in Judaism was a special covenant between God and Israel alone. Therefore, Christians were not expected to become Jews.

In this regard, Christianity had already received a precedent from Judaism. It was not necessary for Gentiles to become Jews when they affiliated with the synagogue. They were placed in a special class, and designated "sojourners," like the original "sojourners" who came to live with the Israelites for a time. It was not expected that they should become Jews in the full sense. They were not bound by the

¹Acts 11.19, 20 ²Acts 11.26 ³Acts 13.1 ⁴Acts 11.25, 26 ⁵Acts 11.20 ⁶Jos. Wars 7.3.3 (Ed. Niese 7.43-45).

full Mosaic law. But it was expected that they should observe the laws which had been given to the whole race before Israel had become a nation. These laws were called Noachian, indicating their universal validity, as the whole human race was supposed to be descended from the three sons of Noah, who alone survived the flood. Through a rabbinical treatment of Gen. 2.16 the following commandments were evolved: (1) not to blaspheme the divine name; (2) not to worship idols; (3) to establish courts of justice; (4) not to kill; (5) not to commit adultery; (6) not to rob; (7) not to eat flesh with blood—from Gen. 9.4—"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."¹

That these Noachian laws, imposed by Jews upon non-Jews, had a determining influence as a precedent in Christianity is revealed in the record of the Apostolic Council. In this test case, where certain ones were demanding that Christians should take the final step in becoming a Jew, become circumcised, the Council decided that only certain Noachian laws which these Christians were in danger of violating should be emphasized. They were to "abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."² There is sufficient evidence to show that the first and last of these laws were in danger of being violated by Gentile-Christians.³ The other Noachian laws, not mentioned, would scarcely need to be emphasized to Christians. The refraining from blood and from things strangled, therefore, was clearly a reference to the seventh Noachian law. This law certainly could never have been taken seriously by the Gentiles. But from the conservative-Christian standpoint,

¹Abodah Zarah 64b; San. 56b; Gen. R. 16.9; Seder Olam Rabba-5
²Acts 15.29 ³1 Cor. 8; 10.14-33; 5.1; Rev. 2.20

there was need for an emphasis upon this law.¹ For the non-Jew affiliated with Judaism, there was always an emphasis upon the refraining from idolatry. It is, however, striking that in the treatise "Gerim,"² the very two Noachian laws to be mentioned as binding were the law against idolatry and the law "not to eat animals which were not slaughtered according to the ritual law." In reference to the latter command, it is interesting to note that although some rabbis taught that only flesh that contained blood was not to be eaten, R. Hanina b. Gamaliel (about 100 A.D.) taught that blood also was not to be eaten.³ This double prohibition was also found in Deut. 12.23 that they should not eat "blood," nor "the life with the flesh." These two items in the Apostolic decree are, therefore, plainly from the Noachian laws. It is thus clear that the Noachian laws had a determining influence in deciding the status of Gentile Christians in moderately conservative circles. If this was the case, it may be easily understood how in more liberal, Pauline circles the Gentile could easily take his place as a Christian without being bothered by the ceremonies of Judaism. However, there were laws of Judaism still binding upon Christians, such as those against adultery, murder, robbery, covetousness. But whatever commandment there was, was included in the law of love to God and neighbor.⁴

In all these laws of Judaism and Christianity, the Sabbath was not mentioned as binding upon the Gentile. So far as the Jews were concerned, some, as R. Meir, held that a Gentile need only give up idolatry to be considered as

¹This Jewish ceremonial law was of sufficient importance to be retained in Mohammedanism (Koran 5.4) ²3.1 (M. Higger—"Seven Minor Treatises") ³San. 59a; cf. Lev. 17.10 ⁴Rom. 13.8-10; cf. Mk. 10.19; Pliny, Letters 10.96 (cf. Appendix, p. 170)

affiliated with Judaism.¹ Yet many believed that this "sojourner" (ger toshab) was expected to observe the Sabbath in some way.² But he was not to observe it as strictly as the Jew. He was, according to some, to behave as a Jew on a Festival, and according to others as a Jew on the holy days between the feast days (Hol ha-Moed).³ On a Festival a Jew could prepare and cook food or do anything which could not well be attended to before the holy day. On the interval between the feast days, as at Passover and Succoth, the Jew could attend to pressing work, but at the same time should remember in various ways the sanctity of those days. If strict Jews could be so lenient, we can well surmise the procedure of liberal Christians.

Certainly liberal Christianity was in no mood to enforce Jewish laws upon the Gentile. No more representative statement of the opinion of this group could be found than that attributed to Peter, "Why therefore do you make trial of God, to place a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"⁴ Now, although the Gentiles were not required to accept Judaism, when they became followers of Jesus, they received the Spirit just the same as Jews.⁵ This was at first amazing to some Jews, that in their intercourse with Christian Gentiles, no difference could be noted in their manner of life and in their spirit from the Jews themselves.⁶ Paul utilized this fact to the utmost, both in his attempt to keep the Gentiles from accepting Jewish law,⁷ and in supporting his case among the apostles.⁸ But, if these Gentiles could receive the Spirit without observing Jewish law, what was the necessity for observing it longer? So they concluded that there was now a new law, the law of the Spirit, which had

¹Gerim 3.1; Abodah Zarah 64b ²Yebamot 48b ³Keritot 9a;
Mekilta on Ex. 23.12 ⁴Acts 15.10 ⁵Acts 15.7-9 ⁶Acts 10.45
⁷Gal. 3.2 ⁸Acts 15.12; 21.19, 20

superseded the old. It is most probable, therefore, that the presence of the Gentiles gave a great impetus to the rejection of Jewish law. Later, as we shall see, as the numbers of Gentiles increased, this spirit of departure from Judaism became more marked.

The Apostle Paul, who lived in this environment, was not only moulded by it, but he was the living voice of the movement, giving it expression and developing it to its logical consequences. He made full use of the experience of the Gentiles, in possessing the Spirit apart from "the works of the law." Indeed, their experience makes it perfectly plain that "a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ."¹ These Gentiles who are not the heritors of the law "do by nature the things of the law" and "show the work of the law written in their hearts."² So the adoption of Jewish ceremonial was not necessary, since they possessed the Spirit within that enabled them to live righteously. When they were led by the Spirit, they were not under the law. Indeed, the law had no jurisdiction over such things as "love, joy, peace," the fruits of the Spirit.³ Christians were thus not irresponsible persons, utterly lawless, but possessed a higher law, that of the Spirit, and so the law became fulfilled in them.⁴ This law was fulfilled when one loved his neighbor.⁵ Jesus had indeed put the main emphasis upon love to God and neighbor, declaring it to be the supreme commandment.⁶ But to Paul, it was the only commandment, in which all worthwhile commandments were included and fulfilled. All other laws were null and void, so far as Paul was concerned. Whatever commandment there was that was binding could be summed up under this law of love.⁷ It was this that stood forth as the gold in Judaism that was worthy

¹Gal. 2.16 ²Rom. 2.14, 15 ³Gal. 5.22, 23 ⁴Rom. 8.4 ⁵Rom. 13.8
⁶Mk. 12.30, 31 ⁷Rom. 13.9

to be passed on to the Gentiles. The law became henceforth not an external obligation, but an internal possession.

This belief, to Paul, was no mere theological dogma. It was the expression of his own experience. Trained in the law as he was, he knew full well its many burdensome details. Conscientious man as he was, he realized how difficult it was to justify himself before God in this way, because the law was so difficult to observe.¹ So he was led to say, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin."² Therefore its only function was to reveal sin and to lead to the only means of justification, Christ.³ But the law was a bitter thralldom. Those who observe it are "under the law;" and Christ redeems, or ransoms those under the law as though they were slaves.⁴ The observers of the law are like sons of a slave woman.⁵ Paul advised the Galatians not to become Jews, saying, "Be not entangled in a yoke of bondage."⁶

But Paul felt that what the law could not do for him, Jesus somehow had accomplished.⁷ Jesus had himself fulfilled the law in his own spirit of love to God and humanity. It was this spirit, passing from one life to another, that was Christianity's great power. Paul had received the vision of the resurrected Christ on the Damascus road. It was therefore natural for Paul to interpret his receiving the spirit of Christ in terms of a union with him in his death and resurrection. He said that Jesus "was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification."⁸ The obligation of the law was somehow fulfilled in Christ by his death. The ordinances were "nailed to the cross."⁹ We were reconciled to God through the death of Jesus, and we

¹Gal. 3.10; 5.3; Rom. 2.25, cf. James 2.10 ²Rom. 3.20 ³Rom. 7.7, 13; Gal. 3.24 ⁴Gal. 4.5 ⁵Gal. 4.23 ⁶Gal. 5.1 ⁷Rom. 8.3
⁸Rom. 4.25 ⁹Col. 2.14

shall be saved by his life.¹ Significant is the statement, "Ye were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God."² Somehow the advantages of Jesus' death and resurrection were made efficacious to the Christians by a mystic union with Jesus, called "faith in Christ." Paul had so identified himself with Christ that he had been crucified with him. So he died so far as the law was concerned, and he possessed a new principle of life. Christ, as it were, lived in him.³ This new "righteousness of God," "apart from the law" came "through faith in Jesus Christ."⁴ Therefore, "a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."⁵ This faith in Jesus that brings union and identification with him is completely realized and symbolized by the sacraments, the eucharist and baptism. In baptism Paul believed that the Christian is buried with Christ, is united with him in the likeness of his death, and one's former self is crucified, no longer in bondage to sin. And, "as Christ was raised from the dead, so we also walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."⁶ The old has therefore passed away. The law must give place to the spirit.

That Paul believed the law abolished by Jesus' death and resurrection is evident from his later attitude. Paul's ideas can be easily discovered merely from the opposition that he created. Since Paul was, as we shall see, extremely careful in his handling of everyone in order to promote his gospel, he must have possessed considerable heterodoxy to arouse such opposition. In place after place that he visited, the Jews rose up in opposition, plotting against him, and

¹Rom. 5.10 ²Rom. 7.4 ³Gal. 2.19, 20 ⁴Rom. 3.21, 22 ⁵Rom. 3.28 ⁶Rom. 6.3-11

at last putting an end to his ministry. At Jerusalem he was charged with teaching Jews to forsake the law, "telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs," and teaching "all men everywhere against the law."¹ Luke's extreme mildness in stating Paul's position and in emphasizing certain conservative practices of his may perhaps be explained by the fact that he had learned well from his teacher to "become all things to all men," in order that by all means he might save some.² At least we must say that the charges brought against Paul comport well with all that we know of his teachings. In no uncertain language he tells us his position: "not being myself under the law,"³ and "at one time in Judaism."⁴ These statements reveal very clearly that he was not only opposed to Gentiles becoming Jews, but that he himself had departed from Jewish law. He was free to include himself when he said, "*Our* liberty in Christ Jesus."⁵ We may conclude with this decisive statement, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ."⁶

This freedom of the spirit thus released Paul from a bondage to any external law. No law, as such, was to be observed. Individual circumstances had always to be taken into account in determining his action. Their results, or consequences, were for him the decisive factor. Quite characteristic is his affirmation, "All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient."⁷ This explains for us many seeming contradictions in his character. He could make the above radical statements and at the same time preach in the synagogues on the Sabbath and subject himself to the ceremony of purification in order to show conservative Christians that he was still an observer of the

¹Acts 21.21, 28 ²1 Cor. 9.22 ³1 Cor. 9.20 ⁴Gal. 1.13 ⁵Gal. 2.4
⁶Gal. 2.16 ⁷1 Cor. 10.23

law.¹ We must realize that Paul felt these matters of minor consequence compared to his great task of making the gospel known. Since the rightness or wrongness of an act depended upon its results, he felt himself justified in adjusting himself to various attitudes, in order that the great cause for which he had devoted his life might be advanced. Illuminating for us are Paul's words, "To the Jew I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake."²

All these phases of Paul's belief are valuable to aid us in understanding his attitude toward the Sabbath. Paul's view of the law had a direct bearing upon this attitude. And his idea of expediency enabled him to be undogmatic as to which day or days should be observed. In popular thought it has long been believed that Paul and the early Christians discarded only the ceremonial part of Judaism, while the moral part remained still binding. The very center of the moral law was the Ten Commandments. But such a distinction cannot be made. The Sabbath itself, as it was conducted among the Jews, was filled with ceremonial, being really the center of the Jewish ceremonial system and forming in effect a ceremonial law. Indeed, it would be difficult to find precepts more irksome than the ones on Sabbath observance.

Certainly Paul made no exception in favor of the Sabbath. If anything was a burden leading to bondage, it was

¹Acts 21.21-26 ²1 Cor. 9.20-23; cf. 1 Cor. 10.32, 33

the Jewish Sabbath law. Highly significant was the connection in which Paul dealt with the Sabbath. He told his readers that they had been buried with Christ in baptism and also raised with him through faith and made alive with him. And the bond or obligation that was found in ordinances against us, that was contrary to our very natures and opposing us at every turn, God blotted out and abolished, "nailing it to the cross." Then there follows the important statement, "Therefore, (because of this fact) let no one judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a festival, or a new moon or a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's."¹ These Jewish observances, which were ordinances against us, are now abolished. They were only a shadow of things to come—they only prefigured the important truth, the body, which was to be found in the Christian faith. There can be no doubt that the above mentioned Sabbath was the Jewish seventh day of the week. In the Old Testament law, the designation of "Sabbath" was only extended to the Day of Atonement and there only by analogy to the seventh day of the week.² Furthermore, this triad of new moon, Sabbath and feasts was too familiar a classification for us to have any doubt as to the meaning of the Sabbath here.³

This very clearcut affirmation that the Sabbath had been superseded enables us to understand other statements of the Apostle. He told the Galatians, "How is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you wish to be in bondage over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid

¹Col. 2.12-17 ²Lev. 16.31; "shabbaton" in Lev. 23.24, 39 is quite distinct from "shabat," although "shabat shabbaton" is sometimes used for emphasis to designate the Sabbath, as in Ex. 16.23; Lev. 23.3 ³2 Chron. 8.12, 13; cf. 1 Chron. 23.31; Isa. 1.13

of you, lest I have bestowed labor upon you in vain."¹ In the light of the previous passage, we can scarcely miss his meaning. These stated periods of ritual are only mentioned in another form and designated as beggarly elements, the observance of which would lead them into bondage.

We thus see that Paul's attitude toward the Sabbath is exactly the same as his more general attitude toward the law. It is a yoke of bondage that the new era has abolished. But although fully aware of the perils of the Sabbath, he did not lay down a law that the Sabbath was not to be observed at all. That would be to substitute one law for another. His principle of expediency made everything flexible. Individual judgment and human needs were to determine whether any day was to be observed and which day. Paul was free to say, "One man considers one day above another; another considers every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind."² Christians are no longer subject to any rigid, external law. They are led by the Spirit. The Lord alone is the judge. These minor differences must not be allowed to become a stumblingblock to any in the attainment of the important values of Christianity. That there were real differences in the practice of this early church seems very evident. It was prominent enough to be a real issue in the church demanding Paul's attention. That this "day" of religious observance was the weekly day of worship seems most probable. This was the most important day for the Christians. So the indefinite reference to "day" would make this day stand out as the most likely. The fact that there were some who observed every day alike would seem to point to the weekly day of worship as the alternative. Perhaps this

¹Gal. 4.9-11 ²Rom. 14.5; cf. Rom. 14.1-13 (ὅς μὲν κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν, ὅς δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν.)

day was the Sabbath, or it may well have been Sunday,¹ or perhaps both. At least this "day" was a day of the week chosen for religious worship. The alternative was either a discriminating between days or regarding them all alike, all to be observed in some way. So great was the fervor of many, perhaps partly due to their expectance of the speedy coming of the Messiah in Glory, that every day they met religiously. We read that early disciples in Jerusalem were daily in the Temple and were daily "breaking bread" in their homes.² This general interpretation of the apostle's meaning of "day" seems corroborated also, not only by our previous study of his general attitude, but by the later practice of the church. About a century after Paul, Justin Martyr in his defense of Christianity against the Jews, made it very clear that the Sabbath had been abrogated and that every day was to be considered sacred. He said, "The new law requires you to keep perpetual Sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious."³ Origen, who followed Paul in so many of his ideas, assumes the same disregard for special days, saying, "To the perfect Christian, always in words, in deeds and in thoughts belonging by nature to the Lord, God the Word, always is His in the days and he is always keeping the Lord's days. . . . But the great part of those who appear to believe, not being so advanced, either not being able or not willing to keep all days in such a manner, need for the sake of remembrance a concrete example, lest the ideal be obscured."⁴ Even as late as the third century we find a very flexible practice in the Eastern Church. We read, "Do not prefer the needs of this life to the Word of God, but assemble together every day at early dawn and evening, singing and praying in the churches. . . . But especi-

¹Acts 20.7 ²Acts 2.46 ³Dialogue with Trypho - 12 ⁴Against Celsus 8.22, 23 (1st half of third century)

ally on the day of the Sabbath and on the resurrection day of the Lord, the Lord's day, meet more diligently."¹ So it is evident that Paul's opposition to any set law or rigidity as to the day of worship was of enormous influence in the practice of the early church. But although he did not lay down any rule as to a day or days of religious observance, he was a mighty influence in tearing down the ceremonial character of the Sabbath, and in so destroying its sanctions that Christianity could be free to adopt any policy of religious observance, with regard only to the practical purpose in view.

This influence of Paul is very plain in subsequent Christian writers. Indeed, because of the lessened influence of the Jews due to the political events of 70 A.D. and the years following when the center of Jewish worship, Jerusalem, was destroyed, and because of the enormous increase of Gentile-Christians, we find Paul's ideas not only reproduced, but made even more emphatic.

The Fourth Gospel reveals the influence of the Apostle, not only in ideas, but in the very mode of expression. The belief that Jesus had somehow ushered in a new order is shown by the words, "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."² As we have noticed, the Sabbath controversy was given an especial emphasis. Jesus not only healed on the Sabbath, but he said, "Arise, take up your bed and walk."³ This blunt way of speaking and deliberate breaking of the Sabbath is also shown by the words, "My father worketh hitherto and I work."⁴ It is also written that when Jesus was speaking with Jews who prided themselves on being of Abraham's seed, never in bondage to any man, he said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Even the

¹Apostolic Constitutions 2.59 (Cf. App., p. 175) ²1.17 ³5.8
⁴5.17

figure of Paul is included—"The bondservant abideth not in the house forever; the son abideth forever."¹ The gospel is not only the best way of life. It is the one true way. The Pharisees and those who attempt another way are thieves and robbers. Jesus came to bring abundant life.² They are busy studying the Scriptures, for they think there is life in the Law, but they do not have life, because they do not become Christians.³

In this later period after Paul, the harsh expressions of anti-Judaism, which are so striking and so much more emphatic than anything Paul had said, are readily explained by the presence in predominating numbers of Gentiles who before their conversion were bitter against the Jews. The pagan writer, Plutarch, about the close of the first century compared the preservation of the Sabbath to filth and superstition.⁴ The Gnostics, who on becoming Christians, could not be converted to any form of Judaism, especially reveal the pagan opposition to anything Jewish. In the second century Marcion proclaimed a fast on the Sabbath in opposition to the God of the Jews who created this evil world of matter, because this God rested on the seventh day.⁵ Orthodox Christianity chose a middle course between the Judaism of the Ebionites and the Anti-Judaism of the Gnostics. It was natural that these extremes should meet in a syncretism that retained elements of both. But the very radicalism of the Gnostics reveals a tendency that was to an extent operative within normal Christianity. Paul had paved the way for this development. The church readily followed.

In the beginning of the second century, Ignatius did not consider it proper for Christians to observe the customs of the Jews, saying, "It is out of place to name the name of

¹8.32-35 ²10.1,7-10 ³5.39,40
⁴Epiphanius, Against Heresies, 42.3

⁴On Superstition 166A

Jesus Christ and Judaize." The symbol of this Judaizing was the observance of the Sabbath, for Christians were "no longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord's Day."¹ This writing assumes double significance, since Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, the very center of the Pauline influence. About the same time the "Didache," or "The Teaching by the Apostles," could record the change from the weekly fast days of the Jews in such terms as this—"Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites."²

The Epistle of Barnabas,³ also of this period, exhibits a curious use of the Scriptures of the Jews, but rejects Judaism. Judaism and anti-Judaism are curiously united, a tendency quite common in early Christianity, due to its mixed heritage. When the Jewish Scriptures were too Judaistic, they could be allegorized away, and Christians really outdid the rabbis in their ability in this direction. According to the author, the Jews were too material-minded to see the significance of their own Scriptures, but the eyes of the Christians had been opened, so they could understand the real meaning. The Christian abolition of the Sabbath could be readily explained from the Hebrew Scriptures, for had not Isaiah said, "Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure"⁴ "These things then he abolished in order that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have its obligation not made by man." So Christians then "ought to understand the loving intention of our Father, for He speaks to us, wishing that we should not err like them" (*i.e.* the Jews).⁵ The institution of the Sabbath as a memorial of the rest from the creation was something rather difficult to allegorize away, but not too difficult for these Christians. Indeed, the way had already been pre-

¹Ignatius, To the Magnesians, 9 ²Didache 8 ³10.11, 12
⁴Isa. 1.13 ⁵Epistle of Barnabas 2.4-9

pared within Judaism itself. A considerable time before this¹ the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, probably taking the "thousand years as yesterday" from the Psalmist,² had developed the creation story into a prediction of the final events of man's destiny, including the "second coming" of God, and the final departure of man from earth after seven thousand years into a state of bliss. God is represented as saying to man, "Earth thou art, and into the earth whence I took thee thou shalt go, and I will not ruin thee, but send thee whence I took thee. Then I can again take thee at my second coming. And I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he rested from all his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, and that the first seven revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours."³ It was therefore easy for the author of the Epistle of Barnabas to adapt these ideas to Christian conceptions. He wrote, "Give heed, children, to what it means, 'He ended in six days.' This means that in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end. For the day with him means a thousand years. . . . Not therefore, children, in six days,—in six thousand years all things shall be ended. 'And he rested the seventh day.' This means—when his son coming shall abolish the time of the lawless one, and shall judge the wicked and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then he shall rightly rest the seventh day. . . . Further, he says to them, 'Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You see what he means, not the present Sabbaths are acceptable unto me, but that

¹Not later than 70 A.D., as the temple was still in existence.
290.4 32,33

which I have made, in which having rested from all things I shall make a beginning on the eighth day, which is the beginning of another world."¹ The Sabbath was, therefore, definitely regarded as abolished, and was reinterpreted in the light of current eschatology.

But perhaps the best explanation by Christians for the abolition of Jewish laws, including the Sabbath, and the most accurate following of the Pauline tradition is given by Irenaeus. Regarding the law, he says, "That man was not justified by these things, but that they were given as a sign to the people, this fact shows,—that Abraham himself, without *circumcision* and without observance of *Sabbaths*, 'believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God'." At this time "the righteous fathers had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbor. There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates, because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves. But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and become extinct in Egypt," then God prescribed these laws. "The laws of bondage, however, were one by one promulgated to the people by Moses. . . . These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled by the new covenant of liberty. But He has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to men largely and without grudging, by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love Him with the whole heart, and to fol-

¹Ch. 15, Epistle of Barnabas—That these ideas were prevalent at this period in Christian circles is shown by their presence in Revelation, where they are exactly reproduced—the rest of a thousand years and then "a new heaven and a new earth."—Rev. 20.3; 21.1; cf. 2 Pet. 3.7-13

low His Word unswervingly, while they abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them."¹ This is a faithful following of Paul's abolition of the laws of bondage and the acceptance of those laws only which were included under the religion of love. It is significant that he calls special attention to circumcision and the observance of Sabbaths as being of only temporary value.

These two distinguishing marks of Judaism were constantly singled out for mention as being abolished in the Christian era. Justin Martyr especially did this in his noteworthy "Dialogue" with a Jew, Trypho. He says very emphatically, "Do you see that the elements are not idle, and keep no Sabbaths? Remain as you were born. For there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now."² He said that the Christians would observe all these ceremonies, if they did not know the reason why they had been enjoined—namely on account of the Jews' transgressions, and hardness of heart.³ He stated frankly the reason for the Christians' differences with the Jews—"Is there any other matter, my friends, in which we are blamed, than this, that we live not after the law, and are not circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers were, and do not observe Sabbaths as you do?" He also declared, "The law promulgated on Horeb is now old and belongs to yourselves alone; but this is for all universally. Now, law placed against law has abrogated that which is before it, and a covenant which comes after in like manner has put an end to the previous one; and an eternal and final law—namely Christ—has been

¹Against Heresies 4.16.2, 3 (about A.D. 180) ²Ch. 33 (c. 150 A.D.) In the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (6.18 - tr. Connolly p. 236) similar ideas are expressed with the addition that the Sabbath was established merely as a type of the final rest. ³Ch. 18

given to us, and the covenant is trustworthy, after which there shall be no law, no commandment, no ordinance."¹ Justin not only displayed a strong anti-Judaism, but he also indicated that the Jews had displayed great hatred and opposition to the Christians. He said that they cursed in their synagogues those who believed in Christ. Although they had not now the power to lay hands on the Christians, he said, "as often as you could, you did so."² They also displayed great zeal in spreading prejudice against Christianity,³ and death punishments were inflicted upon many Christians by the authorities through the aid of Jews.⁴ The early Christian writers were often so filled with anti-Semitism that the condemnation of the Jews by the prophets were utilized to the full. These condemnations struck a responsive chord in the hearts of the Christians. Justin reveals this harsh anti-Semitism when he says, Christians are "more intelligent and God-fearing than yourselves, who are considered to be lovers of God, and men of understanding, but are not."⁵

Tertullian followed Justin Martyr in affirming that circumcision and the Sabbath were only of temporary significance, since "God established Adam neither circumcised, nor observing the Sabbath."⁶ In no uncertain manner he wrote, "There was to come a time when the precepts of the old law and the old ceremonies would cease, and the promise of the new law supervene. That old law has ceased, and the promised new law is now in operation."⁷ From all these great representatives of early Christianity, there can be no doubt as to the main drift of the Christian tradition. It was decidedly opposed to the laws and ceremonies of Judaism. And circumcision and the Sabbath were characteristic symbols of Jewish law.

¹Ch. 10, 11 ²Ch. 16 ³Ch. 17 ⁴Ch. 131 ⁵Ch. 118 ⁶Against the Jews - 2 (c. 200 A.D.) ⁷Ch. 6

Therefore, they had to bear the brunt of the attack. As for the Sabbath, although elements of worth had been retained and preserved in the Christian Sunday, yet the early Christians believed this institution abolished forever in the new era. There was to them no idea of mere transfer from Sabbath to Sunday. The Sabbath was annulled and the only substitute was the eternal Sabbath, the Sabbath which the Christian keeps every day and the Sabbath at the end of the age. These Christians were in no danger of calling the first day of the week, the Sabbath. To them the Sabbath was too repugnant, reminding them of the ceremonies of Judaism.

Later writers only emphasized these ideas. In the Epistle to Diognetus we find this strong statement, "I do not think that you require to learn anything from me as to their scrupulosity concerning meats, and superstition as respects the Sabbath, and their boasting about circumcision, and their fancies about fasting and the new moons, which are utterly ridiculous and unworthy of notice."¹ In the so-called Acts of Peter, it is recorded that Paul said, "Christ abolished your Sabbath and your fasts and your festivals and your circumcision."² This statement, though quite unhistorical, is quite indicative of the attitude of the time toward Jewish ceremonies. In the Canons of Laodicea we read, "Christians must not Judaize and rest on the Sabbath, but they must work upon that day, and honor rather the Lord's Day and, if they can, rest upon it as Christians, but if they be found Judaizing, let them be anathema before Christ."³ How far Christianity had traveled from the paths of the earliest Jewish-Christians! The view of Augustine is milder, but still decisive—"The rest of the Sabbath we consider no longer binding as an

¹Section 4
(1924), p. 231

²E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*
³Canon 29 (c. 365 A.D.)

observance, now that the hope of our eternal rest has been revealed."¹ "There was a time when it was proper that these things should be figuratively predicted and there is now a different time, when it is proper that they should be openly declared and fully accomplished. . . . Reply, if you can, to the apostle, who declares that the rest of the Sabbath was a shadow of something future."² We may thus see that the Pauline ideas were influential in determining the thought of the church, and as Gentiles were thereby encouraged to enter the Christian ranks in large numbers, this drift was further intensified. Although conservative elements were not absent, the main tide of the church flowed in the direction of Christian liberty and the abolition of Jewish law. First and foremost among the Jewish laws to be abolished was the Sabbath.

¹Reply to Faustus 6.4 ²16.28

3. CONSERVATIVE TRENDS.

Although, as we have seen, the main current of Christian thought was steadily departing from Jewish laws and ceremonies, yet we cannot have a true picture of life in the early church unless we include the conservative elements. It is quite apparent that Christianity made no sudden break with Judaism at the start. At the very beginning the Christians formed a group within Judaism. They were a group of reformers who sought to overcome the excessive externalism of the scribes and Pharisees, and to lead the people back to the original intent of the law—love in the human heart to God and fellowmen. Although no doubt treating many of the minor restrictions of the law lightly, as was the custom among the common people, they possessed a deep reverence for the law of their nation, which to them was the law of God. His commandments were written upon their hearts and intensified by the conviction that soon His Kingdom was to be fully manifested in the appearance of their Messiah.

So they were not only loyal, but zealous Jews. In fact, they were so enthusiastic that every day they were to be found in the temple.¹ They were so in accord with Judaism that they were popular with most of the people.² When the hour of prayer came, Peter and John, like any other Jews, went up to the temple.³ Peter was so loyal to Judaism that he could say, "I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." It was only by a vision that he was induced to associate with unclean people, the Gentiles, and seek to convert them.⁴ When Peter returned to the "brethren" he was required to justify this unusual con-

¹Acts 2.46; 5.42; cf. 5.21 ²2.47 ³3.1; cf. 10.9 ⁴10.14, 28

duct.¹ And Peter, on the arrival of Jewish-Christians at Antioch, ceased eating with the Gentiles, "fearing them that were of the circumcision" who had come from James.² Some Christians from Judea even went to newly converted Gentiles and demanded circumcision as a condition of becoming a Christian. So Jewish was early Christianity that Pharisees could believe and charge Christians to be circumcised and keep the laws of Moses.³ The more moderate view that prevailed, although not requiring Gentiles to observe the whole law, certainly gave no license to Jews to abandon the law. They even required Gentiles, in order to consider themselves Christians, to observe such Jewish peculiarities as abstinence from "things strangled and from blood."⁴ The only reason why more was not commanded was that Moses was "being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."⁵ So why should not the Gentiles become indoctrinated with Judaism, since they observed the Sabbath by going with Jews to the synagogue and hearing Moses read. Such was the reasoning of James which prevailed in the church. At this time the Jerusalem church had not even a suspicion that Judaism was inconsistent with Christianity. The only concern with them was whether or not Gentilism was consistent with Christianity. They wondered—Could one be a Gentile and at the same time a Christian? The issue was settled in favor of the Gentiles as we have seen, but the very discussion of such an issue reveals how Judaistic early Christianity was in its most influential center, Jerusalem, and among its most influential representatives, the apostles. The early church at Jerusalem was so conservative that they could tell Paul, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law."⁶

¹11.2, 3 ²Gal. 2.12 ³Acts 15.1, 5 ⁴15.29; cf. p. 34 ⁵15.21
⁶21.20

Paul felt the pressure of Judaism so constantly in Christian circles that he was required to make many concessions in the interest of expediency. In fact, Christianity was so much a part of Judaism that at first his primary concern was to preach to the Jews. The Christians were such an integral part of Judaism that when Paul, before his conversion, went to Damascus on his errand of persecution, it was within the synagogues that he expected to find the Christians.¹ And it was there that Paul "preached Christ" at once after his conversion.² Christians before him, who were liberal enough to be driven out of Judea, did not at first preach to the Gentiles, but only to the Jews.³ Habitually, Paul, in his missionary journeys, on entering a town would make a straight course to the synagogue, preaching on the Sabbath, making his converts among the Jews and Greek "God-fearers" who attended the synagogue. He followed this practice at Salamis, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus.⁴ At Antioch of Pisidia we read that he entered the synagogue, not in the capacity of a preacher, but as a simple worshipper, but during the service was called on to preach. It was only after Paul could no longer gain admittance to a synagogue to preach that he devoted his ministry exclusively to the Gentiles. But at Corinth, when he could no longer preach in the synagogue, he chose an adjoining house and actually converted the ruler of the synagogue.⁵

It was therefore natural for Paul to adapt himself considerably to Judaism. In accordance with his policy of pleasing the Jews, he could even circumcise Timothy.⁶ Although Timothy's mother was a Jewess, the context clearly shows that Paul's act was quite optional, and was done to win the confidence of the Jews. To reassure the Jews of

¹Acts 9.2 ²9.20 ³11.19 ⁴13.5, 14, 15; 14.1; 16.13; 17.1, 2, 10, 16; 18.4, 19 ⁵18.6-8 ⁶16.3

Jerusalem that he was still a law-observer, he entered the ceremony of purification and had an offering made for himself in the temple.¹ He later asserted before his captors that he believed "all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets."² No doubt the Hebrew Scriptures had a different significance for Paul than for the ordinary Jews, and was interpreted differently, yet at least it was "from the law of Moses and from the prophets" that Paul persuaded the Jews concerning Jesus.³ This practice of accepting the Jewish Scriptures as authoritative, although adopting a Christian interpretation of them, was influential in the practice of the later church.

Except for a few hints in Galatians, we are forced to accept the tradition of the Acts as our main source for these conservative trends of the church. It may well be that the emphasis in places is a bit exaggerated, due to the author's desire to reconcile opposing parties, so that Paul is sometimes Petrified and Peter is Paulinized. Yet the tradition in the main is to be accepted, not merely because we possess no evidence against it, but also because this body of material best fits in with the other facts which we know. Luke's inclusion of all this conservative material is striking witness of the influence of Jewish-Christianity in his own day, that he should desire to put in the foreground these conservative aspects of Christianity. Indeed, many features of Christianity would be hard to explain, did we not possess the book of the Acts. Why should Christianity, for example, desire to retain the Hebrew Scriptures as inspired, when it had departed so considerably from their teachings, and then seek to reinterpret them to fit Christian ideas? Christianity's connection with Judaism was too real for it to be otherwise. Why should so many Jewish ideas

¹Acts 21.26 ²24.14 ³28.23

and customs pass over into Christianity? And how further, could we account for the presence of the large body of Jewish Christians, the Ebionites, were it not for the traditions of the Acts?

The facts that we know about these Jewish-Christians are explained very readily from the material we have considered. Shortly before 70 A.D. when the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, the Jewish-Christians removed to Pella, across the Jordan. They became known as Ebionites.¹ No longer at the center of influence, Jerusalem, and no longer possessing such an authoritative head as James, the brother of Jesus, for he had been stoned,² they rapidly dwindled in authority and influence in Christendom. The destruction of the Temple also had disintegrated the very center of Jewish ceremonial. Among the non-Christian Jews, the rabbis complained that lawlessness had developed, the scholars were not respected, and no one consulted them on questions of law.³ The contrast between early and later Christianity is thus very striking. Formerly the Jewish-Christians had deliberated on what terms Gentiles could be Christians. In the later period they themselves were despised as a peculiar sect. Formerly they had dictated the terms upon which Gentiles could fellowship with them as Christians. Later Gentile-Christians could state the terms upon which Jewish-Christians could associate with them. The question before was—How could a Gentile be a Christian? Later the question became—How could a Jew be a Christian? Only a century was necessary to bring about this marvelous transformation. About a century after the Apostolic Council Justin Martyr could write concerning the Jewish-Christians: "If they, on account of the weakness of their intelligence, are able then for such things as

¹Eusebius Church History 3.5.3; cf. Origen against Celsus 2.1
²Jos. Ant. 20.9.1 (Ed. Niese 20.200) ³Sota 9.14, 15

are in the laws of Moses, which we believe were appointed on account of the hardness of people's hearts, together with the hope in this Christ, and if they wish to observe the eternal and natural acts of righteousness and piety and choose to live with the Christians and the faithful, not inducing them either to be circumcised like themselves, or to keep the Sabbath or to observe any other such ceremonies, then I advise that we should add them (to our number) and share all things with them as born of the same womb and brothers."¹ By the fifth century Jerome could deny that they were Christians, writing, "What shall I say of Ebion who pretended to be a Christian?" and also—"While they wish to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews nor Christians."²

This group of Ebionites well maintained the conservative traditions of the early church. Irenaeus gives us the following information—"They use the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law. They practice circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoined by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God."³ According to Hippolytus they believed that Jesus became the Christ by completely observing the law, and when they themselves were able to fulfil the law, they would be Christs.⁴ Eusebius gives us an interesting contribution—that at least a considerable group of these Ebionites, although conservative enough to reject the Epistles of Paul, call him an apostate from the law and use only "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," yet they observed both Sabbath and Sunday.⁵ This is of great im-

¹Dialogue ch. 47 ²Epistle 112 (ch. 13) ³Against Heresies 1.26.2 ⁴Hippolytus (c. 230 A.D.) Refutation of all Heresies 7.22; cf. Tertullian, Against all Heresies 2.3 ⁵Church History 3.27 (App. p. 176)

portance for our study, because these conservative Jews, who were so little affected by Gentile influences, are first-rate witnesses for the life of the church in conservative circles of primitive Christianity.

These Jewish-Christians have an interesting connection with the Gospel of Matthew. But a distinction must be made between two classes of Jewish-Christians, the above more conservative—the Ebionites, and the more liberal—the Nazarenes. Theodoret tells us that the former used the “Gospel according to Hebrews,” and called Paul an apostate, while the latter used only the “Gospel according to Matthew,” and accepted the Virgin Birth.¹ That these two gospels were very similar, and that they originated from the Jewish-Christian group is indicated by Epiphanius who tells us that the full edition of Matthew used by them was in Hebrew and since the book was originally in Hebrew it evidently came from them.² It is at least interesting that the only gospel to mention a supposed prophecy, “that he should be called a Nazarene” should come from the circle of the Nazarenes.³ That this group continued the hostility between the Am ha’Ares and the Pharisees is abundantly clear. Even in Jerome’s time, the Pharisees singled them out for condemnation.⁴ The Nazarene interpretation of prophecy allows us to behold the great bitterness that existed between the two groups. Jerome tells us, “The Nazarenes attempt to explain this passage (Isa. 9.1) as follows: When Christ had come and the proclamation of that one gleamed, first the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali has been freed from the errors of the Scribes and Pharisees, and he has shaken off from their necks the very grievous yoke of the Jewish traditions.”⁵ Further,

¹Compendium haereticarum fabularum 2.1, 2 ²Heresies 29.7
³Mt. 2.23 (perhaps from Isa. 11.1; cf. Jerome, In Isa. 4.11.1)
⁴Ep. 112 (ch. 13) ⁵In Isa. 3.9.1

Jerome, who spent many years at Bethlehem, tells us in his commentary on Isaiah, “That which we have understood pertained to the devil and his angels, the Nazarenes think are words against the Scribes and Pharisees.”¹ We can imagine the bitterness that existed. New significance is thus added to the condemnations of the Pharisees so often found in Matthew. It is interesting to watch the passages peculiar to this gospel. One passage is particularly strong. Although Luke has a somewhat similar passage, the extreme outbursts of Matthew are not included. For example, Matthew in verses 25-29 of chapter 23 has three times the denunciation, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” Verse 33 is the strongest of all—“Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?”

The Gospel of Matthew thus finds itself quite at home in this circle of the Nazarenes. We are right in suspecting that a gospel must come from a very conservative group which, in spite of such denunciations of the Pharisees, could include the words, “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe, but do not according to their works; for they say and do not.”² We are now prepared to consider Matthew’s peculiar addition concerning the Sabbath. In the discussion of the dire events that were to occur at the end of the age, we read in Mark,³ “Pray that it (this event) may not be in winter.” Matthew adds, “Pray that your flight may not be in winter *nor on the Sabbath.*”⁴ This addition⁵ would be quite astounding, did we not know the conservative Christian circle from which it sprang. It

¹In Isa. 9.17-21 (ch. 29) ²23.2, 3 ³13.18 ⁴24.20 ⁵Whether this is a pure addition, or a retention of a conservative clause that the more liberal gospel, Mark, preferred to drop does not concern us here.

is quite unnecessary to seek to explain this addition, as Boll,¹ by pointing out pagan superstitious notions about the seventh day. It is more to the point to consider the Jewish setting from which it was derived. It is to be admitted that according to Matthew this flight could take place on the Sabbath as well as in winter, but it would be a decidedly unfortunate occurrence. Theoretically, at least, the Jews were permitted to break the Sabbath for such an extremity. R. Eleazer b. Perata was once asked if one could flee on the Sabbath. But he feared to answer it directly, but gave an indirect answer that it was permissible.² Josephus, at about this same period avoided fighting on the Sabbath, saying, "I could not take up arms on the next day, because our laws forbade us so to do, even though our necessity should be very great."³ The Jews thus feared to break the law even in great need, because they would thereby invoke upon themselves the displeasure of God. In Josephus, King Agrippa was speaking to the multitude to dissuade them from entering upon the war that was to lead to the disastrous events of the year 70 A.D. In this speech he maintained that their Sabbath laws gave them a hopeless handicap—"How," said he, "Can you then hope for God's assistance, when, by being forced to transgress his law, you will make him turn his face from you?"⁴ We are now able to appreciate the full force of Matthew's addition—"nor on the Sabbath." It reveals clearly that the group of the Nazarenes were in full accord with the prevalent Jewish notions of the Sabbath, that it was decidedly unfortunate to break this law, even though dire extremity should make it necessary.

It is abundantly clear that these Jewish-Christians did

¹Franz Boll, *Aus der Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 134 ²Strack-Billerbeck *Kommentar*—on Mt. 24.20; cf. Er. 45a ³Jos. Life 32 (Ed. Niese 161) ⁴Jos. Wars 2.16.4 (Ed. Niese 2.391, 392)

not regard the Sabbath as abolished. It was, for the Jews at least, to be retained as a permanent institution. But they were Christians, as well as Jews, so they did not hesitate to observe both the Jewish and the Christian memorials, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. This conservative, Jewish-Christian practice was retained for many centuries, not merely among the Jewish-Christians, but among various groups of Christians. Especially in the East where Judaism was influential was this the case. In the time of the author of the *Didascalia* there were Christians who were circumcised and observed other features of the Jewish law and who even said that "the Sabbath is prior to the first day of the week."¹ Chrysostom complained that many Christians joined in the Jewish feasts and fasts and "run to their synagogues."² In the "Egyptian Church Order" both Sabbath and Sunday were observed. The influence of Judaism was so great that Sunday was called "the first day of the week," and both sacred days were designated "Sabbaths." We read, "You and your slaves and your servants, do your work five days. And on the Sabbath and First day you shall not do any work in them; but they shall have opportunity for church, and for instruction in the religion of God."³ Even the sacrament of baptism was performed on the Sabbath.⁴ The Eucharist was administered every day of the week, but "on the Sabbath and on the first day of the week the bishop himself with his own hand" gave it to all the people.⁵ At the present time the church in Abyssinia still retains these Jewish-Christian practices. This church was founded from Alexandria where the presence

¹*Didascalia Apostolorum* 6.10, 11, 18 (tr. Connolly, p. 202, 203, 233) (third century) ²Against the Jews 1.1; 8.8 (Migne P.G. 48.844, 941) ³G. Horner, "Statutes of the Apostles," St. 66 (Ethiopic Text)—These two sacred days are found also in the less Jewish Arabic text. ⁴St. 34 (Eth.); St. 33 (Ar.) ⁵St. 35 (Eth.)

of so many Jews would naturally keep Christianity conservative. Then cut off from the rest of the world by the Mohammedan invasion, it retained its customs, so that today, as Tozer tells us, "The Sabbath is still observed as well as the Lord's day; circumcision is practiced."¹ Of great interest is the Confession of Claudius, King of Ethiopia, who in the year 1555 wrote, "Now with regard to our observance of the original Sabbath: We do not keep it as the Jews do, because those Jews neither drink water nor light a fire, neither cook food nor make bread, nor do they move about from house to house; but we keep it in that we celebrate thereon the Lord's Supper, and hold Love Feasts, even as our Fathers the Apostles have instructed us in the Didascalia. We do not observe it as the Sabbath of the first day of the week, which is a new day—concerning which David saith, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it'."²

The influence of conservative Christianity upon the Eastern Church is discernible for several centuries. In addition to the Lord's day, the Sabbath was also observed, though the rigid requirements of Judaism were relaxed. There is a curious variation in Ignatius,³ a later version which is expressive of this conservative tendency. Instead of drawing rigid lines between "sabbatizing" and "living according to the Lord's Day," as the earlier text does, the later text accepts both Sabbath and Lord's day, changing "no longer sabbatizing" to "Let us no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner." The Sabbath was to be

¹H. F. Tozer, *The Church and the Eastern Empire*, p. 83 ²H. M. Hyatt, "The Church of Abyssinia," p. 292f. It is interesting that this Confession resembles both the Ethiopic text of the Egyptian Church Order in calling the first day a Sabbath and the longer version of Ignatius, just to be considered, in calling attention to the difference between their observance of the Sabbath and that of the Jews. ³ad Mag. 9

observed "after a spiritual manner," laying aside such practices as the Sabbath day's journey and the preparing of food the day before, and after this, the Lord's day was to be observed as "queen of all the days." As late as about 425 A.D. Sozomen could write: "The people of Constantinople and of several other cities assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the next day."¹ Socrates tells us that the Arians "held their meetings as often as the festal days occurred—I mean Saturday and Lord's day—in each week, on which assemblies are usually held in the churches."² In as authoritative a church document as the Canons of Laodicea we read that on both Sabbaths and Lord's days, "The Gospels are to be read with the other Scriptures," and "A remembrance of the holy Martyrs is to be made."³ The so-called Apostolic Constitutions is replete with such references. We read that although Christians were to assemble every day at early dawn and evening, "above all, on the Sabbath day and on the Lord's day, meet more diligently."⁴ These two days were to be celebrated as festivals, "since the one is the memorial of the creation, and the other of the Resurrection."⁵ In another passage,⁶ the Sabbath is not only recognized as a memorial of the creation, but as a memorial of Christ, for God "created the world through Christ." So thoroughly had the Sabbath been a recognized institution that it became for the Christians a memorial of Christ.

This abundant evidence which we have cited should make clear to us that the church was by no means unanimous in its radicalism and its abolition of the Sabbath. There were great differences in the early church. A very considerable

¹Church History 7.19 ²Church History 6.8 (early in fifth century) ³Canons 16, 51 (c. 365) (App. p. 177) ⁴2.59 (late third century) (App. p. 175); cf. 5.20; 8.33 ⁵7.23 (App. p. 175, 176) ⁶7.36

section of the church held to the old, while embracing the new. It should be obvious that in the early church of the New Testament time, the Sabbath was not suddenly dropped and the Lord's day instituted to take its place. The process was more gradual, more natural, depending not upon the authority of supernatural sanctions, but upon the authority of the progress of Christian convictions.

The differences in customs between Eastern and Western Christianity afford us an instructive example of the trends of the times. The East was more conservative, more closely in touch with Judaism, and Judaistic Christianity. But in the West the break with Judaism was more complete. There was more bitter hostility. We have already seen how far Marcion could withhold himself from Judaism in fasting on the Sabbath, because it was "the rest of the God of the Jews."¹ As we shall see, the Jew so prided himself in his Sabbath and so rejoiced in it that fasting was considered a desecration. There was, therefore, no more effective way of displaying one's anti-Semitism and break with Jewish customs than by fasting on the Sabbath. It meant the final repudiation of the Sabbath and all that it represented.

Yet in spite of the liberal character of the Western church, Marcion's fasting was rejected by the church for a time as well as his other teachings. Tertullian was very outspoken against it, saying that the Sabbath was "never to be kept as a fast except at the passover season."² In his writing, "Against Marcion," he went so far as to say that if Jesus had commanded his disciples to fast on the Sabbath, "he would have then and there put an end to the Sabbath, nay, to the Creator Himself."³ But it was only a century after this⁴ that Victorinus of Rome could write, "On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on

¹Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* 42.3; cf. p. 46 ²On Fasting, ch. 14 ³4.12 ⁴c. 300 A.D.

the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the preparation become a rigorous fast, lest we 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,'¹ which Sabbath he in his body abolished."² A century after Victorinus, Augustine in his writing showed that fasting on the Sabbath was practised by "the church of Rome and some churches in the West," yet his explanation was different. Whereas the East fasted yearly on the Sabbath before Easter in memory of the lamentation of the death of Jesus by his disciples, the West fasted every week.³ This accords well with the western fondness for the weekly basis of church celebrations, and the theory has much in its favor. But we may well assume that the anti-Jewish consideration, so prominent in Victorinus, was by no means absent as a factor in hastening the observance. It is at least significant that what Tertullian in the West had so strongly maintained, the church in the East retained for many centuries. So strong was the sentiment against fasting on the Sabbath that we read in the Apostolic Canons, "If any one of the clergy be found to fast on the Lord's day, or on the Sabbath-day, excepting one only, let him be deprived; but if he be one of the laity, let him be suspended."⁴ In the Abyssinian Church at the present day in the long fast before Easter an exception is made of Saturday and Sunday.⁵

Not only did the Eastern church refrain from fasting on the Sabbath, but it retained the custom of standing in prayer on this day, as well as on the following day.⁶ But in

¹Isa. 1.13 ²"On the Creation of the World"—Ante-Nicene Fathers (Roberts and Donaldson) 7.341 ³Letter 36 to Casulanus 464 ⁴Samuel Gobat, *Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia*, p. 296 ⁵A. P. Stanley, *The History of the Eastern Church*, p. 159; cf. Eli Smith, *Researches in Armenia* 1.227

the West kneeling in prayer on the Sabbath became the rule. Yet in Tertullian's time there was great dissension on this subject. This church father, who himself had been outspoken against the practice of fasting on the Sabbath, yet was equally outspoken in his condemnation of those who persisted in refraining from kneeling on that day. This standing posture was to be reserved for Sunday alone.¹ The difference is indicative of the gradual passing away of the Sabbath with its customs from the life of the church and the rise of Sunday which came to assume the sole position of authority. But the practice of the conservative circles of the East is highly instructive. In their retention of the Jewish Sabbath with its customs side by side with the Christian Sunday, they reveal how gradual was the process of the change. They also reveal that the cause for this change lay in the consciousness of difference from and opposition to Judaism. It is quite evident from all the facts which we have considered that the Sabbath declined in proportion as the Jewish law was regarded as superseded and in proportion to Christian opposition to Judaism. The abolition of the Sabbath was therefore but a phase of a wider movement. It represented the abolition of Jewish law. For the Christians the old order had passed away, and with it, the Sabbath.

¹Tertullian, On Prayer - ch. 23

CHAPTER III.

JUDAISM AND THE RISE OF SUNDAY

1. OPPOSITION TO JUDAISM.

WE HAVE found that the attitude of the early liberal Christians toward Judaism was responsible for the ultimate abolition of the Sabbath. The Christians felt, in the most advanced circles, that the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was not consistent with Christianity. It is therefore not unreasonable to suspect that the Christian relation to Judaism had not a little to do with the rise of the Christian Sunday. We have seen clearly that Christianity grew out of Judaism. The first Christians were Jews and only in a gradual manner did Christianity emerge from its basic origin. In its most formative period Christianity was Jewish. Although not denying the presence of outside influences, it is natural for us to look first to Judaism as the primary influence.

This relation to Judaism had two phases: first, a sense of distinction from the old faith which led in many circles to direct opposition. Secondly, there was a sense of oneness with Judaism that resulted in the retention of many Jewish features. These two phases were represented by two extremes of thought in the early church—the Gnostics and the Ebionites, the one bitter in their opposition to everything Jewish and the other scarcely distinguishable in their practices from other Jews. Both trends of thought have met and exerted their influence in the life of the church. Likewise, both phases—opposition and oneness with Judaism have made their imprint upon the institution of the Christian Sunday. Just as there were conserva-

tive circles of thought, as we have observed, among the Jewish-Christians and those in the East, and Christians who made radical departures from the old faith, so the use of Sunday represents the combination of both tendencies.

But we are not to understand that Sunday arose in Christian usage because of a violent anti-Jewish feeling. Certainly this was not the case in its earliest beginnings. The Ebionites themselves, as we have noted,¹ observed the first day of the week as well as the Sabbath, and yet remained loyal Jews. The earliest Christians were Jews, without that bitter opposition that characterized later, Gentile Christianity. But even these original Christians felt they possessed something different from other Jews. There was a very distinct Christian consciousness. This was natural because of their allegiance to Jesus as their Messiah. The "Gospel of the Kingdom", which they preached, itself implied a close relationship to one another. Even the most conservative Jewish-Christians could feel that there was something which united them with other Christians and which distinguished them from ordinary Jews. The use of the expression, "the brethren," is quite significant for the existence of this group consciousness. The practices of baptism and the breaking of bread together clearly reveal this consciousness. These practices would also stimulate this group spirit the more. They involved, furthermore, the necessity for a separate place and time of meeting. Quite obviously the Christians could not be satisfied with merely meeting with other Jews in the synagogue on the Sabbath. They must meet with each other too. Their observances demanded it and the ties that bound them together would make natural a common assembly. Since the Jews were occupied with

¹p. 59

duties on the Sabbath, it was natural that another day be observed for fulfilling their Christian obligations. We are therefore prepared to understand why it was that the Ebionites could observe both days, Sabbath and Sunday, for they were both Jews and Christians.

It seems evident that this practice of observing Sunday went back to an early date, probably much earlier than 70 A.D., for then the Jewish-Christians began to lose their connection and influence with other Christians. It is not probable that these conservative-minded Christians adopted a practice at a later date through mere borrowing from Gentile-Christians. The conditions that would naturally lead to the use of a separate day were all present at a much earlier date. That the Christian use of Sunday originated within Jewish circles is also shown by the fact that it was so often called by Christians "the first day of the week," the Jewish method of reckoning the days of the week. In the New Testament, until the term, "Lord's Day"² supplanted "the first day," this Jewish designation was universally employed.²

This Christian consciousness became greater in the more radical circles. The death of Jesus naturally afforded a rallying point for all Christians. It was especially true for Pauline Christianity, since the Apostle believed that by Jesus' death and resurrection Christians were united with Christ. If they were made one with Christ, then they were united with one another. The church thus was "the body of Christ." Because of the union with Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist Paul wrote, "We who are many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread."³ This sense of union with their Master, the feeling that the church was the "body of Christ," and their

¹Rev. 1.10 ²Mt. 28.1; Mk. 16.2; Lk. 24.1; Jn. 20.1, 19; Acts 20.7; 1 Cor. 16.2 ³1 Cor. 10.17

common assembly for "breaking bread" would all naturally lead to a distinct consciousness. This consciousness and these distinct meetings would make necessary a distinctive day. The feeling that the law had been abrogated through Jesus' death and resurrection made the breach between Christianity and Judaism wide indeed. The Sabbath was no longer in force. A new order had prevailed. The stage was thus all set for the entrance of the Christian Sunday.

In these more radical circles, this strong Christian consciousness was decidedly increased by the opposition of Judaism. In later times we know that many Jews were eager to assist in Christian persecutions, as in the martyrdom of Polycarp.¹ Tertullian called Jewish synagogues "fountains of persecution."² The Jews cherished a particular grudge against Paul, who did so much to overthrow the law among the Christians. Then the conversion of large numbers of Gentile adherents of the synagogue must have made the orthodox Jews bitter toward the new sect. It is no doubt also true that Christians displayed considerable opposition to Judaism, not only because of Jewish opposition, but because they felt that they had a superior religion. Believing as they did that there was only one "name" by which one was to be saved,³ they naturally regarded all the good works of the non-Christian Jews as counting for nothing. Their religion was the only religion that could give salvation.⁴ It is not surprising that radical Christians and orthodox Jews should come into serious conflict.

Paul experienced trouble from the Jews at every turn. We need not wonder that the Christians were finally compelled to separate from the Jews. At Antioch of Pisidia,

¹Martyrdom of Polycarp 12, 13—This also seems to be suggested in the book of Revelation (2.9, 10) in the same locality, Smyrna. ²Scorpiace 10; cf. also p. 51 ³Acts 4.12 ⁴Gal. 2.16

Paul was strongly opposed and cast out by the Jews. As a result of this the Apostle said he would turn to the Gentiles.¹ At Iconium there was trouble and at Lystra, the Jews from Antioch and Iconium were so influential with the people that they left off worshipping Paul and stoned him, and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead.² So the Jews dogged Paul's steps always, doing all in their power to hinder. At Thessalonica the Jews there set the city in an uproar and these same Jews made trouble for Paul at Beroea.³ In Corinth, Jews violently opposed him, so he said, "From henceforth I shall go unto the Gentiles." And he went to a house that was adjoining the synagogue, thus having a separate place of worship. Later "the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment-seat."⁴ At Ephesus a similar event occurred. When opposition arose he left the synagogue. We read, "He departed from them and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus." After this event Paul continued to teach in this new church for two years.⁵ In Greece the Jews plotted against him,⁶ and at Tyre the disciples advised him not to set foot in Jerusalem.⁷ Paul's arrest and imprisonment must have made a deep impression upon the churches which he had founded. The Jewish origin of this arrest would only increase the momentum of the departure from Judaism and solidify the Christian consciousness. Separate assemblies as we have seen were a necessity, due to Jewish opposition. These separate assemblies must have been in existence wherever we find directions for reading the epistles, which are found as early as the Epistles to the Thessalonians.⁸ The epistles were also written to specific

¹Acts 13.45-50 ²14.2, 19 ³17.5, 13 ⁴Acts 18.6-12 ⁵19.8-10
⁶20.3 ⁷21.4 ⁸c.50 A.D.-1 Thess. 5.27; 2 Thess. 3.14; cf. Acts 15.30; Col. 4.16; Heb. 10.25

churches, thus implying in each case separate organizations.

That there was considerable opposition between this new group and the Jews is shown not only through the New Testament, but by outside sources. As early as about 50 A.D. in Rome we are informed by Suetonius that so great were the disturbances among the Jews that they were expelled from Rome.¹ Suetonius tells us that these disturbances were made "at the instigation of Chrestus," a mistake in spelling common at the time.² He also was not exactly informed as to the cause, but at least he knew that the dispute was about Christ. We may well imagine how vigorous would be the disputes among the Jews, between Christians and non-Christians, as to whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. The probable infusion of Paulinism would add to the disturbance. These disputes were so violent as to require action by the authorities. Small wonder, then, that these Christian Jews found it necessary to form a separate organization. And when once formed, the impetus which created this organization would cause Christianity to go further in the direction of separateness and distinction from Judaism. Distinct days of religious observance were inevitable. From the above evidence it is most probable that a definite break with Judaism on the part of Pauline Christianity occurred about 50 A.D. We are therefore justified in believing that although the use of Sunday may well have antedated this time, it most certainly was in existence shortly after. It has been made evident that it only required a distinct Christian conscious-

¹Claudius 25 ("Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit")—confirmed by Acts 18.2, but Dio Cassius wrote (60.6)—"He did not drive them out, but ordered them not to assemble."

²Tertullian Apol. 3; Justin Martyr Apol. 1.4; cf. F. Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome*, p. 230; that this was a dispute over Christianity is confirmed by Orosius 7.6.15.

ness to originate the use of the first day of the week. With the addition of a definite anti-Judaism in Pauline circles, the use of a separate day is a foregone conclusion.

We possess further evidence of Jewish opposition to Christianity. This opposition usually consisted in counterbalancing the claims of the Christians for the Virgin Birth by the assertion that Jesus was an illegitimate son.¹ An instructive bit of information is the tale related about Rabbi Eliezer.² He was once taken into custody on a false charge of heresy. He regarded the incident as the judgment of God upon him, for he had once listened to a Christian and had been pleased with his words. He had transgressed the words of Scripture, "Remove thy way far from her,"³ and therefore he had been brought to judgment.⁴

From the New Testament and other sources we thus learn that there was a great sense of difference and opposition between Christianity and Judaism. It was these very factors that produced a separate day of religious worship. Had they not existed, there would have been no need or occasion for such a change. But knowing as we do their presence in the early church, we need not be surprised that the Christians desired something to express their difference from Judaism. The most distinctive feature in Judaism was the Sabbath. It was for the Jews a memorial. Judaism was filled with such memorials. Their various religious festivals all commemorated definite events in their history. As we shall see later more fully, Christianity, although wishing to be distinct from Judaism, was too closely connected with this religion to avoid many similarities. An instructive parallel is to be found in the

¹Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.32; cf. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 18f., New York, 1925 ²Latter part of first century; cf. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 37f.

³Prov. 5.8 ⁴Abodah Zarah 16b

Mohammedan religion. They too felt that another day in the week was necessary for their sacred day.¹ And whereas the Jews prayed toward Jerusalem they prayed toward Mecca. So it was with the Christians. Whereas the Jews had their own festivals commemorating Jewish events, the Christians felt that they too must have stated times of worship similar to the Jews, but commemorating Christian events.

This is quite evident in the case of the Christian fast days. The Jews fasted twice in the week. The Christians did likewise, but changed the days of the fasting. In Judaism the fasts occurred on Monday and Thursday. These weekly fasts were only observed occasionally by all the people, as for example, when the country was in need of rain.² But more pious individuals, as the Pharisees, took it upon themselves to fast twice in the week on these days throughout the year.³ Fastings in Judaism were adopted not only to avert calamities and appease the wrath of God, but also to express sorrow for distressing events in their history. Their calendar became full of such commemorations.⁴ For example, on each of the days, the ninth of Ab and the seventeenth of Tammuz, five various unfortunate events were commemorated.⁵ The Christians not only took over these two weekly fast-days, but they also observed them as the Jews in many of their fasts—as days of fasting because of calamities in their history. But the Christians were not content merely to take over Jewish fast-days. They must have different ones of their own, ones which should be specifically Christian and which should commemorate Christian events. Very naturally the two

¹For details of the first Friday service, instituted by Mohammed, cf. William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet* 3.9, London, 1861.
²Taanit 1.4-7 (cf. Gemara) ³Taanit 12a; Lk. 18.12; cf. Mk. 2.18
⁴Cf. Jewish Encyclopedia 5.347 ⁵Taanit 4.6

days which stood out as unfortunate were the days when Judas arranged to betray Jesus and when Jesus was crucified, Wednesday and Friday. We thus witness in this adoption of fast-days a striking likeness to Jewish customs: fasts held twice in the week and commemorating unfortunate events. But there is likewise a strong Christian consciousness revealed, and not only a sense that their religion was distinct, but an opposition to the Pharisees. We see these features all clearly revealed in the *Didache*,¹ where we read, "Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth of the week. But as for you, fast on the fourth day and the Preparation (sixth day)." The *Apostolic Constitutions* add an explanation. The fourth day and the Preparation were to be observed as fast days, "for on the fourth day the condemnation against the Lord went forth, Judas promising the betrayal for money; and on the preparation, because on it the Lord suffered by crucifixion at the hands of Pontius Pilate."² That these fast-days were widely observed in the church is shown by many references to the practice as in *Clement of Alexandria*,³ *Tertullian*,⁴ and *Augustine*,⁵ where although both days were observed, the sixth day had become the main fast-day. This day is to a certain extent observed yet in the Roman Catholic church, by the omission of meat. The two days of fasting are still observed in the Abyssinian Church.⁶ These Christian fast-days, found widely throughout the church, thus represent an interesting combination of opposition to Judaism and assimilation of Jewish features.

The analogy of the fast-days to the rise of Sunday is practically perfect. One may ask the question, Why did

¹Ch. 8 ²7.23 (App. p. 175, 176); cf. 5.15 ³*Stromata* 7.12
⁴*On Fasting*, ch. 10.14 ⁵Letter 36 (13.30) ⁶*Samuel Gobat, Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia*, p. 295

the Christians adopt a day of worship recurring every week? The answer is obvious. Coming out of Judaism as they did, they would not think of doing otherwise. The weekly system itself, and the habit of rest and worship every seventh day of the week was too basic a part of their lives for them to desire a change.

More difficult is the question, Why was the first day of the week chosen? We have seen that it was a distinct Christian consciousness and opposition to Judaism which led to the change. But this does not explain why the first day was chosen. In the case of the fast-days, the special days of the week which reminded one of Judaism were changed to days which became symbols of Christian ideas. And whereas the Sabbath was a symbol of Judaism, the use of the first day became a symbol for that which was distinctive of Christianity. In the early church, as early as the writings of Paul, there were just two events which stood out in importance above all else—Jesus' death and resurrection. The one was commemorated by weekly fasting, in analogy to the Jewish fast-days, and the other was commemorated by a weekly festival, like the weekly festival of the Jews. We need not stop to ask how the idea of the resurrection arose, or to inquire as to its validity. The fact of the matter was, the early Christians believed it. And it was a vital belief, a belief without which one can scarcely explain the continuance of the group of Jesus' followers. They believed that their Messiah still lived. Church tradition declares that it was the first day of the week when the tomb was found empty and when most of the appearances of Jesus occurred. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how sufficient Christian consciousness could develop to have any distinct day of worship, were it not for the belief in the resurrection. Why, then, should not the Christians seize upon this day, their own preëminent

day, as a day when they should assemble, just as the Jews did on Sabbath, and thus show forth their own distinctive features, their special commemoration?

The objections usually made to this theory are, I believe, due first, to the desire to find some less obvious explanation, an explanation that would require more extensive research and scholarship. Secondly, it may be due to the feeling, unconscious perhaps, that since the resurrection is no longer acceptable to them as a fact, it can no longer be used as an explanation for the rise of Christian practices. This is to ignore the large place that the resurrection held in the belief of the early church.

The objection is sometimes raised, if Sunday was originated to commemorate the resurrection, how could it be observed every week? We must, however, remember that Sunday did not come into being merely because of the resurrection. There is nothing in the idea of the resurrection that would necessarily produce the observance of Sunday as a day of worship. The primary reason, as we have shown, for the addition of this day was that it expressed the Christian feeling of distinction from Judaism and self-consciousness. No doubt belief in the resurrection contributed toward this distinct self-consciousness. But it was this consciousness that led to a distinct day of worship; it was Jewish precedent that led to the choice of the weekly day; and the belief in the resurrection formed the occasion by which the first day of the week was selected. Therefore, it was quite natural for a weekly observance to be held even though there was a yearly commemoration at Easter. One might just as well ask, how could Friday be observed as a fast-day each week instead of only yearly? Why should the Eucharist be observed weekly instead of only once a year? We should first remark that there is no more reason for a yearly observance than for a weekly observance. But

the reason for these weekly observances is easily to be found. The answer for all three questions is the same. It was from Judaism that these weekly customs came. It was the Jewish Sabbath that formed the precedent for the Christian Sunday. It was Pharisaic weekly fast-days that enable us to understand the Christian ones. And, as we shall show, it was the Jewish weekly "Kiddush" with its breaking of bread and cup of blessing that answers our question about the weekly Eucharist.

A further objection is sometimes given to this explanation for the choice of the first day. There is, say some,¹ a variation in the early tradition as to the day of the resurrection, since Mark's expression, "after three days," is uniformly changed by Matthew and Luke to "on the third day."² Although recognizing that there is some ground for this position, still it is my feeling that their case is far from being proved.³ For the purpose of this study, we may pass it over. It is at least obvious that the uniform tradition of the New Testament places the finding of the empty tomb and most of the appearances upon the first day of the week. This conviction was an early one as the writings of the New Testament indicate.⁴ We may affirm that by 50 A.D. or before this conviction was sufficiently

¹S. V. McCasland, "The Origin of the Lord's Day," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 49, p. 65f.; Maurice Goguel, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions-Notes d'Histoire Evangelique*, 1916, p. 36f.

²Mk. 8.31 (Mt. 16.21; Lk. 9.22); Mk. 9.31 (Mt. 17.23); Mk. 10.34 (Mt. 20.19; Lk. 18.33)

³Certainly the author of Matthew 27.63, 64 was conscious of no contradiction in these terms. The change of expression to "on the third day" may have been caused by the desire to adapt Christian ideas to Hebrew prophecy, i.e., Hos. 6.2. This was evidently the case in Mt. 12.40 where the prediction of Jesus' abode in the earth three days and three nights is made to conform exactly to that of Jonah in the great fish. ⁴1 Cor. 15.4; Mk. 16.2

general to form the occasion for the adoption of the first day of the week in the sacred calendar.

We are further confirmed in this conclusion by the united testimony of the early church. All four gospels are careful to mention that the empty tomb was found the first day of the week. The fourth gospel places the appearances to the disciples on two successive Sundays.¹ Luke, although telling that the appearances took place during forty days,² crams all of them he cares to relate into one day, the first day of the week.³ These Sunday appearances seem to possess a particular interest. In the literature just following the New Testament, there is only one explanation for the choice of Sunday: this day was the day of the resurrection. It is true that side by side with this explanation there are sometimes adaptations to certain features of Judaism, as would be only natural. Justin Martyr says that Sunday is observed, not only because Jesus rose on that day from the dead, but because God made the world on that day.⁴ Justin, in another place, while still emphasizing Sunday as the day of the resurrection, called it the day of the true circumcision, or the eighth day.⁵ In the Epistle of Barnabas, although the commemoration of the resurrection has an important place, he uses Sunday, or the eighth day, as a type of the new world at the end of the age.⁶ All of these are individual and fanciful adaptations. But that Sunday was instituted in memory of the resurrection was a favorite theory of the early church. Not only do we find it in the above-mentioned authors, but we find it in Ignatius,⁷ Clement of Alexandria,⁸ five passages of the Apostolic Constitutions,⁹ and the Egyptian Church Order.¹⁰ Tertullian,¹¹

¹20.19, 26 ²Acts 1.3 ³Lk. 24 ⁴Apol. 1.67 ⁵Dialogue, ch. 41
⁶ch. 15 ⁷ad Mag. 9 ⁸Stromata 7.12 ⁹2.59; 7.23, 36; 5.20; 8.33
¹⁰St. 66 (Eth. Text), also in Arabic text ¹¹On Prayer, ch. 23

instead of saying "Sunday" said, "on the day of the Lord's Resurrection." Eusebius has an interesting comment on the Ebionites, saying, "They performed rites about like us on the Lord's days as a memorial of the resurrection of the Lord."¹ The very designation of this day, the "Lord's day," is striking confirmation of this commemoration. The first day of the week to the Christians was the day of Jesus, because he had risen on that day. This phrase, which came into existence toward the end of the first century, was the common designation for the first day of the week during the second and third centuries. The only exceptions occur in the case of Justin Martyr and Tertullian. The former was specifically directing his treatise "To the Emperor . . . and . . . the Romans," so we are not surprised that he should use the expression, "Day of the Sun," which was most familiar to his readers.² Likewise, Tertullian was writing, as he himself indicated in his introduction, to the "Rulers of the Roman Empire."³

This universal early Christian attitude toward Sunday as the day of their Lord's resurrection has yet a deeper meaning. This day was the day in which he had appeared to the Christians, manifesting his presence. Since Jesus was the central figure of Christianity, marking a point of difference from ordinary Jews, it was natural that this day of his appearance should be chosen to provide for their distinct religious interests. And as time went on, when the resurrection came to have a theological meaning this "Lord's Day" symbolized even more. We have observed the meaning of this event for Paul, the new life that it brought, by mystical union with Christ in his resurrection. This new life, the law of the spirit, made unnecessary the old external laws. So whereas the Sabbath embodied the

¹Church History 3.27 ²Apol. 1.1, 67 ³Apol. 1, 16

spirit of Judaism, being the distinctive symbol of Jewish law, the Lord's Day became for the Christians the symbol of the new life in the new era. It is striking that Ignatius, who wrote so shortly after Paul, and who lived in the same city, Antioch, possessed these very ideas. For him, the Sabbath was the symbol of Judaism; and the Lord's Day, of Christianity. Let us note his words, "If therefore those engaged in ancient affairs came to a new hope, no longer sabbatizing, but living according to the Lord's Day on which also our life rose through him and his death . . . through which mystery we received faith. . . ."¹ To sabbatize was then the mark of a Jew, but to observe the Lord's Day was the mark of a Christian, who had by the mysteries of the death and resurrection been united with Christ and had entered into new life. The Lord's day, then, as a commemoration of the resurrection, possessed a deep meaning for early Christianity. It symbolized the new life of the new religion.

We have shown sufficient evidence to make the above theory of a resurrection-commemoration exceedingly probable. This theory best fits the Christian literature itself. But another, supplementary theory may be advanced. The earliest Christians felt enough distinction from the other Jews to hold separate services in addition to those of the Synagogue. Yet the Sabbath was not available for them, for they were occupied with their Jewish obligations on that day. But when the Sabbath came to a close, they could come together, while the Sabbath had still its influence upon them and before they went back to their occupations. That Christians actually did meet on the evenings after the Sabbath was past is shown by Sozomen, who wrote as late as about 425 A.D., "Among the Egyptians, in many cities and villages, they assemble on the Sabbath toward evening

¹ad Mag. 9 (App. p. 170)

and partake of the mysteries."¹ This is confirmed by John Cassian, writing about the same time, "From the evening of the Sabbath which dawns upon the Lord's day, until the following evening, among the Egyptians the knees are not bowed, . . . nor is the rule of fasts observed."² In the Greco-Russian Church their Service Book contains the following words, "The Saturday evening (Sunday) hymns:" This book also has a regular order of reading from the gospels on Saturday evening.³ The early Jewish-Christians would naturally observe Sunday beginning Saturday evening.⁴ That the Christians thus met on the first day of the week from motives of convenience has much in its favor. This theory need not supplant the resurrection-commemoration theory. It is quite possible that both theological and practical motives were operative in producing the change.

One other theory should be mentioned, for it has found favor in one form or another among many.⁵ This is the view that Sunday was chosen as the day of Christian assemblage, not only because it was convenient to assemble on the first free day after the Sabbath, but also because, among those Christians who had just come from paganism, the day of the Sun naturally became the day of the Savior. Sun-worship was a prominent feature of many pagan cults of this period, especially Mithraism. Although admitting that there are elements of truth in this theory, there are serious difficulties in accepting it. As long as one is objective and detached from the early Christian consciousness,

¹Church History 7.19 (App. p. 177) ²Institutes 2.18—"a vespera sabbati, quae lucescit in diem Dominicum, usque ad vesperam sequentem". ³I. F. Hapgood, Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, p. 35, p. XXI ⁴That the later church did not use this Jewish mode of reckoning is indicated by Mt. 28.1 and John 20.19. ⁵Cf. Hermann Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, p. 73-83; Loisy, *Les Evangiles synoptiques* 1.177

the self-consistency of the theory may be attractive. But if one takes seriously the early Christian tradition and enters into the consciousness therein revealed, this theory does not seem to fit. We have already considered, and will do so more fully the Jewishness of the Christian Sunday. When early Christians could call it "the first day of the week" and observe it beginning Sabbath evening, it does not seem to have been very Gentile in its origin. The Ebionites also may be considered quite remote from Gentile influences, and yet, as we have seen, they observed Sunday along with their Sabbath. When we consider how Jewish the early church was and how early Sunday arose and its accompanying idea of the resurrection, we can scarcely believe that the Gentiles were so influential at this early period as to be responsible for its origin.¹ We must here make a distinction. There were some institutions and beliefs that were common to both Jewish- and Gentile-Christians at an

¹The assumption of McCasland ("The Resurrection of Jesus"—p. 120) that the early Christians were more familiar with Gentile than Jewish practices seems unwarranted in the light of the New Testament passages berating the Gentiles (1 Cor. 5.1; Mt. 6.32), the allusions which only Jews or Gentile adherents of the synagogue could understand (1 Cor. 5.7,8), and indeed, in the light of the entire history of the early church (Cf. p. 54f.). A more serious objection of McCasland (p. 128) is that the Christian Sunday more nearly agreed with Mithraism than with the Jewish Sabbath in that "work and ordinary occupations were not prohibited". And yet we must keep in mind that the early Christians in their use of Sunday did not intend it to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath. They observed both days. And their taking over of many features of the Jewish Sabbath in its worship aspects (Cf. p. 88f.) was probably quite unconscious and undesigned. It is decidedly precarious to build conclusions upon negative agreements in the work aspects of the sacred day. It is surer to build them upon positive agreements in the worship aspects. It is further to be said that although the Christians revolted considerably from Jewish legalism, our information is too scanty to permit us to say that the Christian Sunday in its work aspects was exactly like that of Mithraism. (Cf. p. 177—Canons of Laodicea 29; also p. 93)

early period and quite fundamental in Christianity. There were other beliefs that were only the possession of the more radical group. And there were ideas which were not fundamental, but only developments from these fundamental ideas. For example, no one can dispute the fact that Jesus died, and that the early disciples believed that he had come to life and had appeared to them. These were early fundamental ideas. But the theological developments from these ideas are quite different, and could easily have proceeded from later, Gentile sources. The mere breaking of bread is also different from the full-fledged doctrine of the Eucharist. It is difficult to believe that so early and so fundamental an observance as that of the first day of the week could have arisen from the mere imitation of Mithraism. It is also rather artificial to imagine that the early Christians decided to meet on this day just because the initiates of Mithra did so. A more vital and compelling reason is needed, and one which fits our knowledge of the early Christian consciousness. This theory fails to explain the course of Christian events as we know them. Indeed, the early Christians seem to have been far more vitally concerned over the resurrection of Jesus than over the Sun.

It is to be recognized, however, that our difference with these scholars is solely in the emphasis to be placed upon the various contributing influences. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that none of these theories of themselves can explain the Christian adoption of a new day of the week for worship. It was a distinct Christian consciousness that brought Sunday into Christian use, and it was opposition to Judaism that caused Sunday to supplant the Sabbath. But these theories have a real place in deciding why Sunday was chosen. It may well be that motives of convenience were a factor in causing the Christians to choose the day after the Sabbath. It is highly probable that

the idea of the resurrection gave the Christians a great motive for commemorating this day. And it is also true, as we shall show, that the pagan use of Sunday was of great influence in bringing that day to preëminence in the Christian church.

2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF JUDAISM.

We have seen that the requirement of a separate Christian day for worship was due to the sense of distinction from and opposition to Judaism. A separate day was needed to provide for the requirements of the Christian group. It was also needed in Paulinism to express the difference in the new era, to bring release from the bondage of the Jewish Sabbath, and to serve as a refinement upon that day, excluding all distasteful features and bringing over into the new Lord's day only those features which appealed to them.

In this chapter we shall consider these Jewish Sabbath customs which continued in the Christian church, and their significance for our understanding of the rise of Sunday. We must first remark that we are not to look to the Christians for any detailed confession of what they borrowed from Judaism. There was too much consciousness of difference for them to think of emphasizing the similarities. Unconsciously and naturally they continued many customs which were such an integral part of their lives that they never thought to question them. Coming out of Judaism as they did and retaining the Old Testament as inspired, though revising its meaning to fit their ideas, such a course is not surprising. In the case of the fast-days, they were keenly conscious of the difference in days, that they were not fasting with the "hypocrites," but they seemed unaware that this very custom of observing weekly fasts had been derived from them. These fast-days, as we have observed, reveal Christianity's relation to Judaism to have been that of opposition, and assimilation of Jewish customs.

The basis for this two-fold relationship can be seen clearly in the concrete instance of the church of Corinth. In the

early days of the church, when the Jews opposed Paul, a separate church was formed, but located just next the Synagogue, and the ruler of the Synagogue became a believer.¹ Under such circumstances, it would be only natural that a distinct sense of difference would be felt, and just as surely would there be much in the new church service in which the Jew would feel perfectly at home. In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, written less than five years after the origin of this church,² these features are plainly evident. The extent of their Christian self-consciousness is shown by Paul's directing his epistle "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints."³ The whole epistle implies a distinct organization which had been in existence for some time, but not long enough to be without need of quite detailed instruction in church order. The "brethren" were not to go to law against each other before the unrighteous, but before the "saints."⁴ They regarded themselves as quite distinct from both Jews and Greeks, for Paul said, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God."⁵ A large number of officials in the church had developed with varying functions.⁶ The very emphasis throughout the epistle on the "church" shows how well-developed it had become, and how distinct from Judaism.

But although the church was different enough to be separate from the Jews, there were similarities at Corinth of which we know. In the Christian assemblage it was the custom for the "unlearned" to have a special section in which to sit and to say the "Amen" at the giving of thanks.⁷ This placing of the people according to their rank is also mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, where it is directed that the bishop be placed in the center, the pres-

¹Acts 18.6-8 ²c.57 A.D. ³1.2 ⁴6.1 ⁵10.32 ⁶12.28 ⁷14.16

byters on either side and the deacons at hand.¹ At a certain point in the Greek-Orthodox service today the highest official takes his position on the raised platform in the center of the floor. This central position of the bishop coincides with the custom obtaining in the most orthodox synagogues today, where the highest official occupies the center of the room. That the learned were quite distinct from the unlearned in the synagogues is shown by Mark, who said that the Pharisees loved the chief seats there.² The custom for the mass of the people to say "Amen" at the close of their leader's prayer and thanksgiving was widespread in Christian circles.³ It was such a familiar custom in Judaism that it only requires mention.⁴ At the Synagogue in Alexandria it was said that a synagogue official stood on a wooden platform in the middle, and when the proper time came he gave the sign and all the people answered, "Amen."⁵ So completely were the Corinthian Christians in the habit of following Jewish customs that Paul could argue from Jewish precedent for minister's salaries, saying, "Know ye not that they that minister in sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar?"⁶

Quite striking was the command of Paul that the women keep silence in the churches. He regarded it as disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church, even to ask a question. This practice of the women keeping silent was, as he indicated, a universal custom among the Christian churches.⁷ This injunction, which sounds so strange to modern Christian ears, was yet nothing unusual for that time in Jewish circles where the women were regarded as inferior. Even

¹2.57 ²12.39 ³Justin, Apol. 1.65, 67; I Clement 58, 59; Didache 10.6 ⁴Neh. 8.6; Ber. 8.8; E. Schürer, Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes, 2.530 (n. 104); Jewish Quarterly Review 9.1, Art. "Amen"

⁵Sukkah 51b ⁶I Cor. 9.13, 14 ⁷I Cor. 14.33b-36

today in the blessings of the daily, morning Jewish liturgy, there occur the words: "(Men say): Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast not made me a woman. (Women say): Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast made me according to thy will."¹ In the Jewish synagogues, the silence of women was accepted without question, even the reading from the Scriptures being denied them.² This lack of participation is all the more striking in Jewish synagogues, because laymen have such an active part in the liturgy and in the reading from the Scriptures. The very structure of orthodox synagogues of the present day, with its galleries for women removed from the center of action, where women can only listen, is a mute witness of the Jewish custom.

Highly interesting for our study of these similarities is the passage, "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, treasuring as he is prospered, in order that when I come there may not be collections at that time."³ This was to be done each week on the first day (as *katà* indicates). A significance is thus attached to this day, which, in the light of later writings in the New Testament and elsewhere, seems unmistakably to point to its regular observance as a sacred day. And, as we have seen, by this time all the conditions were ripe for the existence of the Christian Sunday. Chrysostom, who was close to the tradition and an authority on the Greek, indicated that this passage meant that the Christians were to lay up their contributions at home and then produce them later when Paul came.⁴ When he came there was to be no last-minute gathering together of available funds. There would not be

¹Singer-Abrahams, Authorized Daily Prayer Book, Annotated edition, 1922, p. 6 ²Meg. 23a (Strack-Billerbeck on I Cor. 14.34) ³I Cor. 16.2 ⁴Homily on I Cor. (43.2)

enough then, and he could not afford to waste valuable time when important duties were pressing. It is thus apparent that the offerings for the poor were not taken in church on Sunday.¹ Although we are not to imagine that this procedure was employed because of scruple about handling money on Sunday, yet the Jewish custom would naturally persist. In Judaism, it was considered unlawful to make contributions of money on the Sabbath.² The house of Shammai even forbade subscriptions of alms for the poor on the Sabbath, but the house of Hillel permitted it, and this view prevailed.³ This practice of promising contributions exists in Judaism at the present day. Among Christians it would thus be considered as a religious act, one to be performed on Sunday, to set aside an amount for the poor. A further Jewish precedent was the custom to contribute the half-shekel for the temple at Jerusalem. This was deposited in the public treasury and at the proper time commissioners transmitted it to Jerusalem.⁴ Likewise, delegates were to be appointed in Corinth to convey their offerings to Jerusalem.⁵

From the early Christian centuries there has come down to us a mass of evidence pointing to the influence of the Jewish Sabbath on the Christian Sunday. As we have noticed,⁶ the Sabbath was regarded as a day of joy, a festival among the Jews. No mourning was to take place on that day.⁷ The Christians too regarded their Sunday in like manner, as we learn from the Epistle of Barnabas—

¹In Justin's time (Apol. 1.67) there was a public offering for the poor on Sunday. ²Philo, to Gaius, 23 (ed. Cohn-Wendland 158)—In Mt. 6.2 the giving of alms in the synagogue may well refer to the practice on fast-days when almsgiving was especially appropriate. Cf. A. Büchler, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 10.266f. ³Tos. Shab. 16.22; Shab. 150a; Taanit 8b ⁴Philo, to Gaius 40 (ed. Cohn-Wendland 311-315); Jos. Ant. 18.9.1 (ed. Niese 18.312) ⁵I Cor. 16.3 ⁶p. 12f. ⁷Apocalypse of Moses 43.3

"We keep the eighth day for festivity."¹ In recognition of this joyous character of the Sabbath, no fasts were allowed in Judaism, these being a desecration of their sacred day.² Likewise in Christianity, both Tertullian and the Didascalia declare fasting on the Lord's day to be "unlawful"; and John Cassian tells us that the same custom obtained among the Egyptians.³ From the above-cited passage of the Didascalia we also read, "On the first day of the week make good cheer at all times; for he is guilty of sin, whosoever afflicts his soul on the first day of the week." In striking contrast with this practice was that of the Manicheans who, as Leo the Great said, "have chosen to fast on the first and second days of the week in honor of the sun and moon."⁴ These people, like the Gnostics, emphasized not the Jewish, but the pagan side of Christianity. They retained so many features of paganism that they were not acceptable to the main body of Christians. Hegemonius, writing against them, exclaimed, "O barbarous priest of Mithra."⁵ This is highly significant, since it is sometimes claimed that Sunday among the Christians originated from Mithraism or some similar religion of sun-worship. That this was not the case is evident from this one custom of fasting. In their prohibition of fasting on the Lord's Day, Christianity followed, not paganism, but Judaism.

Judaism also furnished, by its Synagogue, a pattern for the Christian Church. In its interior arrangement, there are striking similarities. As Rosenau⁶ has shown, the Synagogue was a kind of reproduction of the Temple. Cor-

¹Ch. 15; cf. Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.13 ²Judith 8.6; cf. p. 66f. ³Tertullian, *De Corona* 3; *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ch. 21 (ed. of R. H. Connolly, Oxford, 1929, p. 183); John Cassian—cf. p. 84 ⁴Sermon 42.5; cf. Augustine, *Letter* 36 (12.27, 29), *Letter* 236.2 (Migne P. L. 33.1033); Ambrose 23.11 (Migne 16.1029) ⁵Acta Archelai 40 (36).7 ⁶William Rosenau, *Jewish Ceremonial Institutions and Customs*, p. 23f

responding to the temple court was the space for the congregation. Instead of the Holy Place there was a platform for reading and speaking. The Holy of Holies which contained the ark of the covenant was represented by a sanctuary with a curtain just as the Holy of Holies was separated from the Holy Place by a veil. This sanctuary was usually called the Ark, but instead of containing the ark of the covenant, it contained the book of the covenant, the Scriptures. Especially in Greek-Orthodox churches there are striking resemblances. A platform in the center is occupied for a time in the service for the reading of the Scriptures. There is also a Holy of Holies, an extensive place, separated from the body of the church by a screen. Over this is hung the veil. In the Holy of Holies there is found an altar, and "an Ark is set thereon, being the Tabernacle, in which are placed the Holy Gifts, the Body and Blood of Christ."¹ But in the service the doors that separate are opened, for they believe that Jesus by his atonement broke down the barriers between man and God, as "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom."² Interesting in this connection is the early Liturgy of St. James where we read, "We render thanks to Thee, Lord our God, for that Thou hast given us boldness to the entrance in of Thy holy places, the new and living way which Thou hast consecrated for us through the veil of the Flesh of Thy Christ. We therefore, to whom it hath been vouchsafed to enter into the place of the tabernacle of Thy glory, and to be within the veil, and to behold the Holy of Holies, fall down before Thy goodness."³ In the Roman Catholic Church there is an "ark," representing the Holy of Holies. Although resembling in structure that in most synagogues, a small chest with a curtain

¹I. F. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. XXXII, XXX ²Mk. 15:38
³Neale, *Primitive Liturgies*, 1859, p. 46

drawn, instead of the Book of the Covenant being therein, there is the Chalice. In the service this Chalice is drawn out with as much ceremony as the Torah in Judaism. In the Jewish synagogue, as we have seen, there was a separate place established for the women. That this practice was adopted by the Christians is shown by the Apostolic Constitutions and Chrysostom, where the women were commanded to "sit by themselves," walled off from the men.¹

So far as the leaders were concerned, the synagogue was not so highly organized as the Christian church today. The laymen took an active part in the liturgy, various ones taking part in the reading from the Scriptures. Naturally the oldest men would have the leadership in these several functions. But there was needed a head to arrange for the various parts of the service. There were thus the elders, or presbyters, and the leader of the synagogue.² In early Christianity likewise, elders were appointed for every church.³ In Judaism the head of the synagogue was a common figure,⁴ and in early Christianity there was a presiding officer who, after the reading of Scripture, made an address.⁵ That the Christians consciously at times used Jewish precedent as a guide is shown by the Didascalia where we read, "As it was not lawful for a stranger, that is, for one who was not a Levite, to draw near to the altar, or to offer aught without the high priest, so you also shall do nothing without the bishop."⁶

In the public worship of Judaism, incense was a feature. In the various Catholic churches today, it is regularly found. In the Liturgy of St. James we read that the priest

¹Apostolic Constitutions 2.57; Chrysostom, Homily 73 on Matthew. ²E. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, 2.509; cf. Codex Theodosianus 16.8, 13—in a reference to Jews—"archisynagogis patriarchisque ac presbyteris ceterisque".
³Acts 14.23 ⁴Pes. 49b ⁵Justin Apol. 1.67—ὁ προεστὼς ⁶ch. 8 (Connolly ed., p. 88)

gave regularly the prayer of the incense.¹ Tertullian tells us that "the sacred rites of the Lord's day in the church" were as follows: "The reading of Scriptures, the chanting of psalms, the preaching of sermons, the offering up of prayers."² These were also the main features of the Jewish synagogue. As for the reading of Scripture, it was the custom in Judaism for the Pentateuch to be read through consecutively in a cycle of three years, a portion being appointed for each Sabbath.³ Chrysostom likewise indicated that the Christians had a regular arrangement of the gospels to be read on the first day of the week, a section for each Sunday.⁴ In the Service Book of the Greco-Russian church there are regular sections from the New Testament to be read each Sunday, a part from the Epistles and a part from the Gospels.⁵ The reading of these two sections reminds us that in Judaism selections from the Law and from the Prophets were regularly read. That this practice of reading selections from both the Law and the Prophets was at first employed in Christianity seems likely from the Liturgy of St. James where we read, "Then are read fully the holy words of the old covenant and the prophets; and the incarnation of the Son of God, his sufferings, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into Heaven and his second coming with glory are set forth; and this takes place each time in the holy and divine service. After the reading and teaching," the liturgy goes on.⁶ That this liturgy at least refers back to an ancient practice is evident from the fact that while the Law and the Prophets are read, neither the New Testament nor the Gospels are, but instead teachings about Jesus' life "are set forth." The

¹1.5 (Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 7.537) ²On the Soul, 9 ³Meg. 29b ⁴Homily 11 on St. John ⁵I. F. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. XXIII ⁶J. M. Neale, *Primitive Liturgies*, 1859, p. 35 (Greek text, 1875, p. 44)

first is "reading," the second is "teaching." In the early Sunday liturgy among the Christian Jews, the Law and the Prophets would be read as usual, but the interpretation of these and the preaching about them would be different, for they would seek to show from each passage for the day that these were predictions of Jesus, and then would proceed to set forth the above teachings about their Messiah. Gradually this service underwent modifications, as Christianity developed, but the Old Testament remained in the church, and the basic Jewish structure of the liturgy remained. Even the ceremony connected with reading the Scriptures obtains in the Greek Orthodox church. Even today one can see a procession of men going forth bearing the Scriptures in practically the same way in both Judaism and the Greek church.

As far as the use of Psalms is concerned, there is a sprinkling of Psalms throughout the Service Book of the Greco-Russian church just as in the Jewish liturgy. They were used in the liturgy of the New Testament church.¹ It is also quite possible, as Naumann² suggests, that the Christian practice of chanting has been derived from the Jewish melodic recitation. "The preaching of sermons" referred to by Tertullian was such a familiar practice in both Judaism and Christianity that it only needs to be mentioned.

Jewish and Christian prayers contain a number of striking similarities. The Apostolic Constitutions prescribe preparation before prayer.³ We read in the Mishnah, "The former pious men used to spend a whole hour and then pray," as a preparation.⁴ One cannot read the Jewish liturgy without being impressed with the abundance of thanksgiving and praise. There was a "blessing,"

¹1 Cor. 14.26; Eph. 5.19; Col. 3.16 ²Emil Naumann, *History of Music*, 1.83f. ³7.24 ⁴Ber. 5.1

not only at meals, but for almost every situation of life. Expressive of this attitude is the selection from the daily morning service, "So long as the soul is within me I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord my God."¹ Thanksgiving has always been a prominent feature in Christianity, so common that it requires only mention.²

Jews from early times have prayed toward their own land and toward Jerusalem.³ It became the rule that when a Jew was outside his own land he turned his face toward it in prayer; when he was in his country he turned his face toward Jerusalem; and when he was in Jerusalem he turned his face toward the sanctuary.⁴ Therefore, it was necessary for the synagogues everywhere to be so constructed that the people would face Jerusalem. Maimonides, the great Jewish authority of the 12th century, said that the custom was for the synagogue to be so arranged that the people should face the Sanctuary, or the Ark, which represented the Temple.⁵ Most synagogues are constructed, as Rosenau says, so that "the ark, toward which the worshippers turn while praying, is along the eastern wall."⁶ In one such synagogue which I attended, the worshippers although not seated facing the ark, yet stood and faced it in prayer. The ancient synagogue unearthed at Tell Hum, Palestine, was directed toward the south, that is, toward Jerusalem.⁷ However, it is quite probable that in many of the synagogues the ark was placed either at the east or west, depending upon whether or not it was west or east of Jerusalem. This was the case at Kafr Bir'im, where in the great synagogue whose ruins have come down to us from the early

¹Abrahams-Singer Prayer Book, p. 5 ²Didache, ch. 14

³1 Kings 8.44, 45, 48; Dan. 6.10 (11); cf. Ezek. 8.16 ⁴Ber. 30a
⁵Hilchoth Tephilla 11.4 (C. Vitranga, De Synagoga, p. 191)

⁶W. Rosenau, Jewish Ceremonial Institutions and Customs, p. 18

⁷Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, No. 29, p. 14

centuries of the Christian era, although north of Jerusalem, the Ark was at the eastern end.¹ In the early Christian churches, since so many of them were west of Jerusalem, it was only natural that they should be directed toward the east. In the Didascalia we read that the Bishop's throne with the presbyters about him was located "in the eastern part of the house," and we read, "It is required that you pray toward the east."² The Apostolic Constitutions tell us, "Let the (church) building be oblong, directed toward the east."³ Even today in the Service Book of the Greco-Russian Church one can read, "The sanctuary must be built except when that is impossible, at the eastern end of the church."⁴ Thus we see that the Christians prayed toward the east, had their building directed toward the east, and had their sanctuary and officials located in the eastern part of the church. These features coincided with Judaism too exactly to be accidental. It is quite striking that in Syrian Antioch, which although north of Jerusalem is slightly east, the church is placed toward the west instead of toward the east. This was sufficiently different in Socrates' time to call for mention, for he said, "At Antioch in Syria the site of the church is inverted; so that the altar does not face toward the east, but toward the west."⁵ But as time passed, the custom was that churches should face the east and prayer be directed toward the east. In Tertullian's time, because of this practice, the charge was made that the Christians were sun-worshippers. Tertullian replied that the idea no doubt originated from their being known to turn to the east in prayer.⁶ Smith tells us that in Armenia, "The altar occupies the eastern extremity of the main longitudinal arch of the building; the Armenians

¹Jewish Encyclopedia, 11.631, art. "Synagogue" ²2.57 (Connolly ed., p. 119) ³2.57 ⁴p. XXIX ⁵Church History 5.22
⁶Apol. 16; cf. Ad Nationes 1.13

holding that divine worship should be directed only toward the east."¹ Interesting is the recent discovery at Jerash of a church built over an old synagogue. We read, "The church was built, as the inscription of dedication showed, in the year 530 A.D. . . . The church was oriented toward the east, the synagogue toward the west, that is, toward Jerusalem."² It would be only natural that at this date the church would follow, not Judaism, but the practice which obtained in practically all the other churches.

The Christian postures in prayer reveal themselves to have come direct from Judaism. The Jewish religion at various times had the following postures in prayer: standing, kneeling and prostration.³ These were at times used also in Christianity.⁴ At a single Greek-Orthodox service I have seen all three postures assumed. However, the more usual and formal practice in Judaism was to pray standing.⁵ In the main prayer of Judaism, the Eighteen Benedictions, the people were in a standing position.⁶ In the more formal prayers of Sunday, the Christians likewise practiced the standing position. Justin tells us, "We all rise together and offer prayers."⁷ This standing posture of Judaism continued to be observed by the eastern churches even on the Sabbath,⁸ and it is regularly observed in orthodox synagogues today. In the Christian Church it was declared "unlawful" for its members to kneel on Sunday.⁹ Following the Canon of Nicea, the Greco-Russian church today "does not permit kneeling."¹⁰ In Abyssinia

¹Eli Smith, *Researches in Armenia*, 1833, 1.226 ²Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research, No. 37, Feb. 1930 ³for comprehensive article, cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Art. "Adoration," L. Ginzberg; Ber. 34b ⁴Tertullian, *To Scapula* 4; Socrates, *Church History* 3.13 ⁵Gen. 18.22; Lev. 9.5; Deut. 29.10(9); 1 Sam. 1.26; Ber. 6b; Baba Mesia 59b; Mt. 6.5; Mk. 11.25; Lk. 18.11 ⁶Taanit 16b; Ber. 5.1 ⁷Apol. 1.67 ⁸p. 67, n. 6 ⁹Tertullian, *De Corona* 3; *Canons of Nicea* 20 ¹⁰*Service Book* (Hagood), p. XXXV

sinia also today, "the congregation stands for prayer,"¹¹ as is the custom in many other churches of the present day.

The lifting up of the hands in prayer was also a practice common to both Judaism and Christianity. In the Psalms the "lifting up of the hands" is assumed as part of the program of prayer.² The custom was employed in the priests' blessing. We read in reference to this blessing: "In the province the priests raise their hands level with their shoulders, but in the Temple over their heads."³ Everyone will of course be reminded of the present-day Christian practice of raising the hand or hands for the benediction. In early Christianity the practice of lifting up the hands in prayer was prevalent. The author of 1 Timothy said, "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands."⁴ Clement of Alexandria tells us, "Prayer is converse with God. . . . So also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven."⁵ From the catacombs of Rome there have come down to us exact pictures of prayer postures in the early church, as the saints stand with their hands outstretched in prayer.⁶

In addition to these prayer practices, one can find considerable likeness in the general liturgy. The early church liturgy, though differing almost completely in phraseology from existing Jewish liturgies, yet was the same in essential spirit. The general structure was much the same, although the subject-matter was naturally different. An interesting likeness is found in the fact that in Judaism while the Reader is saying his part, the Congregation in an

¹H. M. Hyatt, *The Church of Abyssinia*, p. 185f. ²Ps. 141.2 ³Sotah 7.6 ⁴2.8 ⁵Strom. 7.7; cf. Chrysostom, *De Anna* 4.6 (Migne P. G. 54.668); Tertullian, *Apol.* 30 ⁶Theophile Roller, *Les Catacombs de Rome*, Paris, 1881, Vol. 1, pictures opposite pages 286, 288, 291, 293; Pauli Aringhi, *Roma Subterranea*, 1659, 2.81-91; 127-139

undertone says something different.¹ In the Service Book of the Greco-Russian Church,² one can see at different places in the Liturgy exactly the same thing, but a priest says his part in secret. The "Trisagion" in Judaism and that in Christianity are strikingly similar:

Jewish Prayer Book³

"All the hosts on high render praise unto him, the Seraphim, the Ophanim and the holy Chayoth ascribing glory and greatness . . . they all respond in unison and exclaim with awe:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. . . . Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place."

Apostolic Constitutions (8.12)⁴

"Thee the innumerable hosts of angels, archangels . . . adore. The Cherubim and Seraphim . . . say, together with thousand thousands of archangels, and ten thousand times ten thousand of angels, crying out incessantly and constantly: (And let all the people say with them)

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of his glory. Blessed be He for evermore. Amen".

We have thus seen in how many ways Christianity, in its sacred day, followed Judaism. A whole book could doubtless be written on all the various Jewish customs that found their way into Christianity. But we have had to be content with observing some of the respects in which the Jewish Sabbath was reproduced in the Christian Sunday. These parallels should be sufficiently numerous and convincing to make clear to us that the Christian Sunday had its origin largely in Judaism. The very recurrence of a weekly sacred day is best explained by the Jewish religion. Further, the whole character of this day, its atmosphere and the worship services which characterized it, show how

¹Singer-Abrahams Prayer Book, p. 37 ²p. 1 ³Singer-Abrahams, p. 129 ⁴Cf. J. M. Neale, Primitive Liturgies, p. 21, 48, 82, 113, 130, 163

closely associated it was with the Jewish Sabbath. To be sure, Christianity, especially in its more liberal wing, revolted from the external legalism of minute Jewish Sabbath laws. In addition, the theological developments of Christianity made many modifications in the liturgy. But underneath Christianity, modified though it was, was a substratum of Judaism that was unmistakable. This is not at all surprising, considering, as we have shown,¹ the origin of Christianity from the Jewish religion, where the founder, the apostles and the most influential adherents for many years were Jews.

We have yet to consider a passage, which in all its relations has an important bearing upon our subject. We read in Acts 20.7: "On the first day of the week, as we were gathering together to break bread,² Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow." The detail is added (verse 8) that "there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together." This selection of details leaves no doubt that by this time the first day of the week was the regular time for Christian assemblage. The author was extremely careful in his selection of details, all of them having significance. He is careful to mention that this occurred on the first day of the week. By his matter-of-fact manner he assumes that it was quite the normal and expected thing for Christians to meet on the first day of the week and "break bread." We are also able to observe that the same author, in his gospel, carefully arranged his details, cramming all the resurrection appearances into that first day of the week. It is especially to be observed that on the evening of that day the two disciples at Emmaus knew him at the "breaking of bread."³ In the passage of Acts, the "breaking of

¹p. 54f. ²ἐν δὲ τῇ μᾶ τῶν σαββάτων, συνηγμένων ἡμῶν κλάσαι ἄρτον
³Lk. 24.1f., 30, 31

bread" seems clearly assumed as a regular custom for Sunday. In Pliny we read that the Christians were accustomed to assemble on an appointed day, with the first service before light and the second one later when they came together to take food.¹ In view of the above it is most probable that this meant that on Sunday evenings, the "breaking of bread" was regularly practiced. In early Christian literature, as in the *Didache*² and Justin Martyr,³ this "breaking of bread" was the established procedure for Sunday, which Christian usage has followed in the main ever since. This early Christian practice of assemblage on Sundays early before dawn and at night is clearly indicated by the emphasis of the Fourth Gospel, where we read that the empty tomb was found before light, "while it was yet dark,"⁴ and when it was evening on that day the disciples were assembled together and Jesus appeared unto them. The following Sunday the disciples were again together and the appearance again occurred.⁵ So in the light of subsequent practice, Luke's mention of the "first day of the week" becomes highly meaningful.

A difference of opinion has arisen among some as to whether this event occurred on Saturday or Sunday evening, according as Jewish reckoning was, or was not observed. Some believe that the Jewish reckoning must have been employed, and so this passage in the Acts refers to Saturday evening, hence the assemblage could have been no memorial of the resurrection, and therefore we are not to think that this first day of the week was observed as yet as a regular day of assemblage for the Christians.⁶ Yet, as we have just shown, it is probable, in view of Luke's other writing and later Christian usage that Sunday eve-

¹Letters 10.96 ²ch. 14 ³Apol. 1.67 ⁴Cf. Mk. 16.2, "When the sun had risen" ⁵Jn. 20.1, 19, 26 ⁶C. B. Haynes, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, Washington, D. C., 1928, p. 25f.

ning was the time. Augustine, at least, believed that this was the case.¹ The First and Fourth Gospels reveal that in the time they were written, and in these Christian circles, the Jewish reckoning was not employed.² It is therefore probable that the time of this assemblage in Acts 20.7 was Sunday evening. But we may, nevertheless, grant the possibility that it was Saturday evening. As we have noted,³ Saturday evening was probably employed by the earliest Jewish-Christians. But in granting this, it does not follow that the first day of the week had no religious significance to the Christians, nor even that it did not commemorate to them the resurrection. According to their tradition, the finding of the empty tomb and the earliest appearances came on that day. It would be assumed that the actual resurrection occurred some time before the finding of the empty tomb. In view of all this, it would not be at all incongruous for the Christians to meet regularly on Saturday evening, according to Jewish reckoning the day of the resurrection, and celebrate their Lord's death by the Eucharist.⁴ But it must be remembered that by the time the Gospel of Luke and John were written, at least in these circles, the Jewish reckoning of days had for some

¹Letter 36.29 ²Mt. 28.1; Jn. 20.1, 19 ³p. 83f. ⁴That the events of Acts 20.7 took place on Saturday evening may be substantiated by the present practice in the Greco-Russian Church where each Saturday evening a night vigil is kept. (Hagood, *Service Book*, p. XXIII, p. 1) On the Saturday evening before Easter an especial vigil is kept with services all night long until the morning. Paul's staying all night "till break of day" is thus similar. Interesting in this connection is the narrative of the resurrection in the Gospel of Peter (9, 11). There are two episodes of the resurrection story, one Saturday night while the soldiers keep their night vigil in which the resurrection takes place, and the other on Sunday morning when the empty tomb is found. Considerable light may thus be thrown upon the early Christian commemoration on Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

time been abandoned, as the placing of the resurrection events amply prove.

Whether this assemblage was Saturday or Sunday evening, it is at least apparent that we have in this passage an indication of a regular religious observance of the first day of the week. This impression is strengthened when we consider the various details of the passage, in their relation to established Jewish procedure for the Sabbath. Their assemblage on the first day of the week, Paul's long and elaborate address to them, the "breaking of bread," and the detail of the "many lights" all give us in striking manner the details of a service on the first day of the week, such as would be taken over from those of a Jewish synagogue Sabbath service. We should remark at this point that we are not to expect full details or often repeated affirmations in the New Testament that the first day of the week was religiously observed by Christians. The New Testament was written for those who knew much more about the traditions and practices of the time than we do. We should consider ourselves fortunate to possess even fragmentary details that give us a hint of the procedure of the church.

The "many lights" in their assembly room give us an indication of the formality of this religious service, its definitely religious character. Lights in Judaism were always an important feature in their service.¹ In the home a special benediction was used in the kindling of the Sabbath light.² This kindling was a particular duty of the house-

¹Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.13; J. Mann, in the *Jewish Review*, Vol. 4, p. 522, suggests that this was due to a conscious antagonism to the Samaritans, for they believed that the prohibition of fire on the Sabbath included lights. Cf. A. Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften* 3.288. For the lighting up of lamps as an important feature of the Jewish Sabbath, cf. also *Jos. Against Apion* 2.40 (ed. Niese 2.282); Seneca, *Epistles* 95.47

²*Singer-Abrahams Prayer-Book*, p. 108.

wife, never to be neglected. So important was this duty that its neglect was declared to be one of the three transgressions which cause women to die in child-birth.¹ The lighting of a light on the Day of Atonement was optional, depending upon the usage in the various localities. But if the Day of Atonement fell on a Sabbath, a light was always kindled, "in honor of the Sabbath."² On such a religious festival as the Sabbath, an abundance of light was a proper expression of the people's joy and reverence for the day. And so as to Luke's expression, "There were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together," although it seems at first a meaningless detail, yet it becomes highly meaningful in expressing the religious character of the meeting.

Christianity adopted from Judaism various details in its use of lights. It was a Biblical command to the Jews to keep a lamp burning perpetually "outside the veil of the testimony."³ This lamp, referred to in Josephus⁴ as being part of the Temple furnishings, has been brought down to us in the Jewish synagogues of the present day, where above the veil that covers the Ark it still hangs. In exactly the same place in the Greek Orthodox Church one can see today that same perpetual lamp. Likewise the candlestick which played such a conspicuous part in the temple furnishings⁵ has been brought down to us in the Greek Orthodox Church, where we can observe it yet today. We read in their Service Book, "Behind the altar a seven-branched candelabra is usually placed."⁶

It is quite probable that the importance of lights in early Christianity's Sunday services had its precedent in the

¹Shab. 2.6 ²Pes. 54a ³Lev. 24.1-4 ⁴Against Apion 1.22 (ed. Niese 1.199) ⁵2 Chron. 13.11 ⁶Hapgood, p. XXX; cf. p. XXXIV—"Lights are always used during divine service, even though it be performed in full sunlight."

Sabbath ceremonies of Judaism, both in ushering in the Sabbath and in marking its close. The earliest Christians probably assembled, as we have shown, at the close of the Sabbath. This was marked in Judaism by a special service, called Habdalah.¹ In this home service at the termination of the Sabbath, the purpose was to make a distinction between the sacred and the profane, the Sabbath and the rest of the week. Inasmuch as fire was prohibited on this day, and even lights must be kindled before the beginning of the Sabbath, the light would naturally symbolize the end of their sacred day and the beginning of their work-days. At any rate it occupied a conspicuous place in their Habdalah ceremony.² The earliest Jewish-Christians, as they were assembled together, would naturally use this ceremony. But even though assembling at the close of the Sabbath and probably using its forms at first, they would naturally desire to have some form to indicate that their sacred day was not ending, but beginning. The Jewish form, Kiddush, for opening the Sabbath would naturally present itself.

In this ceremony we read, "Lord of the Universe, I am about to perform the sacred duty of kindling the lights in honor of the Sabbath." . . . "(On kindling the lights say:) Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by thy commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light."³ It is no accident that we find in the Egyptian Church Order a solemn bringing in of a lamp, marking the beginning of the Christian assembly. We read, "Concerning the bringing in of lamps at the supper of the congregation. When the evening has

¹For details of this service, cf. Singer-Abrahams Prayer Book, p. CLXXXII, p. 216; J. Elbogen, Festschrift zu Israel Lewy's siebzigsten Geburtstag, p. 183 ²Ber. 8.5; Pes. 54a ³Singer-Abrahams Prayer Book, p. 108.

come, the bishop being there, the deacon shall bring in a lamp, and standing in the midst of all the Faithful, being about to give thanks, the bishop . . . prays thus, saying: We give thee thanks, God, . . . because thou hast enlightened us by revealing the incorruptible light, we having therefore finished the length of a day and having come to the beginning of the night."¹

If Habdalah and Kiddush, the ending and the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, had so much to do with the Christian ceremonies of lights, we may well believe that they had something to do with the Christian "breaking of bread," also mentioned in our passage, Acts 20.7. Since the Eucharist has held such a central place in the liturgy of the Lord's Day, we are justified in giving considerable attention to this phase of our subject. At the outset it is interesting to observe that, as is well known, early Christianity's celebration of the Eucharist was in connection with a common meal.² This is strikingly Jewish. In many of the ceremonies of Judaism, as in the Habdalah, or Kiddush or the Passover, a regular festival meal furnished the setting. Either the family furnished the unit for the celebration or a group of people of congenial interests. The early Christians no doubt followed Judaism in using the assemblage at meals as an opportunity for the expression of their religion. Since at Jerusalem they "had all things common," they possessed an excellent opportunity to practice their religion as they assembled together, "breaking bread" and

¹Statute 37 (Ethiopic Text)—It may be that both Habdalah and Kiddush had their influence in this Christian ceremony of lights. The fact that a deacon brought in the lamp in the Christian service, and not a woman, or a housewife as in the Jewish Kiddush, may be explained by the fact that in the Habdalah service when the light is brought, no specification is made as to who may bring it. Or, it may be due to a natural development in the Christian church, as it left the environment of the home and became more churchly. ²1 Cor. 11.20, 21

“praising God.”¹ These Jewish-Christians would naturally observe Kiddush and Habdalah, as each Sabbath came. Such practices would naturally influence future developments.

It is quite possible, as we have shown, that the earliest Christians, being Jews, continued the Habdalah service with Christian additions, gradually building up a Christian service of their own, similar to the Sabbath service. There was no opportunity for them on the Sabbath to express their distinctively Christian sentiments, as they were busy at the Temple or synagogue. So Christian groups at the meal that concluded the Sabbath could gradually develop a Christian service of their own, as the Sabbath with its services was still fresh upon them. Obviously, they too wished to have some consecration or sanctification of their own day. The consecration ceremony of Judaism, the Kiddush, would naturally lie to hand. It may well be that the practice mentioned by Elbogen² afforded a precedent for the Christians. A number of Jews thus met in groups, calling themselves “associates,” and assembling in the afternoon before the Sabbath began. We have already noted³ that the Egyptian Christians assembled “on the Sabbath toward evening,” thus meeting before the Sunday began.

It is quite probable that very early the Christians commemorated at least weekly the death of their Lord. They may have begun to hold such commemorations on the Sabbath, in connection with one of their meals, at Kiddush or Habdalah. It would be natural for his death to be commemorated at the time he was in the grave, the Sabbath. At least we possess this strange statement from Socrates of Constantinople in the fifth century: “Although the churches of the

¹Acts 2.44-47 ²J. Elbogen, *Festschrift zu Israel Lewy's Geburtstag*, 1911, p. 173-185 ³p. 83f.

world everywhere celebrate the mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, those in Alexandria and in Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refused to do this.”¹ It is plain that the “Sabbath” here is the seventh day of the week, not only because this was the usual meaning in early Christianity, but especially because here the dissenting custom of Rome and Alexandria is mentioned.² Through Sozomen we learn that some cities assembled together on both the Sabbath and the next day, but this was never done at Rome or Alexandria.³ But Socrates, because he was in the midst of this custom, doubtless exaggerated the number of churches who observed the mysteries on the Sabbath. Sozomen tells us that this assemblage on the Sabbath and the Lord’s day, although practiced, as he says, “nearly everywhere,” yet was especially the case at Constantinople, where Socrates lived.³ But although the statement of Socrates is no doubt exaggerated, it may well be that at a very early time Christians commemorated Jesus’ death on Sabbaths by the Eucharist. This would be only natural, not only because they were Jews and would use their Sabbath, but because the first day of the week was their time to celebrate, not the death, but the resurrection of Jesus. But gradually, as Sunday rose in importance, it became the time for the commemoration of Jesus’ death. As this com-

¹Church History 5.22—This is corroborated in the Egyptian Church Order (Statute 34, 35—Ethiopic text, cf. St. 33, Arabic text) where we read that baptisms were made on the Sabbath and that on both the Sabbath and the first day of the week there were special celebrations of the Eucharist. From the Abyssinian church, Claudius, the King, tells us: “We do not keep it (the Sabbath) as the Jews do . . . but we keep it in that we celebrate thereon the Lord’s Supper, and hold Love Feasts, even as our Fathers the Apostles have instructed us in the Didascalia”. (H. M. Hyatt, *The Church of Abyssinia*, p. 292f.)

²This interpretation is further substantiated by the presence in the same chapter in Socrates of the words, “Sabbath”, and “Lord’s Day” side by side. ³Church History 7.19

memoration was closely associated with Jewish Sabbath meals, Kiddush and Habdalah, in early practice, so also was the blessing over the bread and wine in these meals naturally allied to the memorials of Jesus' death.

Whatever may have been the origin of these memorials, at least it can be established that they passed through the moulds of the Sabbath Kiddush.¹ In this ceremony the Jews, in addition to saying such words as, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hallowest the Sabbath," have a blessing over the wine and the bread, saying, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine," and "who bringest forth bread from the earth."² This is a kind of blessing before the meal, but on the Sabbath it had an especially solemn character. It was the custom, as R. Abba said, for a benediction to be pronounced in the Kiddush over two loaves of bread, because of the double amount of manna which originally had to be gathered for the Sabbath.³ So important was the Kiddush wine that R. Zakkai related: "Once my old mother sold her cap from her head and brought me (wine) for the Kiddush." It was taught, "When she died she left him three hundred jugs of wine."⁴ Dembitz gives us an interesting account of the Kiddush ceremony which should be carefully compared with the Eucharist service.—"When the husband and sons come back from the Synagogue, they find the table laid with a clean table-cloth, and where the head

¹It may be that the very name, Kiddush, (קידוש) was retained as a designation of the Eucharist. In the Egyptian Church Order the Eucharist service is called the Kiddas. (Arabic Text, St. 21, 52) In the parallel Ethiopic text it is called the Keddase. In the Abyssinian church the Communion Service is still called the Ked-dase, (H. M. Hyatt, *The Church of Abyssinia*, p. 185f.) ²Singer-Abrahams Prayer Book, p. 124—That these customs were observed in the first century is revealed by the differences on the subject in the schools of Shammai and Hillel in the Mishnah. (Ber. 8.1; Pes. 106a; Pes. 117b) ³Shab. 117b ⁴Megillah 27b

of the family sits, two loaves of bread, in memory of the double portion of manna that was gathered on Fridays, lie covered with a napkin, and next to them stands a cup and by it a jug or bottle of wine to fill it. The master of the house then holds up the full cup and proceeds, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe who createst the fruit of the vine.' The master then drinks from the cup and hands it to his wife, and she passes it to the children and other persons at the table, and all drink from it. Then they wash their hands, the master thanks for the bread, cuts one loaf, takes a morsel for himself, and distributes pieces to the others."¹ It is noteworthy that, whereas the usual order in the Gospels has the bread and then the wine, in a part of Luke which has no parallel in the other gospels, the cup is placed before the bread, and then Paul's account is followed with "the cup after supper."² The Didache, also following the order of the Kiddush ceremony, has "first the Cup" and then the "Bread."³ It is also noteworthy that the Didache has the supper, or Agape, after the Eucharist, just as in the Kiddush.

The giving of thanks is a prominent element in the Kiddush. This feature was so prominent in the "Lord's Supper" that it gave a name to the whole service, the Eucharist. This thanksgiving in the Jewish Kiddush was a "blessing" from its opening word, "Blessed." It is interesting that Paul called the Christian Lord's Supper "the cup of blessing which we bless."⁴ In the Didache this giving of

¹L. N. Dembitz, *Jewish Services in Synagogue and Home*, p. 348; cf. Wm. Rosenau, *Jewish Ceremonial Institutions and Customs*, p. 114 ²Lk. 22.17, 20 (Cf. p. 166) ³Ch. 9, 10

⁴I Cor. 10.16—The very word which Paul used, *εὐλογίας*, corresponds to the Hebrew word beginning the Kiddush ברוך (Singer-Abrahams Prayer Book, p. 124), *εὐλογητός* being the Septuagint translation of ברוך.

thanks is noticeably like the Kiddush: "And concerning the Eucharist (τῆς εὐχαριστίας) thus give thanks (εὐχαριστήσατε): First over the cup, 'We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David,'" etc. There follows the thanks for the bread.¹ The order of the "cup first" and the reference to the "vine" is too like the Kiddush to be accidental. Interesting is the contribution of Justin that the leader at the Communion Service "offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe . . . and gives thanks."² Likewise, in the Egyptian Church Order we read, the bishop "shall give thanks over the cup."³

In the same passage of this Church Order we read that the deacon holds up "the mingled cup." This is wine mingled with water. Justin tells us in connection with the liturgy of the Eucharist, "There is brought to the leader of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water."² We also read in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, "Wine is first poured into the holy cup and then water."⁴ We should not be surprised if we found in Judaism some precedent for this strange practice. Indeed we do in the Jerusalem Talmud, "The wine should not be blessed until after having mixed it with water (the wine of Palestine being too strong)."⁵

In addition to all these striking similarities, we should emphasize that the very connection of the Eucharist with the Love Feast, or supper of the congregation,⁶ has its roots in the association of the Kiddush with the evening Sabbath meal. These similarities would naturally arise, because the

¹Didache, ch. 9 (App. p. 171) ²Apol. 1.65 (App. p. 171, 172) ³Ethiopic Text, St. 37 ⁴J. M. Neale, Translation of the Primitive Liturgies, 1859, p. 120; cf. p. 153; Hagood, Service Book, p. 115

⁵J. Ber. 7.6 ⁶Cf. Egyptian Church Order, Eth. text, St. 37; H. M. Hyatt, The Church of Abyssinia, p. 292f.; Didache, ch. 9, 10

earliest Christians themselves observed these self-same Sabbath meals.

But it may be objected that Judaism had another sacred meal which well could have served as a precedent for the Eucharist, namely, the Passover meal. In fact, the Synoptics declare that it was on the Passover that Jesus instituted the Eucharist. But in the Appendix¹ we seek to prove that the Fourth Gospel possesses a more correct tradition in the assertion that the Passover meal came, not the evening before Jesus' death, but the evening after, not Thursday, but Friday evening.

Yet we should observe to what extent the Passover celebration proved influential in determining the forms of the Eucharist. We may thus be able to determine in some measure the relative influence of both the Kiddush of the Sabbath and the Passover celebration. Lietzmann,² in minimizing the importance of the Passover, points out that in the Eucharist there is only the bread and the wine—the lamb does not have a place. It is striking that instead of having the lamb, as we should expect, we have the bread. Yet this point alone is not conclusive, since in Christian thought Jesus himself represented the lamb. But it is well to notice, as Lietzmann points out, that when the Synoptics refer to Jesus' taking bread at the Last Supper, they do not use the usual word for unleavened bread (azumos) but the word for ordinary bread (artos). He further notes that four cups of wine were used in the Passover liturgy while only one is found in the Eucharist. But it is quite possible that the natural trend toward simplification would result in these four cups being reduced to one in the Christian liturgy. It must be realized that Paul's reference (followed by Luke) to the "cup after supper" is strongly

¹Appendix, p. 161f. ²Hans Lietzmann, Messe und Herrenmahl, p. 211

reminiscent of the Passover. At the conclusion of the Passover meal, there was a goblet of wine, followed by the Hallel Psalms,¹ and after this another goblet of wine was drunk. In this connection, the Egyptian Church Order is quite interesting. In the service of "the supper of the congregation," "after supper . . . the deacon holding the mingled cup . . . shall say the Psalm . . . Hale luya." And then, "the psalm having been completed, he shall give thanks over the cup."²

That there must be some connection between the liturgy of the Passover and that of the Eucharist is shown by the following comparison of the Apostolic Constitutions with the Passover liturgy:

Apostolic Constitutions 8.12³

The high priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord. All the people: It is meet and right. Then let the high priest say: It is truly meet and right before all things to sing a hymn to Thee, who verily art God, who art before the creatures, "from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named".

. . . who didst bring all things from non-being into being . . . For Thou art He who didst set up the heaven as an arch, and

Passover Liturgy⁴

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, For his mercy endures forever.⁵ All thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord, our God; and Thy pious ones, together with all Thy people, the house of Israel, shall, with joy give thanks, bless, praise . . . and ascribe kingship to your name, O our King; for it is proper to give thanks to you, and becoming to sing praises to your name, because . . . Thou art our God.⁶

To him who alone doeth great wonders

To him that by understanding made the heavens,

¹H. E. Goldin, *The Standard Haggadah*, p. 79, 99; cf. Kaufman Kohler, *The Origin of the Synagogue and the Church*, p. 90; Pes. 10.6 ²Ethiopic Text, St. 37

³Cf. *Liturgy of St. Clement*, J. M. Neale, *Primitive Liturgies*, 1859, p. 76f. ⁴H. E. Goldin, *The Standard Haggadah*, p. 85-99 ⁵Cf. *Hallel Psalms*, 118.1; 136.1 ⁶Goldin, p. 97

didst found the earth upon nothing by Thy will alone, who didst . . . prepare the night and the day; who didst bring the light out of Thy treasures; who didst appoint the sun in heaven for authority over the day, and the moon for authority over the night, and didst inscribe in heaven the choir of stars.

(There follows a series of praises to God for various deliverances in Hebrew history. All this is quite alien to the idea of the Christian Eucharist, but well accords with the Passover Hallel.)

Thou, O Lord, didst not overlook the Hebrews when they were afflicted by the Egyptians, but Thou didst deliver them, and punish the Egyptians.

Thou . . . didst divide the sea, and lead over the Israelites, and didst destroy the Egyptians under the water, as they were pursuing. Thou didst sweeten the bitter water with wood; Thou didst bring out water from the rock; Thou didst rain manna from heaven. Thou didst declare Joshua to be general, and didst destroy the seven nations of the Canaanites by him.

Holy also is Thy only-begotten Son Jesus Christ . . . who has not overlooked the lost race of men. . . . And he reconciled

To him that spread forth the earth above the waters,

To him that made great lights—the sun to rule by day

The moon
and stars to rule by night.

To him that smote Egypt in their first-born, and brought out Israel from among them.

To him that divided the Red Sea in sunder, and made Israel to pass through the midst of it, but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea.

To him that led his people through the wilderness.

To him that smote great kings, Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan.

Who remembered us in our low estate

Thee to the world, and freed all men from the wrath to come. And hast delivered us from our adversaries.¹

(Liturgy of St. Clement)²

<p>For to Thee is due all glory, adoration, and thanksgiving, honor and worship . . . both now and ever, and world without end.</p>	<p>For to Thee, O Lord our God, is due song and praise, hymn and psalm, strength and dominion . . . renown and glory . . . blessings and thanksgivings from henceforth even for ever.³</p>
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These striking similarities cannot be overlooked. From these we can at least conclude that the forms of Judaism had a great influence upon those of Christianity. The thought of "Christ our Passover" was strong enough to be influential in the very formation of the Christian liturgy. Interesting are the following Passover-theological ideas in the Liturgy of St. James: "Christ our God cometh forward to be sacrificed and to be given for food to the faithful."⁴ The Jewish Passover was thus influential enough to make a deep impression upon the Christian Eucharist in thought and even in language. There are two possible conclusions from the above similarities—either the Eucharist found its origin in the belief that Jesus established it as a Passover meal, or the Eucharist, already flourishing before the advent of these theological-Passover ideas, passed through a development due to them. Although recognizing our limitations of knowledge, it seems probable that the latter was the case. It is at least noteworthy that for Paul the idea of the Eucharist as a memorial of Jesus' death seems preëminent. This simple memorial service, celebrated at first on the Sabbath, and passing through the moulds of the Sabbath Kiddush, at length took on the coloring of the Passover. It seems certain at least, as we have

¹Cf. Ps. 136.4-24 ²Neale, *Primitive Liturgies*, 1859, p. 76f.
³Goldin, p. 97 ⁴Neale, *Primitive Liturgies*, p. 38

shown, that the weekly celebration of the Eucharist had as its precedent the Sabbath Kiddush. Not only were there striking similarities of form, but it also seems the most natural account, since the earliest Christians met together on the Sabbath, and at their common meals observed all these Jewish ceremonies.

As we have seen, not only the Sabbath Kiddush was influential, but many forms of the Jewish Sabbath had their influence upon the Christian Sunday. This institution thus owes its existence to Judaism in both negative and positive aspects. The early Christians felt their difference from Judaism to be sufficient to warrant a separate day; and their affinity to Judaism was too close to cause their Sunday to be any other than a kind of reproduction of the Jewish Sabbath. In the early Christian church there were present: (1) a sense of difference and opposition to Judaism, and (2) an assimilation of Jewish forms. This two-fold relationship to Judaism expressed itself in the Christian Sunday, a day distinct from Judaism not only in date but in its character as a day of rest. But in respect to worship, the fundamental features of the Jewish Sabbath were retained.

IV. THE NON-JEWISH INFLUENCES.

1. THE TERM, "LORD'S DAY."

HAVING seen the tremendous influence of Judaism upon the Christian Sunday, we would do well to cast our eyes upon the pagan world and see the extent of its influence. We have made it clear that, in the origin of Christianity, we are to look to Judaism for the primary influence, since the cradle of Christianity was Judaism. But having observed that influence, we shall pass on to the non-Jewish world.

Let us first examine the Greek term, "Lord's Day (*ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*)". We are first confronted with this term in the New Testament book of Revelation.¹ Scholars are generally agreed that this term here refers to the Christian Sunday.² This interpretation seems the natural one, as the author thus gives both the place and date of this vision—the isle of Patmos, and the Lord's Day. This view is further corroborated by later usage in the early Christian literature where the "Lord's Day" universally means the Christian day of worship.³ It is quite probable that the term had not been in general use long, since, although later Christian writers used a shortened technical expression,⁴ this writer used the full term.

There are various possible explanations for the origin of this term, all of them having perhaps a certain validity. We have already noted⁵ that the "Lord's Day" may well have come from its being, in the minds of the early Christians,

¹1.10 (c. 90 A.D.) ²Cf. Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. "Lord's Day" ³Ignatius, To the Magnesians 9; Didache 14 ⁴(*ἡ*) κυριακή—Ignatius, To the Magnesians 9; Didache 14; Apostolic Constitutions 2.59; 7.23; 7.36 ⁵p. 82.

the day of the Lord's resurrection. It is also quite possible that the following words of the Passover ritual had their effect upon the name for the day—"This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."¹ This passover ritual, as we have seen, was employed largely in the Eucharist service and, when this service came to be used on Sunday, these words, seeming to have a typical significance, made a deep impression. The words of the Hallel which just precede this passage are as follows: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief cornerstone." The frequent reference to this passage in the New Testament² as a prophecy of Jesus shows how great an impression it had made upon the Christians by frequent use. "The day which the Lord has made," used so frequently in their Sunday ritual, thus naturally became "the Lord's Day."

But although this term may have arisen from the Christian use of the words of the Jewish passover ritual, it must be admitted that it is a Greek term, and has associations which cannot be overlooked. There is an analogy in the New Testament of interest—"the Lord's Supper."³ Goguel believes that the name, "Lord's Day" may well have come from the Lord's Supper having been held on that day.⁴ It is a possibility, since by that time the Lord's Supper was doubtless observed in many churches on that day. It is my own feeling, however, that the name for this day arose, not because of the Lord's Supper, but because of the Christian regard for their "Lord."⁵ It was thus not the "Lord's Supper Day," but the "Lord's Day." But at

¹Ps. 118.24; H. E. Goldin, The Standard Haggadah, p. 89 ²Mk. 12.10; (Mt. 21.42; Lk. 20.17); Acts 4.11; I Pet. 2.7 ³I Cor. 11.20-κυριακὸν δεῖπνον ⁴Maurice Goguel, Revue de L'Histoire des Religions-Notes d'Histoire Evangelique, 1916, p. 29f. ⁵The "day of Mordecai" (2 Macc. 15.36) affords an interesting analogy.

least the term, "Lord's Supper" was a precedent or analogy. Another analogy, found in later Christian writings, is "the Lord's house," or church, which had become a technical expression like the "Lord's Day," and was thus shortened to Kyriakon.¹ We shall probably be disappointed, if we expect to find in paganism the use of "the Lord's Day" just as we find it in Christianity. We need not look for the "Lord's Days" in paganism any more than "Lord's Suppers" and "Lord's houses." The Christians were quite capable of taking this adjective, Kyriakos, and making their own terminology therefrom.²

But this word, Kyriakos, has many interesting associations in the pagan world. It is regularly used to refer to the Emperor, meaning "Imperial." We thus have references to the "Imperial accounts," the "Imperial treasury," "Imperial attendants," etc.³ This adjective implies that the noun, "Lord" (Kyrios) was applied to the Emperor. Such was the case. We must clearly understand that during and before the first century A.D. divine qualities were attributed to rulers. This was a widespread

¹Eusebius, Church History, 9.10, Migne P. G. 20.833; Origen, In Ps. 36.21, Migne P. G. 17.132; The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, B. P. Grenfell-A. S. Hunt, London, 1903, 6.903.19, 21; Athanasius, Historica et Dogmatica, Migne P. G. 25.792; 26.841A; 26.941C (They came into the church saying—*εἰς τὸ κυριακὸν ἤρχοντο λέγοντες*); Apostolic Constitutions 2.59.

²The supposition of S. V. McCasland (Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 49, p. 80) is unwarranted that the *κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου* of Didache-14 implies that there was a pagan Lord's day. This redundancy is readily explained by the desire for emphasis, especially since *κυριακή* had become a technical expression.

³W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Lipsiae, 1905, Vol. 2, No. 669.1, 2 (68 A.D.)—the Imperial accounts—*ταῖς κυριακαῖς ψήφοις*; J. R. S. Sterrett, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Boston, 1888, 1.2. No. 14, 21; The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Grenfell-Hunt, 3.474.41; 12.1461.10; Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum (Berolini), (1853), 2.3490; 3.3919.6; 3.3953 h&i.; 3.4957.18

custom at a very early date. In Egypt, as the Rosetta Stone shows us, Ptolemy V, Epiphanes,¹ is given a eulogy in which he is called: "a living image of Zeus," "son of Helios" (the sun), "a God (born) of a god and goddess as Horus was the son of Isis and Osiris." Athenaeus² tells us that Demetrius Poliorcetes, King of Macedonia in the third century B.C., was hailed by the Athenians on his victorious return as "the only true God." In the Roman Empire, from early times this custom prevailed. The senate gave Julius Cæsar the title on an inscription—"demi-god," and addressed him as "Jupiter Julius and ordered a temple to be consecrated to him."³ Augustus Cæsar, as Suetonius⁴ tells us, was called "Lord" by the common people, even though "He always shrank from the title of 'Lord' as reproachful and insulting. When the words, 'O just and gracious Lord' (Dominum) were uttered in a farce of which he was a spectator and all the people sprang to their feet and applauded as if they were said of him, he at once checked their unseemly flattery by look and gesture." Even though contrary to his wishes, the people naturally called him "Lord." We are also told that the senate "arranged that his name should be included in their hymns equally with those of the gods."⁵

Later emperors were not so reluctant to receive divine homage. When Tiridates wished to secure a favor from Nero, he came addressing him as follows: "I have come to thee, my god, to worship thee as I do Mithras."⁶ From Nero on we possess abundant references to the practice of

¹Dittenberger, *Inscriptiones* 1.141f., No. 90 (Epiphanes, 204-181 B.C.) ²6.253

³Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 43.14; 44.6 (Julius Caesar was put to death 44 B.C.) ⁴Augustus 53 ⁵Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 51.20 (Augustus, 63 B.C.-A.D. 14) ⁶Dio Cassius 62.5 (Nero, 54-68 A.D.)

calling the Emperor the "Lord."¹ Suetonius tells us that Domitian "began as follows in dictating a circular letter in the name of his procurators, 'Our Lord and our God (*Dominus et deus noster*) bids that this be done.' And so the custom arose of addressing him in no other way even in writing or in conversation."²

There is a striking correspondence between these ideas and terminology, and those in the Christian religion. It must be remembered that Jesus was considered as the Messiah, or King of the Jews. There was just enough divine content in the Jewish conception of the Messiahship from the very beginning of Christianity to make the title, "Lord," a natural one. But as Bousset³ points out, in the time and region in which the Kyrios-Jesus-cult arose, the Lord cult of the Kings had hardly had such a dominating place as to cause Jesus to be called Lord in opposition. Although Jesus was probably not at first called "Lord" in opposition to king-worship, we do find therein an instructive analogy. As we have seen, the people instinctively called Augustus, "Lord." This term would also quite naturally be applied to Jesus. And as time went on, this term rose to preëminence.⁴ The Emperors were increasingly being called by this name. There were many other lords, or baals, in the surrounding pagan world.⁵ Paul

¹Paul M. Meyer, *Griechische Texte aus Aegypten*, Berlin, 1916—*Ostraka der Sammlung Deissmann* 22.2; 23.3; 24.2 ("In the ninth year of Nero the Lord"; cf. Christian practice of "anno Domini"); Cf. *Indices*, p. 207 for further references to Nero, Vespasian, Domitian, etc.

²Domitian 13; cf. Martial, *Epigrams* 5.8 (Domitian 81-96 A.D.)

³Kyrios Christos, p. 113, Göttingen, 1913 ⁴The rareness of the term in the earliest gospel-sources (Jackson-Lake, *Beginnings of Christianity*, 1.412) does not necessarily prove its non-existence in the earliest period of the church. ⁵In Mithraism—Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, 2.167, No. 519—"a gift to the unconquered Lord (*domino Invicto*)"; G. A. Cooke, *A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1903, p. 44, No. 9, 132 B.C. (Phoenician)—"My lord, Baal-shamem (lord

gives us a real glimpse into the situation as he says, making a contrast between the pagan world and Christianity, "There are gods many and lords many, but to us there is one God and one Lord Jesus Christ."⁶ By this time the Christian consciousness had become strong enough, and missionary enterprise had advanced into the pagan world far enough, to arouse a real sense of opposition to pagan lords. Jesus was the true "Lord." Later when emperors demanded worship and Christians were being persecuted for their failure to comply, this sense of opposition was brought to its peak. The book of Revelation, written probably in the time of Domitian, reveals this most clearly throughout, asserting that Jesus is "the ruler of the kings of the earth."⁷ Although kings shall war against him, he shall overcome them, as he is "King of kings and Lord of lords."⁸ Indeed, so many were the pagan lords, and so fixed was the custom of calling an Emperor, "Lord," that the Christians would have been guilty of a lack of reverence toward their Master, if they had called him anything less than "Lord." Jesus was not a whit below any Emperor that ever ruled. Even Domitian's title, "Lord and God," was not too lofty to apply to Jesus.⁹

It is therefore not strange that we should find in the book of Revelation for the first time the words, "Lord's Day." At this time the protest against emperor worship (of heaven) . . . may he bless me"; p. 108, No. 39; p. 109, No. 40; Mark Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der Nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, Weimar, 1898, 1.431, Taf. XII.3; *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique*, 7, 1883, Paris, p. 132, No. 8—*Κυρίω Ἀπολλωνί*; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 5, 1884, W. M. Ramsay, p. 253, at Kara Hodja, in ancient Galatia—*Ἦλιε Κύριε*; Albert Dumont, *Inscriptions et Monuments Figures de la Thrace*, Paris, 1876, 111a—KYRIE HAIE. For other examples of the Sun called "Lord", and gods and goddesses called *κύριος* and *κύρια* cf. W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, Leipzig, 1890-94, Art. *Kyria-Kyrios*.

⁶1 Cor. 8.5, 6

⁷Rev. 1.5

⁸Rev. 17.14; 19.16

⁹John

had reached its peak. Christians were being persecuted for their failure to call the Emperor, "Lord."¹ It was only natural that the Christians, in the midst of their persecutions, should devise a distinctive name for their distinctive day.

It may well be, as Deissmann² suggests, that this naming of their day of worship after their "Lord" was due to a sense of opposition to emperor worship with its emperor's day. This was called the day of Augustus, or Sebaste. Wilcken has collected ten examples from 3 B.C. to 100 A.D.³ It seems that the only conclusion that can yet be drawn is that this was a certain day of the month consecrated to the emperor.⁴

In considering the origin of the term, Lord's Day, we should also not fail to notice the contemporary pagan naming of the days of the week after the planets, which they worshipped as gods, on their several days. By the end of the first century A.D., and no doubt some time before this, the Oriental seven-day week, named after the planets, with its accompanying planet-worship, had spread through Asia Minor and entered Europe. So widespread had it become that Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century, in writing to the Romans, adapted the Christian "Lord's Day" to the day generally known to his readers, "Sunday."⁵ He also mentioned the day of Saturn.

¹Josephus (Wars 7.10.1-ed. Niese 7.410, 418) gives an instructive analogy that after 70 A.D. the Romans tortured the Jews, but "they could not get any of them to confess that Caesar was their Lord." ²Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, p. 306

³Ulrich Wilcken, *Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien*, Leipzig, 1899, 1.812, e.g. No. 9, 42 A.D.—*φαρμῶνθ(ι) ἡ σεβαστῆ*

⁴This may have been the first day of the month, or possibly, as 2 Macc. 6.7 intimates, there was a special observance "on the day of the king's birth every month".

⁵Apol. 1.67; cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 1.16; *Ad Nationes* 1.13.

It is interesting to note that this word for Saturday omits the "day" in the same technical fashion as we have observed in the "Lord's Day."¹ By the time of Dio Cassius,² as we read from him, "The Dedication of the days to the seven stars . . . is now in existence among all men, having begun not so long ago. At any rate the ancient Greeks, so far as I know, knew nothing of it. But now it is customary both among all the other peoples, and among the Romans themselves, and already this is in a certain way native." From these words it is difficult to ascertain just when the custom arose in the West. But we possess an indication of the early spread of this custom in the paintings and inscriptions of Pompeii and Herculaneum, cities buried by the lava of Vesuvius, and therefore at least prior to 79 A.D. In one of these wall paintings, there are busts of these planetary deities in the order of the days of the week: Saturn, Sun (with a halo of rays behind the head), Moon (with a moon behind the head), Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus.³ Inscriptions have also been found there with the planetary week given in the same order, over one of which are the words—"days of the gods."⁴ The order of these planetary deities, which corresponds to that of the days of the week, rather than to the original order of the planets,⁵ is striking testimony to the early widespread use of the planetary week, with each day sacred to one of the planetary deities.

The rapid spread of this planetary week was probably due to the worship of the deities on these various days of

¹*Κρονικη - Κυριακη* ²Beginning of third century—Casii Dionis Cocceiani, *Historiarum Romanarum* 37.18 ³*Le Pitture antiche d'Ercolano* 3.263, Napoli, 1762; cf. Wolfgang Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, p. 200, No. 1005, Leipzig, 1868 ⁴E. Schürer, in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1905, p. 27

⁵Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon—cf. Dio Cassius, *History of the Romans*, 37.18.

the week.¹ Eusebius tells us that the pagans were wont to employ threats to "the King-Sun," the Moon, and the "heavenly beings." He further quotes Porphyry, his contemporary, "In oracular response Apollo said: Call upon Hermes (Mercury) and Helios (Sun) according to their forms on the day of the sun, and the moon when her day comes, and Kronos (Saturn) and Aphrodite (Venus) in order, with unuttered prayers, which by far the best of the Magi devised, lord of the seven-stringed lyre, whom all men know."² We find Priscillian uttering an anathema against the one who "worships Sun and Moon, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus or Saturn."³ Chwolson tells us that the Sabeans, a group in Syria about the 10th century, "were accustomed to direct prayers on a certain day to each of the planets, and believed that each planet was the Lord of this day."⁴ We thus are able to know the character of the planet-worship that was quite prominent in Asia Minor and even in Europe as early as the first century A.D. Since the various gods or lords had each his own day of the week, it was quite natural for the Christians to call their own sacred day after their Lord, who was "The Lord." The gods of the heathen with their Emperors and planetary deities were as nothing, then, beside the "Lord" of the Christians. And certainly their "Lord" had far more right than the others to have a distinctive day of his own. This day was naturally the day associated with the resurrection, which they observed by Christian worship. We can therefore easily understand why the Christians should want to call their day of worship, "the Lord's Day."

¹Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 163, New York, 1912; Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 120f., New York, 1912. ²Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 5.10, 14 (Porphyry, 233-304 A.D.) ³1.15 (385 A.D.), *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 18.14. ⁴D. Chwolson, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus* 2.611, St. Petersburg, 1856.

IV. THE NON-JEWISH INFLUENCES.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF SUN-WORSHIP.

IN A PREVIOUS chapter¹ we have shown that the Christian Sunday owes its origin mainly to the distinctive Christian consciousness of the church, and to Christianity's relation to Judaism. We have noticed that the church, in referring to its distinctive day, did not for a long time call it Sunday, except in addressing pagans. It was for them the Lord's Day, the day consecrated to their Lord.

But although we cannot believe that the origin of the Christian Sunday was primarily the result of pagan influences, we should not fail to notice the extent of these non-Jewish influences, which are especially evident in the later development of Christianity. This new religion could not be cloistered, or sheltered from surrounding religions. The Greek language itself, which was everywhere used about them and by them, would bring in foreign ideas constantly. Their own thoughts would naturally form themselves in terms of the Greek language and Greek ideas with which that language was invested. But especially did Christianity undergo development, as it spread beyond Palestine and began the Christianization of the pagan world. The new pagan converts brought with them their paganism, just as the earliest Christians brought with them their Judaism. And just as the Jews, on becoming Christians, could not forget their previous heritage, neither could the pagans. The inevitable result was an amalgamation of ideas. Further, as we shall illustrate, the Christian missionaries, in explaining the new religion, were compelled to use terms that were already known to their

¹p. 69f.

hearers; and in their defense of Christianity, they readily adapted it to pagan ideas and beliefs.

It cannot be denied that the pagan use of Sun-day has had an appreciable effect upon Christianity in bringing the Christian Sunday into preëminence in the church as the sole day of worship. In fact, the pagan cults of the sun have, in many other respects, placed a noticeable mark upon Christianity.

This is not at all surprising when one considers the prominent role assumed by sun-worship and sun-cults of that time. The sun has ever been too noticeable in physical phenomena to be deprived of a prominent place in the history of religion. In man's interpretation of the universe in terms of human personality, the sun loomed large. It was the author of light and life. When it came "out from the great mountain"¹ in the morning, it was as a personal being, a great god. Sun-worship was very prominent in Babylonia. At one time the sun was exclusively worshipped in Egypt.² In the region north of Palestine, especially at Palmyra, it held an important place.³ In Greek literature the sun had a lofty position. He was the "immortal Zeus" (Jupiter) in Orpheus.⁴ Homer described the course of the sun as follows: "Zeus went yesterday to the Ocean with the blameless Ethiopians for a

¹A. Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Samas*, Paderborn, 1912, p. 35; cf. p. 5f. ²Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 74. ³De Vogue, *Inscriptions Semitiques*, 1868-77, Paris, p. 69, No. 108, Aramaic-Greek inscription at Palmyra (150 miles northeast of Damascus), "To the Sun"; p. 82, Nos. 135, 138; G. A. Cooke, *A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 159, No. 61, 1st half of 8th Century B.C.—"Shamash"; p. 171, No. 62; p. 186, No. 64; p. 275, No. 117; p. 298—"The great temple of the sun-god is still the most imposing building among the ruins of Palmyra"; *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 18.102 — "SOLI SANCTISSIMO SACRUM" (sacred to the most holy sun) ⁴Hymns 7

feast, and the gods all followed together, but on the twelfth (hour) he shall come again to Olympus."¹ Plato gave the following description: "The great leader in heaven, Zeus, driving a winged chariot, proceeds first arranging and taking care of all things; and the host of gods and demi-gods follow, . . . but Hestia (earth) alone remains in the abode of the gods."² Plato also related of Socrates that, "With the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun."³

The Hebrew nation in its history was constantly surrounded by sun-worshippers of all sorts. Notable among these were the baal-worshippers who invested inanimate objects of all kinds with divine qualities. The sun had an especial glory in this cult. The Hebrews were naturally affected by these surrounding influences. We read that Josiah "took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of Jehovah . . . and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And he put down the idolatrous priests . . . them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven."⁴ Ezekiel actually found men in the temple precincts worshipping the sun.⁵ So great was the influence of sun-worship upon Judaism that even in their own worship, the Jews conformed to the practice of sun-worshippers. We read in the Wisdom of Solomon, "It is necessary to rise before the sun to give Thee thanks, and at the rising of light to intreat Thee."⁶ This practice was continued by the Essenes, who, as Josephus tells us, "before sun-rising they . . . put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as if they made a supplication for its rising."⁷ It is thus evi-

¹Iliad 1.423; cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.23 ²Phaedrus, 246
³Symposium 220 ⁴2 Kings 23.11,5 ⁵58.16 ⁶16.28
⁷Wars 2.8.5 (ed. Niese 2.128)

dent that at least certain sections of Judaism were strongly influenced by the cult of the sun. Whatever else we may believe, at least we can affirm that Christianity in its earliest origin was in a position to be influenced by surrounding sun-worship.

Likewise, in the earliest period of Christianity, although it is probable that Mithraism had no direct influence, yet it can be affirmed with great probability that this religion was in the offing at the time and region of early Christianity, in position to be of influence. This Persian religion, with its origin in Zoroastrianism, was mingled with the religion of the Babylonians and so became identified with sun-worship. Mithra became the sun.¹ In the first century B.C. this religion came to Asia Minor, according to Plutarch, who wrote, "The power of the pirates had its seat in Cilicia at first . . . They . . . celebrated certain secret rites, among which those of Mithras continue to the present time, having been first instituted by them."² We possess an inscription from the first century B.C. of King Antiochus of Commagene in which are the words—"Zeus-Oromasdes and Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes."³ We thus have a clear indication that even at this early date the new cult had become well enough established to become assimilated with other religions. Indeed, it is highly probable that by the early part of the first century A.D. this cult of Mithraism had had enough opportunity for contact with other religions to have assumed practically the form in which it is today known.

During the first century A.D. this religion was spreading

¹Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, 2.105, No. 66 (69-96 A.D.); 2.146, No. 367-Soli invicto Mithrae-to the Sun, unconquered Mithra ²Pompey 24 (refers to period about 70 B.C.)

³F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, 2.89—for further evidence of the early spread of Mithraism, cf. the citations of S. V. McCasland, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 49.79f.

rapidly in the Roman Empire. Indeed, one may well suspect that the new religion had no little part in the rapid spread of the planetary week.¹ We find an interesting figure in Cumont.² Above the traditional picture of Mithra slaying the bull there is a series of figures representing the gods of the days of the week—reading right to left—the Moon, Mars, Hermes, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, the Sun. This order of the planetary week, as part of the sacred symbolism of Mithraism, with the Sun placed in the position of prominence, or honor, is highly interesting. Origen quotes Celsus as saying that in the mysteries of Mithras the soul makes its way among the planets by means of a "ladder with lofty gates." "The first gate they assign to Saturn, the second to Venus, the third to Jupiter, the fourth to Mercury, the fifth to Mars, the sixth, of silver, to the Moon, the seventh, of gold, to the Sun."³ This backward order is arranged so that the Sun may be at the very top. Of all these planets the sun was the highest. We may also gain an impression of the position of the sun from the following Mithraic prayer of propitiation, to gain the favor of the Sun: "Lord, hail, King of great power, far-ruling, greatest of the gods, Helios (Sun), the Lord of the heaven and the earth, god of gods."⁴ We may therefore easily understand that, although on each day of the week, the planetary deity for that day had to be propitiated, as we have noted, the day of the Sun naturally

¹One may infer some influence from the words of Joannis Laurentius Lydus, *De Mensibus* 2.4, p. 21, ed. Wunsch (early sixth century)—"The Chaldeans of Zoroaster and Hystaspis and the Egyptians adopted the week from the number of the planets".

²*Textes et Monuments* 2.261, No. 99

³Against Celsus 6.22; for an illustration of this feature in archaeological discoveries, cf. F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments* 1.118; 2.244, No. 77 ⁴Albrecht Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, p. 10, line 31f.—

κύριε, χαιρε, μεγαλοδύναμε, μεγαλοκράτωρ βασιλεῦ, μέγιστε θεῶν, Ἥλιε, ὁ κύριος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, θεὸς θεῶν, . . .

had the preëminence in all this area dominated by the Mithraic religion. Sunday became the most sacred day of the week. So rapidly did this cult spread that at length it became an official religion of the Roman Empire. So influential was sun-worship in the Empire, and so lofty had the sun become, that both Nero and Constantine were identified in inscriptions with this deity.¹ The Emperor Julian was especially an enthusiast for the Sun, as his oration upon this deity reveals. Indeed, he had no hesitation in saying also, "We worship Mithras."² But it is impossible by a few references to give an adequate idea of the great spread of Mithraism in the early centuries of the Christian era. Cumont's great collection of archeological findings are numerous enough and from sufficient localities to give one the impression that this religion, although of comparatively late origin, was widespread and of great influence.

We may well believe that this religion, so influential in the contemporary world, was not without an effect upon Christianity. As Christianity spread throughout this very area that had been preëempted by Mithraism, their common observance of Sunday would naturally be striking. To the pagans, already observing the first day of the week as their preëminent day of worship, Christianity would emphasize its own observance of that very day. And the new pagan converts, as they entered the Christian ranks, would have little use for the Jewish Sabbath, but would have a large place for the Christian Sunday, the very day which they had observed before, as sacred to the sun.

This is especially evident, when we consider to what an

¹Karl G. Lanckoronski, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens*, Wien, 1890, 2.206, No. 82 (Termessos, Pisidia)—*Κωνσταντίνου Ἡλίου*; 2.230, No. 221 (Sagalassos, Pisidia)—*Ἡλίου Νέρωνι*

²The Orations of Julian, IV—Hymn to King Sun, 155

extent Christianity adapted itself, in its development, to Mithraism and sun-worship. Since whole books can be written, and indeed have been written upon this and kindred subjects, we shall only attempt to point out some typical features of interest that will make plain Christianity's borrowing from these religions. In Christian art, we see clearly that pagan representations of the sun and Mithras were adapted to Christian use. One representation shows us a figure of the twelve apostles, with six on either side and facing a cross in the center over which is a crown. Above the heads of the apostles are stars, and above the crown in the center on either side are the figures of the sun and moon.¹ In another figure, one can see Christ represented as crowned with the rays of the sun.² The halo in Christian art has a striking parallel in representations of the sun. The sun, or Mithra, is often portrayed in pagan art as a man with the disk at the back of the head.³ Since Jesus was the true "sun of righteousness," it was natural that this image of the sun be reproduced in the representation of him.

Indeed, the mystery religions, both in their terminology and ideas, made a deep impress upon Christianity. The Lord's Supper became a "Mystery," into which the "uninitiated" dared not enter. We read in the Egyptian Church Order that the doors were not opened at the time of the Holy Communion, "even if there should be a believer at the door."⁴ When Sozomen⁵ wrote an account of the Nicene Council, he did not reproduce the very docu-

¹M. E. LeBlant, *Les Sarcophages Chrétiens de la Gaule*, Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France, Troisième Série, Archeologie, p. 142 and Plate 50 ²Victor Duruy, *Histoire des Romains*, Paris, 1885, 7.52

³F. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, Vol. 2, p. 202, No. 29; p. 210, No. 38; p. 241, No. 73; p. 290, No. 145; p. 311, No. 169; p. 350 (opposite), No. 248; p. 434, No. 379 ⁴Arabic Text, St. 52; cf. Apostolic Constitutions 2.57 ⁵Church History 1.20.3

ment, because, as he said, "these truths ought to be spoken of and heard by the initiated and their initiators only." When Clement of Alexandria made an appeal to the heathen to embrace Christianity, he adapted his own religion in a striking fashion to the pagan mysteries, as he said, "Thou shalt see the heavens. O truly sacred mysteries! O stainless light! My way is lighted with torches, and I survey the heavens and God: I become holy whilst I am initiated. The Lord is the hierophant, and seals while illuminating him who is initiated . . . Such are the reveries of my mysteries. If it is thy wish, be thou also initiated."¹ This passage reveals just how Christianity could assimilate mystery religion conceptions by adaptation to prospective or actual pagan converts. An interesting passage is to be found in the Apostolic Constitutions² where we read, "Ye that are to be illuminated, pray. Let us all, the faithful, earnestly pray for them, that the Lord will vouchsafe that, being initiated into the death of Christ, they may rise with him, . . . and may be admitted to the communion of his mysteries." We need only mention the fact at this point that it was a fundamental idea of the mysteries that one attained eternal life by becoming identified with the deity.

In addition to these striking influences upon Christianity, we may observe that the Persian Magi even found their way into the birth-stories of Jesus. It can be well established that these Magi, or Wise Men, were Persians, connected with the religion of Zoroaster, and likewise associated with Mithraism, the offshoot of Zoroastrianism. Plutarch called Zoroaster, "the Magus."³ Clement of Alexandria tells us, "Zoroaster the Magus, Pythagoras

¹Exhortation to the Heathen, ch. 12 (c. 200 A.D.) 28.7

³On Isis and Osiris, 46 (p. 81, ed. Gustav Parthey)

have taken his cue from this passage, and then brought in the Persian Magi for the reasons indicated above. At least, it is highly probable that this story is a further indication of Christian adaptation to the Mithraic faith.

The Christian adaptation to the sun-worship of the time reveals itself also in Jesus being called the Sun. The use may have been derived originally from "the sun of righteousness" of Malachi 4.2. But this appellation proved extremely popular in the Gentile world. Their former devotion, directed toward the Sun, could now be transferred to "the true sun of righteousness." Eucherius shows this spirit of adaptation when he says, "The sun (is) the Lord Jesus Christ, because it lightens the lands." . . . "The moon is the church."¹ Melito, bishop of Sardis, wrote, "But if the sun with the stars and the moon wash in the ocean, why did not also Christ wash in the Jordan? The king of the heavens, and 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."² In one place we read that in the temple that had fallen from Zeus, the Persian power was dedicated to "Jupiter, Sun, God, great King Jesus."³ This identification of Jesus with the gods which they knew was a mere following of the customary practice in the pagan world, just as we noted that Mithra was identified with other gods (p. 132). The Christian apologists well understood that the human mind understands the new in terms of the old, and they were eager to adapt the new idea to the old beliefs.

The Manicheans, as Augustine informs us, seem to have

¹L. Eucherius, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, ed. C. Wotke, 1893, 31.1 (Formulae II, p. 10)

²On Baptism (mentioned by Eusebius as work of Melito)—*Joannes Baptista Pitra, Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi, 1884, 2.5 (c. 160-170 A.D.)* ³Albrecht Wirth, *Aus orientalischen Chroniken, 1894, p. 166*

departed little from their pagan ideas, but they adopted the Christian terminology. As Augustine was a hearer of this faith for nine years, we can gain first-hand information from him. He tells us, "The Manicheans have believed that Christ the Lord is that sun visible to the eyes of flesh."¹ They interpreted Paul's reference to Jesus as the power and wisdom of God as meaning that "his power dwells in the sun, and his wisdom in the moon."² Augustine also said that they worshipped only the sun and the moon, and not the rest of the stars.³ Further he gave an interesting statement of Manichean practice—"You are in the habit of worshipping the sun on what you call Sunday. What you call Sunday we call the Lord's day, and on it we do not worship the sun, but commemorate the Lord's resurrection."³ This contrast of the pagan and Christian use of Sunday is instructive.

That some Christians for many years were prone to sun-worship is shown by writings which have come down to us. In the fifth century, Eusebius of Alexandria wrote, "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 those of the sun-cult and heretics do this, but also Christians, departing from the faith, mingle with the heretics."⁴ About the same time Pope Leo could write, "Even some Christians . . . before entering the blessed Apostle Peter's basilica, . . . turn round and bow themselves towards the rising sun."⁵

A further interesting adaptation to sun-worship is found in the Christian celebration of December 25th as the day of Jesus' birth. In the early period of Christianity there

¹In Joannis Evangelium, Tractatus 34.2 (Migne P. L. 35.1652); cf. Enarration in Psalmum 93.4, 5 (Migne P. L. 37.1193, 4) ²Reply to Faustus the Manichean 20.1, 2 ³Reply to Faustus 18.5
⁴Migne P. G. 86.453 ⁵Migne P. L. 54.218

was no unanimity regarding the date of the birth. Indeed, this date seems not to have been emphasized enough by the earliest Christians for us to have any definite knowledge concerning it. About two hundred years after the birth of Jesus, Clement of Alexandria did not seem to have any views of his own on the subject, but made the following statement on the varying views of others—"There are those who have determined not only the year of our Lord's birth, but also the day; and they say that it took place in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus, and in the twenty-fifth day of Pachon (May 20) . . . Others say he was born on the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth day of Pharmouthi (April 20, 21)."¹ In later times, however, there were two dates chiefly held as the day of Jesus' birth, December 25th and January 6th. The former had the advantage of being more popular; the latter had the advantage of the more ancient tradition behind it, and a more impressive group of adherents. One sixth century advocate of December 25th had the following to say, "We all celebrate the birth of Christ when the ninth month is completed from the beginning of the first month, that is, Choiae 28. But the Christians of Jerusalem (taking their authority) from the blessed Luke who says that Christ was thirty years old at the baptism, celebrate the birth at Epiphany."² Not only the Jerusalem Christians regarded Epiphany or January 6th as the date of the birth, but John Cassian tells us that "In the country of Egypt . . . the priests of that province regard (Epiphany) as the time, both of our Lord's baptism and also of his birth in the flesh, and so celebrate the commemoration of either mystery not separately as in the Western provinces but on the single festival of this day."³ Thus these Jerusalem and Egyptian Christians continued

¹Stromata 1.21 ²Cosmas Indicopleustes 5.194 (Migne P. G. 88.197) ³Conferences 10.2 (early part of 5th century)

to observe Christmas on January 6th until a very late period.

Even in Constantinople there was no celebration on December 25th until the fourth quarter of the fourth century. Chrysostom in his Christmas sermon about the year 386 said, "Consider how great it is to see the sun descending from the heavens, running on the earth and then giving off to all its rays. . . . Consider now how great it is to see the sun of righteousness giving off rays for us from his flesh and illumining our spirits. Long did I desire to see this day, and not simply to see it but with such a multitude. And without ceasing I prayed that the theatre (place of assembly) might be so filled as now one can see it filled. . . . And indeed it is not yet the tenth year from the time that this day has become manifest and well-known to us. But notwithstanding, although delivered to us many years before, as afresh it blossomed through your zeal."¹ One should not fail to notice the idea that Jesus on this 25th day of December was the true "sun of righteousness."

Indeed, this was the very day in the pagan world when the birthday of the sun was celebrated. At the time of the winter solstice, when the sun had reached its lowest point, and then began to return, it was considered as a new-born babe and greatly celebrated by the sun-worshippers. As inscriptions show, this day was the birthday of "the unconquered," the Sun.² The Emperor Julian, probably quite shortly after the inauguration of the Christian celebration of December 25th, had this to say about the current

¹Migne P. G. 49.351 *εις την γενέθλιον ημέραν*: — . . . *καίτοι γε οὐπω δέκατόν ἐστιν ἔτος, ἐξ οὗ δὴλη καὶ γνώριμος ἡμῖν αὐτῇ ἡμέρα γεγέννηται.*

²Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum 1.356

calendar Philocalus

p. Chr. 354

Mensis December

25- B G VIII N̄. Invicti. CMXXX

pagan custom: "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 most splendid games, and we dedicate the festival to the Invincible Sun."¹ Macrobius has the following contribution—"These differences in age² are referred to the sun, as he appears to be a child at the winter solstice, such as the Egyptians bring forth from the sanctuary on a certain day, because at that time, on the shortest day, he appears as though little and like an infant."³ These illustrations should make clear to us the background in which the Christian celebration of December 25th had its beginning.

We are prepared to appreciate the contribution of certain Armenians to this subject. From the above information, it will be evident to us that they are giving us the correct position, as all the evidence fits together and converges toward one conclusion—that the Christians made a further adaptation of their religion to the pagan world by taking advantage of the popularity of this festival of the sun's birth. In the seventh century an Armenian named Ananias, (and we believe he is telling us the truth,) wrote that in the days of Constantius the son of Constantine, "this festival was admitted in the royal court; and in all places where any one chose to keep it they kept it freely and openly, except in the metropolises of the four Patriarchs, who had the thrones of the holy Evangelists. And (this) is clear from St. Cyril.⁴ For therein it is written thus: 'That on the 25th of the month of December is the feast of David and Jacobus, which day in other cities they make the birth of christ.' . . . At the beginning of the canon

¹The Orations of Julian. IV. Hymn to King Helios 155

²Infancy, youth, maturity, old age ³Sat. 1.18.10

⁴Cyril—bishop of Jerusalem in the 4th century, at the very period when the Christian festival of Dec. 25th had its beginning.

we find it written thus: that 'the feast of the holy Epiphany is kept in January, on the sixth of the month. They shall assemble in the shepherd's dwelling, and then in Bethlehem and in the cave.' Here then you see that he appoints both feasts to be celebrated on one day."¹ We thus have the information that this Christmas festival of December 25th was admitted into the imperial court in the days of Constantius, the son of Constantine, in other words, 361 A.D. or before, as Constantius died in that year.

In another important passage Assemanus quotes Bar-salibaeus that Christians in general observe December 25th as the date of the Lord's birth, "except the Armenians, who being men of stupid mind and stiff neck are not obedient to the truth." . . . "However, this rite of the Armenians, which Bar-salibaeus here rejects, some anonymous Syrian wrote in the margin to prove, right at the passage of Bar-salibaeus . . . as follows: 'In the month of January the Lord was born, on the same day in which we celebrate Epiphany, because the fathers celebrated the festival of Nativity and of Epiphany on one and the same day, since on the same day he was born and was baptized. Wherefore even today both festivals are celebrated on the same day by the Armenians. To which the Teachers are in agreement who speak of each festival at the same time. The reason, then, why the aforesaid solemnity was transferred by the Fathers from the sixth day of January to the twenty-fifth of December they show 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 ac-

¹The Expositor, ed. W. R. Nicoll, Vol. 4, 1896, p. 326—Ananias, son of John of Shirak.

customed to invite and admit even Christian people. When therefore the Teachers observed that the Christians were inclined to this custom, they contrived a council and established on this day the festival of the true Rising. To be sure, on the sixth day of January, it was right for Epiphany to be celebrated. So they have retained this custom to the present day, together with the rite of the kindled fire.'"¹

Truly no more evidence is needed to convince us that the Christians, adapting themselves to the current pagan custom of observing the birth of the sun, changed the date of Christmas to conform to the same day, that they might show that their Christ was the true Sun and their Christmas celebrated the "true Rising."

From all the above Christian adaptation to sun-worship we are in a position to understand how the Christian Sunday could win such universal acceptance in the pagan world. We have seen how the Gentiles would naturally tend to discard the Jewish Sabbath, as time went on. And now we can understand how, in the Gentile world, the Christian Sunday could rise to such a position of pre-eminence. A typical example of how the Christians adapted their "Lord's Day" to the pagan Sunday is found in the following words, "The Lord's Day is therefore a venerable and festival occasion to us, because on it the Savior, as the rising sun, dispelled the darkness of the dead, and broke forth with the light of the resurrection, and on this account the very day is called by the men of the

¹J. S. Assemanus, Bibliotheca orientalis 2.164—Causam porrò, cur à Patribus predicta solemnitas à die 6. Januarii ad 25. Decembris translata fuit, hanc fuisse ferunt. Solemne erat ethnicis hac ipsa die 25. Decembris festum ortus solis celebrare; ad augendam porrò diei celebritatem, ignes accendere solebant; ad quos ritus populum etiam Christianum invitare & admittere consueverant. Quum ergo animadverterent Doctores ad eum morem Christianos propendere, excogitato consilio eo die festum veri Ortus constituerunt.

world—Sunday, because the sun of righteousness, Christ, having arisen, illumines it.”¹ In such manner did the Christians capture pagan customs and terminology for their faith. Yet we must emphasize the fact that these adaptations to the pagan world are relatively late, as a whole, and do not primarily affect the origin of Christianity, but its development. Christianity sprang out of Judaism, but it was tremendously affected by its contact with the pagan world.

¹S. Maximi Taurinensis, Migne P. L. 57.371 (5th century)

IV. THE NON-JEWISH INFLUENCES.

3. THE LEGALIZATION OF SUNDAY.

IT IS a singular fact that Christianity, which rose in protest against legalism in the beginning, at length itself became a legalized system. This seems inevitable when we realize the causes contributing toward this result. In the time of Paul liberal Christianity was experiencing a great reaction against the legalism of Judaism. Christians wanted to be free to express the inner spirit which they felt within them. In the initial period of Christianity when numbers were few and spiritual enthusiasm was very great, any external law was unnecessary and more of a hindrance than a help. Further, they did not have a political organization, nor a connection with any state. They were too insignificant a group at first even to have any recognition by governing powers. And rebelling against the thralldom of a legalistic system as they were, they had little inclination to make laws for themselves.

But conditions gradually changed. Large numbers entered the church. Some, as the Antinomians, felt that the “freedom of the spirit” enabled them to disregard any law whatsoever and lead wild, reckless lives under the cloak of Christianity. Even Paul had found it necessary to give many instructions to the churches. The Christian Sunday proved no exception. As the numbers of Christians increased, the more was there need of some regular, orderly system. The ideal of course was that Christians should regard every day as Sunday, but such an ideal was impossible among the masses of the people, as Origen realized.¹ They required a definite, systematic arrange-

¹Against Celsus 8.23 (App. p. 174)

ment whereby they would have the leisure for Christian worship at regular intervals. This the Christian Sunday already provided. As time went on it gained more and more prestige and authority. The Gentile-Christians, coming from sun-worship, held the day in reverence. To further the religious interests of this day, the cessation of labor was naturally desirable. Some Christians, being slaves, or working for others, were in no position to rest on Sunday. But no doubt from an early time Christians did seek rest from their work on their day of worship. But their Sunday was not regarded as an end in itself, as was the Jewish Sabbath. It was a means to an end. It was not to defend the sacred character of their Sunday that they rested, but as a matter of expediency, to enable them to fulfill their religious inclinations. Although in Tertullian we can see a rising tide of reverence for the Lord's Day, yet it was largely with this practical purpose in mind that he wrote, "On the Lord's Day—the Resurrection day—we ought to guard against every posture and observance of anxiety, deferring even our occupations lest we give place to the devil."¹ There was thus no thought in early Christianity of transferring the religious sanctions and consequent obligations of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday. This was left for later generations to attempt.

In the pagan world there were many influences contributing toward the legalization of this day. While the Christians as they came from Judaism brought with them the practice of observing a day of the week for their religion in many respects like the Sabbath, the pagan world too was prepared for such a day. From many sources we know that Judaism had been exerting an influence in the Roman Empire. Especially after the disintegration of

¹De Oratione 23

their own nation the Jews had been scattered over a wide area. Their customs were sufficiently different to attract attention. A number of pagans probably adopted various features of Judaism, although Philo and Josephus doubtless exaggerate in their assertions that all nations had adopted the Jewish day of rest.¹ At least we read from the writing of Tibullus, of the first century B.C., "The holy day of Saturn detained me."² In other words, he could not leave on the day of Saturn, for it was unlucky to do such a thing on this day. Many of the pagans, so prone to take up with other religions, doubtless accepted the Jewish Sabbath, but interpreted it as a mere unlucky day to do work. That the Sabbath was a well-known institution among the Romans is made clear to us from many sources. Ovid referred to the "foreign Sabbaths," in danger of being considered as unlucky days.³ Suetonius tells us that Diogenes chose the Sabbath as a day to lecture.⁴ The fact that the Jewish name for this day, the Sabbath, not the day of Saturn, was chosen is illuminating. Pagans were in such danger of following Jewish Sabbath customs that Seneca declared, "Let us forbid lamps to be lighted on the Sabbath."⁵ With the example of Judaism all about them which had been followed to some extent even by pagans, and with the precedent of the Jewish Sabbath in the Old Testament which they had retained, it was inevitable that Gentile Christianity should build the Sunday as an institution somewhat like the Sabbath. And as each

¹Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.4 (ed. Cohn-Wendland 2.20,21); cf. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.40 (ed. Niese 2.282) ²1.3.18; cf. T. Reinach, *Textes Relatifs au Judaïsme*, p. 263.

³Remedies of Love 219; cf. *Art of Love* 1.76 (early first century A.D.) ⁴Tiberius 32 (first half of second century A.D.); cf. Augustus 76.2 ⁵Epistles 95.47 (first century A.D.); cf. Martial, *Epigrams* 4.4; Persius, *Satires* 5.179-184; Juvenal *Satires* 14.96f.

century added to its antiquity the more the reverence for it as an institution grew.

It is also striking and interesting that the pagans for their own festivals had customs and regulations which had some similarity to the laws of the Jewish Sabbath. It should be particularly noticed that these customs of the pagans were primarily humanitarian. They enabled the workers, even slaves, to rest. By the cessation of court proceedings, a suitable atmosphere of peace and quiet prevailed. But the festivals were not permitted to become a burden. People could do what needed to be done, but no more than what was necessary. Scaevola, an eminent jurist of about 100 B.C., "being consulted as to what was permitted to be done on festivals replied,—that which neglected would be harmful. Wherefore if an ox should fall down into a pit and the father of the family should free him by his efforts, he is not to be regarded as having defiled the festivals; nor he who has saved from imminent ruin by propping up a roof of a house."¹ The following distinctions quoted by Macrobius sound almost Jewish—"On the festal days it is permitted to clean old channels that have become polluted; it is not permitted to dig out new ones . . . On festal days it is not permitted to wash sheep for the sake of the wool to be cleansed; it is permitted, however, if by care the itch is intended to be washed away."² Varro, in the first century B.C., tells us the custom in military affairs—"It is not proper to call men (for fighting) on festivals; if one has called, let there be a sin-offering. It, however, should be known that the day was free to the Romans for fighting, if they were waging war. But when they were engaged in this, no day would have hindered them from defending either their own safety or the public dignity."³

¹Macrobius Sat. 1.16.11 (Macrobius-c.395-423 A.D. ²Sat. 3.3.10,11 ³Macrobius Sat. 1.16.19

Vergil wrote at this same period, "Nay, even on holy days, the laws of God and man permit you to do certain tasks. No scruples ever forbid us to guide down the water-rills, to defend a crop with a hedge, to set snares for birds, to fire brambles, or to plunge bleating flocks into the health-giving stream. Oft, too, the driver loads his slow donkey's sides with oil or cheap fruits, and as he comes back from town brings with him an indented millstone or a mass of black pitch."¹ Cicero about the same time spoke of the "Festivals and Holidays, in which all men should be free, and spend their time without strife or litigation, and which afford the slaves periods of rest and cessation from labor." Then he curiously adds that these festivals should be arranged "so that their distribution may rather facilitate than interrupt the useful labors of agriculture."² The humanitarian point of view is thus predominant. These festivals were indeed made for man, not man for the festivals.

Let us consider in passing that at about this very time in which such views prevailed among the Romans, Jerusalem was captured by Pompey, 63 B.C. It was impossible for these Jews to be shielded from Roman ideas. It is indeed quite possible that the humanitarian movement in Christianity—with "the Sabbath made for man," and the freeing of an ox fallen into a pit—had as a contributing factor this liberal spirit of the Romans. It may well be also that the liberalizing trend of the Pharisees can be traced to the same source.

Certain it is that these festival customs of cessation from work and from court procedure were directly incorporated in the laws of the Romans governing the Christian Sunday. When Constantine became a Christian and declared Christi-

¹Georgics 1.268f. ²On the Laws 2.12

anity to be the State religion, laws were quite inevitable for the protection of this religion. Church and State were now one, just as in the old Jewish religion. And just as political laws were inevitable for governing the Jewish people, so they were necessary in the new Christian State of the Romans. But the humanitarian emphasis of Roman festival customs predominated in the new laws.

In 321 A.D. Constantine issued the following decree: "Let all judges and towns-people, and the occupations of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn, or planting vines, lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted them by the providence of heaven."¹ Constantine's use of "the venerable day of the Sun" reveals how naturally and easily pagans, including Constantine himself, could change from the pagan to the Christian Sunday. And their observance of this Christian day would be about like that of their old festivals.

Later laws in general followed this same trend, although they became somewhat stricter. From a law of about 370 A.D. we read, "On Sunday, which formerly was held auspicious, we desire that no Christian should be accosted by the overseers."² A law of the year 386 tells us, "On Sunday, which the elders have rightly called the Lord's day, let the engagement in all law-suits, businesses, assemblies altogether cease; let no one demand (the repayment of) public and private debt; let there be no acknowledgment of disputes, not even among judges themselves. . . . And not only let him be judged infamous, but also sacrilegious, who has turned aside from the observance of the holy religion."³ In the

¹Justinianus, Codicis 3.12.3

²Theodosian Code 8.8.1

³Theodosian Code 8.8.3

year 469 A.D. the following decree was made: "We decree that the Lord's Day should be always so honorable and venerable that it should be excused from all prosecutions. Let no accusation oppress anyone, let no collection of debts be demanded, . . . let the servants be at rest, let legal procedure be in abeyance, let that day be foreign to judicial examinations, let the terrible voice of the herald become silent, let those suing at law cease from their contentions, and let them have an interval of agreement, let antagonists come at the same time to one another unafraid, let penitence enter their minds as a substitute, forming settlements, and let them talk about agreements. However, as we devout ones relax because of the leisure of this day let us not allow anyone to be occupied with indecent pleasures. Let the theatrical stage claim nothing for itself on the same day, a contest from the circus or doleful spectacles of wild beasts, and if a festival that is to be celebrated on our birthday should fall upon this day, let it be deferred."¹

We are thus able to behold the strictness with which the government upheld Christianity. But the primary purpose in their Sunday laws was to provide safeguards for this religion. The people were not to work, in order that they might have leisure to attend the services. Moreover, legal procedures and theatrical spectacles which disturbed the atmosphere of this day were prohibited. This protection of Sunday was therefore a means to an end and not an end in itself. It had as its motive both the desire to further human interests and to enhance the position of Christianity. So thoroughly were Church and State intermingled that the government could call those who turned aside from the observance of Christianity—"infamous" and "sacrilegious." Thus we may observe that this legaliza-

¹Justinianus, Codicis 3.12.11

tion of Sunday was both different from and similar to the Jewish legalization of the Sabbath. Sunday was largely regarded as a means to an end, and pagan precedent did not allow this day to be too rigidly observed. But laws were made as in Judaism regulating Sunday, for Church and State had become one.

As Christianity became more and more legalistic, being associated with the government, Christian leaders felt the need of rationalizing this new development. Some reason must be found for this legalism. In the fifth century Eusebius of Alexandria asked the question, "Why is it necessary (*ἀναγκαῖον*) for us to keep the Lord's Day, and not to work?"¹ Then he sought to explain this necessity. It became quite natural for Christians to go back to the Old Testament which they regarded as authoritative and justify their own legalism by the laws which they found there. The Ten Commandments were of course central. The Sabbath commandment was easily interpreted to include the observance of Sunday. They said that Jesus had brought in a new era that changed the day to the first of the week, but that the law was still binding, nevertheless. In the "Homily on the Seed" (ch. 1), attributed to Athanasius, but probably later, we read the curious words, "The Lord transferred the day of the Sabbath to the Lord's Day." They were thus able to conserve all the divine sanction of the Sabbath by the fiction that Jesus had merely made a change in the date of its observance. In the light of our previous studies we are able to see how completely unfounded such a fiction is. But these Christians in their legalism had a rather difficult time in conserving all the legalism in the Old Testament that they wished to conserve and not thereby be obligated to retain all the laws of the

¹Migne, P. G. 86.416

Hebrew Scriptures. The Didascalia indicates that one of the qualifications of the bishop was that he must be "a good discriminator between the Law and the Second Legislation, that he may distinguish and show what is the Law of the faithful, and what are the bonds of them that believe not."¹ But Christian apologists were well prepared to meet this difficulty. So far as Sunday was concerned, that was a mere transfer from the Sabbath, because of the change to the Christian era. They were thus able to establish the legality of Sunday by investing it with all the divine sanction of the Hebrew Sabbath. In such wise, then, the Christian Sunday became a fixed and established institution with all the authority of the Roman government and the Hebrew Scriptures behind it.

¹Ch. 4 (2.5) (Connolly ed. p. 34)

V. CONCLUSION.

WE HAVE witnessed the long and many-sided development from the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday. We have also observed how this Sunday, at first in a fluid and developing stage, at length became hardened and crystallized into a fixed and legalized institution. That which arose naturally, gradually and with a view to expediency, the church must needs rationalize and legalize. We must conclude as we began that Christian legalists of all sorts can never understand the true reason why the Jewish Sabbath could become the Christian Sunday. Its secret will ever be to them a mystery. The Seventh Day Adventists, for example, can never understand how one can be a Christian and forsake the Jewish Sabbath. Nor can the ordinary fundamentalist-Christian satisfactorily explain by what authority Christians could alter the Sabbath commandment.

As a matter of fact, early liberal Christianity cared nothing for such legalism as is expressed by both these Christian groups. These early Christians possessed an authority of their own, an authority not resting upon written decrees and external legalism, but reposing in the spirit of man, as his spirit had been touched by the spirit of love. Paul, the great representative of this group, felt that he possessed an inner relationship with God that made external law unnecessary. The whole crystallized legalistic system of the Jews was made fluid. All that was temporary and of passing importance, every idiosyncrasy of a past age could be abolished, or rather reinterpreted. The Sabbath was so weighted down with all its burdensome restrictions that it fell of its own weight. But, as we have noted, all that the Christians wished to preserve of the Jewish Sabbath could

be easily transferred to the Christian Sunday. These early Christians felt that the old era had been abolished, and a new era was dawning, an era which they were helping to create.

For a long time this fluid state remained in which Christianity felt free to gather to itself both Jewish and pagan elements. But at length legalism developed. The creative period had run its course. This was inevitable as the mass of people became Christians and required some unified system to guide them. Theoretically, it would have been well if the early spiritual guidance of the church had continued, with each individual guided by the "spirit" without the dominance of ecclesiasticism. But, practically, it would have proved chaotic. The mass of people must be directed by a system, an organization and a tradition. Aristotle would have been quite willing to agree with the ideas of Paul, for he remarked, "For men of preëminent virtue there is no law—they are themselves a law. Any one would be ridiculous who attempted to make laws for them."¹ But he also realized that laws were inevitable. He said, "We shall need laws . . . to cover the whole of life; for most people obey necessity rather than argument, and punishment rather than the sense of what is noble."² Both phases of Aristotle's attitude are illustrated for us in the history of the Christian church. In the development of Christianity legalism was inevitable.

But with the Christian Sunday now a legalized institution in Christianity, those err greatly who suppose that it was always so. Only gradually did it come to the position it now occupies. And, we have observed that this development of Sunday followed directly the general development of Christianity.

¹Politics 3.13 ²Ethics 10.9 (1180a)

The Christian Sunday in its earliest stage was Jewish. It was even called the first day of the week, the Jewish designation. This observance of Sunday came into existence by the middle of the first century at a time when not paganism, but Judaism was predominant in Christianity. This day, further, was observed by a large section of Jewish-Christians, or Ebionites, although they were conservative enough to keep the law zealously and to reject Paul's Epistles, calling him an apostate from the law. The Jewish mode of observing the Sabbath was largely reproduced in the Christian Sunday. The custom observed by many Gentiles of fasting on Sunday in honor of the sun was not followed by the Christians. Instead, the practice of the Jews never to fast on the Sabbath was exactly adhered to in their observance of Sunday. The evidence indicates also that in the earliest usage of the first day of the week, the Christians followed the Jewish reckoning, beginning their observance on Saturday evening. All these facts reveal that the Christian Sunday came, not primarily from the pagan Sunday, but from the Jewish Sabbath.

This "Lord's Day" came into existence in honor of their Lord, and to provide a distinctly Christian commemoration. The Christians had to have a separate day to express their distinctive interests. Chief among the forces binding them together was allegiance to their Messiah who they believed was yet alive. It was but natural that the two most impressive events in the life of Jesus should be commemorated—his death and resurrection. It was fitting that the former should be commemorated by a fast, in accordance with Jewish fasts, and that the latter should be commemorated by a festival day like the Jewish festival day—the Sabbath.

Although the Christian "Lord's Day" is primarily of Jewish origin, yet there were many Gentile factors in estab-

lishing this day. It was largely Gentile influence that brought Sunday into preëminence in the Christian church and caused the gradual disappearance of the Jewish Sabbath. The Jewish-Christians naturally continued their Sabbath. But the Gentiles had neither the obligation nor the inclination to take up with this institution. Indeed, their own humanitarian outlook upon their own festivals was probably influential in causing even many Jews to be dissatisfied with their burdensome Sabbath laws. And as for Sunday, that day among the Gentiles had already become a sacred day. In fact, it was the most sacred day of the week, because consecrated to the sun. No wonder then that, especially in the West, Sunday came to be the sole day of the week for Christian worship.

This development from Sabbath to Sunday was only a phase of a greater movement. Christianity began in Judaism, then developed sufficient points of difference to be separate, and absorbed many elements of paganism as it became a world religion. The various names given to the Christian day of worship are highly significant. Sozomen refers to "the day termed the Lord's day which the Jews call the first day of the week, and which the pagans dedicate to the sun."¹ At first the Christians under the influence of Judaism called their day, "the first day of the week;" then they named it, "the Lord's Day;" and still later it received the general designation, "Sunday."

This gradual development precludes any hypothesis of abrupt change, of sudden transfer from Sabbath to Sunday, of a known divine sanction for the change. Such was the invention of legalists to rationalize the legalism of Sunday. But the worth of any sacred day rests ultimately upon its value to human individuals for religious purposes

¹Church History 1.8

and for rest. Christians had the right to change the Sabbath to the Christian day, Sunday. It was only by this means that the burdensome restrictions of Sabbath laws could be swept aside and all that was valuable in the Sabbath could be preserved in the Christian Sunday. The old idiosyncrasies could be abolished, but the gold in Judaism could remain. The Old Testament was retained but allegorized and reinterpreted to fit New Testament ideas and events. The law became the slave-pedagogue to lead to Christ; the Sabbath, "a shadow of things to come." In this way Christians could "prove all things" and hold fast to that which was good.

APPENDIX

A. THE SYNOPTIC AND JOHANNINE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER.

In seeking to ascertain which has the correct day of the week for the Passover, the Synoptics or Fourth Gospel, let us first place the Biblical data before us. We read that the Passover time was "In the first month (Nisan), on the fourteenth day of the month." "On the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast".¹ This was the feast of unleavened bread, the night just following the slaying of the passover on the fourteenth,² in accordance with Jewish reckoning. On this fourteenth day of the month it was commanded that "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings".³ The way in which the words, "between the two evenings," was interpreted in the Mekilta shows how the passover was practiced. We are told that the sacrifice of the passover was to be made from the sixth hour on, that is, after twelve o'clock, noon.⁴ A confirmation is found in Philo, who, writing near the time of Jesus' death, tells us that on the passover "the whole people offer sacrifice, beginning at noon-day and continuing till evening . . . And this universal sacrifice of the whole people is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month".⁵ The practice is thus clear—the passover was to be sacrificed on the afternoon of the fourteenth, and it was to be eaten that evening, or the fifteenth, beginning the feast of unleavened bread. It is to be particularly

¹Num. 28.16, 17 ²Ex. 12.18 ³Ex. 12.6; cf. Lev. 23.5, 6
⁴Mekilta on Ex. 12.6 (Translation by Winter-Wunsche) ⁵On the Special Laws (ed. Cohn-Wendland 2.145); Josephus (Wars 6.9.3—ed. Niese 6.423) limits the slaughter of the sacrifices—"from the ninth hour to the eleventh."

noted from the above data that there was only one day, on which "the whole people" were to sacrifice the passover.¹

We therefore turn with some surprise to the conflicting statements of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. For the Synoptics, we shall use Mark as the representative, since the other two agree. We read therein, "On the first day of the unleavened bread when they sacrificed the passover his disciples said to him, where do you wish us to go and make ready, that you may eat the passover?"² Later we read, "They prepared the passover," and the very next verse tells us, "And when it was evening he came with the twelve."³ There follows the narrative of the passover meal where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. According to the Synoptics, therefore, Jesus held the passover the evening before his death, so that the crucifixion occurred on the fifteenth Nisan. Turning to the Fourth Gospel, we find a distinct emphasis that the crucifixion occurred before the passover feast, not after. The author was very careful to mention that the last supper occurred before the feast of the passover" (Jn. 13.1). At this supper some of the disciples thought that Jesus meant for Judas to buy what they needed "for the feast" (13.29). This buying would naturally be for the great feast of the passover lamb, none of the flesh of which was to remain until the morning (Deut. 16.4). In fact, Judas could not buy for the feast on the following day (as some have interpreted it), because the first day of the feast was like a Sabbath for the Jews (cf. p. 165). During the trial the Jews did not enter the Prætorium, "that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (18.28). As Jesus was about to be led away to

¹This was necessarily the case, since the people had to bring their lambs all together to the Temple inclosure at the appointed time to be sacrificed (for details, cf. Goldin, p. 76f).

²Mk. 14.12; cf. vs. 14

³Mk. 14.16, 17

be crucified, John mentions, "It was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour" (19.14). After the death of Jesus the Jews requested that the bodies of those crucified "should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day)" (19.31).

It is therefore evident that we must choose between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics in this particular. We cannot accept both accounts. From the Paschal Chronicle⁴ we read that Clement of Alexandria felt a discrepancy here, but sought to harmonize it by admitting John's date for the slaying of the passover, as coinciding with the time of Jesus' death, and by trying to force the details of the Synoptics to fit the account of the Fourth Gospel. He said that at the Last Supper, the day before the Passover, "both the consecration of the unleavened bread and the preparation for the feast took place." But Mark is too careful to mention the date—"when they sacrificed the passover"²—for any such interpretation to be allowable.

Interesting is the attempted solution of Chwolson.³ He says that if the Passover day, the 14th, fell on a Friday, there would not be time for roasting the passover lamb before the entrance of the Sabbath. So to avoid the violation of the Sabbath, many would hold passover one day sooner. And if the 14th fell on a Sabbath, the passover would be held two days sooner. The practice, however, would differ, just as there are many varying viewpoints within Judaism. So Jesus and his disciples held to one party, and a large number of other Jews held to the other. Therefore, he says, both the Synoptics and John are correct. There are several difficulties in holding this theory. First, it should be re-

⁴Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2.581

²Mk. 14.12; cf. vs. 14

³D. Chwolson, *Das Letzte Passamahl Christi und der Tag seines Todes*, p. 31f.

marked that it is strange that Jesus and his disciples should be more conservative in observing the strict letter of the Sabbath than the leaders of the Jews. Then, we should passover was held at different times. As we have shown, the evidence proves the contrary, that there was only one date evidence proves the contrary, that there was only one date valid for the passover. So strict were the Jews in this regard that if the lamb were slaughtered before noon, it was not valid.¹ But what is most conclusive, there would be no occasion for this shifting of the day of the passover (other than to harmonize the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel). The Mishnah had definite provisions for such cases as these. We are told, "When the day before the passover happened to be a Friday," the daily offering was "sacrificed half an hour after the seventh hour (1:30 P.M.), and the passover sacrifice celebrated afterwards."² The Gemara tells us, "the paschal lamb must be roasted before the Sabbath set in." Even "if the 14th occurred on a Sabbath" the passover was slaughtered just the same, only care was taken to violate the Sabbath as little as possible. And we read, "As soon as it became dark (when the Sabbath was past), they all went out to roast their sacrifices."³

We are thus forced to choose between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. According to the Synoptic tradition, on the first day of unleavened bread, and after the solemn passover meal, the Jews brought about Jesus' arrest, a multitude having come for him with swords and staves "from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." "And they led Jesus away to the high priest"; and "all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes" were there too. "The chief priests and the whole council" heard witnesses. In the morning, still the first day of unleavened bread, a

¹Pes. 5.3²Pes. 5.1³Pes. 5.9, 10

general consultation was heard with all the leaders present, he was brought to Pilate, and the chief priests stirred up the multitude to cry out for his crucifixion. All these events and the crucifixion itself at 9 A.M. seem hurried up in order that they all might be finished before this solemn day was over. On this day also Joseph of Arimathea "bought a linen cloth" for the burial of Jesus.¹

Let us now see what was the law regarding this first day of unleavened bread. We read in Exodus, "In the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and on the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you."² We are told in the Mishnah that it is prohibited "to administer justice" on the Sabbath; and "there is no difference between the Sabbath and the festival, except that the preparation of food is permitted on the latter."³ Philo tells us that to "bring accusations or conduct suits at law" is a violation of established Sabbath laws.⁴ Whereas the multitude in the Synoptics came from the chief priests with swords and staves, the Mishnah tells us that on the Sabbath, "one must not go out with a sword, nor with a bow, nor with a spear."⁵ The Mishnah tells us that even on the day before the first day of unleavened bread, work was suspended. In Galilee there was no work at all on this day; and in Judaea one worked only until noon.⁶

Now let us ask, which comports best with these facts of the feast of unleavened bread? The Synoptics, with their violation of the whole spirit and indeed law of this solemn festival, or the Fourth Gospel, placing the passover a day

¹Mk. 14.43, 53, 55, 56; 15.1, 11, 13, 25, 46 ²Ex. 12.16 ³Bezah 5.2⁴On the Migration of Abraham 16 (ed. Cohn-Wendland 91); cf. Sanhedrin 4.1 ⁵Shab. 6.4 ⁶Pes. 4.5

later, so that the extreme haste revealed in the Synoptics could be easily understood, for the Jews' part in this crucifixion must be finished before noon?

There is an indication within Luke itself of an earlier tradition in agreement with the Fourth Gospel. In verses 18-20 of Chapter 22 Luke follows alternately Mark and Paul, using almost entirely their very words. But verses 15-17 furnish an original contribution to us. Therein we read, "I have greatly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Some of the oldest manuscripts (NABC) support this reading. But others by adding a single word, (*οὐκέτι*), change it to "I shall eat it no more, until", etc. Thus, the best attested text here follows John's chronology, while the other text, by the addition of a single word, not only harmonizes the verse with the rest of Luke, but also makes a complete parallelism with verse 18. It is not likely that a later hand would omit a word which would cause a contradiction within Luke. It is much more probable that a change was made to harmonize rather than disrupt the Lukan account. This change and the reason for it is made all the more clear by the fact that the D text omits *οὐ* thus substituting *οὐκέτι* for *οὐ*. That this verse occurs in a passage that is Luke's special possession, not found in Matthew or Mark, makes it all the more significant. Luke, in putting together his sources, was not overly careful. He put in the reference to the cup twice, because he was following two sources. And so he could use a special source which contradicted his previous statements. It will also be remembered that Mark, followed by Matthew, relates that the leaders decided to take Jesus, "not during the feast, lest there should be a tumult of the people." (Mk. 14.2; Mt. 26.5.) Yet according to Mark this was just what was done. These references within the

Synoptics, while not completely decisive in themselves, nevertheless confirm our idea that the Johannine chronology of the passover represents the more correct tradition.

Assuming that the Synoptics are incorrect in representing Jesus as eating the passover with his disciples just before his death, we have now to ask, how could this tradition arise? Oesterley¹ has constructed a rather fanciful and elaborate hypothesis. He assumes that on the afternoon just preceding the Sabbath it was the custom to assemble together in groups of "associates" at a meal. Since on the year of Jesus' death the passover feast coincided with the Sabbath, this meal could not be held, for the sacrifice of the passover lambs in the Temple would be occurring at that time. Likewise, the Sabbath Kiddush could not take place on Friday evening that year, for the passover meal was being celebrated. Therefore, he says, the disciples met together the evening before, and since it was the time of the passover, with the passover atmosphere everywhere about, it would be natural for the popular mind to come to regard this meal as a passover meal. It is to be admitted that at least some groups met together before the Sabbath began. But this was not such a universal, and necessary custom as is implied. Indeed, in the Gemara and Tosefta we even read that, according to R. Judah, on the afternoon before the Sabbath from the afternoon offering until darkness one was not to eat at all in order to preserve one's appetite for the Sabbath meal.² And even if some people did wish to assemble a little before darkness to eat and drink, they could easily do so, since on the Sabbath, as we have shown, the lamb must be roasted before darkness set in.³ As for the Sabbath Kiddush being neglected at the

¹The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy, p. 167f.

²Pes. 99b; Tos. Ber. 5.1-4 (Translation of O. Holtzmann)

³p. 164

passover, no separate meeting was necessary to fulfill this obligation. It was easily incorporated within the passover liturgy.¹ Further, there was cited no evidence that this afternoon meeting was ever shifted to the evening before. In fact, it would lose all its meaning, were it so done. Finally, we must say that Jesus and his disciples could easily assemble for a supper without such an elaborate theory.

There is, however, some truth in his belief that the passover atmosphere of the time led to this idea that Jesus celebrated the passover just before his death. It is most probable that Jesus was crucified at the passover season, in all probability on the same day that the passover lambs were slain. This was a coincidence too important to be overlooked. The early Christians realized that deep theological significance must be found for Jesus' death. And they also, steeped in Judaism as they were, tended to express the new religion in terms of fulfillment of the old. The old Jewish forms must be reinvested with Christian ideas. Therefore they said, the institution of the passover was a type of Christ. Jesus became the passover lamb, a symbol of redemption, not of Israel, but of the Christians. And just as Jews, partaking of the passover, revealed themselves as sons of the covenant, so Christians, partaking of Christ in the Eucharist, became partakers of the new covenant in Jesus' blood. As early as Paul, this idea of "Christ our Passover" had become current. He tells us, "Our passover also has been sacrificed—Christ."² He, however, does not give us any indication that he follows the Synoptic chronology in calling the Last Supper a passover meal. Instead, he says, "Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread."³ But we may well believe that at a comparatively early time this idea that Jesus was

¹Hyman E. Goldin, *The Standard Haggadah*, p. 13, 15
²1 Cor. 5.7 ³1 Cor. 11.23

the passover lamb permeated their celebration of his death, and since they believed that Jesus himself had instituted this celebration, it must therefore have been a passover meal. The words of the institution, "This is my body," and "This is my blood,"¹ to be partaken of by the believers, then become highly meaningful when viewed in the light of the passover. Thus the idea, "Christ our Passover", is responsible for the Synoptic confusion.

In a similar way the Fourth Gospel has adapted its story of the crucifixion to this theological idea. Whereas the Synoptics tell us that Jesus was crucified "the third hour,"² this Gospel affirms that it was after the sixth hour (noon).³ The idea of Jesus as "the Lamb of God"⁴ is responsible for this change. We have noticed⁵ that the passover lambs were slain anytime from the sixth hour till evening, and that when this event happened on Friday they were sacrificed shortly after 1:30 P.M. (after the daily sacrifice). Highly significant is the statement of the Mishnah, "If the paschal lamb be slaughtered before noon, it is not valid."⁶ If Christ was the passover lamb, he must therefore have been crucified after the sixth hour, to be a valid sacrifice. John is careful to point out that such was the case.³ Thus theological ideas interfered with historical accuracy in both the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel.

¹Mk. 14.22, 24 ²Mk. 15.25 ³Jn. 19.14 ⁴Jn. 1.29, 36
⁵p. 161, 164 ⁶Pes. 5.3

B. EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

(Biblical References to the Lord's Day—Acts 20.7;
1 Cor. 16.2; Rev. 1.10)

PLINY—LETTERS 10.96¹

They affirmed, however, that this was the whole of their guilt or their error, that they were accustomed on a certain fixed day to assemble before light, and sing responsively together a hymn to Christ as to a God, and by an oath they bound themselves not (to engage) in any wickedness, that they would commit no deceit, nor robbery, nor adultery, that they would not violate their word nor deny a trust when called upon. When these were accomplished it was their custom to depart and then assemble again to partake of food, (which was) in common, however, and harmless.

IGNATIUS—TO THE MAGNESIANS 8, 9²

8. Be not led astray by false doctrines or by old fables which are profitless. For if we are living until now according to Judaism we confess that we have not received grace. For the most divine prophets lived according to Jesus Christ . . .

9. If therefore those engaged in ancient affairs came to a new hope, no longer sabbatizing (living according to the sabbath), but living according to the Lord's Day, on which also our life rose through him, and his death,—which some deny—through which mystery we received faith.

GOSPEL OF PETER³

9. And in the night in which the Lord's Day was drawing on, as the soldiers kept guard two by two in a watch . . .

¹William Melmoth, *Pliny Letters*, 2.402, London, 1915 ²Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1.204, New York, 1925 ³H. B. Swete, *The Apocryphal Gospel of St. Peter*, London, 1893

11. And at dawn upon the Lord's Day Mary Magdalene . . .

DIDACHE¹

9. And concerning the Eucharist (giving of thanks), thus give thanks: First over the cup—We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy servant, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy servant, to whom be glory for ever. Over the broken bread—We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy servant. To Thee be glory for ever.

10. And after you are satisfied with food, thus give thanks: We give thanks to Thee, Holy Father, for Thy Holy Name.

14. And every Lord's Day come together, break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, that your offering may be without blemish.

EPISTLE OF BARNABAS—15.8, 9²

8. Furthermore he says to them, "Your new moons and sabbaths I cannot endure." You see what he means? Not the present sabbaths are acceptable to me, but that which I have made, in which having rested from all things I shall make a beginning on the eighth day, which is the beginning of another world.

9. Wherefore we also keep the eighth day for festivity on which also Jesus rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into heaven.

JUSTIN MARTYR—APOLOGY 1.65³

Having ended the prayers we salute one another with a kiss. Then there is brought to the leader of the brethren

¹K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1.322, 330 ²Lake, 1.394, 395
³Migne, *Patrologie Greco-Latine* 6.428

bread, and a cup of wine mixed with water; and this one, taking it, offers praise and glory to the father of the universe through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit; and he gives thanks at considerable length for being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. When he has concluded the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present express their assent, saying "Amen." And when the leader has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread over which thanks have been given and the wine and water, and they bear away some for those who are absent.

APOLOGY 1.67¹

And on the day called Sunday there is an assemblage of all who live in the cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets are read so long as there is time. Then the reading having ceased the leader in discourse gives the admonition and the challenge to imitate these good things. Thereupon we all rise together and offer prayers. And as we said before, when we have ceased praying, bread is brought, and wine and water. And the leader in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, as much as he is able, and the people express their assent, saying the "Amen." And there is a distribution to each one and a partaking of that over which thanks have been given, and it is sent to those absent by the deacons. And those having means and who are willing, each one according to his choice, gives whatever he wishes; and the collection is deposited at the leader's home, and he himself provides for the orphans and widows, and for those who on account of sickness or for any other reason are in want, and for those who are in prison, and for the sojourning

¹Migne 6.429

strangers, and in a word, he is a guardian to all those who are in need. And we all in common make our assembly on Sunday, since it is the first day in which God changed the darkness and matter and made the world, and Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on the same day. For on the day before Saturday they crucified him, and on the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples, and taught these very things which we have imparted to you also that you may view them.

TERTULLIAN—APOLOGY 16¹

Others believe that the Sun is our god. Indeed, I suspect it is from this, that it is well-known that we pray toward the east. . . .

In like manner, if we indulge in rejoicing on Sunday for a reason far different than reverence for the sun, we resemble those who devote Saturday to leisure and nourishment, they themselves also deviating from the Jewish custom, of which they are ignorant.

ON THE CROWN 3²

We consider fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's Day unlawful.

TO THE HEATHEN 1.13³

Others . . . suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is well-known that we pray toward the east or that we engage in festivity on Sunday. What? Do you do less? Do not many of you also at times with an affectation of worshipping the heavenly bodies move your lips in the direction of sun-rise? You certainly are the ones who also have received the sun into the list of the seven days and from the days you have selected this very

¹Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 1.369-371 ²Migne, 2.70 ³Migne, 1.579

one, on which you refrain from the bath or delay it until evening, or you are solicitous for leisure and a meal. Which very thing you do, deviating also yourselves from your own to foreign religions.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA—STROMATA 7.12¹

He fulfils the command according to the gospel and observes the Lord's Day, when he abandons an evil disposition and assumes that of the Gnostic, glorifying in himself the Lord's resurrection.

ORIGEN—AGAINST CELSUS 8.22, 23²

22. If any one should advance against these considerations the days which are practiced among us, the Lord's days, or the Preparation days, the Passover, or Pentecost, it is to be replied to this that the perfect Christian, always in words, in deeds and in thoughts belonging by nature to the Lord, God the Word, always is his in the days and he is always keeping the Lord's days.

23. But the great part of those who appear to believe, not being so advanced, either not being able or not willing to keep all days in such a manner, need for the sake of remembrance a concrete example, lest the ideal be obscured.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS³

2.57 And first let the building be oblong, directed towards the east . . . Let the bishop's throne be in the middle. On each side of him let the presbytery be seated and let the deacons stand near at hand . . . Let the laymen be seated on the other side with all quietness and good order. And let the women sit by themselves, they also keeping silence. Let the reader in the middle stand upon some high place and

¹Migne, *Patrologie Greco-Latine* 9.504, 505 ²Migne, *Patrologie Greco-Latine* 11.1549, 1552 ³*Constitutiones Apostolicae*, Guil. Ælitzén, 1853

read the books of Moses and Joshua the son of Nun, the books of Judges and Kings and Chronicles and the books of the return (from captivity), besides these, the books of Job and Solomon and the sixteen prophets. And after the two readings let some other person sing the hymns of David and let the people sing the response. After this let our Acts be read and the epistles of Paul; . . . and thereupon let the deacon or presbyter read the gospels. . . . And while the gospel is being read let all the presbyters and deacons and all the people stand up with great silence; for it is written, Be silent and hear, O Israel (Deut. 27.9), and again, Do thou stand there and hear (Deut. 5.31). And let the presbyters in order exhort the people, one after another, but not all together, and last of all the bishop . . . Let the doorkeepers stand at the entrances of the men, guarding them, and let the deaconesses stand at those of the women, after the manner of seamen. For the same type also was present in the tabernacle of the testimony (and in the temple of God) . . . Let all rise together and look toward the east, after the departure of the catechumens and the penitents, and let them pray to God . . . Let the bishop make supplication . . . After this let the sacrifice take place, all the people standing, and praying silently, and when it has been offered, let each rank by itself partake of the Lord's body and precious blood.

2.59 Assemble together every dawn and evening, singing and praying in the churches (Lord's houses), at early dawn saying Psalm sixty-two, and in the evening, Psalm one hundred-forty. But especially on the day of the Sabbath and on the resurrection day of the Lord, the Lord's day, meet more diligently, offering praise to God who made the universe through Jesus and sent him forth unto us and consented that he should suffer and who raised him from

the dead. Since what defense will he make to God who does not come together on this day to hear the saving word concerning the resurrection? In which also we perform three prayers standing, in memory of him who rose in three days, in which there is the reading of the prophets and the preaching of the gospels and the offering of sacrifice and the gift of the holy food.

7.23 And let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second day of the week and the fifth. But as for you, fast either the five days, or the fourth and the preparation. For on the fourth day the condemnation against the Lord went forth, Judas promising the betrayal for money; and on the preparation, because on it, the Lord suffered by crucifixion at the hands of Pontius Pilate. The Sabbath, however, and the Lord's Day celebrate as festivals, for the one is the memorial of the creation, and the other of the resurrection.

7.36 Therefore we celebrate the resurrection festival on the Lord's Day and rejoice for him who conquered death and illumined life and immortality.

EUSEBIUS—CHURCH HISTORY¹

3.27 THE HERESY OF THE EBIONITES

Others, however, the evil demon being unable to drive away from their allegiance to the Christ of God, finding other points of susceptibility, he took possession of them. The ancients properly called these men Ebionites, because they held beggarly and poor opinions of Christ . . . And there were others beside these who were of the same name, but avoided the strange, absurd beliefs of the aforesaid, not denying that the Lord was born of a Virgin and of the

¹Migne, *Patrologie Greco-Latine*, 20.273

Holy Spirit, yet these men, likewise not confessing his pre-existence, that he was God the Word and the Wisdom of the Father, turned aside to the impiety of the former, especially when they, like them, were zealous to observe the carnal servitude of the law. And they thought that all the Epistles of the Apostle must be rejected, calling him an apostate from the law. And they used only "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," and they regarded the rest as of little value. The Sabbath and the rest of the Jewish procedure they observed just like them, but besides, they performed rites about like us on the Lord's days as a memorial of the resurrection of the Lord.

4.23¹ Today we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle.

CANONS OF LAODICEA²

16. On the Sabbath the gospels are to be read with the other Scriptures.

29. Christians must not Judaize and rest on the Sabbath, but they must work upon that day, and honor rather the Lord's Day, and if they can, rest on it as Christians. But if they be found Judaizing, let them be anathema before Christ.

49. In Lent there must be no oblation of bread, except on the Sabbath and Lord's Day only.

51. In Lent the birthdays of martyrs are not to be observed, but a remembrance of the holy martyrs is to be made on the Sabbaths and Lord's days.

SOZOMEN—CHURCH HISTORY³

7.19. But there is not the same time or manner of assemblage among all churches. Of course they have their

¹Migne, 20.388C ²Friedrich Lauchert, *Kanones der altkirchlichen Concilien*, p. 74-77, Leipzig, 1896 ³Migne, P.G., 67.1477B

assemblies both on the Sabbath and on the first day of the week, as in Constantinople, and nearly everywhere. In Rome and in Alexandria (this is) no longer (the case). Among the Egyptians, in many cities and villages, contrary to common usage among all, they assemble on the Sabbath toward evening, and having already had lunch (the midday meal), they partake of the mysteries.

SOCRATES—CHURCH HISTORY¹

5.22 Although the churches of the world everywhere celebrate the mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, those in Alexandria and in Rome, from some ancient tradition, refused to do this. The Egyptians in the neighborhood of Alexandria and the inhabitants of Thebais hold these assemblies on the Sabbath.

¹Migne, P.G., 67.636A

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