Some Sources of Puritan Sabbatarianism

John C. Powers

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SOME SOURCES OF PURITAN SABBATARIANISM

1535 - 1585

by

John C. Powers

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Field of Church History

June 1974
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

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Patrick Collinson in his study on "The Beginnings of English Sabbatarianism," defines sabbatarianism as something more than a certain ethical and social attitude to the use of Sunday. It implies the doctrinal assertion that the fourth commandment is not an obsolete ceremonial law of the Jews but a perpetual, moral law, binding on Christians; in other words, that the Christian observance of Sunday has its basis not in ecclesiastical tradition but in the decalogue.\footnote{Patrick Collinson, "The Beginnings of English Sabbatarianism." Studies in Church History. C. W. Dugmore and Charles Duggans (ed.). (London: Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1964), p. 207.}

The metamorphosis of the sabbath from the rigid concept of the Old Testament Jews to the subtle relaxing and spiritualizing of the idea in the early centuries of the Christian Church came full circle in the pre-Civil War period of the Stuart kings. The extreme Puritans at this time attempted to reconstruct the sabbath on the Old Testament prototype and found justification for their effort, in part, in their ecclesiastical heritage that stretched back into their Catholic past.

Two other concepts can be discerned in this transformation that significantly influenced the church during these formative years. First, that sabbath or Sunday was a day of rest, of worship and spiritual discipline but no more important than any other holy day.
observed by the church and without moral significance. The development of canon law had encouraged the disciplinary approach to religion and the hours of the sabbath lent themselves to this kind of structuring. Second, it was a symbol of rest in Christ, symbolic of the eternal rest that was promised in salvation. In this instance the observance of a particular day was unimportant. It was these two ideas that grew out of the ecclesiastical traditions of the Catholic Church that led the Puritans to the rigid sabbatarianism of the seventeenth century.
The Puritan doctrine of Sunday was so far advanced over that of their allies across the channel that it differs not only in degree but in kind. It represents, therefore, a bit of English originality and is the first and perhaps the only important English contribution to the development of Reformed theology in the first century of its history.

Chapter 1

SOME ELEMENTS OF PURITANISM

Contemporary writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show that the word Puritan was not used in its English context before 1563, and then in a more limited sense than is the case today. In its earliest application the word Puritan appears as a nickname to describe those clergymen of the Anglican Church who refused to subscribe to the liturgy, ceremonies and discipline of the Church as stipulated by the English bishops "and such as refused the same were branded with the odious name of Puritans. Puritan here was taken for the opposers of the hierarchy and church service, as [resenting] superstition." No sooner is a word conceived than it begins to grow and "profane mouths quickly improved the nickname, therewith on every occasion to abuse pious people."3

In any discussion of Puritanism serious consideration must be given to the Puritan concept as popularly conceived in the public mind because, however distorted, it still represents a recognition of essential qualities that were associated with the Puritan character. The

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3 Ibid., pp. 327-28.
definition of the term Puritan is often a groping effort to identify the spirit of Puritanism or perhaps more accurately the common denominator in the variations in Puritanism.

It was a sense of being a protagonist in the divine drama that gave the Puritan his elan. "Puritans were elect spirits, segregated from the mass of mankind by an experience of conversion, fired by a sense that God was using them to revolutionize human history, and committed to the execution of his will."\(^4\) It was this faith and dedication that created the tremendous energy that had such a lasting impact on the English Reformation. "The mainspring of the Puritan's mechanism was his moral consciousness. The beautiful and the true were to him only handmaidens of the good."\(^5\) The Puritan moral standard was formidable in the extreme. It was all inclusive and absolute. "All acts were moral. At no moment was one exempt from ethical considerations. There would be an accounting of every idle word, and about the criterion there was no relativity or shadow of turning."\(^6\)

The preoccupation with the problems of casuistry emphasize a second common denominator of historical Puritanism, that is, discipline. This was a discipline that could look at God's creation and see only a means of subjecting the mind and the emotions to a rigid schedule of duties and exercises. Knappen quotes Edward Dering, a Puritan minister


\(^5\)M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 341.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 342.
of London during the reign of Queen Elizabeth: "The weight of sin is not in the substance of matter but in the majesty of God that is offended, and be the thing never so little, yet the breach of his commandment deserves death." The discipline of the ascetic reduces life to its bare essentials and what elements remain are purely functional—functional in that they contribute in some way to the glory of God.

As the ascetic enthusiasm of Puritanism was broken on the resistant forces of human nature it was seen that "in this life it was impossible to eliminate temptation and the tendency to sin. But it was possible and necessary to eradicate any inclination to enjoy or persist in wrong doing." "A communion of saints without discipline was, to the Puritans, mere promiscuity . . . there was what might be called informal discipline—the preaching of a high standard of conduct, and the clear signs of social disapproval in case of a slip."

As Gerald R. Owst has suggested, the roots of English Puritanism are to be found in the preaching of the late medieval church:

Further, all that unpopular word "Puritanism" has ever stood for, to the minutest detail shall be found advocated unceasingly in the preaching of the pre-Reformation Church. The long face, the plain diet, the plainer attire, the abstention from sports and amusements in company, the contempt of the arts, the rigid sabbatarianism, the silence at meals, the long household prayers, the stern disciplining of wife and children, the fear of hell, the heavy mood of "wanhope" are typical of the message of the faithful friars.

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7Ibid, p. 342.
8Ibid., p. 343.
9Ibid., pp. 347, 349.
Puritanism was not a break with the past but a continuation of the Catholic revivals of the thirteenth century simply revealing itself in the market place rather than in the cloister.

Records older than the Fioretti, and of a more strictly historical character, reveal among the early Franciscans and Dominicans a gloom of life, an exaggerated and stereotyped other-worldliness, an indifference or aversion to some of the noblest things in creation, which we are accustomed to attribute too exclusively to post-Reformation religious movements . . . . Nothing but a close study of the manuals of conduct written for friars by St. Bonaventura and his school can make us realize how little the ordinary conscientious Franciscan retained of St. Francis's joy in life, or in how many respects he was enslaved to a formalism worthy of the post-Reformation Puritan.11

Thus, the English Puritan of the sixteenth century was not like Melchizedek, "without father, without mother, without pedigree" but was a part of that earnest group of men and women who appear, particularly in times of religious revival, and carry forward the teachings of the leaders to a logical, or perhaps an illogical, conclusion. Coulton has suggested the exaggerations attendant to such groups:

Puritanism, indeed is not of one time, but of most times, and especially of most religious revivals. Its faults are simply the faults of exaggeration, and exaggerated belief in the value of religious phrases and religious deportment, with an exaggerated depreciation of "the world" in that narrow sense which was of hoary antiquity before the sixteenth century was born.12

But the spirit of Puritanism was more than an austere view of life. It was at its very heart mystical in its emphasis on identification with the will of God. This was an actual identity that transcended a more psychological relationship but never absorbed the human


12Ibid., p. 71.
soul. Many Puritans conceived of the union in terms of a point of identity with God's spirit, particularly the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{13} It was a mysticism of the affective or practical kind of Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), a German Dominican, which was never divorced from the problems of ordinary life. His was a mysticism which rated practical service above mystical contemplation. The teachings of mysticism clearly made the subordination of earthly interests necessary if the heavenly realities were to be anticipated now and realized hereafter. It is the longing of the weary heart to find rest from the ceaseless struggle with the flesh. It is, perhaps, in this aspect that Puritanism should be judged; not by what it became but by what it intended. It has been said that such "spiritualism" must issue in "legalism" as a psychological necessity because the spirit is too rarified and some return to the world of sense imposes itself. If the preparation for receiving the Holy Spirit is the way of mortification of the flesh, then there must be a strict discipline and this readily codifies itself into rules.\textsuperscript{14}

Knappen's book, Tudor Puritanism, carries the subtitle: "A Chapter in the History of Idealism." This recognizes that aspect of any puritan movement that rises above mere "religious" considerations and seeks to achieve an ideal social setting. He characterizes this drive as:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13}Jerald C. Brauer, "Reflections on the Nature of English Puritanism," \textit{Church History}, XXIII, No. 2 (June, 1954), 106.
\end{itemize}
Actions done without hope of immediate tangible reward, attitudes in which the interests of others bulk large, are idealistic... we must employ "altruistic" and "spiritual" as synonyms, "selfish" and "material" as antonyms... the term "Puritan" is used... to designate the outlook of those English Protestants who actively favored a reformation beyond that which the crown was willing to countenance and who yet stopped short of Anabaptism.¹⁵

In one striking way sixteenth century Puritanism broke the precedent of all of the ascetic reform movements of the past. Always before the reformers had sought the renewal of the church by a return to the precepts of the Gospel through a life of poverty. This veneration of poverty provided the reformers with a historical justification for their opposition to the corporate church. These idealists believed that not only had Christ and his disciples lived without property or wealth but had renounced all secular jurisdiction and temporal powers.

In this, the English Puritan movement broke with the past. While the Puritans showed themselves willing to retain the basic values of the old religion they proved themselves progressive enough to adapt them to the changing times. The challenge lay in counterposing these ideas to the existing order. Poverty and the renunciation of all possessions on the model of Christ were physically incompatible with the continuance of the church as a corporation. To emulate Christ's life requires a body of citizens who obviously do not renounce all their possessions. As a way of life, poverty requires someone who can supply the needs of the devotee. This indicates a limited number who can enjoy the luxury of withdrawal from the community responsibilities.

¹⁵Knappen, op. cit., pp. xi, xii.
The role of the London merchants in the beginning and continuation of the Puritan movement is too well known to doubt that a realistic compromise was made. These merchants not only helped to provide the necessary financial assistance but also formed a community in which advanced ideas and illegal methods of propaganda might be freely discussed and advocated.16

The Puritan believed that every experience of life afforded an opportunity for spiritual training and self-improvement. He accepted as a duty the chance to make the most of each experience. To the Puritan, religion was never merely a set of opinions about God and his works but rather a divine discipline to reform the heart and life. Discipline was a way of structuring time. The more structured time is the less danger there is to living a profligate life. What became virtually the ritual of sabbath-keeping is an example of structured time. Ritual is a programmed use of time where everybody agrees to do the same thing. In the social approval is the feeling of being safe, of doing the right thing.

Life is short and filled with danger. "Keep a high esteem of time," wrote Richard Baxter, "and be every day more careful that you lose none of your time than you are that you lose none of your gold or silver . . . . and for the redeeming of time, especially see, not only that you be never idle, but also that you be doing the greatest good

16Ibid., p. 4.
that you can do."17 This, in part, explained the earnestness of spirit so characteristic of the Puritan.

Charles and Katherine George have pointed out that the sabbatarian issue was related to the doctrine of the "calling": indeed the industrious man in a vocation is declared to be in particular need of his Sunday because of the dangers of becoming "glued to the world."18 Thus it was that the Puritan, so driven by the tyranny of time, chose as his gonfalon the scriptural monument of time, the sabbath.


Chapter 2

COVENANT THEOLOGY

All human projects begin with a certain point of view that gives form and substance to the endeavor. Subsequent postulates result as a logical extension of the original premise. When the Roman Catholic authority was rejected by the Reformers, they faced the problem confronting all reforming or revolutionary groups: the problem of establishing a new authority, one that would not only have popular appeal but would be such as to command the obedience of the rebels to itself and make possible a reformed society.

Out of the milieu of a society in transition had evolved the idea of authority grounded in natural law and social contract. As a corollary to this political concept, religious reformers had found a new authority grounded in the divine law and a covenant between God and man. "The theological formulation of the covenant idea appeared first in English literature with Tyndale."¹

The various writings of William Tyndale show a wholehearted and systematic adoption of the law-covenant scheme as the basis of his entire religious outlook . . . . Tyndale asserts that the key to the Scriptures is to be found in that all of God's promises are conditional . . . . All strictly religious matters, public and private, all moral standards, public and private, and all sense of ethical and religious obligation are founded upon this sworn covenant of promise to obey God's law.²

²Ibid., p. 39.
From this conviction came Tyndale's inspiration for the translation of the Bible into English. Since no man can obey God's law unless he knows it, every man must be allowed to read the Bible in his own language. It was to be the role of the preachers to act as shepherds to lead men into obedience to God's law. Regeneration was the result of a man exhibiting godly sorrow for breaking this law, acknowledging the law as just and right, and endeavoring by God's help to obey it. Said Tyndale:

The general covenant, wherein all others are comprehended and included, is this: if we [meek] ourselves to God, to keep all his laws, after the example of Christ, then God hath bound himself to us, to keep and make good all the mercies promised in Christ throughout all the Scripture.3

The initial impulse for the law-covenant idea seems to have originated in the free cities of the Rhineland, an area in which more liberal views of freedom and liberty had long been prevalent. However, these ideas also represented "the best of the Augustinian tradition which England had long since made its own."4 The covenant or federal theology was only an intellectual formulation into which the older English piety, practice and preaching were fitted.5

Other English reformers quickly adopted the covenant idea always emphasizing that concept which became the majority view, that the covenant is a conditional promise on God's part with the burden of fulfillment

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4Trinterude, op. cit., p. 55.

5Ibid., p. 50.
always resting upon man, for he must first obey in order to bring God's reciprocal obligation into force.

John Hooper expressed the Puritan point of view when he wrote:

Also seeing these ten commandments are nothing else but the tables or writings that contain the conditions of the peace between God and man and declareth at large how and to what the persons named in the writings are bound unto the other . . . . Man is bound . . . to obey, serve, and keep God's Commandments; to love him, honor him, and fear him above all things. 6

While covenant theology made some progress during the reign of Henry VIII, it became fixed in English theology during the reign of Edward VI. An influx of covenant theologians from the Rhineland, along with such influential men as Peter Martyr and Martin Bucer, helped to spread these ideas and to give them the stamp of approval between the years 1547-1553. Subsequently, the Marian exiles who settled in the Rhineland gave vigorous voice to the state-contract theory and made it the Puritan point of view.

There were two dimensions in the Puritan's view of the covenant idea. The covenant is conditional but it is also absolute; for it is God in his sovereignty who promises and fulfills the conditions. A Christian man who lives in a covenant relation to God depends largely on internal evidence of this relation and on conviction of God's faithfulness as one bound to respect his covenant commitment.

The objective was preserved in the structuring of God's initiative in a definite form, but the subjective was protected in that man had to enter this relationship personally through an experience of forgiveness and faith. The rational was preserved in that a man living under the covenant lived according to God's law as originally written in the heart and as present in the structure of nature's law.

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The emotional was equally preserved in that the ability to live under the covenant was dependent upon constant incursions of God's Spirit stirring up man's zeal.\(^7\)

It was from this law-covenant point of view that sabbatarianism came as a logical development. It was the perfect seal of the divine legal document to which all Puritans subscribed. If the first four commandments detail man's responsibility to God then the fourth commandment requires a man to "keep holy" a certain portion of his time and in that injunction is contained a lifetime of responding, an opportunity to prove obedience and worthiness.

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\(^7\)Jerald C. Brauer, "Puritan Mysticism and the Development of Liberalism," *Church History*, XIX, No. 3 (September 1950), 104.
Chapter 3

THE CONTINENTAL SABBATH

Sabbatarianism in its more rigorous forms seems to be a unique contribution of the Puritans to the Reformation and found no corresponding zeal in the Continental reform movements. If sabbatarianism was not inherent in the teachings of the Reformers, what are the sources of the rigid sabbatarianism of the English Puritans?

That the Reformers placed no special emphasis on the keeping of a sabbath but rather the observing of Sunday as a day of rest is evidenced by early Protestant creeds: *The Augsburg Confession* (1530), *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), and *The Formula of Concord* (1577). These statements represent the considered opinions of the leaders of the Reformation after sufficient time had passed for study and deliberation. One point must be remembered in evaluating the sabbath concept among Continental reformers. Their view overlooks the idea that the day might have a moral as well as a ceremonial aspect and is a part of the Decalogue which the Lord did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

*The Augsburg Confession*, the first explicit statement of Lutheran teachings, was largely the work of Philip Melanchthon in its final form. Martin Luther had taken a leading part in the important

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preparatory labors and had produced the doctrinal matter of the Confession. It consists of two parts, one positive and dogmatic and the other negative or apologetic. The first part refers primarily to doctrine, the second to ceremonies and institutions. The work received widespread acceptance not only among Lutherans but among many Reformed leaders as well and strengthened the cause of Reformation everywhere. Even John Calvin signed the Confession while a minister in the City of Strassburg.

Two articles in The Augsburg Confession deal with holy days and the sabbath: Part I, Article XV, speaking of Ecclesiastical Rites says:

Concerning Ecclesiastical rites [made by men], they teach that those rites are to be observed which may be observed without sin, and are profitable for tranquility and good order in the Church; such as are set holidays, feasts, and such like. Yet concerning such things, men are to be admonished that consciences are not to be burdened as if such services were necessary to salvation. . . . wherefore vows and traditions concerning foods and days, and such like, instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.2

Part II, Article VII, states:

Such is the observation of the Lord's day, of Easter, of Pentecost, and like holidays and rites. For they that think that the observation of the Lord's day was appointed by the authority of the Church, instead of the Sabbath, as necessary, are greatly deceived. The Scriptures which teacheth that all the Mosaical ceremonies can be omitted after the Gospel is revealed, has abrogated the Sabbath. And yet because it was requisite to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the [Christian] Church did for that purpose appoint the Lord's day: . . . that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observation, neither of the Sabbath, nor of another day, was of necessity.3

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2Ibid., p. 16.
3Ibid., pp. 68, 69.
These statements reflect the joyous faith that knows no law nor will be bound by the past. Sunday as a day of rest, far from being a yoke, is an example of Christian liberty.

Thirty-three years later two men of the Reformed Confession, Zacharias Ursinus, a pupil of Melanchthon, and Casper Olevianus, produced The Heidelberg Catechism, a model of restraint and balance. Question 103 in the Catechism asks: "What does God require in the Fourth Commandment?"
The answer:

In the first place, that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church, to learn the Word of God, to use the holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by his Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.4

This statement contains the four primary reasons for keeping the Lord's Day that had been advanced by English writers during the preceding three decades:

1. The Lord's Day or Sunday was the time to attend church to hear the Word of God preached.

2. It was a time to partake of the sacraments.

3. It was a time to call upon the Lord in prayer.

4. It was a time to give an offering to help the Christian poor.

These reasons make Sunday utilitarian rather than legalistic. The day as a symbol of perfection and eternal life and as prima facie evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual's life is here stated.

4Ibid., p. 345.
The third statement of faith with which we are concerned is the Formula of Concord, completed in 1577 and first published in 1580. As its name suggests, its aim was to give doctrinal unity and peace to the opposing factions of the Lutheran Church. It represents the decided majority of Lutheran Germany. It was a stricter interpretation of Lutheran teachings, minute, technical and scholastic in contrast to the freedom of The Augsburg Confession. Although it does not specifically speak of the sabbath it does formulate the principle of the Christian's relation to the Law of God.

Article VI. "Of the Third Use of the Law" gives the statement of the controversy:

Since it is established that the Law of God was given to men for three causes: first, that a certain external discipline might be preserved, and wild and intractable men might be restrained, as it were, by certain barriers; secondly, that by the law men might be brought to an acknowledgment of their sins; thirdly, that regenerate men, to all of whom, nevertheless, much of the flesh still cleaves, for that very reason may have some certain rule after which they may and ought to shape their lives . . . .

The Affirmation follows:

I. We believe, teach, and confess that although they who truly believe in Christ, and are sincerely converted to God, are through Christ set free from the curse and constraint of the Law, they are nevertheless not, on that account without law, inasmuch as the Son of God redeemed them for that very reason that they might meditate on the Law of God day and night and continually exercise themselves in the keeping thereof . . . .

II. We believe, teach, and confess that the preaching of the Law should be urged not only upon those who have not faith in Christ, and do not yet repent, but also upon those who truly believe in Christ, are truly converted to God and regenerated and are justified by faith.5

5Ibid., p. 130.
The Formula of Concord marked the beginning of the period of Lutheran high orthodoxy. A pattern can be discerned in these three creedal statements, a pattern that was to be repeated in the Puritan movement and particularly as it applied to the institution of the sabbath. The greater the tendency to define and defend, the more exclusive the church tended to become and more definition was required.

John Alymer, Bishop of London under the Stuart Kings, defending himself against a charge of sabbath-breaking for playing at bowls on a Sunday, insisted that he was only following the example of the great master, John Calvin. Apparently such innocent recreation was not considered sinful to the Protestants in Geneva.6

John Calvin, in the Institutes, had written concerning the sabbath:

In the present age, some unquiet spirits have been raising noisy contentions respecting the Lord's day ... we celebrate it not with scrupulous rigour, as a ceremony which we conceive to be a figure of some spiritual mystery, but only use it as a remedy necessary to the preservation of order in the church.7

For it was the design of the heavenly Lawgiver under the rest of the seventh day, to give the people of Israel a figure of the spiritual rest, by which the faithful ought to refrain from their own works, in order to leave God to work within them.8


8Ibid., II, viii., 28, 29.
For Calvin, it was Christ who was the fulfillment of the sabbath and its significance was not contained in one day but in the whole course of life. To make more of the sabbath than this was to superstitiously regard the day. It was as an opportunity for preaching and teaching that made the sabbath important. There was no moral value in a rigorous observation of the time. In the formulation of these ideas, the Reformation leaders were reaching back to the early Church Fathers, particularly Augustine, for their spiritual concepts of the Lord's Day and were rejecting the teachings of the Scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas. In their view, it was the papacy that had departed from the "old paths" and they were seeking to return to the imagined freedom and purity of the ancient church.

Since these early Reformers provided no basis for sabbatarianism except in the most relaxed sense, we must turn to other sources for the rigid sabbatarianism of the Puritans. E. G. Rupp suggests, in reference to the Tyndale-More controversy of 1531, that the sabbatarianism of this period was a Catholic not a Protestant trait and is perhaps more easily defensible on Catholic principles.⁹

The Dominican friar preachers of medieval England were the true progenitors of the "Godly preachers" of the later English Puritan movement:

... whenever the homilies of an outspoken prophet of righteousness have survived from the period, a mood of passionate

resentment and gloom shows itself, often giving vent to the language of sheer despair. Unless he stood out like Elijah gaunt and forbidding, his god a threatening Jove with lightnings and tempests in his hand, the world would sink to perdition... The price to be paid then was the unlovely Puritanism of the Reformers; and the Puritan temper of the seventeenth century can only be fully explained by reference to the pulpit messages of the later Middle Ages.10

The Puritanism of the medieval church was almost, if not quite, as strict as that of the Reformed church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It often regarded all amusements with a very doubtful eye. Rich and poor alike were told that if they persisted in enjoying themselves too much they were running the risk of an awful expiation hereafter. These Dominican friar preachers represented an age and a class which exalted the narrow and precise piety of the monastic calling in its almost unobtainable ideal form and regarded it as in some sense the standard by which everyone should be measured.

These men played no small part in creating that peculiarly English type of staid and independent domestic piety which blossomed out into the Puritanism of subsequent centuries. "This is after all where our stubborn Puritan temper comes from, not from Protestant Geneva or Wittenberg, but medieval Yorkshire. For round the family board, and in the hearts of the peasantry, the Reformation meant no such break with the past as many would have us believe."11


11Ibid., p. 280.
The development of canon law was a slow process through the early Christian centuries but its study, with the exaltation of papal and ecclesiastical supremacy, gave the church legal support.

Canon law and the attendant Handbooks of Penance were employed in administering a religious discipline to our forefathers during their transition from paganism to Christianity and from barbarism to civilization. From the first the Church had applied austere standards of behaviour and developed a discipline for the correction of its members who violated the code.

The Laurentian Penitential (c. 1200) is an interesting example of the provisions made in the penitentials for the observance of Sunday. In the main it goes back to the legislation of Charlemagne (789) and is based on the Ten Commandments for the "observance with all reverence of all God's days from evening until evening," and required abstinence from illicit work and gainful trade. It specifically forbids trading, hunting, sailing or hunting for business, making bread, weaving, washing a garment, shaving the crown, taking a bath or writing.12 For the transgression of this law, seven days of penance were ordered. Not even an offering was to be taken on the Lord's Day but was to be received on Saturday while the giver was fasting. The time was to be set aside for the celebration of the Mass and the praise of God. This and similar statements in canon law established an early sentiment for a procrustean sabbatarianism that appealed to a chivalry-minded age.13

13 Ibid., p. 353.
Chapter 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH SUNDAY LAWS

The development of ecclesiastical and canon laws is well illustrated in the history of the Christian church in England. After the conversion of the Germanic people to Christianity, the close connection and the mutual influence of religion and law was inherited and, at first, became even more detailed than before. "In pre-Norman England and the Frankish Empire, the closeness of this connection is to be seen clearly in the intermingling of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and . . . in the passing of secular laws that required penance for crimes."¹ In some cases bishops probably dictated or strongly influenced the whole content of individual codes; in all cases they constituted a part of the legislative body and, in that capacity, aided in formulating and interpreting the laws. The part of Christian priests in controlling legal procedure was so important that laws were passed regulating it. Penance was required by the secular laws for ecclesiastical offenses, semi-ecclesiastical offenses and purely secular crimes. Among the ecclesiastical offenses was working on holidays and breaking fasts.²

The earliest Sunday laws in English history were issued within


²Ibid., pp. 138, 139.
a century of the coming of the first Christian missionaries from Rome (597). Two sets of laws were issued at approximately the same time, those of Ine, King of Wessex, sometime between the years 688 to 694, and those of Wihtred, King of Kent, about 695. It is worth noting that one of Wihtred's laws is practically identical with one of Ine's, which points to communication between the two courts.3

In the preamble to Ine's laws he states that they were formulated with the help of Hedda and Erconwald, his bishops, among others, and were concerned with the "salvation of our souls and the security of our realm."4 The law concerning Sunday observance was brief and related mostly to the status of slaves:

3. If a slave works on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall become free, and the lord shall pay a fine of thirty shillings.

(1) If, however, the slave works without cognizance of his master, he shall undergo the lash or pay a fine in lieu thereof.

(2) If, however, a freeman works on that day except by his lord's command, he shall be reduced to slavery or (pay a fine of) sixty shillings. A priest shall pay a double fine.5

The Kentish laws of King Wihtred had the full support of "every order of the church of the province,"6 and were given substance by Berhtwald, the Chief Bishop of Britain and Gefmund, Bishop of Rochester.7

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4Ibid., p. 37.

5Ibid.

6Ibid., p. 25.

7Ibid.
Again the emphasis is on the conduct of the servants or slaves;

9. If a servant, contrary to his lord's command, does servile work between sunset on Saturday evening and sunset on Sunday evening, he shall pay eighty sceattas (shillings?) to his lord.

10. If a servant makes a journey of his own (on horseback) on that day he shall pay six shillings compensation to his lord or undergo the lash.

11. If a freeman works during the forbidden time, he shall forfeit his healsfang, and the man who informs against him shall have half the fine, and (the profits arising from) the labor.8

These laws represented a facet of church discipline and had little theological implication.

Alfred the Great became King of Wessex in 871 and expanded the laws of his predecessor King Ine. In the introduction to his laws, Alfred acknowledges his indebtedness to the laws of Ine and in existing manuscripts of Alfred's laws, the laws of Ine are added as an appendix. The laws were preceded by a long introduction which contains translations of the Ten Commandments and passages from the Book of Exodus followed by a brief account of Apostolic history and the growth of church law as laid down by the ecclesiastical councils, both ecumenical and English.9

This Sunday law supplements the law of Ine and adds substance to the definition of Sunday observance:

5. We decree that he who steals on Sunday, or during Christmas or Easter, or on Holy Thursday, at Rogation Days, shall pay in each case double compensation just as he must (if he steals) during Lent.10

8Ibid., p. 27.
9Ibid., pp. 34, 35.
10Ibid., p. 67.
It is to be noted in this and in the following laws that Sunday seemed to be considered important only as one, or perhaps because of its frequent repetition, the chief one, of many other holy days and feast days.

In 866 occurred the great Danish invasion of England which eventually put an end to all the existing English kingdoms except Wessex. The crisis of the invasion came when the Danish King Guthrum was defeated by Alfred in 878. In accordance with the terms of surrender, the king submitted to be baptized and to evacuate Alfred's kingdom.

The laws of Edward and Guthrum state in the preamble that these laws were first decided and agreed upon by King Alfred and King Guthrum and later by Edward and Guthrum when peace and friendly relations were established between the English and the Danes. Whether these laws were established at this early date (c. 885) or later (c. 920), they represent an enlargement of the idea of Sunday observance. Two additional concepts were now added:

7. If anyone proceeds to bargain on a Sunday, he shall forfeit the goods, and twelve ores (in addition) in a Danish district, and thirty shillings in an English district.

(1) If a freeman works during a church festival, he shall be reduced to slavery, or pay a fine or lashlit. A slave shall undergo the lash or pay a fine in lieu thereof.

(2) If a slave is compelled to work by his lord during a church festival, he (the lord) shall pay lashlit within the Danelagh, and a fine in an English district.

9. If it can be so contrived, no capital offender shall ever be put to death during the feast of Sunday, but he shall be arrested
and kept in custody until the festival is over.\textsuperscript{11}

If we remember that each succeeding set of laws did not abrogate what had been formulated in the past but used them as a basis for further legislation and only supplemented that which had previously been enacted, we can see how the law could grow from a relatively simple statement to a complex control of conduct. Two further sets of laws followed closely, that of King Aethelstan (925-939) and King Edgar (c. 945). Aethelstan's law was concerned mainly with the administration of justice. Regarding Sunday it says:

\textsuperscript{24} And no trading shall take place on Sunday; and if anyone does so he shall lose the goods and pay a fine of thirty shillings.\textsuperscript{12}

King Edgar's second Code deals exclusively with ecclesiastical affairs. This Code enlarged the perimeter of the Lord's Day.

\textsuperscript{5} And every Sunday shall be observed as a festival from noonday on Saturday till dawn on Monday, under pain of the penalty which the written law prescribes; and every other feast-day according to the regulations appointed for it.\textsuperscript{13}

During the long reign of King Aethelred (978-1016), several codes of law were published that bear witness to the strong influence exercised by Archbishop Wulfstan of York, to whose sermons whole passages afford close parallels.\textsuperscript{14} Strong religious motivations influenced the composition of all these laws. The purpose, in part, stated: "We have

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 107.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 112, 113.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 49.
confirmed, both by word and by pledge, our firm intention of observing one Christian faith under the authority of one king."  

There was some repetition of Sunday legislation in the various codes of Aethelred but Code VI, Article 22, contains the substance of all of the other codes:

And the festival of Sunday shall be diligently observed in a fitting manner; and marketing and meetings and hunting expeditions and secular employment shall be strictly abstained from on the holy day.  

In 1016, the reign of Aethelred ended in the conquests of Canute I, the Danish King. His first proclamation deals with ecclesiastical affairs and seems to have been issued early in 1020 and is addressed to all of his subjects in England. It contains the receipt of letters and injunctions from the pope and the general acceptance of the laws of Edgar. The homiletic tone of the whole proclamation recalls the laws of Aethelred and may be due to the influence of Bishop Wulfstan of York. Canut's code of laws is notably comprehensive. It shows no marked originality, however, as a large portion of its injunctions and regulations are drawn from homilies and penitentials and from earlier laws, especially from Edgar and Aethelred.  

These laws set the tone for Sunday observance in England for the next three hundred and fifty years. Not until the reign of Richard II, in 1388, do we have a significant addition to the concept of Sunday observ-

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15 Ibid., p. 79.
16 Ibid., p. 96.
17 Ibid., p. 137.
18 Ibid., p. 138.
ance when the law forbids tennis, football and other games, though it allowed practice with bows and arrows as necessary for the defense of the realm.\textsuperscript{19}

These laws formed the bare legal bones of Sunday observance in England during the medieval period but were fleshed out by superstition and legends that saw miracles attendant on those who faithfully observed the hours of Sunday and conversely believed the devil to be present with those who ignored the sacred demands.

The course of the English church was set when the Roman party won the day at Whitby (663); but it would be a mistake to imagine that the Anglo-Saxon church as organized by Theodore of Tarsus was a purely Roman creation. The Anglo-Saxon church of the early Middle Ages was an English national church. It was Roman in its organization, discipline and orthodoxy, yet embodying ideals derived partly from the Celtic church, partly from the Eastern church, and most of all from the temper of the English people.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19}The Dictionary of English Law (London: Sweet and Maxwell Ltd., 1959), I, 779.

\textsuperscript{20}S. J. Crawford, Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom 600-800 (Oxford: The University Press, 1933), p. 34.
That medieval man was preoccupied with the state of his soul and its ultimate destination in heaven or hell is reflected in the literature of that age. It was not by chance that religious concerns occupied a major portion of medieval literature. Two secular works of the period are a fair expression of this religious conscience and the place given to the sabbath in this regard.

And on Sunday to cease, God's service to hear
Both Matins and Mass; and after meat in church
To hear their Evensong every man ought.
Thus it belongeth for lord, for learned and lewd,
Each holy day to hear wholly the service.¹

These words quoted from a fourteenth century poem, Piers Plowman, introduce the subject of Sunday keeping into a work that was mainly concerned with a striving for Christian perfection. Medieval man appeared to believe salvation was attained only by the perfection of moral character; serious Christians spent their lives in pursuit of this goal. The author lays the stress on the progress toward perfection. "It is a journey, a movement, an ascent. Life is a pilgrimage . . . a progression toward perfection."²

Influenced perhaps by the story of the wilderness wandering in the Old Testament Book of Exodus and Paul's statement in Philippians 3:14, "I


press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," perfection became a part of the mysticism of the time. ³ Sunday was used as the prototype of all perfection and of the kingdom of God. Essentially this emphasis sets up the static idea of pattern and norm on which mankind can model itself. The day is important here in the total concept of perfectability in a chronological sense, a belief in the reality of time in the context of perfection.

An insight into the intellectual and moral history of the late fifteenth century is provided by a stinging satire, Ship of Fools by Sebastian Brant. Written in 1494, Ship of Fools satirizes all of the follies and weaknesses of man. But the important feature of the work is the deep moral earnestness which pervades its jests and satire; man is exhorted never to lose sight of his salvation and the future life is represented as the goal to which his efforts are to be directed. ⁴ The form of the work is allegorical, the framework being a ship manned and steered by fools, with fools as passengers, sailing to a fool's paradise. Originally written in German it was translated into English in 1509 by Alexander Barclay, a pious Franciscan monk. ⁵ Sebastian Brandt was a lawyer, teacher and writer of legal works as well as Latin poetry. The

³Ibid., p. 53.
significance of his book is that it was produced by a layman without any particular affinity for the Roman Church. The Church is never referred to as the means through which the pardon of sin and grace of God are to be attained, neither is there any intimation that the offices of the Church are essential. Anticipating Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers, the great lesson to be learned is that man deals directly with God and is responsible to Him alone. That a section on the sabbath should be included in such a book is indicative of its importance in the thinking of Catholic laymen of this turn-of-the-Century period. Not only had sabbath-keeping been incorporated into canon law but, even more significant, it occupied an important place in popular thinking. Although the number of its champions and their indictments against sabbath breakers would suggest that strict sabbatarianism was an ideal rather than a reality in Christian life, the point is that strict observance of the Lord's Day was an essential element in medieval theology.

Section CII of *Ship of Fools* begins:

He that does not the holy day honor
With due devotion, laud and reverence,
But rather intends to covetous labor,
Many tales, sports, or other like offense.
Such ought of duty and very congruence
To climb as companion up to the cart of apes
Which (each day like) applies nought but apes.

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6Lea, op cit., p. 683.

7Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools*, tr. Alexander Barclay (London: Richard Pynson, 1509), Folio CII. Rendered into modern English by this writer, spelling and punctuation changed to correspond to current usage.
As canon law based its authority on the Ten Commandments, so Brant, the lawyer, establishes the same foundation:

The Father of heaven gave a commandment
   To Moses written in tables of hard stone.
Divided in ten precepts, to this intent,
   Mankind to reduce which had misgone,
   Among the which precepts this was one:
   The sabbath to worship and sanctify alway
   The seventh day of the week called Sunday. 8

Then appears a theme which is to be repeated over and over again in Protestant and Puritan defense of sabbatarianism, the purpose of the day:

The days were ordained for men to exercise
   Themselves in prayer, goodness and virtue,
   Our Lord and his saints to honor: and likewise
   Of word and deed all excess to eschew.
   But for that we more gladly us subdue
   To worldly trifles, and bodily pleasure
   We violate the faith by our wilfull error. 9

Further indictments follow of Sunday rioting, gluttony and drunkenness. The latter sin seems to be the greatest enemy of Sunday keeping.

These drunken dastards set not their mind
   To church nor prayer, but drink till they be blind.
And on the holy day, we daily see that men
   Sooner to the tavern than to the church ran.
   And where the whole week thou kept soberness
   Thou worshipped the holy day with drunkenness. 10

Ship of Fools suggests the appeal of a strict Sunday observance was no longer endemic to medieval man for legal or ecclesiastical reasons

8 Ibid., CCII.
9 Ibid., CCII.
10 Ibid., CCIII.
only but had become a part of his conscience, quiescent but ever sensitive to the quickening of the Spirit.

Early in the sixteenth century Richard Whitford of the Bridgitine Monastery of Syon wrote a Werke for Householders. Published in 1530, it was probably written at a much earlier date. Syon, located at Isleworth on the banks of the Thames, known for its pious orthodoxy, was a center of the devotional life of the period. It was actually a community of nuns with attendant monks to say mass and hear confession. Whitford, the self-styled "Wretch of Syon," fostered the pious practical piety of his sisters by the highest ascetical teachings. He was no recluse but was widely traveled, a friend of Erasmus and Thomas More, whom he is reputed to have encouraged in resisting Henry VIII's demands.11

His Werke for Householders was a simple dissertation on the Ten Commandments to instruct the faithful in practical Christian living. His commentary on the third commandment (Protestant fourth) is a reflection of the strict Catholic orthodoxy in the observance of Sunday.

Now for the third commandment. I pray you give good example in your own self, and then teach all yours how they should keep duly the holy day, that is to say, inasmuch as conveniently may be, to be void of all manner of worldly and bodily labours. I say inasmuch as conveniently may be. For people must have meat and drink, the houses must be appareled, beasts must be cured and looked unto and every unfeigned necessity or need does excuse in conscience.12

Whitford introduces an interesting amalgam of strictness and common sense. As we will see of some of the early Puritan writers on the subject, he was always aware of the "ox-in-the-ditch" and provided opportunity for its extraction. In the following, he comes close to the suggestion of Luther in teaching that there is a divine calling in every common occupation:

The holy day is ordained of God and the church, only for the service of God. The due place of that service is the church, unto all of them that may conveniently come thereunto. And unto them that may not, every honest place of good and lawful occupation is their church. For God is there present where he is duly and devoutly served. And when you be at the church, do nothing but that you came for, and look oftentimes upon them that be under your charge that they all be occupied, (like at the least) unto devout Christians. For the church (as our Saviour says) is a place of prayer, not of clattering and talking. And charge them also to keep their sight in the church close upon their books of beads. Thus in the afternoon must you appoint them their pastime with great diligence and straight commandment.13

The following list of forbidden sabbath pleasures finds echo in many later Puritan writings on the Lord's Day. Such lists must reflect the leisure time activities of the Tudor man-in-the-street, things not only frowned upon by the preacher at any time but doubly so on Sunday.

First, that in no wise they use such vanities as commonly be used, that is to say, bear-baiting and bull-baiting, football, tennis playing, bowling nor these unlawful games of carding, dicing with such other unthrifty pastimes, or rather lost times. Therefore let them beware of the tavern or alehouse for dread of drunkenness, or of gluttony, or of suspect places, or wanton company, for fear of uncleanness, or leachery, which thing be unto youth most perilous and of great danger and jeopardy of corruption.14

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13Ibid.

14Ibid.
Whitford advocates the complete separation of men and women during the sabbath hours. It was, perhaps, this attitude that led to the later separation of men and women in the Puritan church service where the men occupied one side of the church and the women the other.

Assign you therefore and appoint you that manner of their disports honest ever and lawful for a reasonable recreation, and (as much as conveniently may be) let the fires be departed and all their disports, that is to say: the men by themselves, and the women by themselves. And also appoint the time or space; that they may not (for any disport) from the service of God ... for if there be a sermon any time of the day, let them be there present all that be not occupied in needful and lawful business ... let them ever keep the preaching, rather than the mass, if by case they may not hear both. To buy and sell or bargain on the holy day is unlawful except it be for very need. Charity unto the poor and needy neighbors does lawfully excuse bodily or worldly labours upon the holy day. Look well you neither do nor say willfully and by deliberation upon the holy day anything that you know in conscience should be contrary unto the honor of God and then done you justly keep your holy day. A very good surc pastime upon the holy day is to read these books or such other good English books, and gather thereunto as many persons as you can. For I tell you there should be no time lost nor misspent upon the holy day.\footnote{Ibid.}

In general outline Whitford states the propositions that were to be voiced by the exponents of sabbatarianism during the next fifty years. These two classical literary works from the Middle Ages show Sunday to have been a major concern of laymen as well as clerics; that deep within the conscience of medieval man was the demanding voice of perfection of which the sabbath seemed the ideal articulation. Richard Whitford's religious tract appears almost as a summation of sabbatarianism bridging the transition from the medieval to modern times.
Neither browbeating the booksellers, nor issuing injunctions against them had stemmed the tide of Lutheran works flooding into England during the early 1520's. Agents of the church had diligently sought out these illicit books and brought them to St. Paul's Cross for burning. Among these works given to the flames were copies of the New Testament so recently translated into the vernacular by William Tyndale from his continental refuge in Worms (1525-26).

The great center of distribution was of course London. Thus it was that Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, was more concerned than his fellow-bishops to control this dangerous challenge to the Catholic Church. Since the thunder of the law had failed, something more positive was needed and Tunstall decided to try the still small voice of reason. On March 7, 1528, he invited his good friend Sir Thomas More to become the champion of the distressed church and granted him the license to read and keep certain publications in English of an heretical nature that he might be qualified to refute them. Accompanying this letter was a bundle of the suspect books including two by Tyndale, considered the most dangerous, his New Testament and his Introduction to Romans. These were the circumstances that initiated the prolonged controversy (1529-1533) between Tyndale and More.

Although no churchman, More was recognized at this time as the most accomplished scholar in England. A humanist, friend of Erasmus
and Colet, trained in the law, More was eminently qualified to present the case for the church. Both Tyndale and More were Catholics in the pre-Reformation sense of the word, and while More remained what he had always been, with Tyndale it was not so. Still in his early thirties he had left England and, going to Germany, came under Luther's influence and forthwith embraced the Protestant religion. Although absent abroad during the period of the controversy he was recognized as the protagonist of Protestantism in England.¹

John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, had had a profound influence on the young More and had confided to Erasmus that he could "pronounce More to be one genius he had found among his English friends."² It is important for our study to mark this influence. Colet has often been identified as a forerunner of the Reformation but he seems never to have seriously questioned the basic structure of the Roman Church. In his last years he had a great longing to end his days in or near a monastic house. So it was that he sought a place of rest and spiritual privilege near the Carthusian monastery of Shene, where, for the remainder of his life, he might have some experience of the contemplative life of which he had written in his commentaries on the Hierarchies of Dionysius as the summit of human experience in this world.³ The ascetic appeal of monastic life still seemed to many the answer to the problems of the church. To what extent More was influenced by this ideal can only be


²Ibid., p. 22.

surmised from his writings but the appeal seems to run as a strong undercurrent throughout his religious works.

The Tyndale-More controversy, coming as it did in the early spring of the English Reformation, stated most of the issues over which the Reformers would do battle for the next two centuries. No other discussion was carried on between men of such pre-eminent ability and with so clear an apprehension of the points at issue. To More's assertion of the paramount authority of the church, Tyndale replied by appealing to the Scripture, with an ultimate resort to individual judgment. ⁴

Bitter foes though they were during their paper war, Tyndale and More had much in common. Both had a deep concern for spiritual values. Both had at heart the well being of the commonweal. Both were hostile to the proposal for setting aside the King's marriage. Both were realistic critics of the shortcomings of the English clergy.⁵ Personal animosity made their language provocative and venomous, neither man reflecting the generosity of the Gospel. For both Tyndale and More the ultimate authority for all human actions was the conscience of the individual. Where they parted company was in their interpretation of the source whence that authority was derived. Tyndale found it in the Bible. For More, conscience found its resting place in the Church, the head of which for him was God's representative on earth.⁶

⁴Ibid., pp. 15, 16.
⁶Ibid.
Tyndale, more radical in thought and action, was more concerned with the future than with the past. He did not fear theological innovations nor did he hesitate to reject the traditions of a discredited institution. More was the defender of the status quo and ruthless in his rejection of the heretic.

The dispute covered a period of more than four years (1529-33). Four major works came from their pens. More's first book (1529) was his Dialogue Concerning Heresies. In 1531, Tyndale replied with his Answer to More. Then followed two more works by More: Confutation (1532-33), and his Apology (1533). In the preface to the Dialogue, More says he consulted with some friends who were expert theologians. Thus we may say that his work represents the authoritative Catholic doctrine that was held at this time upon all matters arising in dispute between men of the old faith and those of the new. "In doctrine More speaks as the mouthpiece of the Church; but the sentiments and comments are his own."7

Sir Thomas More was brought up on the old scholastic form of discussion. When this was in written form the disputant upon any particular thesis first of all enumerated fairly and at their full strength the main objections to his own opinions. Then, having given some general and formal reason for a contrary view, he goes on to justify it as strongly but as concisely as may be. This done, he answers in turn each of the objections at first raised against it, and so brings the discussion to

7Ibid., p. 124.
an end. 8

In More's time, whenever a thoughtful man wished to examine with judicial care important opinions of a political, social or religious kind, the dialogue was adopted as the most fitting vehicle of his opinions. It was this form More used for his first book and this gave him considerable freedom in handling his material. This was cast in the form of a discussion between two people, the Messenger, "wise, more than meanly learned, (with) a very merry wit," 9 and Sir Thomas More, to whom the Messenger has been sent for information on all matters of the faith just then in question. The Messenger raises all theological issues in turn, while More answers them with care and in detail, and also with a "very merry" wit.

In the spring of 1531, Tyndale's Answer to More appeared in which he first dealt with the main points of More's criticism beginning with the objections to his version of the New Testament, and then answered the whole work chapter by chapter. More replied with a Confutation to Tyndale's Answer, a huge treatise, virtually reprinting both the previous ones. On each of the topics is set forth his original sentence from the Dialogue, then appears Tyndale's paragraph of refutation from Answer to More, and lastly a rejoinder to the rebuttal.

The Confutation, the work in which for the purpose of this study we are the most interested, appeared in two parts. The first three books were written while More was still immersed in the duties of his high

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8Ibid., p. 87.
9Ibid., pp. 129, 130.
office. A year later he completed six more books making a total of nine. Of this attack, Tyndale apparently took no notice in print. One historian has said that, "The Confutation is a vast expanse of arid waste, with hardly a single oasis to relieve the misery of the traveler. Its gigantic length alone is almost fatal to it." 10

The basis of all Tyndale's propaganda was every man's freedom to read the Bible in his own tongue, and the doctrine that whatever a man's prayerful study of the Bible taught him, that was God's message to his soul. The relations between God and man were wholly private relations. Sacraments and rituals only had an importance in the scheme as signs which reminded man of God's eternal, unfailing promises. 11 Tyndale was calling for a more spiritual type of Christianity than had been customary in the Middle Ages. The medievalist had placed much value on ritual ordained by the church. The Protestant emphasis on faith brought into focus the underlying tension between faith and works and Tyndale, echoing Luther, said the true spiritual approach was from within. With this inward approach external ceremonies became secondary:

They are not to be abolished; but are to be used in obedience to the spirit of the Christian man. Fastings, pilgrimages, ear-confessions, sabbaths, holy days and the like have no value in themselves, but are committed to the church and its members, to be used at discretion. 12

E. G. Rupp has suggested that "sabbatarianism at this period . . . . was


12Cited in Mozley, op. cit., p. 233.
a Catholic and not a Protestant trait, and is perhaps more easily defensible on Catholic principles."13

Tyndale, in his Answer to More, had stated his position on the sabbath clearly:

And as for the sabbath, a great matter, we be lords over the sabbath; and may yet change it into Monday, or any other day, as we see need; or may make every tenth day holy day, only, if we see a cause why. We may make two every week if it were expedient, and one not enough to teach people. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday, than to put a difference between us and the Jews; and lest we should become servants unto the day, after their superstition. Neither needed we any holy day at all, if the people might be taught without it.14

In this statement the rest day has neither moral nor ceremonial significance but is utilitarian only as a day to teach the laity of the things of God.

More's reply to the assertion that man is lord over the sabbath, views the question from a different perspective:

Tyndale makes the change of the sabbath day a very slight matter. And because our Saviour said of himself, that the Son of Man, that is to wit, he himself, was lord of the sabbath day: Therefore as though every man were god almighty his fellow, Tyndale says that we be lords of the sabbath day, so that we may change the Sunday into Monday . . . . But the very cause of the change is, that we were not the lords of the sabbath day, nor men were not the principal authors and makers of the change. But the Son of Man, our Saviour, Christ himself, being (as he himself said) lord even over the sabbath day too, and which as God has made and ordained the sabbath day for man and not man for the sabbath day, and yet, never-


theless, subdued man unto a certain order of serving, not the sabbath
day, but God upon the sabbath day.\textsuperscript{15}

The serving of God is to this purpose:

When he delivered the people from the observance of the old law,
did as lord of the sabbath discharge them of the sabbath day, and
yet because they should not have such a lordly mind, as Tyndale here
teaches us to have, as to think they might at their pleasure take
what day they would, and make and break as they please: he appointed
them himself and his own holy spirit, the day of his own resurrection
which glorious rising of his blessed body not only to rest, but also
to eternal glory: it pleases him to have weekly celebrations with the
resting day drawn from worldly business, to the desire of heaven and
acceptable service of God.\textsuperscript{16}

When Tyndale made the sabbath utilitarian, More was quick to
respond:

And where he says we need no holy day at all, if the people
might be taught without it: this is one drought of his poison put
forth under the sweet pretext of preaching. Whereby such preaching
is necessary, he would make men believe that coming to church on
the holy day or there to honor God with divine service and prayer,
were a thing of naught, whereas the apostles came themselves into
the temple in the holy days to pray. And our Saviour alleges him-
self the words of Isaiah: My house shall be called a house of
prayer.\textsuperscript{17}

More ascribes moral as well as ceremonial significance to Sunday
observance and uses scripture to strengthen his premise. Earlier in
this work he had dealt with another statement of Tyndale:

And likewise of the holy day, he knows that day is servant unto
man, and therefore when he find that it is done because he should
not be let from hearing the Word of God, he obeys gladly and
yet not so superstitiously that he would not help his neighbor
on the holy day and let the sermon alone for one day, or that he

\textsuperscript{15} Thomas More, The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer Made by Sir
Thomas More, Knight Lord Chancellor of England (London: William Rastell,
1532), p. cclxvii.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. clvii, clviii.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. clxix.
would not work on the holy day, need requiring it, at such time as men be not wont to be at church.\textsuperscript{18}

More responds:

Here Tyndale teaches us high spiritual doctrine, yea, that Christian men should not be superstitiously holy on the holy day, meaning that he might do no bodily work for necessity. But the people, for all that I see, know it well enough and more too. But yet, to make them the more bold, he teaches them that the holy day is servant unto man, that he may therefore be bold upon the holy day as upon his own servant to use it as it pleases him.\textsuperscript{19}

More's regard for Sunday reflected the view of the pious Catholic of this period. It was a day of rest and of worship. Implicit is the suggestion of discipline that marks the day. He uses the term sabbath, Lord's Day, holy day and Sunday interchangeably, suggesting that the basic concept is a concern for one day in seven as an expression of loyalty to God. Since the Catholic Church has made that day Sunday, it is the day he will defend.

More's arguments are based on inductive reasoning. He carefully establishes a scriptural basis for his arguments. First, the sabbath is legally founded in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). God Sanctified the sabbath not only for himself but for man's profit (Eze. 20:12). Christ is lord of the sabbath, not man, and can use it as he chooses. He chooses it to be a day set apart for man to worship him and so it is for man's spiritual benefit (Mark 2:27, 28). To reinforce the legal status of the sabbath he uses as an illustration the stoning to death

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. xxxi.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. xxxi, xxxii.
of the man found gathering sticks on the sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). He appeals further to Acts 15:28, to show that the decision of the Holy Spirit and the decision of the church are one. This anticipates an argument Tyndale might have used; that the church made Sunday the day of worship so the church could also break it. True to his allegiance, More identifies a decision of the church with the decision of the Holy Spirit and that there can be no mitigation of man's responsibility for keeping the Lord's Day unless God should reverse himself.

Tyndale's position, as indeed was Luther's, was based on deductive reasoning. Beginning with the general idea that salvation is by faith alone, they deduce that all legal restrictions are abolished in this new found freedom of the Christian man and that works are a denial of this spiritual freedom. A point of this study is to show the subtle reversal of this position by the Puritans during the next fifty years.
Chapter 7

THE BISHOP'S BOOK AND THE KING'S BOOK

The Tyndale-More controversy was coming to an end as the dispute between Henry VIII and the papacy was reaching its climax. Frustrated in his many attempts to receive papal approval for his divorce from Catherine, Henry was ready to deny the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff and assume legal and spiritual responsibility as head of the English Church. But denial of papal supremacy did not mean the King was ready to adopt the new Lutheran teachings, as the Protestants were soon to learn. In the period that followed Henry's decision to reject the infallible authority to which all men had hitherto been accustomed, a difference of ecclesiological opinions divided Englishmen. It was the intention of the King and his advisors to establish Christian "quietness" and unity among the people and to formulate a fresh basis of worship.

Two steps were necessary to achieve this. First, a legal foundation was laid by a series of legislative acts in parliament. This legal revolution was virtually completed by the end of 1534. From this secured base the government proceeded to issue three formularies of faith designed to instruct the people and explain the principles of the Christian faith. Thomas Cromwell was the exquisite manipulator of the parliamentary program while the religious treatises were all composed and published under the immediate inspection and supervision of Thomas

All of these acts and formularies reflect the essentially conservative position of the King. His break with Rome was on the issue of control of the machinery of the church and it is doubtful if the King ever seriously questioned the basic doctrines of Roman Catholicism. When Protestant ideas were expressed officially it appeared to be for political effect only and their influence was usually nullified in subsequent reactionary legislation.

The convocation which met in June, 1536, a few weeks after Anne Boleyn's execution, under the presidency of Cromwell's deputy, Dr. Peter, dealt with the disorder and confusion threatening the church by adopting The Ten Articles about Religion set out by the Convocation, and published by the King's Authority in the year 1536, commonly called The Ten Articles. These Articles represent a compromise between Catholic and Protestant opinions with the balance slightly in favor of the former. They recognize only three sacraments but these are defined in the orthodox sense and the validity of the other four sacraments, recognized by Catholics, are not denied. The phraseology concerning the eucharist was ambiguous and could be interpreted in favor of either the Lutheran or Catholic view.

In August, 1536, Cromwell, as Vicegerent, though probably with the approval of Cranmer, issued a Royal Injunction to enhance the effect of The Ten Articles. According to the Injunction, The Ten Articles were to be expounded in sermons distinguishing between what is "necessary to be holden and believed for our salvation" and Ceremonies, rights and
All definitions of belief require a certain defense which in turn requires additional definition and so ad infinitum. To clarify the principles set forth in The Ten Articles, the King issued a commission to some of the leading bishops and other divines where the doctrines, sacraments and ceremonies of the church were to be studied and debated so that a uniform concept could be presented to the people. Each delegate was to set down in writing his judgment on each point. Cranmer was the chairman of this commission. The findings of the group were embodied in the Institutions of a Christian Man, sometimes called the Bishop's Book, completed in July, 1537. This was even more conservative than The Ten Articles; an elaborate exposition of the Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria, its thrust was more Catholic than Lutheran. This book was never given official recognition but was used by Henry to test the nation's reaction to his program.

The Bishop's Book, in its exposition on the Ten Commandments, contains a comprehensive statement of sabbath observance. This statement marks the beginning of the developing sabbatarian concept of the

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early Tudor period. It is the purpose of this thesis to show the progress in the formation of this concept until it was given definitive form in the Cambridge lectures of Lancelot Andrews in 1585.

The statement of 1537 begins by pointing out that the Hebrew word in the fourth commandment which gives us the English word "Sabbath" means rest, thus "the sabbath should be a day of rest and quietness." The fourth commandment differs from the other nine in that they are moral commandments and belong to all men, while the sabbath commandment is ceremonial and pertains only to the Jews before the coming of Christ. Nevertheless, this corporal rest, as it signifies a spiritual rest, a rest from the carnal works of the flesh and all manner of sin, is moral and remains still and binds them that belong unto Christ.

Careful as were the Reformers to differentiate between Jewish legalism and Christian freedom, the goal of some of the English reformers was no less exacting than the goal of Jewish law, the elusive goal of human perfection. When any group lays claim to be the chosen ones of God and heirs of the promised kingdom, they are eventually faced with the ambivalence of the deity that does not fulfill his promise. Causation is usually found in the lack of perfection among the adherents and there is a demand for more self-control, more suffering. Reality recognizes that not everyone will attain the desired perfection, so judgment must be executed to separate the sheep from the goats. This was a factor that undoubtedly helped to form the rigid sabbatarianism.

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of the later Puritan movement.

Seven years earlier the Augsburg Confession had sounded a note for spiritual freedom. The hard crust of formalism that had all but entombed the church became fluid in the aspirations of the early Reformers and began to flow into new and creative patterns. But few men can tolerate the threat of freedom and all too soon they began to forsake the springs of living water for the broken cisterns of a new scholasticism. The writers of The Bishop's Book proceeded to structure the sabbath for the Christian:

Furthermore besides this spiritual rest (which chiefly and principally is required of us) we be bound by this precept, at certain times, to cease from bodily labor, and to give our minds entirely and wholly unto God, to hear the divine service approved, used, and observed in the church, and also the word of God, to acknowledge our own sinfulness unto God, and his great mercy and goodness unto us, to give thanks unto him for his benefits, to make public and common prayer for all things needful, to visit the sick, to instruct every man his children and family in virtue and goodness and such other like works.³

It becomes apparent that if a man strictly followed this admonition and observed the sabbath accordingly, he would have little time for ordinary recreation. Apart from the time spent in formal church services, the visiting of the sick and the instruction of the family in virtue and goodness, would fill the balance of the day. This ideal differs little, if at all, from the Puritan sabbath a century later.

It should be noted that here for the first time appear the four primary reasons for keeping the sabbath, as suggested previously in ref-

³Ibid.
erence to the Heidelberg Confession. Only, as originally stated, time was to be given in visiting the sick. Very shortly this duty could be satisfied by giving an offering to the poor.

A curious aspect of the compromise between ideal and reality appears in the restriction of recreation and the permissiveness for necessary work on Sunday. All Sunday work was not considered unlawful by the authorities:

Also men must have special regard, that they be not over scrupulous, or rather superstitious, in abstaining from bodily labor upon the holy day. For notwithstanding all that is aforespoken, it is not meant but we may upon the holy day, give ourselves to labor for the speedy performance of the necessary affairs of the prince and the commonwealth, at the commandment of them that have rule and authority therein. And also in all other times and necessity, as for the saving of our corn and cattle, when it is like to be in danger, or like to be destroyed, if remedy be not had in time. 4

But Sunday amusements or recreation are definitely forbidden:

Against the commandment generally do offend all they, which will not cease from their own carnal wills and pleasure . . . but (as commonly is used) pass the time either in idleness, in gluttony, in riot, or other vain or idle pastimes, do break this commandment . . . for as St. Austin says of the Jews, they should be better occupied, laboring in their fields, and to be at plow, than to be idle at home. And women should better bestow their time in spinning of wool, than upon the sabbath day to lose their time in leaping and dancing and other idle wantonness. 5

Sunday was thus, as it was in later Puritan doctrine, a day for discipline, for perfection of character. Not only was there ecclesiastical and moral discipline but there is a suggestion of class discipline, a means whereby the ruling and upper classes could control and order the

4Ibid., p. 62.
5Ibid., pp. 62, 63.
lives of the lower classes. Having little faith in the "common" man's ability to order his own life, the upper classes felt an obligation to order it for him. Better that a man be engaged in gainful employment for the good of king and commonwealth on the sabbath than to be idle and breed mischief.

The idea was not uncommon among early English Reformers that once the duties of worship were discharged Sunday labor was quite permissible. John Frith, writing in 1543, on the subject of baptism said:

[Sabbaths] were instituted that the people should come together to hear God's word, receive the sacraments, and give God thanks. That done they may return unto their houses, and do their business as well as any other day. He that thinks that a man sins which works on the holy day, if he be weak or ignorant, ought better to be instructed and so to leave his hold.6

The Bishop's Book also represents a break with the past in the use of the phrase "as commonly is used" in reference to the passing of the day in "vain or idle pastimes." The right of the people to amuse themselves on Sunday as they chose had not theoretically ended. But this was not all, for the time which had been used for recreation now was to be used for work. Thus the first official declaration of Sunday observance in Reformation England was voiced in what was essentially a Catholic setting and, if it could have been enforced, nearly as grim a setting as that of the Puritan sabbath a hundred years later.

In 1538, Henry suggested a revision of The Bishop's Book with the idea of publishing another edition. Many of these revisions were

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in the King's own hand and these in turn were edited by Cranmer who did not hesitate to criticize nor correct the Royal view.

Significantly, between the first and second editions of The Bishop's Book, although the second edition was commonly called The King's Book, there appeared the most reactionary of religious legislation: the Six Articles of June, 1539. For several months a committee of bishops appointed by parliament had been seeking an agreement upon a statement of doctrine. Their failure to reach an agreement prompted the Duke of Norfolk to introduce the statute of the Six Articles in the House of Lords on May 16, 1539. These Articles insisted upon transubstantiation, communion in one kind only, clerical celibacy, inviolable vows of chastity, private masses and compulsory auricular confessions. This well represented the views of the conservative North but was not inimical to the King's private convictions.

Also, in the spring of 1539, was issued the first English Bible to be licensed by the government and commended to be read in churches. This was called the "Great Bible" and was a revision of the Matthew's Bible of 1537, which was actually a compilation of Tyndale's work. Previous English translations of the Bible had suffered a clandestine existence. The appearance of the Bible during this revolutionary period in English life added one factor that was to make the changes then in progress irrevocable and carry the English Reformation far beyond anything the King or his ministers had imagined.

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7Bettenson, op. cit., pp. 233, 234.
Another significant step was taken in 1539, when Convocation brought out a Book of Ceremonies which stated:

The Sundays are to be continued and employed in the service of God, to hear the word preached, to give thanks for the benefits we received daily. And the day is much to be regarded, both for the antiquity, and also for that it is a memorial of Christ's resurrection: whereby we ought to be stirred to rest our minds from earthly things to heavenly contemplations of Christ's glorified nature.9

This was not a definitive statement but is of interest as showing the ground upon which the English Church was basing its claims for the observance of Sunday.

In 1543, appeared the revised edition of The Bishop's Book, titled, The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man, commonly called the King's Book. This work is nothing more than The Bishop's Book in a varied form, with some additional articles on freewill and good works. The article on the sabbath remains unchanged in this edition. An interesting point appears in Henry's editing of this article. He comments on the passage beginning: "For notwithstanding all that is aforespoken, it is not meant by that in time of necessity we may upon the holy day give ourselves to labor,"10 his insertion is "so that we neglect not mass and evensong." Archbishop Cranmer, in his turn edited the King's commentary in a forthright manner and in his annotation on Henry's correction has this to say:

As well there might be added, "matins". And so it signifieth, that whatsoever necessity happens upon the holy day, we must so apply ourselves to such urgent business, that mass, matins, and evensong may not be omitted; and yet matins and evensong be wholly of man's tradition and ordinance, and mass also almost altogether, as it is now used; and these things were not understand (sic) in this commandment, which were made and ordained since the commandments were given. And the law in his most rigour does permit otherwise, namely, to the husbandman, cooks, bakers, mariners, fishers and such other, which laying aside all such service, must take the time as it comes.\textsuperscript{11}

In the face of great issues the King was involved in the form of the matter but his ecclesiastical counselor endeavored to make clear the principle of sabbath observance. In 1547, Cranmer, in his work, \textit{A Con-futation of Unwritten Verities}, written in opposition to the papists, treated the subject more fully.

There be two parts to the sabbath-day: one is outward bodily rest from all manner of labor and work; and this is mere ceremonial, and was taken away with the other sacrifices and ceremonies by Christ at the preaching of the gospel. The other part of the sabbath-day is the inward rest, or ceasing from sin, from our own wills and lusts, and to do only God's will and commandments. Of this part speaks the prophet Isaiah: and this spiritual sabbath, that is, to abstain from sin and to do good, are all men bound to keep all the days of their life, and not only on the sabbath-day. And this spiritual sabbath may no man alter nor change, no, not the whole church.

That the (outer) observing of the sabbath is mere ceremonial, St. Paul, writes plainly, as that the holy days of the new moon and the sabbath-days are nothing but shadows of things to come.\textsuperscript{12}

In spirit, this reflects a point of view antithetical to both \textit{The Bishop's Book} and \textit{The King's Book} and is important as an expression of the liberal temper of the Continental Reformers who had an important influence on the archbishop. In Cranmer's treatment, the sabbath becomes

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11}}Ibid.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12}}Ibid., pp. 60, 61.
highly subjective as a principle of godly living divorced from the objectivity of routines and ceremonies. He continues:

And that the outward bodily rest is a mere ceremonial precept, St. Austin also affirms, saying, that among all the ten commandments this only that is spoken of the sabbath is commanded figuratively: but all other commandments we must observe plainly, as they be commanded without any figure of speech . . . therefore certain days were appointed, wherein we should come together, not that the day is holier than the other in which we come together, but that whatsoever day we assemble in there might arise greater joy by the sight of us to another . . . . Hereby you may easily perceive that the church has not changed the special part of the sabbath, which is to cease from vice and sin; but the ceremonial part of the sabbath only, which was abrogated and taken away, with other ceremonies of Moses' law, by Christ, at the full preaching of the gospel: in place whereof the church has ordained the Sunday for causes aforesaid.13

Cranmer would subordinate any moral or spiritual meaning of the day to the educative process of preaching and teaching the people God's revealed will which was necessary for salvation. But the gentle hand of the archbishop, while loosening the bonds of discipline from the routine and ceremonial sabbath, bound man ever tighter to the moral demands of a sinless life of which the sabbath became the symbol. Thus, the legalistic aspect of English sabbatarianism had firm roots in its Catholic past and a coloration of the rigidity that was to be characteristic of the later Puritan movement. Whether or not medieval society reflected this ideal is not the point; it had been, and remained, the salvific norm of the Roman Catholic community.

Cranmer represents the awareness of the Continental Reformers that lightly brushed the English Reformation in its salad days, a spas-

13Ibid., p. 61.
modic reaction to freedom, a true voice of protest, before spiritual enthusiasm congealed once again. Their ambivalence appears in their preoccupation with human perfection. They would be free of form and ceremony that they believed had robbed the day of its spiritual significance and yet would go twice as far to make the sabbath morally binding, not one but seven days a week.
Chapter 8

THE PROTO-PURITAN WRITERS

The forty years between 1545 and 1585 witnessed the slow evolution of the Puritan sabbath doctrine. The pace was not always even as men groped for a compromise between the legalism of the Old Testament Jewish sabbath and the spiritual freedom of the Reformation ideal. Midway in this period, the more radical English Reformers who sought the renewal of the church from within, were first called Puritans.

English Puritanism appears as one of those periodic revivals of devotion as seen in the monastic movement and its subsequent renewals. Yet; "the same urge which turned other deeply religious men into missionaries for their faith turned Puritans into policemen for theirs."1

A dark side of Puritanism was its constant preoccupation with sin. Peccancy was seen in even the most harmless activities and magnified out of context. "A Puritan," wrote John Manningham in 1602, a shrewd observer of people and events, 'is a curious corrector of things indifferent;' or as Bishop Curle put it more rudely: 'such an one as loves God with all his soul but hates his neighbor with all his heart.' To the Puritan these 'indifferent things' were matters of principle and indispensable to the reformation of the church as a whole."2


The first delusion of the saints was the assumption that the mass of unregenerate mankind could be made to respect the ideal of the Puritan elite. Puritanism was always, in one form or another, a declaration of war against ordinary humanity. In its predestinarian forms it denied any possibility of salvation to the mass. In all its forms it denied that human nature could grow in grace: it had to be reborn through an experience which wrenched the natural man out of his normal orbit and sent him on a course which only a few could be expected to follow. There was nothing unnatural to this age about the few setting standards for the many; but for an elite of family, wealth, and humanistic education, whose discipline could be made to accommodate the diversities and frailties of mankind, it was proposed to substitute an elite of self-certified saints whose moral code made mortification a civic duty.3

As the Puritan loaf could be cut into many slices for each man to spread as he would, so, many hands had helped to knead the dough and bake the bread during the formative years of the English Reformation. An examination of selected writings of this period shows a general agreement as to the nature and purpose of the sabbath and a hardening of attitude as to what constituted a keeping of the sabbath. Taking these writers chronologically from their earliest known statement on the sabbath, we will then consider any other subsequent sabbatarian views they expressed during the fifty-year period under consideration.

Thomas Becon

Thomas Becon (1511?-1567), during this formative period of the Puritan genius, published some seventy devotional and controversial works, certain of which ran into so many editions as to claim a place among Tudor best sellers. Graduated from St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1530, he

was ordained in 1538, and became Vicar of Brensett, near Romney in Kent. A pupil and follower of Hugh Latimer he was condemned for heresy under the Act of Six Articles in 1541 but when brought to Paul's Cross he publicly recanted. After this he returned to the Midland counties (1542-1547). During this enforced retirement in Warwickshire he put out several popular religious tracts under the name of Theodore Basil.

One of these works was *The News Out of Heaven*, published in 1543. In the prologue he writes:

> How they visit the poor and comfortless, according to God's precept, their daily manners do show; for to the ale-house and tavern run they, as flocks of sheep, upon the Sundays and other holy-days, so soon as service is done, yea, many before it is begun, because they are loath for to come too late, where they eat, drink swill, gull, banquet, lie, swear, till they be more like brute beasts than men. If they have a ghostly and learned curate, which according to his office would be glad to teach them the will of God, him do they hate, they wish the pulpit a coal pit. They think it a hundred years, if he preaches but half an hour; so little pleasure have these ass-heads in hearing the glorious and blessed word of God.

There is more than an echo of the medieval friar preachers in Becon's words. The pungent vocabulary must have appealed to the Tudor man and struck a responsive chord that expressed his feelings as well. A. G. Dickens places Becon "among the most tasteless Protestant bigots"

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6 Becon, op. cit., p. 39.
sermon was preferable.

In 1560, while a prebendary at Canterbury, Becon prepared a catechism in the form of a dialogue between a father (Becon) and his six-year-old son. To the question, "What is the will of God in this commandment (the fourth)?" the child replies:

God in this his law requests of us two things: first, that we keep holy the sabbath-day: secondly, that on the seventh day we rest from all worldly and bodily business, labors and works, that we may the more freely serve the Lord our God, and consider the things which appertain unto the salvation of our soul.\(^9\)

The next question asked was what it meant to sanctify the sabbath day. The familiar list of sins was recited in answer: "Not to pass over the day idly in lewd pastimes, in banqueting, in dicing and carding, in dancing and bear-baiting, in bowling and shooting, in laughing and whoring, and in such like beastly and filthy pleasures of the flesh."\(^{10}\) A naive view of the world and mankind that could draw a parallel between "laughing and whoring" suggests a view that not only could see sin in unexpected places but could imaginatively invent it where it did not exist at all.

An allusion to mystical contemplation is reflected in Becon's words as he continues:

But, all such madness and wickedness laid aside and the mind utterly sequestered from all worldly things, and the body free from all servile works, to address ourselves, and to apply our whole mind and body unto godly and spiritual exercises; as unto the consideration of the mighty power of God in creating all

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\(^9\)Ibid.  
\(^{10}\)Ibid.
things both in heaven and in earth, yea, and that nothing through
his word, for the wealth and commodity of man: again, unto the
consideration of God's unoutspakable goodness in preserving for
the use and profit of man.\textsuperscript{11}

There then follows the four activities of proper sabbath obser-
vance:

1. The humble and reverent hearing or reading of God's word.

2. Faithful and diligent calling on the name of God by fervent
prayer and hearty thanksgiving to God for his benefits.

3. Unto the worthy, receiving of the holy mysteries of the body
and blood of the Lord.

4. Visiting, counselling, comforting and helping poor and miser-
able afflicted persons.\textsuperscript{12}

Becon provided no new dimension to Sunday keeping. What he
said had been said before and would be said again. His work is of
interest as placing in this early period a dogmatic, demanding Protes-
tant concept of Sunday keeping, more Catholic than reformatory in spirit.

\textbf{John Bradford}

John Bradford was born in 1510. He entered the Inner Temple as
a common law student in 1547 and was apparently converted about this
time. He thereupon abandoned his law studies and enrolled at Cambridge,
receiving his M. A. in 1548, and became a Fellow at Pembroke Hall. In

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}
1550 he was ordained a deacon and in 1552 was appointed one of the six chaplains to Edward VI. Two chaplains were always in residence and four always away on preaching tours. Bradford exhibited all of the marks of the true ascetic in his daily life. He slept about four hours a night; ate one meal a day, which was but very little when he took it; his continual study was on his knees; in meditation he wept much. He counted that hour not well spent, wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, study, or exhortation to others.13

In 1548, in his meditation on the fourth commandment, Bradford's admonitions regarding the keeping of the sabbath are subjective, directed inwardly to himself rather than as an admonition to other men:

After thou has told me how in the external service of thee, gracious Lord, thou wilt have my tongue used, so dost thou now teach me how thou wilt have mine ears and all my whole body occupied, namely in sanctification and holiness; that is, in those things which thou peculiarly hast appointed to me means immediately to help to that end; as in hearing the word preached, and using the ceremonies of thee appointed, even as thou has commanded: for the which things to be exercised of the people thou at the first did appoint a certain day, namely the seventh day which therefore thou callest the sabbath, that thereby they with their children and family, resting from all exterior labor which hindereth the meditation of the mind, might not only be more able to go on through with their travail and labor (for without some rest nothing can endure in respect whereof thou wouldst the very beasts which in labor were exercised should have the privilege of the sabbath) but also and much rather that thy people might with their families and children be instructed and taught.14

It is apparent that Bradford's concern is for personal sanctification and holiness. The sabbath is important only as the day God has


14 Ibid., I, 157.
appointed for the necessary instruction whereby one can be sanctified and made holy. The sabbath in this setting is always a means to an end and never an end in itself. The elements of sanctification are then listed.

First by the ministry of thy word in preaching and catechising, secondly by the using of thy sacraments, appointed after thy commandments and institution, they might be assured of thy promises; thirdly by praying they might be augmented in all godliness; and last of all by their meeting together, and exercising all these thy works of sanctification, they might increase in love and charity one towards another, as members of one body, and fellows of one inheritance; and thus by meeting together, praying and using thy sacraments, they might be instructed in thy law, and of that sabbath whereinto thou thyself did enter after thou hadst made the world, ceasing from thy works, not of conservation, but of creation: into the which as after this life, and the works of this time, they should enter, so now they begin spiritually to enter, in resting from their own works which the old man moveth them unto.15

After thanking God for the blessing that accrues to those who hear and keep this commandment, he continues:

But alas! I am not only unthankful, but also a miserable transgressor of it. I will not now speak of my transgressions past concerning this commandment: presently they are so many that I cannot; for thou knowest how I do not only at convenient times, on the work days, keep myself away from common prayers in the congregation and assembly of thy people, and from hearing of thy word, but also on the sabbath days. To ride or go about this or that worldly business I am very prest (ready): to sit down at this tavern, and to go to that man's table, I am ready at the first bidding: but, alas! to resort to the table of thy Son . . . O how unwilling I am.16

Deep humiliation, self-castigation, a denigration of individual worth were earmarks of the Puritan culture as they had been of the monastic ideal of the Middle Ages. Later, in a written prayer, Bradford

15Ibid., I, 158.

16Ibid., I, 159.
returned to this thought;" . . . yea, Lord, I confess that I spend the holy-days evil, in banqueting, in feasting, in idle or unhonest pastimes by which things I provoke thine anger, not only against me, but also against many others."17

In 1553, in a sermon, Bradford spoke of the purpose of the sabbath:

In God's law we see it as a foul spot to our souls not only to be an open profaner of the sabbath-day, but also not to rest from our own words and works that the Lord might both speak and work in us and by us; not to hear his holy word, not to communicate his sacraments, not to give occasion to others to holiness by our example in godly works, and reverent esteeming of the ministry of his word.18

In the tradition of monastic mysticism, Bradford's religion was highly personal. Driven by a demanding conscience he could find no spiritual rest. The ideal rest of the sabbath signified no surcease of labor but merely exchanging the mundane work of the week for the more exhausting spiritual struggle of the sabbath. In this he struck a note whose echo rang through later Puritan writings. Life to the Puritan appeared as an obstacle course in which each man ran against time. The more difficult the obstacles, the greater was the satisfaction in final achievement. The tragedy was not so much that the sabbath challenged the best in a man but that it represented so little joie de vivre in execution.

Bradford was arrested during the Marian persecution and imprisoned in the Tower of London. While a prisoner he wrote a pamphlet entitled Hurt of Hearing Mass, whose stated purpose was to "show that

17 Ibid., II, 259.
18 Ibid., I, 55, 56.
every commandment ... is broken up by hearing and seeing mass."19

Let us now go to the fourth commandment, of the sanctifying of the sabbath-day; and we shall see no less occasion than we have done to gather [sic] going to the mass, and not disallowing it publicly in word and deed, to be sin and a breach of this commandment also. For in it the Lord requires rest from bodily labor to the end of sanctification, except we should put no difference between the end of rest on the sabbath-day appointed to man, from that which is appointed to the beast. The end thereof, I say, of the rest in the sabbath to man is sanctification: that is, man is commanded to rest from bodily labor and other exercises, that he may with diligence and reverence hear God's word in his ministry, learn his law, use his sacraments and ceremonies as he hath ordained, covent [come together] to common prayer in the place appointed and the other holy exercises, helping to the conservation of the ministry, propagation of the gospel and increase of love and charity one towards another.20

The efficacy of the mass aside, as a spiritual mystery it represents the epitome of worship to thousands. This value Bradford rejects in favor of preaching as a means of instruction for the propagation of the gospel. Whatever his purpose, this view denies the symbolic spiritual value of the sabbath and emphasizes its utilitarian aspect as a day of Christian education. Bradford continues:

... no man of any reading or godly consideration of the scriptures cannot but see, the principal thing God in his commandment did respect was the ministry of his word and sacraments, by which God gathers his church, increases it, and conserves it: and therefore of all things he could worst away with [endure] the breach of this commandment.21

Thus Bradford ends where he began; the sabbath is a means to an end and that end is sanctification of the individual and of the church.

19 Ibid., II, 323.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., II, 324.
This increases the importance of the sabbath as upon these exercises rests a man's hope of eternal salvation. The danger lies in the exercise becoming a raison d'être.

Heinrich Bullinger

Heinrich Bullinger was neither an Englishman nor, in the strict sense, a Puritan but his influence on Puritan thought justifies his inclusion in this study. He was born in 1504 in Bremgarten near Zurich. In 1519 he commenced studies at the University of Cologne. He became involved in the Reformation about 1524 and succeeded Zwingli as the pastor at Zurich in 1531. Bullinger was one of the Swiss Reformers who played host to the English religious exiles, first during the latter years of Henry VIII and later during the Marian persecution. Consulted on many major issues in the development of the English Protestant Church, Bullinger's patronage was a formidable factor in shaping the ecclesiastical thought of Tudor Englishmen.

While only nineteen, Bullinger was called to the Cistercian convent of Kappel to become a lecturer and teacher of the monks and other students in the monastery. This offer did not require Bullinger to take vows, professions or observances that might interfere with his conscience and he began this work in January, 1524. The importance of this position was that it allowed the young man to discourse on the scriptures as well as the writings of the Church Fathers. During the

six years he remained at Kappel he composed more than fifty treatises, mostly on religious topics. These were subsequently published or incorporated in his later writings.\textsuperscript{23}

Bullinger was best known for the \textit{Decades}, a series of fifty sermons divided into five books of ten sermons each. These became so popular that they were required reading for English preachers during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His treatise on the sabbath is the fourth discourse of the second book. Like many other sixteenth century religious writers, Bullinger, in a detailed exposition of the ten commandments, was forced to examine the implications of the sabbath in Protestant Christian thought. He prescribes the now familiar four principles of sabbath observance:

\begin{quote}
Now, for because the worshipping of God cannot be without a time there has the Lord appointed a certain time, wherein we should abstain from outward or bodily works; but so yet that we should have outward rest commanded that the spiritual work should not be hindered by the bodily business. Moreover, that spiritual labors among our fathers was chief spent about four things: to wit, about public reading and expounding of the scriptures; and so consequently, about hearing of the same; about public prayers and common petitions; about sacrifices, or the administration of the sacraments; and lastly, about the gathering of every man's benevolence. In these consisted the outward religion of the sabbath.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The idea of the sabbath as a "rest" was lost on Bullinger. His sabbath was merely exchanging one type of work for another. The goad of time was applied unsparingly to the long-suffering believer:

\begin{quote}
As that day the Lord did rest from his creating, but he ceased not still to preserve; so we upon that day must rest from handy and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., V, p. ix.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., II, 255.
bodily works, but we must not cease from the works of well doing and worshipping of God. Furthermore, the heavenly rest was no prejudice at all to the things created: neither shall the holy day, or sabbath, spent in God's service, be any let or hindrance to our affairs and business. For the Lord blessed the sabbath-day; and therefore shall he bless thee and thy house, all thy affairs and business, and if he shall see thee to have a care to sanctify his sabbath; that is, to do those works which he commanded to be done on the sabbath-day. They therefore do err from the truth as far as heaven is wide, whosoever do despise the religion and holy rest of the sabbath-day, calling it an idle ease, and do labor on the sabbath-day, as they do on working days, under the pretense of care for their family and necessities sake. 25

Here we see an hardening of attitude toward any activity on the Sunday except that specifically designated as holy labor. Sunday would become an exercise in well doing in which the time is spent in watchful concern over proper procedure rather than a revelation of God's presence.

Bullinger then proceeds to deal with the time of the Sunday. It is not the particular day that is important but the manner in which the day is used:

We know the sabbath is ceremonial, so far as it is joined to sacrifices and other Jewish ceremonies, and so far forth as it is tied to a certain time: but in respect that on the sabbath-day religion and true godliness are exercised and published, that a just and seemly order is kept in the church, and that the love of our neighbor is thereby preserved, therein, I say, it is perpetual and not ceremonial. 26

He insists that "now as there ought to be an appointed place, so likewise must there be a prescribed time, for the outward exercise of religion, and so consequently, an holy rest." 27

A second time Bullinger lists the four things by which men sanctify the sabbath and adds:

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25 Ibid., II, 259.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
For nothing more is required in the fourth commandment than that we should holily observe and devoutly exercise, the sacraments, and holy, lawful, profitable, and necessary rites and ceremonies of the church . . . . and these are the duties, wherein the Lord's sabbath is kept holy even in the church of Christians; and so much the rather, if to these be added an earnest good will to do no evil all the day long.28

If the emphasis had remained on a voluntary striving for perfection and the sabbath had been only the unique symbol of the striving, sabbatarianism would have reflected no more than an extreme view of a means to an end. However, Bullinger now sounds a warning of a new legalism building on the foundation of the old church so recently abandoned. This tendency, of some of the Reformers, to step back rather than forward, to concern themselves with the letter of the law rather than the spirit, made the sabbath a yoke of bondage rather than an experience of Christian freedom.

The ominous shadows of repression began to take shape in these words of the Zurich preacher:

This discipline must now be brought in and established by every householder in all our several houses, with as great diligence as it was with the Jews. . . . This one thing I add more; that it is the duty of a Christian magistrate, or leastwise of a good householder, to compel to amendments the breakers and contemners of God's sabbath and worship. The peers of Israel, and all the peoples of God did stone to death (as the Lord commanded them) the man that disobediently did gather sticks on the sabbath-day. Why then should it not be lawful for a Christian magistrate to punish by bodily imprisonment, by loss of goods, or by death, the despisers of religion, of the true and lawful worship done to God and of the sabbath-day.29

The fearful emphasis on the Old Testament bloodletting and a

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28 Ibid., II, 261.

29 Ibid., II, 261, 262.
curious myopia that blinded them to the generous interpretation of Jesus, robbed Puritanism of its true Christian content. This point of view owed something to the theology of John Calvin as well. Whatever contribution Puritanism would make to social, economic, or political progress would seem to be only incidental to its main purpose and was never consciously intended. In its legalistic, disciplinary concept of life, Puritanism was tragically limited and did little more than mirror the rough Tudor age of which it was so integrally a part. The oppressive suggestion made by Bullinger was to be repeated by future Puritan writers. As Bullinger wrote in a simulated theocracy, this would become the ideal of Puritanism; law would replace love as the motif of God's kingdom on earth.

John Hooper

John Hooper (1490-1555) studied at Merton College in Oxford and eventually entered monastic life. After the dissolution of the monasteries, when the Six Articles were in force (1540), he withdrew to the Continent where he was received at Zurich by Bullinger, whose works had converted him to the Protestant view. He returned to England in 1548, residing in London, preaching and taking an active part in the reformation. Appointed Bishop of Gloucester, he refused to wear the required vestments and so delayed his consecration to that office until February, 1551. He even suffered a short confinement in Fleet prison until he was willing to confess vestments as a thing indifferent. At this point, Hooper had but four years of life left, being burned under the Marian
persecution, February 9, 1555.  

Although his name is usually linked most prominently with the Vestiarian Controversy, Hooper wrote some passing observations on proper sabbath observance. He expressed his attitude toward the ten commandments as the inclusive key to the scriptures: "And whatsoever is said or written by the prophets, Christ, or the apostles, is none other thing but the interpretation and exposition of these ten words or ten commandments." He comments on the reason for the giving of the fourth commandment which bears the same utilitarian stamp as his Protestant predecessors:

The cause and end why this commandment was instituted is diverse. First, because man should upon this day call his intendment and thoughts from the lusts, pleasures, vanities, and concupiscence of the world, unto the meditations of God and his word, to the study of scripture, hearing of the word of God; to call upon God with ardent prayer, to use and exercise the sacraments of God, to confer and give, according to his ability, alms to the comforting of the poor.

The trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit is apparent in Hooper's treatment of sabbath observance. With enthusiasm he writes:

That man and beast therefore might breathe and have repose, this sabbath was instituted, not only that the body should be restored unto strength, and made able to sustain the travails of the week to come; but also that the soul and spirit of man, while the body is at rest, might upon the sabbath learn and know so the blessed will of his maker, that only it have not from the labor and adversity of sin, but also by God's grace receive such strength and force in the contemplation of God's most merciful promise that it may be able to

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31 Ibid., p. 271.
32 Ibid., p. 337.
sustain all the troubles of temptation in the week that follows. For as the body, being always oppressed with labor, loses his strength and so perishes; so does the mind of man oppressed with the cares and pleasures of this world, lose all her force, lust and desire, that she had to the rest to come of eternal life, and so dies not only the death of sin, but hasteth, what she can, to hate and abhor all virtue.33

Hooper draws on the Old Testament to illustrate that the sabbath is a type and figure of the eternal and everlasting rest to come. "Such as believed the promises of God declared by Moses, were led by Joshua. . . and rested in Canaan: such as hear the word of God and obey it, shall be carried into the celestial heavens by Jesus Christ.34

Hooper taught that to neglect a charitable deed to our neighbor is to break the sabbath but concluded: "not to cease from doing ill, but to abuse the rest and ease of the sabbath, is to abuse the sabbath. It is as much as to fery [keep a feast or holiday] unto God, and work to the devil; for especially all unlawful plays and sports be used upon that day."35

On the question of sabbatarianism, Hooper sustained rather than innovated. The weight of his blows were reserved for other issues but he supported the trend to a more rigid keeping of a day that allowed no pleasure for the sake of pleasure.

Hugh Latimer was born in 1491. Educated at Cambridge, a fellow

33Ibid., p. 338.
34Ibid., p. 339.
of Clare Hall, he received his M. A. in 1514. Noted at Cambridge for his piety as well as his studious habits he was a zealous Papist and a bitter opponent of all who favored the new Reformation teachings. In 1524, the influence of Thomas Bilney converted Latimer to Protestantism and he became as ardent a reformer as he had formerly been an ardent Catholic. Dickens says, "Latimer had little importance as a theologian, and if his message was primarily religious it concerned itself scarcely less with social morality. In his mind ... the notion of the commonwealth had a deep religious connotation; it almost involves a species of Christian socialism."  

Much of Latimer's contemporary fame was based on his ability as a popular preacher. Even today his style is fresh and vigorous and his sermons can be read with enjoyment. His prejudice for preachers and preaching is evidenced in these words of a sermon on the sabbath delivered in 1552:

Here I might take occasion to inveigh against those which little regard the office of preaching ... for the holy day is ordained and appointed to none other thing, but that we should at that day hear the word of God, and exercise ourselves in all godliness. But there be some which think that this day is ordained only for feasting, drinking, or gaming, or such foolishness; but they be much deceived: this day was appointed of God that we should hear his word, and learn his laws, and so serve him. But I dare say the Devil hath no days so much service as upon Sundays or holy days; which Sundays are appointed to preaching, and to hear God's most holy word.

37Dickens, op cit., p. 224.
38Latimer, op. cit., p. 471.
Here again we mark the utilitarian use of the sabbath as a day of instruction in the Christian virtues. Such special emphasis tended to ignore the subtle nuances of worship that involved man's emotional response to God. The sabbath was reduced to the small print in the contract that one would ignore at his own risk. Latimer then proceeds to describe the work of the holy day:

Therefore God saith not only in his commandments, that we shall abstain from working; but he saith, Sanctificabis, "Thou shalt hallow:" so that holy day keeping is nothing else but to abstain from good works, and to do better works; that is, to come together, and celebrate the communion together, and visit the sick bodies. These are holy-day works; and for that end God commanded us to abstain from bodily works, that we might be more meet and apt to do those works which he has appointed unto us, namely, to feed our souls with his word, to remember his benefits, and to give him thanks and to call upon him. So that the holy-day may be called a marriage day, wherein we are married unto God; which day is very needful to be kept. The foolish common people think it to be a belly cheer day, and so they make it a surfeiting day: there is no wickedness, no rebellion, no lechery, but she hath most commonly her beginning upon the holy day.39

We recognize in the preceding statement a rephrasing of the four accepted sabbath duties that have, by this time, become the common denominator of sabbatarianism whether advocated by Protestant or Catholic writers. They represent a singular dedication to a pragmatic sabbath concept and a lack of imagination that fails to see the Lord's Day from any perspective other than their own. That the Lord also sanctified the sabbath for his purpose seemed to be generally overlooked in their devotion to sanctifying the sabbath for their purposes.

39Ibid., pp. 471, 472.
Latimer then illustrates the importance of proper sabbath observance by the use of a familiar Bible story:

We read a story in the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers, that there was a fellow which gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day; he was a despiser of God's ordinances and laws, like as they that now-a-days go about other business, when they should hear the word of God, and come to the common prayers: which fellows truly have need of sauce, to be made more lustier to come and feed upon Christ than they be. Now Moses and the people consulted with the Lord, what they should do, how they should punish that fellow which had so transgressed the sabbath-day. 'He shall die' saith God: which thing is an ensample for us to take heed, that we transgress not the law of the sabbath day.\(^0\)

In referring to this text in Numbers 15:32-36, Latimer sustains Bullinger's thesis of magisterial compulsion of sabbath observance and by implication rejects the freedom of worship of some Protestant thinkers. But to say this is only to recognize the depth and strength of the Catholic roots that nourished these proto-Puritans, so recently divorced from the Old Church and still so thoroughly imbued with her spirit.

Latimer concludes this sermon on an evangelistic note that marks this as being composed for the pulpit rather than the study:

\[\ldots\] for upon the sabbath-day God's seed-plough goeth; that is to say, the ministry of his word is executed; for the ministering of God's word is God's plough. Now upon the Sundays God sendeth his husbandmen to come and till; he sendeth his callers to come and call to the wedding, to bid the guests; that is, all the world to come to that supper \ldots. Therefore I call you in God's name, come to this supper; hallow the sabbath-day; that is, do your holy-day work, come to this supper; for this day was appointed of God to that end, that his word should be taught and heard. Prefer not your own business therefore before the hearing of the word of God.\(^1\)

\(^0\) Ibid., p. 472.

\(^1\) Ibid.
In all ages, preachers dwell most on that which men do least. It is difficult to obtain direct evidence as to the way the ordinary people observed sabbath at this period as distinct from the precepts and ordinances of individuals and the state as to how they ought to observe it. The extent to which it was the subject of sermon and treatise would suggest that little or no actual change had taken place; the people attended the services, as they had always done, and passed the rest of the day in a more or less relaxed mood. "The Act of Uniformity in 1552 made attendance at the Parish Church compulsory, it having been found that numbers of people were absenting themselves from worship." Thus sabbatarianism remained an ideal rather than a realization. Latimer advanced no new ideas of sabbath observance but rather moved back in time in advocating legal control of sabbath worship.

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Chapter 9

THE EDWARDIAN YEARS

The death of Henry VIII in January of 1547 marked the beginning of a time of refreshing for the more extreme Protestants in England. It is not by chance that the bulk of our quoted material was written between the years 1547 and 1553, which years marked the reign of Edward VI. It is a curious fact that in spite of his allegiance to the Catholic faith, Henry delegated the education of his young son into the hands of those of known Protestant sympathies. So it was that during the reign of the young king, the Protestant cause was able to establish itself sufficiently to withstand the blasts of the Marian persecution. In the amiable atmosphere of the Edwardian years, the Protestant writers enjoyed a freedom of expression that enabled them to advance their cause.

There had as yet been no sabbatarianism in the conduct of the Reformation either at home or abroad. The Royal Injunctions of Edward VI (1547) had ordered the due religious observance of the day but had not held that inconsistent with requiring the clergy to teach the people "that they may with a safe and quiet conscience, after their common prayer in the time of harvest, labor upon the holy and festival days and save that thing which God has sent."1 It was even suggested that not to do so on religious ground would be grievously offensive and displeasing to God. The practice of the Reformers, English and foreign,

had been consistent with this view of Sunday observance.  

However, the unsatisfactory position of prohibiting amusements but permitting work upon Sunday seems to have been apparent to some of the Reformers. Thomas Becon, while chaplain to Cranmer, seems to have been more clear upon this point than his archbishop. He had written: "The mind utterly sequestered from all worldly thing..." man was to pass the sabbath hours in "bodily and spiritual exercises." From this time on there was to be an almost imperceptible but consistent move toward a theological, moral and disciplinary sabbatarianism of Puritan devising.

The laws and orders issued from the government of the reformed Church of England, and possessing authority to bind its members, may be arranged under the three heads of regulatory, synodical, and mandatory: the first consisting of acts of parliament, the second of decrees of synods confirmed by the sovereign, and the third, royal mandates. It is evident that in all these cases the assent of the sovereign is indispensable; and in the language of the law as well as prerogative, the royal pleasure has been considered as the source of all church authority.

In the act of parliament which Henry had procured for giving force and authority to his proclamations, a proviso was added that his son's councilors, while he should be underage, might set out proclamations of the same authority with those which were made by the king him-

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2 Ibid., p. 38.


self. This gave the Duke of Somerset full power to proceed in that work in which he resolved to follow the method begun by Henry VIII of sending visitors over England with injunctions and articles. The Injunctions of 1547 had this to say concerning the keeping of Sunday:

4. Item, that every holy day throughout the year, when they have no sermon, they shall immediately after the gospel openly and plainly recite to their parishioners in the pulpit, the Pater noster, the Credo, and the Ten Commandments in English, to the intent the people may learn the same by heart: exhorting all parents and householders to teach their children and servants the same as they are bound by the law of God, and in conscience to do.

This Injunction was directed primarily to the leadership of the church and was one of the items to be inquired into at the time of the visitations. Specifically, at the time of the visitation in the Diocese of Canterbury in 1547, the question was asked:

Whether they have not diligently taught upon the Sundays and holy days their parishioners, and specially the youth, their Pater noster, the Articles of our faith, and the Ten Commandments in English; and whether they have expounded and declared the understanding of the same.

This same admonition was repeated in subsequent proclamations relative to church visitations.

Item 24, in the Injunctions, stated the principle of sabbath observance at this period:

Also, like as the people be commonly occupied on the work-day with bodily labor, for their bodily sustenance, so was the holy-day at the first beginning godly instituted and ordained, that the people should that day give themselves wholly to God. And whereas

5Ibid., p. 4.
6Ibid., p. 7.
7Ibid., p. 25.
in our time, God is more offended than pleased, more dishonored than honored upon the holy day, because of idleness, pride, drunkenness, quarreling and brawling, which are most used in such days, people nevertheless persuading themselves sufficiently to honor God on that day, if they hear mass and service, though they understand nothing to their edifying: therefore all the king's faithful and loving subjects shall from henceforth celebrate and keep their holy day according to God's will and pleasure. 8

Here follows a statement of the four duties that constitute proper sabbath observance and then the ox-in-the-ditch clause that robbed the statement of any moral obligation that might otherwise have been implied.

Yet notwithstanding all parsons, vicars, and curates, shall teach and declare unto their parishioners, that they may with a safe and quiet conscience, in the time of harvest, labor upon the holy and festival days, and save the thing which God hath sent. And if for any scrupulosity, or grudge of conscience, men should superstitiously abstain from working upon those days, that they should grievously offend and displease God. 9

Similar articles of visitation issued by Bishop Bonner in 1554, early in the reign of Queen Mary, cited the responsibility of the minister to instruct the parishioners in the Articles of the Catholic faith, the ten commandments, both as expressed in the old law and in the gospel's new law, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven principal virtues and the seven sacraments of the church.

To further instruct the people in Christian virtues, a book of twelve sermons was published in 1547. These sermons were to be used in every church and heard of all congregations, designed for the maintenance of true religion and virtue, for the suppression of Catholicism and

8Ibid., p. 75.
9Ibid.
the discouragement of Puritanism, as well as for the teaching of what duty they owe both to God and man. These homilies were probably, next to the Book of Common Prayer, as well known and as influential as any writing produced between 1547 and 1640.10

The twelve sermons were later increased to twenty-one. Authorship is not certain, though Bishops Jewell, Grindal, Pilkington and Parker seem to have written most of them. Eight editions were published in 1563 alone.

One of the sermons, A Place and Time of Prayer, dealt with the subject of the sabbath. The thesis suggested that, since God in creation had given men the use and government of all things even though they did not deserve it, men should express thanks to him in worship. Although men ought to at all times and in all places remember these things, God has given them a special time and a special place to honor his name—the sabbath.

And albeit this commandment of God does not bind Christian people so straitly to observe and keep the utter ceremonies of the sabbath day, as it was given unto the Jews, as touching the forbearing of work and labor in times of great necessity, as touching the precise keeping of the seventh-day after the manner of the Jews . . . . yet notwithstanding, whatsoever is found in the commandment appertaining to the law of nature, as a thing most godly, most just, needful for the setting forth of God's glory, it ought to be retained and kept of all good Christian people.11

10 Certaine Sermons or Homilies, 1547-1571 eds. Mary Ellen Rickey and Thomas B. Stroup (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1968), pp. vii, viii.

11 Ibid., pp. 124, 125.
Carried to a logical conclusion, this could include all that the Jews did and more. To neglect the jots and tittles is to fall short of perfection. The more men tended to resist the admonition of the preacher, the more demanding and definitive would be the standard of conduct required of the erring sinner. The preacher continues:

Even so, God has given express charge to all men, that upon the sabbath day, which is now our Sunday, they should cease from all weekly and work day labor, to the intent and like as God himself wrought five days, and rested the seventh, and blessed, and sanctified it, and consecrated it to quietness and rest from labor: even so God's obedient people should use the Sunday holy and rest from common and daily business and also give themselves wholly to the heavenly exercises of God's true religion and service . . . . Thus it may plainly appear, that God's will and commandment was to have a solemn time and standing day in the week, wherein the people should come together, and have in remembrance his wonderful benefits and to render him thanks for them, as appertains to loving, kind, and obedient people. 12

After referring to the Bible story of the man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath, two types of sabbath breakers are defined:

But alas, all these notwithstanding, it is lamentable to see the wicked boldness of those that will be counted God's people, who pass nothing at all of keeping and hallowing Sunday. And these people are of two sorts. The one sort if they have any business to do, though there be no extreme need, they must not spare for the Sunday, they must ride and journey on the Sunday, they must drive and carry on the Sunday, they must row and ferry on the Sunday, they must buy and sell on the Sunday, they must keep markets and fairs on the Sunday: finally they use all days alike. Work days and holy days all are one. The other sort is worse. For although they will not travel nor labor on the Sunday as they do on the week day, yet they will not rest in holiness, as God commands: but they rest in ungodliness and filthiness, prancing in their pride, prancing and pricking, pointing and painting themselves to be gorgeous and gay: they rest in excess and superfluitie, in gluttony and drunkenness, like

12 Ibid.
rats and swine: they rest in brawling and railing, in quarreling and fighting: they rest in wantonness, in toyish talking, in filthy fleshliness, so that it does too evidently appear that God is more dishonored, and the devil be better served on Sunday, than upon all the days in the week besides.13

Although these sermons were expressly composed to combat not only Catholicism but Puritanism as well, yet the tone taken in reference to proper sabbath observance can scarcely be distinguished from the Puritan theme of a generation later. This would suggest that the fine line between sabbath keeping and sabbatarianism was only to a degree and scarcely to be understood by the rank and file of the church. Fine definitions were in the realm of the theologians; to the man in the Tudor pew, the end result was a demanding discipline as old as canon law. If God's judgment demanded the death of the sinner then it behooved a man to seek a lighter sentence. God must be appeased and a certain amount of suffering and inconvenience was necessary to reduce the charge from a felony offense to a misdemeanor. Submission to discipline gave a man the reassurance of having paid his moral dues of balancing the books of the judgment.

After discoursing on the peoples' indifference to their attendance at church, a crisis theme is introduced into the sermon to hopefully accomplish by fear what cool reason and stern admonition had failed to do.

Alas, how many churches, countries, and kingdoms of Christian people have of late years been plucked down, and overrun, and left waste, with grievous and intolerable tyranny and cruelty of the enemy of our Lord Christ the great Turk, who has so universally

13 Ibid., p. 126.
scourged the Christians, that never the like was heard or read of. About thirty years past, the great Turk had overrun, conquered, and brought into dominion and subjection, twenty Christian kingdoms, turning away the people from the faith of Christ, poisoning them with the devilish religion of wicked Mohammed, and either destroying their churches utterly, or filthily abusing them with their wicked and detestable errors. And now this great Turk, this bitter and sharp scourge of God's vengeance, is even at hand in this part of Christendom, in Europe, at the borders of Italy, at the borders of Germany, greed gaping to devour us, to overrun our country, to destroy our churches also, unless we repent our sinful life, and report more diligently to the church to honor God to learn his blessed will and to fulfill the same.¹⁴

This was the essence of Puritanism as well as the detail expressed in an atmosphere admittedly hostile to the Puritan impulse. But on the sabbath issue at least there was a unanimity of spirit that betrayed a common source of spiritual inspiration. How much the repeated reading of this sermon tended to dilute the fear and repentance it was intended to provoke, is a question with no certain answer; although when knowledge of the world was limited to one's own horizons such scare tactics would undoubtedly have had an immediate effect on the people.

Among the many writings dated during this period, a significant document appeared in the publication of the Edwardian Catechism of 1553. This was the last work of the Reformers in Edward's reign and may be fairly understood to contain, as far as it goes, their ultimate decision and to represent the sense of the English Church as then established. Listing the laws of the first table it concludes: "Last of all this ought we to hold steadfastly and with devout conscience, that we keep holy and religiously the sabbath day; which was appointed out from the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 130.
other for rest and service of God. This official tone differs measur-
ably from much of the public expression of the proto-Puritan publicists.

It continues:

Master: "What has thou to say of the sabbath, or the holy day, 
which even now thou madest mention of, among the laws of the first 
table?"

Scholar: "Sabbath is as much to say, as rest. It was appointed 
for only honor and service of God: and it is a figure of that rest and 
quietness, which they have that believe in Christ. For our 
trust in Christ doth set our minds at liberty from all slavish fear 
of the law, sin, death and hell; assuring us in the mean season, 
that by him we please God, and that he hath made us his children and 
heirs of his kingdom: whereby there growth in our hearts peace and 
true quietness of mind: which is a certain foretaste of the most 
blessed quiet, which we shall have in his kingdom. As for those 
things that are used to be done on the sabbath day, as ceremonies 
and exercises in the service of God, they are tokens and witnesses 
of this assured trust. And meet it is, that faithful Christians, 
on such days as are appointed out for holy things, should lay aside 
unholy works, and give themselves earnestly to religion and serving 
God." 

At a time when religious convictions were expressed with savage 
intensity and the position of power could deal death to the dissenter, 
soft answers, such as this, were the exception rather than the rule. In 
this, Cranmer's influence is undoubtedly reflected as a mild statement 
of sabbatarian principle. It says further:

Master: "What be the parts of that outward serving God, which 
thou saidest even now did stand in certain bodily exercises; which 
are also tokens of the inward serving him?"

Scholar: "First to teach, and hear the learning of the gospel: 
then the pure and natural use of the ceremonies and sacraments: last 
of all, prayer made unto God by Christ, and in the name of Christ,

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15 The Two Liturgies, 1549 and 1552, With Other Documents, ed. 

16 Ibid., pp. 515, 516.
which without fail obtaineth the Holy Ghost, the most assured author of all true serving God, and upright religion." 17

Only three elements of sabbath keeping are listed here. The giving of alms or the doing of good deeds are not included, perhaps a subtle suggestion that after the ceremonies of the sabbath have been observed, a true rest might be enjoyed.

No significant legislation or development of the observance of sabbath appeared during the reign of Mary. No hostility was expressed that threatened Puritan sabbath observance and whatever other weight of persecution was felt would tend to settle those of Puritan persuasions more firmly into the convictions of the "rightness" of their way.

17 Ibid., p. 516.
Chapter 10

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth century is known in history under the name of the "Counter Reformation." This term is correct in a great measure although it does not do it full justice. The Catholic Reformation was to a great extent a reactionary reform. To give substance to Catholic purpose a church council was convened in the City of Trent in 1545 and continued intermittently until 1563. In the list of general councils, Trent holds first place, not only because of its restatement of Catholic doctrine and its initiation of a genuine reform, but also because of its extraordinary influence both within and without the church. Its purpose was two-fold, to define the doctrines of the church in reply to the heresies of the Protestants, and to bring forth a thorough reform of the inner life of Christians.¹ The Council marked the beginning of a new era in the Papal Church. The Protestant movement had forced the Church of Rome to self-reform. Addressing itself to those doctrines and abuses which had been the targets of the Reformers, the Council adopted a statement of faith and a program of reforms that effectively stayed the course of rebellion. It set in motion instruments of defense that in another generation everywhere jeopardized the existence of the Reformed Churches.²


The Roman Church did not seek to change its basic form of organization but sought to assure that better men assumed the power of leadership. The Bishop of Nazianzus and Coadjutor of Famagusta, Reverend Jerome Ragazonus of Venice, delivered the closing oration of the Council in the ninth and last session on December 4, 1563. He summed up the work of the Council in these words:

For since in a two-fold respect medicine had to be applied to their weak and infirm spirits, one, the explanation and confirmation of the teaching of the Catholic and truly evangelical faith in those matters upon which they had cast doubt and which at this time appeared opportune for the dispersion and destruction of all the darkness of errors; the other, the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline, the collapse of which they claim was the chief cause of their severance from us, we have amply accomplished both so far as the conditions of the times would permit.3

The summation of the work of the Council was embodied in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which was not published until 1567. Part III, "On the Precepts of God Contained in the Decalogue," deals extensively with the law and the sabbath. As this represents the considered opinion of the Roman Church in the sixteenth century, and is in effect a restatement of the source from which the Puritans drew the initial inspiration for their sabbatarianism, it is worth a close look to see in what respects Puritan sabbatarianism now differed or in what aspects there were similarities of ideals in worship.

The first item states that "The Decalogue is a summary and epitome of the entire law."4 Item eight argues that all men are bound to obey the injunctions of the law as this is necessary to salvation; that


when the Apostle Paul says "a new creature in Christ, alone availleth," by a new creature in Christ we plainly perceive that he means him who observes and keeps the commandments of God."

There are twenty-eight articles relative to the sabbath, the first of which reads:

1. What this Commandment Prescribes to the Faithful. In this precept of the law is prescribed in due order that outward worship which is due to God from us, this being as it were a fruit of the preceding commandment; for if guided by the faith and hope that we repose in him, we worship God piously in our inmost souls, we cannot refrain from honoring him with outward worship and thanksgiving. And as this is a duty which cannot be easily discharged by those who are engaged in the occupations of human things, a fixed time has been appointed when it may conveniently be performed.

The second article reminds men that the sabbath commandment begins with the word "Remember" and continues "for, since it is the duty of the faithful to remember, it is also that of the pastor, by admonishing and instructing, frequently to remind them of the commandment." The importance of the sabbath is underlined by their saying "that a faithful compliance therewith facilitates the observance of all the other commandments of the law."

An oblique reference back to canon law and in effect a restatement of Bullinger's thesis of the power and responsibility of the magistrate is stated in Article 3: "But princes and magistrates are to be admonished and exhorted to aid with the support of their authority the

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5 Schroeder, op. cit., pp. 373, 374.
6 Ibid., p. 374.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 375.
prelates of the church, most especially in those things which appertain to upholding . . . the worship of God."\(^9\)

As did the proto-Puritan writers, the Catholic catechists differentiated between the sabbath commandment and the other nine commandments of the Decalogue. Article 4 states:

The difference, then, appears evident in that the other commandments of the Decalogue are precepts of the natural and perpetual law under all circumstances unalterable, whence, notwithstanding the abrogation of the law of Moses, all the commandments contained in the two tables are observed by the Christian people, not because Moses so commanded, but because they agree with the law of nature, by the dictates of which men are impelled to their observance; whereas this commandment, touching the sanctification of the sabbath, if considered as to the time of its observance, is not fixed and unalterable, but susceptible of change, and belongs not to the moral but to the ceremonial law. Neither is it a natural principle, for we are taught or formed by nature to give external worship to God on the sabbath rather than on any other day; but from the time the people of Israel were liberated from the bondage of Pharaoh, they observed the sabbath day.\(^10\)

Having isolated the sabbath commandment into a category of its own, the catechists immediately retrieve it, recognizing it as the cornerstone of the Decalogue and essential to the observance of the whole law, as they have previously stated in Article 2. Article 6 makes this point clear:

But this precept agrees with the others not in what is ritual and ceremonial, but inasmuch as it comprises something that appertains to the moral and natural law. For the worship of God and the practice of religion, which are comprised in this precept, have the natural law for their basis, whereas it is natural for us to give some time to the worship of God . . . . For it is natural for man to give some time to necessary functions, such as bodily repose, sleep, and other such matters; so also does the same nature require that some time be allowed to the mind, to recruit its energies in the contemplation of God; and thus, as some portion of time ought to be consecrated to divine things, and to paying the worship due

\(^9\)Ibid.

\(^10\)Ibid.
to the Deity, this no doubt appertains to the moral law. ¹¹

We have noted this theological dilemma in the writings of the proto-Puritans as they attempt to find justification for the change of the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week. They must first separate the day from moral obligation then reconstitute it as having moral significance in the context of the total Decalogue. Article 8 says: "For although the law of nature commands us at some time to give external religious worship to God, it prescribes no particular day for the performance of that duty."¹² To establish their point they must needs go outside of the scripture and appeal to natural law. The Catholic writers would find no inconsistency in this point of view but the Protestant writers were on a precarious perch, given their allegiance to the Word of God as alone sufficient for salvation.

Like Cranmer, the catechists would broaden the scope of sabbath observance. In the legal and disciplinary aspects of the sabbath is a suggestion that what we do on the other six days of the week must be justified as we come to worship God on the sabbath. Article 8 continues:

The faithful are also to be taught, that from these words we may infer in what manner we should employ our time during the week; to wit, that we are constantly to keep in view the Lord's day, in which we are, as it were, to render an account to God of our deeds and works; and therefore our occupations should be such as not to be repudiated by the judgment of God . . . . Lastly we are taught—and the lesson certainly merits attention—that there will not be wanting occasions to lead to forgetfulness of this commandment, being lead either by the example of others who neglect its observance, or by a love of amusements and spectacles, by which we are

¹¹Ibid., p. 376.
¹²Ibid., pp. 376, 377.
frequently withdrawn from the holy and religious observance of the Lord's day.13

Article 9 goes so far as to state that not only the seventh day but the entire week was called the sabbath in honor of God's creation of the world.

Article 20 emphasizes that the "six days of labor" is an exhortation that man is not to pass his life in indolence and sloth but that on the six days of the week man should do his business and work with his hands and "defer not to the Sunday what should be done or transacted on the other days of the week, through which neglect our attention must be withdrawn from the care and study of divine things."14

Article 21 adds that:

To avoid altogether whatsoever may interfere with the divine worship. For it is easy to perceive that every manner of servile work is forbidden, not because it is improper or evil of itself, but because it withdraws our minds from the divine worship, which is the end of the commandment.15

On the positive side, Article 23 speaks of those things which are permitted on the sabbath: "Neither are we to suppose that by this commandment attention is forbidden to those things which, if neglected on a festival, are lost to the proprietor, the preservation of which the sacred canons also permit." Thus the "ox-in-the-ditch" is remembered. But a further appeal is made to scripture as to things that are proper for sabbath observance. These scriptures refer to Christ healing

13Ibid., p. 377.
14Ibid., pp. 379; 380.
on the sabbath and his walk through the cornfield on the sabbath day.16

In article 25 we encounter once again, in Roman Catholic theology, the four familiar sabbath duties. Pastors are to instruct the faithful in what actions Christians should occupy themselves on festivals, which of course, includes the sabbath.

Among other things we are to visit the temple of God, and there with sincere and pious attention of mind assist at the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass. . . . Sermons are also to be heard by the faithful. . . . In prayer and divine praises also should the piety of the faithful frequently be exercised . . . and to practice with assiduity the duties that comprise piety, giving alms to the poor and the indigent, visiting the sick and piously administering consolation to the sorrowing and afflicted.17

On all major points, Puritan and Catholic would have been in harmony on the place and importance of the sabbath as revealed in this Catechism. Where there would have been a divergence of opinion was in the Catholic's inclusion of the sabbath as only one of many festival days of the church. For the Puritan there was only one festival of the church and that a weekly one. On this day every week the mighty acts of God in the creation, redemption and sanctification of man, through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, were celebrated. The whole drama of salvation was rehearsed each Sunday in its entirety. What need was there, then, for separate festivals which celebrated only one scene of the divine drama? The Puritans did not merely regard the saints' days and festivals as superfluous but as a diminution of the glory due to God

16Ibid.

17Ibid., p. 381.
alone, as well as a denial of the sole Mediatorship of Christ. 18

The ground of Puritan growth appeared remarkably unchanged from its medieval cultivation. To notice the difference between the Catholic sabbath and that nurtured by Puritans requires the subtle eye of the professional theologian and could easily escape the casual viewer. The difference lies more in philosophical concepts than in immediate application.

Coincidentally with the publication of the Catechism of the Council of Trent (1567) there appeared a minor work by Laurence Vaux, an English monk at the monastery of Louvain. Vaux wrote a catechism for the use of young scholars in the monastery school. Vaux was born at Blackrod in Lancashire around 1519. He was educated at Oxford and for a time was chaplain to the Bishop of Gloucester. Under Queen Mary he became Warden of Manchester (1558) but was deprived under Queen Elizabeth. After this he retired to Louvain. He later returned to England where he was imprisoned and died in misery and want. 19 Referring to the sabbath he wrote:

We do sanctify the holy day when we apply ourselves to the worshipping of God. Therefore upon Sundays and holy days we ought to search our conscience and purge it from sin: we should cry and call unto God for mercy and grace, thanking him for his manifold benefits bestowed upon us: we ought to have in memory Christ's passion, Paradise, Hell and Purgatory, so to abstain from sin, and exercise ourselves in things that be godly for our soul's health: as in going to church to pray devoutly, reverently to hear Mass, and other divine service. 20

20 Ibid., pp. 48, 49.
After this positive statement of doctrine, Vaux proceeds to examine the various ways in which the proper observance of the sabbath might be spoiled. The sabbath, he says, may be broken in four ways:

1. By servile work: ploughing, carting digging or use of handicrafts. It was permitted to dress meats, prepare a medicine and bury the dead, exercise the liberal sciences, dispute, study, sing, play an instrument or take a necessary journey.

2. By omitting to worship in the recognized way.

3. By "unreverence of holy things" talking, walking, gazing or occupying oneself idly when at mass and misusing the church or churchyard.

4. By plays, pastimes or gambling, "cards and dice for covetousness, or when dancing for wantonness, idly straying about during divine services," using an "unhonest" place or company and frequenting taverns or bowling alleys.21

Such documents show clearly that those who claimed for themselves a freedom to spend Sunday just as they liked could not find support for their demand in Roman Catholic thought whatever justification they might adduce from previous Roman Catholic practice. These, too, show that in many points the great similarity between the demands being advanced by the stricter Protestant thinkers and views of the Roman Catholic Church reflected the deepening of religious life in both communions in the latter part of the sixteenth century. There was an accompanying conviction that

21Ibid., p. 49.
the Sunday was a day which must in a very special sense be set apart from the other days of the week.

It must be noted that Vaux does not condemn the playing of all games on Sunday. Generally speaking, he makes a distinction between games which afford pure enjoyment to the individual indulging in them and which cause no harm to others and pastimes which are in themselves incentives to or pretexts for vice and impurity. The former he would allow; the latter he condemned. Herein he is in line with the motives which influenced the magistrates in England who felt constrained during Elizabeth's reign to modify and restrain the existing freedom of conduct on Sunday.  

22Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 49, 50.
With the coronation of Elizabeth I, and the return of the Marian exiles, the Anglican Church again began to take form, and in its constitution, the divergent view of the Protestant extremists became apparent. The controversy began chiefly about vestments, ceremonies and church discipline. The matter of doctrine, specifically, did not become an issue until late in Elizabeth's reign. However, although the Vestrian Controversy and the attack on the prayer-book system took precedence in the public mind, the sabbath issue, like a descant theme, would continue and swell until it dominated the original melody and became one of the most controverted questions between Puritans and Anglicans. Already there was evidence in the writings of men like Phillip Stubbes of what the sabbath would become at the hands of the Puritan enthusiasts. By the time of the Stuarts the Puritans would come to treat it as the Jewish sabbath; no work was to be done, no amusements to be indulged in; it was a day of prayer and worship, and sometimes fasting. This would appear as a gloomy day to those who had no sympathy with the Puritan ethos and found their services dull and uninspiring. But we would be wrong to assume that it was so for the sincere Puritan for him it was not gloomy at all but a day of enjoyment. Puritan insistence that the sabbath be kept holy and that the old

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system of holy days inherited from the Middle Ages be dispensed with would offer a work cycle highly desirable to the new classes. Puritanism offered much more: a morality fitted to meet the needs of the day, a recognition of the value of education and labor. Puritanism always found its strongest support in those areas where rapid transformations were taking place, in London and the market towns.

The Puritans were zealots, and like all zealots, severe to the weaker brethren, whose weakness was incomprehensible to them. For the Anglicans, Sunday was not to be treated as the Jewish holiday, but a Christian festival, the weekly memorial to the resurrection. In the intervals between the services they thought themselves entitled to indulge in harmless recreation. The Puritan sabbath theory was denounced by the rising school of High Churchism as a sabbatarian heresy and a cunningly concealed attack on the authority of the Church of England, by substituting the Jewish sabbath for the Christian Sunday and all the church festivals.

By May 28, 1559, the authorities, employing the powers given them under the Supremacy Act, determined to undertake a general visitation of all the dioceses and to establish a permanent ecclesiastical commission. Lord Cecil, in planning the royal visitation, was consciously copying the precedent set in the first year of Edward VI, when visitors went through

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the country holding inquiries and distributing the first book of
Homilies together with Paraphrases of Erasmus and the Injunctions.
Accordingly a set of Articles of Inquiry were drawn up based largely on
the Edwardian Injunctions which were revised and considerably enlarged.

A collation of the Injunctions with those of 1547 shows that
the first twenty-eight correspond very closely with the older series.
The second half is either new or incorporates enactments and regulations
which had appeared since 1547. These Injunctions are a very important
document in the Elizabethan Settlement, as they form the invariable
standard of discipline in the various matters of which they treat for a
long time to come. Item XX, regarding sabbath observance reads:

All the [Queen's] faithful and loving subjects shall from henceforth celebrate and keep their holy day according to God's will and pleasure; that is, in hearing the word of God read and taught, in private and public prayers, in knowing their offenses unto God, and amendments of the same, in reconciling themselves charitably to their neighbors, where displeasure hath been, in oftentimes receiving the communion of the very body and blood of Christ, in visiting of the poor and sick, using all soberness and godly conversation. Yet notwithstanding, all parsons, vicars, and curates shall teach and declare unto their parishioners, that they may with a safe and quiet conscience, after their common prayer in the time of harvest, labor upon the holy and festival days, and save that which God has sent; and if for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience, men should superstitiously abstain from working upon these days, that then they should grievously offend and displease God.

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5 Ibid., pp. 43, 44.

6 Ibid., p. 44.

7 Ibid., pp. 53, 54. See also Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. (Cambridge: The Parker Society, 1847) pp. 573, 574.
While essentially the same as the Edwardian Injunction in defining permissible activities of sabbath observance, this leaves out the introductory admonition that describes the impious sabbath breaker of Edward's day.

Writing at about this same time (1560-62), James Pilkington, a zealous but moderate reformer who had been one of the leaders of the Frankfort Congregation during the Marian exile, stated in the preface to his *Commentary on Haggai*:

And not only this evil reigns, but the world is come to such a dissolute liberty and negligent forgetting of God, that men sleeping in sin need not so much a whip to drive them out of the church, (so few come there) but they need a great sort of whip to drive some thitherward. For come into a church on the sabbath day, and ye shall see but few, though there be a sermon; but the alehouse is ever full.8

This Commentary was published to "stir up well minded people, to go forward with the reformation of religion vigorously; for it was perceived there was too much coldness in the matter among those that were chiefly employed about it."9

Commenting on Nehemiah 11:11 that speaks of the Prophet resting for three days, Pilkington wrote:

Knowing the weakness of man's body to be such, that it cannot continually endure labor, but must be refreshed with ease and rest. Thus must good men in authority not overlay their servants with continual labor, but let them have reasonable time of rest: for God made the sabbath day, that both man and beast might rest, and not be oppressed with continual toiling: such a consideration he had of man's weakness.10

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9 Ibid., p. iv.
10 Ibid., pp. 337, 338.
It could be said that Pilkington spoke for the concerned moderate, all too often the minority voice in public affairs. But it does tell us that in any age of extreme and narrow viewpoints, there were men capable of a breadth of vision that saw all issues in their perspective.

The publication of the Book of Sermons in Edward's reign had underlined one of the chief weaknesses of the Reformed Church movement, the lack of a learned ministry. The returning Marian exiles found many churches without ministers because of deprivations, especially in London, where few clerics who had deserted Protestantism now deserted Catholicism. With few clergy available, some Puritans found themselves serving as many as four churches. The number of qualified ministers remained low until late in Elizabeth's reign. The closing of the monasteries had lessened the number of university students, and many of those who were graduated, especially at Oxford, were attached to the Roman Church. At Cambridge only twenty-eight men commenced the B. A. in 1568; in 1583 the number was up to 277.11

The Puritan solution to the shortage of preachers was the establishment of "prophesyings"—meeting of the ministers for the study of the Bible. They began in Norwich, where John Parkhurst was Bishop, in 1564 and became common throughout England. In 1567, the Queen commanded Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, to suppress the prophesyings everywhere. When Grindal refused, the Queen went directly to the bishops and ordered them to stop the public exercise by those "pretending to a

more purity." But in many areas prophesyings continued under other names.

Strype tells us that these exercises were used in the church at Northampton and at the suggestion of the clergy and with consent of the Bishop of Peterburgh, the mayor of the town and the Justice of the Peace certain orders for religious worship were set up and established there. There are seventeen items in all dealing with communion, prophesyings, bell ringing, etc., but the first six items define sabbath observance as it was practiced in Northampton in 1571. The main points are as follows:

1. The singing and playing of organs, beforetime accustomed in the quire, [sic] is put down, and the common prayer there accustomed to be said, brought down into the body of the church among the people, before whom the same is used according to the Queen's Book with singing psalms before and after the sermon . . . .

4. The service be ended in every parish church by nine of the clock in the morning, every Sunday and holy day; to the end the people may resort to the sermon in the same church. And that every minister give warning to the parishioners in the time of common prayer, to repair to the sermon there; except they have a sermon in their own parish church.

5. That after prayers done, in the time of sermon or catechising none sit in the streets, or walk up and down abroad, or otherwise occupy themselves vainly, upon such penalties as shall be appointed.

6. The youth, at the end of evening prayer, every Sunday and holy day, (before all the elder people) are examined in a portion of Calvin's Catechism, which by the reader is expounded unto them; and holdeth an hour.

It appears that an ordinary service, without a sermon, was to be held in each parish church and was to be over by nine o'clock. The

12Ibid., pp. 18, 19.


14Ibid.
people from the various churches were then to assemble in some one church in which the sermon for the day was to be delivered.

This account throws light upon the method for spending the devotional part of Sunday as agreed upon by both ecclesiastical and secular authorities in the first half of Elizabeth's reign. It also reflects the restrictions of the day, restrictions enforced by secular authority in the tradition suggested by Bullinger.

It is not the purpose of this study to trace the course of Puritanism during these formative years but only to notice those points touched by the sabbatarian issue. It is generally true that in the early years of Elizabeth's reign Puritan interests were not centered on doctrinal matters but were chiefly concerned with the right forms of church organization. Sabbatarianism's development, at this stage, was incidental to the Puritan thrust as a whole. Its distinction as a unique Puritan symbol was to wait until the very end of the sixteenth century.

In 1576, Edmund Bunny, formerly a chaplain to Bishop Grindall when he was Archbishop of York, published an ambitious work entitled, The Whole Sum of the Christian Religion. Bunny had attended Oxford University in 1556 and had then studied law at Gray's Inn for two years. He returned to Oxford and took his M. A. in 1564 and was elected a fellow at Merton College in 1565. He was a zealous preacher and catechizer whose zeal brought him under the charge of being too forward and meddling. 15

His book is styled in an interesting format that under the symbols of root and branch presents cause and effect in the spiritual life. This is well illustrated in his comments on the sabbath:

The Branch is no more than this, that we keep holy the seventh day, resting from our usual labors therein. This root, to be godly minded; or to have an unfeigned, and an earnest desire to attain to this worship before described; and so thoroughly to be sanctified by the gracious work of God in us, that every day more and more we may cease from our own natural works which are ever naught, and be occupied in his, that so we may worship him aright.16

Bunny then presents the other side of the coin:

The Branch is too occupied in our usual affairs on the sabbath day. The root is, to be worldly minded: or, to have so little [account] of our inward sanctification, that we do not much care though still remain as bad as before, and ever be occupied in the works of our own corrupt nature.17

An ascetic-cum-mystical experience that requires the mauling and mastering of the body that the spiritual mind might worship unfettered is latent in this observation. Bunny then proceeds to an apocalyptical eschatological view of the sabbath:

The reason whereupon the observation of this law is grounded . . . the first reason is, because God himself, having finished his work in those six days that went before did rest the seventh day . . . The other more dark, and more uncertain in itself: . . . Which is no more but this: that if as the world was made in six days and the seventh was a day of rest, so is it likely to stand toward the point of six thousand years, and then immediately the eternal rest in glory to begin (which not only divers of the learned have said, and great likelihoods do import: but also the scriptures do seem to witness both by the whole and universal course of them, and also by certain particular places) then may a man in the seventh day's rest more sensible perceive, that now our redemption, to so many as labor, is near at hand: and therefore that it is time to lift up our heads, both because we are already come to


17Ibid., folio 49.
the sixth day's afternoon; and hope that of those years that yet remain, a good number shall be cut off. Insomuch that hence ariseth double instruction. First to those that will not cease from their own works here, that they must in the world to come labor in eternal torments; so that they cannot with any sound comfort behold the seventh day's rest, than those that here cease from their own works, that they shall rest in the world to come: so that they most joyfully behold the seventh day's rest, that is unto them so comfortable a messenger, or so blessed an estate, so near at hand.\textsuperscript{18}

A popular theme can become subject to many variations. Bunny's ideas were not new but in turn were a variation of older themes of eschatological expectancy combined with spiritual exercise. The sabbath as a means to spiritual attainment on an other worldly plane was a concept not confined to Puritans alone but formed a philosophical reason for more liberal but conscientious Anglicans.

John Northbrooke, a sound Protestant but usually considered too liberal to be classed as a Puritan, wrote a \textit{Treatise Against Dicing} in 1577. He had occasion to consider the question of sabbath observance and, as most other writers on the subject, said that Sunday was appointed for the reading and hearing of the scripture; for attending public and private devotions; for alms giving to the poor, and for visiting the poor and settling differences with one's neighbors. His liberal viewpoint is suggested in his statement: "I do allow of honest, moderate, and good lawful exercise for recreation, and quickening of our dull minds."\textsuperscript{19} But such pastimes and games as are indulged in are to be used like sleep to refresh after "we have labored enough in weighty matters

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., folio 51.

\textsuperscript{19}Whitaker, op. cit. p. 50.
and serious affairs." It is quite clear that a mere perfunctory attendance at one or even two sermons would not be considered by Northbrooke as qualifying the individual for indulgence in sport for the remainder of the day. Northbrooke would permit the gathering of corn or hay "which has been abroad a long time, and to save it" on Sunday. The individual self-discipline which is implied in this scheme, both for the serious part of the day's activities and for the recreative part, was a virtue few of the ordinary people of that time were educated to practice. In the event, discipline became the substitute for education.

Natural disasters and accidents were viewed by ministers as evidence of God's wrath and punishment of sinners. The condemnation of sabbath breakers was a favorite theme in this context. A Godly Admonition for the Time Present, a sermon published in 1580, was apparently occasioned by an earthquake in April of that year. This was typical of the apocalyptical sermons lamenting the godlessness of the people and the signs of imminent judgment.

The Sabbath days and holy days ordained of the hearing of God's word to the reformation of our lives, for the administration and receiving of the sacraments to our comfort, for the seeking of all things behooveful for body or soul at God's hand by prayer, for the minding of his benefits, and to yield praise and thanks unto him for the same, and finally, for the special occupying of ourselves in all spiritual exercises, is spent full heathenishly in taverning, tippling, gaming, playing and beholding of bear-baiting and stage plays to the utter dishonor of God, impeachment of all godliness, and unnecessary consuming of men's substances, which ought to be better employed.21

20 Ibid., p. 51.
Bear-baiting was at best a cruel pastime and appeared on practically every list prepared by Puritan writers that defined forbidden sabbath activities. The famous London bear-pit was located in Paris Garden south of the Thames. A Puritan epigram of the period rhymes out the truth that Sunday was the great day for such rude sports:

And yet every Sunday  
They will surely spend  
One penny or two,  
The bearward's living to mend.  
At Paris Garden each Sunday  
A man shall not fail  
To find two or three hundred  
For the bearward's vail.  
One halfpenny a piece  
They use for to give,  
When some have no more  
In their purse I believe.  

In 1583 there was a "judgment" at Paris Garden. About one thousand persons were assembled on Sunday, January 13th when during the spectacle the viewing stands collapsed so that "not a stick was left so high as the bear was fastened to." This was probably a figure of speech but it was true that five men and two women were killed. Puritan preachers, like John Field, vigorously "improved" the incident and it apprarently became a starting point of more careful observance of the Lord's day than had generally prevailed.


23Ibid., p. iv.

24Ibid.

While the Puritans professed to see God's judgment in the course of natural events and sought to merit God's protection by living a more careful and disciplined life, John Whitgift, now Archbishop of Canterbury, (1583) voiced the opposing view in his answer to Cartwright a few years earlier in 1574.

The Scripture hath not prescribed any place or time wherein or when the Lord's supper should be celebrated, neither yet in what manner. The scripture hath not appointed what time or where the congregation shall meet for common prayer, and for the hearing of the word of God, neither yet any discipline for the correcting of such as shall contemn the same.

The scripture hath not appointed what day in the week should be most meet for the sabbath-day—whether Saturday, which is the Jews' sabbath, or the day now observed, which was appointed by the church . . . . and yet no man (as I suppose) is so simple to think that the church hath no authority to take order in these matters. 26

Whitgift, in the name of the church, is espousing a sophisticated and elusive doctrine of sabbath observance. Denying the need for an objective keeping of the day he suggests that such exercises are only the form for a subjective appreciation of what the symbols signify. In this he is closer to the true Protestant concept than were the Puritans. He establishes his position by quotations from the works of Augustine:

The same Augustine . . . expounding the words of the apostle "ye observe days, years, times," writeth thus: "But one may think that he speaketh of the sabbath: do not we say that those times ought not to be observed, but the things rather that are signified by them? For they did observe them servilely, not understanding what they did signify and prefigurate: This is that that the apostle reproveth in them, and in all those that serve the creature rather than the creator." 27

The subtlety of this definition would easily escape the unsophis-

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27 Ibid., II, 580.
ticated mind of the devout sixteenth century layman who would find in the routine of sabbath observance satisfaction in having fulfilled the demands of God's law.

In reply to a statement from Cartwright's Admonition that saints' days are "superstitionally kept and observed," Whitgift said:

Why should other men's superstitions hinder you from lawfully using a lawful thing? The sabbath-day is superstitionally used of some; so is the church, so is the creed, and the Lord's prayer, and many things else; and yet I hope you will subscribe to them. You heap up a number of places in the margin to prove that which no man doubts, that is, this portion of the commandment: 'Six days shalt thou labor, etc.,' the meaning of which words is this, that seeing God has permitted unto us six days to do our own works in, we ought the seventh day to wholly serve him.

Every man has not bodily work to do, but may serve God as well in these six days as in the seventh. And certainly he does not by any means break this commandment, which abstains in any of these six days from bodily labor to serve God.

These fine lines of demarcation preserved the sabbath for theological dispute but added little to its practical observance by the devout common people. The subjective concern of Whitgift and the Anglicans for proper sabbath keeping, while not without merit, would in the popular mind tend to dilute its moral and spiritual significance.

28 Ibid., II, 593.

29 Ibid.
Chapter 12

PHILLIP STUBBES

Although the full vigor of the sabbath controversy still lay in the future, there was no want of men at this time (1583) to take a firm stand on the issue of the sabbath. The work of Phillip Stubbes is offered as an example of the extreme positions some men were ready to take at this period.

Phillip Stubbes has come down through history as almost a caricature of the popular concept of the typical Puritan: bitter and narrow-minded, who saw only the dark side of everything, evil in innocence, sin in mirth, the devil in dancing, and hell in Shakespeare's art. Even in his own time this opinion prevailed. He was held up to contempt as one of the Marprelate zealots and hypocrites by the sharp-tongued Thomas Nashe.¹ Few facts are known about Stubbes' life. He was a gentleman and a writer of pamphlets and books strongly on the Puritan side (1581-1610?). He was well-read in his Bible and holy books and before 1583 had spent "seven winters and more, traveling from place to place, even all the land over indifferently."²

In 1583, he wrote the work for which he is best known: Anatomy of Abuses in England. In this writing he deals extensively with the sabbath and it is apparent in even a casual reading of the material that

²Ibid., p. 52.
Stubbes was preoccupied with sin. The burden of his diatribe is the negative warning of the results of sabbath-breaking and the listing of activities whereby this might be done:

The sabbath day of some is well sanctified, namely in hearing the word of God read, preached, and interpreted, in private and public prayers, in singing of Godly Psalms, in celebrating the sacraments, and in collecting for the poor and indigents; which are the true uses and ends whereto the sabbath was ordained. But other some spend the sabbath day (for the most part) in frequenting of bawdy stage-plays and enterludes, in maintaining Lords of misrule (for so they call a certain kind of play which they use). Maygames, church-ales, feasts and wakes; in piping, dancing, dicing, carding, bowling, tennis playing; in bear-baiting, cock-fighting, hawking, hunting and such like; in keeping of fairs and markets on the sabbath, in keeping courts and leets; in foot-ball playing, and such other devilish pastimes; reading of lascivious and wanton books and an infinite number of such like practices and profane exercises used upon that day, whereby the Lord God is dishonored, his sabbath violated, his word neglected, his sacraments contemned, and his people marvelously corrupted and carried away from true virtue and godliness.

To find the equal of Stubbes' definition of sabbath observance we must go back more than fifty years to Richard Whitford's A Werke for Householders. Here we find the same emphasis, almost the same wording. This is not to suggest that Puritan writers consciously borrowed from their Catholic opponents but to indicate again how similar were the two approaches to worship. At heart it was a "duty" religion, conscientiously performed to appease an angry God. Stubbes proceeds to list the four reasons for sabbath observance:

And (in my judgment) the Lord our God ordained the seventh day to be kept holy for four causes:

1. To put us in mind of his wonderful workmanship and creation of the world and creatures besides.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 136, 137.}\]
2. That His word (the church assembling together) might be preached, interpreted and expounded; His sacraments administered sincerely, according to the precepts of His word, and that sufferages and prayers, both private and public, might be offered to His excellent majesty.

3. For that every Christian man might repose himself from corporal labor, to the end they might the better sustain the travails of the week to ensue; and also to the end that all beasts and cattle which the Lord has made for man's use, as helps and adjuvants unto him in his daily affairs and business, might rest and refresh themselves, the better to go through in their travails afterward. For as the heathen man knew very well . . . without some rest or repose, there is not anything durable, or able to continue long.

4. To the end it might be a typical figure or signitor to point (as it were) with the finger, and to cypher forth and shadow unto us that blessed rest and thrice happy joy which the faithful shall possess after the day of judgment in the Kingdom of Heaven. Wherefore, seeing the sabbath was instituted for these causes, it is manifest that it was not appointed for the maintenance of wicked and ungodly pastimes, and vain pleasures of the flesh.

In touching on the favorite sabbatian text of the man stoned for gathering sticks on the sabbath, Stubbes comments:

Then if he were stoned for gathering a few sticks upon the sabbath day, which in some cases might be for necessities' sake, and did it but once, what shall they be, who all the sabbath days of their life give themselves to nothing else but to wallow in all kinds of wickedness and sin, to the great contempt both of the Lord and his sabbath. And though they have played the lazy lurdens all the week before, yet that day of set purpose they will toil and labor, in contempt of the same, so shall they be stoned, yea, ground to pieces, for their contempt of the Lord in his sabbath.

After laying the groundwork for a rigid conformation of sabbath observance, Stubbes then reveals the ambivalent attitude, common to the time, toward what was considered "necessary" work on the sabbath day. There seems no doubt that Puritan prohibitions of sabbath activities

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1Ibid., pp. 137, 138.

5Ibid., pp. 138, 139.
related almost entirely to recreational activities or, to any activity in
which the participant found enjoyment. Stubbes writes:

Yet I am not so strait-laced, that I would have no kind of work
done upon that day, if present necessity of the thing require it
(for Christ has taught us the sabbath was made for man, not man for
the sabbath) but not for every light trifle, which may as well be
done other days as upon that day. And although the day itself, in
respect of the very nature and original thereof be no better than
another day, for there is no difference of days, except we become
temporizers, all being alike good; yet because the Lord our God has
commanded it to be sanctified and kept holy to himself, let us (like
obedient and obsequious children) submit ourselves to so loving a
Father; for else we spit against heaven, we strive against the
stream, and we contemn his ordinances.6

Stubbes, however, placed his emphasis on the positive aspect of
sabbath worship and refrained from simply compiling a list of prohibited
activities. He specified his attitude in these words:

But (perchance) you will ask me, whether the true use of the
sabbath consists in outward abstaining from bodily labor and travail?
I answer, no; the true use of the sabbath (for Christians are not
bound only to the ceremony of the day,) consists, as I have said, in
hearing the word of God truly preached, thereby to learn and to do
his will, in receiving the sacraments (as seals of his grace toward
us), rightly administered, in using public and private prayers, in
thanksgiving to God for all his benefits, in singing of godly Psalms,
and other spiritual exercises and meditations, in collecting the
poor, in doing of good works, and briefly, in the true obedience of
the inward man. And yet, notwithstanding, we must abstain from the
one to attend upon the other: that is, we must refrain all bodily
labors, to the end that we may the better be resiant [sic] at these
spiritual exercises upon the sabbath day.7

Preoccupied with perfection and driven by the goad of time, the
Puritan was in spiritual tension all of his days. The sabbath uniquely
reflected both of these concerns and thus became a focal point of con-
troversy as the English Puritan conscience developed. Stubbes expressed
this concern:

6Ibid., pp. 139, 140.
7Ibid., p. 140.
Wherefore I exhort them, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, to eschew not only from evil, but also all appearance of evil, as the Apostle wills them, proceeding from one virtue to another; until they grow to perfect men in Christ Jesus, knowing that we must give account at the day of judgment of every minute and iota of time, from the day of our birth to the time of our death: for there is nothing more precious than time, which is given us to glorify God in good works and not to spend in luxurious exercises after our own fantasies and delights.

Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses* was written in the same year that the catastrophe took place at the Paris Garden Bear Pit. He leaves us a colorful account of the tragedy:

... when they were all come together and mounted aloft upon their scaffolds and galleries, and in the midst of all their jollyty and pastime, all the whole building (not one stick standing) fell down with a most wonderful and fearful confusion; so that either two or three hundred men, women, and children (by estimation), whereof seven were killed dead, some were wounded, some lamed, and other some bruised and crushed almost to the death. Some had their brains dashed out, some their heads all to squashed, some their legs broken, some their arms, some their backs, some their shoulders, some one hurt some another ... . This woeful spectacle and heavy judgment did the Lord send down from heaven, to show unto the whole world how grievously he is offended with those that spend his sabbath in such wicked exercises; in the meantime leaving his temple desolate and empty. God grant all men take warning hereby, to shun the same for fear of like or worser judgment to come.

Although it is doubtful that such a position had much popular appeal it certainly reflected the sentiment of the hard core of Puritan leadership that gave substance to the whole movement. During the critical years of their development (1568-1573) the Puritans had exerted all of the pressures of which they were capable on crown, bishops and parliament but had been disappointed in their hopes for religious changes within the English Church. Unable to effect the national reforms they

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8Ibid., p. 156.

9Ibid., p. 179.
desired, it was natural for these zealous men and women to turn inward in quest of the moral perfection their faith demanded.

In 1584, Thomas Sampson, a long-time advocate of the extreme Puritan position, addressed to the Queen and privy-council and to the parliament a Supplication. It was a protest against Whitgift's attempt to enforce his Articles and conduct processes to oust recalcitrant ministers. "Its chief burden was the death of suitable and learned preachers residing in the parishes and attending to their duties; and it prayed for the abolition of Roman practices surviving in the English Church." 10 Included in the Supplication was a plea for sabbath reform:

That the Lord's day, even the sabbath day, which we do barbarously call Sunday, may hereafter be kept so holily, that it be not abused, nor misspent, neither in open feasting, nor in making or using any public shows, plays or pastimes. Nor that there be any fairs or markets kept upon any sabbath-day .... And in all games and pastimes of shooting, bowling, cocking, bear-baiting, dances, prizes of defense, wakes, May games, and all other such rude disports, be utterly forbidden to be upon any sabbath day: and that upon great punishment to be laid upon the offenders. So that the Lord's day may be kept holy, as it is commanded. 11

Undoubtedly Sampson prepared the Supplication in conjunction with his fellow Puritans. His leadership and influence went back to the Marian Exile and before. It may be accepted that his appeal echoed the thoughts of other Puritan leaders in the definition of prohibited activities on the sabbath. The whole question of the sabbath had reached that point where it demanded definitive structuring. The preceding years had seen a groping for sabbatarian significance and a recognition


11 Ibid., p. 191.
of the unique place of the sabbath in the act of worship. It needed now but one mind to unite the various components into a logical whole. The brilliant mind of Lancelot Andrewes was already engaged in that task.
Chapter 13

LANCELOT ANDREWES

In the formative years of English Puritanism, party lines were not sharply drawn and many of the most devout members of the Church of England were Puritan in sentiment.¹ Lancelot Andrewes, at this time (1585) a fellow of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, was identified with this number. The career of young Andrewes was sponsored by some of the leading Puritans of the day. Sir Francis Walsingham, one of the leaders of the Puritan party at court, arranged for his scholarship at Pembroke Hall and later secured him an appointment in London.²

In 1578, Andrewes was appointed catechist of his college:

Purposing to read upon the ten commandments every Saturday and Sunday at 3:00 p.m., which was the hour of catechising, not only out of other colleges in the university, but divers also out of the country, did duly resort unto the college chapel as to a public divinity lecture.³

In the preface to Andrewes' Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine, it says:

... for in these lectures, or college exercises (which were heard with public applause of the whole university, where scarce any pretended to the study of divinity, who did not light their candle at his torch) it will appear that he had even then gone through the

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²M. M. Knappen, "The Early Puritanism of Lancelot Andrewes." Church History, II, No. 2 (June, 1933), 96.

³Ibid., p. 100.
whole encyclopedia of divine and human learning. That Andrewes was later to become a leader of the liberal wing of the Anglican Church in no way detracts from his contribution to the formulation of sabbatarian doctrine.

M. M. Knappen suggests that a search through the existing sabbatarian literature has failed to reveal any such developed theological justification of the practice as that of Andrewes, "so that it seems reasonable to suppose that it was he who formulated the Puritan doctrine at that time."\(^{5}\)

The better known work of Nicolas Bownds on the sabbath was substantially the same as that of Andrewes. Bownds, a Suffolk Puritan divine, sometime fellow of Peterhouse and Rector of Norton, was a contemporary of Andrewes at Cambridge and his lectures were well known to him years before his own work was written. The later career of Andrewes shows that he was a man of learning and ingenuity quite capable of developing a new argument and not the type inclined to copy in extenso from others.\(^{6}\)

In the dedication to a collection of his lectures entitled, The Moral Law Expounded, it says:

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\ldots \text{the work itself is such, as in those days when it was preached, he was scarce reputed a pretender to learning and piety then in Cambridge, who made not himself a disciple of Mr. Andrewes by diligent resorting to his lectures: nor he a pretender to the}
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\(^{4}\text{Lancelot Andrewes, The Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine (London: n.p. 1675), Preface.}\)

\(^{5}\text{M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 103.}\)

\(^{6}\text{Ibid.}\)
study of divinity, who did not transcribe his notes, and ever since they have in many hundreds of copies passed from hand to hand, and have been esteemed a very library to young divines, and an oracle to consult at to laureate and grave divines.7

Much of Andrewes' work revolved around the concept of sanctification, its definition and its duties. To grasp this idea is to understand the importance of the sabbath in Puritan thinking. The lectures cover four general areas of emphasis. Firstly, Andrewes undertakes to prove that the fourth commandment is a part of the moral law, which is still binding on Christians, rather than a ceremonial decree invalidated by the advent of the Christian dispensation. He supports this contention by alleging that the sabbath existed in the Garden of Eden before the introduction of ceremonies, and also by maintaining that the ten commandments as a whole are a moral code, and that each of them, therefore, must be a bit of moral legislation.

Secondly, he argues that under the New Testament dispensation the particular day to be observed as a sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday. Thirdly, he forbids practically everything prohibited on that day in the Old Testament, such as buying and selling, fairs and markets, bearing burdens, journeying and harvesting. He concludes with a description of the positive duties of the day, such as the obligation to worship God by praying, meditating, and attending divine service and to assist our fellowmen by works of charity and mercy.

Andrewes takes care to define his terms and one of his basic

terms is sanctification. He defines it in both its divine and human setting. "When God does appoint a thing to an holy use, he is said to sanctify it: when a man applies it to that end, whereunto God has appointed it, he is said to sanctify it."\(^8\) But sanctification in reference to the sabbath has a specific function and nature.

So this is the nature of the thing sanctified, and it therein differs from other things, that what is sanctified or separate for God, must not be converted or applied to any other use, and so for days, such as are sanctified or set apart for God, must be applied to no other use, unless God himself or his church by authority from him and that upon ground warranted by God, dispense therein in some special cases. Other things may be done in part upon other days, but not upon this.\(^9\)

Man's salvation is never far from the mind of Andrewes. The sabbath was essentially a means to an end and that end, for him, was sanctification. For as he said, quoting I Timothy 4:15: "Without holiness (sanctification) none shall see God."

Now the question may arise, whether God sanctified this day to himself or to us? Certainly the Apostle tells us, that omnia munda mundis, all things are clean to the clean: And God is most pure and holy, and therefore needs nothing to be sanctified to him; therefore to this end that we might be holy did he sanctify this day.\(^10\)

Andrewes' facile use of scripture is everywhere evident as his arguments unfold. His proof texts are not confined to the obvious sabbath texts but his creative mind ranges over the whole scripture using

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 326.

\(^9\)Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine, p. 261.

\(^10\)Ibid.
those texts that support the principles involved in his thesis, if only
by implication. This is illustrated in his suggestions as to how man
sanctifies the sabbath. It consists, he says, of two things:

1. In our estimation and account of it, which is for our judg-
ment. 2. Secondly, in the use of it, which is for our practice.

1. We must account of it in our judgment as a day holy unto
God, not as a common day: but as a prince is sacred among men, so
this is to be reputed holy among days, a day of days: that of God
to St. Peter just be our rule, what God has sanctified, make not
thou common.

2. For use that we so use it. This use is well set down by
the prophet. We must not do our own work. No common thoughts are
to exercise our brains: and as our thoughts must not be taken up
with common affairs, so neither must our communication be of such
things nor our practice, but our thoughts, words and actions must
be sanctified, and such as tend to the practice of holiness.11

"If that which is sanctified touch that which is common," argued
Andrewes, "the common pollutes the thing which is sanctified." Therefore,
though the sabbath remains holy in itself, yet man may pollute it by his
polluted actions.12 This reflects the hard legal base on which the Purit-
tan sabbath was founded and would lead to a greater rigidity in observ-
ance. Jots and tittles would multiply as defense demanded definition
and so ad infinitum. Andrewes then considers the idea of the sabbath as
a day of rest:

Rest is but a subordinate end, and a man was not made for it,
but rather rest was made for man. Rest is but the means to attain
to sanctification which is man's end, and that for which he was
made. For as the Apostle says of bodily exercise [I Timothy 4:8] it
profits little, or indeed nothing at all, except it be applied to
sanctification, which is the end.13

11Ibid., p. 262.
12Ibid.
13Ibid., p. 263.
A middle course is recommended together with a warning against extremism. The sabbath should not be spent in idle games nor in hunting and other like pastimes but neither should a man mortify the flesh excessively.\textsuperscript{14}

In the symbolism of the sabbath, Andrewes sees three special works and benefits performed by the godhead that the sabbath should bring to remembrance: "that of creation by the Father, redemption by the Son, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost." Thus the memorial of creation, resurrection and Pentecost are embodied in sabbath observance. When the sabbath was first established it was to commemorate creation since this was the most memorable event then known. The day was changed after the resurrection and Pentecost, as they now became the most memorable events.\textsuperscript{15}

In the summation of his arguments up to this point, Andrewes lists eight elements that constitute sabbath works:

1. Prayer: before or after service; public or private.
2. Preaching: "Thereby the end is to hear the word." Deuteronomy 4:10. First is to read or to hear read, secondly to preach or to hear preached.
3. Meditate on the word that "we might make better use of it."
4. Private reading (study) after the service.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{The Moral Law Expounded}, pp. 343, 344.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine}, p. 267.

c. With the family. Deuteronomy 11:19.


7. Celebrating the sacraments.

8. The doing of good works: "Our good works glorify him,"
Matthew 5:16. When he comes to judge he shall be happy for six works and a seventh may be added:


b. Giving drink to the thirsty.

c. Entertaining the stranger.

d. Clothing the naked.

e. Visiting the sick. Galatians 6:2.

f. Visiting those in prison. Matthew 5:44

g. Caring for the dead. 2 Samuel 2:5.16

Andrewes always kept in view the positive aspects of sabbatarianism. For him sabbath-keeping consisted in doing something good rather than merely refraining from certain prohibited activities. In this he was typically Puritan in utilizing the time to the best advantage.

Christian theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, writing about the fourth commandment always sat uncomfortably on the horns of a dilemma devised by their insistence on making the fourth commandment different from the other nine. By making the sabbath commandment ceremonial rather than moral they denied the need for observing it at all.

Andrewes denied this premise and declared the fourth commandment to be moral.

There is beside in the commandment another word, Remember, and because that is properly of a thing past, therefore it refers to some place or time before; and there is mention of the sabbath but in two places before, one is Exodus 16:23-25, but that is not it; for God in the end, adding (God blessed it) refers us to that place, where the same words are: Genesis 2:3, and so we know that we are referred thither: and by this occasion falls in that first question, that many think it is a ceremony, and sundry are to persuaded, and hold that men are not bound to sanctify since Christ.\(^{17}\)

Andrewes argues then that the sabbath cannot be ceremonial:

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\ldots \text{ because Paradise and man's perfection, and a ceremony cannot agree in the state of man's innocence } \ldots \text{ before there was a Saviour there could not be a type of Saviour: and before there was sin there needed no Saviour: so consequently, needing no Saviour, nor ceremony, it could not be ceremonial. But that was it, that Adam having in the six days a natural use in his body of the creatures, should for the glory of God on the seventh day, have a spiritual use and consideration.}^{18}\]

All ceremonies are ended and abrogated by Christ's death, his argument continues, but Matthew 24:20 makes plain that the sabbath was not:

For there Christ denouncing, the overthrow of Jerusalem, bid them pray, that their calamity befall not in the winter, or on the sabbath day. We know this destruction fell out long and many years after Christ's death, when all ceremonies were ended, the veil rent, etc. Now then if he should have prayed that their flight be not on the sabbath; and that were abrogated as a ceremony, he should have prayed that it might not have been on that day, which indeed should have been no day. Therefore it is necessary that it be counted no ceremony.\(^{19}\)

The methodical exposition of sabbatarianism requires an answer to the question of how strict must one's observance be; whether the

\[^{17}\text{Ibid., p. 329.}\]
\[^{18}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{19}\text{Ibid., p. 331.}\]
Christian is required to view it with the same rigidity as did the Jew. Andrewes responds with a statement of liberal application: "The dangers of life excludes the sabbath." He bases his belief on two statements regarding sabbath observance that he considers ceremonial: the one forbidding the dressing of meat and the other for not building a fire on the sabbath.

The reason, for there is no external duty of the Law, but it may be performed of any man, of any nation throughout the world. But it is well known, that those who are under the Poles, they cannot live one day without fires; and to let their fire go out, it were the utter destruction of them all: and therefore because it is such an external action, it is certain it is not moral. The like may be said concerning the provision of meat; for they that are under the hot zone, under the equinoctiall [sic.] their provision will not last them but one day; therefore these acts cannot be kept in the whole world; therefore ceremonial. So the Christian is released, but not that they could be performed of the Jews; and there a peculiar precept to the Jews, because they had no hinderances.

But this deals with only two special aspects of sabbath observance so Andrewes applies a general rule to cover all activities. "What might have been done before, and what may be done afterward, must be rested from." He makes it clear that it is not the works that are themselves evil, but only because they would distract the mind; "and would not suffer the whole man wholly to attend the works of the sabbath."

Six countermands of sabbath observance are recognized, really forming six principles upon which all subsequent sabbath legislation is

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20 Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine, p. 283.
22 Ibid., p. 337.
23 Ibid., p. 338.
For as we may not keep open markets, go to plow or to law on that day, so neither should we spend the time in hunting, nor yet in dancing and sporting; nor spend our time ordained for sanctification in beholding fights, stage plays, and the like: not because they are in themselves evil or unlawful, but in that they hinder our sanctification . . . . the other sort are they that spend their time this day in gluttony, lust, drunkenness, and such like vices, which ought not at any time, much less on that day, be practiced.27

In establishing a norm for sabbath keeping, Andrewes recognized an authority superior to scripture. When considering from what works the people should abstain and for how long, he decrees:

I conceive it the most probable answer, that herein we must be directed in particular by the laws, canons, and customs of the church wherein we live, and that by divine law, as the sanctifying of the day is required in general by the law of God; but the particular determination, of what works, and how long, and in what manner, with other circumstances, of which no general law could be so fitly given, is left to the Bishops and pastors of the church.28

Andrewes viewed the sabbath in greater depth than had any of the Puritan writers before him. It was not enough to review the salient points of scripture relevant to the sabbath nor to deal with the theological implications of sabbath observance, but going beyond these he considered all attendant matters that "help and conduce to the keeping of the sabbath."29

He dealt at length with the establishment, adornment, dedication and maintenance of places of worship. He treats of tithes and offerings as they contribute to the maintenance of the churches. His far-ranging mind foresaw the need for educated pastors and he detailed the manner in which they should be chosen and enumerated their duties and responsibil-

27Patterns of Catechistical Doctrine, p. 285.
28Ibid., pp. 274, 275.
29Ibid., p. 298.
ities. He did not fail to point out the reverence that was due to the ordained ministers and the benefits they should receive both temporal and spiritual. But more than this were his instructions for the establishing of schools and colleges as a means of preparing and maintaining the ministry.30

As before, in its long history, the sabbath had found an advocate. Taking the disparate views of the sabbatarians, Andrewes had formulated a definitive doctrine of the Puritan sabbath giving it form and substance and, with the Bible, making it the foundation of the Puritan genius. His was the work upon which all future writers on the subject would depend. That Lancelot Andrewes has not received the public recognition he deserves is due perhaps to two factors. First, his work was not published until 1642, long after the writings of Bownds and Greenham had been accepted as the authoritative view of the Puritans. Second, at the time the lectures were delivered, people were interested in church reform rather than purely doctrinal matters. Ten years later (1595) the work of Nicolas Bownds, Sabbath Veteris et Novi Testament, caught the crest of the wave as Puritan enthusiasm began to turn to the consideration of doctrines as an expression of their faith.

The words alone were dead things until the imagination and vitality of men translated them into deeds of worship. There is some evidence that the sabbath had become more than a subject for theological debate and had found its way into the busy streets of Tudor London. The

30Ibid., pp. 298.
extent to which the Puritans and their teachings were supported by the nation is difficult to determine. To represent it as only a clerical movement is to misjudge its essential strength at this point of its development although it is equally evident that it had no wide or strong popular support outside of London and the neighboring shires. It was not until the next century that it became a national movement and its development into one then was due to political rather than religious reasons.

In 1584, a certain Mr. Barber, a Puritan minister, was suspended from preaching in Bow Church by the Lord Mayor of London and his Board of Aldermen. Barber had failed to satisfy the Commissioners of the Archbishop of Canterbury when he "denied them to answer certain questions by them propounded of this thought and secret conceit in certain curious points." Three years later, in 1587, a Supplication was made to the Lord Mayor for the reinstatement of Mr. Barber and was signed by 119 residents of London, members of his church.

The Supplication begins by pointing out how much the good government of the city "is nourished and increased by the ministry and diligent preaching of the Gospel." It continues by saying that "the most ready way to breed sin, destroy virtue, to raise contempt of God and the magistrates and finally to disturb and disorder the quiet peace, good government, and true obedience," was to interrupt the ministers in the

32 Ibid., II, 219, 220.
the exercise of their duty. The Supplication then strikes a true Puritan note:

For while pride and idleness (the nurses of all ill rule) are so increased in all sorts of people, and plays, vain spectacles, bear-baiting, dancing schools, fencing schools, dicing houses, and so many allurements and hostries [sic] of iniquity are maintained; if the faithful diligent, and earnest preachers of the Word of God should suddenly be restrained and put from their accustomed exercises ... how can it be but the former profanations of the Lord's sabbath will be renewed ... 33

A final warning is given that if godly ministers are prohibited from exercising their duties, "disorder, sabbath-breaking, and immorality are certain to result." The point to note is that in this plea for law and order a proper observance of the sabbath is recognized as a chief victim of the lack of it and equally as a deterrent for its loss.

Difficult as it is to determine the popular support of the Puritan movement at this time, this document suggests that in their espousal of the sabbath the Puritans were, in part, simply reflecting an innate spiritual response from men and women who were heirs of the Roman Catholic traditions of the Middle Ages.

Earnest men, seeking to give form and substance to an abstract quality of faith, had found in the sabbath-concept a malleable component that could be structured to express their worship of, what they deemed to be, a demanding God. In the Catholic community, canon law had helped to make Sunday not only a day of worship but a type of spiritual discipline to prepare men for salvation. In its transition from the Catholic to the Puritan mode both aspects of the day had been main-

33 Ibid., p. 220.
tained. While other writers, both Catholic and Protestant, had recog-
nized and delineated the need for proper sabbath observance, Lancelot
Andrewes defined it as probably no one before him had done. His unique
contribution was to make possible the adapting of Sunday observance as
the hallmark of the incipient English Puritan movement.

During the fifty years that separated the Tyndale-More contro-
versy from the lectures of Lancelot Andrewes the sabbath had spiritually
moved from one religious community to another. The rigidly structured
sabbath that had been vigorously defended by Sir Thomas More in 1533,
as a Catholic doctrine was, in 1583, defended with equal vigor by an
Anglican divine as a Puritan doctrine. In the Catholic Church the sab-
bath had been one holy day among many; in Puritan worship it became the
epitome of all that was holy. This is not to imply that the sabbath was
divisive, dividing one religious group from another, but rather to sug-
gest how interdependent all religious groups are in the common source
of God's word.
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**Secondary Sources**


**PERIODICALS**


SOME SOURCES OF PURITAN SABBATARIANISM
1535 - 1585

by

John C. Powers

An Abstract in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the field of History.

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ABSTRACT

M. M. Knappen's observation, that the Puritan doctrine of Sunday was a bit of English originality and perhaps the only important English contribution to the development of Reformed theology in the first century of its history, initiated this study: Some Sources of Puritan Sabbatarianism. Since sabbatarianism was not inherent in the teachings of the Continental Reformers it was necessary to look elsewhere for the Puritan inspiration.

The fifty-year period between 1535 and 1585 was chosen as the area of study because of two significant events that marked the beginning and the end of the period. July, 1537, saw the completion of the book entitled, Institutions of a Christian Man, sometimes called The Bishop's Book. This work was prepared on the direct order of Henry VIII to clarify the principles set forth in the Ten Articles. Its importance, for the purpose of this study, is that in its exposition of the Ten Commandments is the first comprehensive statement of sabbath observance made under the reform government of Henry VIII. This statement marks the beginning of the developing sabbatarian concepts of the early Tudor reform period. This work, like the Ten Articles, represented a compromise between Catholic and Protestant opinions with the balance slightly in favor of the former. The end of the era was marked by a series of
lectures on the Ten Commandments delivered by the Anglican Divine, Lancelot Andrewes, at Cambridge. In his discussion of the fourth commandment, he took the disparate views of the sabbatarians and formulated a definitive doctrine of the Puritan sabbath giving it form and substance and, with the Bible, making it the foundation of the Puritan genius.

It was the writer's purpose to show that in the intervening fifty-year period, particularly during the reign of Edward VI, many of the proto-Puritan writers had exhibited a growing awareness of the significance of a holy day and had attempted a formulation of doctrine. Also, during this period, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was meeting to restate the Catholic position. Its purpose was two-fold, to define the doctrines of the church in reply to the heresies of the Protestants, and to bring forth a thorough reform of the inner life of Christians. It sought not to change its basic form of organization but to assure that better men assumed the power of leadership.

The summation of the work of the Council was embodied in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which was published in 1567. Part III deals extensively with the Law and the sabbath. As this represents the considered opinion of the Roman Church in the last half of the sixteenth century, it is in effect a restatement of the source from which the Puritans drew the inspiration for their sabbatarianism.

The major portion of the research was done in the Huntington Library and the balance at the British Museum. The main conclusions
were drawn from original source material and extensive use was made of
the Parker Society publications of Tudor theologians. Research also
encompassed early English laws, the preaching of Dominican friars of
Medieval England, a restricted area of literature of the Middle Ages,
creeds of the Continental Reformers and the work of the Council of
Trent. The original publications of Lancelot Andrewes' two works that
bear on this subject, published in 1642 and 1675, were the basis of the
conclusions regarding the important role he played in the formulation
of the sabbath doctrine. Although these works were published much later
than the period under consideration, there is sufficient evidence to
show that his lectures were well known and notes taken from his lectures
were in circulation well before 1585.

It was the purpose of this study to show that during the period
between 1535 and 1585, the sabbath had, in a sense, moved spiritually
from one religious community to another. What had been a Catholic
doctrine in 1533, defended by the then champion of the church, Sir
Thomas More, had by 1583 become a Puritan doctrine, enthusiastically
restated by Lancelot Andrewes. In the Catholic Church the sabbath had
been one holy day among many; in Puritan worship it became the epitomy
of all that was holy. Only in this sense was it a unique Puritan con-
tribution to the development of Reformed theology.