

Jewett, Paul K. *The Lord's Day: A Theological Guide to the Christian Day of Worship*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971. 174 pp. \$2.95.

In this popularly written book Jewett is saying two things: first, that the Christian day of worship has been Sunday since the first Easter Sunday, and second, that both the theological interpretation of this day and the religious observance of it are determined by the OT (Jewish) Sabbath.

Regarding the first point Jewett affirms that Sunday observance did not predate Christianity in any way. Neither did it come about through a lengthy development beginning in the 2nd cent. A.D., whereby Sabbath was gradually replaced by Sunday as the Christian day of worship. Rather, the Christians worshiped on Sunday from the very beginning. Jewett reaches this conclusion by arguing that the Lord's day (*kyriakē hēmera*) originated as the day on which the Lord's Supper (*kyriakon deipnon*) was first celebrated after the resurrection, namely in the evening of Easter Sunday (cf. Lk 24:33-43; Jn 20:19-23). In the 2nd cent. the Christians are said to have moved their worship service, perhaps under pressure (cf. Pliny's letter to Trajan), from Sunday evening to Sunday morning. The freedom to abandon Sabbath observance, Jewett continues, was given by Jesus himself (cf. Mk 2:27, 28; 3:1-6) when he fulfilled the rest which the Sabbath had promised (cf. Mt 11:28; Heb 3:7 to 4:11). The early Christians accepted this freedom (cf. Rom 14:5; Col 2:16), and worshiped in the evening of the first day (Acts 20:7), although they also (mistakenly) continued to keep Sabbath.

Jewett's arguments and his conclusions so far are not new and are far from conclusive. Essentially they were published in Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (1968). Jewett quotes frequently from the first (German) edition of this work (1962). Perhaps he does not credit Rordorf as much as would be expected, for Jewett's volume is in some measure a popularization of Rordorf's far more technical work. This does mean, however, that any serious attempt to dialogue with Jewett's arguments must examine Rordorf's careful work.

Now let us go on to his second point. It is that the Christian Sunday cannot be understood theologically, nor be properly observed, without reference to the day it replaced, namely the Sabbath. That is to say, the early Christian celebrations of the Lord's Supper on this day cannot fill it with the meaning which Jewett will have it carry. There are two areas in which Sunday has borrowed from Sabbath: (a) The weekly Sunday must be an "authoritative apostolic tradition" adopted from Sabbath observance, since there is nothing inherent in the first Sunday service which would call for its repetition every week; (b) The first Christian Sunday, as Jewett reconstructs it, in no way implies abstinence from work. The rest day (Sabbath) has met its fulfillment in the eschatological rest provided by Jesus. At the same time this eschatological rest is still hoped for in the future. And so the Sabbath with its emphasis on rest remains an important element in the Christian Sunday. Jewett speaks of the church's *sic et non* to the fourth commandment. Thus in early Christianity the Sabbath of rest was observed either in the place of or along with Sunday for centuries. Gradually the two days were merged, and in time, beginning with Constantine (A.D. 321)

the idea of a Sunday rest emerges. Since then Sunday has not only been called the Christian Sabbath, but has functioned as a Sabbath. The civil Sunday is ultimately influenced by the Sabbath, and Jewett views it with some interest and supports legislation which enables a citizen to benefit from its time of rest, if he so desires.

The Sabbath, says Jewett, shares with the whole NT in the "fundamental tension between the indicative of present fulfillment and the imperative of future consummation" (p. 82). The important question is, Does this dialectic of the Lord's day hold together? Can he claim the rich heritage of the Sabbath for the Christian Sunday while abandoning Sabbath observance? Jewett attempts to demonstrate this possibility by tracing the Church's *sic et non* to the Sabbath through her history. He steers between the Scylla of Marcionism (the Protestant reformers' denial of any relationship between the Sabbath and the Christian Sunday), and the Charybdis of Judaism (medieval superstitious and legalistic efforts to make Sunday into another Sabbath). The dialectic is continued with the interpreters of the reformers, e.g., the Puritans and various Sabbatarians.

The charter into the future is less clearly marked. Jewett is looking for a day of spiritual rest in the Lord, but a day which must symbolize by a physical rest that the eschatological rest is still hoped for. And yet abstinence from work cannot be required of Christians who are freed from the Sabbath. It must be a day of communal worship, a day of joy, and a day dedicated to the risen Lord.

It does seem that Jewett is asking of the first Easter Sunday with its communion meal something which only a Sabbath can provide. If so, the example of the early Christians and of Jesus (cf. Mk 1:21) does have something to tell us. Finally Jewett should have known that most serious Sabbath keepers do not observe this day in protest of the "error" of Sunday worship. Certainly the real reason for observing the Sabbath by Jews and some Christian communions is to share in the recollection of God's past creative and redemptive acts, to celebrate with joy the freedom and rest God has provided, and to look with anticipation toward the eternal rest to come. This spiritual heritage, which also Jewett is claiming, is linked so closely to the Sabbath that it is a serious question whether it can be appropriated apart from the Sabbath institution. That institution, as many Christians have demonstrated, in no way detracts from the significance of the resurrection, the breaking of bread, and the present Lord.

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Jordan, Clarence. *The Cotton Patch Version of Matthew and John*. New York: Association Press, 1970. 128 pp. \$2.50.

This posthumous publication follows the same style as Dr. Jordan's earlier translations, *The Cotton Patch Version of Paul's Epistles* (1968) and *The Cotton Patch Version of Luke and Acts* (1969). He attempts to translate