

## Chapter 3

### The Memorial of Christ's Resurrection

IT is a striking fact that the Jewish sabbath almost disappears from recorded Christian practice after Christ's resurrection. The very day before his resurrection occurs, we find the disciples resting on the Jewish sabbath (Luke 23 : 56; cp. also Mark 16 : 1; John 19 : 42), but after it has happened the observance of the seventh day is never mentioned except as a tolerated option for Jewish Christians (Rom. 14 : 5), or an intolerable imposition by Judaising heretics (Gal. 4 : 9-11; Col. 2 : 16f.), or in passages where Paul reasons with the Jews in the synagogue on the sabbath (Acts 13 : 14, 42, 44; 17 : 2; 18 : 4; cp. also Acts 16 : 13), not apparently because the observance of the day is a regular part of his own devotional practice but because it provides an excellent opportunity for evangelism. The Acts of the Apostles does supply some remarkable evidence of the observance of the ceremonial Law by Paul (Acts 18 : 18; 20 : 16; 21 : 23f., 26f.; 24 : 17f.), yet we know from 1 Corinthians that this was not his constant habit, but that he adapted his practice to the circles in which he was moving, whether Jewish or Gentile, in order to avoid giving needless offence 1 Cor. 9 : 19-23).

Now, Paul was not alone in this. We have the testimony both of Luke and Paul that even Peter, one of the pillars of the church of Jerusalem, did not try to keep the whole ceremonial Law (Acts 15 : 10; Gal. 2 : 12-14), and in both passages other of the Jewish Christians are linked with Peter. The attitude of James (whatever opinions the Judaisers may have attributed to him) does not seem to have been markedly different. In his epistle he manifests no enthusiasm for the ceremonial Law, and the 'works' that he calls for are works of love and faith like the relief of needy fellow-Christians or (in Old Testament terms) the offering of Isaac by Abraham and the helping of Joshua's messengers by Rahab (Jas. 2 : 14-26). Moreover, in Acts 21, the report which he says has incensed the Christians of Jerusalem is not that Paul does not obey the Law but that he forbids people to obey it, and the test that he proposes to Paul could not in the nature of the case show that Paul always conforms to it but only that he is willing to do so on occasion, and hence is not hostile to such conformity (vv. 20-24).<sup>1</sup>

This being so, it cannot be taken for granted that all Jewish Christians continued the strict observance of the Jewish sabbath, after the Lord's Day had come into use as well. It would depend on whether, like Paul, they thought of the Jewish sabbath as a type now fulfilled. In Palestine, indeed, public opinion must have strongly discouraged complete disregard of the Jewish sabbath, especially with the tide of Jewish nationalism rising higher and higher as the first century ran its course;<sup>2</sup> and the conscience of the weaker brother must have been another important restraining influence. Yet even in Palestine it is quite possible that Peter and James and other moderate men sympathised with Paul's attitude, at least privately, and it is noteworthy that at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 they refrain from imposing the sabbath upon Gentile Christians, just as they refrain from imposing circumcision upon them, thus recognising that both institutions have ceased to be indispensable parts of a life pleasing to God.<sup>3</sup>

But whatever the personal beliefs of the Jewish Christian leaders may have been, whatever concessions they may have made to Gentile converts, and whatever may have been the practice of Jewish Christians living in Gentile countries, it seems likely on the whole that, in the outward practice of the first-century church of Palestine, the Jewish sabbath was as widely observed in some form as circumcision was. Just as circumcision was practised side by side with baptism (Acts 2 : 38-41; 21 : 20f., etc.), so, probably, the sabbath was kept side by side with the Lord's Day. This, of course, is to assume that the Lord's Day was also observed from an early date by the Palestinian church, and direct testimony is as much lacking on this point as it is on their observance of the sabbath. Nevertheless, the indirect evidence is very strong, and shows not merely that the Lord's Day was kept by Jewish Christians, but that it originated with them. The evidence is as follows.

In the first place, the New Testament mentions the Lord's Day only outside Palestine, in Acts 20 : 7; 1 Cor. 16 : 2, and Rev. 1 : 10; yet in the first of these instances we find it being observed in the presence of Paul, who was not a Gentile but a Jew, brought up in Jerusalem (Acts 22 : 3; 26 : 4); who often emphasises his Jewish descent (Acts 23 : 6; Rom. 11 : 1; 2 Cor. 11 : 22; Phil. 3 : 5); and whose thought is profoundly Jewish, as works like W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, show; in the second instance it is mentioned in one of his letters; and in the third instance it is mentioned in the book of the prophet John, who likewise gives every appearance of being a Jew, especially in his highly Semitised Greek. The references make it clear

that both Paul and John approved of the Lord's Day and personally observed it.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, the earliest post-biblical references to the Lord's Day, given in note 4 on p. 150, include more than one from Syria (which was peculiarly closely related to Palestine, both in geography and in language) or from Palestine itself. What is probably the earliest of all post-biblical references, that in *Didache* 14, is of such an origin; and here we find the peculiar expression 'the Lord's (Day) of the Lord'. The omission of the noun 'day' from the name is common in the early Church, the feminine form of the adjective *kyriakos* (dominical, the Lord's) showing what has been omitted; but the duplication *kyriakē* and *kyriou* is more surprising. Probably the explanation is that the name 'Lord's Day' originated in Aramaic, which has no word 'dominical' and so would use the genitive of the noun, as is sometimes done in the kindred Syriac language (cp. the Peshitta of 1 Cor. 11: 20, where 'the Lord's Day' is *yawmeh demāran*); but that when the name was rendered into Greek the adjective 'dominical' was either added, as here, or substituted, as normally, to show that it was the ecclesiastical 'Day of the Lord', not the eschatological, that was meant. If, however, the name is of Aramaic origin, the festival it denotes is probably of Palestinian origin.

Thirdly, the fact that the Lord's Day falls on 'the first day of the week' (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 2) is significant. In a Jewish writer like Paul, and in the continuation of St. Luke's Gospel (cp. Acts 20: 7 with Luke 24: 1), this doubtless means the first day of the *Jewish* week. Now, a festival on 'the first day of the (Jewish) week', called by that name, could hardly arise except among Jews.<sup>5</sup>

Fourthly, the non-Gnostic party among the Ebionites, an anti-Pauline Judaizing sect which originated from the Jewish Christians of Palestine, observed the Lord's Day as well as the sabbath (see Eusebius, *HE* 3.27.5). So it must have been celebrated among Jewish Christians in Palestine, and without known dependence on the influence of Paul; and it is much more likely that the churches in Gentile lands derived the observance from them than the other way round.

The date at which the Lord's Day started to be observed is more obscure. The earliest mention of the day is in 1 Corinthians, about AD 54, perhaps a year before the events at Troas recorded in Acts 20. This is approximately twenty-four years after Christ's resurrection. But since the observance of the day probably first arose in Jewish-Christian circles in Palestine, since (as we shall see) it was observed in

commemoration of Christ's resurrection, and since commemorative festivals often originate with the events they commemorate, at the same time as well as the same place, it is not at all improbable that this is what happened with the Lord's Day, and that it had been celebrated ever since the resurrection. If so, the first to observe it were the Twelve and their circle, who must be considered to have instituted it; though it is not their institution of the day that is recorded in the New Testament but the endorsement of the day by Paul and John.

It is customary to speak of the Lord's Day as replacing the Jewish sabbath. This is what it eventually did, and this may be the way that Paul thought of it from a very early stage. But the substitution doubtless took place much more quickly among Gentile Christians than among Jewish, and originally, as we have said, the two days were probably celebrated by many Jewish Christians side by side, as by the Ebionites afterwards. Their way of observing the Lord's Day would be likely to resemble their way of observing the sabbath, that is to say, by rest and worship—this being the manner in which the Jews observed all their important holy days (see p. 42 below); and until Christians were excluded from the synagogues, and the temple was destroyed, the Palestinian church may have been accustomed to rest and join in synagogue and temple worship on the sabbath, and to rest and join in Christian worship on the Lord's Day. If so, their exclusion from the synagogues and the destruction of the temple probably led those among them of moderate, Pauline views to concentrate their weekly rest and worship on the Lord's Day, while the rigorous legalists became founders of Ebionism. The alienation between Church and Synagogue was probably by this time such that the moderates positively desired to dissociate themselves from the Jewish sabbath, just as they desired to dissociate themselves from Jewish fast days (*Didache* 8).

It has sometimes been thought incredible that the early Jewish Christians should have rested for two days in the week. To us who live in the age of the five-day working week, this seems less hard to believe. It should not be assumed that the Jewish Christians, and certainly not the moderate leaders among them, like Peter and James, observed the sabbath with a Shammaite rigour. They cannot have been oblivious of the new interpretation of the sabbath given by Christ, with its stress on the permissibility of acts of necessity and acts of mercy on that day, as well as acts of worship. When they started to observe the Lord's Day also, they would certainly not have applied rules of greater

stringency to the new festival than to the old, and the possibility that they kept a measure of rest on both days is therefore a very real one. This would be the case even if we did not have the remarkable evidence of Luke about the life of the Jerusalem Church. Luke tells us that the apostles 'were continually in the temple' (Luke 24: 53; Acts 3: 1); that they 'continued steadfastly in prayer' with the women and the Saviour's family (Acts 1: 14); that their converts 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers' (Acts 2: 42); that 'day by day' all who believed 'continued steadfastly with one accord in the temple and broke bread at home . . . and the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved' (Acts 2: 46f.); and that 'every day, in the temple and at home, the apostles ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ' (Acts 5: 42; cp. 3: 11ff.; 5: 12ff.). As long as this state of affairs continued, it does not look as if it would have been any problem to the church of Jerusalem to have rested from remunerative labour, either partly or wholly, on many more days in the week than a mere two!

The likelihood that the church of Palestine originally observed both the sabbath and the Lord's Day has seemed to some an objection to the belief that the Lord's Day fulfils the sabbath. A straight substitution, such as there appears to have been among Gentile Christians, would leave room for a sabbatarian interpretation of the Lord's Day, it is suggested, but the observance of both days side by side excludes it. This is to forget, however, that all the early institutions of Christianity were originally observed by Jewish Christians side by side with their Mosaic counterparts. Baptism was observed side by side with circumcision: this is beyond question. But the continued participation of the Jerusalem church in the sacrificial worship of the temple strongly suggests that the Lord's Supper was likewise observed side by side with the Passover meal. And it would only be natural that, when the disciples added to Christ's own two institutions the institution of the Lord's Day, it would be observed side by side with the sabbath. If this is so, far from it being improbable that they thought of the Lord's Day in sabbatarian terms, the reverse is true. For the evidence that baptism fulfils the Old Testament initiation rite and that the Lord's Supper fulfils the Old Testament memorial feast is virtually inescapable; moreover, it is likely, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the disciples would model the Lord's Day on the general lines of the festival they already knew and practised. If, of course, it could be

shown that originally the Lord's Day was not a memorial observance, a day of worship or a day of rest, as the sabbath was, then this presumption would fall to the ground. But the remainder of the chapter will make it clear whether the Lord's Day did possess such a character or not.

#### THE LORD'S DAY AS A MEMORIAL

The only actual directive about the observance of the Lord's Day in the New Testament is 1 Cor. 16: 2. The other two references are a factual narrative of what took place on a particular Lord's Day, and a passing allusion. This being so, a great deal is left to inference, and, as in the case of the two Christian sacraments, inference must be based partly on the general teaching of the New Testament, and partly on its Old Testament and Jewish background. The first day of the week is mentioned in the Bible in only two connections. It is the day on which light was created (Gen. 1: 3-5) and it is the day on which Christ rose from the dead and appeared to his followers (Matt. 28: 1; Mark 16: 2; Luke 24: 1; John 20: 1, 19, 26). 'The Lord's Day' (*hē kyriakē hēmera*) is found by this precise name only in Rev. 1: 10. 'The day of the Lord' is used of the eschatological coming of God in the Old Testament, and of that of Christ in the New (Isa. 2: 12; 13: 6, 9; Jer. 46: 10; Ezek. 13: 5; 30: 3; Joel 1: 15; 2: 1, 11, 31; 3: 14; Amos 5: 18, 20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1: 7, 14; Zech. 14: 1; Mal. 4: 5; 1 Cor. 5: 5; 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Pet. 3: 10); and in Aramaic, as we saw on p. 32, this phrase is indistinguishable from 'the Lord's Day'. 'The Lord's holy day' is found in Isa. 58: 13, with reference to the sabbath (cp. 'the Lord's sabbaths' in Lev. 23: 38, and 'thy holy sabbath', 'my sabbaths', 'a sabbath to the Lord' elsewhere in the Old Testament). All these conceptions may have relevance to the Lord's Day, as we shall see, but since the first day of the week was newly chosen as a festival in the New Testament period, it is reasonable to look for its primary meaning in New Testament events and doctrines. On this showing, the Lord's Day would be primarily a memorial of Christ's resurrection and an anticipation of his future return. The context to Rev. 1: 10 confirms these conclusions: see vv. 5, 7, 18.

The idea may also be present in Rev. 1 that the Lord's Day, as the day of corporate worship, is the Church's day of meeting with the risen Lord; but John's meeting with him was unique, and the idea is certainly not explicit.

The contention of Rordorf that the phrase *kyriakē hēmera* in Rev.

1 : 10 must be derived from *kyriakon deipnon* (1 Cor. 11 : 20), and must consequently mean the day on which the Lord's Supper is celebrated (op. cit., pp. 221, 274f.), is very improbable. *Kyriakos* is merely the adjectival form of *kyrios*, and its simple meaning is 'belonging to the Lord'. The fact that it occurs in the New Testament only in these two places may mean that it was not a very common word, but we find it used outside the New Testament both in the same connections and in different connections, and the underlying Aramaic word must have been much more common than the Greek.<sup>6</sup> The context in Rev. 1 is against Rordorf's theory, since it contains clear references to Christ's resurrection and return (vv. 5, 7, 18) but none to the sacrament; and though it is true, as Rordorf says, that Christ ate with his disciples on the day when he rose (Luke 24 : 41-43), yet there is no indication that the meal was the sacrament, and the whole emphasis of the Gospel narrative at this stage is on his resurrection, the eating being a deliberate demonstration on his part that he was really alive again. It is also worth noting that the Greek Fathers, who would be more sensitive to Greek linguistic nuances than we are, see no verbal connection between 'the Lord's Day' and 'the Lord's Supper'; for by the time of Hippolytus (c AD 215) *kyriakon deipnon* has come to mean the *agapē*, or love-feast, separated from the sacrament, and commonly held on weekdays—days suitable for fasting (*Apostolic Tradition* 25-27). We know from Acts 20 that the custom of celebrating the sacrament on the Lord's Day is an early one; and the appropriateness of celebrating the memorial of his death on the memorial of his resurrection is clear to anyone who considers how closely his death and resurrection are linked in the New Testament; but the inference that the Lord's Supper gave its name to the Lord's Day is one which the evidence does not permit us to draw. Rordorf's moral for today, that the only thing which really matters on the Lord's Day is the celebration of the sacrament (op. cit., pp. 305f.), is similarly excluded. 'The Lord's Day', be it repeated, simply means the day belonging to the Lord; it is observed in the New Testament by celebrating the sacrament, preaching and in other ways; it is an anticipation of the Lord's second coming; but above all—and this is the reason why the first day of the week was chosen—it is the memorial of his resurrection.

#### THE LORD'S DAY AS A DAY OF WORSHIP

It has already been noted that the form of language in Acts 20 : 7 seems to imply that to meet for the breaking of bread on the first day

of the week was normal practice for Paul and for the church of Troas. Even the fact that Luke names the day of the week (not usual in his writings) appears to indicate that there was something significant about it. The meeting described evidently occupied the evening (vv. 7f.), and the day is apparently reckoned from the previous evening or morning, since Paul's intended departure at daybreak is regarded as 'on the morrow' (vv. 7, 11). At what time the meeting began we are not told, but it presumably commenced in the afternoon or evening, since it goes on till dawn; though what we know of Jewish practice when teaching (see p. 22 above) and of Paul's own practice when thus engaged (see Acts 28 : 23) makes this inference somewhat uncertain. If the meeting did begin in the afternoon or evening, there may well have been other services earlier in the day, as in the synagogue on the sabbath. At all events, in this service Paul preaches at great length, knowing that he is about to depart, and it is not until some time after midnight that the breaking of the bread takes place (vv. 7, 9, 11).

We know also of daily worship in New Testament times. The church of Jerusalem worshipped together daily, as is shown by the evidence from Luke's writings quoted on p. 34. The members of this church, though they probably lived in separate houses and practised different trades, yet had all their possessions in common (Acts 2 : 44f.; 4 : 32-5 : 2) and appear to have taken their meals together (Acts 2 : 46; 6 : 1f.). Meeting so often, it is natural that they often joined in corporate worship, and it may be that the Lord's Supper was observed at the daily meal (Acts 2 : 46; cp. v. 42).

The only other probable reference to daily corporate worship is in Heb. 3 : 12f. (cp. Heb. 10 : 24f.), where the recipients of the letter are bidden to meet daily for mutual exhortation, unless the meaning is that they are to exhort one another at chance meetings. In this instance, we know practically nothing of their situation, but the exhortation in ch. 10 not to forsake the assembling of themselves together would be meaningless if they had lived together and needless if they had normally eaten together; so they do not seem to have been a community in as close a sense as the Jerusalem church. On the other hand, they may have been a community like the Therapeutae of Egypt described in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*—indeed a closer community, in that they met for worship daily, not simply once a week. The presumption that a Hellenistic letter like Hebrews was written by a converted Hellenistic Jew, very likely an Egyptian Jew, is a strong one, and lends credibility to a destination in similar circles, though not necessarily in

the same country.<sup>7</sup> But we must not speculate further. The point to be noted is that the recipients were not necessarily an ordinary congregation.

Apart from these two cases, the corporate worship described in the New Testament (for example, in 1 Cor. 10-14) is probably weekly, like that of Acts 20. The Jewish origin of the Church makes this likely, for there is absolutely no evidence that in the first century it was normal for synagogue worship, like temple worship, to be held on weekdays; whereas there is abundant evidence of synagogue worship on the sabbath, supplied by the New Testament, Philo, and Josephus.<sup>8</sup> It is true, as has just been said, that the mother church at Jerusalem, with its communal life and its proximity to the temple, worshipped together daily, but even at Jerusalem there were synagogues (Acts 6:9; 24:11f.), which may have followed a different practice, like the synagogues in other places; and wherever the disciples carried the gospel we find them associating themselves with the synagogue for as long as they are permitted to, and trying to found the local church on a Jewish nucleus (Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1f., 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8). It seems probable, therefore, that when a local church first had to separate from the synagogue, it regarded itself as a synagogue, like the congregations called 'synagogues' in the Greek of Jas. 2:2 (which may or may not already have been separate), and met for worship weekly, though on the Lord's Day rather than the Jewish sabbath. Not only so, but it probably modelled its worship on what it had been used to in the Jewish synagogue, though with the addition of the Christian sacraments and of charismatic gifts like prophecy and tongues. The three recorded elements of the first-century synagogue service (Scripture-reading, teaching, and prayer) are not actually found together in New Testament accounts of specifically Christian services; and the first is not mentioned at all, except by implication (where the *exposition* of Scripture is spoken of, 2 Tim. 3:16, or the reading of *Christian* compositions, 1 Thess. 5:27; Rev. 1:3); though prayer is more fully attested (Matt. 18:19; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:14-17; 1 Tim. 2:8), and teaching more fully still (Acts 20:7-9; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; etc.). But when we first have a clear description of a Christian Sunday service as a whole, in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* 67, dating from about AD 155, the influence of the synagogue service is plainly visible and is universally admitted (see, e.g., Dugmore, *Influence*, chs. 5, 7).

It might perhaps be objected by people without experience of

community life that the Lord's Day cannot originally have been a day of worship in any special sense, seeing that the church of Jerusalem worshipped together daily. But, in the first place, if this were true it would apply also to the sabbath, and the Jerusalem church would have had no special day of worship at all. Rather, the likelihood is that, since the church of Jerusalem worshipped together on ordinary weekdays, it devoted even more time to worship, and especially to the ministry of the word, on its two weekly festivals. This would agree with known Jewish practice on the sabbath, according to which a great part of the day was thus spent (see p. 22 above). Secondly, it must be remembered that Jewish Christianity soon spread outside the communal life of Jerusalem to other places in Palestine (Acts 8:1; 9:31-43), and that there the special character of the sabbath and Lord's Day would have been highlighted. Thirdly, Jewish-Christian practice at an early date, before the abandonment of the Jewish sabbath, is reflected in the customs of the Ebionites. But here we find no indication that the special character of the Lord's Day as a day of worship is not recognised. On the contrary, the Ebionites, says Eusebius, as well as observing the sabbath, 'each Lord's Day celebrated rites similar to ours' (*HE* 3.27.5).

#### THE LORD'S DAY AS A DAY OF REST

Rordorf is the latest of a line of writers who make a sharp distinction between the Lord's Day as the day of corporate worship and the Lord's Day as the weekly day of rest. The former, he claims, goes back to the New Testament, but the latter was only introduced by the emperor Constantine in the fourth century. In prosecuting this thesis, he draws his arguments partly from the writings of the Fathers, and partly from the supposed impossibility of Christians in pagan society resting on Sunday, both because many of them were slaves, and because, in times of persecution, a Christian who rested would thereby betray himself (op. cit., pp. 85, 103f. 154-73). His case from the Fathers is very vulnerable. Dr. Stott shows in the second part of this work that the patristic evidence is capable of a wholly different interpretation. There are passages in Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and even earlier writers, which seem clearly to teach that Sunday is a day of rest, corresponding to the sabbath. Moreover, the Fathers regard the whole day as sacred, and appear to have devoted a great part of it to corporate worship, not hesitating to invade the normal hours of work for this purpose. As to Rordorf's other arguments, it should be noted that

pagan Romans were used to the Jews resting on Saturday, so would not necessarily have been intolerant of Christians resting on Sunday; that the proportion of early Christians who were slaves, and the harshness with which slaves were treated in the Roman world, are often exaggerated, but that slaves who were compelled to work on a day they regarded as a holy rest-day would have been able to comfort themselves that Christ permitted acts of necessity on the sabbath; that persecution is not now thought to have been as frequent in the early centuries as was once believed; and that the danger of revealing one's Christian allegiance by resting would have been small compared with the danger of revealing it by joining in worship—a danger which was frequently braved.

So much for arguments against the conception of the Lord's Day as a day of rest. Turning now to arguments on the other side, it should be noted first that the disjunction between a day of rest and a day of worship ignores the fact that, to the Jew, rest was itself an expression of worship. As was observed on pp. 5 and 13f. above, the sabbath rest was from the beginning a symbolical rest, commemorating God's rest after his work of creation, and was later given a further symbolical meaning, whereby it commemorated Israel's rest when delivered from the servitude of Egypt. In the New Testament, there is held before us the prospect of entering into God's creation rest ourselves, in virtue of the saving work of Christ (Heb. 3-4), so a symbolical rest, kept on the day which commemorates his saving resurrection and anticipates his glorious return, would have been no less meaningful to Christians. (See Gaffin, *Acts*, pp. 158-66.) Similarly, in the New Testament the creation is seen as fulfilled by a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 14-17; Eph. 2: 4-10), and the redemption from the slavery of Egypt is seen as fulfilled by redemption from the slavery of sin (Rom. 6: 1-23; 1 Pet. 1: 18-21), both the new creation and the new redemption being achieved by Christ through his death and resurrection. If, therefore, it had been appropriate to rest symbolically on the sabbath, the memorial of creation and of deliverance from the lesser bondage, it would surely have been regarded as equally appropriate to rest symbolically on the Lord's Day, the memorial of the new creation and of deliverance from the greater bondage.<sup>9</sup> Added appropriateness might have been seen in the fact that the rest now takes place on the first day of the week, not the last, for the redemption symbolised is not the outcome of our good works but the source of them (Rom. 8: 3f.; Eph. 2: 8-10; Titus 2: 14; Heb. 13: 20f.; 1 Pet. 2: 24).<sup>10</sup> These various ideas are widely distributed

in the New Testament, and one or more of them may have been present to the minds of the disciples from the time that they first observed the Lord's Day. For example, the promise of rest to those who believe in Christ is not confined to Hebrews but goes back to the Gospels and the earliest apostolic preaching (Matt. 11: 28f.; Acts 3: 19). Also, the fact that Christ's resurrection occurred on the first day of the week was an indication from the outset that his resurrection was the beginning of a new work of creation, and the Passover context in which his death and resurrection took place was an indication from the outset that in some new way he was redeeming his people from bondage: there is no reason why Paul need have been the first to draw these conclusions, especially as we have found them drawn by other New Testament writers as well.

The second fact to be noted is that there seems to be a hint of rest in each of the three New Testament references to Sunday. 'The Lord's Day' (Rev. 1: 10), as we saw on p. 36 above, means 'the day belonging to the Lord'. But if it belongs to the Lord, it should be devoted to the Lord, just as the Lord's sabbath was (Exod. 20: 8-11; 31: 13-15; 35: 2; Lev. 23: 3; Deut. 5: 12-14; Isa. 58: 13). Not that other days should not be devoted to the Lord (Rom. 14: 6-9); but on this day, as Paul says in a different connection, we should be able to 'attend upon the Lord without distraction' (1 Cor. 7: 35).

Similarly, in 1 Cor. 16: 2 we find the Lord's Day being selected not just for corporate worship but for a private duty. Commentators are more or less agreed that the phrase 'let each one of you lay by him in store' must mean an action performed at home. This alone is sufficient to refute Rordorf's idea that the Lord's Day at first existed simply for corporate worship. On the contrary, the day had further duties to fill it, such as calculating what amount of one's weekly earnings one could devote to the impoverished Christians of Jerusalem. And if this act of mercy is specially appropriate on Sunday, what about other acts of mercy?

Again, in Acts 20, Sunday is the regular day of corporate worship. But Sunday worship, as we saw on p. 38, was based upon the service of the synagogue, and the service of the synagogue, as we saw on p. 22, was of considerable length, far in excess of what was practicable on a working day. Not only so, but to the service of the synagogue the Church had added both the exercise of charismatic gifts and the celebration of the Lord's Supper! Except in circumstances where it was absolutely impossible, therefore, the Church would surely try to keep Sunday as a day of rest from normal duties.

The third and final fact which must be weighed is that not only the weekly sabbath, but also every important Jewish feast or fast, was a day of rest. On the first and last days of Unleavened Bread, on the Day of Pentecost, on the feast of Trumpets, and on the first and last days of Tabernacles, 'no laborious work' was to be done (Lev. 23 : 7f., 21, 25, 35f.; Num. 28 : 18, 25f.; 29 : 1, 12, 35), while on the sabbath and on the Day of Atonement 'no manner of work' was to be done (Lev. 23 : 3, 28, 30-32; Num. 29 : 7). Wherever it is stated in the Law that a day is a 'holy convocation', it is also stated that it is a day of rest.<sup>11</sup> Now, the Jewish Christians who instituted the Lord's Day evidently instituted it to be a holy convocation—indeed, it became before long *the* holy convocation, the Church's one regular day of corporate worship, through the decision of the Jerusalem council to exempt Gentile Christians from keeping the Jewish festivals, in agreement with the teaching of Paul, and through the subsequent decision of Jewish Christians to follow suit themselves. But to make the Lord's Day a holy convocation was equivalent to making it a day of rest. Otherwise one would have to suppose that its originators reckoned it of no more account than those minor festivals listed in *Megillath Taanith*, which were not holy convocations at all, and to which the only respect that was required was not to fast on such days: assembling for worship was optional, if indeed assemblies were held.<sup>12</sup>

The Lord's Day, then, was instituted to be a weekly memorial day, a weekly day of corporate worship and a weekly day of rest. In each of these three respects it resembles the weekly sabbath.

1. It should not be thought that Acts plays down the strictness of the Jewish Christians of Palestine. On the contrary, as Jacob Jervel has argued, convincingly in the main, Acts emphasises this (*Luke*, chs. 2, 5). So any qualifications that it makes should be given their full weight.
2. This may be the explanation of Matt. 24: 20—not that Christ envisaged his followers having scruples about the performance of acts of necessity on the sabbath, contrary to what we saw on p. 23, but that he envisaged unbelieving Jews putting obstacles in their way, by discouragement, threats, the barring of city gates, etc. How far the Jewish Christians actually shared the nationalistic ambitions of their fellow-countrymen is uncertain, but it must not be forgotten that they had been warned by this prophecy of Christ's that Jewish nationalism was heading for disaster.
3. As has often been observed, the decree of the Jerusalem council is based upon the so-called Noahic Laws, listed in the Tosephta (*Abodah Zarab* 8: 4) and in a *baraita* recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 56a), and discussed in the succeeding columns of the Talmud. These are laws believed to have been imposed upon all mankind, at least from the time of Noah, if not from the time of Adam, so that a heathen who transgressed them was held culpable by a Jewish court. A God-fearer or half-proselyte was naturally expected to observe them, though he was not expected to be circumcised or to observe the whole Law; and this seems to have been the model on which the Jerusalem council worked. A God-fearer, however, was expected to observe the sabbath as well as the Noahic Laws, in accordance with what is required of the resident alien in the fourth commandment (though a *baraita* in *Bab. Kerithoth* 9a somewhat reduces the stringency of the sabbath law in such a case). But of the sabbath the Jerusalem council's decree, significantly, says nothing.
4. For a refutation of the theory that Rev. 1: 10 refers not to Sunday but to Easter Day, see Rordorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-15. The patristic evidence of the late first century and the first half of the second, from which Rordorf argues, strongly supports the view that the Lord's Day was Sunday, that it was kept as the memorial of Christ's resurrection, and that it was the Church's regular day of corporate worship. See *Didache* 14; Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9; *Epistle of Barnabas* 15; *Gospel of Peter* 9, 12; Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.67. Compared with this, the evidence for the existence of Easter is late; but, once the church had Sunday as a commemoration of the Resurrection, it is natural that in time the Sunday nearest to the Passover should have come to be specially emphasised.
5. See also note 17 on p. 149 above.
6. As noted above, there is no adjective 'dominical' in Aramaic, so 'Lord's Day' and 'Day of the Lord', 'Lord's Supper' and 'Supper of the Lord' would in Aramaic be indistinguishable, and would simply be two among the large group of similar phrases reflected in NT Greek: 'angel of the Lord', 'name of the Lord', 'way of the Lord', 'temple of the Lord', 'the Lord's death', 'the Lord's brother', etc.

7. Various theories of this kind are discussed by F. F. Bruce (*Hebrews*, pp. xxixff.). Though he thinks Italy a more likely destination for the letter than Egypt, he concludes that the recipients were a house-church belonging to a larger congregation, not a congregation in their own right.
8. See pp. 10, 20f. above. It is worth noting in this connection that one of the names for the synagogue current at the beginning of the Christian era was *sabbateion*, 'the building for sabbath-day worship': see the decree of Augustus quoted by Josephus in *Antiquities* 16.6.2, or 16.164. The fact that the Jews in some towns where Paul preached, but not others, pursued their discussions with him in their synagogue on weekdays, does not of course mean that they were accustomed to worship there on those days: see Acts 17: 10f. and possibly Acts 19: 8-10, but contrast Acts 13: 14, 42, 44; 17: 17; 18: 4. Perhaps the nearest thing to regular weekday worship in the synagogues is what the Mishnah records about *maamads*. The Mishnah states that, while the temple was still standing, each of the twenty-four courses of priests had a lay *maamad* corresponding to it, which provided an embryo congregation in temple and synagogue through the week when that course was officiating (*Taanith* 4.1-5). But, in the nature of the case, a member of a *maamad* was on duty only one week in twenty-four. It is clear from *Bikkurim* 3.2 that *maamads* did not meet in the synagogues of all towns, and from *Megillah* 3.4, 6 that, even in towns where they did meet, they were not meeting all the year round. *Bikkurim* 3.2 implies that the country was divided into twenty-four geographical areas, with one *maamad* to each, in which case they would not have met in any one place for more than two or three weeks in the year. Moreover, the services of the *maamads* took a form which shows that the later daily services were not yet in use; for they included readings from Scripture (*Taanith* 4.2f.) and were four in number—morning prayer, additional prayer, afternoon prayer, and the closing of the gates (*Taanith* 4.3-5). In both these ways they corresponded to the temple and synagogue services of sabbaths and holy days, not to the later daily services, which were only three, and did not include Scripture-readings. Apart from *maamads*, the Mishnah mentions services on Mondays and Thursdays (*Megillah* 3.6-4.1), but states that these were held only in some towns, not all (*Megillah* 1.3). See Elbogen, *Gottesdienst*, pp. 99f., 237, 239f.; Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy*, pp. xvii-xix, 24, 27f., 30f., 118f.
9. In the NT, the themes of creation and redemption are not explicitly linked with the Lord's Day, the memorial of Christ's resurrection, but only with his resurrection itself. Nevertheless, the context of the title 'the Lord's Day' in Rev. 1: 10 speaks not only of his resurrection and return (as was noted on p. 35) but also of the old and new creation. For the chapter repeatedly refers to God or Christ as 'him who is and who was and who is to come', 'the Alpha and the Omega', 'the First and the Last' (vv. 4, 8, 17), and the implication of this language, 'Behold, I make all things new', is drawn out in ch. 21, vv. 5f. In exactly the same way, the context in ch. 1 refers to the old and new redemption. For in vv. 5f. it

employs this remarkable language about Christ: 'him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a *kingdom*, to be *priests* unto his God and Father'. The subject here is the new redemption through Calvary and the resultant privileges of the Church, but the language chosen to express it is evidently drawn from the Exodus, when God loosed the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt and thereupon constituted them 'a kingdom of priests' (Exod. 19 : 5f.).

10. See James Orr, *The Sabbath Scripturally and Practically Considered*, as quoted by Swanton, RTR, p. 22.
11. Passover proper and Firstfruits (the Sheaf) are not individually described as holy convocations and days of rest, but they appear in the list of holy convocations in Lev. 23. Moreover, the Passover *meal* fell on the first day of Unleavened Bread, which *is* so described, and Firstfruits was one of the mid-festival days, on all of which a measure of rest was actually observed—as also on Passover proper (*M. Pesahim* 4; *M. Moed Katan, passim*).
12. *Megillath Taanith* is the oldest extant piece of rabbinical literature, and the only one compiled as early as the first century (though with additions made early in the second century). It is mentioned in the Mishnah (*Taanith* 2 : 8). For text and discussion, see Zeitlin, 'Megillat Taanit'; Greenup, 'Megillath Taanith'. In relation to the Jewish feasts, Dr. Stott has pointed out to me that in Passion year, according to the Sadducean reckoning, many of them fell on Sundays, which were consequently days of rest. The Sadducees held that the day on which our Lord rose was Firstfruits, since it was the day after the weekly sabbath (*M. Hagigah* 2 : 4; *M. Menahoth* 10 : 3); and as this was a Sunday, Pentecost, seven weeks afterwards, was also a Sunday. If the Last Supper was the Passover meal, then the Sadducean Firstfruits fell on Nisan 17 and the Sadducean Pentecost on Siwan 7; but this being so, Trumpets and the first and last days of Tabernacles, Tishri 1, 15, and 22, were probably also Sundays, since the lunar month averages  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days, which would make these three dates come 112, 126, and 133 days later respectively, that is, exactly sixteen, eighteen, and nineteen weeks later. Assuming that the Lord's Day was observed from Passion year onwards, those who observed it (especially if of Sadducean background) may well have noticed how often it coincided with a holy rest-day that year.