THE SABBATH IN THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

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The Epistle of Barnabas contains the earliest definite statement on the teaching and use of Sabbath and Sunday in the literature of the early Church written after the end of the New Testament era. ¹ Justin Martyr's First Apology also gives a very early and definite statement on this subject, but it is to be dated after the Epistle of Barnabas.²

Although the early Church Fathers who cited this work believed it was written by Paul's companion, internal evidence demonstrates that the author was not the Barnabas of the Book of Acts. As the writer nowhere in the epistle named himself, he remains anonymous. Apparently Church tradition sometime in the 2d century applied the name of Barnabas

¹ For a reference which is very likely earlier, but also more obscure see Ignatius' *Epistle to the Magnesians*, 8, 9. A recent study on the textual criticism of this passage concludes with the comment, "The statement remains ambiguous." Fritz Guy, "'The Lord's Day' in the letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians," AUSS, II (1964), 17.

² The Epistle of Barnabas is dated mainly by the internal evidence from ch. 16, by which it can be placed between the destruction of the Temple in 70, and the second destruction of Jerusalem in the Bar Cochba rebellion of 132-135. The book dates most logically to the first third of the 2d century. In this the majority of scholars agree, including such authorities as Tischendorf, Goodspeed (130), and Harnack (130-131). No valid reason has been advanced to assign a later date to the work.

Lightfoot leads a minority in the more extreme view placing it in the late 1st century, nearer the destruction of the Temple. Although he overstates the evidence, it is interesting that a non-Sabbatarian scholar such as Westcott denies this view on the basis of the anti-Sabbatarian 15th chapter, "the letter... also affirms the abrogation of the Sabbath, and the general celebration of the Lord's day, which seems to shew that it could not have been written before the beginning of the second century." B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History* of the Canon of the New Testament (7th ed.; London, 1896), pp. 41, 42. to the letter for one of several reasons.³ In all likelihood the epistle was written in the environs of Alexandria. On this point scholarly opinion is essentially unanimous. The two main reasons for this are: (I) Among the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers, it is at Alexandria that the epistle received its earliest and best acceptance (especially by Clement), and (2) the author's extensive use of allegory, which was so typical of Alexandrian thought.

Gnosticism

The author's extensive use of allegory along with his frequent reference to and respect for "knowledge" (gnosis) ⁴ has led some to conclude that the author was a Gnostic, or at least under considerable Gnostic influence. ⁵ This conclusion is not warranted by the evidence. The author urged the rational study and comprehension of the facts of faith, referred to by him as "knowledge." This principle stands in sharp contrast with the Gnostic idea of salvation through esoteric knowledge. ⁶

In this letter there are some fifty passages where the writer employed the allegorical type of teaching. Some of these are

⁸ I. Because it was written by another Barnabas.

2. Because of the tradition that Alexandria was one of the places where the Apostolic Barnabas worked.

3. From the similarity of subjects treated with the Book of Hebrews, which some of the Church Fathers believed was written by Barnabas.

⁴ Barnabas I : 5; 2 : I-3, 9, 10; 4 : 1, 6; 5 : 3; 6 : 5, 10; 7 : 1; 9 : 7; 10 : 11, 12.

⁵ A. H. Newman, A Manual of Church History (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 221-222. Walter E. Straw, Origin of Sunday Observance in the Christian Church (Washington, D. C., 1939), p. 48. Frank H. Yost, The Early Christian Sabbath (Mountain View, Calif., 1947), p. 33. Richard Hammill, "The Sabbath or the Lord's Day?" Doctrinal Discussions, ed. R. A. Anderson, (Washington, D. C., 1961), p. 82.

Discussions, ed. R. A. Anderson, (Washington, D. C., 1961), p. 82. • "For the Gnostics, however, 'gnosis' or higher knowledge was the channel of salvation. This 'gnosis' did not mean a mere intellectual knowledge acquired by mental processes, but rather a supernatural knowledge which came from divine revelation and enlightenment." J. L. Neve, *History of Christian Thought*, I (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 53. rather Biblical, ⁷ but many are quite strained by any Biblical standard, and some reach the heights of absurdity. ⁸ The Gnostics made much use of allegorization also. However, the use of allegory does not *ipso facto* designate a writer as following Gnostic thought, and the author's time and place must be considered,

Their [Hebrew Christians'] own habits of allegorizing, and their Oriental tastes, must be borne in mind, if we are readily disgusted with our author's [Barnabas] fancies and refinements. 9

The only adequate basis on which the degree of the presence or absence of Gnosticism in this epistle can be judged is on doctrinal content. The end-point teachings must be uncovered from all overlying allegories and examined to see what the tenets of the writer's faith were. When this is done a surprisingly large amount of evangelical doctrine is encountered in this book. On many of the cardinal beliefs of Christendom the author is quite orthodox. ¹⁰ Two doctrinal points should

⁷ The covenantal allegory in 13: 1-4, 7 has many similarities to Paul's in Gal 4: 22-31 in spite of the fact that the basic covenantal theology is quite different.

⁸ One classic example of this is found in ch. 10 where about a dozen of the clean and unclean animals of the Levitical Law are interpreted in terms of the spiritual classes of men in the world. Aside from the strained allegory involved in this passage, the author cites an animal not contained in the Law *i.e.*, the hyena (v. 7), and accepts several pure myths as biological statements of fact (10: 7, 8). See also below under note 18.

⁹ A. C. Coxe, ANF, I, 133.

10 For example:

1. God's creatorship is viewed as it is found in the Genesis account.

2. Sin entered the world with the fall of man through the serpent's temptation in Eden.

3. Man, originally made in the image of God, has through the fall acquired a nature that is corrupt, weak, in darkness, and contrary to God.

4. The nature, work and fate of a personal devil are in harmony with the Biblical references on the subject.

5. Jesus Christ: was pre-existent, became incarnate, performed miracles, suffered, died atoning for sin, was bodily resurrected, ascended to heaven, and will soon return to judge the world.

6. The dead will be resurrected and the saints will receive a future eternal kingdom.

receive special mention. The statements of this letter on the human aspect of Christ's nature are emphatically anti-Docetic. Over and over again Christ is referred to as having come in the "flesh" and truly "suffered." ¹¹ The doctrine of the vicarious death of Christ on the cross as an atonement for sin is also unqualified and clear. ¹² These and many other doctrinal views of the epistle are directly opposite those of the Gnostic movement.

Anti-Judaism

This is not to say that the book is without errors, for such is far from the case. Opposition to the Sabbath and utilization of the "eighth day" are not necessarily the greatest errors in the epistle. The author's false Sabbatarian theology in turn rests upon his view of the essence of the Old Testament, and his view of the covenant that God had with Israel. Old Testament history and religion he viewed essentially as one vast type, and this only. He also denied that God ever had a convenant with Israel after it was broken by idolatry at Mt. Sinai.

It is evident then that the anti-Sabbatarian 15th chapter cannot be viewed apart from the rest of the book, but must

7. Man is forgiven, cleansed and purified through the blood of Christ, God's sacrifice for sin.

8. Faith and repentance are gifts from God.

9. The new birth: God re-creates and renews man, giving him a heart of flesh and the soul of a child.

10. God dwells within the individual Christian and he becomes a member of Christ's present spiritual kingdom.

11. A fall from grace and eternal loss are possible.

12. Good works are the fruit of faith.

13. Baptism is by immersion.

¹¹ 5 : 1, 5, 6, 10-13; 6 : 3, 7, 9, 13, 14; 7 : 2, 3, 5, 9, 11; 12 : 5, 10; 14 : 5.

¹² 2:6;5:1,10;6:11;7:2,3,5,11;8:2,3,5;9:8;11:8,11;12:2,3,7;14:5;16:10. "The main idea is Pauline, and the apostle's doctrine of atonement is more faithfully reproduced in this epistle than in any other postapostolic writing." A. Harnack, "Barnabas," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York, 1908), I, 487. be taken in its context, and that context is one of unrelenting anti-Judaism. ¹³ The Epistle of Barnabas contains the strongest anti-Judaistic statement to be found among the Apostolic Fathers. ¹⁴

The motivation for this strongly anti-Judaistic position was a desire to demonstrate the total rejection of Judaism by God as His true religion. That this sprang, at least in part, from conflicts in which the author was involved ¹⁵ is evident in two passages in the epistle,

Moreover I ask you this one thing besides, as being one of yourselves and loving you all in particular more than my own soul, to give heed to yourselves now, and not liken yourselves to certain persons who pile up sin upon sin, saying that our covenant remains to them also. Ours it is; but they lost it in this way for ever... (4:6, 7)

Moreover I will tell you likewise concerning the temple, how these wretched men being led astray set their hope on the building,... For like the Gentiles almost they consecrated Him in the temple.... Ye perceive that their hope is in vain (16 : 1, 2)

The first quotation prefaces the writer's initial statement on the covenant. One can see the author's deep involvement in the problem here by the earnestness of his appeal to his readers. The second passage introduces his discussion of the Temple.

Who were these "certain persons," "these wretched men"? Were they Jews or Judaizing Christians? As the epistle's readers were intimately involved in the controversy it was

¹⁸ "The writer is an uncompromising antagonist of Judaism, but beyond this antagonism he has nothing in common with the Antijudaic heresies of the second century." J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London, 1926), p. 239. The quotations from the epistle used in this paper are from Lightfoot's translation.

¹⁴ "His polemics are, above all, directed against Judaizing Christians. In no other writing of that early time is the separation of Gentile Christians from the patriotic Jews so clearly brought out....He is a thorough anti-Judaist, but by no means antinomist." Harnack, *ibid*.

¹⁵ "The picture too which it presents of feuds between Jews and Christians is in keeping with the state of the population of that city (Alexandria), the various elements of which were continually in conflict." Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 240. not necessary for the writer to give a complete identification of his opposition, unfortunately for us. However, he did point out several of their characteristics. His antagonists believed that God's covenant remained to the Jews also, and they had their hopes set on the Temple in Jerusalem, as cited above. They also practiced circumcision (9:4). Some commentators favor the view that they were Judaizing Christians. The extensive treatment of so many major points of Judaism and the fact that they were contrasted with "the Gentiles" implies more strongly that they were non-Christian Jews.

Regardless of the identification of the opposition party, the many anti-Judaistic features of the epistle were undoubtedly directed against them, and the force of the epistle is clear. It was directed to Christians who were tempted to retain or return to Judaistic beliefs and practices in their faith. ¹⁶ It is an appeal for a complete Judaeo-Christian dissociation, ¹⁷ especially in the points outlined below.

The thoroughness of the author's treatment of Judaism may be seen in the fact that he dealt with many of the major tenets of the Jewish faith, as demonstrated by the following abbreviated outline:

1. The Sacrificial System: The sacrifices along with other

¹⁶ "It is adressed to those Christians who, coming out of Judaism, desired to retain, under the New Testament, certain peculiarities of the Old—in the same way that Judaizing teachers among the Galatians had acted." Constantin von Tischendorf, *Codex Sinaiticus* (8th ed.; London, [n.d.]), p. 66. "Hilgenfeld, who has devoted much attention to this Epistle, holds that 'it was written... with the view of winning back, or guarding from a Judaic form of Christianity, those Christians belonging to the same class as himself." Coxe, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

¹⁷ "It marks however an important stage in the relations of Judaism and Christianity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hints that the time is coming when Christians must part company with the Jews, and in *Barnabas* we see that this has come to pass." F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The History of the Christian Church* (New York, 1933), p. 100. "The Epistle introduces us into a new religious atmosphere. The burning question of the relation of Christianity to Judaism was in the air, and the author is at pains to vindicate the right of Christianity to stand alone." E. H. Hall, *Papias and His Contemporaries* (Boston, 1899), p. 40. types, prophecies, and allegorically interpreted Scriptures find their fulfillment in the life, death, and work of Christ. (Chs. 2, 5, 7, 8, 12)

2. The Covenant: The covenant made by God with the Jews at Mt. Sinai was broken by their idolatry there, and it was never reoffered to them. (Chs. 4, 13, 14)

3. The Promised Land: "The land of milk and honey" does not apply to the possession of a literal Canaan by the Hebrews, but to the Christian's present spiritual experience and his future reward. (Ch. 6)

4. Circumcision: The true circumcision is that of the ears and heart of the Christian. Circumcision of the Jews is abolished and when first given to Abraham was to look forward to Jesus on the cross. 18 (Ch. 9)

5. The Levitical Laws: The clean and unclean animals are interpreted as representing the spiritual classes of men in the world. ¹⁹ "Moses spake it in spirit... with this intent." (Ch. 10)

6. The Sabbath: The Fourth Commandment does not apply to a weekly holy day, but to a future seventh millennium. (Ch. 15)

7. The Temple: The literal Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed and abolished. The true temple is the Christian in whom God dwells. (Ch. 16)

The fact that the Sabbath was one of the main features of Judaism provided the writer's antagonism with reason to dissociate from it also, along with the other pillars of the

¹⁸ The writer arrived at this conclusion because Abraham circumcised 318 men of his household, and the numerical values for the Greek letters in the name of Jesus equal 18 and the cross (T) equals 300 (9:7, 8). The author seemed quite proud of this lesson for he added, "no man hath ever learnt from me a more genuine word; but I know that ye are worthy" (9:9). One writer wittily adds, "If he could only have known that the first general council at Nice [Nicaea] two hundred years later was going to be attended by three hundred and eighteen Fathers, his happiness would certainly have been much greater." C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (New York, 1907), p. 78. ¹⁹ See above note 8. Hebrew religion. It is important to note that almost all of these items of the faith receive their fulfillment in the present Christian era. Only the Sabbath is exclusively future in application. It is logical to assume that if the author had seen in the Sabbath a shadowy Jewish ceremonial that met its antitype in some present feature of Christianity he would have applied it as such, but he did not. Instead he allegorized it into a future millennium.

The Covenant

The author's doctrine of the covenant is one of his most important and central teachings. This is the theological basis upon which he allegorized away various of the pillars of Judaism. If there was a valid covenant between God and Israel from Moses to Christ then these items had a greater sacramental and spiritual value and historical significance in their time than the writer was willing to grant them.²⁰ Because he denied that such a covenant existed he felt free to use these features of the Jewish faith almost exclusively in an allegorical or typical manner.²¹

The importance the author placed upon the doctrine of the covenant is demonstrated by the fact that he devoted three of seventeen chapters to it. 22 In ch. 4 he gave his first statement on the broken covenant. In ch. 13 he justified his covenantal position through allegory. Ch. 14 is a restatement and re-emphasis of his position on the subject, and this is

²⁰ In the Epistle of Barnabas Old Testament religion is "without any significance for the actual surroundings of its earlier day." H. S. Holland, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London, 1893), p. 204.

²¹ "Judaism is made a mere riddle, of which Christianity is the answer." Westcott, op. cit., p. 46.

²² The first 17 chapters constitute the major part of the book original with the author. Three of the last four chapters (18-20) are an appended early form of the Teachings of the Apostles, and ch. 21 is an epilogue. The transition between the two sections of the epistle is shown by the abrupt change in style and content, and is illustrated by textual criticism, particularly in the Latin version. See especially E. J. Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature (Chicago, 1942), pp. 31-33, 158-160. followed by his discussion of the Sabbath. A denial of the historic relations of the Sabbath gave the author a freedom also to dispose of its current obligation by allegorizing it into the future. In the 2d century, anti-Sabbatarianism is found associated with errors in covenantal theology.

The writer's position on the covenant is clear. God gave the Jews a covenant at Sinai, "But they lost it by turning to idols" (4:8). This was shown by the breaking of the tables of the Law. "They themselves were not found worthy" (14:4), and the covenant was not reoffered. "Ours it is; but they lost it in this way for ever, when Moses had just received it" (4:7). This covenant is now transmitted to Christians by Christ (14:5).

The question the author left unanswered is, what status did the Jewish religion have toward God in the interval between Moses and Christ? If there was no binding covenant in existence then, what validity did Sabbath observance (etc.) have in that age? The author probably omitted comment on this because he felt that any recognition shown these items in a past era might weaken his argument in the time and situation in which he was writing. He was only interested in denying the current literal application of Jewish beliefs and practices and drawing out of them allegorical or typical meaning. The Epistle of Barnabas presents a thoroughly non-Pauline interpretation of the Sinai covenant.²³

The Law

A subject related to the doctrine of the covenant is the position of the Law in the epistle. In some passages the author used the term "law" to refer to the Pentateuch or its religious

²³ "The Epistle of Barnabas, whenever it may have been written, is a striking example of what the Apostolic teaching about the old Covenant was not. Ignoring the progressive method of God's dealings with mankind, it treats the Jewish practices and beliefs of old time as having always been mere errors, and thus makes the Old Testament no more than a fantastic forestatement of the New Testament." F. J. A. Hort, quoted in Foakes-Jackson, op. cit., p. 100.

teachings, but when one looks for specific references to the Ten Commandments, there are few to be found. Three out of the ten are referred to in the last section of the book, but this lies outside of the realm of the present discussion. ²⁴ There is a very important statement which concerns the Law, however, in the last chapter on the covenant,

And Moses took *them* [the tables of the Law], and brought *them* down to give *them* to the people.... Moses received *them*, but they themselves were not found worthy. But how did we receive *them*? Mark this. Moses received *them* being a servant, but the Lord himself gave *them* to us to be the people of His inheritance,... and we might receive the covenant through Him who inherited it, even the Lord Jesus,... and thus establish the covenant in us through the word. (14: 3-5, italics mine)

In the above quotation, the antecedant of "them" is always the tables of the Law. Therefore the Ten Commandments form the basis of both the covenant that God had with Israel until it was broken, and the covenant that God has now with Christians. The author upheld the binding obligation of the Law upon Christians. As Harnack states, the author of Barnabas was no antinomian.²⁵

This fact is also demonstrated in the anti-Sabbatarian 15th chapter. The writer cited the Fourth Commandment from the Law and considered the Sabbath as still in effect. But the Sabbath he accepted was not the literal seventh day of the week, rather it was a future seventh millennium as determined by symbolically interpreting the creation week in conjunction with the rule of a day for 1,000 years. If this millennial ages scheme as outlined in the epistle is to be valid, it is mandatory that the Sabbath be in effect. The Fourth Commandment is not fulfilled and done away with, it is unfulfilled and yet future.

Millennial Ages Theory

Jewish Apocalyptic. The Epistle of Barnabas interprets

²⁴ II (19:5), VII (19:4), X (19:6). See above, note 21.
²⁵ See above, note 14.

the six creation days as representing 1,000 years each, "He meaneth this, that in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end" (15:4). These six days are followed by the Sabbath, which apparently represents another millennium commencing "when His Son shall come" (15:5). Then comes the eighth day, "which is the beginning of another world" (15:8). This millennial ages idea was not original with the author, for it is found in the intertestamental Jewish literature. The earliest reference to it is found in the Book of Jubilees, which dates from well before Christian times. ²⁶ The day-millennium equation is stated there as follows,

And he [Adam] lacked seventy years of one thousand years; for one thousand years are as one day in the testimony of the heavens and therefore was it written concerning the tree of knowledge: "On the day that ye eat thereof ye shall die." For this reason he did not complete the years of this day; for he died during it.²⁷

It remained for a later work to expand this principle into a complete system, as it is in the Epistle of Barnabas. This next step is found in the Book of the Secrets of Enoch (Slavonic),

And I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he rested from all his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, that the first seven revolve in the form of the seven thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours.²⁸

²⁶ "The oldest extra-biblical Jewish work is almost certainly the book of Jubilees, if we bear in mind that its historical and geographical point of view is essentially pre-Hellenistic, ... we may attribute it to the early third century B.C. (possibly even to the late fourth century)." W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2nd rev. ed.; Baltimore, 1957), pp. 346, 347.

²⁷ Jubilees 4 : 30, 31. "It is hence obvious that already before the Christian era 1,000 years had come to be regarded as one world-day." R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913), II, 451.

²⁸ II Enoch 32: 1, 2. This book has been treated as a composition written by an Alexandrian Jew in the period A.D. 30-70; Charles, $^{op.}$ cit., II, 425. Subsequent studies have assigned it a later date, well into the Christian era. H. H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic The familiarity of the writer of Barnabas with the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature is demonstrated elsewhere in the epistle. He quotes Enoch by name.²⁹ There are six quotations cited as Scripture that are not Biblical and have not yet been located in extracanonical writings.³⁰ An important relationship is that between Barnabas and IV Ezra (II Esdras). A quotation from IV Ezra has been noted in Barnabas 12 : I. ³¹ A further parallel between these two works may be seen by comparing the following passages, "For thus shall the Day of Judgement be whereon is neither sun, nor moon, nor stars,..."³² A phrase in Barnabas' (London, 1947), pp. 95, 96. If this later view on II Enoch is correct it would of source proclude the idea that Barnabas deviued the millor

it would of course preclude the idea that Barnabas derived the millennial ages system from that source. It is not vital to embark upon a study of the date of II Enoch here. Suffice it to say that if II Enoch (or a similar work) does not bridge the gap in the development of this idea between Jubilees and Barnabas, then the writer of the latter work must be credited with much more theological ingenuity than he probably deserves.

²⁹ Barnabas 4:3. The passage in Enoch has not been definitely located, but may be from I Enoch 89 or 90. Barnabas was not very exact in his quotations of Biblical or extrabiblical sources. He freely paraphrased and combined passages to suit his purposes.

 30 6 : 13; 7 : 4; 7 : 8; 10 : 7; 16 : 6 where the quotations are introduced with such phrases as, "the Lord says," "in the Prophet," and "it is written." These passages are apparently taken from extracanonical works no longer extant. In 7 : 11 there is a quotation from Jesus not recorded in the gospels which was probably one of the sayings of Jesus that circulated in Egypt in the post-Apostolic era, such as are found in the Oxyrhynchus papyri.

³¹ Barnabas: "Concerning the cross in another prophet, who saith: 'And when shall these things be accomplished? saith the Lord. Whensoever... blood shall drop from a tree.'" IV Ezra 4:33; 5:5; "How long and when shall this be?"..."Blood shall trickle out of wood."

³² IV Ezra 7 : 39 (This verse is missing in the Vulgate and in the Authorized Version). The dating and textual criticism of IV Ezra also has its complexities. The passages from this work related to Barnabas (4:33; 5:5; 7:39) come from a section of IV Ezra (3-14) believed to have been written originally in Hebrew before the end of the 1st century A.D.; "Apocrypha," S. H. Horn *et al.*, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (Washington, D.C., 1960), pp. 50, 51. II Enoch 32: 2 quoted above may contain a concept astronomically related to this verse in IV Ezra.

anti-Sabbatarian chapter apparently refers to an extension of this celestial activity, "when His Son shall come,...and shall change the sun and moon and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day." ³³ The similarity between these two passages lies in more than just phraseology. They both come out of the context of a chapter that deals with the "millennium" and the future age. ³⁴

Numerical imagery in Jewish apocalyptic is admittedly a complex subject which cannot be thoroughly explored here, but it is of interest to note that in another location IV Ezra divided the present world age not into six epochs as Barnabas did, but into twelve (a multiple).³⁵ Another work which contains this division of the present world age into twelve time periods is the Apocalypse of (Syriac or II) Baruch. This is one of various parallels between IV Ezra and II Baruch, which was written in the last half of the 1st century A.D. In II Baruch these twelve ages are dualistically alternated between light and darkness, good and evil.³⁶

Persian Influence. The twelve-age outline of IV Ezra and II Baruch in turn strongly resembles the ages system of

³³ Barnabas 15 : 5. Other writers of Jewish apocalyptic also mention this. At the end of the Jubilees, "all the luminaries (shall) be renewed" Jubilees I : 29. In I Enoch 91 : 15-17 after the "great eternal judgement," "The powers of the heavens shall be given seven-fold light." This resembles the Zoroastrian idea of the final renovation of all the universe. (See below.)

³⁴ IV Ezra 7 describes a 400-year "millennium" which begins with the coming of the Messiah, and ends with His death along with all humanity. Seven days after this all those in the grave will be resurrected along with the Messiah, to stand before the "Most High...on his judgement seat." On this "Day of Judgement," quoted above from 7:39, the "heathen" are assigned to the "lake of torment...the furnace of the Pit" and the righteous to the "paradise of joy."

³⁵ IV Ezra 14:11, 12: "For the world-age is divided into twelve parts; nine (parts) are passed already, and the half of the tenth part; and there remain of it two (parts) besides the half of the tenth part." 5:49: "So have I also disposed the world which I have created by defined periods of time."

³⁶ II Baruch 26-28; 53; 68, 69.

Zoroastrianism, in which the battle between the forces of light and darkness (the good led by Ahura Mazda against the evil headed by Ahriman) is pursued to its close at the end of a 12,000-year course, which is divided into four aeons of 3,000 years each.³⁷

Various points of correspondence have been noted between Zoroastrian doctrine and Jewish thought.³⁸ It is possible that this interchange of ideas began as early as the Exile when these two currents of thought were most directly in confrontation, though evidence for a relationship is not remarkable until the last few centuries B.C. ³⁹ Even in areas where an exchange of ideas appears evident, it is not necessarily certain in which direction the transmission of thought occurred.⁴⁰

³⁷ In the first aeon Ahura Mazda made preparations for the battle with Ahriman and laid out the number of years necessary to accomplish the final triumph of righteousness. This period of time was agreed upon by both of the protagonists. The warfare began in the second aeon. The third aeon culminated in the advent of the great prophet Zoroaster. The final aeon is divided into three millenniums, each of which is ruled over by a virgin-born son of Zoroaster. This last aeon ends with the ultimate victory of righteousness, a resurrection and judgement, rewards to the wicked and righteous, and the renovation of the world and the universe. IV Ezra even parallels the Zoroastrian system roughly with respect to time schedule. The Iranian outline left a balance of 3,000 of the total 12,000 years from the time of Zoroaster (sometime in the first half of the last millennium B.C. historically) to the end. Of the total of 12 world periods (of unspecified duration) in IV Ezra, the author left a remainder of two and a half periods from his time in the 1st century A.D.

³⁸ The main points of similarity are:

- 1. The nature and origin of evil.
- 2. A personal antagonist of God.

3. The doctrine of angels, especially with respect to their organized hierarchy.

4. A tendency toward dualism.

- 5. A bodily resurrection with individual afterlife.
- 6. A last judgement with its rewards and punishments.

³⁹ "There is no clear trace of Iranian influence on Judaism before the second century B.C., though the beginnings of this influence may well go back a century or two earlier." Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

⁴⁰ "We cannot say with any certainty whether the Jews borrowed from the Zoroastrians or the Zoroastrians borrowed from the Jews This relationship is especially difficult to demonstrate in the realm of eschatology. ⁴¹ The reason for this is that the Jewish apocalyptic cited above antedates by several centuries the Pahlavi books, which contain the more elaborate Zoroastrian eschatologic statement with its ages outline. However, the details of Zoroastrian literary chronology are obscure and their interpretation is a perplexing problem to scholars working in that field, ⁴² and the earlier teachings of this religion were probably transmitted orally for a long period of time. ⁴³ Zoroastrian tradition holds that the original Avesta was destroyed by Alexander the Great and that only a third of it remained in the memories of men. This is "almost certainly pure legend, but legend, as usual, probably enshrines some grain of truth." ⁴⁴ It remains a distinct though as yet unproved possibility that the division of the present world

or whether either in fact borrowed from the other." R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (New York, 1961), pp. 57, 58.

⁴¹ "The case for a Judaeo-Christian dependence on Zoroastrianism in its purely eschatological thinking is quite different and not at all convincing, for apart from a few hints in the $G\bar{a}th\bar{a}s...$ and a short passage in Yasht...we have no evidence as to what eschatological ideas the Zoroastrians had in the last four centuries before Christ." Zaehner, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴² "The whole question is immensely complicated by the fact that the data for the history of Mazdayasnianism (the religion of Zoroaster) are very obscure and conflicting. In fact no two specialists agree in their interpretation of the evidence, as is particularly clear if we compare the views of the latest competent writers on the subject." "The apocalyptic picture of the end of the world (e.g., Rev. 8 ff.) calls to mind many Iranian parallels, though in view of the obscurity of Zoroastrian literary chronology, it cannot be definitely shown that they antedate Sassanian times (third-seventh centuries A.D.)." Albright, *op. cit.*, pp. 358, 363.

⁴³ "Zoroaster...preached a new gospel, the general nature of which is clear from the Gathas of the Avesta....Judging from linguistic and paleographic evidence, they [concepts of the Avesta] were transmitted orally for not less than 800, and perhaps for more than 1100 years." Albright, *op. cit.*, pp. 359, 360. Between the 1st and ^{2d} editions of this work Albright moved his date for Zoroaster three centuries farther, consequently his estimated period for this oral transmission became 300 years longer.

44 Zaehner, op. cit., p. 25.

age into epochs as found in the Jewish apocalyptic cited above (which Barnabas draws from) had its original basis, in one form or another, in Iranian thought of the era before Christ.

Greek Philosophy. Some of the presuppositions underlying Barnabas' ages system also harmonized with ideas from Greek philosophy, especially as they are found fused with the Hebrew religion in the works of Philo. This Jewish philosopher, also a resident of Alexandria and a great allegorist, antedated the Epistle of Barnabas by about a century. While he accepted and observed the Sabbath (he believed that it was a day for philosophic meditation and a mystical experience), his teachings undermined the foundation upon which it rested. Because he accepted the Platonic concept that time was based upon motion, Philo did not believe that the record of Gn I referred to literal days. He interpreted the six days of creation as meaning "not a quantity of days, but a perfect number" and he adds, "It is quite foolish to think that the world was created in six days or in a space of time at all." 45

The fact that this type of thinking was current in Barnabas' place and time certainly could have enhanced the acceptance of his millennial ages scheme, but in the matter of interpretation the writer stands closer to the apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and Rabbinic teaching. ⁴⁶

Christian Acceptance. The millennial ages system with its 6,000 years of present world history appeared in Christian literature for the first time in the Epistle of Barnabas.

⁴⁵ Quoted in H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), I, 120. ⁴⁶ Barnabas "gives no sign of being motivated by such philosophical objections as Philo felt, but justifies it [the 1 day = 1,000 year rule] by means of Ps. lxxxix. (xc.) 4.... In this point also Barnabas rests on Jewish tradition." C. K. Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology: Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd* (Cambridge, Engl., 1956), pp. 369, 370. See also below note 63. Subsequently the idea received a fairly wide circulation in the early Church. At least a dozen of the early Church Fathers⁴⁷ from Justin Martyr ⁴⁸ to Augustine accepted the theory to a greater or lesser extent. Hippolytus (d. *ca.* 236) is particularly noteworthy in the development of this idea as he carried the system to its logical conclusion. If the present world age terminates with Christ's second advent at the end of 6,000 years, then the date for that event can be computed if the date of creation is known. Using the LXX text he arrived at the date of 5,500 B.C. for creation and therefore believed that Christ would return about A.D. 500. Thus Hippolytus became the first Church Father known to us who set a specific date for the second advent by calculation, ⁴⁹ and it was based upon the millennial ages theory. Lactantius later arrived at the same date by the same method of calculation.

Needless to say, these Church Fathers were in error theologically if not chronologically, and the failure of their forecast undoubtedly reinforced the movement away from the 6,000 year system to a less exact interpretation as found in the teachings of Augustine. Augustine accepted the millennial ages outline at face value in his earlier career, ⁵⁰ but later, as he

⁴⁷ Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian (probably), Hippolytus, Julius Africanus, Cyprian, Commodian, Victorinus of Pettau, Methodius, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine. Space prohibits a full documentation and discussion of these sources, but see especially L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, (Washington, D.C., 1946-54), vol. I, under the appropriate sections, in conjunction with the writings of the Fathers.

⁴⁸ Justin mentions the I day = 1,000 year principle in the same terms used in Jubilees 4:30,31 which refers to Adam's unfulfilled day; *Dialogue with Trypho*, 81. The millennial-ages system in its more complete form is not found in his extant works, but there is a lost fragment of Justin referred to by Anastasius who says, "Justin the martyr and philosopher, who, commenting with exceeding wisdom on the number six of the sixth day,...Whence also, having discoursed at length on the number six, he declares that all things which have been framed by God are divided into six classes,..." ANF, I, 302.

49 Froom, op. cit., p. 278.

⁵⁰ "I myself, too, once held this opinion." Augustine, De civitate Dei, xx. 7.

became the great proponent of Amillennialism, he shifted away from the idea and its natural premillennial implications. Though he retained the idea of dividing the present world age into six periods, Augustine based his divisions on periods of Biblical history, none of which were 1,000 years in length. ⁵¹ With other features of Augustinian theology this idea received acceptance in the Middle Ages, and also in later eras. This concept of a "world week" with its "septiform periodicity," whether held in its earlier more precise millennial outline or in its later generalized form, has continued to exert an influence even down to modern times. ⁵²

Millennialism

The question has been raised in regard to Christian theology, under what category of millennial doctrine does the Epistle of Barnabas belong? It certainly does not support Postmillennialism. ⁵³ The epistle is generally understood as presenting the premillennial view, but it has been claimed for Amillennialism. ⁵⁴ The basic assumption that must be made

⁵¹ Augustine's ages are: (1) Adam to Noah, (2) Noah to Abraham, (3) Abraham to David, (4) David to the Captivity, (5) the Captivity to Christ, (6) Christ to the end, (7) the second advent and the eternal rest. *De genesi contra Manichaeos*, i. 23. With his amillennial view the period from Christ to the end becomes his "millennium." Though he did not necessarily mean for this 6th period to be understood as a literal 1,000 years, his teaching later came to be interpreted that way, and another disappointment of the end of the world hope was experienced around A.D. 1,000.

⁵² William Miller, leader of the 1844 Advent Movement, criticized the day-age theory in connection with his opposition to a temporal millennium, "He then alludes to the 'mystical meaning' deduced from the six days of creation week, and avers that the prevalent false millennial theory 'has led mankind into more delusion than any other thing or manner of explaining Scripture ever did.'" Froom, *op. cit.*, IV, 480.

⁵³ "It is clear that Barnabas' real view was that he and his contemporaries stood within the 6000 years, still waiting for the Son of God to usher in the millennial period with heavenly signs and portents." Barrett, op. cit., p. 371.

⁵⁴ D. H. Kromminga, The Millennium in the Church (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1945), pp. 31ff. in order to classify Barnabas as amillennialist is that the 15th chapter of the epistle makes the future symbolic seventh and eighth days identical with respect to commencement and duration. ⁵⁵ If they are not identical then Barnabas is premillennialist. The problem arises because the author did not clearly differentiate between the two days and thus has left room for some confusion. ⁵⁶

In spite of his lack of clarity on this point, the premillennial view is certainly the simplest and most reasonable way to understand the writer. ⁵⁷ There are some minor reasons for

⁵⁵ "He seems to be of the opinion that there will be a seventh world period all right, but that period will be identical with the perfection of the eternal state. There can be no doubt about the identity of his seventh and his eighth day." Kromminga, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵⁶ There are actually two problems that contribute to the confusion:

1. The author did not specifically state that the 1,000 year rule applied to the seventh day as it did to the other six (15:5). "In 15:5-7, however, the writer of this Epistle does not develop logically the thought with regard to the seventh day; for the seventh day on which God rested from His works should in accordance with the same principle of interpretation as in 15:4 have been taken as a symbol of a thousand years of rest, *i.e.*, the millennium." Charles, *op. cit.*, II, 427.

2. The author did not clearly state whether the eighth day starts at the beginning, during, or at the end of the future seventh day (15:8). "But this leads him to include the explicit statement that the eighth day is the beginning of a new world, and if by this he means the eighth millennium what he says here is inconsistent with what he says in xv. 5-7, where the Sabbatical millennium in which sin is overcome is the seventh." Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

Is it possible that this obscurity in Barnabas is reflected in the writings of Clement of Alexandria? He writes, "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." *Stromata*, vi. 16.

⁵⁷ As does one Catholic writer who diagrams Barnabas' system for his readers, "Days: 1|2|3|4|5|6-the present|7 Millennium|8 eternity"

the past

and he adds, "His seventh era begins when the world *ends*, and will *end* with the dawn of 'another world,'—not another millennium, but the day of eternity, 'the eighth day.'" J. A. Kleist, *The Epistle of Barnabas* ("Ancient Christian Writers," vol. VI; Westminster, Md., 1948), p. 179.

drawing a distinction between the seventh and eighth days in this passage. The logical progression of the chapter indicates a difference, 58 and the mere fact that the author uses a different name or number at all implies a distinction. But the greatest reason against making the two days identical is the basic purpose of the chapter. If the future seventh and eighth days begin together (at the end of the sixth day) then so do the week days in this present age, and that leaves Christians keeping the seventh-day Sabbath which is exactly what the writer did not want, and against which he was writing. A distinction between the seventh and eighth days both present and future is vital to the author's anti-Sabbatarian cause. It should be kept in mind that this chapter was not meant to be a treatise on the millennium, but that the millennium and the ages scheme are present here because they are useful in supporting the writer's basic purpose in the chapter, *i.e.*, opposition to the Sabbath. ⁵⁹

The Sabbath

The Epistle of Barnabas was not written simply as a tract to dispose of the Sabbath, although that was the author's purpose in the 15th chapter. The writer's anti-Sabbatarianism was just one of the many features of his overall anti-Judaism. The Sabbath had become so intimately connected with the fabric of Judaism, indeed one of the hallmarks of it, in the thinking of the writer (and many of his age) that he was unable to make a separation between the continuing Sabbath and other features of the Hebrew religion no longer to be perpetuated in Christianity.

The main argument used in the epistle against the Sabbath was the millennial ages outline by which the writer transferred

⁵⁸ vv. 1-4—first 6 days; vv. 5-8a—the 7th day; vv. 8b-9—the 8th day.

⁵⁹ "The only point that is really clear here is perhaps the only point that Barnabas really wished to make: the Jews with their Sabbaths are in the wrong, the Christians with their Sundays are in the right." Barrett, op cit., p. 370.

it to a future age. To arrive at this conclusion three assumptions were required:

1. The days of creation could not be interpreted entirely as literal days, but were wholly or in part symbolic in nature.

2. These "days" were to extend into the future from the time of creation for their accomplishment. 60

3. The length of time occupied by each "day" was to be determined by the equation that one day equals 1,000 years.

In regard to the first assumption, the Genesis record of creation when taken in its most logical sense is simply the ancient Hebrew writer's account of origins, and was a natural place for him to begin the history of mankind and redemption. There is nothing in Gn I and 2 to indicate that the writer of these chapters in any way felt that they were mythologic, legendary, symbolic, prophetic, or to be interpreted allegorically. To interpret this account of creation in such a manner is to apply an external presupposition to it that violates the basic principle that the Scriptures should be interpreted according to their most literal and obvious meaning, unless the contents or the context of the passage dictate otherwise. ⁶¹ The second assumption Barnabas established by transposing the original verb forms of the LXX, ⁶² and the third rests on his faulty exegesis of Ps 90 : 4. ⁶³

⁶⁰ As opposed to the geologic-ages theory or Philo's interpretation for example, which place the supposed symbolism in the past.

⁶¹ For a discussion of allegorization and its relation to Seventh-day Adventist principles of interpretation see Royal Sage, "Does Seventhday Adventist Theology Owe a Debt to Theodore of Mopsuestia?" AUSS, I (1963), 81-90.

⁶² "In this interpretation two points are involved: the expansion of 'days' into millennia, and the change of the past tense (συνετέλεσεν) into the future (συντέλεσει). The latter change Barnabas makes no attempt to justify.

"The universe will thus be completed in 6,000 years. Gen ii. 2 continues that on the seventh day God rested (ματέπαυσεν). This aorist also is changed into a future." Barrett, op. cit., p. 370.

⁶³ "Clearly he is applying a ready-made set of canons of interpretation. In making the former he... justifies it by means of Ps. lxxxix. (xc.) 4. This piece of eschatological mathematics, though very serviceThe only other argument Barnabas used against the Sabbath besides the millennial ages scheme is found in 15:6, 7. Not until that future age represented by the Sabbath will man be hallowed enough to keep it, "we shall be able to hallow it then, because we ourselves shall have been hallowed first" (v. 7). But as for this present age, even the best of men are unable to achieve that state of purity and holiness. ⁶⁴ For a brief answer to this in passing it should be remembered, that which God commands He also supplies strength sufficient to perform.

Why should the author of Barnabas believe that Christians were unable to attain sufficient sanctity to hallow the Sabbath in this present age? The answer to this may possibly be found in the kind of Sabbath observed by the Jews in Barnabas' era. One of the reasons for opposition to the Sabbath in the early Church was the Jewish legalistic misuse of it, and it is possible that Barnabas' statement here reflects the same reaction against the burdensome restrictions the Sabbath had been weighed down with in the intertestamental period.

As the Epistle of Barnabas is the witness closest to the

able to Christians perplexed by the parousia, seems to have been Jewish in origin.... The rabbinic evidence can be traced back to the first century, and supplemented by Jub. iv. 30, where, however, there is no explicit reference to Ps. xc. In this point also Barnabas rests on Jewish tradition.

"Thus in all his calculations Barnabas has simply adopted and transposed Jewish methods and results. We have already seen that the equation of one day with a thousand years was Jewish; so also was the connection between the Sabbath and the age to come." Barrett, op cit., pp. 369-371.

⁶⁴ "If therefore a man is able now to hallow the day which God hallowed, though he be pure in heart, we have gone utterly astray" (15:6). "And in our sinful inability thus to sanctify it he finds the reason for its abolition." Kromminga, *op. cit.*, p. 35. The same reasoning applies to Sunday. If Christians cannot become sufficiently holy now to hallow the Sabbath day, neither can they become such to hallow any other weekly holy day such as the "eighth day." Therefore it could not have been necessary, in the author's thinking, to hallow the 8th day in the sense of a strict religious observance the way the Sabbath had been kept, but it was "for rejoicing" (15:9).

New Testament on this subject, it is important to consider not only the reasons the writer did give for voiding the Sabbath, but also the reasons he did not give:

1. He did not cite any teaching of Christ to discontinue Sabbathkeeping.

2. He did not cite any command or example of the Apostles to discontinue Sabbathkeeping.

3. He did not cite any change in or abolition of the Law as a reason for discontinuing Sabbathkeeping.

4. He made no mention of the Sabbath as being a ceremonial type that was fulfilled and terminated at the cross.

Does opposition to the Sabbath in this epistle imply that it was being kept in the author's time and place? Certainly. But the question is, by whom? If the party the writer opposed was composed of Christians then they were Judaizers of the rankest type. As has been mentioned earlier, Barnabas' antagonists were more likely non-Christian Jews. The epistle was directed against the Jews and various features of their faith and practice to prevent his Christian readers from becoming Judaizing Christians (or returning to Judaism itself). ⁶⁵

The epistle gives no direct evidence that evangelical Christians in the New Testament tradition were keeping the Sabbath there and then, nor does it say that they were not. The most that can be said on this point is that the Christian readers of this letter were in "danger" of observing the Sabbath, and that there was a strong enough appeal in Sabbathkeeping for them that the author wrote his 15th chapter against it, with the warning that anyone so doing has "gone utterly astray" (15:6). The strongest evidence in support of the Sabbath from this epistle is not found in the reverse implication that Christians of that time were keeping the Sabbath, but rather in the clear demonstration of the fact that the anti-Sabbatarianism of so early a witness rests upon such a thoroughly unbiblical basis.

⁶⁵ "Barnabas' 'sons and daughters' were face to face with the ^{temp}tation to fall back into Judaism." Kleist, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

The Eighth Day

Again it should be pointed out that the author's main objective in the 15th chapter of the epistle was to void the Sabbath. His principal thrust in this passage was to oppose the obligation of Sabbath observance, and not necessarily to enjoin Sundaykeeping as such, although this was a logical byproduct of his attack. The introduction of Sunday in this chapter was of far less importance to the author than was the elimination of the Sabbath. Sunday was brought in at the end of his anti-Sabbatarian statement almost as a postscript, and only the last three of 32 lines of text in the chapter are concerned with it. The author's comment on his keeping of the eighth day did not place it in the same category that Sabbath observance previously occupied (and which Sundaykeeping later came to occupy), with its mandatory obligation as a sanctified weekly holyday. ⁶⁶

It may be asked, why did the author always refer to the day we commonly call Sunday as the "eighth day"? Several reasons for this have been proposed:

1. Because he was citing that phrase from II Enoch. 67

2. Because he was drawing a parallel with Jewish circumcision which was assigned to the eighth day after birth. ⁶⁸

3. Because the name was in common use in his time, perhaps

66 See above, note 64.

⁶⁷ "In xv. 8, however, this writer [Barnabas] shows his return to our text [II Enoch 32:1,2] by his use of the peculiar phrase, 'the eighth day.'" Charles, *op. cit.*, II, 427. This is quite reasonable, but of course depends on where one dates II Enoch (see note 28).

⁶⁸ Yost, *ibid.*; Hammill, *ibid.* Barnabas did not mention that circumcision took place on the 8th day, nor did he make any connection between that rite and the Sabbath. The first time this idea appeared in Christian literature was in Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 41. Justin also used the eight people in Noah's ark as a symbol for the 8th day. *Ibid.*, 138. While it is not impossible that circumcision was the basis for Barnabas' use of the eighth day, he did not say so, and the only reason supplied in the epistle for it was the millennial-ages theory. It is more likely that these varying reasons employed by Barnabas and Justin represent independent attempts to justify the same thing—use of the eighth day. due to the old Roman eight-day market-day cycle, or some such similar custom. ⁶⁹

Once more it is important to view the negative aspect of the problem, and look at the reasons that the writer did not give for his use of Sunday:

1. He cited no command or inference from Christ for Sunday observance.

2. He cited no instruction or practice of the Apostles for Sunday observance.

3. He did not cite any Scripture in support of Sunday observance (other than the verses used in the millennial ages theory).

⁶⁹ It is a basic question whether "the eighth day" was a special coined Christian term or one that was in general use. It is significant that the eighth day appears most strongly in Sabbath/Sunday literature in the 2d century (early—Barnabas; middle—Justin; late—Clement). Thereafter it assumed much less importance, although it did not completely disappear, *i.e.*, the Venerable Bede in his book "Concerning Times," 4, mentioned, "The week consists of seven days, and the eighth day is the same as the first; to which it returns and in which the week begins again." Quoted by Yost, *op. cit.*, **p.** 66.

These 2d century statements were written in the period when the old eight-day market-day cycle (nundinae) was giving way to the newer seven-day astrologic week which spread through the empire with Mithraism. "The astrologic week, used unofficially in Italy as early as Augustus,... was 1st given legal recognition in the Roman civil calendar when Constantine,... made laws enforcing rest on Sunday, 'the venerable day of the Sun.'" Horn, et al., op. cit., pp. 1140, 1141.

Justin Martyr used the astrologic weekday names when he wrote to the emperor, referring to the first and seventh days as "the day of the sun," and "the day of Saturn," respectively (*First Apology*, 67). These names were known and used by the emperor, and by not referring to the Sabbath Justin avoided arousing his anti-Jewish antagonism. However, when he wrote against Trypho the Jew he used the Judaeo-Christian terminology of the Sabbath, the first day, and the seventh day, along with the added eighth day feature. (*Dial.*, 41, 138). Had Justin spoken of "the day of the sun" (or Saturn) to Trypho he would very likely have been further accused of paganism. The fact that Justin used the eighth day in converse with the non-Christian Trypho shows that he was acquainted with it and that it was not just a coined Christian phrase. 4. He did not cite the resurrection as a reason for Sunday observance.

5. He did not enjoin Sunday observance because that day was called "the Lord's day."

The one and only reason the author gave for his employment of Sunday was the millennial ages theory in which the eighth day was symbolic of a future age "which is the beginning of another world" (15:8). His conclusion based on this, and the only direct comment about his use of Sunday was, "Wherefore also we keep the eighth day for rejoicing" (15:9). Only after having established this thesis did he also add esteem to the eighth day by referring to the fact that Christ's resurrection occurred on that day, "in the which also Jesus rose from the dead" (15:9). ⁷⁰ This subordinate clause does not give the resurrection or a commemoration of it as the reason for keeping Sunday, but that event on the eighth day was mentioned here to lend its influence to the conclusion already finalized on the basis of the millennial ages outline. It is logical then that the author did not refer to the first (eighth) day of the week as the "Lord's day." ⁷¹

Brief mention might be made here of the use to which this work has been put by some advocates of Sunday observance, and the extravagant claims that on occasion have been made for it, such as, "It expressly mentions *the universal celebration* by the Church of the eighth day as a holy day, in place of the former seventh day." ⁷² Another dominical advocate has

⁷⁰ Barnabas 15:9: Διό και άγομεν την ήμέραν την όγδόην εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ἢ και ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν και φανερωθείς ἀνέβη εἰς οὐρανούς.

⁷¹ Justin took the next step after Barnabas and did give the resurrection as one of the reasons for Sunday observance, along with his 8th-day allegorisms (circumcision, eight people in the Ark), and the commemoration of the first day of creation. However, not until Clement of Alexandria (shortly after the reference in the apocryphal Gospel According to Peter) did "the Lord's day" appear in the bonafide writings of the Church Fathers definitely connected with the first day of the week. Clement finds it allegorically in the 10th book of Plato's Republic, again on the basis of the 8th day. Stromata, v. 14. ⁷⁸ I. Gilfillan cited in Robert Cox. The Literature of the Sabbath given a far more objective and acceptable statement to the effect that the Epistle of Barnabas,

certainly is admissible evidence to show that in the time of the writer of the Epistle the first day of the week was by some Christians,—somewhere or other, and after some fashion or other,—observed and distinguished from the other days of the week.⁷³

In conclusion, we may note that the two earliest clear statements in the literature of the early Church relating to the Sabbath/Sunday controversy are found in the writings of Justin Martyr and in the Epistle of Barnabas, which date from the middle and early 2d century respectively. Both of these works are anti-Judaistic and anti-Sabbatarian, and they both cite the use of Sunday in their localities. These writings originated from the first and second cities of the empire, Rome and Alexandria. It is interesting to view these works and their relation to the Sabbath in their place and time through the information supplied to us in the two oft-quoted but still striking statements from the 5th century Church historians Socrates and Sozomen:

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. 74

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. 76

Question (Edinburgh, 1865), I, 316. See also the comment of Westcott under note 2.

⁷⁸ W. Domville quoted in Cox, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, v. 22.

⁷⁵ Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History, vii. 19.