

# **ORIGIN OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE**

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## Preface

FOR a great many centuries Sunday has been considered a day of rest by the Christian nations of the world. And today this idea is not only held by Christian nations, but is penetrating beyond them into the great heathen countries as well. Of course the day is not thought of in the same way by all these people. Some think of it as a day set apart by Jesus and the disciples for religious service and worship, while others think of it only as a convenient time for rest and recreation. But all these people recognize It either consciously or unconsciously-as a day different in some way from the other six days of the week.

Whence the origin of this special day? The history of this we shall endeavor to trace. To some, this may seem a simple task and a matter that is already well settled; yet it is not so easy as it might seem at first. If we had some definite and direct statement from Jesus or the disciples concerning its origin and importance, our task would be very much easier. But since we have no such statement, and must, therefore, rely upon inferences and indirect statements and possibilities, it can readily be seen that the task is not an easy one.

The great mass of mankind take it for granted that our day of rest had its origin with Jesus or His disciples, and that in some way they set a special stamp of approval upon it. This attitude is very similar to that taken toward most other things of life. Our activities are based more upon custom and precedent than upon reason and evidence. Many of our religious icons are based upon opinions held by our forefathers. We have accepted them because our relatives and associates have done so before us, and not because they are based upon evidence that we ourselves have acquired. Did Sunday keeping begin with Jesus and His disciples as some tell us, or did it not? The only way we can find out is to go back and consider the evidence.

If Christ and His disciples did not command Sunday keeping, the problem is to find out when Sunday did begin to be observed regularly as a day of worship. Our source material in this field is somewhat limited, and this increases our problem. I have proceeded by dealing with each period separately, beginning with the apostles, and then following on through their immediate successors. We must recognize that custom and practice change with time. For this reason we should keep the different periods separated, and study carefully what actually took place at each step of the way. I have, therefore, considered the statements of each of the Fathers in the light of the times and circumstances in which he lived. This will give the reader an opportunity to learn for himself just what occurred during the first few centuries.

These findings are the result of several years of research in the literature of the early centuries of the Christian Era. The historical facts and the conclusion have been submitted to and approved by the history department of one of the leading American universities.

## 1. Did Gentile Converts Keep the Sabbath?

THE Christian church was born in the land of the Jews, with a Jewish outlook upon life, and with a background of Jewish opinions. All the first disciples were of Jewish extraction, with Palestinian Jewish ideas. In the early days of the church, these disciples labored among only their own people, and consequently gained converts from only that race. Dr. Philip Schaff says, "The Jewish converts at first very naturally adhered as closely as possible to the sacred traditions of their fathers. They could not believe that the religion of the Old Testament, revealed by God Himself, should pass away." [1]

### Early Christians Jewish

While the early Christians saw in Jesus the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah, and recognized that type had met antitype, and that the use of Jewish sacrificial offerings and ceremonies had ceased; yet, apart from this, they recognized and observed the other Jewish rituals. In fact, since they were the ones who saw and acknowledged Jesus as the long-looked-for Messiah and the antitype of the Scriptures, they considered themselves the true Jews, and the lawful successors of Abraham and the prophets.

### Maintained Jewish Customs

The Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness continued for years after Jesus had left them. Their orthodoxy to Jewish notions was clearly shown ten years after the crucifixion in their attitude toward Peter when he preached the gospel to certain Gentiles in Caesarea. The record reads: "The apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them." Acts 11:1-3.

Dr. Arthur C. McGiffert, in writing about this, says, "The disciples of Jerusalem are represented as contending with Peter because he had gone in to men uncircumcised and had eaten with them. . . . They did not admit the right of any Jew to cease observing the Jewish law, and to disregard the prohibition against eating with the uncircumcised. The latter step was not taken even at the council some years later, and we certainly cannot suppose that it was taken at this time.' [2] Surely the disciples in this day were not observing Sunday, a Gentile day, when there was such bitterness against even preaching the gospel to them. No. At that time the Christians still followed much of the ritual of the Jews. They kept the Sabbath, observed the feasts, and practiced circumcision.

### Opposed Preaching to Gentiles

Peter explained the circumstances under which he associated with the Gentiles at Caesarea, and those men at Jerusalem finally seemed to assent to the work he had done under these special, peculiar conditions. But as soon as they heard that others had been preaching the gospel to the Grecians at Antioch, they immediately sent Barnabas up there to look into matters. The Scripture reads, "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the band of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." Acts 21:19-22.

Barnabas, being a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, repented at what he saw, and "exhorted them all [both Jews and Gentiles], that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Acts 11:22. Then Barnabas immediately went to find Saul, who was then at home, to get him to assist in the work at Antioch. This seems to be the beginning of a broadened vision of the work-that it really should include the Gentiles.

## Dissension Among Members

But some of the brethren of Judea were now rather skeptical about the work of Barnabas himself, and came down to Antioch to investigate. Evidently Barnabas and Saul had not the necessity of requiring circumcision of converts from among the Gentiles. But the men from Judea believed it to be necessary. The record says, "Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." Acts 15:1. This brought a clash, for Paul contended with them, and the result was that a council was called at Jerusalem to consider whether circumcision should be required of the new converts from among the Gentiles.

This is the first recorded break from Jewish practices, twenty years after the church had been established. It was decided at this council that it was not necessary for converts from the Gentiles to be circumcised. The decision was as follows: "James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.... My sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." Acts 15:13-21.

## Meaning of the Jerusalem Council

Philip Schaff, the church historian, says, "It was a decree of emancipation of the Gentile disciples from circumcision and the bondage of the ceremonial law.... Hereafter the Judaizing doctrine of the necessity of circumcision for salvation was a heresy, a false gospel.... It imposed upon the Gentile Christians abstinence from meat offered to idols, from blood, and from things strangled (as fowls and other animals caught in a snare). The last two points amount to the same thing. These three restrictions had a good foundation in the Jewish abhorrence of idolatry." [3] And George T. Purves, another church historian, says, "Its motive was to prevent offense to the Jews who dwelt in every city, and the simplest explanation is that these four things were prohibited because they were the Gentile customs which were most abhorrent in Jewish eyes." [4]

Although this council decided that it was not necessary for the Gentiles to practice circumcision, yet converts from the Jews still did. As Doctor Schaff says, "The status of the Jewish Christians was no subject of controversy, and hence the decree is silent about them. They were expected to continue in their ancestral traditions and customs as far as they were at all consistent with loyalty to Christ." [5] As the Sabbath was not a question of controversy at this time, it was understood that all, both Jews and Gentiles, would continue its observance. In fact, these same people who decided that circumcision was not required of the Gentile converts, understood that they would continue the observance of the Sabbath. They said they did not need to write more because they met every Sabbath and heard the writings of Moses read, which gave them further instruction regarding their duties. Acts 15:21. If they understood that Sabbath observance and ceremonial practices were on the same basis, why did they make a difference between them here?

The document that was sent to them begins, "The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." Acts 15:23. This epistle [6] was to the Gentiles-not the Jews-who were meeting every Sabbath day and listening to the reading of Moses. It was taken to them by Paul and Barnabas and two men from Jerusalem. When these men got there with these decrees for the Gentile Christians to follow, they observed the Sabbath every place they went, whether there were synagogues in which they could meet or not. The record is, "As they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which resorted thither." Acts 16:4,13.

## Paul's Custom of Sabbath. Observance

This shows that Paul and the other apostles at that time considered that the Sabbath was on a different basis from circumcision and Jewish ritual. Otherwise Paul would have protested against it, just as

he did against circumcision. But instead of that, when he came with the decrees from the council at Jerusalem, notifying the Christian Gentiles of their deliverance from circumcision and the ritual of the Jews, wherever he went he set the example by observing the Sabbath. When he came to Thessalonica, he, “as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.” Acts 17:2. This states that it was Paul's manner, or custom, to do that. Then, when he went to Corinth, “he reasoned in the synagogues every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.” Acts 18A.

When Paul was at Jerusalem the last time, the Jews brought him to trial before the Roman governor. At this trial they naturally sought for everything they could find to bring against him-his doctrines as well as his conduct. He was accused of being “a mover of sedition among all the Jews” and “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.” Acts 26:4-6. These were the Jews who found so much fault with Jesus because He did not keep the Sabbath in a manner pleasing to them, and who complained because His disciples picked a few heads of grain as they were passing through a field on the Sabbath, thus, they claimed, desecrating the day.

## **Paul Loyal to Jewish Customs**

Now if Paul at the time of this trial had abandoned the observance of the Sabbath altogether, the Jews surely would -have had just ground, from the Jewish viewpoint, for accusing him of heresy, which they were then trying to do. But all through it there is never a word from them about keeping the Sabbath.

Rather, we hear Paul say, “My manner of life from my youth . . . know all the Jews; . . . that after the most straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.” Acts 26:4-6. “Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple. . . have I offended anything at all.” Acts 25:8. And when he got to Rome he called the Jews together and said, “I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers.” Acts 26:17.

Now Paul could never have said that if he had abandoned altogether one of the most sacred observances of the Jews the Sabbath. In fact it was while Paul was trying to demonstrate his loyalty to Jewish customs that he was taken prisoner in the temple.

When he got to Jerusalem and met the brethren there, they said to him, “Thou sees, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teaches all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. . . . Do therefore this that we say to thee.... and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walks orderly, and keeps the law.” Acts 21:20-24. Paul then proceeded to do just what these brethren asked, in order to prove that he walked orderly and kept the law. We conclude from this that no change in the day of worship could have been made or recognized by Paul.

“Weizsacker justly remarks: 'The primitive Christians held fast to the faith and polity of their nation. They had no desire to be renegades, nor was it possible to regard them as such. . . . The Christians did not lay themselves open to the charge of violating the law. They assumed no aggressive attitude. That they appeared before the local courts as well as before the Sanhedrin, the supreme national council, tallies with the fact that, on the whole, they remained Jews. “ [7]

## 2. What Was Done Away by Christ?

THE conclusions we have reached bring us into conflict with the opinions some have had, and also with the interpretations commonly placed on certain texts. For instance, many have supposed that Galatians 4: 10, 11, and Colossians 2:16 repudiate Sabbath keeping. We will take up the reference in Galatians first. It reads, "You observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

### Paul a Sabbath Observer

Does Paul mean to reprove those Galatians for observing the Sabbath? Let us see. This letter was written not later than 58 AD., or six years after the Jerusalem council. Right after this council we find Paul making his second missionary tour, delivering in every place the decrees which set the Gentiles free from ceremonial bondage, and at the same time setting an example of Sabbath observance. It was on this trip that he passed through Galatia and raised up the churches to whom he is writing in this text. Among other things he reproved them for departing from the teaching he had brought them at the time of his first visit, and adds, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1:8. Thus it is evident that Paul had not changed his doctrine or his practices.

### What Paul Warned Against

Scholars in this field recognize that James and the church at Jerusalem never gave up Sabbath keeping so long as Jerusalem stood. When Paul was there at least two years after he wrote the epistle to the Galatians, he proceeded to show that he was in accord with his brethren in Jerusalem, as is recorded in Acts 21:20-24. Even after that, when he was at Rome, he said, "I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers." Acts 28:17. Therefore, Paul was not condemning the Galatians for doing the same as did he. About what, then, was he warning the Galatians? It was not that it was wrong to observe the Sabbath, for he was doing that himself. It was not that it was wrong to perform the act of circumcision, for after the Jerusalem council he had Timothy circumcised. Acts 16:1 What was it then? In this same letter he said, "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision.- Gal. 5:6. It made no difference whether a man went through the form as such, or not. But it did make a difference if a man did that for salvation. What had they been taught? "Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said, Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." Acts 15:1. That was the contention-whether it was necessary for salvation. Paul wrote and warned them about keeping days and months and times and years, and being circumcised as a means of salvation. He told them that if they could be saved by that means, they did not need Christ or a savior. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.... Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are fallen from grace." Gal. 5:2-4. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Gal. 2:16.

It seems probable that the Galatian church was influenced by the early Jewish Gnosticism. The warning of Paul indicates that. The early Gnostics were Jewish converts who held to their old rituals and accepted certain Oriental ideas. It is possible that these days and months and times and years about which Paul warns them indicate an Oriental trend similar to that at the Colossian church. Dr. Shirley Jackson Case, in his book, 'Evolution of Early Christianity,' says: "The result of this admiration for the heavens was a disposition to deify not only all the heavenly bodies, but also the elements-fire, air, water, and earth-as well as the phenomena of time-seasons, months, weeks, days, hours." [1] If this influence was present in Galatia, it would explain Paul's attitude.

### Colossians Not to Be Judged

The reference in Colossians reads: ---Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.--- Col. 2:16. What does he mean? How can a man keep another from judging him? Does Paul mean that they were to keep all those feasts so well

that no one would be able to judge them, or to find fault with the way they did it? If he meant judging in the ordinary sense, we would have to draw this conclusion.

Chrysostom comments upon Colossians 2:16 as follows: "He said not, 'Do not then observe them,' but, 'Let no man judge you.' . . . He argues with these persons, almost stopping their mouths, and saying, you ought not to judge.--- This church Father of the fourth century certainly did not believe that this text abolished the Sabbath.

## **A False Philosophy**

In his letter to the Colossians Paul is not warning them simply about the danger of depending upon ritual for salvation, as in the Galatian letter, but against a strange set of doctrines that tended to overthrow the teaching of the gospel. This sixteenth verse is the conclusion of an argument which Paul had used to show that Jesus had paid the price of man's salvation, and had completely obliterated every trace of the document of debt, and had set him free. Then he adds, "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words: . . . beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Col. 2:4-8. Clearly this was a warning against a philosophy that tended to lead away from Christ. Those who were doing that in the first century were Gnostics who held to the ritual of the Jews, but denied the divinity of Christ, and claimed to be Christians. This seems to be the people to whom Paul refers here.

He says, "Let no man judge [krineto] you." This word is translated in 1 Corinthians 7:37 as "decree." If we should translate it that way here, it would read, Let no man make decrees for you to follow concerning meat and drink, etc. It was a warning to the Colossians about false teachers who were making decrees for men to follow which were leading them away from Christ. He says, "Let no man beguile you of your reward. . . . Why as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col. 2:18-22. This was a warning against men who were denying the merits of Christ in the salvation of man. These men were relying upon ritual rather than upon Christ.

## **Gnosticism**

But even more than that, these Alexandrian Jewish Gnostics denied the divinity of Christ. Mr. E. de Pressense says, "The system of Simon Magus, which belongs to the same date, is strongly impregnated with elements borrowed from the pantheism of the East. It appears to us, then, probable that the heretics of Colosse and of Ephesus brought together in hybrid union Jewish and pagan ideas. . . . Against such false and vain speculations the apostle sets the grand and powerful doctrine of Christianity, that between God and the world there is but one mediator, the Eternal Son, who is the express image of the Divine Person, 'by whom and for whom were all things created.' He points to the cross triumphing over all the malignant powers with which false science sought to fill up the gulf between earth and heaven. " [2]

These people were steeped with Platonic philosophy, and believed that matter itself was evil. They believed that God did not and could not have any contact with it except through a retinue of angels and inferior beings. Thus they believed, that Jesus was only a man born into the world like other men, and that hence there was in Him no salvation. Now that philosophy repudiated every principle for which Paul stood, and for which he had given his life. That is why he writes, "Let no man beguile you of your reward," which he believed they would lose if they accepted and followed the decrees of these Jewish Gnostics.

## **Distinction Between Jewish Feasts and the Sabbath**

In both the Galatian and the Colossian letters a series of feast days and holy seasons are mentioned, which were a part of the ceremonies of the Jews, the first and last days of each feast being designated a Sabbath. Paul evidently put these feasts on the same basis as circumcision, and considered them Jewish, and not applicable to Gentile believers. However, his attitude toward the weekly Sabbath was entirely different. Of course we may think of it as being just as ritualistic as the other ceremonies. But that does not prove that Paul thought of it in that way. He continued to observe the Sabbath and to sanction it among the Gentiles after he had taken a decided stand against Gentile Christians' following Jewish ritual. I have yet to find a writer in the early church who quotes Paul as teaching that the decalogue, or any part of

it, was abrogated. We do find, however, among the church Fathers a sentiment that the decalogue was still binding, and that it was the ritualistic law that was nullified.

Irenaeus writes, "God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the decalogue (which, if anyone does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them." [3]

In the "Apostolic Constitutions" we read, "He that was the Lawgiver became Himself the fulfilling of the law; not taking away the law of nature, but abrogating those additional laws that were afterwards introduced." [4]

Socrates, the historian of the fifth century, writes, "They have not taken into consideration the fact that when Judaism was changed into Christianity, the obligation to observe the Mosaic law and the ceremonial types ceased. And the proof of the matter is plain; for no law of Christ permits Christians to imitate the Jews. On the contrary, the apostle expressly forbids it; not only rejecting circumcision, but also deprecating contention about festival days." [5] Then in this same book a little farther on, he says, "Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Lord's supper] on the Sabbath of every week."-Id. Therefore, these early Fathers did not believe that the decalogue, or any part of it, was done away with.



### 3. Sunday in the Early Church

WHILE the apostle Paul lived, he and his associates observed the Sabbath. The question naturally arises as to the origin of the observance of Sunday and what the attitude was toward it. When did Christians begin to observe it? The first definite mention by the Christians of Sunday, or “He tou heliou hemera,” the day of the sun, as a day of worship, was made by Justin Martyr about the year 150 AD. Before that time Sunday, among the Jews and early Christians, was called the first day of the week.

#### First Day References

The first day of the week is first mentioned in the New Testament in connection with the resurrection of Christ on that day. The references are Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24: 1; and John 20: 1. As these are only simple references to the fact of the resurrection of Christ, we can get no argument for Sunday observance from them. A further reference is made in John 20:19, where the apostle records the meeting of Jesus and His disciples. But this still gives no clue as to any importance being then attached to the day by the disciples, for they were at the place where they “abode” (Acts 1:13), or in their lodging place in Jerusalem; and that “for fear of the Jews.” This would indicate that there was so much excitement among the Jews because of the report that Jesus had risen, that the disciples did not dare leave their place of abode for fear of being mobbed. Further, there could have been no possibility of their assembling there to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, for at that time they did not believe He had risen. Mark 16:9-13. So the Gospels furnish no light whatsoever on the question of Sunday observance.

There is a reference to the first day of the week in 1 Corinthians 16:2. The words are, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.” This verse seems to refer to a business procedure rather than to a religious service. They were asked to lay aside a gift for the destitute Christians in Judea according as God had prospered them. The way in which they were to find out how God had prospered them was to balance their accounts for the preceding week; then, according to their income, they were to lay aside a gift. The Encyclopedia Biblica says of this text, “It must not be overlooked, however, that the contribution of each one is to be laid up 'by him' (par houto), i.e., in his own home not in an assembly for worship.” [1]

#### Chrysostom's Comment

Chrysostom, in his homily, comments upon it: Paul “said not, 'Let him bring it into the church,' lest they might feel ashamed because of the smallness of the sum; but 'having by gradual additions swelled his contribution, let him then produce it, when I am come; but for the present lay it up,' said he, ,at home, and make thine house a church; thy little box a treasury. [2] This text, then, proves nothing about Sunday observance, for they could balance their accounts at home on one day as well as on another.

At the same time this text might imply that the Corinthians were observing the Sabbath with Jewish strictness, and had been having some difficulty in getting their accounts of the week balanced and ready for the Sabbath before the sun sank

behind the hills on Friday night. And it might be that Paul advised that this work be postponed until after the Sabbath. Then, before the work of the new week was begun, they could balance the account of the previous week and lay aside a gift.

The only other clear reference to the first day of the week in the New Testament during the life of Paul, is found in Acts 20:7. Further, this is the only place in the New Testament where a religious service is mentioned as being held on the first day of the week. In order to ascertain the significance of this meeting, a number of things must be taken into consideration. What does this service indicate? The record reads, “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight!” This tells of a night meeting that continued until the breaking of the day, in the midst of which a young man fell out of the window and was restored by Paul. Since this was a night meeting on the first day of the week, Jewish reckoning, it would occur on what we now call Saturday night, for their day began at sunset. Conybeare and Howson say of it, “The labors. of the early days of the week that were spent at Troas are not related to us, but concerning the last day we have a narrative. . . . It was the evening which succeeded the Jewish Sabbath.” [3] If this is

right, it was not strictly a Sunday service. And there is no direct evidence outside of this text that at this time it was the practice of the church to come together for a special meeting of breaking of bread on Sunday.

## **The Breaking of Bread**

The only other New Testament record concerning a time for breaking bread is in Acts 2:46, where it is stated that they did it daily. Professor Mc Giffert says, "There can be little doubt that throughout the period with which we are dealing the disciples came together in larger or smaller companies, whether for the breaking of bread or for mutual edification, as often as they could, and that they did not confine their religious meetings to stated days and times." [4] If at Troas they were still following that practice, the meetings of the other days were not mentioned. Then probably this one would have been spoken of, not because of the day, but because it was one that continued all night and Paul did not expect to see them again (Acts 20:25), and because of the restoration of the young man who fell out of the window.

## **Early Church Customs**

So far as actual customs in the church were concerned, they varied. Some were still having the Lord's supper daily, while others had it only on certain occasions. I give the statements of some of the early Fathers, showing that there was no uniformity in the practice of the believers over a period of some four hundred years.

In reply to an inquiry, Jerome wrote, "You ask me whether you ought to fast on the Sabbath and to receive the Eucharist [Lord's supper] daily, according to the custom-as currently reported-of the churches of Rome and Spain. . . . As regards the holy Eucharist you may receive it at all times without qualm of conscience or disapproval from me." [5]

Basil of Pontus wrote, "It is good and beneficial to communicate ... four times a week, on the Lord's day, on Wednesday, on Friday, and on the Sabbath. . . . At Alexandria and in Egypt each one of the laity, for the most part, keeps the communion at his own house, and participates in it when he likes." [6]

The historian Sozomen said, "There are several cities and villages in Egypt where, contrary to the usage established elsewhere, the people meet together on Sabbath evenings, and, although they have dined previously, partake of the mysteries [the Lord's supper]." [7]

John Cassius wrote, "Wherefore, except vespers and nocturnes, there are no public services among them in the (lay except on Saturday and Sunday, when they meet together at the third hour for the purpose of holy communion." [8]

Justin Martyr says, "On the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read. . . . Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers." [9]

The "Didache" reads, "And on the sacred day of the Lord come together and break bread and give thanks." [10]

Socrates informs us that "almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Lord's supper] on the Sabbath of every week." [11]

Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, in a letter to the emperor Trajan in regard to the Christians, said, "They met on a certain stated day before it was light . . . to eat a common and harmless meal." [12]

We have all this testimony regarding the love feasts and communion services in the church. Some had them daily, some four times a week, some only twice; and Justin Martyr says that in Alexandria they had them on Sunday, while Socrates, the historian of the fourth century, says almost all the churches had them on the Sabbath. But we can hardly conclude from these references that the first day was set apart for the celebration of the Lord's supper in Paul's time, for the first statement that mentions any definite day for communion was about one hundred years after the meeting at Troas.

## **No Proof for the Troas Meeting**

The statements of Pliny and Justin Martyr are often quoted to prove that this was a weekly

meeting at Troas. But what does this involve? Pliny wrote his letter sixty years after this Troas meeting. And it was a whole generation later that Justin Martyr made his statement. So simply from the standpoint of time there were plenty of opportunities, after the meeting at Troas, for changes to take place in the celebration of the Lord's supper.

Then there is another point that should be taken into consideration. The greatest changes in the Christian ritual were made, not during the lifetime of Paul, but later. While Paul lived, the temple still stood at Jerusalem, and that city remained the center and headquarters of the Christian church. As Doctor Schaff says, "The congregation of Jerusalem became the mother church of Jewish Christianity, and thus of all Christendom." [13] At that time everything was carried on under Jewish influence and with a Jewish perspective. To this place Christians came from all parts of the country to celebrate the great feasts of the Jews. And from this center missionaries were sent out into the mission field. The disciples who still resided there continued to practice many of the rituals of the Jews, and to impose them upon others as far as possible. This influence is revealed in the experience that Paul had with them at the time of his last visit when they said to him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law." Acts 21:20. So long as Jerusalem stood and remained the center of the Christian church, it was impossible to depart very far from Jewish practice.

## **Changes at the Fall of Jerusalem**

But after Paul's death Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews and the Christians were scattered. Professor Harnack says, "Before long the relation of Jewish Christians to their kinsmen the Jews also took a turn for the worse—that is, so far as actual relations existed between them at all. It seems to have been the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple which provoked the final crisis, and led to a complete breach between the two parties. No Christian, even supposing he was a zealous Jewish Christian, could look upon the catastrophe which befell the Jewish state, with its capital and sanctuary, as anything else than the just punishment of the nation for having crucified the Messiah. Strictly speaking, he ceased from that moment to be a Jew; for a Jew who accepted the downfall of his state and temple as a divine dispensation, thereby committed national suicide." [14]

Jerusalem was no longer the center of Christian activity, and it lost its influence upon the church. As Doctor Schaff says, "At last the victory was won. The terrible persecution under Nero, and the still more terrible destruction of Jerusalem, buried the circumcision controversy in the Christian church." [15] Robert Rainy says, "From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus it must have been difficult for Jewish Christians, even for those who clung most to the law, to maintain friendly relations with official or devout Judaism; and after the war of Bar Cocheba it became, as a rule, impossible. No Christian could support the movement of that warlike messiah. Christians were henceforth denounced by Jews as apostates; and a formal curse directed against them became a tradition of Jewish worship. Authoritative Judaism, of the schools and of the synagogues, finally shut its doors against all kinds of Christians. . . . As regards the Christian church, the effect of these events was to fuse the believers from the circumcision and those from among the Gentiles still more completely into one community!" [16]

Then those Christians who had lived at Jerusalem under the Jewish influence got out where they could see things from another angle. They were no longer so anxious to please the Jews, for the Jewish power had been broken, and they had given up the hope that the Jews would someday accept Christ as a body. As time went on, a larger per cent of the converts were from the Gentiles, and more and more of a Gentile influence was brought in. All these things go to show that the probabilities are much stronger that changes in Christian practice took place after the destruction of Jerusalem rather than before that time. But when Jerusalem was destroyed, Paul was dead. So nothing in Paul's writing should be construed to imply Sunday observance by him.

Now we have given all the texts in the New Testament regarding the possible observance of Sunday so long as Paul lived, and there seems to be no substantial, reliable evidence concerning its observance at that time. And, unfortunately, for this period there is no other historical evidence. Pliny and Justin Martyr wrote too long after this time to have any bearing on the question. And Pliny says that they had meetings on a certain day, not necessarily on Sunday. Consequently, with all this before us, it seems that we must look for the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath as a day of rest in the Christian church, after the death of Paul, rather than before it.

## 4. The Lord's Day

THE only scripture written after the destruction of Jerusalem that anyone has ever pretended to use to substantiate Sunday observance is Revelation 1:10, in which John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." It is then assumed that because Sunday has been designated "the Lord's day," by some in later times, John must have alluded to it in that way. This is an unwarranted conclusion. The book of Revelation does not tell us which day was meant, and such men as Augustine, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria lived too long afterward for us to find out from them what John meant. What is the evidence that at the time John lived this day had received the special title, "Lord's day"?

### John and the First Day

We are not sure just when the book of Revelation was written. In early times, and during the Middle Ages and the Reformation, the consensus of opinion was that it was at the time of the persecution of the emperor Domitian, 96 AD. Although scholars are not fully agreed as to the date of its composition, they are fairly well agreed that the book was written before either the Gospel or the Epistles of John.

Now if there had come in by this time a special, peculiar significance attached to Sunday, and it was then designated 'the Lord's day,' of course John himself, if he so used that term in Revelation, in his later writings would also thus have designated the day. But the same John in his later writings [1] calls Sunday simply "the first day of the week," just as do all the other New Testament writers. Is it possible that this day had now taken on this added significance with an altogether new title, so different from what the other New Testament writers understood, and John himself does not mention it? In his writings John was always very careful to explain any expression or practice which he thought was not familiar to his readers much more so than any other of the New Testament writers. Notice the following: "And John also was baptizing in Aenion, . . . for John was not yet cast into prison." John 3:23, 24. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve." John 6:70, 71. "Nicodemus said unto them (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them)." John 7:50. You may go on through the entire book, and you will find it a special characteristic of John to explain any point which he felt might not be clear. [2] But here on this important question there is not a word. Why? Further, Polycarp, an associate of the apostle John, apparently knew nothing about Sunday as the Lord's day. And Irenaeus, an associate and companion of Polycarp, mentions nothing about this in his writings.

### Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and the First Day

Then there is another strange thing about this situation. If Sunday was known as the "Lord's day" during the last of the first and the early part of the second century, how can \*; explain the fact that the two strongest advocates of Sunday observance in the second century, Barnabas and Justin Martyr -in fact, the only ones thus far discovered, who denounced Sabbath observance and urged the observance of Sunday in that period-never referred to it as the Lord's day? Although they were trying to find a reason for observing Sunday, yet they always referred to it simply as the first day, or the eighth day; and in one instance Justin used the heathen expression, "he tou heliou hemera," the day of the sun, in referring to it. If Sunday was then known as "the Lord's day," and these men were urging the observance of it, why did they not use that title, and cite the apostle John as their example? All this seems to indicate that these men and their associates knew nothing about Sunday as the Lord's day.

### The Lord's Day Defined

The only day which the Bible has ever mentioned as being the Lord's day is the seventh day of the week. The expression found in Isaiah 58:13, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day," refers to the seventh day. But did John refer to it thus in Revelation 1:10? There is an apocryphal book that claims to be giving the events that took place in the life of the apostle John, the same John who associated with Jesus and spoke of the Lord's day in Revelation 1: 10. In this book, "The

Acts of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John,” the author definitely calls the seventh day “the Lord's day.” He wrote, “On the seventh day, it being the Lord's day, he said to them: 'Now it is time for me also to partake of food.'” [3] Of course we know nothing about the author of this book, but the fact that the above statement was included therein at least shows that there were people living in those days who did not believe that John referred to Sunday in his statement in Revelation. This is a book that was in existence in the early church, for it is mentioned by such men as Eusebius the historian, Epiphanius, Photius, Augustine, and others. Of course, it is a fact that later in the church Sunday was called the Lord's day. But the fact that it is so called in the third and fourth centuries, does not prove that John called it that.

## **Dionysius and the Lord's Day**

We shall now give all the historical references that can be found which deal with the question of the Lord's day in the first two centuries. We have already discussed Revelation 1: 10 and the statement found in the “Acts of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John.” These indicate that it was the seventh day that was referred to as the Lord's day.

The next reference is found in the letter of Dionysius to the church at Rome, probably written about the first part of the second century and quoted by Eusebius. It reads, “We have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle. From it whenever we read it we shall always be able to draw advice, as also from the former epistle, which was written to us through Clement.” [4] They read the letter on the Lord's day. But what day was that? The letter does not say. Dionysius lived at the same time as the author of “The Acts of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John,” or earlier, the probabilities favoring an earlier period. But so far, the only day that we have found called the “Lord's day” is the seventh day. And as there is no historical evidence to the contrary, we may conclude that Dionysius here referred to that same day.

## **The “Didache”**

The other reference is found in the “Didache,” a book probably written during the second century, but just when or by whom we do not know. The statement reads, “On the sacred day of the Lord come together, and break bread, and give thanks.” [5] This reference gives us no clue as to what day is referred to. And since we do not know the author of the book, or when it was written, it is hard to decide. Still, on the basis of its anti-Jewish sentiment and its similarity to the book of Barnabas, it may be that it refers to the first day of the week. If so, it must have been written the latter part of the century, because both Barnabas and Justin Martyr, who lived earlier in the century, and who were both advocates of Sunday observance, did not seem to know anything about the first day's being called the Lord's day. They referred to it simply as the first day or the eighth day.

## **First Sunday Lord's Day Reference**

The first authentic statement so far discovered in which the first day of the week is called the Lord's day is from Clement of Alexandria at the very close of the second century. [6] He says, “The Lord's day Plato prophetically speaks of in the tenth book of the Republic, in these words, 'And when seven days have passed to each of them in the meadow, on the eighth day they set out and arrive in four days.'” [7]

These are all the authenticated references there are to the Lord's day in the first two centuries after Christ. The first positive reference that we can rely upon is from Clement of Alexandria. But he gets his authority from the writings of Plato, the great Greek philosopher, and he writes one hundred years after John wrote the book of Revelation. A great many changes could have taken place during that time, and, as a matter of fact, many changes did take place.

## **Changes in the Second Century**

Think of what has taken place in the churches and in religious thinking since the beginning of the last one-hundred year period. At that time Darwin had not developed his theory of natural selection, which has transformed the thinking of the world, and brought about the antagonism between the Modernists and

the Fundamentalists. If men of a hundred years ago could come from their graves today and visit their own beloved churches, they would think they were in another world. But just as great and radical changes were taking place in the early church in the second century. That was the time when Christianity was having its struggle with Gnosticism.

We began that century with the associates of John calling the seventh day the Lord's day, and ended the century with the first day of the week being called the Lord's day; hence the solution of this problem must be in this century. Our task is carefully to study the history of this period to see what was taking place.

## 5. Gnosticism

IN view of the evidence available, we may conclude with certainty that as long as Paul lived there was no chance for a change to come in which would affect the day of worship. The change must have come later. Then how did it take place? We answer briefly: It seems to have come about through the influence of semi-heathen and semi-Platonic beliefs and practices called Gnosticism.

### Gnosticism Defined

What do we mean by Gnosticism? The expression comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning knowledge. The great heathen religions were looking for some means of salvation. Most of them thought this redemption was dependent upon some sort of knowledge, or *gnosis*, and so they looked for that magic formula by which it might be accomplished. There was a constant striving for the secret information by which they might attain unto salvation.

### Origin of Gnosticism

The place where this striving developed into a great system was at Alexandria in Egypt. Here there was an intermingling of the different religions of the empire, out of which finally grew a great system known as Gnosticism. The greatest influence in this movement was the affiliation of the different schools and religions at Alexandria—one of the greatest university cities in the world at the beginning of the Christian Era. Here nearly every religion had its school of learning, and here the teachers and the students of these different faiths mingled and discussed their philosophies and religious ideas. As a result they fused their beliefs into a conglomerate mass of opinions that later spread throughout the Christian church.

Professor Sayce says of it, “Alexandria was not only the meeting place of East and West, it was also the place where the decrepit theology of Egypt was revived by contact with the speculative philosophy of Greece. The Egyptian, the Greek, and the Jew met there on equal terms, and the result was a theological system in which each had his share. In Philo [the Jew], we are told, we find Moses Platonizing; but the atmosphere in which he did so was that of the old Egyptian faith.” [1]

### Gnostics Used Allegories

Dr. E. de Pressense says, “Starting from the idea of a hidden, incomprehensible God, who has no contact with the finite, it developed most prominently the theory of intermediary divinities, who, by means of emanation, were able to produce the lower world, which the supreme God could not even touch. . . . Gnosticism gathered symbols and allegories on all hands; it drew from pagan sources no less than from the sacred books of the Jews and the Christians.” [2]

The Gnostics adopted a method of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures which had been introduced among the Jews by Philo. They would take a statement of fact from the Scriptures and use it as an allegory, or as a representation of something else. For instance, Valentinus, a Gnostic of the second century, interpreted the Garden of Eden and the experiences recorded there as representing the birth of a child. He represented the Garden of Eden and the rivers flowing from it as a mother and her anatomy. “Moses, he says, resorting to allegory, has declared Paradise to be the womb. . . . a river flowing forth from Eden, for the purpose of irrigating Paradise (meaning by this), the navel. This navel, he says, is separated into four principles; for on either side of the navel are situated two arteries, channels of the spirit, and two veins, channels of blood.” [3] And again, “The world, then, as Moses says, was made in six days, that is, by six powers.” [4] This is a fair sample of their method. We shall soon observe these same characteristics in the writings of the Alexandrian church Fathers. Especially is this apparent in the writings of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Clement, and Origen, the first four men to mention Sunday observance in the church.

### Used Images

Another of the Gnostic characteristics was image worship. Many wonder how the practice of

image worship came into the church. There were no images in connection with the worship of the early apostles. We hear nothing about them in the churches of the East for years after the apostles had passed away. But in the fourth and fifth centuries image worship was manifest everywhere. Whence this change? The only satisfactory answer yet given is that it came from Gnosticism. As these Gnostics were allowed to come into the church and still continue their practices, the worship of images gradually came into the church, and later was adopted as part of its ritual. Irenaeus writes, "They style themselves Gnostics. They also possess images, some of them painted, and others formed from other kinds of material; while they maintain that a likeness of Christ was made by Pilate at that time when Jesus lived among them. They crown these images, and set them up along with the images of the philosophers." [5]

## **Used Greek Philosophy**

Although many of these Gnostics claimed to adhere to certain Christian tenets, still they were steeped in the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato. Valentinus was so imbued with their teaching that Hippolytus said he should "justly be reckoned a . . . Platonist, not a Christian." [6] Yet Clement, the great professor of the Christian school at Alexandria, later manifested this same spirit in his writings. Finally this philosophy became the most pronounced theology of the Christian church.

Milman says: "This Platonism had gradually absorbed all the more intellectual class; it hovered over, as it were, and gathered under its wings all the religions of the world. It had already modified Judaism; it had allied itself with the Syrian and Mithraic worship of the sun, the visible mediator, the emblem of the Word; it was part of the general nature worship; it was attempting to renew paganism, and was the recognized and leading tenet in the higher mysteries." [7]

## **Gnostics Practiced Sun Worship**

Professor William Olcott says, "The chief masculine deity of every nation, which was the chief object of their idolatrous worship, is in every case to be identified with the sun ." [8] Professor Cumont adds, "For all the astrologers, the sun, as before remarked, was the royal star, and it was consequently he who gave to his chosen ones the virtue of sovereignty, and called them to kingly dominion." [9] So we see that the principal deity worshiped in the early days of the Christian Era, and that which was the central figure of the Gnostic system, was the sun.

## **They Observed Sunday**

When did they worship this deity? Neander says, They "celebrated the Sunday of every week, not on account of its reference to the resurrection of Christ, for that would have been inconsistent with their Docetism, but as the day consecrated to the sun, which was in fact their Christ.---[10] Professor Cumont, the greatest authority on the subject, adds, "The preeminence [of the sun] contributed to the general recognition of Sunday as a holiday." [11] 'Each day in the week, the planet to which the day was sacred was invoked in a fixed spot in the crypt, and Sunday, over which the sun presided, was especially holy.' [12] Hence, when the early church started on its career of conquest, astrology and sun worship were prevailing notions of the time, and Sunday was considered "especially holy," and was dedicated to the worship of the sun by these Gnostics.

## **They Were Anti Jewish**

Gnosticism appeared in many forms. Yet they all agreed in the idea of one absolute and far-distant God beyond and opposed to all contact with matter, the essence of evil. In opposition to this power there was another who was the author of matter and evil. Between these two opposing forces there was a long chain of emanations or cons operating. One of the lower of these was the Demiurgus. In the second and third centuries this Demiurgus was considered the one who -creates the world without any suspicion of the existence of a power higher than his own; he fashions incoherent matter, and forms from it the human body, into which he breathes life. He gives man a law, but without rendering him capable of fulfilling it. The fall of man is laid to the charge of the



Demiurgus. . . . The Old Testament is the monument of this maleficent activity, the Jewish people is the people of the Demiurgus, the law is the emanation of his cruel justice and the miserable destinies of Israel reveal the impotence of a god who could not even secure the happy fortunes of his favorites.. Paganism belongs to matter and to the demons, as Judaism to the Demiurgus.” [13]

## Summary

By way of review we may recall that we have observed the following characteristics among Gnostics: 1. They allegorized the Scriptures. 2. They worshiped images. 3. They clung to philosophical rather than Biblical ideas. 4. They worshiped the sun as their Christ. 5. They observed Sunday. 6. They were anti-Jewish in the second and third centuries.

Although semi-Gnostic ideas seem to have appeared among Christians first at Alexandria, yet it is not long before we see an effort put forth to establish them at Rome, the capital of the empire. Valentinus went from Alexandria to Rome and labored for some twenty years during the first half of the second century. Basilides had a large following at both Alexandria and Rome. Newman says of another: “Marcion, a native of Pontus, went to Rome about 138 or 139 and became a member of the Roman church. Failing in an attempt to bring the church to his way of thinking, he felt constrained to organize his adherents into a separate church and to inaugurate an active propaganda. Within a few years he had built up a strong community in Rome, and organizations of his followers had been formed in most of the provinces. . . . In general it may be said that Gnosticism led the way in the amalgamation of Christian and pagan thought and life that was to transform the religion of Christ and His apostles into the Christianity of the third and following centuries.” [14]

## 6. Sunday at Alexandria in the Second Century

THE second century was a period of great changes. This was especially true in Alexandria and Egypt, where that peculiar mixture of religious sentiments developed into what was known as Gnosticism. But these Gnostics were not living in isolation, apart from the rest of mankind. They were living and active representatives of their beliefs, and they materially influenced the men of their time and the Christian church at that place. About all we hear from Alexandria during the first century and the first half of the second is concerning Gnostics or half Gnostics, such as Simon Magus, Cerinthus, Basilides, Valentinus, etc., who came up among the disciples and caused trouble because of their strange and obnoxious doctrines.

### Alexandria the Seat of Gnosticism

But the important and radical changes that came in and later so seriously affected the church made their entrance at Alexandria, the seat of Gnosticism. It was at this place that we first hear of Gnostic sentiments in the church. It is here that we first hear of men who profess to be Christians favoring image worship. It is here also that we first hear of men in the church allegorizing the Scriptures and opposing the Old Testament. It is here, or from places under that influence, that we find men tinged with Gnostic ideas who give us our first sure and authentic reference to Sunday observance in the Christian church.

We will show, as we proceed, that Sunday observance appeared at the time of the Jewish war. But the importance of it can hardly be too strongly emphasized, especially as so many have passed it by unnoticed. The source of this and conditions that occasioned it we will explain. However, we will observe that all who spoke in favor of Sunday worship during the second century were tinged with Gnosticism, and were anti Jewish.

Why and when did these sentiments arise? We first hear of them about the time of the Jewish war between 115 and 135 A.D. This was the war that ended so disastrously for the Jews and started an odium against them which continued to grow until the people of the Christian church tried to keep as far as possible from Jewish practices, and developed an aversion to everything Jewish.

### Alexandrian Church Unknown by Early Fathers

So far as the Alexandrian church was concerned, it wielded practically no influence upon Christianity in the early days. It was never alluded to until the end of the second century. None of the apostles came from there. Even after the death of the apostles, and for many years following, the church at Alexandria had very little influence upon Christianity. Charles Bigg says, "The church of Alexandria . . . remained almost without a history until the end of the second century. It is mentioned by Hadrian in his letter to Servianus; after this we hear of it no more until the persecution of Severus." [1]

We are not told why there is this silence concerning the church at Alexandria. Evidently its attitude was not compatible with the spirit of the early Christians elsewhere. It certainly was not in harmony with the ideas and ideals of the early church of Palestine and Asia Minor. Irenaeus wrote: "John, the--Disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus [the Gnostic from Alexandria] within, rushed out of the bathhouse without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.'" [2]

### Hadrian's Letter

This gives us some idea of the type of people who came from Alexandria, and the feeling of the apostles and true worshipers toward them. Professor Bigg says that the only reference we have to this church for the first two centuries is from the letter of Hadrian, the emperor who lived at the time of the Jewish war. This letter was written to his brother-in-law, Servianus. What did he have to say about the Christians in Egypt when he wrote? Bigg quotes from the letter: "Egypt, which you praised to me so warmly, my dear Servianus, I found altogether frivolous, unstable, and shifting with every breath of rumor. There those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis. There is in that country no ruler of the synagogue of the Jews, no Samaritan, no

Christian priest, who is not astrologer, soothsayer, or apothecary. Even the renowned patriarch, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ. . . . Their one god is money. Him, Christians, Jews, and Gentiles alike, adore.' [3]

## **Gnostic Influence**

Gnosticism evidently had a great influence upon the church members at Alexandria, for whenever we hear from any of them during the first two centuries, it is from men who strongly manifest the sentiments of the Gnostics. Professor Rainy says that in the second century "Gnosticism was, after all, only an extreme case of a general tendency. It was a very general thought that the divine excellency of Christianity must then be ours when we find it rising upon the soul as a deep, pure, comprehensive, wonderful knowledge. . . . The author of the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, are all conspicuous instances." [4] These four men, so conspicuous for the manifestation of Gnostic characteristics, are also the men most conspicuous for allegorizing the Scriptures, spiritualizing the Sabbath, and giving us our early information concerning Sunday observance. [5]

## **Barnabas**

Little is known concerning Barnabas. About all the information we have is that an epistle has come down to us with his name attached to it. Its value and importance we shall have to derive from the epistle itself. It is apparent that whoever the author was, he was strongly under the influence of the Gnostics, for he adhered to their methods and principles.

You will notice that he uses the Gnostic method of allegorizing the Scriptures, and by it nullifies their teaching. You will also observe that he is strongly anti-Jewish and anti-sabbatic, and tries to find a reason for the observance of Sunday, which he calls the eighth day. Note his words and the method he uses.

He writes, "It is written concerning the Sabbath in the decalogue which He [the Lord] spoke face to face to Moses on Mt. Sinai. 'And sanctify you the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart.' And He says in another place, 'If My sons keep the Sabbath, then will I cause My mercy to rest upon them.' " He speaks of the Sabbath at the beginning of creation, " 'And God made in six days the works of His hands and made an end, on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.' Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days.' This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years. . . . And He Himself testifies, saying, 'Behold, today will be as a thousand years.'

"Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. 'And He rested on the seventh day.' This means: When His Son coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day. . . . Further, He says to them, 'Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure.' You perceive how He speaks: Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me, but that is which I have made, . . . when, giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead, and when He had manifested Himself, He ascended into the heavens." [6]

Whoever this writer was, he evidently endeavored to give the seventh day an allegorical interpretation, applying its observance to the kingdom of heaven. He also gave a mystical reason for the observance of the eighth day. This is the first historical reference to the observance of Sunday by a professed Christian—probably between 140 and 150 A.D.

## **Justin Martyr**

We come to know Justin by his own writings. He tells of his early life, and his experience with the different philosophers, and his final conversion. His first experience was with the Stoics. Later he joined himself to a teacher of the philosophy of Aristotle, then to a Pythagorean, and finally to a Platonist. After that, one day he met an old man, a Christian, who told him of the Christian religion. Justin accepted a form of Christianity, and began to teach it to others, but always in the garb of a philosopher, for his ideas were tinged with Gnosticism. Although Justin Martyr became one of the great church Fathers, yet his early

training in the philosophies of his time prepared him for the work he endeavored to do in bringing in a more sympathetic feeling toward Greek and Oriental philosophies. He seems never fully to have shaken off those early influences. He believed there was considerable good in all religions, and states, "Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians. . . . For all the writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted word that was in them. [7] This indicates that Justin was never weaned from his old heathen ways. Professor Workman says, "It is not surprising, therefore, that with Justin Martyr, we began the triumph of Hellenic culture, and the modification of the primitive simplicity of Christianity." [8]

## **Sunday Worship**

Justin is the man who gives us our first definite and reliable statement that the people where he worshiped came together and had the Lord's supper on Sunday. He wrote, "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together into one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen." [9] A great deal of Justin's writings is given over to a discussion with Trypho, the Jew, about their worship. He is bitterly opposed to the Jews and their worship, and bitterly attacks the idea of Sabbath observance of every form. He wrote that everyone, including himself, would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if he did not know for what reason they were enjoined upon the Jews—namely, because of the transgressions of the people and the hardness of their hearts. "Wherefore, Trypho," he wrote, ". . . do you see that the elements are not idle, and keep no Sabbaths? Remain as you were born. For if 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." [10]

"The new law requires you to keep perpetual Sabbath, and you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious, not discerning why this has been commanded you; and if you eat unleavened bread, you say the will of God has been fulfilled. The Lord ' our God does not take pleasure in such observances: if there is any perjured person or a thief among you, let him cease to be so; if any adulterer, let him repent; then he has kept the sweet and true Sabbaths of God." 11 Therefore, according to Justin the Lord takes no pleasure in Sabbath observance. This is the second man we find who opposed Sabbath observance, and this was about the middle of the second century.

## **Reason for Sunday Observance**

Justin also mentions Sunday as a special day. Here are his words: "Now, sirs, I said, it is possible for us to show how the eighth day possessed a certain mysterious import, which the seventh day did not possess and which was promulgated by God through these rites." "The command of circumcision, again, bidding (them) always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, (namely through) our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, . . . and (yet) remains the first." [12]

Thus we see that Justin allegorizes the Sabbath in a way that is very similar to the method used by Barnabas. He mentions a certain mysterious import connected with the eighth day that gave it special significance, and then he connected this eighth day with the first. These are the first two men to give us any definite instruction regarding Sunday observance in the church. But both of them followed the Gnostic method of interpreting the Scriptures, and both of them followed the Gnostics in considering Sunday a day of special importance.

## **Clement of Alexandria**

The next great man to be considered is Clement of Alexandria, who lived and taught during the last of the second century. He goes farther than either of his predecessors in his Gnostic methods. He seems

to have been wholly enamored with the philosophy of Plato, and publicly advocated Gnostic principles.

Clement occupied a profoundly interesting position in the history of Christianity. "He is the first to bring all the culture of the Greeks and all the speculations of the Christian heretics to bear on the exposition of Christian truth." [13] When Clement turns his eyes upon philosophy, he can hardly find words to express his admiration. "'There is one river of truth,' he says, 'but many streams fall into it on this side and on that.' . . . No such language had been heard since the time of Justin Martyr, and it gave great offense to those whom Clement calls the Orthodoxasts. . . . But what use did Clement make of his philosophy? He sets entirely upon one side the Fathers of the New Testament, and launched upon the church the Neoplatonic doctrine of the absolute God." [14] He felt that there was now no need for anyone to go to the Gnostics, for "the church can satisfy every desire of the intelligence. Christian theology is the true Gnosis, the perfect Christian is the true Gnostic." [15]

Very little is known of Clement's early life. It was in his later years that he came to prominence as a teacher in the catechetical school of Alexandria. But he was a great lover of Greek philosophy and of the Gnostic method of interpreting the Scriptures. This catechetical school, the first of its kind in the church, was established by Pantaeus, who was said to have been a pagan philosopher before his conversion. Clement was his student and later became his successor as a teacher in the school. But Clement was so imbued with the spirit of Gnosticism that for a time it was questionable whether he was going to be able to maintain his position in the church. He not only did not believe that it was wrong to worship the heavenly bodies, but actually taught that they had been ordained for that purpose.

Hear his words: "He [God] gave the sun, and the moon, and the stars to be worshiped; 'which God,' the law says, made for the nations, that they might not become altogether atheistical, and so utterly perish." [16] So much for an introduction to Clement and his philosophical ideas.

## **Clement Rejects the Sabbath**

Now what has he to say about the day of worship? Why, he uses a strange, mystical, Gnostic method to show that the seventh day was instituted because of men's ills, and was only a preparation for the more important and primal day, the first day of the week, the day on which light was created. Then he proceeds to show by his allegorical methods that the eighth day is really the seventh day referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is what he says, "And the fourth word is that which intimates that the world was created by God, and that He gave us the seventh day as a rest, on account of the trouble that there is in life. . . . The seventh day, therefore, is proclaimed a rest-abstraction from ills-preparing for the primal day, our true rest; which, in truth, is the first creation of light, in which all things are viewed and possessed. . . . The eighth may possibly turn out to be properly the seventh, and the seventh manifestly the sixth, and the latter properly the Sabbath, and the seventh a day of work. For the creation of the world was concluded in six days . . . . The Pythagoreans, as I think, reckon six the perfect number . . . . As marriage generates from male and female, so six is generated from the odd number three, which is called the masculine number, and the even number two, which is considered the feminine. For twice three is six." [17] Such is the idea of Clement on the Sabbath question. He did not believe that it should be kept, and he tried to show that the eighth day was the all-important day.

## **Clement and the Lord's Day**

Clement is the first man who unequivocally used the expression "Lord's day" for the first day of the week. What is his source of authority for it? It is Plato. This is what he says, "And the Lord's day Plato prophetically speaks of in the tenth book of the Republic, in these words, 'And when seven days have passed to each of them in the meadow, on the eighth day they are to set out and arrive in four days.' [18] This instruction was from the great Clement of Alexandria, the teacher in the catechetical school where priests, bishops, and missionaries were trained for their gospel work. What effect did this have upon Christianity? "The Alexandrians mark a stage in a conflict which ended in a compromise. The great Gnostics of the second century had been unable to maintain their footing in the church. Clement succeeded in doing so, though not without suspicion." [19]

Barnabas, Justin, and Clement are three great men of the church who were tinged with Gnosticism. They are also the three who give us our first information regarding Sunday observance.

Barnabas applies Sabbath keeping to the kingdom of heaven, and said that in his time they kept the eighth day. Justin said the Sabbath was given to the Jews because of the hardness of their hearts, and the eighth day was more important because it had a mystical significance which the seventh had not. Clement nullified the Sabbath by a process of Pythagorean reasoning, and said the important day was the eighth. Justin is also the first man we know who gives a clear statement about regular Sunday services, and Clement is the first to apply the expression "Lord's day- to Sunday.

## 7. Sunday in Asia in the Second Century

THE men from Alexandria, who were previously considered, are often quoted as though they were representative of their time; but they were not. They were representative of Alexandria, but not of the rest of the empire. Even before the Christian Era, during the latter part of the Jewish dispensation, Alexandria had been considered unorthodox by the Jews of Palestine. At Alexandria lived Philo the Jew, who was enamored with Plato's philosophy, and introduced the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures, which was later taken over by the church at that place.

### Church in Asia Minor Opposes Alexandrian Theology

But the Jews from Jerusalem stood for the old Jewish religion of the law and the prophets, unmixed and uncontaminated by Greek philosophy and Oriental influences. This was the religion of the people for whom Jesus and the early apostles labored. From this center the early disciples came, and from here they went out to evangelize the world. It was from this influential center that Paul, Peter, James, and John, and all the other apostles labored. Their center of activity was Jerusalem as long as that city stood. But after the Jewish war, it could no longer be used as such. Then their headquarters were transferred to Antioch. This city remained the center of activity for the orthodox Christians for years after the fall of Jerusalem. W. R. Inge says of it: "The school of Antioch led a revolt against the Alexandrian exegesis of Holy Scripture, and founded a more critical method." [1] "The church of the second century rang with alarm, and the consequence was that all the Christian writers of that period, except Justin Martyr and Clement [2] of Alexandria, shrank with horror from the very name of philosophy." [3] This clearly indicates that the men from Alexandria were in no way representative of the church in other places. More than that, it clearly shows that an opposition to their teaching developed in the section of the country in which Antioch was located.

Now this was the section in which the apostles lived and labored so faithfully and long. This is the area which stood firm for the teaching of the apostles and bitterly opposed the coming in of any change not in harmony with their teaching and practice. Here in Asia Minor the apostle John lived until the very close of the first century. Here Polycarp, a companion and friend of John, carried on the work laid down by that apostle until the middle of the second century, and in the later years of his life went to Rome and opposed the Gnostics and brought many back into the fold. Here Irenaeus was born and reared; here he lived until 177A.D., when he was transferred to Lyons.

### Polycarp Loyal to the Apostles

Irenaeus was a close friend of Polycarp, and wrote that Polycarp "was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried (on earth) a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time." [4]

Notice the points he makes. First, he had associated with Polycarp, who had been with the apostles of Jesus. Polycarp recalled what the apostles taught, and had carefully reassured, for his followers, those things which had been handed down to the church; and these, and these alone, all the Asiatic churches accepted as truth. Consequently, the teaching of the apostles, and Polycarp, and Irenaeus, and the Asiatic churches agreed.

By way of summary we have the following:

1. The churches of Asia were a united group and received their faith direct from the apostles.
2. They were constantly very particular to trace all their teaching back to the apostles.
3. The church had been very careful to keep out all foreign sentiments.
4. No other teaching was tolerated, because that and that alone was true.
5. This was the testimony of all the Asiatic churches.

6. The apostles and Polycarp, with his associates. and Irenaeus and all the Asiatic churches, kept the Sabbath down to the last of the second century.

7. In specifying the Asiatic churches, Irenaeus infers that there were some elsewhere who did not testify to this.

All this indicates that there was a division in the church at this time. Because of the Gnostic tendencies in the church at Alexandria, the churches of Asia, with Antioch at their head, took a decided stand against that tendency, and fell more decidedly back upon the practice of testing all their doctrines by the teaching of the early apostles. And here they were particularly able to test their faith because of the long labors in those parts of men like the apostle John and Polycarp, whose lives overlapped for so many years.

## **Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Theophilus Kept the Sabbath**

Irenaeus tells us that so long as he lived, the churches of Asia Minor followed the teaching of the apostles, and that these churches were all united and unanimous in their teaching and practice. We have already learned that the apostles, so far as the records show, always kept the Sabbath. What about those other men who followed the apostles? The history of Polycarp reads: "Now, the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom on the second day of the month Xanthicus just begun, the seventh day before the Kalends of May, on the great Sabbath, at the eighth hour." [5] Now the great Sabbath was at a time when the Sabbath of a feast came at the same time as the weekly Sabbath. This was a day of special importance to them. Thus the indications are that the people who associated with Polycarp kept the Sabbath.

But what about Irenaeus? What does he say about the Sabbath? He wrote, "The Lord did not abrogate the natural (precepts) of the law, by which man is justified." [6] "For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning he had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the decalogue (which, if anyone does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them." 7 "And in Exodus, God says to Moses: 'And you shall observe My Sabbaths: for it shall be a sign between Me and you for your generations. [7] Irenaeus certainly was a Sabbath keeper.

Thus far the men from this section seem to agree in their theology and their attitude toward the decalogue and the day of worship. There is another man from these parts by the name of Theophilus whom we must consider. In the last part of the second century he was appointed bishop of Antioch, the city that revolted against the Alexandrian teaching. Since he lived at the end of the second century, when Sunday worship was well established in Alexandria, and after Irenaeus and the other fathers had gone from this section, his teaching should throw some light on the question before us. He has nothing whatsoever to say about Sunday, and only indirectly discusses the Sabbath. But he says enough about it in his discussion of the creation to reveal his attitude and practice. He wrote, "On the sixth day God finished His works which He made, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because in it He rested from all His works which God began to create." [9]

## **Ignatius and the Sabbath**

There is yet one more Father of this century whom we have not considered; that is Ignatius. He was living about 110 AD., and was a bishop of Antioch, the city that revolted against the Alexandrian teaching. He was evidently a good man, and a close friend of Polycarp, who had been a companion of the apostle John. Polycarp seems to have believed in the writings of Ignatius and was sympathetic toward them, for he wrote that they "treat of faith and patience, and all things that tend to edification in our Lord." [10] This seems to indicate that Polycarp and Ignatius agreed in principle and practice.

Now the epistle to the Magnesians, which Ignatius is supposed to have written, contains the following: "If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death." [11] That is a very strange statement for the bishop of Antioch to make, a contemporary and associate of the apostle John and of Polycarp, and from the city that revolted against the teaching of the Alexandrian school. It is entirely in harmony with that of the so-called Barnabas, and Justin Martyr, but is foreign to any of his own associates. How can we account for the foregoing statements, so different from the teaching of his associates, who apparently were



sympathetic toward him, and yet could not tolerate anyone whose doctrines were diverse from their own, [12] and this in view of the fact that Irenaeus wrote that all the people were agreed in their teaching?

This seems to bring us to a dilemma, for these statements cannot all be true. Either Polycarp and Irenaeus, who lived at that time, did not know what they were writing about when they said they all agreed, or Ignatius did not make that statement. The evidence we have (outside of these words in this letter) indicates that Irenaeus told the truth, and that the men there agreed in their teaching. I will now produce this evidence.

## **How Many Epistles of Ignatius?**

Here is the situation: Ignatius evidently wrote some letters, for both Polycarp and Eusebius tell about them. How many did he write? That is the question. Polycarp does not state, and Eusebius, who lived about two hundred years afterward, says there were seven.

Ignatius for many years has been a puzzle to scholars. During the time of the Reformation there were supposed to have been fifteen epistles written by him. Now the editor of the 'Anti-Nicene Fathers' says, "It is now the universal opinion of critics that the first eight of these professedly Ignatian letters keep the Lord's day. In the other the author says, "After the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day." For further information see appendix.

are spurious. . . . They are now by common consent set aside as forgeries." [13]

## **The Spurious Epistles**

The difficulty with Ignatius is that we do not know what he wrote. One collection contains fifteen epistles ascribed to him, and each one much longer than those in the other group. Another collection in Greek has only seven epistles, and these are much shorter than the same epistles in the collection of fifteen. Then there is still another collection in Syriac of only three epistles (to the Ephesians, the Romans, and Polycarp), and each of these is still shorter than the same epistles in the other two recensions. So how many epistles did Ignatius actually write? No one now believes that he wrote fifteen. Clearly eight have been forged in his name. And the remaining seven have been so interpolated by forgeries and additions that we are not sure what Ignatius really said. If the last collection of three shall prove to be a recension of the actual books that Ignatius wrote (which many scholars contend to be the case), then there would be no letter by Ignatius to the Magnesians, and nothing said by him about either the Sabbath or Sunday.

## **Only Three Epistles Quoted by Fathers**

Now, strange to say, the Fathers who lived during this period of over two hundred years between Ignatius and Eusebius quoted from each of these three Syriac epistles mentioned above and from these three only—not a word from any of the others. This might indicate that the other four were forged in the latter part of the third century. Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn says, "A large number of scholars declared substantially for this view [of only three epistles], though still more refused their assent." [14]

If we accept the position of the scholars who accept the last collection as the real epistles of Ignatius, there is no Sabbath or Sunday difficulty, for the only place in which they are alluded to is in the letter to the Magnesians, and that letter is not in the last recension. If we accept the seven shorter ones, we still have trouble, because we do not know just how much has been interpolated. So Ignatius seems to be a broken reed upon which to lean in any doctrinal controversy.

## **Ignatius an Unreliable Source**

It seems to me incredible to think that Ignatius, who was so intimately associated with these other men of his time, could have been so different in point of view from them when Irenaeus said they all agreed. Philip Schaff says, "These oldest documents of the hierarchy soon became so interpolated, curtailed, and mutilated by pious fraud, that it is today almost impossible to discover with certainty the genuine Ignatius of history under the hyper- and pseudo-Ignatius of tradition." Then in a note he adds,

'Baur and the Tübingen critics reject the entire Ignatian literature as forgery.' [15]

In view of the different recensions and the many interpolations of the epistles of Ignatius, I cannot see how we are going to be able to find out what he said. So how can his writings be taken as evidence in any controversy? Then I find these words at the conclusion of the article on Ignatius in the Schaff-Flerzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, which give a summary of the best scholarly results on this question: "It seems highly probable that even the shorter Greek form has suffered extensive interpolation, how extensive no one is in a position to determine. The cautious student of the history of polity and doctrine will decline to base important conclusions on the unsupported testimony of these writings." [16]

We shall follow this advice. On the question of Sunday observance he not only has no support for his strange opinions, but is opposed by all others of his day. So we seem justified in concluding that all the men of Asia agreed on this question and were in accord with Irenaeus. If that is the case, then all these men kept the Sabbath and knew nothing about Sunday observance.

## **Pliny's Letter on Sabbath Observance**

According to the substantiated apostolic literature of Asia Minor (excluding that of Ignatius), it is conclusive that the Asiatic Christians observed only the traditional Sabbath, the seventh day. However, there is the letter that Pliny wrote to Trajan to be explained. This letter seems to indicate that there was some trouble with the Christians in Pontus, where he was governor. In explaining this trouble to Trajan, Pliny described the arguments raised against Christians as follows: "They affirmed that the whole of their guilt or error was that they [the Christians] met on a certain stated day before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some God." [17] The question is, To what day does he refer when he mentions "a certain stated day"? The only plausible conclusion is that it was the seventh day, the day mentioned in apostolic literature. Pliny states that this people met on a certain stated day, not days. This implies that they were not meeting on two days, as was the custom in Alexandria at this early time, but were observing only one day, and that day the seventh, for the available literature clearly shows that the seventh day was the only day observed in this section of the country. Therefore, Pliny, in writing of a certain stated day, adds nothing to the support of Sunday observance.

## 8. Events and Changes in the Second Century

To those who are inclined to believe that the Christians of the first century recognized Sunday as a day of worship, we wish to state that such belief must rest upon assumption and not upon historical evidence. There is not only no reliable historical data for Sunday observance in the first century, but there is also no undisputed evidence for it in the second century in the land of Syria and Asia. And there are strong indications that the church there was strongly antagonistic toward Roman and Alexandrian ways, which were allowing heathen customs to enter. Syria and Asia were opposed to any practice not instituted by the apostles.

### The Jewish War

So long as Jerusalem stood and was the center of influence in the church, it was practically impossible to depart very far from Jewish practices. With the fall of Jerusalem, however, the Christians were scattered and began to depart from those traditions. After the Jewish war of 69 and 70 AD., the Jews returned and partially reestablished their temple worship.

Although there was nominal peace, yet massacres and revolts kept breaking out at intervals. Finally, during the later years of the reign of Trajan, probably about 115 AD., a revolt of the Jews broke out in Egypt that was summarily put down with great massacres of the Jews. This revolt spread to Cyrene and Cyprus, where it was dealt with in a similar manner. At the death of Trajan, 117 AD., Hadrian, who was in charge of the militia in Cyprus, succeeded to the office of emperor. At first he tried to deal leniently with the Jews, in an endeavor to bring about peace. But his efforts seemed unappreciated and futile, and he soon changed his tactics and seriously proscribed Jewish liberty, making it unlawful for them to carry on their services, or circumcise their offspring, or keep the Sabbath. For a time the Jews reluctantly endured these restrictions, but finally Bar Cocheba appeared, claiming to be the star of promise, the Messiah, and said that he had come to deliver them from the oppression of the Roman dominance. As a result, war broke out anew and raged fiercely for about three years. Finally this revolt failed and was put down with great severity, and the Jews were driven out of their country and forbidden to return.

Eusebius describes the outcome of this conflict and the siege of Jerusalem as follows: "When the siege had lasted a long time, and the rebels had been driven to the last extremity by hunger and thirst, and the instigator of the rebellion had suffered his just punishment, the whole nation was prohibited from this time on, by a decree and by the command of Hadrian, from ever going up to the country about Jerusalem. For the emperor gave orders that they should not even see from a distance the land of their fathers." [1]

### Gentile Influence Established

Doctor Rainy says: 'Palestine was laid waste; Jerusalem under the name of Aelia Capitolina became a Gentile city, equipped with all the pomp of pagan worship. Circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and instruction in the law, were prohibited everywhere; and no Jew might enter Jerusalem. [2]

At the close of this war the Jews were defeated and driven out of their country, and were not permitted to return, according to Doctor Rainy. Pagan worship was set up in Jerusalem, and the Jewish ritualistic temple service ceased. That meant also that it was no longer carried on anywhere else, for the Jewish law forbade it outside of Jerusalem, and the Jews could no longer enter there. So Jewish ritualistic services ceased at the close of this war, 135 AD.

Up to the time of this war there had been close affinity between Jewish and Christian practices. Eusebius says, "Their whole church consisted then of believing Hebrews, who continued from the days of the apostles until the siege which took place at this time." [3] And Professor Case informs us: "The early disciples described in the book of Acts apparently had no thought of severing traditional religious connections, or of establishing any movement outside the pale of Judaism. . . . Loyalty to the religion of their fathers is one of the best attested characteristics of the early Christians. . . . Thus they had no desire to break with Judaism, and did not even think of themselves as a separate sect." [4]

But now a distinction comes in, and the Christians must make that distinction in order that they themselves may continue their worship in proscribed Jewish areas. The Jews could no longer enter Jerusalem. Could the Christians? Note the words of Eusebius, the church historian, on this point, and the

distinction he made. He says, "The church was collected there [at Jerusalem] of the Gentiles; the first bishop after those of the circumcision, was Marcus." [5] Before that time the bishops had been of the circumcision, or Jews; now they are of the Gentiles, because the Gentiles are the only ones who can come there to worship. Therefore we can see here a very decided change of attitude in Christian worship at this time.

## Anti-Jewish Feeling

From this time on the Christians desired to differentiate as much as possible between themselves and the Jews. An anti-Jewish sentiment began to come in because the Christians did not wish to give any basis for being classified as Jews, and therefore tried to get as far as possible from Jewish ritual. We hear such remarks as, "Whoever loves the Jews. . . . should not enter in amongst them [Christians] and ministers." [6] This feeling increased as time went on, and finally we hear Constantine say, "Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd. [7] He also passed a law to the effect that "no Christian should remain in servitude to a Jewish master." [8] The third Synod of Orleans passed a law that "Christians must not marry with Jews, nor even eat with them." [9] At the Synod of Laodicea (about 365 AD.) they passed a decree that "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday ["Sabbath," original]. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out [anathema] from Christ." [10] Thus we see that this anti-Jewish sentiment forced the church to make some decided changes in its practice and organization. Also about this time another important movement was seriously affecting the church.

## Gnosticism Prevails

To understand why the church took the attitude it did regarding the day of worship, we must understand something of its condition. Clement and Origen, teachers in the Christian school at Alexandria, were enamored with the Neoplatonic philosophy of Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus. These men believed that the great principles of truth were to be found in all religions. There might be different names of God and expressions of faith, but the fundamental, underlying principles were all the same. Thus they were accepting the tenets of faith of the religions in their midst, and becoming like them.

Doctor Harnack, a church historian, says, "More than any before it, the second century is the century of religious fusion, of 'Theocrasia.' The problem was to include Christianity in this religious fusion, as one element among others, although the chief. The 'Hellenism' which made this endeavor had already attracted to itself all the mysteries, all the philosophy of Eastern worship, elements the most sublime and the most absurd, and by the never-failing aid of philosophical, that is to say, of allegorical interpretation, had spun them all into a glittering web. It now fell upon-I cannot help so expressing it-the Christian religion; it was impressed by the sublime character of this religion; it did reverence to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world; it offered to give up everything that it possessed-all the treasures of its civilization and its wisdom -to this message, if only the message would suffer them to stand. As though endowed with the right to rule, the message was to make its entry into a ready-made theory of the world and religion, and into mysteries already prepared for it. What a proof of the impression which this message made, and what a temptation. This 'Gnosticism'-such is the name this movement has received-strong and active in the plentitude of its religious experiments, established itself under Christ's name, developed a vigorous and abiding feeling for many Christian ideas, sought to give shape to what was still shapeless, to settle accounts with what was externally incomplete, and to bring the whole stream of the Christian movement into its own channels." [11]

"The first stage of any real influx of definitely Greek thought and Greek life is to be fixed at about the year 130. It was then that the religious philosophy of Greece began to effect an entrance, and it went straight to the center of the new religion. It sought to get into inner touch with Christianity, and conversely, Christianity itself held out a hand to this ally." [12]

## Influence of the Jewish War

The second century was an important period in the history of the church. It was a period of great changes, a period when the church was struggling with Gnosticism, and when many of the Gnostic

opinions were entering the church in the Alexandrian area. When did these ideas begin to enter? Harnack says, "The first stage of any real influx of definite Greek thought and Greek life is to be fixed at about the year 130." However, this is just the beginning. It was at the time of the Jewish war that the attitude of the Christian church toward the Jews and their rituals was so seriously changed. This war resulted in the Jews' being driven out of their country, thus causing their ritual service to cease. Following this, a great odium fell upon the Jews. But this state of affairs did not develop in a day. It must have been going on all through the war, which continued intermittently for some twenty years. But at its close the fruition was reached, and Christians of Jewish extraction also suffered with their race. For this reason the Christians tried to make as great difference between themselves and the Jews as possible. And it was because of this that they were forced to change the leadership among the Christians at Jerusalem, which had been the headquarters of the church, from pro-Jew to pro-Gentile bishops. Following this there developed and extended a decided anti-Jewish feeling in the church, with an agitation for Christians to keep as far as possible from Jewish practices.

## **Anti Jewish Sentiment Brings Sunday**

About the time of the Jewish war we hear the first anti Jewish sentiments among the Gnostics. At first the Gnostics were pro-Jewish, but by 135 AD. they considered the Demiurge the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Him they now rejected, and became anti-Jewish.

Just at the time of the Jewish war "the Gnostic, Basilides, taught in Alexandria." And just about that time and at this place we find the first Gnostic sentiments entering the church. Immediately following the Jewish war, or about 140 AD., another Gnostic, Valentinus, left Alexandria and went to Rome and began to teach his doctrines there. His work resulted in numbers' accepting his faith, which seriously affected the church. It might have been as disastrous there as at Alexandria had it not been for the work of Polycarp, a companion and associate of the apostle John. When he heard of the work of Valentinus, he left his home in Asia Minor and went to Rome and "caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretic to the church of God."-Irenaeus, "Against Heretics," book 3, chap. 3.

Before the year 130 AD. we can find no authentic statement for Sunday observance anywhere outside of heathenism.

Soon after this, however, probably between the years 140 and 150 AD., we get our first reference to Sunday as a day of worship in the church, and that from men tinged with Alexandrian Gnostic notions. Philip Schaff says of Justin Martyr, "He may be called, in a loose sense, a Christian Platonist.... From the time of Justin Martyr, the Platonic philosophy continued to exercise a direct and indirect influence upon Christian theology. . . . We can trace it especially in Clement of Alexandria, and Origen." [13] It is from Barnabas and Justin that we get our first sure reference to Sunday as a day of worship, about 140 or 150 AD., and it is from Clement, about 190 AD., that we get our first sure reference to it as the Lord's day. What does all this mean? It means that Sunday observance came into the church from paganism through the influence of Gnosticism.

Williston Walker, professor of church history at Yale University, said, "This Old Catholic Church developed its distinguishing characteristics between 160 and 190." "Thus out of the struggle with Gnosticism and Montanism came the Old Catholic Church." "Here a union of what was best in ancient philosophy, chiefly Platonism and Stoicism, was affected to a degree nowhere else realized in orthodox circles, and the result was a Christian Gnosticism." [14]

While the Catholic Church was developing, it was absorbing these Alexandrian ideas. At first there was strong opposition to it from Asia Minor. But later this Alexandrian influence permeated to the rest of the empire and was adopted into the church. Doctor Harnack says, "The Catholic Church had its origin in the struggle with Gnosticism. It had to pay a heavy price for the victory which kept that tendency at bay; we may almost say that the vanquished imposed their terms upon the victor." [15]

## 9. Sunday in the Third Century

IN our study thus far we have learned that during the first two centuries there developed two separate and distinct types of Christian worship. The one in Syria and Asia Minor held to the old orthodox ways of life, and adhered to the Sabbath and primitive Christianity as handed down by the apostles. The other from Alexandria and Egypt allowed many Gnostic and foreign sentiments to enter, and with them Sunday worship and other foreign practices unknown in the apostolic church and opposed by the early apostles.

Of the men of the latter group who had Gnostic tendencies, there were Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and Clement. This is the group that gives us our first information about Sunday observance. Then, during the last part of the second century a school was established at Alexandria to train ministers and bishops for mission, evangelistic, and pastoral work in the churches. This school had in it men with Gnostic tendencies. The last of that group was Clement, a teacher there, who was imbued with Greek philosophy and Gnostic ideas.

### Origen

Clement's pupil and successor in this school was Origen. He was born during the last half of the second century, and was brought up by Christian parents. He was a great student of philosophy, and attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neoplatonic school of philosophy. He carried the Philonic method of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures to greater lengths than any of the Fathers before him, and developed a conception of God like that of Plotinus, the great Neoplatonist.

Origen shows a bitterness toward the Jews and their ritual similar to that of Barnabas and Justin before him. He objected to Sabbath observance and to the regulations which were in any way like those of the Jews, because he was opposed to interpreting the Scriptures literally. His method of interpretation was the allegorical.

His attitude is shown by the following: "Jesus, then, is the Son of God, who gave the law and the prophets; and we, who belong to the church, do not transgress the law, but have escaped the mythologizing of the Jews, and have our minds chastened and educated by the mystical contemplation of the law and the prophets." [1] 'Was it impious to abstain from corporeal circumcision, and from a literal Sabbath, and literal festivals, and literal new moons, and from clean and unclean meats, and to turn the mind to the good and true and spiritual law of God?' [2]

He believed in the Lord's day, but only in a spiritual way. He wrote, "If it be objected to us on this subject that we ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as for example the Lord's day, the preparation, the Passover, or Pentecost, I have to answer that to the perfect Christian, who is ever in his thoughts, words, and deeds serving his natural Lord, God the Word, all his days are the Lord's and he is always keeping the Lord's day." [3]

"We do not regulate our lives like the Jews, because we are of opinion that the literal acceptance of the laws is not that which conveys the meaning of the legislation." 4

### A Division of Sentiment

But Origen admitted that his opinions were by no means universal in the church, which again confirms what has been said before that the church was divided in its teaching. He says,---Let it be admitted, then, that there are amongst us some who deny that our God is the same as that of the Jews. . . . Let it be admitted also, that there is a third class who call certain persons 'carnal' and others 'spiritual.' Let it be admitted further, that there are some who give themselves out as Gnostics. . . . Let it be admitted, moreover, that there are some who accept Jesus, and who boast on that account of being Christians, and yet would regulate their lives, like the Jewish multitude, in accordance with the Jewish law. " [5] So Origen, another of the teachers at Alexandria, repudiates the Sabbath and everything Jewish.

### Tertullian

Our next man is Tertullian, a lawyer from North Africa. He was born before Origen, but was not converted until the very last of the second century, about the time of Origen. This throws them together as contemporaries in their Christian work, although there was a difference in their ages.

Tertullian was not from Alexandria. He was a lawyer from Carthage and was brought up a Stoic philosopher. In his writings he had a tendency to allegorize the Sabbath, but apparently he observed both Sabbath and Sunday. When writing to Marcion, the Gnostic, he emphasized the importance of the Sabbath, and when writing to the Jews he spiritualized it away. To Marcion he wrote, "Christ did not at all rescind the Sabbath: He kept the law .... He exhibits in a clear light the different kinds of work .... which from the beginning He had been consecrated by the benediction of the Fathers." [6]

When writing to the Jews, he said, "The Jews say, that from the beginning God sanctified the seventh day, by resting on it from all His works which He made; and that thence it was likewise, that Moses said to the people: 'Remember the day of the Sabbaths, to sanctify it; every servile work you shall not do therein, except what pertains unto life.' Whence we (Christians) understand that we still more ought to observe a Sabbath from all servile work always, and not only every seventh day, but through all time." [7] "We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day to be unlawful," [8] but "we make Sunday a day of festivity." [9]

## Alexandrian Influence Extends

Here we now find a man away from Alexandria who reveals Alexandrian characteristics. How can this be accounted for? Evidently the influence of Alexandria is now being felt in other parts. She has existed for a good many years, and is no longer the unheard of and un-influential church that she once was. Her students are now active in other parts as priests and bishops, and her influence has thus been extended and is felt in many places.

The clear line of demarcation between the Alexandrian section of the church and that of the East, so apparent in the second century, is no longer visible. Communication between the different churches with the varying sentiments had been carried on for a hundred years. Students from the Alexandrian school were now bishops in Asia and the East, and in other parts of the empire. Origen himself did considerable traveling and taught for a while in Palestine. During this century Alexandria, which before was obscure, has become popular, and her bishops prominent. This influence has spread, bringing in a more tolerant spirit toward others of different opinions. During this century we find that the Fathers still do not agree, but the differences are no longer sectional. There is considerable opposition to Jewish ritual; yet both Sabbath and Sunday seem to be recognized and observed in most places, with pagan influences and practices becoming apparent.

## The Position of Some Not Clear

During this century we find some few people still standing for the principles upheld by the churches of Asia and the East. But on the whole, there is a modification of the extremes and more of a blending of sentiment. From several of the Fathers it is impossible to learn how they stood on the question of days, for in their writings they do not mention it at all. For example: Hippolytus, a spiritual son of Irenaeus, mentions neither Sabbath nor Sunday. Cyprian, called the Ignatius of the West, writes of a new law and new covenant, but does not mention the Sabbath or Sunday. Dionysius, a pupil of Origen, and later bishop of the church of Alexandria, in a letter to Basilides of Libya, mentions the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week, and speaks of the Sabbath in that connection; then he goes on to the question of fasts, but gives no clue whatsoever as to days of worship. [10]

## The Sabbath Still Kept

The "Apostolic Constitutions" contain a series of regulations for the church. When this was written and by whom, it is not known; but it is supposed to have been drawn up about the third century. I give below a few statements from it on the subject of Sabbath keeping:

"Have before thine eyes the fear of God, and always remember the ten commandments of God.... Thou shalt observe the Sabbath, on account of Him who ceased from His work of creation." [11] "Keep the

Sabbath, and the Lord's day festival; because the former is the memorial of creation, and the latter of the resurrection.” [12]

“Let the slaves work five days; but on the Sabbath day and the Lord's day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction and piety.” [13] This gives some idea of the times and of the practice of observing two days.

In 1841 there was found another document in Syriac which contained mystic sentiments and Gnostic ideas, and mentioned heathen practices. It is supposed to have been written in the last part of the third century, but by whom, no one knows. It is called “The Teaching of the Apostles.” It refers to services on the eve of the Sabbath, and on the first day of the week; and it gives an explanation of why they followed the heathen practice of praying toward the east. I quote, “The apostles therefore appointed: Pray you towards the east: because, 'as the lightning that lightens from the east and is seen even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.' . . . The apostles further appointed: On the first (day) of the week let there be service, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures. . . . The apostles further appointed: On the eve (of the Sabbath), at the ninth hour, let there be service.” [14] This reveals a practice of observing both days, and with it a mingling of deep-seated heathen customs.

## **Gnosticism Seen in Archelaus**

Then there is one more document that has come down to us from the last of the third century, called “The Acts of the Dispute of Archelaus With the Heresiarch Manes.” In this the author says, “As to the assertion that the Sabbath has been abolished, we deny that He has abolished it plainly: for He as Himself also Lord of the Sabbath. . . . And again, He did not actually reject circumcision; but we should rather say that He received in Himself and in our stead the cause of circumcision, relieving us by what He Himself endured, and not permitting us to have to suffer any pain to no purpose.” [15]

Then he expounds the Scriptures, “'Christ, who redeemed us from the curse of the law.' My view of this passage is that Moses, that illustrious servant of God, committed to those who wished to have the right vision, an emblematic law, and also a real law. Thus, to take an example: after God had made the world, and all things that are in it, in the space of six days, He rested on the seventh day from all His work.... Yet in the sequel it, the new law, says, 'My Father works hitherto, and I work.' Does that mean, then, that He is still making heaven, or sun, or man, or animals, or trees, or any such thing? Nay; but the meaning is, that when these visible objects were perfectly finished, He rested from that kind of work; while, however, He still continues to work at objects invisible with an inward mode of action, and saves men. In like manner, then, the legislator desires also that every individual amongst us should be devoted unceasingly to this kind of work, even as God Himself is; and He enjoins us consequently to rest continuously from secular things, and to engage in no worldly sort of work whatsoever; and this is called our Sabbath.” [16]

Such are the ideas of some of the church Fathers by the end of the third century. During the second century Clement and his associates had been conducting a school in Alexandria. This work was continued by Origen, who was imbued with Gnostic ideas and pagan philosophy. All through these years their students were being sent out to take charge of churches in different parts of the empire. By the close of that century we find Alexandrian sentiments manifest in churches everywhere. Then the century closes with Archelaus trying to defend the faith against Manes by using Gnostic arguments.



## 10. Sunday In The Fourth Century

BY the time we reach the fourth century we meet with an effort to bring about uniformity of doctrine and practice in respect to Sunday. At first there was revealed a movement against Sabbath observance and an effort to bring Sunday to prominence. This continued for years. Finally, by the fourth century, there appears an effort to regulate Sunday observance.

### Sunday Regulated

At the Council of Elvira in 305, it was decided that “if any one in the city neglects to come to church for three Sundays, let him be excommunicated for a short time so that he may be corrected.” [1] Sixteen years after that the emperor Constantine passed a law that the people of the empire were to rest on the “venerable day of the sun,” except the people in the country, who might continue the work of planting their crops on that day. [2]

Even as late as the third Synod of Orleans in 538 it was decided that it was a Jewish superstition to say that “it is unlawful to ride or drive on Sunday, or do anything for the decoration of the house or person. But field labors are forbidden, so that people may be able to come to church and worship. If anyone acts otherwise, he is to be punished.” 3

Although during those times people were observing Sunday by worshiping on that day, still the idea that no work should be done had not arisen. Here is Jerome's description of a Sunday at his monastery: ---On the Lord's day only they proceeded to the church beside which they lived, each company following its own mother superior. Returning home in the same order, they then devoted themselves to their allotted tasks, and made garments either for themselves or else for others.” [4]

The councils thus far were regulating church attendance rather than Sunday labor. At Elvira they dealt only with church attendance. Constantine, although he passed a law regarding labor, still allowed people in the country to continue their work on Sunday. At the Synod of Orleans they were commanded to stop work so that they could attend church.

### Anti-Jewish Sentiments

We observed a series of steps in the first three centuries in recognizing Sunday as a day of worship in the church. Then we have another series regulating how it is to be observed. Finally we find another movement accompanying the others an anti-Jewish sentiment which tended to relegate Sabbath observance to the background. This started with the Jewish war and destruction of Jerusalem between the years 115 and 135 AD.

From this point these Gnostic tendencies began to penetrate the church under the Alexandrian influence. It is interesting to note that although Sabbath and Sunday observance continued side by side during the third and fourth centuries, yet the opposition to the Sabbath and the advocacy of Sunday came from men with Gnostic sympathies and tendencies and anti-Jewish feelings.

Here are a few men who opposed the Sabbath:

Cyril of Jerusalem said, “Stand aloof from all observance of Sabbath, and from calling any indifferent meats common or unclean. [5]

Victorinus wrote, “On the seventh day He [God] rested from all His work, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the, former day [the Sabbath] we are accustomed to fast rigorously that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the parasceve 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 hates;' which Sabbath He in His body abolished In Thine eyes, O Lord, a thousand years

are as one day.' Therefore in the eyes of the Lord each thousand of years is ordained, for I find that the Lord's eyes are seven. Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millennium of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign." [6]

John of Damascus wrote: "For the purpose of securing leisure to worship God in order that they might, both servant and beast of burden, devote a very small share to Him and be at rest ' the observance of the Sabbath was devised for the carnal that were still childish and in the bonds of the elements of the world, and unable to conceive of anything beyond the body and the letter." The Sabbath, moreover, is the cessation from sin. "Since the law therefore enjoined that the seventh day should be spent in rest from carnal things and devoted to spiritual things, it was a mystic indication to the true Israelite who had a mind to see God, that he should through all time offer himself to God and rise higher than carnal things." [7]

At the Synod of Laodicea, held about 365 AD., it was decided: "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath in the original], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ," [8]

Still this resolution did not mean that they were to have no more religious services on Sabbath, for at this same synod they passed several laws concerning Sabbath services. Canon 16 reads: "The Gospels are to be read aloud on the Sabbath with the other Scriptures." Canon 49: "During Lent the bread must not be offered except on the Sabbath day and on the Lord's day only."

## **The Sabbath Still Observed**

Although there were many advocating these anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath sentiments for many years, yet in spite of it both Sabbath and Sunday continued to be observed in most places down to the close of the fourth century.

Gregory of Nyssa, in Asia, writes, ---It was now past six o'clock, and the bath had been well prepared, and the banquet was being spread and the day was the Sabbath, and a martyr's commemoration." [9]

John Cassius, the great missionary to Gaul, wrote, "There are no public services among them in the day except on Saturday and Sunday, when they meet together at the third hour for the purpose of holy communion." [10]

Chrysostom said, "There are many among us now who fast on the same day as the Jews, and keep the Sabbaths in the same manner; and we endure it nobly, or rather, ignobly and basely." [11]

Socrates, the historian of that time, wrote, "Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Lord's supper] on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians at Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this." [12]

And Sozomen, a contemporary, confirms this by saying, "The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome, or at Alexandria." [13]

## **Many False Impressions Given**

In view of this information, how can people say that Sabbath observance was done away-with by the apostle Paul? Here we have all this evidence that in spite of strong opposition' that grew in force as the years went by, the Sabbath continued to be observed. At the close of the fourth century two of the great historians who lived at that time stated that it was observed everywhere, with two notable exceptions, Alexandria and Rome. Why these exceptions? As it happens, these are the two cities in which the Gnostic and radical elements were so strong. We have already shown how this was the case at Alexandria. Now what about Rome? The great Gnostic, Valentinus, went to Rome and labored for several years during the second century. This led Polycarp of Asia to follow and reclaim many who were led astray by him. After this Justin Martyr went there and labored for some years. Then Marcion, another leading Gnostic, and finally Plotinus--- the great Neoplatonist, went to Rome. This will explain the similarity of practice in the two cities.

## How the Sabbath Was Finally Eliminated

How was it that the Sabbath was finally obliterated? We have noticed that its opponents were always anti-Jewish Gnostics. The great leaders of Gnosticism were men from Alexandria and Rome. We have learned that their influence was so strong that these two cities led the world in their opposition to the Sabbath, while the rest were still observing it.

Now the situation so shaped itself that during the fourth and fifth centuries, when the great church councils were in progress, the two cities which had the greatest influence were these two cities Alexandria and Rome. Now if these two cities had already ceased to observe the Sabbath at that time, and they were the ones having the greatest influence in the world, no doubt this accounts for the final elimination of Sabbath observance from the church in other places. At any rate, 'BY the eighth century the Alexandrian theology was accepted by the whole Christian world, east and west.' [14] Then when the Alexandrian theology was accepted everywhere, naturally Sabbath observance ceased to have a place in the church.

## 11. Pagan and Christian Rituals

THERE are a few other questions that should be considered, while we are studying the introduction of Sunday observance. How did Easter and Christmas get into the church? Who introduced the use of holy water, the worship of the virgin, etc? We look in vain for these at the time of the apostles. It is a well-attested fact that the Christian church today has many practices, ceremonies, and beliefs that were foreign to the church at the time of Christ and the apostles. Therefore they did not come from the apostles. From where did they come? Professor Sayce answers, "We are the religious heirs of the builders and founders of the Egyptian temples. Many of the theories of Egyptian religion, modified and transformed no doubt, have penetrated into the theology of Christian Europe, and form, as it were, part of the woof in the web of modern religious thought. Christian theology was largely organized and nurtured in the schools of Alexandria!" [1]

In our study of these practices and customs, we shall find among the heathen in the empire in the early days of the Christian Era customs such as we find practiced by Christians in the church at a later time.

### Easter

In the time of the apostles there was no Easter service such as we have today. The early church celebrated the Passover of the Jews, but not Easter. The very name "Easter" indicates a foreign and heathen ancestry. In those early times there was celebrated in the empire a great heathen festival in honor of spring, personified by Attis, very similar to the Easter of a later time.

Professor Franz Cumont says, "The Emperor Claudius introduced a new cycle of holidays that were celebrated from March 15th to March 27th, the beginning of spring at the time of the revival of vegetation, personified in Attis.... On March 25th there was a sudden transition from the shouts of despair to a delirious jubilation, the Hilaria. With springtime Attis awoke from his sleep of death, and the joy created by his resurrection burst out in wild merrymaking, wanton masquerades, and luxurious banquets.... Under a constant rain of flowers the silver statue of Cybele was taken to the river Almo and bathed and purified according to an ancient rite." [2] This ceremony, many believe, had a profound effect on the establishment of the Easter season, coming as it did about the time of the Jewish Passover and the resurrection of Christ.

### Christmas

There was no Christmas celebration in the early church.

The Roman winter solstice.... as celebrated on December 25 in connection with the worship of the sun-god Mithra, appears to have been instituted in this special form by Aurelian about 273 AD., and to this festival the day owes its apposite name of "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun." With full symbolic appropriateness, though not with historical justification, the day was adopted in the Western Church, where it appears to have been generally introduced by the fourth century, and whence in time it passed to the Eastern Church as the solemn anniversary of the birth of Christ, Christmas Day. As a matter of history no valid or even consistent early Christian tradition vouches for it! " [3] Chrysostom says that Christmas was introduced into the East about 378 AD.

### The Priestly Ritual and Holy Water

In the pagan Egyptian service and ritual we have practically a counterpart of the service in the Christian church during the Middle Ages, and perhaps the very ritual that was taken over. Professor Dill writes, "The daily ritual of Isis, which seems to have been as regular and complicated as that of the Catholic Church, produced an immense effect on the Roman mind.

Every day there were two solemn offices, at which white-robed, tonsured priests, with acolytes and assistants of every degree, officiated. The morning litany and sacrifice was an impressive service. The crowd of worshipers thronged the space before the chapel at the early dawn. The priest ascending by a

hidden stairs, drew apart the veil of the sanctuary, and offered the holy image to their adoration. He then made the round of the altars, reciting the litany, and sprinkling the holy water 'from the secret spring.' [4]

## **The Mother and Child Cult in Egypt**

We hear nothing about the "Queen of Heaven, the Mother of God," in the early days of the church. The first we hear of this is in connection with Isis and Horus, the mother and son in the Egyptian religion. But in the early part of the fourth century the church was shaken to its foundation over the question of "Mary, the mother of God," which was urged on the church by Egyptian leaders of the church. This resulted in a split in the church and the banishing of Nestorius, who refused to subscribe to that theology. Here is the origin of these ideas, according to the noted scholar, Flinders Petrie, who wrote, "The most popular form of Isis in the later centuries ... was that of Isis the Mother nursing Horus the Child.... Thus we see that there had been growing for many centuries an ardent devotion to the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of God, the Patroness of sailors in Italy, and thence over all the Roman world. In the third and fourth centuries this worship was especially directed to the type of the mother and son. Then in the fifth century the names utterly disappear; and immediately there appears devotion hitherto entirely unknown in Christianity, a devotion to precisely the same figures with the same attributes, but with other names. The transformation is unmistakable. The new importation into Christianity was Isis and Horus, whose names alone had been banished." [5] "And Isis' devotees passed quietly over to the worship of another mother." [6]

We might continue quite at length in showing the similarity of religious forms in the Oriental worship at the beginning of the Christian Era to those of the later Christian church. But that seems to be pretty well understood. There were the great ascetics in the Hindu religion, and monks with shaven crowns, and the rosary. There was the burning of candles in the worship of Mithra, the sun god, with mysteries in the service, and all sorts of ritual similar to that of the church of a later time, but unknown at the time of the apostles. How did these get into the church? Not from the apostles or their immediate successors. They came when the church opened its doors to Gnosticism and heathenism. At that time and from this same group came Sunday observance into the church, for sun worship and Sunday observance were also prevalent in the Roman world at that time.

## 12. Heathen Customs and the Church

WE have learned that Alexandria became the melting pot for the various philosophies and religions of the East. At this place these religions had a great influence upon the Christian church, and men in the church there accepted the tenets of those religions. When the emperor Hadrian visited that place, he said that even the bishops of the church worshiped Serapis, and all the people were astrologers and soothsayers. At this place Clement and Origen, teachers in the school in which ministers and priests were trained, were enamored with Neoplatonic philosophy and believed there was much good in all religions. At first the men of the East sounded an alarm against this thing, and it seems that they were, for the greater part of the century, to quite an extent successful. Still the

Gnostics were at work in other parts. Valentinus went from Alexandria to Rome and succeeded in gaining a considerable following. Polycarp followed him from Asia there, and Irenaeus says, "He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus, caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles." [1]

### Heathen Ideas Enter the Church

For a time the East was able to counteract this influence, but when bishops and preachers like Dionysius, Gregory Thaumaturgus (the Wonder-Worker), and scores of others were poured out from this school to take charge of the churches, their influence spread through the churches every where. The marvels of the work of Gregory have often been mentioned-how he began work in a church in Pontus with only seventeen members, and in a few years the whole country except seventeen were Christians. How was this accomplished? "When Gregory perceived that the ignorant multitude persisted in their idolatry, on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoy at the pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures." [2]

How many other teachers there were like this we do not know, but undoubtedly there were some; and as time went on there probably were many. And "crowds of ignorant, undisciplined heathen were flocking into the church, bringing their heathen taint with them." [3] Therefore, "it was inevitable that many persons steeped in that world of ideas and coming under the influence of the gospel should try to combine the two things."

### The Church Bishops Teach Pagan Philosophy

Not only were the masses coming into the church from heathenism still retaining their tainted notions and holding to their old practices, but also the leaders were delving into heathen philosophies and adopting pagan ways. "There was in the third and fourth centuries so much friendly interchange of ideas between Christians and pagans, especially at Alexandria, that, as Harnack has recently shown, there is very little difference between Porphyry and his Christian contemporaries in their general view of life and duty.... Basil and the two Gregories are full of Plotinian ideas. But it is with Augustine that the stream of Neoplatonic influence flows strongly into Christian theology. Augustine was converted first to Platonism and came through Platonism to Christianity." [5] "St. Augustine declares in his 'Confessions,' that at the time when he was a Manichean, he regarded Jesus only as the son of the sun." [6]

Doctor Milinan, in speaking of the Manicheans, one branch of Gnostics, says; ---The Christ, the first afflux of the God of Light, would have been defined by the Manichean as in the Nicene creed, as Light of Light; He was self-subsistent, endowed with all the perfect attributes of the Deity, and His dwelling was in the sun. He was the Mithra of the Persian system; and the Manichean doctrine was Zoroastrianism under Christian appellations.... Prayers addressed to the sun, or at least with their faces directed to that tabernacle in which Christ dwell hymns to the great principle of light, exhortations to subdue the dark and sensual elements within, and the study of the marvelous book of Mani, constituted their devotion! [7]

Edwyn Bevan says of Augustine, "He is the child of the past, awakened to spiritual aspirations by Cicero, steeped to his fingers' ends in Virgil, upon whom the right heritage of old pagan philosophy has come, and whom it stimulates to original thought. And then this same man became the Christian doctor

who, according to Harnack, more than any other one man, shaped the theology and ruled the ecclesiastical practice of Western Europe in the Middle Ages.” “Now we see how the Christian belief has been grafted on to a Platonic stock.” [8]

Instead of the great mass of practices in the church coming from Christ, we learn that “the Christian Platonists of Alexandria led the way.... It is no paradox to say, with Eucken, that the pagan Plotinus has left a deeper mark upon Christian thought than any other single man.” [9]

We learn that this Neoplatonism of Clement, Origen, and Augustine has left a greater mark upon Christianity than anything else. Professor Cumont says, “Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neoplatonism insisted still more emphatically upon the sacred character of the luminary [the sun], which is the ever-present image of the intelligible God.” [10]

## **Comparison of “Son” and “Sun”**

How was it possible for all these changes to take place, and the church members to follow these strange customs and still call themselves Christians? Professor Cumont answers, “The ecclesiastical writers reviving a metaphor of the prophet Malachi, contrasted the Sun of justice with the Invincible Sun, and consented to see in the dazzling orb which illuminated men a symbol of Christ, 'the light of the world. [11]

Notice this in the “Hymn on the Nativity,” by a Christian, Ephraim Syrus: “The Sun revealed in silence his worshipers to his Lord; it was grievous to him, a servant, to be worshiped instead of the Lord. Lo, creation is glad, that the Creator is worshiped.... When fools did reverence to the sun, in reverence to him they disgraced him. But now when all know he is a servant, in his course his Lord is worshiped.” [12] “The day of the All-Lightening exults in his birth; a pillar of radiance which drives away, by its beams, the works of darkness. After the type of that day. . . . the radiance of our Savior's birth, came in to sunder the darkness that was on the heart!” [13]

It was the custom of the Egyptians to worship the sun in the east in the morning; and the Persians prostrated themselves before it as it rose. Tacitus tells of this practice in Vespasian's army when that general was conducting his conquest of the East. [14] But as early as the time of Tertullian the Christians were doing the same thing; but they used this excuse: Some -believe that the sun is our god. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you also under pretense sometimes of worshiping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury. [15]

## **Bible Quoted in Defense of Worship Toward the East**

The records indicate that during the time of the apostles the Romans were following the customs of the Egyptians and Persians of worshiping the sun as it rose in the morning, and were also recognizing Sunday as of special importance. We also see that the church at Alexandria was the first (it was later followed in other parts) to follow the same custom. As a result, they were accused of following pagan customs, which necessitated an explanation. Tertullian, about 240 AD. acknowledged this similarity, but was unable to give a satisfactory reason for it. A century or so later the reason given was, “The apostles therefore appointed; Pray ye towards the east, because 'as the lightning that lightens from the east and is seen even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. [16] Shortly after this, John of Damascus said, “It is not without reason or by chance that we worship towards the east.... Since, therefore, God is spiritual -light, and Christ is called in the Scriptures, Sun of Righteousness and Dayspring, the east is the direction that must be assigned to His worship.” [17]

The very fact that these people were following the pagan practice of worshiping toward the east at sunrise like their neighbors, and recognizing Sunday, as they did, without giving adequate reason for the practice, and later gave reasons so divergent, strongly indicates that the practice came from another source than Christian. And then when we take into consideration the fact that Clement, the great teacher in the Christian school at Alexandria, where ministers and bishops were trained for their gospel work, actually believed that the worship of the heavenly bodies was not only legitimate, but really beneficial to mankind, we may be able to understand something of how this practice came into the church.

And Gregory Thaumaturgus (the Wonder-Worker) says of Origen, Clement's successor there, “To

secure us against falling into the unhappy experience of most [people], he did not introduce us to any one exclusive school of philosophy; nor did he judge it proper for us to go away with any single class of philosophical opinions, but he introduced us to all, and determined that we should be ignorant of no kind of Grecian doctrine. And he himself went on with us, preparing the way before us and leading us by the hand as on a journey.” [18]

Such was the instruction given by the great teachers in the school of Alexandria. Is it at all strange, then, that the people who came in from heathen faiths continued in many of their old ideas and practices? And when the great influential rulers accepted Christianity, crowds of half-converted pagans swarmed into the church where they found practices very similar to those in their heathen temples. Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn says that when Constantine accepted the Christian faith, “heathenism seemed to be annihilated at one blow, and now the heathen crowded in multitudes into the church.” [19]

He describes the religion of Constantine as follows, “He had not yet completely broken with heathenism, and his personal convictions contained a medley of heathen and Christian elements.” “The soldiers were conducted into the open country and there held a service of peculiar kind, but one entirely characteristic of the time of transition. It was not heathen, but it was also not as yet thoroughly Christian. . . . The general observance of Sunday wove a very firm bond between the life of the people and Christianity.... In this period many things not germane to Christianity, many plainly heathenish, existed side by side with Christianity.” [20]

## **The Conclusion**

And Professor Cumont adds, “In the fifth century, not only heretics, but even faithful followers, were still wont to bow their heads toward its dazzling disc [the sun] as it rose above the horizon, and to murmur the prayer, 'Have mercy upon US.’” [21]

Tertullian may have desired to justify his church for the practice of worshiping toward the east, and endeavored to explain that they were not following heathen practice in so doing; yet the results in the end were heathen practice and heathen worship, simple, clear, and unadulterated.

And only a few years after this it was necessary for the state to pass laws concerning this. “A later decree issued by Justinian, probably in 531, threatens the punishment of death upon those who continue as pagans after having received baptism.” [22]



## **13. How Sunday Came Into the Church**

WITH all the evidence that there is to the contrary, it seems strange that so many have taught that the Sabbath was not observed in the early church. Why have so many tried to teach us that another day was instituted by the apostles to take the place of the Sabbath when there is not a single statement to that effect by any of the disciples, and no well-authenticated historical statement by any writer in Palestine or Asia Minor before the close of the second century? The facts are that, as long as they lived, the disciples always observed the Sabbath as a regular custom, and this custom was followed by their immediate successors. It was observed by the great mass of Christians all through the first, second, and third centuries, in spite of the effort on the part of certain centers to overthrow it. Even down to the latter part of the fourth century, almost all churches throughout the world celebrated the Sabbath every week, except Rome and Alexandria, according to two of the great early historians, Socrates and Sozomen.

### **Reasons for Divergence**

Why did not these two places follow the custom of the rest of the churches? Was there any special situation there that might account for this? Remember, it was at Alexandria that Gnosticism and heathen practices began to enter the church, and it was here that we first heard of Sunday observance among Christians. Here Basilides, the great Gnostic, taught about the time of the great Jewish war, and here about that time we find the first anti-Jewish sentiments and opposition to Jewish customs of every kind.

From this place Valentinus, another Gnostic, went to Rome and gained many followers. Following this, Plotinus, a companion of Origen, and a great advocate of Neoplatonism, went to Rome and taught for several years. Marcion, another Gnostic, taught in Rome for years. Also Justin Martyr, whose teaching was tinged with Gnostic ideas, went to Rome and taught for some time. More than that, all the men for the first two centuries whose writings have been authenticated beyond question, and who opposed the Sabbath and favored Sunday observance, were men who were sympathetic with Gnosticism and who had anti-Jewish prejudice.

What started this peculiar sentiment against the Jews? About the year 135 AD. an unsuccessful Jewish revolution was crushed and the Jews were driven out of their land and not permitted again to return. Immediately following this we see the church beginning to adjust itself to meet this new situation and to make a strong distinction between Christians and Jews, and a determined effort to keep as far away as possible from Jewish practices. Then there developed a strong antipathy toward everything Jewish, both in the church and among the Gnostics. About this time we hear the first opposition to the Sabbath and arguments in favor of Sunday observance; and this from men sympathetic with Gnostic notions. While this was going on at Alexandria, there developed a strong opposition to these Gnostics in Asia Minor. The men from this section held to the teaching of the apostles as a basis of their faith, and opposed anything not taught by them.

### **Reason for Opposition to Sabbath**

But the church at Alexandria took a very different attitude, and allowed many with Gnostic and strange doctrines to remain in the church. A school was established at Alexandria in which ministers were taught and from which they were sent out to all parts of the empire. The teachers in this school were sympathetic with Gnosticism; consequently their students, as they went out, carried these sentiments everywhere. After this, we find the question of the day of worship somewhat in dispute, but both days are observed in most places, except in Alexandria and Rome. These two places refused to observe the Sabbath. And as we come to the close of the fourth century, at these two places alone, according to two historians then living, the Sabbath was not recognized as a day of worship.

There is also another consideration. It is a well-attested fact that there are a great many practices, beliefs, and ceremonies in the church today that were foreign to the early apostles and to Jesus. So far as the records show, they knew nothing about Christmas, Easter, images, holy water, Sunday, etc.. From where did these come? Not from the apostles. However, we find these things at the time of Christ in the heathen religions of the Roman Empire. And later we see these same strange practices coming into the church and finally adopted as a part of its ritual.

We have shown to quite an extent the similarity of the Oriental religions to the later Christian church. There was the great Easter festival of the Phrygians; and Christmas, the birthday of Mithra, the Mother and Son of Egypt; and the ritual of priest and holy water. There were the great ascetics in the Hindu religion, monks with shaven crowns, and the rosary. We find the burning of candles in the worship of Mithra, with its mysteries in the service, and all sorts of ritual which it seems apparent the Christian church took over in its own service.

## **Strange Practices in the Church**

The fact remains that a great part of our Christian practice, and many of our present Christian doctrines, were unknown in the days of the apostles. In tracing the origin of many of these things, we find them prevalent in the Oriental religions of that time. We have also traced certain pagan notions and tendencies that gradually came into the church. Now in studying the history of the church during the first century, we find nothing that we can rely upon concerning the practice of Sunday observance at that time. And in the second century we find nothing from the writings of the men of Asia and the East about any practice of it there. The first ones who give us any clear and definite statements concerning it are the spurious Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Clement, and Origen. These are all from Alexandria, the center of Gnosticism. From here we find these practices coming into the church, and with them the recognition of Sunday.

Therefore I must conclude that this-Alexandria and its Gnosticism-should be considered the origin of our Christian Sunday.

## **The Church's Part in the Change of Days**

In view of what has been presented, the question may arise in the minds of some as to what part the church acted in the introduction of Sunday as a day of worship in place of the Sabbath. The simplest answer is that the early church apostatized from the pure truth of the gospel soon after the passing of the apostles, by allowing practices and beliefs of paganism to find an entrance into the Christian economy. So long as the apostles lived, and in the sections of the country in which the church shunned heathen practices, we find no indications of Sunday observance in the early church. But the literature of the early church clearly indicates that sun worship and Sunday observance go hand in hand in one form or another. As soon as, and wherever, the church became sympathetic toward heathen practices and allowed them to enter among its adherents, there always came Sunday observance and symptoms of sun worship in some form. As time went on and men like Gregory the Wonder-Worker, permitted half-converted members to practice in the church the idolatrous rites to which they- had been accustomed in heathenism, and "crowds of ignorant, undisciplined heathen were flocking into the church, bringing their heathen taints with them," it was inevitable that many of - these would try to combine the two practices.

This method of dovetailing and blending heathen practices in the Christian ritual continued to go on stealthily and quietly for many years. As this continued, the church moved farther and farther toward heathen ways until finally, in the early part of the fourth century, the emperor Constantine favored, and nominally accepted, Christianity. Then, Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn says, "Heathenism seemed to be annihilated at one blow, and now the heathen crowded in multitudes into the church." [1]

About this time, in the fourth century, there were certain liberal-minded men who claimed the Lord's day to be of more importance than the Sabbath. Eusebius, one of them and a great friend of the emperor Constantine, said, "All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day."

From this time on there seems to be a definite effort to discredit the Sabbath and to exalt Sunday as a day of worship. Church councils and civil enactments added their power to the support of the new day, as later church history so abundantly testifies. But strictly speaking, the councils did not change the day of worship. That would have been impossible. They simply recognized what the church was already doing in practice, and endeavored to justify and strengthen their position.

Later, we find Pope Gregory the Great laying it down with authority that "to 'cause the Sabbath to be kept from work' is a mark of Judaizing and a 'sign of anti-Christ.'" [2]

This defense of the Sunday Sabbath by the Catholic Church has continued down through the

centuries to our own time, Now the Roman Catholic Church boldly claims that she is responsible for the change of days, and points to this change as a mark of her authority in religious things.

The Roman Catholic "Doctrinal Catechism," by the Rev. Stephen Keenan, reads:

---Question-Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"Answer - Had she not such power, she could, not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her-she could not have instituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." [3]

Thus we see that there was a constant movement of heathen ideas into the church in the early centuries. With these ideas came also sun worship and Sunday observance. As the heathen philosophers and rulers nominally accepted the Christian religion, and great masses of partially converted heathen crowded into the churches, these practices increased until they predominated throughout the Christian world. Then when the leaders in their councils placed their stamp of approval upon these practices, they became fixed in the church. Later when these leaders realized what had taken place, they began to eliminate some of the grosser heathen practices, but permitted many of the ritualistic forms to remain. Sunday observance, therefore, is a remnant of an ancient ritualistic heathen practice adopted into the church and finally fully authorized by councils and popes.

# Appendix

## The Epistles of Ignatius

THE great scholar, J. B. Lightfoot, says, "The Ignatian question is the most perplexing which confronts the students of earlier Christian history. Contemporary Review, Vol. XXV, P. 339.

Mrs. E. S. Armitage says, "The name of Ignatius has long been associated with one of the most perplexing of all the controversies which obscure the history of the second century. His letters, the only monuments which he has left behind, have been challenged and defended, pulled down and built up, till a mass of literature has grown up around them, whose bulk is great enough to daunt any but the most stouthearted of students." - Sunday Magazine, Vol. V, p. 238.

Why is this such a perplexing, and, at the same time, so important a problem? It is important because Ignatius lived during the last years of the first century and the first years of the second. Hence his life reaches back and overlaps that of the last of the apostles and connects us up with New Testament times. It is perplexing because his letters have been so interpolated that no one is absolutely sure of what he wrote.

At the time of the Reformation there were fifteen epistles extant containing the name of Ignatius as their author. In the year 1644 AD., Bishop Ussher found two recensions of Ignatian letters which contained only the seven epistles mentioned by Eusebius, and these were in a shorter form than those that had been known before that time. Following this, Vossius and others found more copies like those found by Ussher.

Further perplexity was thrown into this question just before the middle of the nineteenth century when two Syriac manuscripts of the Ignatian letters were found and published by William Cureton. These contained only three letters-to the Ephesians, to the Romans, and to Polycarp-and these in a much shorter form than the shorter Greek recension. Then the question arose, Which of these are the real epistles that Ignatius wrote? Both the internal and the external evidence show clearly that eight of the epistles that were in use during Reformation times were forgeries. Scholars have now so agreed and have rejected them as such.

Now the question seems to rest between the other groups as to which are the true Ignatian letters, the three Syriac of Cureton or the seven Greek Vossian ones. During the forty years immediately following the finding of the Syriac group there were arguments both for and against each group. About 1875 Doctor Lightfoot wrote, "Those who maintain the genuineness of the Ignatian epistles, in one or other of the two forms, may be said to be almost evenly divided on this question of priority. While Cureton and Bunsen and Ritschl and Ewald and Weiss accept the Curetonian letters, Uhlhorn and Denzinger and Petermann and Hefele and Jacobson and Zahn still adhere to the Vossian."-Contemporary Review, Vol. XX V, p. 340.

"Unless, therefore, really solid objections can be urged, we are bound by all ordinary laws of literary evidence to accept as genuine at all events the shortest form in which these epistles are presented to us. In other words, the Curetonian letters at least must be received. And as these satisfy all the quotations and references of the second and third centuries (though not those of Eusebius in the first half of the fourth), perhaps not more is required by external testimony."-Id., P. 355.

"As regards style, the Curetonian letters are more rugged and forcible than the Vossian; but as selected excerpts they might perhaps be expected to exhibit these features prominently.

"For the reasons given I shall, unless I am shown to be wrong, treat the Curetonian letters as the work of the genuine Ignatius, while the Vossian letters will be accepted as valid testimony at all events for the middle of the second century. The question of the genuineness of the latter will be waived."-Id., P. 358.

A few years after this, however, Doctor Lightfoot came out with a series of articles on the Ignatian epistles. In these he took a strong position in favor of the Vossian group of seven. In fact, his position was so strong that a large number of scholars have gone no farther in their investigation of this question, but have since relied upon his findings and conclusions. Since he has given the strongest arguments yet produced in favor of this group, I herewith list his principal points.

1. Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians mentions the letters of Ignatius. As "letters" is in the plural, he concludes there must have been seven.

2. As Polycarp mentions that the letters were written to us, and as Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, he concludes that the Smyrnian letter (one of the seven) should be included in the list of Ignatian epistles.
3. In this same letter Polycarp says, "Both you and Ignatius wrote to me that if anyone went into Syria he should carry your letters with him." -"Epistle to the Philippians," Vol. I, chap. XIII. As the longer Vossian epistle mentions "letters," and the shorter Syriac does not, he concludes the longer must have been the ones in existence in Polycarp's time.
4. A heathen by the name of Lucian about 165 AD., gave the story of the arrest of an individual in very similar language to that used in the longer Vossian group. The parallel to this experience is not recorded in the Syriac recension.
5. Another argument is that quotations are made from the epistles of Ignatius by Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius.
6. He says Eusebius referred to the Vossian group of seven two hundred years before the Syriac was produced.
- 7.---When he [Eusebius] is acquainted with any spurious or doubtful works ascribed to the same author, he is careful to mention the fact. Here there is nothing of the kind. He enumerates the seven epistles alone; and of these he speaks without a shadow of misgiving."--Edinburgh Review. Vol. CLXIV, p. 118.
8. The Armenian Version has the seven made from the Syriac, not the Greek. "Where they cover the same ground they agree absolutely." So he concluded that the original Syriac must have contained seven letters, not three.
9. He claims that there must have been an abridgment from the seven that produced the three epistles in a shorter form. "The abridgment theory is simple," he says, whereas the interpolation theory is very difficult because the forger would have been obliged to have before him the Greek and the Syriac to satisfy the interpolation theory.

These are the points that Lightfoot produced in favor of the Vossian, or as he calls it, the middle group, of Ignatian epistles. Because of Lightfoot's learning and standing as a scholar, the average person leaves the matter about where he concludes. However, there is very little material that either Lightfoot or anyone else can have access to in checking up the work of Ignatius, and that material is just as accessible to us as to the great scholars. Also, learned professors are just as liable to be biased in their conclusions as anyone else. Consequently it seems to me that we are fully justified in carefully reviewing the points given and the arguments produced.

1. He says Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians mentions the letters of Ignatius; "letters" being in the plural, he therefore concluded that there must have been seven. I cannot see how it would necessarily follow that there were seven. Any number above one would be sufficient to fulfil] these specifications; the Syriac group had three.

2. It is further contended that Polycarp says these letters were written to us. As Polycarp was bishop of the Smyrnian church, he concludes that the Smyrnian letter must have been included, which was not in the Syriac group. Why would Polycarp necessarily be alluding to the Smyrnian church? Was it not just as possible for him to be referring to all the Christians, or to all the presbyters, as it was for him to be referring to one specific church?

3. It is still further urged, however, that Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians mentions the epistles Ignatius sent to "us" and others which we sent to you. It is concluded that since so many are mentioned there must have been more than three. In the thirteenth chapter of Polycarp's letter this is alluded to. It reads, "Tas epistolas Ignatiou tas pemftheisas hamin hup' autou, kai allas hosas eikomen Par' hamin, epempsamem hummin, kathos eneteilasthe." This translated literally would read. "The epistles of

Ignatius, those having been sent to us by him, and others as many as we have by us, we have sent to you as you commanded.” I cannot see how this necessarily alludes to more than three Ignatian epistles. ' The epistles of Ignatius are mentioned as having been sent to us by him. That might include any number from three on. Then there were others besides that. These might have been other epistles written by someone else which they sent on to the Philippians. Even Lightfoot says, “Though the words 'tas epistolas tas Pernftheisas hamin hup' autou' might be satisfied by the single letter to Polycarp in the short recension, yet they are much more natural and appropriate as referring to the two letters the one to the Smyrnians, the other to Polycarp himself-which are found in the middle form.”-”The Apostolic Fathers,” by J. B. Lightfoot, Vol. I, part two, P. 275. Macmillan and Company, London. 1885.

It is further urged that chapter 8 of the Ignatian letter to the Philippians in the Vossian group, mentions the sending of letters, whereas in the shorter it does not. The Syrian reads, “I salute him who is reckoned worthy to go to Antioch in my stead, as I commanded thee.” The Greek of the same chapter reads, “Such as are able to do so sending messengers, and the others transmitting letters to those persons who are sent by thee.” Although the epistle mentions letters, it says nothing about those of Ignatius. No one could gather from this the information that is implied in Polycarp's letter. I cannot see how that latter fulfills the specifications any more than does the Syriac recension.

4. “But the most powerful testimony is derived from the representations of a heathen writer. The Christian career of Peregrinus must have fallen within the reign of Antoninus Pitis (138-161 AD.). Thus it is not very far removed, in point of time, from the age of Ignatius. This Peregrinus is represented by Lucian, writing immediately after his death (165 AD.), as being incarcerated for his profession of Christianity, and the satirist thus describes the prison scene: 'When he was imprisoned the Christians . . . left no stone unturned in the attempt to rescue him. . . . Moreover, there came from certain cities in Asia deputies sent by the Christian communities to assist and advise and console the man.' The singular correspondence in this narrative with the account of Ignatius combined with some striking coincidences of expression, have led to the opinion that Lucian was acquainted with the Ignatian history, if not with the Ignatian letters. “-Contemporary Review, Vol. XXV, p. 350.

It is true that this account is riot in the Syriac recension. But why should it be? There is nothing in the writings of Ignatius that would require it. Is it not possible for a forger to lie familiar enough with the times to write an experience true to life? Farrar, in his “Lives of the Fathers,” says that Harnack has “;et aside the relevance of Lucian's supposed allusions. His belief in their genuineness rests primarily upon Polycarp! James Hastings, in the Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, says, “Whether Lucian, the satirist. . . was thinking of Ignatius or even had direct knowledge of his letters is a point on which one hesitates to decide. “Vol. 1, P. 597, 1916 ed.

5. Lightfoot further mentions “the seven epistles by a long series of writers beginning with Irenaeus and Origen in the second and third centuries” and carries us on through to Eusebius, and concludes that there must have been seven. Farrar says the writers who substantiate the Ignatian epistles are Polycarp, Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius. James Hastings says, “The seven epistles of Ignatius are attested, as we have said. first by the epistle of Polycarp, and then at the beginning of the fourth century by Eusebius.” The facts are, somewhere in this beginning of forgeries there came into the writings of Ignatius material which he had never produced. When this was no one seems to know. However, instead of the references just produced proving the Vossian group, it seems to me the opposite is the case. The only quotations of Ignatius by any of the early Fathers are from the shortest Syriac group. There is not a single reference to any of the other epistles until the time of Eusebius in the fourth century. Why he refers to others is another question. But he was the first one to intimate that there might have been more than three epistles.

6. It is further mentioned that Eusebius referred to just the seven Vossian epistles two hundred years before the Syriac: was produced, or at least was known. It is possible that this is so. But it is also possible that the translator of the Syriac knew that the other four of the epistles were forged, and consequently, and for that reason, left them out of his recension. At least the controversy was on in regard to the number of epistles a long time ago, for the epistle to the Romans in the Syriac recension concludes with the words, “Here end the three epistles of Ignatius, bishop and martyr.” Evidently, away back in the early times somewhere there was a contention about the epistles, and someone wanted the people to know that Ignatius wrote just the three epistles.

7. One of the strongest reasons given by Lightfoot and others for holding to the Vossian seven is the fact that Eusebius mentions them. Lightfoot says, "When he [Eusebius] is acquainted with any spurious or doubtful works ascribed to the same author, he is careful to mention the fact. Here there is nothing of the kind. He enumerates the seven epistles alone; and of these he speaks without a shadow of misgiving."--*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. CLXI 7, P. 118. Great confidence seems to be felt in Eusebius. In the first place we should remember that there were more than two hundred years between the death of Ignatius and that of Eusebius, which gives ample time for many and great changes to have taken place. We should also remember that many changes did take place at this time. It was during this period that great apostasies arose and false teachings came into the church, seriously affecting many of its adherents. Then there is danger of placing too much confidence in Eusebius. We all recognize the great work he did in writing a history of the Christian church; yet he was a man subject to like passions and frailties as we are.

He was far from being orthodox. He was a great friend of Constantine and favorable to the Arian faction at the Council of Nicea. He it was who later induced Constantine to modify the actions of this council. He does show bias in his writings, for, in spite of the fact that Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, Origen, Hippolytus, and practically all the early Fathers state that the apostle John was the author of the book of Revelation; yet when Dionysius, in opposition to chiliasm and in trying to nullify the effects of the book, speaks of another John as its author, Eusebius conveys the same impressions. That is not impartial history. That was put in in spite of all the writings of all the other Fathers, a position that is now accepted by the great mass of modern scholars in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. Dr. N. B. Stonehouse, in his doctor's dissertation, "The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church," says. "Eusebius came under the spell of this theology (the antichiliasm of Dionysius) through teachers who had been disciples of Origen. . . . The prominence which Eusebius gives to the criticism of Dionysius upon the Apocalypse by devoting to it an entire chapter in his Ecclesiastical History is motivated by more than historical interest."--Page 131. "This hesitating attitude can only mean that Eusebius was at odds with the church. Personally he is quite ready to classify it [the Apocalypse] with the spurious works, but in deference to its acceptance as canonical not only in the West but also by the leading teachers in the East, including Origen, he places it also among the undisputed books. . . . It is no wonder, then, that it is generally admitted that Eusebius was dogmatically biased in much the same way as Dionysius, and was quite ready to destroy the influence of the Apocalypse in the church."--Id., p. 133. This is the way he did it. He did it by degrading it to the level of the disputed catholic epistles. "After all, Eusebius could best gain his ends by admitting that it had long enjoyed an honorable place in the church, like the epistle of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of Peter, and then showing through criticism, like that of Dionysius, that John had not written it any more than the companion of Paul and the apostle Peter had written certain works ascribed to them." Id., P. 134. Is it not possible that Eusebius had a similar motive in writing about the epistles of Ignatius? At least there is certainly danger in putting too much confidence in his integrity in these matters.

8. Lightfoot mentions the Armenian translation of the Ignatian epistles as containing the seven Vossian letters, but says that they were translated from the Syriac rather than from the Greek, for, "where they cover the same ground, they agree absolutely." Thus he concludes that the original Syriac must have been the seven and that these were later abridged into the three. That, of course, is one possible solution to the question. Another might be that the man who translated this work into the Armenian had the three short Syriac originals in his possession, from which he did his translating. Then after this work was done he might have been informed of the other forged epistles that were in existence, which he then incorporated into his text. Is not this as possible as the other theory? Many people today are still translating the epistles of Ignatius which they fully believe have been forged, but they do it to satisfy a certain group. Is it not possible that men were actuated by similar motives in those times?

9. Doctor Lightfoot says, "The abridgment is simple, but the interpolation theory is difficult." However, Cureton adds, "We know of no instances of such abridgment in any Christian writer; while examples of fabrication, additions, and interpolations are most numerous."--*English Review*, Vol. IF, P. 319. Lightfoot acknowledges that the Syriac group is shorter, and "more rugged and forcible than the Vossian." In laying down the rules for testing the value of texts, Dr. Ira Maurice Price says, "In general, the shorter reading is preferable to the longer, because insertions and additions are more probable than omissions.... The more difficult and obscure reading is preferable to the one that is more easy and simple in construction."--"Ancestry of English Bible," P. 203. On the basis of these criteria, the shorter Syriac

recension should more likely be the true reading.

These are the points which Lightfoot produced in favor of the seven Vossian epistles of Ignatius. We must acknowledge that if these were the only points to be taken into consideration, there might be considerable reason for accepting his conclusion. Yet not one of his points is conclusive in itself. Although there seems to be some plausibility in his conclusions, yet with each one of them there is another way of interpretation that is just as plausible. Perhaps we might say that taking the whole list together there remains about a fifty-fifty choice in the matter. However, it seems to me there are other questions besides these that are more vital and not so easily brushed aside. Dr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, in his comment upon Eusebius' Church History, book 3, chapter 36, in a note on Ignatius, says, "The great difficulties which have stood in the way of the acceptance of the epistles are, first and chiefly, the highly developed form of church government which they [the seven] reveal; and secondly, the attacks upon heresy contained in them. Both of these characteristics seem to necessitate a date later than the reign of Trajan, the traditional time of Ignatius' martyrdom. Harnack regards these two difficulties as very serious, if not absolutely fatal to the supposition that the epistles were written during the reign of Trajan."

Ignatius lived during the last years of the first century, and was bishop of Antioch, the city that led out in opposition to the innovation of ideas not taught by the apostles. Here in this city the apostles passed to and from in their labors. Thus Ignatius surely must have been associated with the apostle John, who had been a companion of Jesus. His later associates were Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, and the author of "The Shepherd of Hermes." Some of these lived and wrote forty years after Ignatius had passed away, but all agreed with one another and with the New Testament concerning offices and the positions of the leaders in the church. None of them make any distinction between bishops and presbyters. The Syriac recension fully agrees with all of these, whereas the Vossian group does not, but writes in a strain similar to that of two centuries later.

I quote from the epistles in the Syriac recension. In Ignatius' letter to the Romans, chapter 4, we have these words, "I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles, I am but a condemned man." To the Ephesians, chapter 1, we have these words, "Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love, whom I pray you by Jesus Christ to love, and that you would all seek to be like Him." In the epistle to Polycarp, we have the following: "Let nothing be done without thy [Polycarp] consent; neither also do thou anything without the approval of God."-Chapter 4. "But it becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to the Lord."-Chapter 3. "My soul be for theirs that are submissive to the bishop, to the presbytery, and to the deacons. . . . Labor together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together."-Chapter 6. Here in these writings of Ignatius you will see the same spirit and attitude that we find in the epistles of the apostle Paul. Here are indications of democracy, with no distinction between bishops and presbyters.

Now suppose we note the same in the seven Vossian epistles of the longer recension. In the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 6, is the following: "It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself." This sounds more like Gregory VII than the apostle Paul. In his epistle to the Trallians, chapter 7, we have the following, 'We who does anything apart from the bishop, and the presbyter, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience.--- In the letter to the Philadelphians, in chapter 7, we have the following, "Do nothing without the bishop." Then in chapter 10, he mentions, "In some cases bishops, and in others presbyters and deacons." Here we have a clear distinction between bishops and presbyters which we did not have in the other recension. In his letter to the Smyrnians he writes in chapter 8, "See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles." In chapter 9 he writes, "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop.... He who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop does [in reality] serve the devil." To the Magnesians, chapter 6, we have the following: "I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons." Here we have the vicar sitting in the place of God on earth, Can we believe that an associate of the apostle John wrote such words? No other man for more than a hundred years after this wrote in any such strain.

So far as the doctrines in the Syriac group are concerned, they are in full accord with those of the New Testament. In the letter to the Smyrnians, chapter 7, of the Vossian Greek recension, however, complaint is made because "they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ." We hear of no such language as this in any contemporary literature or in the short Syriac form. These are



arguments that arose in the church at a later time.

In the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 7, we have another argument that is not found in the early part of the second century. It reads, "There is one physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh, true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first possible and then impossible,-even Jesus Christ our Lord."

In regard to the Jewish law: "But if anyone preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him."-Epistle to the Philadelphians, chap 6. "For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace."-Epistle to the Magnesians, chap 8. "It is absurd to profess Jesus Christ, and to Judaize."-Id., chap. 10. "If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day."-Id., chap. 9. I cannot see how it is possible to think of Ignatius, a companion of the apostle John, as expressing himself in such words as these.

Cureton writes, "lit the Epistle to the Ephesians in the Syriac recension, at least two thirds of the matter has been omitted. Now had these passages so omitted been part of the original epistle, it seems hardly possible that they could have been taken away in the manner in which they have been-sometimes whole chapters, at others considerable parts, sometimes whole sentences, and at others half sentences, or -single words without interrupting the general tenor of the epistle, or cause any hiatus, and producing obscurity. But what is now the state of the case? Not only is no obscurity caused, nor the tenor of the epistle broken, but, on the contrary, several places, which before were unintelligible, became now clear; the whole epistle runs on uninterruptedly; each sentence adheres closely to that which precedes it; and, what is still more remarkable, all this without the necessity of making even slightest grammatical change in the order or construction of the sentences."-English Review, Vol. IV, p. 320.

After reading all the arguments of Lightfoot and others, the church historian, A. H. Newman writes, "As already intimated, Zahn and Lightfoot have, in the opinion of a large majority of competent judges, established the originality of the shorter Greek form of the epistles, as compared with any other form. If there are any genuine Ignatian epistles, these alone can claim to be such."-A Manual of Church History, A. H. Newman, Vol. 1, P. 223. Then he adds, "We must admit the possibility of the supposed circumstances and of the supposed psychological status and consequent acts of Ignatius; but we may well be excused if we find ourselves unable to agree with these great scholars, as to the probabilities of the case. The objection based upon the writers' strong episcopal tendencies has little weight; but questions like the following thrust themselves upon us, and are not set aside by the plausible answers that have been given: Is it psychologically conceivable, or if so, is it within the bounds of probability, that a Christian man who had associated with the apostles, and who by reason of this character and abilities had attained to a position of commanding influence throughout Syria and Asia Minor, could think, write, and act as Ignatius is represented as doing in these documents?"-Id., P. 224.

"We conclude: First, that there probably was an Antiochan bishop in the time of Trajan named Ignatius; secondly, that he probably suffered martyrdom at Rome; thirdly, that he probably wrote some letters on his journey; fourthly, that what he wrote furnished the basis of the extant Ignatian documents; fifthly, to what extent interpolations have occurred it is impossible to determine."-Id., p. 226.

In writing of these same epistles, Dr. E. de Pressense, the great French historian, concludes without a question that the Syriac is the true recension of Ignatius. He writes, "According to a Syriac manuscript, which has thrown much light upon this question, three only of the seven letters attributed to Ignatius are genuine.----"The Early Years of Christianity," Vol. 11, P. 223, 4th edition. Hodder and Stoughton, London.

Then in a note on page 631, he gives his reason for his position as follows: "Daille clearly establishes that Ignatius could not have combated in the year 107, heresies which had no definite existence till the middle of the second century, nor have given expression to the theory of an episcopal monarchy, at a period when it is notorious that the identity of the bishop and the elder was still maintained."

"For our own part, we are fully convinced, on the following grounds, that Cureton has given us the genuine Ignatius. [The three Syriac letters.] First, we remark that prior to Eusebius no evidence can be brought forward from the Fathers, in support of a single passage of the ancient Greek text of Ignatius. Irenaeus ("Adv. Haeres," v. 28) quotes a passage from the Epistle to the Romans, which is found in the two editions of Ignatius. Origen cites a passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians, which is in the Syriac, and this other passage from the Epistle to the Romans, which also occurs in the Syriac.... Whatever Pearson may say, it cannot but appear unaccountable that Irenaeus, who is so glad to strengthen his position by the

testimony of his predecessors, should not have cited the passages in which Ignatius opposes the same heretics as he himself, if those passages had been before his eyes....

“Second, A comparison of the shortest Greek text with the Syriac, is in itself sufficient to prove the priority of the latter.... Thus, in the Syriac, Ignatius contents himself with expressing his gratitude to the Ephesians for sending to him their bishop, while in the Greek we have five chapters making use of the occasion to lay down the most monarchical theories of episcopacy (chaps. 3-8). The Syriac subsequently gives some earnest exhortations, full, at the same time of firmness and gentleness. In the Greek these are drowned in fierce invectives against the heretics (chaps. 8, M), and in prolix dissertations. But the interpolation is still more palpable at the end of the epistle. The Syriac simply speaks of the star which announced the reign of the Savior. The Greek develops this theme after the manner of the Apocryphal Gospels. 'A star,' it says, 'shone in the heavens surpassing in glory every other star; its light was ineffable, and its straitness threw men into consternation.' . . .

“Third, considered from a doctrinal point of view, the Syriac bears the character of far greater antiquity than the Greek. . . . While the Syriac simply says that he who was invisible became visible for our salvation, the Greek enters into an expansion of the doctrine, such as the following, 'There is one sole physician, clothed in human flesh, and yet spiritual, made and not made, God existing in man, true life in death, born of Mary and of God, once subject to suffering, now impassable, Jesus Christ our Lord.' The heresies indicated . . . unmistakable traits of Gnostic docetism. Now, this docetism did not assume such definite form till a far later period. . . .

“Fourth, there is a great difference between Syriac and the Greek in regard to ecclesiastical organization.... The bishop according to the Greek, is invested with an apostolic character. . . . He is positively the vicar of God and of Jesus Christ. To obey the bishop is to obey the will of God. It is he who directs the worship. We are brought into the presence of a fully developed episcopal organization. It is impossible to reconcile such language with that of Clement of Rome, of Polycarp, or of the 'Shepherd of Hermes.' In the Syriac, nothing of this sort appears. . . .

Fifth, the interpolations of the Greek text are very evident in the legendary additions made to the Syriac in the details of Ignatius' journey, and of the feelings of the martyr. The Syriac simply shows us the bishop Onesimus by the side of Ignatius ('Adv. Eph.,' 1), joined afterwards by some deputies from the churches ('Rom.' xx). According to the Greek text, he presides over regular assemblies of the church, and conducts formal discussions ('Phil.,' vii, viii).... Even Ignatius himself does not appear to us in the same light in the Syriac and the Greek. The former shows him blending gentleness -with firmness; the latter represents him as a fanatic and violent man; it exaggerates his humility, and makes him say, in his Epistle to the Romans, that he was ashamed to be called a Christian ('Rom.,' vii). From a comparison of the two texts, the priority of the Syriac is to us established beyond doubt.... The Syriac does not on any of these points go beyond the Epistle to the Ephesians.----Id., pp. 631-634.

What does all this tend to indicate? To me it indicates that the three short Syriac letters are most likely the three genuine Ignatian epistles. If not, the others are most certainly so interpolated that no one can depend upon them for guidance in regard to any teaching or doctrine of Ignatius. My reasons briefly summarized are as follows:

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1. The great Doctor Lightfoot in his most thorough investigations has produced no evidence in favor of the Vossian group that cannot be answered from the standpoint of the integrity of the Syriac epistles.

2. The seven Vossian epistles contain ideas concerning the episcopacy that are entirely out of harmony with ideas prevailing at the time of Ignatius.

3. The doctrines described in the Vossian group are entirely out of accord with those of the time of Ignatius, the companion and associate of Polycarp and the apostle John.

4. Irenaeus said that Polycarp, a close companion of Ignatius, “always taught the things he had learned from the apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true, to these things all the Asiatic churches testify.”-Irenaeus “Against Heresies,” book 3, chap. 3, par. 4. This indicates a close checkup as to what was being taught among the people of this section, and, outside of the Vossian group of epistles, all historical records seem to coincide with these words. Therefore, I must conclude that much in the seven epistles has been interpolated.

5. This position fully agrees with that of Philip Schaff. He says, “These oldest documents of the

hierarchy soon became so interpolated, curtailed, and mutilated by pious fraud, that it is today almost impossible to discover with certainty the genuine Ignatius of history under the hyper- and pseudo-Ignatius of tradition.”-”History of the Christian Church,” Vol. II, 2 volume edition, P. 660.

6. Therefore, my conclusion accords with that of the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, article “Ignatius.” Here we have the summary of the best scholarly results on this question, as follows: “The cautious student of the history of polity and doctrine will decline to base important conclusions on the unsupported testimony of these writings.” Or, in other words he will ignore them if vital conclusions are dependent upon them alone.

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4. George T. Purves, "The Apostolic Age," p. 150. New York: Scribners, 1908.  
Note. - Doctor Purves says, ' Now, fornication was regarded by the Jews, as well it might be, as a typical pagan custom. It was often sanctified by pagan religions, and nowhere more so than in Western Asia. It was too often regard with indifference in Graeco-Roman society. It therefore would naturally be mentioned by a Jew as a threatened Gentile abomination.' "The Apostolic Age," P. 149.
5. Philip Schaff, "History of Apostolic Christianity," Vol. I, p. 349.
6. Note. -Schaff, in speaking of this decree, says, "The Gentile form of greeting, Xalpeiv [chairein], Acts 15:23, occurs again in James 1:1, but nowhere else in the New Testament except in the letter of the heathen, Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26)" --"History of Apostolic Christianity, - Vol. I, Page 345. This would show that the letter was from James and was sent to the Gentiles, for he gives a Gentile salutation
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5. Jerome, Letter to Lucinius, Letter 71.
6. Basil, Letter 93.
7. Sozomen, "Ecclesiastical Histories," book 7, chap. 19.
8. John Cassius, "Institutes," book 2, chap. 18.
9. Justin Martyr, "First Apology," chap. 67.
10. "Didache," chap. 14.
11. Socrates, "Ecclesiastical History," book 5, chap. 22.
12. Pliny, Letter 96.
13. Phifi Schaff, 'Mistory of Apostolic Christianity,' Vol. 1, p. 247.  
Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1883, 2 volume edition.
14. Adolph Harnack "Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries," Vol. I, pp. 72-74. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
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16. Robert Rainy, "The Ancient Catholic Church," pp. 19, 20. New York: Scribners, 1902.

### 4. The Lord's Day

1. NOTE-There are some who still hold that John was not the author of the apocalypse. However, N. B.

Stonehouse, in 1929, rather firmly established the fact that the evidence overwhelmingly points to the apostle John as the author. He shows that Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement, Origen, and others believed that the apostle was the author. The first to oppose this idea was Dionysius, in the third century, and his reason was that he wanted to confute those who were teaching about the millennium. This he tried to do by showing that no one could understand the book, and that it does not claim that John is the author. Then in the next century, Eusebius, who seemed to be prejudiced against the book, claimed that Papias, a companion of the apostle, said that the author was a second John, and not the apostle. I quote from Stonehouse: "The writer is inclined to doubt the interpretation of Eusebius. On the supposition that there were two Johns, we have the extraordinary, and not satisfactorily accounted for, phenomenon that 'no trace of such a person appears until about the beginning of the fourth century, when Eusebius calls attention to the significance of Papias' language, though Papias' book had been well known through centuries, when the Alogi and others were seeking a non-apostolic authorship for the Johannine Apocalypse, and Dionysius was unable to find any evidence of a second John in Asia to whom to attribute it, except the two tombs at Ephesus.' "- "The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church," P. 44. Goes (Hol. ,and Oosterbaan & Le Cointre.

2. See John 3:23, 24; 6:70, 71; 7:50; 9:22; 11:50, 51; 12:31-33; 13:26-29; 18:13, 14. 40; 21:22, 23.

3. "Acts of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John," Vol. XVI.

4. Eusebius, "Ecclesiastical History," book 4, chap. 23.

5. "Didache," chap. 14.

6. The authenticity of the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians is seriously questioned, and will be considered later, as will be also Pliny's letter, which, however, does not mention the Lord's day, but only a "certain stated day." Tertullian was born about the same time as Clement but was not converted until the very close of the century. He will be considered with men of the third century.

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6. Hippolytus, "Refutation of all Heresies," book 6, chap. 24.

7. Henry Hart Milman, "The History of Christianity," Vol. II, p. 355. London: John Murry, 1875.

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10. August Neander, "General History of the Christian Religion and Church", Vol. II, p. 194. London: Henry G Bohn, 1851

11. Franz Cumont, "Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans", Page 163. New York: Putnam's, 1912.

12. Franz Cumont, "The Mysteries of Mithra", Page 167.

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14. Albert Henry Newman, "A Manual of Church History," Vol. I, pp. 191-194. Philadelphia, American Baptist Publishing Society.

## 6. Sunday at Alexandria in the Second Century

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2. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," book 3, chap. 3, par. 4.

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11. Justin Martyr, "Dialogue With Trypho," chap. 12.
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16. Clement, "Miscellanies," book 6, chap. 14.
17. Clement, "Miscellanies." book 6. chap. 16.
18. Clement, "Miscellanies," book 5, chap. 14.
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