

**A HISTORY OF
THE
SATURDAY RESURRECTION
DOCTRINE**

by

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PREFACE

This paper is an attempt to present some history of the doctrine that Jesus Christ was resurrected on Saturday, not on Sunday as is traditionally taught and believed.

The Saturday resurrection doctrine states simply that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, remained in the grave for three full days and three full nights, and rose again late Saturday. There are some modifications of this point of view among various students of the subject which we shall note later.

This doctrine is very popular and widely accepted among those who observe the seventh-day Sabbath. It has also gained some strong support among Sunday-keepers. It is not a new doctrine, nor is it a doctrine accepted only by a handful of supporters.

This thesis has three main purposes. They are:

1. To reveal some history of the doctrines of Christianity.
2. To prove the Saturday resurrection doctrine is not a new doctrine, promulgated only in the last forty or fifty years or so by this or that religious leader.
3. To accept the challenges of some who rejected the Saturday resurrection to prove it was a teaching of the ancient Church and that it has appeared in literature before the twentieth century. More will be said about this in the Introduction.

This study is not in and of itself an attempt to prove the Saturday resurrection. While the author personally believes that Christ was crucified on Wednesday and resurrected seventy-two hours later, that is, late Saturday afternoon, it is not his intention to try to prove it within the scope of this study. There will be certain statements that express belief in the doctrine, but these are only as may be called for within the context of the study.

The author welcomes correspondence and literature on any aspect of the subject, "What were the days of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection?"

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Selby V. McCasland, in his article "The Origin of the Lord's Day", says:

A tradition that the resurrection was after three days and three nights is shown by Matthew's reference to Jonah (12:40) and also in the effort of the Syriac Didascalia to show that this tradition was really correct in a figurative sense.¹

Where did this "tradition" originate if it was not apostolic? In other words, if the Church under the apostles did not believe Christ rose on Saturday, where and when did such a belief begin?

The author decided to make this study partly because of certain "challenges" that came to him over a period of years.

Robert C. McQuilkin, in an article written to oppose the Saturday resurrection, says: The question at once arises: "When and how did the Christian Church begin to consider Friday the day" (of the crucifixion)... ?²

When this author was living in Benton Harbor, Michigan, in the early 1960's, he attended a Seventh-day Adventist tent meeting conducted by a traveling campaign team. In the course of a talk on the subject of the Sabbath, the speaker made reference to the Saturday resurrection doctrine and attributed it to a certain radio minister. After the meeting, this author asked the speaker if he meant Herbert W. Armstrong. He said he did. He then rejected all efforts to show him the Saturday resurrection doctrine was around long before Herbert W. Armstrong.

One man, a minister-author in the East, wrote this author to say nothing can be found in the writers of the early Church, or before the Reformation, or before 1800 to support any other idea but the traditional Sunday resurrection. In an earlier letter, this man stated that the Saturday resurrection doctrine is totally foreign to every ancient writer.³ Finally, a religious leader living in the Southwest stated in a letter to this author that the idea of a Wednesday crucifixion (corollary of which is the Saturday resurrection) "began with Mr. Garner T. Armstrong."⁴

This history is-in-part-an answer to these stated and implied challenges!

¹ Selby V. McCasland, "The Origin of the Lord's Day", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 49 (1930), p.66.

² Robert C. McQuilkin, "Was Friday the Day of the Crucifixion?", *Sunday School Times*, March 5, 1932.

³ Letter to the author dated November 9, 1965, and an earlier letter dated October 8, 1965. This man once held to the Saturday resurrection as stated in another letter dated September 13, 1973. The present author prefers to maintain this man's anonymity.

⁴ Letter to the author dated December 19, 1977. The present author prefers to maintain this man's anonymity.

CHAPTER II
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

It seems that the Saturday resurrection doctrine is widely attributed to Herbert W. Armstrong and/or his son Garner Ted Armstrong. Herbert Armstrong does teach the Saturday resurrection and has taught it since his ordination as a minister.

He has stated that he learned the Saturday resurrection doctrine in the summer of 1927 and wrote an article (apparently never published) entitled "Foundation for Sunday Sacredness Crumbles".¹

In the early summer of 1932² Armstrong was ordained a minister by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God. This group was related to (but incorporated separately from) what was then called the Church of God (Adventist), and is now known as the Church of God, Seventh Day. At that time their headquarters were in Stanberry, Missouri.

Armstrong taught the Saturday resurrection in a campaign at Alvadore, Oregon, in 1934-1935.³

Since Garner Ted Armstrong was born on February 9, 1930⁴, it is obvious that the Saturday resurrection doctrine did not originate with him. He simply learned it from his father.

Herbert Armstrong never specifically says just how he came to learn of this doctrine. In 1927, when he accepted it, he was not, strictly speaking, a member of the Church of God, Seventh Day. This group has always taught the Saturday resurrection, as we shall see. It is possible Armstrong studied the subject with Church of God literature. Certainly this doctrine was being taught by the Stanberry group around 1931, when Armstrong was ordained. L. D. Snow of Oklahoma, a former Church of God minister, now a leader in the Sacred Name movement, who knew Herbert Armstrong personally, wrote to this author: "YES, Wed. crucifixion-Sat. resurrection was OFFICIALLY taught in 1932."⁵ And it was by no means new then, as we shall see later.

But before we continue with the Church of God, we shall look at several other twentieth century writers who were teaching the Saturday resurrection before or at about the same time as Herbert W. Armstrong.

¹ Herbert W. Armstrong, *Autobiography*, Vol. I, pp. 325-326. See also *The Plain Truth*, June, 1959, p. 5.

² *ibid.*, pp. 398-399, 407. The actual month was June. See *The Plain Truth*, December 1959, pp. 9-10. See also Lawson Briggs, *What Became of the Church Jesus Built?*, p. 282.

³ *The Plain Truth*, November, 1960, pp. 11-14, 18.

⁴ *Autobiography*, Chapter 21, pp. 370ff.

⁵ Letter to the author dated October 26, 1965.

The first writer to consider is William Frederick, who published his book *Three Prophetic Days* in 1900. He says nothing about any outside influences that guided him. All he says is that the subject of the book was suggested to him while preparing his Sunday School lesson on the "Triumphal Entrance", John 12:1-12. He began to search for reasons why Jesus arrived six days before the Passover, and the book was the result of his studies.⁶

The next writer to notice is a man who did a thorough job of presenting the Saturday resurrection. This was Eugene Charles Callaway, whose book *Harmony of the Last Week* was published in its first form in 1901. He describes it as "a short treatise".⁷ Later he calls it "My earliest essay or booklet" and "a short pamphlet of 29 pages".⁸

Callaway states that he first became interested in this subject in 1900, and that at the time he was writing (1901), he had not seen anything advocating a Saturday resurrection.⁸

At least four editions of Callaway's book were published, the last in 1929. He also published three articles in the *Sunday School Times* in 1928 in which he explained his belief in a Saturday resurrection.¹⁰

The next writer to consider is O. L. Hailey. His book *The Three Prophetic Days of Matt. 12:40* was published in 1931. However, Hailey had been a student of the subject long before then. He says: "For twenty years I have been studying about the theme of this little volume."¹¹

J. B. Tidwell of Baylor University says in his Introduction to Hailey's book that "a number of years ago" Hailey had published "some small pamphlets" on the subject.¹² He also says that Hailey published "tracts on the subject" "years ago".¹³ Tidwell says of himself that he had "long been convinced" of a Saturday resurrection.¹⁴

Perhaps the first man to give the Saturday resurrection doctrine wide notice among what might be called Evangelicals or Conservatives was Reuben A. Torrey.

Torrey was a prominent evangelist before and after the turn of the century and taught for a time at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He was also dean of Los Angeles Bible Institute at one time.

⁶ William Frederick, *Three Prophetic Days*, p. 3.

⁷ Eugene Charles Callaway, *Harmony of the Last Week* (1929 ed.), p. 13.

⁸ *ibid.* p. 183

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ March 13 - "On What Day was Christ Crucified?", March 31 - "Wednesday Crucifixion Fulfills Prophecy", April 7 - "The Harmony of Passion Week". These articles, under the same titles, also appeared in the Church of God, Seventh Day magazine *The Bible Advocate* in the issues for December 11, 18, and 25, 1928.

¹¹ O.L. Hailey, *The Three Prophetic Days of Matt. 12:40*, p. v.

¹² *ibid.*, p. xi.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

Torrey was teaching the Saturday resurrection as early as 1907.¹⁵ However, it seems he really startled the religious world at the Great Prophetic Conference held at Carnegie Hall and Marble Collegiate Church in New York City on November 25-28, 1918. Torrey stated to the assembled group (which included a number of prominent religious leaders of the day) that he believed Christ was crucified on Wednesday and remained in the tomb seventy-two hours.¹⁶

According to some writers, Torrey also put out "a little brochure" (or tract) in which he taught the Saturday resurrection.¹⁷ However, these references appear to be to his book mentioned above in footnote 15.

Another writer on this subject in the early years of the present century was Elmer Ellsworth Franke, a one-time Seventh-day Adventist minister who, after leaving that church, had an independent ministry in New York City. His book *Pagan Festivals in Christian Worship*, published in 1919, teaches the Saturday resurrection.¹⁸ His magazine *People's Christian Bulletin*, in its issue for December, 1923, offered literature teaching the doctrine.¹⁹ Earlier, Franke discussed in the magazine his support of this doctrine in a debate in New York City on June 9, 1918.²⁰

Franke also wrote on the Saturday resurrection in a refutation of a Seventh-day Adventist magazine article in 1923. The Seventh-day Adventist Church officially teaches the traditional belief that Christ was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday morning.²¹

In the August 7, 1923, issue of *Signs of the Times*, an Adventist magazine, a man named J. Ronald Dieffenbacher had an article entitled "On What Day was Christ Resurrected?". A brief introduction says that "in some quarters of the church" the traditional Sunday resurrection was being questioned.²²

¹⁵ It was expounded in his book *Difficulties in the Bible*, published that year. See Chapter XXI, "Was Jesus Really Three Days and Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth?"

¹⁶ See E. E. Franke, "The Crucifixion of Christ on Saturday Not on Sunday", p. 15; E. E. Franke, *Pagan Festivals in Christian Worship* (1972 ed.), pp. 19-20; Raymond Clark, "Which Day is the Sabbath?", p. 12. Clark was present and heard Torrey make his statement.

¹⁷ Franke, "The Resurrection of Christ", p. 15; Franke, *Pagan Festivals*, p. 47.

¹⁸ pp. 5-45.

¹⁹ Inside front cover, The title being offered was "The Truth about the Day of Christ's Resurrection".

²⁰ *People's Christian Bulletin*, issue for June 25, 1918, p. 4

²¹ This belief is constantly expressed by Adventist writers. See the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. V., pp. 248-251. See also L. E. Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 103. Another brief reference is "The Wednesday Crucifixion Theory", a booklet by R. L. Odom, published in 1965.

²² p. 13. Whether Dieffenbacher meant some quarters of the Adventist church or the Christian church in general is unclear.

He begins by saying:

In a tract published in Washington D.C., the title of which is: "The Resurrection of Christ Not on Sunday", the writer labors through fifteen large pages to prove that Christ was crucified on Wednesday and was resurrected late on the Sabbath day.²³

He then continues in an attempt to disprove the tract and prove a Sunday resurrection.

The tone of Dieffenbacher's article suggests that the Saturday resurrection was not widely known among Adventists at that time.

The author of the tract Dieffenbacher refers to is not known. But Franke undertook to reply to this Adventist writer and sheds a little light upon the subject.

On page 25 of his booklet "The Resurrection of Christ on Saturday Not on Sunday" Franke says, referring to Dieffenbacher's article:

The article in question was written, we understand, against a tract published in Washington, D.C., by an old friend of ours, shortly after we issued our first pamphlet on the subject, . . . He is now dead,

Franke then proceeds to refute the Dieffenbacher article.

While this does not identify the author of the tract published in Washington, it does tell us that Franke published his first writing on the Saturday resurrection sometime before August, 1923. Our previous references to Franke's literature (see above) show he was teaching the Saturday resurrection as early as 1918. When and how he arrived at his belief that Christ was resurrected on Saturday cannot be determined., But it was probably after he left the Adventist church, which was around 1900.

In 1930 I. J. Hill published his booklet "The Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus". On the title page and on pages 23 and 27, Hill says he had studied the subject for forty years, and on page 16 he says fifty years. This would take us back to 1890 or 1880. However, on page 23 he says he challenged the Sunday resurrection when he was a "young boy". Since Hill was 84 years old in 1930, he could have been studying the day of the resurrection before the Civil War.

Maurice S. Logan, in his anti-Sabbath book *Sabbath Theology*, published in 1913, devotes a chapter to the Saturday resurrection doctrine.²⁴ Logan totally rejects the doctrine, but he refers to some literature worth noticing. On page 156 he mentions a pamphlet entitled

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Maurice Logan, *Sabbath Theology*, Chapter VII, "The Saturday Resurrection Theory Examined." There must have been enough interest in the doctrine at that time for Logan to give it an entire chapter of thirty pages!

"Three Days and Three Nights: or The Greatest Puzzle of Christendom Solved at Last" by Lt.-Col. T. W. Richardson, the editor of *The Sabbath Observer*, published in England. Logan gives no date, but he says the pamphlet appeared "recently". This could be no later than 1913, his book having appeared that year. Richardson's pamphlet taught the Saturday resurrection.

Logan also makes another reference on pages 168-169. This is an article by A. G. Marks entitled "The Crucifixion Date", which appeared in *The Sabbath Observer* in the July, 1912 issue. Marks also taught the Saturday resurrection.

Another reference can be inserted here. In *The Religious Herald* a Baptist magazine published in Richmond, Virginia, in the issue for April 13, 1922, there was an article entitled "Crucifixion Day" by H. A. Griesemer. The article teaches a Saturday resurrection. The author says

... there is not a verse, or a line, or a word anywhere in the New Testament that so much as intimates that Christ was crucified on Friday; . . .

A note at the end of the article says that the author read it before a meeting of Baptist ministers on March 24, 1902, and that it was published in substance in the *Baltimore Herald* on March 25, thereby showing that Griesemer believed in the Saturday resurrection around the turn of the century.

Also in this same issue of *The Religious Herald*, on page three, appears a letter signed by S. M. Provence in which he says that he had published an article in the magazine some time earlier in which he taught the Saturday resurrection.²⁵ He states he had worked "for a number of years" to prove the traditional Sunday resurrection was false.

G. G. Rupert, a one-time Seventh-day Adventist, who left that group and became a leader in the Independent Church of God movement in the first quarter of this century, published a magazine called *The Remnant of Israel*. His magazine carried a number of letters in which the writers taught the Saturday resurrection.²⁶ However, there seems to be some question about Rupert's personal belief. Nickels (footnote 26) says Rupert believed in the traditional Sunday resurrection. But William J. Walker, present director of the group called the Remnant of Israel and successor to Rupert (after I. C. Sultz, who taught the Saturday resurrection), told this author that Rupert definitely taught the resurrection was on Saturday.²⁷

²⁵ The article was "How Long was the Body of Jesus in the Tomb?", in the issue for March 2, 1922.

²⁶ Richard C. Nickels, *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God, 5, The Remnant of Israel*, p. 11.

²⁷ Letter to the author dated February 17, 1982.

Alonzo T. Jones is an example of a Seventh-day Adventist who believed and taught a Saturday resurrection. He may have left the Adventists, as he had some association with Rupert.²⁸ Jones published a booklet entitled *God's Sabbath: The Only Lord's Day*.²⁹ In chapters V-VII and again on page 58, he teaches the resurrection was on Saturday.

A. T. Robertson, the author of the famous book *A Harmony of the Gospels*, also mentions the Saturday resurrection. In this book, published in 1922, he says: "Quite an effort is made in some quarters to show that Jesus remained in the tomb seventy-two hours, three full days and nights."³⁰

In fact, Robertson himself spends considerable time studying the question. He makes this valuable statement:

But Matthew seems to put the resurrection on the evening after the Sabbath, our Saturday evening. . .³¹

Unfortunately, Robertson, instead of seeing the obvious truth in Matthew 28:1, assumed he had to "reconcile" Matthew with the other Gospel writers, thus ending up trying to support the Sunday resurrection.

There have been many other religious leaders and writers in this century who teach or taught (many are dead) the Saturday resurrection doctrine. Before we list several of them, it must be pointed out that some of these men had differing beliefs. While all of them believe(d) Christ was crucified on Wednesday, some of them preferred to push the resurrection up far enough so they could teach it was on Saturday night but late enough to be called a "Sunday" resurrection, since after sundown on Saturday would be Sunday in Jewish reckoning. Nonetheless, it is believed all the following men would support a full three days and three nights in the grave.

1. M. R. DeHaan (deceased), of the Radio Bible Class radio broadcast.³²
2. John A. Lovell (deceased), editor of *Kingdom Digest*, Dallas, Texas.³³
3. Alexander Schiffner, editor of *Prophetic Herald*, Spokane, Washington.³⁴

²⁸ Nickels, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 13.

²⁹ The original publication date is unknown, but Jones died in 1923.

³⁰ A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 289

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 288.

³² M. R. DeHaan, *Jonah-Fact or Fiction?* published in 1957, Chapters 14-16.

³³ Letter to the author dated December 12, 1963.

³⁴ "Three Days and Three Nights and the True Sabbath Day", *Prophetic Herald*, undated. See also an article by F. A. Hinman, "Three Days and Three Nights", *Prophetic Herald*, Volume 24, No. 4.

4. Joe Meier, editor of *Light-of-Day Messenger*, Daylight, Tennessee.³⁵
5. James G. Matthews (deceased), editor of *Bible Notebook*, Tumwater, Washington.³⁶
6. Carl J. E. Nelson (deceased), editor of *Rays of Light*, Colorado Springs, Colorado.³⁷
7. Roy D. Goodrich (deceased), editor of *Back to the Bible Way*, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.³⁸
8. William M. Smith (deceased), founder of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana.³⁹
9. Donald Gray Barnhouse (deceased), editor of *Eternity* magazine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁴⁰
10. Ethelbert W. Bullinger (deceased), prolific British religious writer.⁴¹
11. G. Campbell Morgan (deceased), noted minister and author.⁴²
12. Henry Grube (deceased), Baptist minister and writer.⁴³
13. Charles Halff of the Christian Jew Hour radio broadcast.⁴⁴
14. Cyril R. Crichlow (deceased), religious author.⁴⁵
15. William L. Blessing, editor of *Showers of Blessing*, Denver, Colorado.⁴⁶
16. F. Russell Ackley (deceased), editor of *Portions in Due Season*, Denver, Colorado.⁴⁷
17. Howard C. Estep, director of World Prophetic Ministry, Colton, California.⁴⁸
18. Milburn Cockrell, editor of *Berea Baptist Banner*, Ashland, Kentucky.⁴⁹

³⁵ He was at one time a minister in the Church of God, Seventh Day, but has been independent for many years. He accepted the Saturday resurrection about 1914.

³⁶ Letter to the author dated August 30, 1965. He accepted the Saturday resurrection about 1935.

³⁷ Letter to the author dated March 10, 1969. He accepted the Saturday resurrection about 1929.

³⁸ Communication with the author dated January 10, 1968.

³⁹ Letter to the author from his son, Simeon O. Smith, dated August 28, 1968. William Smith lived from February 28, 1872, to April 4, 1964. In 1959 Simeon Smith published a booklet entitled "The Wednesday Crucifixion of Christ" in which he teaches the Saturday resurrection.

⁴⁰ "Is Good Friday on Wednesday?", *Eternity*, June, 1958.

⁴¹ *The Companion Bible*, edited by Bullinger, published in 1910. Appendixes 144, p. 170; 156, p. 179; 165, p. 188; 166 p. 189.

⁴² *This was His Faith*, by Jill Morgan, pp. 183-186. He accepted the Saturday resurrection between 1915 and 1918.

⁴³ "On Which Day of the Week was Christ Crucified?", *The Western Voice*, February 19, 1968.

⁴⁴ Charles Halff, known as the Christian Jew, issues Simeon O. Smith's booklet (footnote 39, above) under the title "Was Jesus Crucified Wednesday?"

⁴⁵ Crichlow published a number of studies dealing with the Saturday resurrection, the first being "The Harmony of the Resurrection". in 1929. See his book *The New Birth*, p. 143, for a list of related titles he issued.

⁴⁶ "The Seed of the Woman", *Showers of Blessing*, December, 1967.

⁴⁷ "The Crucifixion-Wednesday? Thursday? Friday?", *Portions in Due Season*, March, 1955

⁴⁸ "The Bible Says", *Prophetic News Letter*, February, 1973.

⁴⁹ Letter to the author dated July 21, 1981.

19. R. B. Thieme, Jr., religious writer and speaker.⁵⁰
20. E. T. Tennyson, editor of *Harvest News Letter*, Jefferson City, Missouri.⁵¹
21. Jerry Falwell of the Old-Time Gospel Hour radio broadcast.⁵²
22. Oscar M. Baker of *Truth for Today* publications, Warsaw, Indiana.⁵³
23. Albert Garner of Blessed Hope Foundation, Lakeland, Florida.⁵⁴

It is important to remember that of all these men we have discussed, only five – the two Armstrongs, Franke, Meier, and Crichlow – are or were seventh-day Sabbath-keepers. All the rest are or were Sunday-keepers. In fact, Callaway and Frederick spend considerable time in their books trying to show why the Saturday resurrection doctrine does not mean Sunday should not be observed.

Other scattered references to the Saturday resurrection appear in literature. We shall mention two more of them, both valuable because they appear in publications meant to clarify certain questions in the Bible.

The first is a book entitled *Strange Scriptures that Perplex the Western Mind*, by Barbara M. Bowen. This book, published in 1944, is a collection of Scriptural references explained from the viewpoint of people in Christ's time and land. The authoress explains Matthew 12:40 as meaning the crucifixion was on Wednesday.⁵⁵

A second interesting reference is found in a pamphlet entitled "Where is Calvary?", by L. T. Pearson. While discussing the site of Christ's crucifixion, Pearson says the resurrection was on Saturday.⁵⁶

One independent Sabbath-keeping group that believed in the Saturday resurrection must be mentioned here, their early date making them important to this study. About the turn of the century, a group of German Sabbath-keepers in Roscoe, South Dakota, believed in this doctrine.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ R. B. Thieme, Jr., "King of Kings and Lord of Lords", published in 1966, pp. 26-28, 84.

⁵¹ "Was Jesus Born Christmas, Crucified Friday, and Resurrected Sunday?", *Harvest News Letter*, March-April, 1962.

⁵² Letter to the author written for Dr. Falwell by Richard U. Alvarez, dated August 13, 1980.

⁵³ Letter to the author dated November 1, 1980.

⁵⁴ Albert Garner, "Three Days and Three Nights", an undated tract.

⁵⁵ Barbara Bowen, *Strange Scriptures that Perplex the Western Mind*, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁶ L. T. Pearson, "Where is Calvary?", published in 1946, pp. 15-26.

⁵⁷ Richard C. Nickels, *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, p. 124.

One group that grew out of the Mormon movement teaches a Saturday resurrection. This is the Church of Christ, headquartered in Independence, Missouri. In one of their pamphlets appears the following statement:

Christ was crucified. . . on Wednesday and resurrected on Saturday afternoon or was in the tomb 72 hours, or three days and three nights, which is also verified in the Book of Mormon,

This is followed by quotations from III Nephi 8:5 and 22-23 (See also verse 3), book of Mormon references.⁵⁸

Another group that came out of the Mormon movement, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangites), the followers of James J. Strang, at least unofficially accept the Saturday resurrection.⁵⁹

Another group that developed out of the Mormon movement was Zion's Order of the Sons of Levi. This group, again at least unofficially, believes in the Saturday resurrection.⁶⁰

Even atheists have taken notice of the discussion over which day Christ was crucified, Wednesday or Friday. Writing in 1950, atheist author Herbert Cutner said:

There are many Christians who have argued that the New Testament writers. . . are altogether wrong, that Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday so as to give him three clear days before his resurrection.⁶¹

⁵⁸ "The Sabbath", by S. T. Bronson, undated, pp. 8-9. See also "Today is the Third Day?", by Arthur Coaty, *The Voice of Warning*, October, 1980.

⁵⁹ The Saturday resurrection is accepted by their leader Theron Drew of Burlington, Wisconsin, as explained in a letter to the author dated May 27, 1968. Both the Church of Christ and the Strangites keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

⁶⁰ Belief in the Saturday resurrection is expressed by William A. Hiles, the group's secretary, in a letter to the author dated March 13, 1965.

⁶¹ Herbert Cutner, *Jesus-God, Man, or Myth?*, p. 20.

CHAPTER III
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

As we go back to the nineteenth century, we find references and hints showing that the question of which day Christ rose must have been widely discussed, at least at certain times.

Among the first Sabbath-keepers to emigrate to America from England were the ancestors of what are today called the Seventh Day Baptists. As a denomination, the Seventh Day Baptists take no official stand on the day of Christ's resurrection. But there have been many Seventh Day Baptists who believed in the Saturday resurrection. In addition, there has been considerable literary activity in favor of this doctrine among Seventh Day Baptist writers.

Francis Bampfield, a seventeenth-century English leader among the group that was to become the Seventh-day Baptist denomination, believed in the Saturday resurrection.¹

Henry Clarke, a noted Seventh Day Baptist leader, who was active in his denomination in the very early part of the nineteenth century, believed in the Saturday resurrection.²

Another interesting reference that suggests the Seventh Day Baptists may have generally believed in the Saturday resurrection in the earlier years-perhaps to a greater extent than now-appears in a book called *Book of Religions*, written by John Hayward and published in 1861. He says, concerning the Seventh Day Baptists of his day:

They reject Sunday because the New Testament never alludes to a change of the Sabbath. It never speaks of Sunday as a sacred day or as commemorative of any event or as connected in any way with the Sabbath question. It does state that "Christ rose late on the Sabbath".³

A very prominent Seventh Day Baptist writer was Abram Herbert Lewis, a well-known and active leader in his denomination in the last decade or two of the nineteenth century.

Lewis accepted the Saturday resurrection doctrine about 1865.⁴ Following are some references to the doctrine in his writings:

1. *Biblical Teachings Concerning the Sabbath and the Sunday*, published in 1888. Chapter V, "Change of the Day Theory", discusses the Saturday resurrection.
2. *The Outlook*. This was a Seventh Day Baptist magazine edited by Lewis. In the issue for January, 1891, on page 21, he had a brief study of the doctrine under the heading, "Did the Resurrection Occur on Sunday?".

¹ Lawson Briggs, *What Became of the Church Jesus Built?*, p. 206.

² *ibid.*, pp. 204-206. Clarke published a book entitled *History of the Sabbatarians or Seventh Day Baptists in America* in 1811.

³ Quoted by Dean Blackwell, *A Handbook of Church History*, p. 310.

⁴ Abram Herbert Lewis, "The Time of Christ's Resurrection and the Observance of Sunday", *Sabbath Reform Library*, March, 1892, p. 24.

3. *Paganism Surviving in Christianity*, published in 1892. In this book Lewis deals with the doctrine on pages 173-174 and 179.

4. *Swift Decadence of Sunday What Next?*, published in 1899. Here Lewis has a brief study on pages 169-170.

5. *Spiritual Sabbathism*, published posthumously in 1910.⁵ Lewis discusses the doctrine on page 120 and in footnotes on pages 213-214 and 215-217.

Another Seventh Day Baptist writer, James Bailey, published a book entitled *Sabbath Commentary* in 1888. He has a lengthy study on pages 149-171 that suggest he personally believed in the Saturday resurrection, although he never positively commits himself to such a belief.⁶

At the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference held at Shiloh, New Jersey, in 1869, one L. C. Rogers presented an essay on the time of the resurrection.⁷ Whether Rogers argued for a Saturday resurrection or not is unknown at this time. But since many Seventh Day Baptists believed in the Saturday resurrection, this was undoubtedly what he discussed. But even if he defended the traditional Sunday resurrection, it still shows there was enough interest in the matter to call for study and discussion.

Another prominent Seventh Day Baptist who is now deceased was Loyal F. Hurley. He was a leading minister in his denomination who taught many ministerial students, influencing them to accept the Saturday resurrection.

Hurley accepted the doctrine himself sometime after 1902, the year he first began to study the question. However, both his father and his grandfather believed in the Saturday resurrection. Since Hurley was born in 1886, two generations back would take us well into the first half of the nineteenth century.⁸

While there are many other references to the Saturday resurrection in Seventh Day Baptist literature, the author does not feel that it is necessary to list many more of them. We shall note only a book entitled *The Sabbath in Divine Revelation and Human History*, published in 1928. The author was George Arthur Main, well-known in his day and a voluminous writer of literature on the subject of the Sabbath. In this particular book he presents the Saturday resurrection on pages 4-5 and 37-41.

⁵ Lewis died in 1908.

⁶ It is noteworthy that on page 96 Bailey mentions that Christ was in the tomb for three days after a Passover evening burial. Despite his noncommittal, there can be little doubt how Bailey believed on this point!

⁷ *The Gathering Call*, April-June, 1967, p. 9.

⁸ The facts about Hurley's background are from a letter to the author dated February 22, 1965. Hurley stated in this letter that he had studied the matter over sixty years and had held to the Sunday resurrection for several years. He published a pamphlet entitled "The Harmony of Passion Week" date unknown, in which he presented the Saturday resurrection.

At this point we must go back to the eighteenth century for a very early Seventh Day Baptist reference. In 1724 George Carlow published a book with the title *Truth Defended, or Observations on Mr. Ward's Expository Discourses from the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh verses of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, concerning the Sabbath*. Carlow taught the Saturday resurrection in his book without apology. His language seems to suggest that he was setting forth his personal belief as he makes no references to anyone who shared his view.⁹

With these references we leave the Seventh Day Baptists. It seems that, despite the fact they have no official stand on the day Christ was resurrected, the weight of opinion among them favors Saturday.¹⁰

Next we shall consider several Baptist (not Seventh Day) writers. The first is Patrick Samuel Gideon Watson, a Baptist minister active in some of the Southern states. He published an article entitled "Christ Lay in the Grave 72 Hours" in *The Religious Herald* for August 20, 1874.

In 1880 Watson published a book entitled *Prophetic Interpretations*. In chapters XIX, XX, and XXI and an appendix, he taught the Saturday resurrection, viewing it from several angles. The tone of his book suggests he knew of no one else teaching this way.

The next Baptist writer is Henry B. Maurer. In a paper (later issued as a booklet) entitled "Baptist Consistency on the Sabbath", Maurer taught the Saturday resurrection.¹¹

A more prominent Baptist leader was Edward Hiscox. In a letter dated April 17, 1889, Hiscox wrote to Maurer: "But I have long been inclined to believe that the crucifixion was on Wednesday. . . ."¹²

In the introduction to a book by Maurer entitled *Tests of Truth*, published in 1890, Hiscox wrote: "We have no proof that Christ did arise on the first day of the week."¹³

⁹ George Carlow, *Truth Defended*, published as *A Defense of the Sabbath*, Chapter XI, pp. 99-122.

¹⁰ Leon M. Maltby, one-time corresponding secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist Church, was opposed to the Saturday resurrection, as expressed in letters to the author dated April 6, 1964, and January 25, 1965. He also issued a pamphlet in 1942 entitled "Burial to Resurrection" in which he set forth the traditional Sunday resurrection.

¹¹ pp. 8-12. The paper is undated. However, it was obviously read before a Baptist ministers' conference on April 15, 1889. This date is mentioned in the letter by Hiscox referred to.

¹² This letter was included in Maurer's booklet "Baptist Consistency on the Sabbath", published by the American Sabbath Tract Society in 1891.

¹³ The book's pages were not numbered, but the statement is on the third page of the Introduction.

Hiscox became widely known at one time for a paper he presented at various Baptist ministerial meetings. It was entitled "The Transference of the Sabbath" and, while questioning why Sunday was adopted in place of the Sabbath, also seriously questioned the Sunday resurrection doctrine, inclining rather toward Saturday as the day Christ rose.¹⁴

It is important to remember that Hiscox was a Sunday-keeping Baptist who, in spite of his personal feelings toward the origins of Sunday observance, still kept Sunday and served the Baptist church until his death in 1901.¹⁵

Another late nineteenth century writer who taught the Saturday resurrection was Ithamar Quigley, who served for fifty-six years as the minister of the Mount Zion Chapel, a Sabbath-keeping congregation in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Quigley became part of this group as a child in 1889. "A number of years" later he studied the Saturday resurrection doctrine and accepted it. Interestingly, sometime before 1889 the doctrine had been presented to the group and was opposed.¹⁶

Earlier, while considering the connection of Herbert W. Armstrong with the Saturday resurrection doctrine, we made reference to the Church of God, Seventh Day. This church has always taught this doctrine, and it is one of several points of difference between this church and the Seventh Day Adventists, although they share a common origin in the Advent Movement that began with William Miller in the 1840's.¹⁷

The Church of God, Seventh Day, which was long headquartered in Stanberry, Missouri, came into being teaching the Saturday resurrection. The Church was formed in the early 1860's, and the first appearance of this doctrine in their literature was in their magazine *The Hope Of Israel* (published today as *Bible Advocate*) in the issue for September 21, 1864. One Luther L. Tiffany of Lansing, Iowa, had a very brief study called "Christ's Resurrection on the 7th Day". The tone of the study shows it was not teaching something new but was simply explaining the matter.

¹⁴ This paper was read on November 13, 1893, before a group of Baptist ministers and was reported in the *Baptist Examiner* for November 16th. See E. E. Franke, "The Resurrection of Christ on Saturday Not on Sunday", pages 14-15, and *Pagan Festivals in Christian Worship*, pp. 18-19. Franke was present and heard the paper read. This was only one of the times Hiscox read this paper.

¹⁵ This is interesting considering that Hiscox came from a long line of Seventh Day Baptists. See his biography in *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 528.

¹⁶ These details are included in a letter to the author dated January 4, 1965. Quigley taught the Saturday resurrection in a booklet entitled "The Resurrection-When?", date unknown.

¹⁷ The day of Christ's resurrection is one of ten differences between the two churches listed and discussed in an old booklet issued by the Church of God, Seventh Day, entitled "Doctrinal Differences between the Seventh-Day Church of God and the Seventh-Day Adventists". This booklet was written by A. F. Dugger, Sr., at least as early as 1907. See Richard C. Nickels, *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, p. 229.

An early leader of this church was Andrew F. Dugger. About 1879 Dugger wrote a book entitled *The Bible Sabbath Defended*, which contains a study teaching the Saturday resurrection.¹⁸ Other official literature existed, for Dugger urged his readers to write for a tract called "Resurrection of Christ",¹⁹ which shows Dugger's book was setting forth the official doctrine of the Church of God, Seventh Day.²⁰

Following are the titles of tracts and booklets on the subject of the day of Christ's resurrection that were advertised in *The Bible Advocate* in 1907:

1. "Crucifixion and Resurrection", by C. S. Deford.
2. "The Good Friday Problem", by David Nield.

In the 1920's the following titles were added:

1. "The Resurrection of Christ – Which Day Did it Occur?", by A. N. Dugger.
2. "The Sign of Jonah", by John Kolvoord.
3. "The Resurrection of Christ, Which Day?", no author given.²¹

Also published in 1919 was a large book entitled *The Bible Home Instructor*, which contained studies on pages 165-173 teaching the Saturday resurrection.

The Sabbath question-whether to observe Saturday or Sunday as the Sabbath day-was hotly debated in the nineteenth century, especially in the second half of the century. A part of this was a study of which day Christ was resurrected.

We find that this subject was studied by Sunday-keepers and Sabbath-keepers alike. Sometimes, when someone was converted from Sunday to the Sabbath, the Saturday resurrection was accepted as part of Sabbath-keeping.

A good example of this is a man who was a Baptist minister for years, later accepting the seventh-day Sabbath. This was Samuel Davison. According to his own account of how he came to believe in the Sabbath, he seems to have accepted the Saturday resurrection about 1843.²² That year he became a Seventh Day Baptist²³ and served as minister of their congregation at Salem, New Jersey, from 1844 to 1846 and at Shiloh, New Jersey, from 1846 to 1849.²⁴ His son Samuel

¹⁸ Chapter IX (1944 edition).

¹⁹ p. 57 (1944 edition).

²⁰ For an interesting support that the Church of God, Seventh Day, has always taught the Saturday resurrection, see a letter from A. N. Dugger in "The Resurrection of Yeshua", a study published by the Servants of Messiah in 1981, p. 61.

²¹ Nickels, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²² S. Davison, "The True Sabbath Embraced and Endorsed," undated, pp. 3, 6-7.

²³ Lawson Briggs, *What Became of the Church Jesus Built?*, p. 256.

²⁴ Nickels. *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Stennett Davison was a leader of the Church of God, Seventh Day, in the 1860's.²⁵

We can locate at least one foreign group that believed in the Saturday resurrection around this time. The Tai-Ping, the followers of Hung-sui-tshuen (a group of Chinese Sabbath-keepers) were teaching the doctrine during or sometime after the year 1846.²⁶

Another interesting foreign belief is found in Bolivia. Certain Bolivian Indians, at least some years ago, who had converted to Christianity, observed Christ's death with a celebration that lasted three days and three nights. It began Wednesday night and lasted until Saturday night. One wonders where they got this idea of a full three days and three nights from Wednesday to Saturday!²⁷

In the April, 1884, issue of a magazine called the *Christian Quarterly Review*, Clark Braden had an article entitled "Certain Infidel Objections Answered". In this article he attempted to totally reconstruct the time elements involved in Christ's last week, including extending His trials over several days. Despite his questionable conclusions Braden definitely taught a Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday resurrection.

Following this, another magazine, *The Christian Evangelist*, in its issue for July 17, 1884, had an article by G. R. Hand entitled "How Long was Christ in the Tomb?". Hand refers to Braden's article and agrees with the Saturday resurrection. He even includes an interesting diagram to illustrate it. He states: "I have long been convinced that Friday was not crucifixion day, . . . and have so taught publicly for many years, . . ."

Earlier, in a magazine called *Bible Advocate*, published in Hartford Connecticut, not to be confused with the Church of God, Seventh Day magazine of the same title, in the issues for December 2 and 9, 1847, in articles dealing with the Sabbath, a man named J. B. Cook discussed the day the resurrection occurred. Actually, he brought it up only as a means of supporting the Sabbath. Cook believed in the traditional Sunday resurrection. Still, the very fact that he used it as a point of discussion shows the subject was receiving some attention. This is further borne out by the fact that in the issue for December 16, one Joseph Turner had a letter in which he tried to prove the crucifixion was on Friday and the resurrection on Monday.

²⁵ *The Sabbath Sentinel*, May, 1977, p. 8. The father also became a leader in the Church of God. See Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 260, and Nickels, *ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁶ Herman L. Hoeh, "The Dramatic Story of Chinese Sabbath-Keepers", *The Good News*, December, 1955.

²⁷ Cornelius R. Stam, "Christmas and the Consecrated Christian". *The Berean Searchlight*, December, 1964.

Carl J. E. Nelson, in his magazine *Rays of Light*, Vol. 4, No. 40 (April, 1946), mentions an article by A. A. Anderson that appeared years before that time in a magazine called *Facklan*, published in Sweden, that taught the crucifixion was on Wednesday.

A book published sometime before 1892 entitled *The Sunday School Illustrator*, in a study of Matthew 28:1, shows the crucifixion was on Wednesday, not Friday.²⁸

A Sunday advocate who made reference to the Saturday resurrection was James H. Potts. In 1888 he published a book entitled *Faith Made Easy*. On pages 356-358, as part of a lengthy discussion of the Sabbath-Sunday issue, he briefly attempts to refute the Saturday resurrection. The tone of his language suggests the doctrine may have been fairly widely known. But Potts says "Sabbatarians" were the ones teaching it.

Another Sunday advocate who dealt with this subject was John W. McGarvey. In his book *Jesus and Jonah*, published in 1896, in Part IV, entitled "The Three Days and Three Nights", he tries to explain Matthew 12:40 as a Hebrew idiom.

F. W. Farrar, in his book *Life of Christ*, published in 1874, mentions "the theory of Schneckenburger that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, and lay four days in the grave."²⁹ Farrar adds that Prof. Westcott apparently accepted this idea.³⁰

The mention of Schneckenburger brings us to a very old reference.

Mathias Schneckenburger taught the Saturday resurrection in a study called "Chronology of the Passion Week", which appeared in a book with the title *Beiträge zur Einleitung ins Neue Testament*, which was published in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1832. A translation of this study made by W. C. Daland appeared in *The Outlook* for October, 1891, under the title "Christ Did Not Rise on Sunday".

Also noteworthy is that in a footnote in Schneckenburger's study (in *The Outlook* found on page 148), he states: "Johann Heinrich Drumel maintained that Christ died on Wednesday, . . ." It appears Drumel was prior to 1832.

²⁸ This is mentioned by A. H. Lewis, "The Time of Christ's Resurrection and the Observance of Sunday", *Sabbath Reform Library*, March, 1892, p. 24.

²⁹ F. W. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, p. 704, footnote 3. His suggestion of four days in the grave was not Schneckenburger's belief. Possibly Farrar confused what Schneckenburger really taught.

³⁰ This is Brook Foss Westcott, famous British scholar who, with Fenton J. A. Hort, published the text of the Greek New Testament in 1881.

John A. Broadus, in his famed commentary on Matthew, published in 1886, says "some" were insisting that Matthew 27:63 shows Christ was in the tomb seventy-two hours.³¹ He rejects the idea, but is significant that the Saturday resurrection was being studied seriously enough to attract the attention of Broadus, a very prominent scholar in his day.

There is one more reference worth noting at this point. Franke Parker, in his article "The Day of the Crucifixion", which appeared in *The Journal of Sacred Literature* for April, 1862, argued strongly for Friday as the day of the crucifixion. The value of his article lies in the fact that his language indicates there was disagreement and question concerning the subject at the time.

In concluding this chapter, we shall digress somewhat to take note of a belief held by some that is related to our study. McQuilken says this:

A number of devoted Bible students and teachers in recent years have argued that Wednesday should be recognized as the day our Lord was crucified, and a smaller number have argued for Thursday, both uniting in believing that the tradition of a Friday crucifixion is a serious mistake and that it tends to bring dishonor on the Scriptures.³²

There have been a number of attempts made to show that Christ was crucified on Thursday, but these efforts accept a Sunday resurrection, so all they try to do is find three full days between a Thursday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection. Since these efforts to show a Thursday crucifixion do not support the Saturday resurrection, they are only a side issue to our discussion. Nevertheless, we shall mention some of them to show that the question of which day Christ died and which day He rose again has received much study over the years. Not everyone has automatically accepted the Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection tradition, but many have honestly studied and researched the question. As far as this author knows, all the following writers were Sunday-keepers.

William C. Thurman, in his book *The Sealed Book of Daniel Opened*, published in 1864, spends several pages setting forth the Thursday crucifixion.³³

³¹ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 277.

³² McQuilken, "Was Friday the Day of the Crucifixion?", above, p. 1.

³³ Thurman's study extends from p. 184 to p. 198.

J. K. Aldrich, in his article "The Crucifixion on Thursday-Not Friday", which appeared in *The Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, 1870, tried to prove Christ was crucified on Thursday while accepting the traditional Sunday resurrection. His article suggests there was some study being given at that time to the question of what day Christ was resurrected.

Ferrar Fenton, in his translation of the Bible, published in 1903, presents evidence for a Thursday crucifixion, but some of his evidence will also fit with a Wednesday crucifixion.³⁴

An early study in *The Hope of Israel* was by Horace Cushman of Flushing, Michigan, which appeared in the November 16, 1864, issue. In it Cushman taught the crucifixion was on Thursday and the resurrection occurred about an hour before sunrise on Sunday morning.³⁵

Callaway, in his book *The Harmony of the Last Week*, mentions James Gall of England who published a booklet entitled "Good Friday" in which he taught a Thursday crucifixion.³⁶

A very thorough presentation of the Thursday crucifixion idea was made by Roy M. Allen in his book *Three Days in the Grave*, published in 1942. Some of his statements are worth noting. On page 9 in his Introduction, Allen says the idea of a Wednesday crucifixion first came to his attention "some twenty-odd years ago". This would have been around 1922. He goes on to say that there was a large amount of literature supporting the idea and also that many Bible expositors were accepting it. But Allen rejected both Wednesday and Friday as possible crucifixion days and devoted his book (about 160 pages) to teaching a Thursday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection.

There are many more references and studies that present the Thursday crucifixion, but this is enough on the subject. This brief digression has served to show there has been much dissatisfaction among many people with the traditional Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection. In studying the matter for themselves, many men have arrived at various conclusions. There are still other ideas that the author does not feel it necessary to discuss. Finally, the Thursday crucifixion idea still supports the Sunday resurrection and does not detract from our main study in this paper in the least.

These references to the Saturday resurrection-while certainly only some that undoubtedly appeared in the nineteenth century-are enough to prove two things.

First, they show the Saturday resurrection received considerable attention in the nineteenth century.

³⁴ Ferrar Fenton, *The Holy Bible in Modern English*, footnote on John 20, p. 1042.

³⁵ Nickels, *History*, p. 57.

³⁶ pp. 120, 171

A second thing we have proved is that the Saturday resurrection is not just a doctrine held by Sabbath-keepers only or by any other particular group. This subject received considerable attention from even those who held the popular opinion-the traditional Sunday resurrection. This included some very prominent and capable scholars.

Having established that the Saturday resurrection was around long before our time, our next concern will be to go back to the early Church and see what was believed then.

CHAPTER IV THE EARLY CHURCH

Are there references to a Saturday resurrection in the writings of the Church Fathers? There seem to be no specific statements that Christ rose on Saturday. However, there are a number of statements that show various of the Fathers accepted a period of three days in the grave. How literally these statements can be taken is a question that is difficult to answer.

One very interesting reference is found in the apocryphal book called the Gospel of Peter. The date of this book is uncertain, possibly early second century. Only a fragment has survived. But considering its early origin, what it has to say is certainly worth noticing.

After describing Christ's suffering and death, the unknown author says: "And upon all these things we fasted and sat mourning and weeping night and day until the sabbath."¹

Although later statements in this book do suggest a Sunday resurrection, this is significant. If it was "night and day" until the Sabbath, a Friday crucifixion is out of the question. Perhaps the author knew something he failed to follow through with!

Ignatius, in the longer version of his Epistle to the Trallians, says: "He (Christ) also rose again in three days, . . ."² Later in the same chapter he says that Christ rose "at the dawning" of Sunday and compares this to the experience of Jonah. As is often the case with the writings of the Fathers, it is difficult to be sure exactly what Ignatius is saying.

Eusebius, in his Epistle to Marius, discusses what he considers a contradiction between Matthew 28:1 and Mark 16:9. He concludes that a comma should be placed after the word "risen" in Mark 16:9 so the words "early the first day of the week" tell when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene rather than telling when He rose.³ Eusebius may have suggested this solution simply because he was trying to reconcile the references that to him contradicted each other. But whatever his motives were, this shows that by the time of Eusebius (early fourth century), the question of what day Christ rose had become a source of confusion, suggesting that the truth—regardless of what the truth is—was confused.

Iraeneus, in his book *Against Heresies*, says several times that Christ was dead for three days and rose on the third day. He also quotes Matthew 12:40 in support of this.⁴

¹ Gospel of Peter, v. 7, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX, p. 7.

² Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, Chapter IX, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. I, p. 200.

³ Edward J. Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, p. 146

⁴ Iraeneus, *Against Heresies*, Chapter XXXI, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, pp. 560-561.

Cyprian, in one of his Treatises, while discussing various attributes of the promised Messiah, says that "He should rise again from the dead on the third day."⁵ He quotes several Old Testament references that mention "the third day" and also quotes Matthew 12:40.

Tertullian, in one of his books, while discussing the state of the dead, says "... we read that Christ in His death spent three days in the heart of the earth, . . ."⁶ He goes on to describe his opinion of the afterlife, never suggesting that "the heart of the earth" meant in the hands of Christ's enemies, as some have tried to argue.

Another reference is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, which date probably from the fourth century. This document says the people of that day "pray thrice standing in memory of Him who rose in three days, . . ."⁷

It is true that just before this statement, the Apostolic Constitutions refer to the day of the Lord's resurrection as being the Lord's day. But this proves nothing in favor of a Sunday resurrection since the term "Lord's day" does not name a specific day of the week.

Gregory of Nyssa, in one of his writings, while discussing the fact that baptismal candidates were being immersed three times, says:

... to what purpose are the three immerisions received? . . . we conceal ourselves in that (water) as the Saviour did in the earth: and by doing this thrice we represent for ourselves that grace of the Resurrection which was wrought in three days: . . .⁸

Clement of Alexandria, writing about 200 A.D., said: "He (Christ) certainly rose the third day, . . ."⁹

Clement is also quoted as saying elsewhere: "Ye were conducted to a bath, just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were thrice immersed to signify the three days of his burial."¹⁰

Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century makes an even more significant statement. In one of his lectures, after speaking of candidates for church membership being immersed three times in the waters of baptism to picture Christ's three days of burial, he says: "For as our Saviour passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, . . ."¹¹

⁵ Cyprian, Treatise XII, "Testimonies against the Jews", Second Book, 25, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. V, p. 525.

⁶ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, Chapter 55, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, p. 231.

⁷ Apostolic Constitutions, Bk. II, Sec. VII, chap. LIX, in *Ante-nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII, p. 423.

⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, "On the Baptism of Christ", in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. V, p. 520.

⁹ Clement of Alexandria, quoted in *The Paschal Chronicle*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II, p. 581. Clement lived c. 150-215 A.D., and *The Paschal Chronicle* was compiled in the seventh century. This quotation is probably from his book *On the Pascha*.

¹⁰ Quoted by C. H. Forney, *The Christian Ordinances*, p. 35.

¹¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture XX, "Of Baptism", par. 4, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII, p. 148

In another lecture, Cyril compares the experience of Jonah with that of Jesus and says "great is the force of the resemblance."¹²

These two statements, especially the first one mentioning three nights as well as three days, are very important. Cyril's statement about three nights in addition to three days is perhaps the most valuable reference to our subject found in all the writings of the Fathers.

This matter of trine immersion-putting candidates for church membership under the water of baptism three times-was symbolic of Christ being buried for three days. Surely there was something to this, more than just a symbol, but rather an understanding that Christ was in His grave for three days and, as Cyril of Jerusalem wrote, three nights.

Alfred Plummer explains it this way:

In the Eastern Churches trine immersion is regarded as the only valid form of baptism; and the Catechism explains that "this trine immersion is a figure of the three days' burial of our Saviour, and of His resurrection".¹³

Another reference source has this to say:

... in numerous fathers of East and West, e.g. Leo of Rome, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Theophylactus, Cyril of Jerusalem and others, trine immersion was regarded as being symbolic of the three days' entombment of Christ; and in the Armenian baptismal rubric this interpretation is explained, as also in an epistle of Macarius of Jerusalem addressed to the Armenians (c. 330). In Armenian writers this interpretation is further associated with the idea of Baptism into the death of Christ.¹⁴

The Didascalia, a third century work, seems to offer some support for the Saturday resurrection doctrine. In a very interesting article several years ago, James A. Walther wrote:

¹² Catechetical Lecture XIX, pars. 17-18, *ibid.*, pp. 98-99

¹³ Alfred Plummer in James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 243, footnote.

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 3, p. 366.

References in the Didascalia, in Epiphanius, in Victorinus of Pettau, and in the *Book of Adam and Eve* support . . . the . . . arrest of Jesus in the morning hours of Wednesday.¹⁵

In Chapter XXI, "Concerning the Pascha and the Resurrection of Christ our Saviour", the Didascalia tries to explain the three days and three nights by a curious system of counting. It says Christ was arrested Tuesday night, and also that He rose on Saturday night, but still tries to come back to a Friday crucifixion. It is difficult to make much out of the Didascalia's chronology!¹⁶

Aphraates, a Syria writer, in his twelfth *Homily on the Passover or Pascha*, says much the same thing as the Didascalia. He is obscure and hard to follow through to any definite conclusions.¹⁷

Also, it was an ancient practice to fast on Wednesday, as mentioned by Barnhouse in his article (footnote 15), and this practice may have grown out of the tradition that Christ was betrayed on Wednesday, or the Sanhedrin decided to kill Him on Wednesday.¹⁸

Schaff tells us this: "Wednesday, and especially Friday, were devoted to the weekly commemoration of the sufferings and death of the Lord, . . ." ¹⁹ He is here talking about the first centuries of the Christian Church. So, while Friday was beginning to receive precedence, many still recognized Wednesday's claims.

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, mentions Jesus in one of his books.²⁰ He says that Jesus appeared "on the third day alive again." There has been much controversy as to whether the reference to Jesus is genuine or an interpolation. Present evidence supports the genuineness of the reference.²¹

There is also some evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls to support a Saturday resurrection. See the Walther and Barnhouse references mentioned above in footnote 15 for further information on this.

¹⁵ James A. Walther, "The Chronology of Passion Week", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, June, 1958, p. 118. See also Donald Gray Barnhouse, "Is Good Friday on Wednesday?", *Eternity*, June, 1958.

¹⁶ R. Hugh Connally, *Didascalia Apostolorum*.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

¹⁸ *New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, art. "Fasting", p. 281.

¹⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, p. 205

²⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII.3.3.

²¹ See F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, pp. 108-112

One more early reference must be inserted here. The church in Scotland in the sixth and seventh centuries evidently believed in a Saturday resurrection. John Price, in his book *The Ancient British Church*, while discussing Easter observance, says:

There is, however, an unfair insinuation that the British Christians were Judaic in their observance of Easter day, . . .

Then he points out that the Celtic church kept Easter on Saturday and says this was "the day which the Scriptures point out as the one on which the Saviour rose from the grave, (which was 'late on the Sabbath.' Matt. 28:1-4)."²²

Now we must go back to the primary sources and see what the apostles had to say about the day of Christ's resurrection.

After Christ had risen again, an angel said to the women at His tomb: "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said" (Matthew 18:6). What did He (Christ) say? In Matthew 12:40 He said He would be in the grave for three days and three nights.

In John 2:18-22 Christ says the temple of His body would be raised in three days. Verse 22 says after He rose, His disciples remembered this and believed Him and the scripture.²³ Also, Paul, in I Corinthians 15:4, says: "... He rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Now the scriptures referred to by John and Paul were the Old Testament, and in the Old Testament scriptures, in Jonah 1:17, we are told that Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, the only incident given by Christ as a sign of proof He was the Messiah (Matthew 12:40).

These scriptural references certainly indicate the Church in the time of the apostles knew from both prophecy and actual fact that Christ was resurrected on Saturday.

²² John Price, *The Ancient British Church*, p 94, note. Cited by Charles Green and James Gamble, "Seventh Day Baptists in the British Isles", in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*.

²³ This in itself strongly suggests a Saturday resurrection. If Christ's disciples believed in both Him and the Old Testament scriptures, it would seem reasonable they accepted Christ's sign of His Messiahship, based upon Jonah 1:17.

Seeing this, we naturally want to know how a Sunday resurrection became so widely accepted. There are reasons. The next chapter will explore this question.

CHAPTER V
THE SUNDAY RESURRECTION DOCTRINE

We might well ask with Robert C. McQuilkin: "When and how did the Christian church begin to consider Friday the day (of the crucifixion)?"¹

This is a fair question. Since it seems reasonably evident the New Testament writers and at least some of the early Fathers of the church believed in a Saturday resurrection, why did people begin to believe in a Sunday resurrection?

The answer lies in the history of the Christian Church. Early Christianity began to accept many practices and beliefs of paganism, adapting them to its own thinking by changing names and details, then glossing the whole over with a veneer of "Christian" meaning. However shocking it may be, we are going to see that there were many pagan "saviours" who were believed by their worshippers to have been killed and then raised again on Sunday.

Homer W. Smith writes, concerning the worship of the Persian sun god Mithra: "Sunday was called the Lord's day, after one of Mithra's titles. His birthday was at the winter solstice, his triumph and ascension at the spring equinox."²

Dunbar T. Heath tells us: "We find men taught everywhere, from southern Arabia to Greece, . . . the birth, death, and resurrection of deities, and a resurrection too apparently after the second day, i.e., on the third."³

Doane writes:

With her usual policy, the Church endeavored to give a Christian significance to the rites which they borrowed from heathenism, . . . and joy at the rising of the natural Sun became joy at . . . the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the grave.

This festival of the Resurrection was generally held by the ancients on the 25th of March, . . . Throughout all the ancient world, the resurrection of the god Sol, under different names, was celebrated on March 25th, with great rejoicings.⁴

Graves says:

We find presented in the canonized histories of several of the demigod Saviors the following remarkable coincidences appertaining to their death:—

¹ McQuilkin, "Was Friday the Day of the Crucifixion?", above, p. 1.

² Homer W. Smith, *Man and His Gods*, p. 130.

³ Quoted by James Donwick in *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, p. 174.

⁴ T. W. Doane, *Bible Myths*, pp. 495 and 496.

1. Their resurrection from the dead.
2. Their lying in the tomb just three days.
3. The resurrection of several of them about the time of the vernal equinox.⁵

Graves goes on to discuss several ancient pagan "saviors" who were supposed to have risen from the dead on the third day.⁶

Higgins also shows the pagan "saviors" were widely believed to have been raised from the dead on March 25th.⁷

Some may say that pagan resurrections on the "third day" may actually show the Saturday resurrection is more a pagan idea than the Sunday resurrection since the Saturday resurrection is the belief that allows for a full three days' burial. But a little thought will show this is not the case at all.

That nominal Christianity has borrowed heavily from paganism is a well-known and well-documented fact. One writer says:

The similarity of these pagan legends and beliefs with Christian traditions was indeed so great that it excited the attention and the undisguised wrath of the early Christian fathers.⁸

Elsewhere this author says:

... the Christian Church... has managed to persuade the general public of its own divine uniqueness to such a degree that few people, even nowadays, realize that it has sprung from just the same root as Paganism, and that it shares by far the most part of its doctrine and rites with the latter.⁹

Now what is the popular doctrine, the belief that is accepted by nearly all of the Christian world? Is it not that Christ was resurrected on Sunday? So it is quite obvious that the truth of a Saturday resurrection was one of many truths lost with the passage of time and the increasing pagan influences that entered Christianity.

So far we have seen that a Sunday resurrection doctrine was found in pagan religions before the existence of Christianity. Now we must try to see how it became a part of Christian teaching. To be sure, it entered as pagan influence grew, but why?

Obviously, the idea of a Sunday resurrection came along with Sunday observance. As Sunday replaced the Sabbath in the lives of many in early Christianity, the resurrection day was naturally shifted from Saturday to Sunday.

⁵ Kersey Graves, *World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors*, p. 144.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 145-146. It is interesting that Graves states: "... Christ rose... three days after the entombment", p. 144. Perhaps he realized more than he cared to pursue!

⁷ Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, Vol. II, pp. 99-104

⁸ Edward Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 25.

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

Samuel Bacchiocchi, in his recent study of how Sunday replaced the Sabbath, asks: "How did Christ's resurrection come to be associated with sunrising?"¹⁰ He then answers his question by pointing out that since Sunday was the day of the sun, and since the resurrection of Christ was viewed as the rising of the Sun of Justice, it was easy for many early Christians to associate the two ideas.¹¹

Augustine gave a reason for the origin of Sunday-keeping that shows the relationship between Sunday observance and a Sunday resurrection. He wrote:

The Lord's day was not declared to the Jews but to the Christians by the resurrection of the Lord and from that event its festivity had its origin.¹²

Bowers puts it this way: "The Roman Christians adopted the ordinary Gentile usage, which within certain limits, placed the observance of the crucifixion on a Friday, and that of the resurrection on the following Sunday."¹³

But was there no struggle between those who believed in the historical fact of the Saturday resurrection and those who were introducing the idea of a Sunday resurrection? Indeed there was! History records it as the Quartodecimanian Controversy.

Usually this controversy is seen as a struggle between the Eastern Christian churches who wanted to observe a yearly Passover on the 14th of Nisan, the same day as the Jews, and those Western Christians who wanted to observe the resurrection of Christ on another date and on a Sunday every year. This controversy, however, was rooted in the question of what day Christ rose. We cannot go into a detailed history of the Quartodecimanian Controversy here. Those who wish to study the subject further will find a good history in Philip Schaff's book *History of the Christian Church*, Volume II, pages 209-220.

Eugene Charles Callaway also gives a brief history of the controversy and shows how the question of what day Christ rose was involved in it. At the conclusion of his history, Callaway quotes the *Standard Dictionary*, which says that after the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D., "Friday was accepted as the day of the crucifixion, and the Sunday following as that of the rising from the dead."¹⁴

¹⁰ Samuel Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 265.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

¹² Augustine, Epistle 55, 23, 1. Bacchiocchi gives several other quotations from early Christian writers who say the same thing. See his book, pp. 270-273.

¹³ G. M. Bowers, *Faith and Doctrines of the Early Church*, pp. 200-201.

¹⁴ Callaway, *Harmony of the Last Week*, pp. 144-147. The quotation from the *Standard Dictionary* is from p. 1804.

Schaff agrees. He says that after the Council of Nicaea, "The feast of the resurrection was thenceforth required to be celebrated everywhere on a Sunday, . . ."¹⁵

Surely anyone can see the facts. Until 325, at the Council of Nicaea, it was a known and accepted fact, at least among the Eastern Christians, that Christ had been crucified on Wednesday and resurrected on Saturday. But at that famous council the will of men imposed several new doctrines upon the Church. One of them was the Sunday resurrection.

McCasland says that:

the first day of the week agrees only with "on the third day" whereas there were other divergent traditions in the early church as to the length of time that Jesus lay in the grave, and these traditions must in some way be accounted for; . . .¹⁶

Callaway, writing in 1929, predicted that the Saturday resurrection doctrine would be accepted within another twenty-five years and no Protestant commentary would again support Sunday as the day of the resurrection.¹⁷ Had he been right, by 1955 the Saturday resurrection would have been universally accepted in Protestant circles. Of course, Callaway was wrong. There are reasons why the Saturday resurrection doctrine is not universally accepted.

¹⁵ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, p. 405.

¹⁶ McCasland, "The Origin of the Lord's Day", above, p. 1.

¹⁷ Callaway, *Harmony*, p. 185.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have tried to trace some of the history of the doctrine that Christ was resurrected on Saturday. No doubt there is much more that could be said if we had the sources available to us. But this much will suffice.

Whether one accepts the Saturday resurrection or not, this history should be enough to prove that it is not a new doctrine, the brainchild of any one recent religious leader, or the pet theory of a group of fanatics.

Many thoughtful Sunday-keepers, as well as great numbers of Sabbath-keepers, have accepted the Saturday resurrection. The only Sabbath-keeping church of any size that officially teaches a Sunday resurrection is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and many Adventists personally believe in a Saturday resurrection.¹

Also, a fair number of Sunday-keeping Baptist ministers teach the Saturday resurrection, some having done so for years.²

Some Protestants are afraid that if it becomes generally known and accepted that Christ rose on Saturday, Sunday might lose its popularity as a day of worship. One writer has said: "If they could prove Wednesday to be the crucifixion day, they could thereby show a Saturday Sabbath."³ Elsewhere this man says:

A Wednesday cross would have demonstrated a Saturday seventh day Sabbath, . . . It is well to bear in mind that the claim of a Wednesday cross is a covert attack upon the Christian Sabbath.⁴

Callaway quotes an unidentified writer in these words:

Any teaching claiming "the resurrection to be in the end of the sabbath, there can be little question that all Christians will instinctively turn from it as false, . . . as the whole fabric of the Christian church, . . . is that our Lord rose on the first day of the week."

¹ See the *Signs of the Times*, July, 1970, p. 32. In addition, some writers have endeavored to show that Ellen G. White suggested a Saturday resurrection in her book *The Desire of Ages*, a life of Christ. See "Mrs. White on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ," by Isaac N. Cramer, *The Gathering Call*, January-February, 1966.

² Letter to the author from Milburn Cockrell, editor of the *Berea Baptist Banner*, dated July 21, 1981.

³ L. J. U. Smay, *The Sanctuary and the Sabbath*, p. 171.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 178. By "the Christian Sabbath", he means Sunday. Smay taught the Thursday crucifixion and, of course, Sunday resurrection. See his book (which was published in 1915), Part III, "The Sabbath Question".

Callaway continues with these tongue-in-cheek words:

Here we have the secret of the intense opposition to Wednesday as the day of crucifixion. It brings the resurrection perilously near the last moment of the Jewish sabbath: . . . should by any accident it be proven that the resurrection occurred a moment before sundown, it would destroy the Church itself!⁵

Be that as it may, we have proven the Saturday resurrection doctrine has a long history. Whether it is a true doctrine must be decided by each one for himself.

⁵ Callaway, *Harmony*, pp. 177-178. Of course, Callaway is being ironic. But it is interesting to remember that he was a strong advocate of Sunday-keeping.

ADDENDUM

Following are three more twentieth century religious leaders who taught a full three days and three nights in the grave.

1. W. Graham Scroggie (deceased), noted religious author.¹
2. John R. Rice (deceased), editor of the *Sword of the Lord*, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.²
3. Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of The Way International, New Knoxville, Ohio.³

¹ W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, published in 1948, pp. 569-577.

² John R. Rice, *Dr. Rice, Here is My Question*, published in 1962, pp. 70-71.

³ Victor Paul Wierwille, *The Word's Way*, published in 1971, Chapter 12, "The Day Jesus Christ Died."