

Carson, D. A., ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982. 444 pp. Paperback, \$10.95.

It is a striking occurrence that two monumental works on the Christian day of worship should very recently have been in press simultaneously: the volume here under review, and the one reviewed by Niels-Erik Andreasen on pp. 184-188, below. By their broad scope of treatment (OT to modern times), they add significantly to the growing number of scholarly treatments of the subject, including the widely recognized and influential monographs (more limited in scope) by Willy Rordorf (*Der Sonntag*, 1962; Eng. ed., *Sunday*, 1968) and Samuele Bacchiocchi (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977). (See *AUSS* 16 [1978]: 333-342 and 17 [1979]:85-104 for review articles treating the Rordorf and Bacchiocchi publications.)

Seven scholars collaborated in the preparation of the volume here under review: Carson himself, in addition to editing the volume, wrote the first chapter ("Introduction") and chap. 4, "Jesus and the Sabbath in the Four Gospels." The other authors and their contributions are as follows: Harold H. P. Dressler, chap. 2, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament"; C. Rowland, chap. 3, "A Summary of Sabbath Observance in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era"; Max M. B. Turner, chap. 5, "The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts"; D. R. de Lacey, chap. 6, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus"; A. T. Lincoln, chaps. 7 and 12, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament" and "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective"; and R. J. Bauckham, chaps. 8 through 11—"The Lord's Day," "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," "Sabbath and Sunday in the Medieval Church in the West," and "Sabbath and Sunday in the Protestant Tradition."

This summary of authors and chapter titles makes obvious several important characteristics of the volume: (1) its broad scope (mentioned earlier); (2) the rather limited area assigned to each contributor (with perhaps the exception of Bauckham) so as to assure the possibility for competent treatment; and (3) the preponderance of attention given to NT data. Concerning the third item, it may be noted that more than half of the book's main text is devoted to discussion of the NT materials (chaps. 4-7, plus parts of chaps. 8 and 12), in contrast to less than half for all the rest—the OT, Jewish sabbath observance at the beginning of the Christian era, and the entirety of the post-NT Christian era. Granting that the crucial nature of the NT data makes them deserve a measure of this more detailed treatment, I nevertheless cannot but feel that other significant matters have been given correspondingly short shrift.

The point of view expressed toward the rise and meaning of Sunday as a Christian day of worship differs in one way or another from what may be found in most of the recent major publications in the field—including those of J. Francke, P. K. Jewett, R. T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, Bacchiocchi, and the multi-authored work reviewed later in this issue of *AUSS*. Whereas such publications tend to consider the sabbath as a “creation ordinance” which either is transferred to Sunday in apostolic times or is maintained on the seventh day of the week in the NT period (Sunday emerging in the post-NT era), the authors of *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day* deny that the sabbath is a “creation ordinance” at all. Accordingly, they reject the “transfer theory” (i.e., that the OT sabbath obligations are transferred to Sunday). They also forthrightly admit the paucity of NT data for Christian Sunday observance, but they nevertheless conclude that Sunday should be observed as a special day for Christian worship—though by no means as a sabbath or rest day. It is, in fact, this particular thesis (together with the interpretation of data leading to it) which provides the editor with rationale and justification for adding this new volume to the numerous already-existing books on the subject (pp. 14-17).

The views of such authors as Jewett and Bacchiocchi are critiqued at various points throughout the chapters of this volume; but as Carson points out, “We have not written in order to demolish the theories of others. Indeed, as a matter of policy we have focused attention on primary sources; we refute opposing positions only when it is necessary to do so in order to establish our own position” (p. 16). It is to the credit of Carson and his collaborators that despite their attacks upon other positions, an irenic tone has consistently been maintained. One receives the feeling that these scholars have seriously endeavored to get at the heart of the issues, without becoming overly polemical or dogmatic. On the one hand, they maintain an attitude of kindness and respect for those who differ from them; and on the other hand, they acknowledge the limitations and the tentativeness of a number of their own conclusions.

It is impossible in this review to outline and evaluate the lines of argument presented in each chapter of the volume; rather, I shall focus upon a few of the more crucial issues or matters that appear heavily contributory to the thesis of the book. Such elements are elaborated in various sections of chaps. 2 through 11, and are drawn together by Lincoln in chap. 12, a chapter which provides a helpful summary and synthesis of the materials presented earlier.

In his relatively short chapter on the sabbath in the OT (only some 14 pages, excluding endnotes), Dressler argues on the basis of literary structure that God’s rest on the seventh day (Gen 2:2-3) is the capstone to the account of creation week, and concludes, further, that God’s ceasing from

work "on the seventh day to 'rest' and be 'refreshed' . . . can only indicate that the goal of creation is not mankind, . . . but that all creative activities of God flow into a universal rest period" (p. 29). Thus, for Dressler, "Genesis 2 does not teach a 'creation ordinance' . . . ; the institution of the Sabbath for the people of Israel, however, was based on the creation account and became a sign of God's redemptive goal for mankind" (p. 30).

Lincoln becomes even more emphatic than Dressler in denying the sabbath as a "creation ordinance," suggesting that Exod 20:11 has etiological features. For him, this portion of the sabbath commandment of the Decalogue is to be seen as explaining the newly introduced sabbath "by reference to a past event, God's seventh-day rest after the creation, utilizing the terminology of Genesis 2:3 and a play on words to make its point" (p. 349).

This line of argument misses the mind-set of the ancient Hebrews, as well as failing to grapple with the realities of the historical situation. Its understanding of etiology may also be questioned, inasmuch as modern investigation reveals that etiology functions to explain *time-honored* institutions. It does not serve as rationale for *new* practices. (See, e.g., the discussion by John Bright, *Early Israel in Recent History Writing: A Study in Method* [Chicago, 1956], pp. 91-100.)

A further flaw in Lincoln's thesis is his view that the Decalogue itself is "*pars pro toto*, the part standing for the whole" of the Mosaic covenant in the sense that "what is true of the place of the covenant as a whole will also be true of the Decalogue" (p. 356). But it must be remembered that the Decalogue was given *first*, and that these "Ten Words" were stated in *apodictic* form (i.e., broad statement of *principles*). Case-law stipulations, ritual regulations, etc., were to function *within the sphere of these more basic Ten Words*—Ten Words to which God "added no more" (Deut 5:22). (Perhaps an analogy may be made with constitutions and laws of modern nations, though the parallel is by no means exact: rather than a nation's constitution being "*pars pro toto*" of its laws, the constitution is the *foundational statement* indicating the direction which specific laws of the community should take.)

In dealing with the data in the Gospels, the authors of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* tend to be cautious—rightly so—in their evaluation of Christ's sabbath miracles as evidence of sabbath-breaking. Carson correctly identifies Jesus' breaches of sabbath regulations as involving Halakah, not any written precepts of the Torah (see chap. 4, *passim*, and the summary statements on p. 84). One may question, however, Carson's conclusion that Jesus' radicalization of Torah included *repeal* as well as intensification. The one example of repeal of Torah which Carson provides (p. 76)—Mark 7:14-23—is really *set in the context of Halakic regulations* about ritual

washing of hands. Moreover, there is pertinent question as to what is meant in this Marcan passage by "defilement" or "rendering common," for that too is apparently a development that stands in contrast to the OT's own regulations on "clean" and "unclean" (see now Colin House's discussion given in the present issue of *AUSS*, pp. 143-153).

As for any NT evidence relating to Sunday as a special time for Christian worship (in this volume, Sunday as a *full day of rest* from routine activities is emphatically denied), the authors readily concede that such evidence is scant and controversial—as well as somewhat late, when viewed in relationship to the Cross and Resurrection. They do not, therefore, press for Sunday's investiture with worship significance in the immediate post-Resurrection period. Nevertheless, they feel, as Lincoln puts it, that the "scanty" evidence—the data of Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2, and Rev 1:10—"points us clearly in one direction" (p. 383). This direction, as summarized by Lincoln, is that Acts 20:7 refers to a Sunday, not Saturday, assembly; that even though the putting aside of funds mentioned in 1 Cor 16:2 "is not directly connected with public worship," the "most likely factor" for singling out this day "remains that this was in fact the day for the Corinthians' regular assembly for worship"; and that "Revelation 1:10 adds to this somewhat sparse evidence by indicating that the title of 'Lord's Day' had been conferred on the first day of the week" (*ibid.*).

Obviously, Lincoln's conclusion regarding 1 Cor 16:2 is mere speculation and represents a *non sequitur* in relationship to the text itself. Would it not, in fact, be more logical to deduce the very opposite from the text: namely, that "laying aside" funds "at home" on the first day of the week is evidence *against* there being public worship services on that day?

As for the situation at the Troas meeting depicted in Acts 20:7ff., Turner's argumentation in chap. 5 that this took place on a Sunday night rather than on a Saturday night is not compelling (the question as to which night it was must remain an open one), nor is he convincing in his view that the coming together to break bread definitely signified an assembling for the purpose of celebrating the Eucharist (see pp. 130-131). While we recognize with Turner (and with Joachim Jeremias, to whom he appeals on p. 130) that to "break bread" came frequently to have this sort of technical significance, a wooden application of it in this particular context creates confusion, for in that case Paul evidently celebrated the Eucharist a second time that night, after restoring Eutychus (vs. 11)!

The already "scanty" evidence has now been reduced to a single text, Rev 1:10—a text that does not even specify or identify a particular day. In later usage, "Lord's Day" did, of course, refer to Sunday; but the question must be raised here as to the legitimacy of reading back into NT usage that later "Lord's Day" terminology. (Cf., e.g., the treatment by Walter F. Specht

on pp. 125-127 of *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* [see p. 184, below] and my own discussion in *NTS* 13 [1966-67]: 174-181.)

Bauckham makes clear, however, in his more specific treatment of the "Lord's Day" in chap. 8, that he does not consider Christian Sunday observance to be simply a late innovation even in NT times. Indeed, although he vigorously refutes Willy Rordorf's thesis that its origin lies in an Easter-Sunday evening meal of the disciples with their risen Lord, he opts for a somewhat later *Palestinian* origin—an origin for which NT evidence is lacking, as he candidly admits (pp. 234-236). He speculates that the universality of Christian worship on Sunday outside of Palestine "when the evidence becomes available in the second century" makes irresistible the conclusion "that all of the early missionaries simply exported the practice of the Palestinian churches," especially since the universal imposition of the practice left "no hint of dissent and disagreement" (p. 236).

But what does early Christian history *really* suggest? Aside from the fact that clear and direct evidence for this sort of universality belongs to the *third* century rather than to the second, there is difficulty in seeing why such a development left absolutely *no traces* of itself in conjunction with either the *giving* Palestinian Jewish-Christian church or any of the *receiving* Gentile churches. *Major changes of this sort increase and intensify the evidence, rather than leaving no trace!*

The treatment afforded developments in post-NT church history by *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* is indeed all too brief, as I have noted earlier. A more thorough-going approach to the evidence regarding the sabbath-Sunday controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries, as well as a number of other relevant matters, would not only enhance our understanding of those later centuries, but would also provide a more adequate frame of reference for assessing the rather obscure earlier developments that led up to the more-clearly-documented later situation. Nevertheless, it must be recognized, too, that Bauckham's task in covering the entire span of post-NT Christian history was an especially formidable one and that he therefore deserves commendation for covering in as much detail as he does the data pertaining to those many centuries.

In at least one major concern, the authors of this volume have been quite successful: namely, in demonstrating the lack of canonical support for the "transfer theory" of sabbath obligations to Sunday. As Bauckham has noted (p. 287) and Lincoln has echoed (p. 386), this Sunday sabbatarianism "was a medieval, not a patristic, development." But the question arises: In setting forth their evidence, have not these authors also undercut their own thesis?

In his synthesizing summary chapter, Lincoln admits that if "to set a normative pattern an imperative in the New Testament is required, then

observance of the first day of the week does not come into the category of normative patterns of practice" (p. 387). But he goes on to suggest that Rev 1:10 provides "more promising data." In his view, the limited evidence of Rev 1:10 suggests that "a precedent had already been set in the practice of at least John's churches" (p. 387). It was, according to him, undergirded by the "theological rationale of Christ's lordship demonstrated in His Resurrection on the first day of the week"; and furthermore, its applicability was not just to Roman Asia nor to only the early-church period, but is one that remains in effect "throughout the church's life" (p. 388). Thus, he finds that, after all, "the practice of Sunday worship . . . lays high claim to bearing the mark of canonical authority" (ibid.).

But, pray tell, how can this diminutive and attenuated string of suppositions lead to such a lofty conclusion? It would seem that Lincoln and the other authors of this volume, in their effort to steer a course which avoids both the "sabbath-transfer theology," on the one hand, and the conclusions of Samuele Bacchiocchi in favor of the continuation of the Saturday-sabbath, on the other hand, have set forth a view of Sunday in the early Christian church which simply cannot give the day the virtually normative status that in the final analysis is here claimed for it.

The foregoing negatives do not minimize the significance of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*. This book is an important publication, and it will undoubtedly be recognized as such by modern biblical scholarship for years to come. Its authors show an outstanding acquaintance with relevant secondary literature. In many ways, the vast amount of material to which they call attention, as well as their own incisive analysis, is instructive indeed. Their critiques of differing viewpoints are usually penetrating. As is so often the case, however, these are frequently of better quality than are their own positive contributions. In any event, this publication is one which will be—and should be—read, though such reading should necessarily be with cautions of the sort sampled in this review.

The volume contains no bibliography, but the chapters close with sections of endnotes that provide in themselves an outstandingly rich mine of information. Several helpful indexes conclude the book.

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Hodges, Zane C., and Farstad, Arthur L., eds. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*. Nashville, Camden, and New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982. xlvi + 810 pp. \$13.95.

The title clearly indicates the contents of this book. The editors, especially Hodges, have for many years promoted the Textus Receptus (TR) or the majority text. Textual critics have not generally concerned themselves