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THE SABBATH IN ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY,
1830-1860

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Barry Randolph Chesney, Jr.

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APPROVAL SHEET

THE SABBATH IN ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY,
1830-1860

Barry Randolph Chesney, Jr.

Read and Approved by:

David L. Puckett (Chair)

Gregory A. Wills

Michael A. G. Haykin

Date _____

To my beautiful wife, Courtney, who did the real work of taking care of our home and children so I could complete this project; to my parents, Randy and Miriam, who have always believed in me; my in-laws, Dr. Mac and Debbie Brunson, who are constant encouragers; and finally to my late grandfather, Howard Carpenter (1918-1996), who began his Ph.D. but with a full teaching load at the College level along with complete devotion to his loving wife and five children, did not finish his dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
1. NONCONFORMITY IN CONTEXT	1
Introduction	1
Purpose of Study	4
The British Context	10
Moral Reform	17
Nonconformity as a Growing Movement	20
Nonconformity's Battle	27
Nonconformity and the Sabbath	29
Conclusion	36
2. THE BIBLICAL WARRANT FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE	37
Introduction	37
The Beginning and Reappearance of the Sabbath	37
Jesus and the Sabbath	57
Conclusion	70
3. PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH	71
Introduction	71
Neglect of the Sabbath	73
Acceptable Work on the Sabbath	88

Chapter	Page
Proper Sabbath Observance	91
Conclusion	109
4. BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE	110
Introduction	110
Societal Blessings and Curses	110
Personal Blessings and Curses	122
Conclusion	129
5. LEGISLATING THE SABBATH	130
Introduction	130
Sabbath Legislation	132
Sabbath Legislation and Recreational Venues	153
Conclusion	169
6. CONCLUSION	170
Appendix	
1. NONCONFORMIST WRITERS	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY	180

PREFACE

The doctoral studies journey began for my wife, Courtney, and me on the second week of our honeymoon in early March 2005. Nearly five months later, we moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to begin course work. After completing classes and exams, more than seven years have passed. We began as newlyweds and now have three children: Broc (5), Asa (3), and Audrey (1).

In the second semester of my coursework, I took the Puritanism seminar under Dr. Gregory Wills. When discussing potential paper topics for his class, he mentioned the Puritan Sabbath. I was curious and interested in this topic and wrote on it. In a later seminar under Dr. David Puckett, I examined the Sabbath as it related to Bishop Beilby Porteus in the late eighteenth century. After writing on John Calvin's understanding of the Sabbath, I felt near the end of the Sabbath journey and was unsure of my dissertation topic. Thankfully, Dr. Puckett encouraged me to consider studying the Sabbath in a later time period. I am grateful for Dr. Puckett's wisdom and encouragement or this project would have never commenced.

God has met our every need through this journey. He has provided financially through a secular job (W. W. Grainger), two churches that I have previously served (Highview Baptist in Louisville, Kentucky, and First Baptist, Woodstock, Georgia) and the one where I currently serve on staff (First Baptist, Plant City, Florida). In each place, God has granted favor, and my superiors and friends have been incredibly supportive. Dr. Jerry Johnson, President of The Criswell College, graciously allowed me to travel to Oxford, England, with his students to study abroad. These two trips sharpened my amateur writing skills. I am especially grateful for Nathan Miller at First Baptist, Woodstock, who did extra jobs at times so I could begin this study. In addition, I am

thankful for the faithful workers at Boyce Library at Southern Seminary. They have been a tremendous help along with the divinity library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, the University of South Florida library and multiple libraries in the United Kingdom. In preparing this manuscript, Chris Bosson and APlus Edits were a tremendous help. I greatly appreciate Chris' editing skills, encouragement and friendship through this journey.

Most of all, I am grateful to my sweet wife, Courtney. She does not know married life without doctoral work. She has sacrificed much time so I could work on this degree. She deserves it as much as or more than I. She has been an encourager, a supporter, a good listener, and a faithful friend. I am so grateful for my wife! To God be the glory for giving grace to complete this project.

Barry R. Chesney, Jr.

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CHAPTER 1

NONCONFORMITY IN CONTEXT

Introduction

As a category of English religious history nineteenth-century Nonconformity has remained relatively unexplored. There have been significant studies published on general aspects of Nonconformity¹ but thorough studies of some important issues within Nonconformity remain undone.² One of these elements is Sabbatarianism in Nonconformity. Sabbatarianism for the purposes of this study is defined as the practice of

¹Dale A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity, 1825-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3. For helpful studies on aspects of Nonconformity, see Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Kenneth D. Brown, "An Unsettled Ministry: Some Aspects of Nineteenth-Century British Nonconformity," *Church History* 56 (1987): 204-23; David W. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011); Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780-1920* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977); Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pt. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Richard J. Helmstadter, "Orthodox Nonconformity," in *Nineteenth-Century English Religious Traditions: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. D. G. Paz (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995); Richard J. Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience" in *The Conscience of the Victorian State*, ed. Peter Marsh (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979); Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004); Timothy Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality: Nonconformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 1999); James Munson, *The Nonconformists: In Search of a Lost Culture* (London: SPCK, 1991); M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alan P. F. Sell, *Testimony and Tradition: Studies in Reformed and Dissenting Thought* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005); Ian Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* (New York: Homes & Meier, 1977); Jane Shaw and Alan Kreider, eds., *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999); David M. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978); and Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

²Johnson wrote that in Chadwick's *The Victorian Church* there was a noticeable omission of specific issues confronting the Nonconformists and that since Chadwick's work, there had been a combination of anthologies, surveys, and monographs on Nonconformity, but many unexplored areas still remained. See Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity*, 3.

allocating one day out of seven as a day of rest and worship to God.³ Previous publications either briefly mentioned Sabbatarianism in Nonconformity without offering a detailed account of its practice or avoided the subject altogether. Two particular works represent this need for further study on Sabbatarianism. First, in *The Victorian Church*, Owen Chadwick referred to nineteenth-century Sabbatarianism but only as it related to Evangelical Anglicans.⁴ Next, Michael R. Watts presented a general development of Nonconformity but only briefly reviewed Sabbatarianism in his work, *The Dissenters*. He explained that Nonconformists observed Sunday in similar fashion to the manner that Jews treated Saturday; a day on which neither work nor was leisure acceptable unless it was of a specific religious kind.⁵ Watts' general characterization of Nonconformist Sabbatarianism is helpful but lacks a detailed account from primary sources. Richard J. Helmstadter recognized the absence of studies on finer aspects of Nonconformity and explained that little had been written about the manners and morals of Nonconformists in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶ Thus, a full presentation of Sabbatarianism within

³For an excellent definition of Sabbatarianism, see Patrick Collinson, "The Beginnings of English Sabbatarianism," *Studies in Church History* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964), 1:207.

⁴Chadwick discussed the English Sabbath from pages 455-468 of his work. He focused on Sabbatarianism as it pertained to Evangelicals within the Anglican Church. He briefly mentioned the LDOS and its parliamentary efforts along with London attractions that received consideration for opening on Sunday afternoon (the National Gallery, British Museum, and Crystal Palace). Chadwick mentioned one well-known Nonconformist, Josiah Conder, and referred to Nonconformity but did not offer any detailed analysis of their Sabbatarian position. See Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 455-68.

⁵Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:210: "In general Evangelical Nonconformists treated Sunday as the Jews regarded Saturday: a day on which neither work nor relaxation was permissible unless it were of a specifically religious nature."

⁶Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience," 76-77.

Nonconformity is necessary.⁷ This is not the case for Sabbatarianism within the Established Church.

The Sabbath within nineteenth-century Evangelical Anglicanism has received attention from at least three dissertations. First, George Mark Ellis presented the Evangelical Anglican view of the Sabbath. He indicated that a shortage of information on the Sabbath in standard histories of the Evangelical Anglican party propelled him to publish his study.⁸ He presented a chronological study focused on the inception of the Lord's Day Observance Society and its impact on Victorian culture but gave little attention to the Sabbath in Nonconformity.⁹ Next, Ian Rennie's dissertation referred to Nonconformists and the Sabbath but he did not present a treatment of relevant sources within Nonconformity.¹⁰ Rennie devoted an entire chapter to Sunday Observance but it mostly detailed Sabbatarianism within Evangelical Anglicanism. Finally, in 1999, Dan Eshet's study highlighted the nineteenth-century Sabbatarian struggle to replace the

⁷Sabbatarianism was an important topic within Nonconformist writings during the mid-nineteenth century. But, it was not the most important issue. The morality of drinking and the temperance movement also occupied their minds (See Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:211). Recognizing that proper Sabbath observance was important to Nonconformists, the term Nonconformity or Nonconformist henceforth will refer to those of Sabbatarian persuasion within the tradition. Dissent from Sabbatarianism existed within Nonconformity but the position was in the minority.

⁸George Mark Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question, 1830-1860: Organized Sabbatarianism as an Aspect of the Evangelical Movement," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1951), 1.

⁹Ellis noted that his motivation for writing was the silence of standard Anglican historical works on the Sabbatarian movement during the middle third of the nineteenth century "The primary focus of interest in this study lies in the Lord's Day Observance Society, the Anglican organization which led the battle for the Sabbath, and in the newspaper, the Record, the chief organ for the extreme wing of the Evangelical party" (Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question," iii-iv).

¹⁰Ian Rennie, "Evangelicalism and English Public Life 1823-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1962). Rennie gave special attention to Sabbath observance on pages 205-31. He discussed Nonconformity's heightened Sunday consciousness and their desire to see Sunday honored but did not offer a presentation of primary sources within Nonconformity (209).

leisure practices of the urban poor with a more strict religious Sabbatarianism.¹¹ He argued that Evangelical Anglicans¹² and Nonconformists shared concern over the Sabbath but did not offer a thorough account of the Nonconformist view. So, although each of these studies discussed nineteenth-century English sabbatarianism, they did not shed much light on the Sabbath in Nonconformity.

Purpose of Study

This study offers a detailed presentation of the Sabbath within Evangelical Nonconformity from 1830-1860.¹³ Key individuals within the Nonconformist tradition and their ideas about the Bible and Christianity as it relates to society and the Sabbath will be presented. This project seeks to answer one basic question while seeking to expound on views related to Sabbatarianism in secondary sources. The question is, what was the character of Sabbatarianism in Nonconformity? In order to answer this question,

¹¹Dan Eshet, "Life, Liberty and Leisure: Sunday Observance in England and the Cultural Ideology of Modern Leisure" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1999), ix-x. Eshet stated that he did not intend to provide a comprehensive study of Protestant Sabbatarianism (1).

¹²Evangelical Anglicans were never among the majority within the Church of England in the nineteenth century. The *British Quarterly Review* reported that of the 16,000 ministers in the Church of England, not more than 3,000 considered themselves Evangelical. See "Article IV," *British Quarterly Review* 9 (February 1849): 113.

¹³For the purposes of this study, the term "Evangelical" is defined as a group of Protestants characterized by four values. David Bebbington has defined Evangelicals as emphasizing the following: "Conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism form the defining attributes of Evangelical religion." According to Evangelicals, people became Christians through conversion. Evangelicals preached the gospel and desperately wanted to see people converted to Christianity and they depended on the Holy Spirit and clear biblical preaching to do so (conversionism). Once converted, Evangelicals believed that laypeople and ministers alike should be active in sharing the gospel with others (activism). Next, Evangelicals believed that the Bible was the source of the doctrine of salvation (biblicism). Finally, Evangelicals explained that the focus on the gospel was the atonement of Christ (crucicentrism). See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 4-17.

every aspect of Sabbatarianism within Nonconformity's evangelical denominations will be examined; the biblical foundation for Sabbatarianism, the day of the week that Nonconformists observed the Sabbath, the Sabbath's proper practice for every Christian, and the Sabbath as a legitimate subject for legislation.

The study seeks to interact with views expressed about Sabbatarianism and Nonconformity from secondary sources. Evidence presented in this project will adjust the view that credits Wesleyans as the primary denomination within Nonconformity that advocated Sabbath observance. Ellis explained that Wesleyans were in tune with evangelicals on the need for strict Sabbath observance and noted, "it appears that the Independents, Baptist and Presbyterians were relatively indifferent to the question of Sabbath legislation, as contrasted with the activities of the Wesleyan Methodists."¹⁴ Chapter five of this study explains that one of the leading proponents of Sabbath legislation was Josiah Conder, a Congregationalist. This study also shows that Baptists and Presbyterians joined the effort to protect Sunday through legislation. In *Victorian Nonconformity*, David Bebbington articulated a similar view concerning Wesleyan Methodism: "Wesleyan Methodism, which represented Evangelical religion without the libertarian heritage of the Old Dissent, was always more inclined to endorse sabbatarianism, anti-Catholicism and imperialism than the Congregationalists or Baptists."¹⁵ Without question, Wesleyan writers enthusiastically supported Sabbatarianism. In fact, a Wesleyan authored one of the most comprehensive Sabbatarian

¹⁴Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question," 12-13.

¹⁵Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 50.

document in this era (200 pages).¹⁶ Yet, in evaluating the Sabbatarian treatises published from 1830-1860, Congregationalists and Baptists produced more works than Wesleyans¹⁷ and a Congregationalist wrote the most extensive Sabbatarian work available (447 pages).¹⁸

John Wigley, in his work *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, makes a statement concerning Sabbatarianism within Nonconformity worthy of examination. He explained that between 1837-1847 “most Nonconformists had remained aloof from the Sabbatarian movement.”¹⁹ The data from this study offers some support for Wigley’s claim; twenty-nine of the treatises observed for this project were published outside of the timeframe above while only three were made available between 1837-1847. Likewise, periodicals evaluated in this study also maintain Wigley’s claim since the majority appear beyond the specified window of time. Nonconformist writers were most engaged in publishing their Sabbatarian works in the 1850s while the early 1830s also saw some works made available.

The thesis of this project is that Nonconformists believed it was necessary for every Christian to observe the Sabbath. No exemptions were allotted. The Sabbath began at creation, reappeared at Mount Sinai and was affirmed by Christ and the early church; it is necessary for every Christian to observe it. Nonconformists offered instruction on how

¹⁶Peter M’Owan, *Practical Considerations on the Christian Sabbath* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843).

¹⁷See Appendix for a list of Nonconformist writers and their denominational affiliation.

¹⁸Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man: or, the Origin, History, and Principles of the Lord’s Day* (London: John Farquhar Shaw, 1857).

¹⁹John Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 99.

to observe the Sabbath and many of them insisted that legislation was appropriate to enforce its proper observance.

Nonconformists viewed the Sabbath as a creation ordinance; it began at creation and resurfaced at Mount Sinai in the Decalogue.²⁰ They also affirmed the Sabbath's transition from Saturday to Sunday because of Christ's resurrection.

Nonconformists had a practical view of the Sabbath. Sunday was reserved for private and corporate worship instead of leisure and permitted prescribed activities for Sunday afternoon. As a result, some Nonconformists sought a parliamentary ban on the opening of amusements such as the British Museum and the Crystal Palace on Sunday afternoons in the middle of the nineteenth-century.²¹ Some Nonconformists, but not all, supported sending petitions through Anglicans in Parliament.²² However, Sabbath legislation made some Nonconformists uncomfortable, so they refused to support it.

This study will cover the period from 1830-1860, the period in the nineteenth-century during which Nonconformists were most engaged with Sabbatarian thought and its proper practice.²³ The resurgence of Sabbatarian thought and its publication in 1830

²⁰On Evangelical Anglicans, Ellis explained, "One of the basic tenets of Evangelical faith was a strong belief in the proper observance of the Sabbath, founded as it was upon a strict interpretation of the Fourth Commandment. Any attack upon the Sabbath as an institution constituted an attack upon the Sacred Word itself, producing a vigorous response from the Evangelicals" (Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question, 1830-1860," 4-5).

²¹"As the century approached the half-way mark, Dissent, reinforced by Church Evangelicalism which could represent it in Parliament, came to exert an increasing influence on social behavior and raised the Sunday issue to the level of a national one" (Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question, 1830-1860," 5-6). See also Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, 116.

²²Dissenters sent their petitions through Evangelicals because when sent through their usual Whigs spokesman he would be uninterested in the matter (Rennie, "Evangelicalism and English Public Life 1823-1850," 211).

²³There was a heightened interest on Sabbatarianism from Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists during these years. This can be contributed to three factors, numerical growth, political

can be attributed mostly to England's moral decay, commercial expansion and a retort to Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Whately's non-Sabbatarian views that were originally published in 1828.²⁴ Sabbatarianism was connected to England's social and religious culture.²⁵ In theory, Nonconformists were no longer second-class citizens as of 1828 when the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed. Some Nonconformist writers seized the opportunity to make a difference in society by promoting proper Sabbath observance. In the first three years of the 1830s, seventeen pamphlets (both Evangelical Anglican and Nonconformist) were published.²⁶ This was a dramatic increase in Sabbatarian publications from previous years.²⁷ From 1833-1860 at least 64 additional treatises appeared from both parties.

freedom, and commercial expansion. Methodists, Baptist, and Congregationalists saw tremendous growth that meant an increasing number of people valued proper Sabbath observance. Likewise, Nonconformists had previous interest in Sabbatarianism but did not have a voice in society to share their views. That changed with the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts of 1828 (ibid., 205-31). Following the Napoleonic War, commercial life in England saw expansion. Sunday became the most noticeable day of commercial expansion and the working classes were vulnerable to this development. Thus, Sabbatarianism was rekindled (Roberts, *Making English Morals*, 99-100).

²⁴Whately believed that the Sabbath was ceremonial in nature and perished with the ceremonial law. Thus, it has no bearing on Christians. See Richard Whately, *Essays on Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul and in other Parts of the New Testament* (London: B. Fellowes, 1828).

²⁵Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, 184.

²⁶Eshet, "Life, Liberty and Leisure," 134-35.

²⁷From 1801-1829, at least twenty-two Sabbatarian treatises were published. Robert Cox reasoned why so few were published: "DURING the first quarter of the present century the Sabbath Question was but little discussed in Britain. Not only did the arduous struggle with Napoleon divert men's minds from theological controversy, but the manifold utility of a weekly day of rest was so generally admitted, and the national antipathy to the French revolutionists continued so strong, that those who doubted either the Scriptural authority of the Lord's-day, or the identity of that institution with the Sabbath, were content to leave the 'Evangelical' party in possession of the field, so long as no attempt was made by its adherents to interfere with the liberty of others" (Robert Cox, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question* [Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart, 1865], 2:329).

The drop²⁸ in Sabbatarian treatises after 1860 may be related to unsuccessful Sabbath legislation²⁹ and new, more pressing challenges raised by Darwinism.³⁰ Sabbatarians were still engaged in promoting proper Sabbath observance as the Lord's Day Observance Society (henceforth LDOS) continued its battle with the National Sunday League (henceforth NSL) but the world around Sabbatarians was changing; historical criticism of the Bible had elevated.³¹ By 1860, Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists had lost most of their efforts to pass legislation through Parliament.³² For years some Nonconformists and the LDOS had attempted to secure legislation that prohibited Sabbath desecration.³³ Sunday legislation never passed. Following 1860 Sabbatarianism once again coasted into a comparatively quiet period. Ellis notes that a "falling away of interest in the whole problem of the Sabbath is plainly evident after

²⁸In the 1850s more than 100 treatises were published on the Sabbath while from 1860-1865 only eight were made available. See Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question," 335. Also see Cox, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question*, 2:vi-vii.

²⁹Sabbath legislation failed on two main areas, closing public houses and preventing Sunday trading (Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question," 314). Ellis also explained that by the middle of the 1860s it had become evident that securing legislation to prevent Sunday trading was impossible (325).

³⁰Cox's *The Literature of the Sabbath Question* was published in 1865 and he lists only one Sabbatarian treatise available after 1860.

³¹Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question," 314.

³²Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience," 71.

³³Nonconformists were actively involved in pushing for Sabbath legislation, particularly the Methodists. "When the petitions for Sunday laws were analysed they were found to include a large number of petitions from Wesleyan congregations; still more from the united inhabitants of villages; fewer from Independents and Baptists" (Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pt. 1 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966], 464).

1860.”³⁴ The issue of Biblical authority took precedence over the Sabbath in light of Darwin’s challenge.³⁵

In order to fulfill the aim of this study, every available Nonconformist Sabbatarian work has been sought with the help of libraries in the United States and the United Kingdom. Robert Cox’s, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question* (vol 2), published in 1865 helped identify many of the treatises evaluated here. In addition, multiple periodicals were also consulted.³⁶

The British Context

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nonconformity was insignificant in size and influence, overshadowed by the Established Church. In education, politics, finances, and religious rights, Nonconformists were disadvantaged.³⁷ They could not

³⁴Ellis, “The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question,” 314.

³⁵Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859. Chadwick noted an unsettlement of faith in the Bible by English residents between 1861-65. “Geology disproved Genesis. Most educated Christians did not mind that geology changed their understanding of Genesis chapter I, or narrowed the area of land covered by the flood. But whether they minded or not, the world understood how geology contradicted Genesis. ‘Science’ and ‘Religion,’ it was soon being said, had opposed conclusions” (Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 3).

³⁶*Baptist Magazine*, *British Quarterly Review*, the *Patriot* Newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, the *Eclectic Review*, *Wesleyan Methodist Association Magazine*, and *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*. The *Patriot* embodied core beliefs held by evangelical Christians and political interests of Nonconformists who had grown impatient with the Whigs’ reforming agenda. The *British Quarterly Review* began in 1845 by Dr. Robert Vaughan, a Congregationalist, and eventually became the *Congregational Review*. The *Eclectic Review* commenced in 1805 and originally aimed at representing both Dissenting and Established Church concerns. Initially, members of the Established Church were editors but after the first year the clergymen disassociated themselves from the periodical. The goal of the *Nonconformist* was, “To shew that a national establishment of religion is essentially vicious in its constitution, philosophically, politically, and religiously, —to bring under public notice the innumerable evils of which it is the parent” (*Nonconformist* [April 14, 1841]: 1). See also Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 48 and Josiah Conder, “Farewell Address, on Concluding the Third Series of the Eclectic Review,” *Eclectic Review* 16 (July-December, 1836): 549-53.

³⁷“For until the nineteenth century, Nonconformist Evangelicalism had been confined to the politically impotent section of the population” (Ellis, “The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question,” 1-2).

attend England's most prestigious universities, Oxford and Cambridge.³⁸ They could not serve as Members of Parliament. Financially, they were marginalized, as the Established Church required them to pay a fee, known as church rates, which facilitated the upkeep of Anglican parishes. Nonconformity's religious rights were regulated as Anglicans required Nonconformist ministers to perform funerals at parish churchyards. Yet, in spite of these impediments, by 1860, Nonconformity had grown in size and earned respect in society.³⁹ They never represented the majority among English Evangelicals but they did earn political representation, acceptance into Oxford and Cambridge, and even rivaled the Established Church in Sunday church attendance in 1851.⁴⁰

Early nineteenth-century Nonconformists lived in an era of change, especially economic change. By the 1850s, Britain became the world's economic leader. Due to the Industrial Revolution of 1760-1830,⁴¹ Britain's economy surpassed all of its closest competitors (Belgium, Switzerland, France, Germany, and the United States).⁴² In

³⁸Kitson G. Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), 38-39.

³⁹“With the gradual growth of the economic and political power of the middle classes, however, Nonconformists began to exert an influence on the domestic scene to a heretofore unprecedented extent” (Ellis, “The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question,” 2).

⁴⁰The 1851 Religious Census revealed that the Church of England had 52 percent of worship attenders while Nonconformity had 43 percent (David Bebbington, “Gospel and culture in Victorian Nonconformity,” in *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition*, ed. Jane Shaw and Alan Kreider [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999], 45).

⁴¹The Industrial Revolution can be divided into three main phases: The first phase was a pre-industrial era that covered the first half of the eighteenth century and was dominated by a growing agricultural economy: The second spanned the second half of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century and was known as the manufacturing phase, though its growth was stunted periodically during the Napoleonic Wars: The third phase began with the Railway era in the 1830s and saw the trade and transport industries expand. See Phyllis Deana and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959: Trends and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 180.

⁴²Peter Mathias, *The Transformation of England: Essays in the Economic and Social History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 15.

general, the Industrial Revolution was characterized as an “Age of Improvement.”⁴³

Improvements touched Britain’s social, technological, demographic, and economic culture.⁴⁴ Britain came to produce one-third of all the manufactured items in the world⁴⁵ and had the highest national income per capita of any nation.⁴⁶ Though previously agricultural and rural, it became increasingly industrialized and urban.

Britain’s economic boom contributed to a population boom as well, especially in urban areas. From 1760-1830, Britain’s population grew from six million to over thirty million.⁴⁷ Other European countries on the continent (France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands) witnessed a 50-80 percent growth prior to 1820 while Britain’s increased by 280 percent.⁴⁸ Overall, between 1801-1911, England’s population nearly

⁴³Joel Mokyr, “Accounting for the Industrial Revolution,” in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, ed. Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1:12.

⁴⁴T. S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 47. Multiple factors contributed to Britain’s economic rise. First, although the nation was in a constant position of warfare in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, the battles were conducted overseas, on foreign soil, and ended more often in victory than defeat. Second, England possessed a political system adaptable enough to embrace reform without revolt and thus avoided the turmoil that devastated France at the end of the eighteenth century. Third, until the late nineteenth century, England had a vigorous agricultural economy: it grew enough food to sustain its inhabitants and even enjoyed excess used for export. The only products England or Scotland was compelled to import were timber, bar iron, sugar, rum, tea, coffee, and silk (Mokyr, “Accounting for the Industrial Revolution,” 16-17).

⁴⁵Francois Crouzet, *The Victorian Economy*, trans. Anthony Forster (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 5.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 18. For more on reasons for Britain’s economic increase, see Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain 1700-1914*, 2nd ed. (New York: Methuen, 1983), 9-14.

⁴⁷Calculating England’s population with precision is difficult before 1801 because there was no official census taken. In addition, not until 1837 did England account for the total number of births, deaths, and marriages. See Roger Schofield, “British Population Change, 1700-1871,” in *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*, 2nd ed., ed. Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 61.

⁴⁸M. J. Daunton, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1700-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 135. From 1681-1841, England’s population expanded from 5.1 million to 14.9 million. See E. A. Wrigley, “British Population During the ‘Long’ Eighteenth Century,

quadrupled.⁴⁹ England's cities benefited from the population influx. From 1821-1831 most cities saw a 2.5 percent boost. By 1840, cities accounted for 48 percent of England's inhabitants.⁵⁰

Industrialization and urban influx created new jobs, which altered England's job market. Agriculture slowly lost its grip as the chief employer.⁵¹ The 1811 census revealed that 33 percent of England's full-time work force served in agriculture, forestry and fishing while 30 percent labored in manufacturing and mining.⁵² By 1831, employment patterns had changed. Retail and trade became popular choices among working males over age twenty in urban areas, while factories attracted mostly women and children with only a limited number of men.⁵³ By 1851, only 20 percent of the country's full-time work force depended on agriculture for their livelihood.

England's growing economy and revamped job market fostered major improvements in transportation. Canals and new roads were created, but the most significant invention was the railway. Trains enjoyed significant advantages over canals and roads: they were not as affected by inclement weather, whether drought, flood, or ice;

1680-1840," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, ed. Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1:65.

⁴⁹See David Cannadine, "Victorian Cities: How Different?" *Social History* 4 (January 1977): 457-82. In 1801, England's six largest towns were London (959,000), Manchester/Salford (89,000), Liverpool (83,000), Birmingham (74,000), Bristol (60,000), Leeds (53,000). See Daunton, *Progress and Poverty*, 137.

⁵⁰Jeffrey Williamson, "Coping with City Growth," in *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700*, 2nd ed., ed. Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1:334.

⁵¹Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation*, 60.

⁵²Kenneth Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain: Social Change, 1750-1850* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004), 7-8.

⁵³Wrigley, "British Population," 91-92.

they made the connection between industrial plants much easier, since unlike canals, they could be located almost anywhere; they could deliver mail and gold more efficiently than the steamboat or carriage; and most importantly, they were faster than the older alternatives.⁵⁴ The English welcomed the train, and by 1845 one million passengers used the railway annually. Unfortunately for Nonconformists, trains operated on Sunday as well.

Political Change

The industrial era brought remarkable political developments, most of which were beneficial for Nonconformists. Since the 1790's, the Tory party had controlled Parliament. But, that trend changed by 1830. The bill for the emancipation of Roman Catholics passed in April 1829 and the Tory Party was significantly weakened.⁵⁵ The Tory's right wing was upset and concerned that Catholic Members of Parliament would use their votes to eliminate the Established Church. So, the Tory right grew sympathetic to the Whigs and their reforming spirit. The Whigs gained control of Parliament in 1830 and this proved beneficial for Nonconformists.⁵⁶ Whigs remained in power for over half a century except for two brief interludes, from 1841-45 and from 1874-80.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation*, 252-53.

⁵⁵Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 7, 24. The bill passed, not because citizens favored the bill, but because they feared riots in Ireland which contained around five and a half million Roman Catholics (7-8).

⁵⁶After George IV's death in 1830, the Tories lost thirty Parliamentary seats in the general election.

⁵⁷Herbert Tingsten, *Victoria and the Victorians*, trans. David Grey and Eva Leckstrom Grey (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), 170.

Labeled as Liberals, the Whigs wanted “greater civil and religious liberty”⁵⁸ and aspired to prevent the government from abusing its power.⁵⁹ They assumed office with two chief aims: to extend the people’s right to share in their own government; and to promote positive legislation to enhance the people’s quality of life.⁶⁰ Industrial England contained a growing middle-class full of merchants, businessmen, and employers who wanted reform. This middle-class and Nonconformity found representation in the Whigs. Only from the Whigs might Nonconformists expect assistance on issues such as the payment of church rates, and the right to conduct weddings within their own congregations.⁶¹ It was a new day for Nonconformity and the beginning of increasing influence upon society.⁶²

Moral Decline

Unfortunately, England’s morality did not progress as its economy had during this period. Nonconformist writers paid attention to England’s moral decline because they viewed them as rooted in Sabbath neglect.⁶³ Key indicators in a declining morality were a

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 5.

⁶⁰Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals, 1830-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 36-37.

⁶¹David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 9.

⁶²Bebbington noted that during 1833-34 a new evangelical Nonconformist political culture had emerged. During this time Dissenters began sensing the possibility of full religious equality (David Bebbington, “The Dissenting Political Upsurge of 1833-1834,” in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations*, ed. David Bebbington and Timothy Larsen [New York: Sheffield Academic, 2003], 244-45).

⁶³M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 118. Roberts explained that Sabbath profanation led to turmoil, intemperance, crime and a pattern of disrespect for authority (ibid).

rise in public drunkenness and an elevated crime rate. In 1830, Parliament passed the Beerhouse Act that allowed anyone to ferment and sell his or her own beer by purchasing inexpensive certification. As a result, dozens of pubs opened and alcohol became readily available. In response, the British and Foreign Temperance Society formed in 1831 to oppose consumption of alcohol. By 1835, it possessed 115,782 members and many Nonconformists were leaders in the Temperance Movement.⁶⁴ In spite of the Temperance Movement, public consumption of alcohol rose significantly: by 1853, 70 percent of the working class spent their leisure time in pubs.⁶⁵ The second sign of moral decline was an elevated crime rate. The crime rate had increased since 1800. Following the Napoleonic War, the crime rate mushroomed as many former soldiers returned to civilian life and engaged in robbery and burglary. Consequently, penitentiaries were built to combat this trend.⁶⁶

The crime rate was now addressed but other moral problems such as public drunkenness and breaking the Sabbath lacked resolution. This caught the attention of many Christians, Nonconformists and Evangelical Anglicans, who desired genuine change in society.

⁶⁴Ibid., 117. See also Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience," 156.

⁶⁵Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain*, 20.

⁶⁶The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 established stable law enforcement in London.

Moral Reform

Moral reform was not a novel concept but became a worthy cause for Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists in the nineteenth century particularly in regards to Sabbath neglect. Certainly, public drunkenness on Sunday and the escalation in crime alarmed Nonconformists. But, what disgusted them, as much as neglect for God's holy day, the Sabbath, because other vices were rooted in it. Disregard for the Sabbath was common among the English in the 1820s. "Indifference to the Sabbath was a clear indication of profligacy, and this crime, it was thought, often marked the opening of the floodgate for a profusion of vice."⁶⁷ Rural residents often journeyed to towns for trade on Sundays, a practice that increased once the railway was established in 1830. Inner-city dwellers grew accustomed to buying liquor, livestock, shopping at open food markets, and the chance to enjoy activities such as leisurely walks on Sunday.⁶⁸ F. Somner Merryweather commented, "[In] Protestant England, so countless are the Sabbath breakers, and so deep and obvious the sin, that we cannot wind our way to the house of God without being shocked at the glaring abomination."⁶⁹

Frustrated with growing Sabbath neglect, a group of Nonconformist ministers took their complaint to the Bishop of London, Charles James Blomfield. They

⁶⁷R. W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 104-05.

⁶⁸Roberts, *Making English Morals*, 118.

⁶⁹Frederick Somner Merryweather, *Dies Dominica: Voices and Admonitions from the Old Saxon Times* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1849), 3-4.

recognized that societal change could only occur if they took their plea public.⁷⁰ So, they asked Blomfield to employ his influence and address the profanation of Sundays.⁷¹

Blomfield responded positively. He wrote a letter to the laity in London and Westminster in 1830⁷² in which he declared that the ruin of Sundays was “an evil of great and crying magnitude” that threatened the well being of England’s religion.⁷³ The Sabbath had preserved religion in England for hundreds of years and refusing to honor it would make religion extinct. Specifically, the surges in Sunday traffic and the display of public drunkenness on Sunday were tendencies that Blomfield found especially repulsive.⁷⁴

Blomfield’s letter ignited an effort among Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists for proper Sabbath observance that persisted over the next 30 years. Numerous Nonconformists and Evangelical Anglicans picked up their pens and utilized their pulpits to promote proper Sabbath observance and to protect the Sabbath from commercialism, tourism, and leisure.⁷⁵ The Sabbatarian cause gained traction and added

⁷⁰Blomfield served as Bishop of London from 1828-1856. For more on Blomfield, see Malcolm Johnson, *Bustling Intermeddler? The Life and Work of Charles James Blomfield* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001), 21.

⁷¹Rennie, “Evangelicalism and English Public Life,” 210.

⁷²The editors of the *Baptist Magazine* were generally pleased with Blomfield’s letter. “In the Letter before us, Dr. Blomfield stands forward as a zealous advocate for the Lord’s day; and we are pleased with his illustrations of the benefit of its observance and with the strong and faithful colouring in which he exhibits the prevailing neglect of its claims” (“Review,” *Baptist Magazine* 22 [October 1830]: 425).

⁷³Charles James Blomfield, *A Letter on the Present Neglect of the Lord’s Day*, 5th ed. (London: C. J. G. and F. Rivington, 1830), 3. See also Johnson, *Bustling Intermeddler?* 36.

⁷⁴Blomfield, *A Letter*, 10, 14-15.

⁷⁵A key Evangelical Anglican who joined the fight was Daniel Wilson, vicar of St. Mary’s, Islington, who published seven sermons on the necessity of observing the Sabbath in 1831. Wigley added that Wilson’s published sermons produced “the definitive Evangelical interpretation of the Fourth Commandment, so inspiring a major assault upon the English Sunday” (Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, 28).

supporters with the rise of an organized movement that lobbied publicly to protect Sunday. An energized group of Evangelical Anglicans committed to protecting Sunday from secularism formed the LDOS in 1831.⁷⁶ The LDOS gained support from numerous Evangelical Anglicans but faced opposition from the majority of English citizens. It published documents to advance its cause. In its first year, the LDOS printed 55,000 Sabbatarian pamphlets.⁷⁷ Interest in writing and preaching on proper Sabbath observance persisted over the next 29 years (1831-1860)⁷⁸ as dozens of works were printed.⁷⁹ Initially, the LDOS sought to revise and reinforce England's Sunday law by appealing to Parliament.⁸⁰ Although Parliament considered several bills from the LDOS, none were passed in the 1830s. Still, the LDOS had orchestrated an intense effort to promote proper Sabbath observance in England: a struggle that according to Wilfred Whitaker was "without parallel in the story of the English Sunday."⁸¹ Although they were not members

⁷⁶A preliminary meeting was held on January 25, 1831, to discuss the vision of the LDOS. Prominent clergymen and laymen met again on February 8 to approve resolutions and to determine the objectives of the Society (Harold J. W. Legerton, *For Our Lord and His Day: A History of the Lord's Day Observance Society* [Leicester: Oldham & Manton, n.d.], 7). The LDOS still exists and continues its fight to make Sunday a day of worship and rest. The society's name has been changed from LDOS to Day One Christian Ministries. Its current web address is www.lordsday.co.uk.

⁷⁷Eshet, "Life, Liberty and Leisure," 135.

⁷⁸The first address from the LDOS on February 14, 1831, said "that every person in a Christian country is bound in conscience to devote this seventh portion of his time to the honour of God, by resting from the business of his calling; by abstaining altogether from the pursuit of gain, and from ordinary pastimes and recreations; by guarding against every worldly avocation and interruption; and by spending the entire day in the public and private duties of religion, with the exception of such works of necessity and charity" (Legerton, *For Our Lord and His Day*, 8).

⁷⁹Membership in the LDOS was exclusively Anglican. See Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth-Century England," in *Past and Present* 38 (1967): 103.

⁸⁰Legerton, *For Our Lord and His Day*, 15.

⁸¹Wilfred Barnett Whitaker, *The Eighteenth-Century English Sunday: A Study of Sunday Observance from 1677-1837* (London: Epworth, 1940), 271.

of the LDOS,⁸² Nonconformists also embraced the fight to protect the Sabbath.⁸³

Nonconformity as a Growing Movement

Nonconformity finds its roots in the mid-seventeenth century.⁸⁴ Its numbers increased when the Established Church enforced strict adherence to *The Book of Common Prayer* for corporate worship in 1662, many discontented Anglicans refused to comply and exited the Established Church.⁸⁵ This was known as the Great Ejection of 1662. Those who left were labeled Dissenters and joined the ranks of those who had never conformed to the Anglican Church.⁸⁶ Dissenters retained this label until the mid-nineteenth century when they became known as Nonconformists.

⁸²Josiah Conder was grieved over the LDOS's failure to include Nonconformists as members especially since his stance on the Sabbath concurred with that of the LDOS. "The fact is, Mr. Editor, that when, a year ago, I first saw the names of the Committee announced, without that of a single Dissenter among them, I was deeply grieved, and took the freedom of addressing a remonstrance, on the subject, to the much respected clergyman, who has since been appointed to the see of Calcutta [Daniel Wilson]" (Josiah Conder, "To the Editor of the Patriot," *Patriot* [May 1832]: 148).

⁸³See Joseph Kingsmill, *The Sabbath: The Working Man's True Charter* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 24.

⁸⁴See Henry W. Clark, *History of English Nonconformity: From Wiclif to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965).

⁸⁵Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, 15.

⁸⁶Eustace Conder wrote that even though Dissent is a negative term which implies disagreement or protest, Dissenters had actually separated from the Church of England for the same reason that Anglicans had dissented from Rome: they were attempting to remain obedient to what they believed the Scriptures taught. See Eustace R. Conder, *Why Are We Dissenters? Three Lectures on the Principles of Evangelical Nonconformity*, 2nd ed. (London: John Snow, 1853), 1-2.

Nonconformist Denominations

Nonconformity included several different denominations.⁸⁷ Presbyterianism had its roots in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The majority of English Presbyterians had become Unitarian by the nineteenth century, and were in principle Nonconformist while fundamentally unorthodox.⁸⁸ A remnant of Presbyterians held to orthodoxy, particularly the divinity of Christ, and in 1839 formed the Presbyterian Church in England. This group looked to the Church of Scotland for guidance until 1844,⁸⁹ when they declared their autonomy.⁹⁰ English Presbyterians who had become Unitarians and their Sabbatarian thought will not be treated in this study since they were not considered evangelical. However, several Presbyterian ministers who identified with the Presbyterian Church in England published works on the Sabbath that will be viewed

⁸⁷“Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Unitarians, and members of a host of minor sects differed from each other in many respects, but they shared social situations, social values, and political goals sufficiently that they were conscious of forming a distinctive community within English society” (Helmstadter, “The Nonconformist Conscience,” 135).

⁸⁸Unitarians denied that the Trinitarian God eternally exists as one essence and in three persons. Therefore, they denied the deity of Christ and affirmed that God is one in being and personhood.

⁸⁹Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:25. Interestingly, of the 72 English Presbyterian ministers in 1843, 36 left their churches for vacant parishes within the Church of Scotland during 1843-44. In spite of this mass departure, the majority of these churches remained united with the Presbyterian Church of England and was thus distinctly Nonconformist. See David Cornick, “The Disruption in London: English Presbyterians and the Scottish Disruption of 1843,” in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations*, ed. David Bebbington and Timothy Larsen (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 290, 307-08. See also Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 399. The editors of the *British Quarterly Review* stated, “Presbyterianism in England at present is scarcely in any degree English. Our Scotch neighbours bring their preferences for this polity with them south of the Tweed, and, with a feeling which we are by no means disposed to condemn, seem to cling to it only with the more fervor, from having to uphold it in a country to which it is not very congenial. Over the northern counties of England, and in our metropolis, all the more conspicuous sections of Presbyterianism may be said to keep a good footing among Scotchmen” (“Article VIII,” *British Quarterly Review* 12 [August 1850]: 232).

⁹⁰Cornick explained that the English Presbyterian Church declared in 1834 that the Church of Scotland did not have legal jurisdiction in England, and the Church of Scotland concurred in 1839. At that point, the Church in England amended the title “Presbyterian Church in England,” and excluded the phrase “in connection with the Church of Scotland.” See Cornick, “The Disruption in London: English Presbyterians and the Scottish Disruption of 1843,” 292.

in this project since they were considered evangelical. Congregationalists, also known as Independents, could trace their roots to the Elizabethan period.⁹¹ Baptists were divided into groups: General and Particular. General Baptists had convened in London's Spitalfields in 1612.⁹² Particular Baptists had begun in England after 1633, and had a church in London by 1638.⁹³

A fringe group within Nonconformity was the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Evangelical Nonconformists often viewed them with suspicion,⁹⁴ partly because membership could be acquired through physical instead of spiritual birth and partly because Quakers depended upon the "light within," their personal conviction, to steer their orthopraxy.⁹⁵ While Quakers professed faith in Christ and the reality of hell, their silent gatherings thwarted any gospel presentation and restricted real conversions.⁹⁶ This practice invited many moral English citizens and few Christian converts from the perspective of evangelical Nonconformists. Quakers, remained distinct from other bodies of Dissenters: they persistently denied the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and exalted direct mystical experience of the Holy Spirit over divine revelation through

⁹¹Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:1. See also R. Tudor Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962* (London: Independent, 1962).

⁹²A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Kingsgate, 1947), 46.

⁹³Ibid., 58. John Spilsbury was the pastor. See Peter Naylor, *Picking Up a Pin for the Lord: English Particular Baptists from 1688 to the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Grace, 1992).

⁹⁴Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, 16. Victorians considered the following denominations as Nonconformists: Unitarians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and Methodists. See Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 2.

⁹⁵Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 12. One became a Quaker through two avenues: by birth if one's parents were both Quakers; or by conversion, also known as conviction. See Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 68-69.

⁹⁶Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:98-99.

Scripture.⁹⁷ By 1851 their numbers were so small as to be almost unnoticeable: the census revealed that they had only 14,016 in attendance, while the Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists each featured over 350,000 members.⁹⁸ For the purposes of this study, Quaker thought on the Sabbath will not be treated since they were not seen as evangelical.

The final evangelical body within Nonconformity was Methodism, which had roots in the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. Methodism emphasized the pursuit of holiness and contributed a surplus of hymns written by John Wesley and his brother Charles.⁹⁹ Until John Wesley's death in 1791, Methodism remained firmly within the Established Church. Methodism contained several different branches; the largest was the Wesleyan Methodists. Wesleyans remained sympathetic towards Evangelical Anglicans and did not consider themselves Nonconformists.¹⁰⁰ James Beckwith, a Wesleyan Conference Minister, noted in 1847 that Wesleyans had never been Dissenters. In response to Beckwith, James Mursell agreed that Wesleyans had never departed from the Established Church and were still considered full members.¹⁰¹ Wesleyans were not of

⁹⁷Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, xxiv.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, xix.

⁹⁹Norman P. Goldhawk, "The Methodist People in the Early Victorian Age: Spirituality and Worship," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, ed. Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George, and Gordon Rupp (London: Epworth, 1978), 2:120-21.

¹⁰⁰"Wesleyan Methodism, as a body, had always supported the Established Church and seen itself as different from the rest of Dissent" (Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 165). Editors of the *British Quarterly Review* noted in 1850 "Wesleyan Methodism has still a powerful influence in England, though comparatively feeble in the other portions of the British empire. It has done a noble work; but its old aggressive spirit has nearly departed from it" ("Article VIII," 231).

¹⁰¹"Reviews and Literary Notices," *Wesleyan Methodist Association Magazine* 10 (June 1847): 266: "The absurdity of Wesleyans affecting to deny that they are Dissenters, and of paying court to the Church establishment, are ably demonstrated; and just reproof for such folly is well administered."

one mind on how to view Nonconformity.¹⁰² The Methodist editor Thomas Jackson esteemed the strong connections between Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists in the early nineteenth century and criticized those who lobbied for separation;¹⁰³ but fellow-Methodist, Joseph Beaumont, disagreed intensely, for he asserted in 1834 that his religious affiliation was that of an oarsman who faced the Church of England but rowed steadily away.¹⁰⁴

Methodism as a whole had a unique divorce from Anglicanism; it was gradual and intricate. The break became apparent to most Methodists in the late 1830s, when the Tractarians banned Anglicans from attending the evening services of the Methodists. This act forced Methodists to admit that they were indeed disconnected from the Established Church.¹⁰⁵ For the purpose of this study, Wesleyan Methodists will be treated with other Evangelical denominations within Nonconformity.

Although divided into multiple branches, Methodism was Nonconformity's largest denomination and in 1851 contained over half of Nonconformity's congregations.¹⁰⁶ Besides Wesleyans, the remaining Methodist bodies were known as

¹⁰²Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 371.

¹⁰³Rupert E. Davies, *Methodism* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), 147. Ward noted that John Wesley desired to remain Anglican. In the last twelve years of his life, however, he allowed clergymen to celebrate Communion in America and Scotland beyond the Church of England's control. See W. R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1950* (New York: Schocken, 1973), 28.

¹⁰⁴Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 370.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 385. John Wolffe added that "Methodism set itself decisively on the road to separation around the time of Wesley's death in 1791" (John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* [London: Routledge, 1994], 27).

¹⁰⁶Watts added that Methodism's system of itinerancy matched England's fast growing yet scattered population, and that combination propelled it to Nonconformity's largest body. See Watts, *The Dissenters*, 134. Methodists saw tremendous growth from 1800 to 1850. Wolffe explains: "Wesleyan Methodists numbers in England increased from 88,334 in 1800 to 319,770 in 1846; Primitive Methodism,

Primitive, Calvinistic, Independent, and New Connexion. These groups aligned themselves with Nonconformists. The Primitive Methodists separated from the Wesleyans in the first decade of the nineteenth century because they practiced certain revival methods that Wesleyans disliked. Independent Methodists and the Methodist New Connexion began in 1797 and Calvinistic Methodists were found primarily in Wales.¹⁰⁷

Nonconformist Expansion

Nonconformity had a modest membership before the Industrial Revolution but added members quickly once it began.¹⁰⁸ The fastest growing denomination was Methodism, which increased by almost 200,000 members between 1801 and 1851.¹⁰⁹ The Religious Census of 1851 on March 30 revealed that Methodism drew 33 percent more worshippers than either Presbyterians or Congregationalists and 50 percent more than Baptists.¹¹⁰ Baptists placed second in denominational growth. Between 1801 and 1851, Baptists expanded from 652 congregations to 2,789.¹¹¹ Congregationalism rose from 914

formed as a result of further revivalistic surge around 1810, had over 100,000 members by 1850” (Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, 25).

¹⁰⁷David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 3.

¹⁰⁸Watts recorded that in 1715-1718, England contained 59,940 Congregationalists but in 1851 boasted 655,935. Baptists had 59,320 in 1715-1718 and in 1851 had 499,604. Nonconformists numbered 338,120 in 1715-1718 and surged to 2,878,543 in 1851 (Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:29).

¹⁰⁹Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience*, 3.

¹¹⁰Ibid. Methodism had 1,385,382 attendees at its worship services compared to 793,142 for Presbyterians and Congregationalists and 589,978 for the Baptists. From 1841 to 1851, Methodist congregations multiplied by 40 percent.

¹¹¹Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain*, 34. Larsen added that Baptists had 841 ministers in 1831 and 1,196 in 1851. Baptists did not publish lists of their ministers in superseding years. See Timothy Larsen, “Honorary Doctorates and the Nonconformist Ministry in Nineteenth-Century England,” in *Modern*

congregations to 2,604.¹¹²

Overall, Nonconformity saw tremendous growth in the nineteenth century. According to the Religious Census of 1851, its numbers rivaled and in some places surpassed Anglican worship attendance¹¹³ especially in England's large cities.¹¹⁴ The Religious Census of 1773 showed 1,685 Nonconformist congregations, but the 1851 Religious Census revealed 17,019 Nonconformist congregations.¹¹⁵ In 20 out of 29 industrial centers in England, attendance at a Nonconformist congregation surpassed that of the Established Church in March 1851.¹¹⁶ Anglicans had 14,077 congregations though the number of attendees is uncertain.¹¹⁷ England had a total population of 16,618,538 in

Christianity and Cultural Aspirations, ed. David Bebbington and Timothy Larsen (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 140.

¹¹²Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 24. See also Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:23.

¹¹³“At the time of the religious census in 1851, Nonconformists had accounted for about half the church-going public. There was never another national, official census of church attendance, but numerous local inquiries suggest that, at the turn of the century, rather more than half of those who normally attended church on Sunday were Nonconformists” (Richard J. Helmstadter, “The Nonconformist Conscience,” in *Religion in Victorian Britain*, ed. Gerald Parsons [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998], 4:61).

¹¹⁴“In the big towns dissent was shown to be the stronger. In Leeds (assuming each attendance as one person) 15 percent of the population went to church, 31 per cent to chapels; in Bradford 12 percent went to church, 27 percent to chapels. In the big towns of the West Riding like Halifax and Huddersfield, in Manchester and Bolton, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Hull, in Birmingham and Stroud, and in the Cornish towns like Penzance and Redruth, dissent was in the majority, often a comfortable majority, of actual attendants at worship” (Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pt. 1, 368-69).

¹¹⁵Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:23-24. This represents a growth of 975 percent. The General Baptists saw tremendous growth. In 1773 they had 378 congregations and in 1851 they boasted 2,347 (23). Likewise, Congregationalists grew from 300 congregations in 1773 to 3,244 in 1851 (23-24). The Presbyterians and Quakers both witnessed major reductions. The Presbyterians, who had 637 congregations between 1715-1718, had split by 1851 among Unitarians (202 congregations), the orthodox Presbyterian Church in England (76 congregations), and the United Presbyterian Church.

¹¹⁶Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience*, 2.

¹¹⁷Out of the 14,077 Anglican parishes, 989 refused to report their record of attendance on census Sunday. From its inception, Anglicans opposed the Religious Census. See Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:25 and Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 364.

1851, of whom 6,618,538, or 39.82 percent, were at church on Census Sunday, March 30.¹¹⁸

Nonconformity's Battle

From Nonconformity's seventeenth-century beginnings, until 1828, Nonconformists were treated as second-class citizens.¹¹⁹ This was due in part to the Test and Corporation Acts. The Corporation Act was passed by Parliament in 1661 and required anyone seeking an elected public office to partake in Anglican Communion. In 1673, the Test Act became law and required any civil or military employee to be in good standing with the Anglican Church. It was designed to protect the Established Church from the Duke of York who was a Roman Catholic and heir to the crown. But, the Acts also penalized Nonconformists.¹²⁰ This restriction was removed in 1828 when Parliament repealed the Test and Corporation Acts.¹²¹ When the Acts were reversed Nonconformists

¹¹⁸Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:27-28. Nearly half of the 39.82 percent were Nonconformists (2,878,543). The total number of Anglicans present in church on census Sunday in England was 3,415,861, which only outnumbered the Nonconformists by slightly over three percent (20.19 percent Anglican vs. 17.02 percent Nonconformist). A total of 34,467 congregations were surveyed. England's population had increased from 8.7 million in 1801 to over 16 million in 1851 (Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain*, 5).

¹¹⁹“Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was an event of high symbolic significance, for it conferred constitutional confirmation upon the movement toward religious pluralism in English society” (Helmstadter, “The Nonconformist Conscience,” 145).

¹²⁰R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*, ed. A. W. W. Dale (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 610: “Absurd were the number and variety of persons affected by the Test Act: non-commissioned officers, as well as officers—excisemen, tide-waiters, and even pedlars. The penalties incurred by these different classes of men were sufficiently alarming—forefeiture of the office, disqualification for any other, incapacity to maintain a suit at law, to act as guardian or executor, or to inherit a legacy; and lastly, a penalty of 500 pounds” (610-11).

¹²¹Larsen wrote, “It was only after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 that Dissenters felt sufficiently secure and confident in organizing to propagate their reforming views” (Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 146). The repeal was a significant triumph for Nonconformists; one which had been attempted in previous years. Lay representatives from Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational bodies in, and within, twelve miles of London, had formed the Protestant Dissenting Deputies in 1732 to convey their antagonism to the Test and Corporation Acts. See Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, 42; Bernard Lord Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, ed. Ormerod Greenwood (Cambridge: Cambridge

could hold public office.¹²²

Even though 1828 was a turning point for Nonconformists, battles remained. One battle that Nonconformity maintained concerned education. Nonconformists could not obtain degrees from Oxford or Cambridge until the 1850s unless they submitted to the conditions of the Thirty-Nine Articles.¹²³ Since some, but not all, Nonconformists were unwilling to do this, they were prohibited from attending Oxford and from taking degrees at Cambridge.¹²⁴ Instead, Nonconformists opened their own schools called dissenting academies.¹²⁵ The dissenting academies offered an excellent education and some of its graduates produced works of good scholarship.¹²⁶ However, all Nonconformist ministers did not attend the academies. Untrained laity led most

University Press, 1952), 2; Johnson, *The Dissolution of Dissent, 1850-1918*, 155; and David M. Thompson, "Nonconformists at Cambridge Before the First World War," in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations*, ed. David Bebbington and Timothy Larsen (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 177.

¹²²Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain*, 83. "But repeal was not the end of the Dissenters' battle for liberty. After repeal, Nonconformists continued to call for increased toleration and soon began to demand full equality with the Church of England" (Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience," 145).

¹²³Until the 1850s, all students who began study at Oxford were required by law to affirm the Thirty-Nine Articles; at Cambridge, one had to be a member of the Church of England in order to graduate. Thus, Nonconformists who attended Cambridge often left without their degree. Larsen noted that in 1854 William Gladstone's Oxford University Bill passed to allow Nonconformists to attend Oxford for a bachelor's degree, and in 1856 another bill was passed to allow them to attain non-theological bachelors and master's degrees from Cambridge. See Mark D. Johnson, *The Dissolution of Dissent, 1850-1918* (New York: Garland, 1987), 169; and Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, 60-62.

¹²⁴Ibid., 627: "It was the contention of Nonconformists that the national Universities were the Universities of the nation. When the nation was Catholic, the Universities were Catholic; when the nation became Protestant, the Universities became Protestant—change of faith did not invalidate the national claim to the honours and the wealth of the national seats of learning."

¹²⁵Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation*, 142. Congregationalists took the lead in this effort and founded the London colleges of Homerton, Coward, and Hoxton. In 1850, the three colleges united to form New College. Similar colleges were established in Birmingham and Yorkshire. See Dale A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity, 1825-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16. Methodists established their first educational institute for ministerial training in 1834 (48).

¹²⁶Larsen, "Honorary Doctorates," 141.

congregations.¹²⁷ Besides education, a major irritant to Nonconformists was church rates, a local tax levied upon all English citizens, regardless of denominational affiliation, in order to maintain the parish church property and fund new Anglican facilities.¹²⁸ Church rates were abolished in 1868. But cause for grievance remained. Nonconformists resisted Burial Laws, which prevented Dissenting clergy from conducting funerals of their own members in Anglican churchyards.¹²⁹ The Burial Laws required that services be conducted by clergy of the Church of England in keeping with the guidelines of *The Book of Common Prayer*. This tradition was altered with the Burials Act of 1880.¹³⁰ Thus, Nonconformists finally reached religious equality with Anglicans.

Nonconformity and the Sabbath

Parliament's repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 energized Nonconformists and gave them a political voice.¹³¹ Some Nonconformists seized the moment and sought to advance their reforming aspirations.¹³² A group of Nonconformists established the *Patriot* newspaper in 1832 to support "principles of civil and religious

¹²⁷Watts, *The Dissenters*, 2:145.

¹²⁸Anglican churches were required by law to keep their buildings and roads in good condition (Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 81). From 1801-51, 2,529 Anglican churches were built at a cost of 9,087,000 pounds, of which 1,663,429 pounds originated from public funds including church rates. The remainder stemmed from private donations. Because of church rates, Nonconformists had to pay for their own buildings while at the same time giving to Anglican parishes. See Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies*, 176.

¹²⁹Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, 43.

¹³⁰Johnson, *The Dissolution of Dissent*, 167.

¹³¹In 1833, Evangelical Nonconformists had two MP's as delegates; a third was added in February 1834. See G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 39.

¹³²Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 146.

freedom.”¹³³ Other Nonconformists joined the effort in publicly proclaiming desires for deep-seated change in English society:¹³⁴ According to Bebbington, “[m]any Dissenters became thoroughly involved in the cry for reform in church and state.”¹³⁵ This enthusiasm evolved into some Nonconformists writing and preaching in favor of proper Sabbath observance. Sabbatarianism, Nonconformists thought, positively influenced England’s declining moral condition. But, Nonconformist Sabbatarian thought did not originate in the nineteenth-century—it dated back to the Puritan era.

The Evangelical Tradition of Sabbath Observance

Sabbatarianism is rooted in late sixteenth-century England. English Puritans¹³⁶ championed the cause by regularly discussing proper Sabbath observance beginning in 1582 at the Dedham conference of pastors that met from 1582-1589.¹³⁷ Christopher Hill attributed the fresh interest in Sabbatarianism in the late sixteenth-century to biblical

¹³³The *Patriot* did not claim to serve as the voice of Nonconformity. The editors added, “It has for its specific object, to secure to the Protestant Dissenters of Great Britain and Ireland, a medium of Political Intelligence, free from the distorting influence of party faction, —a faithful Reporter of the proceedings of our great religious and philanthropic institutions, —a Domestic Record, from which the revolting details of crime, that too often fill the columns of the Daily papers, will be carefully excluded, — and a temperate, but firm and uncompromising Advocate of principles of civil and religious freedom” (“To the Public,” *Patriot* [January 2, 1833]: 1).

¹³⁴Bebbington, “The Dissenting Political Upsurge of 1833-34,” 224-25.

¹³⁵Machin, *Politics and the Churches*, 24

¹³⁶M. M. Knappen explained that Sabbatarianism originated in England (M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939], 442). Wigley added, “After the Reformation many devout Englishmen, particularly those members of the Established Church commonly called Puritans, began to interpret the Fourth Commandment in such a way as to identify Sunday with the Old Testament Sabbath, and to demand the prohibition of most forms of Sunday labour and all forms of Sunday amusement” (Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, 3).

¹³⁷Sabbatarianism surfaced at the first Dedham conference meeting on December 3, 1582 and was repeatedly discussed over the next four years. See John H. Primus, “The Dedham Sabbath Debate: More Light on English Sabbatarianism,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 17 (Spring 1986): 89.

literacy; Christians read the Bible and interpreted it literally.¹³⁸ The Puritans promoted a literal twenty-four hour for Sabbath observance, from sunset on Saturday until sunset on Sunday. They prohibited any physical activity unless essential to daily life and believed that God would direct judgment toward the nation that disregarded the Sabbath.

Beginning in 1592, Puritans began publishing sabbatarian works with Richard Greenham's (1535-1594) *Treatise of the Sabbath*. Greenham viewed the Sabbath with great delight and saw it as a time of refreshment: "[I]n it we shall recover ourselves."¹³⁹

In 1595, Greenham's son-in-law, Nicholas Bownd (d. 1613) published the most extensive study on the Sabbath at that time entitled, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath*. Neglect of the Sabbath brought spiritual decay upon Christians, argued Bownd. Those who break the Sabbath were prone to "falling into many sinnes, prone unto a great many moe."¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Bownd believed that proper Sabbath observance benefited Christians by helping them grow spiritually. The "Father"¹⁴¹ of English Puritanism was William Perkins (1558-1602) and he proposed that the Sabbath was designed to liberate Christians from worldly concerns and allow them to focus on God. Perkins also insisted that England's sins were worse than Israel's and out of England's top five sins, profaning the Sabbath was number four.¹⁴²

¹³⁸Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964), 146.

¹³⁹M. Richard Greenham, *The Workes of the Reverend and Faithful Servant of Jesus Christ M. Richard Greenham*, ed. Henry Holland (London: 1612), 138.

¹⁴⁰Nicholas Bownd, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* (London: Widdow Orwin, 1595), 18.

¹⁴¹James T. Dennison Jr., *The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England, 1532-1700* (New York: University Press, 1983), 31.

¹⁴²William Perkins, *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Iam Breward (Berkshire, England: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 79.

Sabbatarian thought persisted throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century from Anglicans and Nonconformists. Observing the Sabbath was viewed as a priority and a great delight while failure to keep the Sabbath was seen as sinful. Presbyterian and Congregationalist pastor John Flavel (1628-1691) saw the Sabbath as a small taste of heaven in this world. The Sabbath was not a day of gloom but of great joy.¹⁴³ Of all the commands given by God, Flavel supported the command to remember the Sabbath as the most important because it carries positive and negative results for humanity. In the eighteenth century, Anglican minister John Wesley (1703-1791) noticed the lack of interest in religion and disregard for the Sabbath—he affirmed the sinfulness of this trend. Nine out of ten persons in England did not have any interest in religion, according to Wesley. “Myriads more perish through drunkenness, lewdness, Sabbath-breaking, cursing and swearing, and other outward sins.”¹⁴⁴ In a letter to the Mayor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Wesley explained he had recently been informed of an abundance of Sabbath-breakers and drunkards who wandered around the Sand Hill on Sunday evenings. Wesley reasoned, “Immediately my heart burned within me to call those sinners also to repentance.”¹⁴⁵

Baptist minister John Gill (1697-1771) affirmed the Sabbath’s significance and believed that Christians should observe it based on Jesus’ resurrection and the early

¹⁴³Flavel believed that Sabbath practices are “to be performed with spiritual delight. . . . And all grudging at, and weariness of spiritual exercises, is a sin forbidden” (John Flavel, *The Works of John Flavel* [London: W. Baynes and Son, 1820; reprint, Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982], 6:236).

¹⁴⁴John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), 8:179.

¹⁴⁵John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), 2:15.

church's example. Gill did not view the Sabbath as instituted by God at creation.¹⁴⁶ God did not mention a Sabbath in Genesis 2:3 as in the fourth commandment, according to Gill.¹⁴⁷ The verse only explains what God did and do not provide an admonition for Adam to preserve the day. Furthermore, Gill reasoned that no record exists of any person observing a Sabbath prior to Moses (not Adam, Job, Enoch, Noah, Lot, or Melchizedek) yet the patriarchs were righteous and obtained God's favor. In spite of the Sabbath's omission during the patriarchal era, Gill affirmed that the Sabbath remained important for Christians and should be observed each week. Since Jesus rose from the dead on the first day and considering that the apostles and the early church worshiped on this day,¹⁴⁸ rest was in order.¹⁴⁹ All unnecessary work should be avoided and besides corporate worship the entire day should be spent reading Scripture, praying, and meditating.¹⁵⁰

In the early nineteenth-century, Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), a particular Baptist minister, conversed with others Baptists in 1805 over the importance of keeping

¹⁴⁶“He [Adam] must be bound to keep a Sabbath before the institution of it; he was created on the sixth day, after the image of God; one part of which was the law of nature, written on his heart; but the institution of the Sabbath-day was not until the seventh day, if it was then; for it is yet a matter of question” (John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity; or, A System of Practical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* [London: George Keith, 1770], 3:420).

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 421: “No mention is made of a Sabbath, and of the sanctification of that, as in the fourth command, *Exod. xx. 11.* only of the seventh-day, and not of that as a Sabbath.”

¹⁴⁸“As to the observation of the first day, tho' there is no express command for it, there are precedents of it; there are instances of keeping it, *John xx. 19, 26. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1,2*” (John Gill, *The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, In Favour of Infant-Baptism* [London: G. Keith, 1751], 94).

¹⁴⁹The Sabbath “requires no more nor other than this, a rest on the seventh day, after six days labour; it does not direct to any epochs from whence it is to begin. . . . it only directs to, and regards the seventh-day from whence a man begins to labour in whatever place or country he lives (ibid., 430).

¹⁵⁰“The whole of the day should be observed, from morning to evening; the early part should not be indulged in sleep, not any part spent in doing a man's own business, in casting up his accounts, and setting right his shop-books. . . . But besides public worship, men should attend to reading the Scriptures, prayer, and meditation, and christian conferences; and in such pious exercises should they spend the whole day” (ibid., 431).

the Sabbath. Fuller was asked to explain why Christians should cease from labor on Sunday. Fuller responded, “It appeared to me to be a *moral* duty to keep a sabbath, or it would not have made a part of the ten commandments; and that which is moral is of perpetual obligation.”¹⁵¹ Unlike Gill, Fuller affirmed the Sabbath’s institution at creation.¹⁵² During the patriarchal era, Fuller explained that time was divided into weeks Noah sent out the dove, waited seven days and sent it out again. The Sabbath was implemented as a day of rest particularly for the poor.¹⁵³ Fuller saw the Sabbath as a day of refreshing.

In general, English Sabbatarianism began receiving more attention in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries than it had in years past. Evidence of this trend is seen in the passing of the Sunday Observance Act in 1780. Evangelicals lobbied for this bill that levied a 200-pound fine upon planners of Sunday amusement or any type of entertainment where an admittance fee was charged.¹⁵⁴ In the early nineteenth-century, the increase in Sunday trading particularly in London and policies implemented by Parliament caused concern for Sabbatarians. The 1821 Bread Act allowed Sunday deliveries; the 1827 River Thames Act allowed boats to hire employees on Sunday; and the 1831 Hackney Carriage Act permitted Hackney carriages to operate on Sundays as

¹⁵¹J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1830), 114.

¹⁵²“The conclusion of so divine a work required to be celebrated, as well as the Creator adored, in all future ages: hence arose the institution of the sabbath” (Andrew Fuller, *The Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* [New Haven, CT: S. Converse, 1825], 5:21).

¹⁵³“The sabbath was not appointed for God, but to be a *day of rest for man*, particularly for the poor” (ibid., 22).

¹⁵⁴Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, 26.

any weekday.¹⁵⁵ This concern promoted an intense effort by Sabbatarians (Nonconformists and Evangelical Anglicans) to urge their countrymen to properly observe the Sabbath. Sabbatarians made their plea primarily through sermons and published treatises. They lamented over disregard for Sunday and aimed to stop the decay. Nonconformists' "sense of responsibility for the corporate life of England drove many mid-century Nonconformists to join Anglicans in enforcing Sabbath observance and opposing Roman Catholics."¹⁵⁶

Sabbath treatises within Nonconformity from 1830-1860 normally began with a Biblical warrant for Sabbath observance since Scripture was the final authority. This is the focus of chapter two in this study. Nonconformists affirmed the Sabbath's inception at creation and Jesus' affirmation of the Sabbath in the gospels. Once they formulated a Biblical view of the Sabbath, Nonconformists normally applied it to life; what sorts of what activities were permissible on Sunday? Chapter three will cover this question in detail and provide an overview of how a Sabbath should be observed according to Nonconformists. The Sabbath was of such practical importance for Nonconformists that blessings and curses were understood to accompany its observance or neglect; this is the focus of chapter four. These blessings and curses were both national and personal in scope. Unfortunately, not all residents observed the Sabbath. In fact, not even all Christians practiced a proper Sabbath as Nonconformists envisioned. So, some Nonconformists pleaded with government officials to protect the Sabbath from unnecessary labor and open amusements. They sought to enforce the Sabbath through

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁶Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 67.

legislation. This is the topic of chapter five. Finally, chapter six offers conclusions and contributions from this study.

Conclusion

Nonconformists had aspirations that England would be a godly society. They were especially burdened by commercialism, crime and public drunkenness on Sunday. In order to curtail public drunkenness, many Nonconformists joined the Temperance Movement.¹⁵⁷ While the Temperance Movement attracted many supporters, some but fewer Nonconformists promoted Sabbatarianism, which they thought, would remedy these evils. Nonconformist writers maintained a general consensus concerning their Sabbatarian views except on Sabbath legislation. Sabbatarianism was an important issue for Nonconformists as some of its prominent leaders such as Josiah Conder, Edward Baines, Jr. and John Angell James were Sabbatarians. Therefore, unless otherwise noted, “Nonconformist” and “Nonconformity” will be used in this dissertation to refer to writers of sabbatarian persuasion and to the tradition represented by those writers.

¹⁵⁷See Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (Keele, England: Keele University Press, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL WARRANT FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Introduction

Nonconformists highly esteemed the Scriptures and sought to follow them fully. They regarded the Bible as the inspired rule of faith and practice and the foremost authority on earth.¹ Scripture took precedence over tradition. The biblical warrant for the Sabbath was of utmost importance for them. As Nonconformists wrote and preached on Sabbath observance, they often began with a treatment of the Sabbath's biblical warrant, which for them was found in Genesis 2. They then moved chronologically through Scripture treating the Sabbath's reappearance in Exodus and concluding with an analysis of Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath.

The Beginning and Reappearance of the Sabbath

The Sabbath first appeared in Genesis 2 and disappeared from Scripture until Exodus 16. Nonconformists interpreted the Sabbath's emergence in Genesis as the

¹“But we recognize no authority as binding upon the conscience, but that of the sacred Scriptures” (J. M., “The Christian Sabbath,” *Eclectic Review* 3 [June 1830]: 483). Helmstadter added, “Almost all Evangelical Nonconformists, until Biblical scholarship and Biblical Criticism began to make headway among them in the 1880s, considered that the Bible was God's revelation written down by men acting under the guidance of divine inspiration. They accepted the Bible as true in a straightforward literal sense, and they made frequent reference to proof texts to support their central message about sin, salvation, and the Atonement” (Richard J. Helmstadter, “The Nonconformist Conscience,” in *Religion in Victorian Britain*, ed. Gerald Parsons [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998], 4:69).

beginning and its reappearance in Exodus as its return. Because the Sabbath was rooted in creation all people in every generation were required to observe it.

The Sabbath's Beginning

Nonconformists generally agreed² that God established the Sabbath in Genesis 2:3³ following his work of creation. Though anti-Sabbatarian Nonconformist views appear to be a minority from 1830-1860, the timing of the Sabbath's institution was the point of departure from Sabbatarian views. Anti-Sabbatarians believed that the Sabbath was Jewish in scope since it was given to them at Mount Sinai and thus not applicable to Christians. On the other hand, Sabbatarians believed that God shaped the heavens and earth in six days and then rested.⁴ When he ceased from his work, God blessed the seventh day, which distinguished it from all other days.⁵ Thus, God's blessing established the Sabbath and called attention to God's greatness and power. Moreover, God's rest offered a commanding reason why the Sabbath was distinct from other days. Joseph

²One anonymous Baptist layman argued against the Sabbath's institution in Gen 2:3 and for its commencement in Exod 16 as part of the ceremonial law. God rested in Gen 2:3, according to the layman, because his creation had been perfected. God did not rest in his view to commence the Sabbath for man. Editors of the *Baptist Magazine* explained that they were not to be held liable for the views expressed by the author. See "The Lord's Day," *Baptist Magazine* 50 (October 1858): 620-25.

³"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." All Scripture passages, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New American Standard version of the Bible.

⁴"The law of the Sabbath was instituted in Eden before man fell, for the whole human race to the end of time" (Baptist W. Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath* [London: James Nisbet and Co., 1856], 3).

⁵"On it [the Sabbath] God rested—rested not only *from* all his works which he had created and made, but rested *in* them—had complacency and delight in them, and that day which was thus distinguished as the beginning of God's rest, was blessed and sanctified as man's sabbath" (William Martin Thompson, "Lecture I," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 3). James Sherman added, "It [the Sabbath] was originally instituted as a day of rest from labor, to afford man an opportunity of commemorating the goodness, wisdom, and power of God in the creation and of holding communion with his Maker, that he might be established in holiness and confirmed in happiness" (James Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day* [London: Fisher, Son & Jackson, 1830], 28).

Ivimey explained: “For the purpose of commemorating the power, and wisdom, and goodness of Jehovah; the evidences of his eternal power and Godhead which are so closely impressed on all the works of his hands, He ‘blessed,’ or sanctified, or set apart ‘the seventh day.’”⁶ When God blessed the Sabbath, he stamped it with his approval.⁷

Nonconformists, of course, did not believe that God rested on the Sabbath because he suffered from fatigue.⁸ God possessed all power and did not require rest. He rested “in” his marvelous works of creation which meant that he had “complacency and delight in them,” wrote William Martin Thompson.⁹ The Sabbath honored God’s knowledge, supremacy, and righteousness displayed through creation.¹⁰ John Angell James explained that the Sabbath is “God’s witness to the world as its Creator and Redeemer, and is ever delivering a most solemn and impressive testimony for Him as regards His existence, works, attributes, and authority.”¹¹ So, resting reflects God’s enjoyment and delight in his creation.

⁶Joseph Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges of the Christian Sabbath and the Sin and Danger of Neglecting or Profaning It* (London: George Wightman, 1832), 4.

⁷“God hath put his seal on that day as a day that he specially loves” (Thompson, “Lecture I,” 11).

⁸“[H]e rested; not that, weary with his manifold operations, he sought quiescence and repose, but that he ceased to act creatively in relation to the heavens and the earth” (William Brock, *Three Sermons about the Sabbath* [London: Cooke and Whitley], 4).

⁹Thompson, “Lecture I,” 4. Sherman wrote, “It cannot be supposed that God needed a day of rest, as if he were wearied with his labors. His rest was a holy complacency and delight in his creatures” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 27-28).

¹⁰Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 4.

¹¹John Angell James, “The Sabbath—Its Religious Observance a National Duty and a National Blessing,” in *The Christian Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects* (Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856), 395-96.

God's six days of work and one day of rest set a pattern for man to follow.¹² It offered an example for man to imitate. God completed creation and then fashioned humanity. Likewise, noted Josiah Conder, man should rest and memorialize the seventh day.¹³ Edward Baines explained that God established the Sabbath as a day of rest for himself first and then for man: "[God] set his own seal upon it. In order that it might exist *for his creatures*, he provided that it should exist *for HIMSELF*."¹⁴ When God rested, he set a binding example for man to follow, noted John Cox.¹⁵ Nonconformists believed that Adam represented all of humanity in the garden, which imposed an obligation¹⁶ for all humanity to observe the Sabbath, wrote Peter M'Owan.¹⁷ God could have created the

¹²The Sabbath "was originally instituted as a day of rest from labor, to afford man an opportunity of commemorating the goodness, wisdom, and power of God in the creation" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 28).

¹³Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1830), 10. John Hannah also wrote, "The Sabbath recalls the memory of *Creation*, which the Sabbath first of all instituted was expressly designed to celebrate" (John Hannah, "The Sabbath a Happy Day, Viewed Especially in its Influence, when Rightly Observed, on the Religion of Individuals," in *The Christian Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 172).

¹⁴Edward Baines, *On the Attempt to Change the Character of the Christian Sabbath* (Leeds, England: Edward Baines and Sons, 1853), 2. The editors of the *Eclectic Review* added that "[t]he seventh day was consecrated, not so much to keep up the remembrance of the fact, that the heavens and earth were made in six days, as to perpetuate the acknowledgement that they were made by Jehovah" (J. M., "The Christian Sabbath," 491).

¹⁵John Cox, "Lecture V," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1852), 86. Micaiah Hill also suggested that God was not fatigued, but his rest was exemplary, a lesson for all. See Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath made for Man; or the Origin, History, and Principles of the Lord's Day* [London: John Farquhar Shaw, 1857], 18).

¹⁶"[N]o sooner had man entered upon his being than he entered upon the observance of the Sabbath of God" (Thompson, "Lecture I," 3). Hill also wrote that "if God chose to create in six, what he could have created in one day, or in one moment; and was pleased to leave on record that on the seventh day he rested, and *therefore* hallowed it and blessed it; there was *some* design in this order of procedure" (Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval* [London: Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1856], 9).

¹⁷Peter M'Owan, *Practical Considerations on the Christian Sabbath* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford), 35-36: "What God commanded him [Adam] to do, he commanded us to do. What God would have given him to enjoy, he would have given us to enjoy." He then added, "Now, we argue, that if our first parents, in their original state, were bound to copy the example, to reverence the appointments, and to use

world all at once but instead chose to create it in six days.¹⁸ As a result, this pattern instructed man that he must also work six days and rest on the seventh.¹⁹

One significant observation Nonconformists made is that God founded the Sabbath before sin entered the world.²⁰ This meant that the Sabbath was not a response to sin nor to man's need for rest from labor. Hill noted that at the earth's beginning there was rest in heaven and in Eden.²¹ Adam's body did not at that time crave physical rest. Instead, he longed to love and adore God, which the Sabbath offered more time to do.²² Since Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day, their first full day on earth was the Sabbath. So, before Adam worked and required rest, argued Andrew Curr Wright, he observed the Sabbath.²³ James Sherman drew a principle from this fact: "Man was

the means of grace which their sovereign Creator instituted, for the confirmation of their happiness, and for the increase of their knowledge; that if they were obligated to meditate on the works of his hands. . . . then we, also, are bound to do the same."

¹⁸Thompson, "Lecture I," 5: "He must act from the very instincts of his moral being, in conformity with that mind and will of his God; and so as his Creator rested upon the seventh day, and blessed and sanctified it as the Sabbath, so must Adam, also, by the very constraint, so to speak, and it was the constraint of love, of the unfallen spirit within him, so long as he was innocent, both rest on the seventh day and bless it and sanctify it as his Sabbath."

¹⁹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 25.

²⁰"Even in a state of purity and innocence, man needed a day of rest from bodily labor, a day that should be exclusively given up to divine meditation, and communion with God" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 27).

²¹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 20.

²²Richard Winter Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath, the Proper Statute of Religion, Identical in Principle and Invariable in Force through all Times and Dispensations," in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* (Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856), 317: "From his everyday occupation, simple and untiring, he would indeed abstain. It was still the season of rest. His body craved it not. It was the rather addicted to that mental activity of love and adoration which is the true repose of holy minds. To him it could only be the interval of a more intense and festal devotion."

²³"The first day on which our first parents beheld the sun arise in his eastern glory, shining on the Garden of Eden, gleaming on its rivers, causing the flowers of Paradise to exhibit their beauty and to exhale their fragrance, was the sabbath day. Adam was put into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it; but his work did not begin till he had kept sabbath" (Andrew Curr Wright, *A Discourse* [London: Jackson & Walford, 1851], 7).

created on the latter part of the sixth day, consequently his first day upon earth was the Sabbath. God thus intimated that the first and best of his time should be devoted to him.”²⁴ Even if Adam and Eve had never sinned, they would still have rested on the Sabbath to honor God.

After the fall, Adam, Eve, and their descendants continued to observe the Sabbath.²⁵ For example, Cain worshiped on the seventh day by bringing an offering to God. The Scripture says that “in the course of time” Cain submitted an offering of produce to God (Gen 4:3). M’Owan argued that the phrase “in the course of time” meant “at the end of days” and was a common Old Testament expression that referred to the end of a calculated term.²⁶ This phrase indicated that the earliest measurement of time came through weeks; thus, one can conclude that Cain presented his sacrifice on the Sabbath. Micaiah Hill agreed with M’Owan and added that offering a sacrifice was the primary way to worship God, and it occurred on the proper day of worship as well.²⁷

The Purpose of the Sabbath

Nonconformists believed that God established the Sabbath for multiple purposes. One aim, according to M’Owan, of the Sabbath was to indicate that God is the

²⁴Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 27.

²⁵The Sabbath “was the same as it always was [after the fall]; but, by its blessed expansiveness, it adapts itself to fallen man, and to all the conditions of his fall. It can be construed to all circumstances” (Hamilton, “The Law of the Sabbath,” 317).

²⁶M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 45.

²⁷Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 7.

creator of the world, which distinguished God from all other created things.²⁸ Conder explained that the Sabbath was designed to honor God's name and for man to enjoy:

It [the Sabbath] was set apart for the honour of His name, and was hallowed to His service. But, viewed under another aspect, as a day of rest, it was intended for the benefit of man. God has reserved, as it were, this portion of time to Himself, that He might bestow it afresh as a precious boon, guarded from infringement by Divine sanction, upon the labourer, the slave, and the domestic animals groaning under man's oppression.²⁹

Sherman noticed another purpose for the Sabbath; it represented God's kindness towards man.³⁰ The Sabbath served as a deterrent towards idolatry. God knew that fallen man's heart would drift toward sin, so he established the Sabbath to call him back to himself.³¹ When man returned to God each Sabbath day it reminded him that only God was worthy of worship. Meditating upon God's work of creation each week prompted man to recognize his dependence on God for every need. This practice kept him close to God and away from idolatry.³² As the Sabbath protected Israel from worshiping false gods, it

²⁸M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 9-10.

²⁹Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political*, 4th ed. (London: Patriot Office, 1853), 11. Close added, "Who can think of the mercy, the wisdom, the power, that may be read in the volume of Creation, and not be thankful that God has appointed a day to call them to remembrance, and lead us to holy meditation?" (J. W. Close, "Lecture IV," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 67).

³⁰"The Sabbath-day is to us an equal token of good-will from our heavenly Father, and is conducive to the same blessed ends; and as long as these blessings are needful for man, so long will the Sabbath be continued" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 28).

³¹"What the Sabbath was, at the period of its re-promulgation from Sinai, what it had ever been from the Creation, that it still is, the only means of perpetuating that profession of belief in the Only True God, and that worship of the Creator, which are an essential part of natural religion. As the Jewish Sabbath was a main preventive of Idolatry, so is the Christian Sabbath a main barrier against atheism" (J. M., "The Christian Sabbath," 492).

³²M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 10: "God, who knew the end from the beginning, foresaw this irrational lapse; and, to prevent it from becoming universal, to guard his people against the sin, and to furnish the world with a standing demonstration of the falsehood and absurdity of idolatry, he instituted the sabbath."

protected Christians from worshipping no God.³³ The Sabbath served as a sign between God and Israel; distinguishing Israel from the Gentiles. On the Sabbath, Israel communed with God and learned more about him.³⁴ This activity was essential because of man's sin, which robbed him of his innocence. The Sabbath offered an opportunity to regain lost intimacy with God.³⁵ Pondering God's power as creator inspired wonder and appreciation from man on the Sabbath. This exercise advanced God's glory and increased man's cheerfulness.³⁶

God designed the Sabbath to serve as a tutor. The Sabbath taught man that life on earth was temporary and his permanent home was with God in heaven. It presented God as the owner of time, which gave man the responsibility to spend the day according to God's will, not his.³⁷ God established order in the universe. His example of rest was more than a "suggestion" that man should imitate. It was "sanctioned and hallowed" to man by the ultimate power and therefore by mandate.³⁸ Resting on the Sabbath reminded man that the earth was only a temporary home and no amount of material possessions brought satisfaction.

³³Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 10.

³⁴Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 28. Conder also observed, "What the Sabbath was, at the period of its re-promulgation from Sinai, what it had ever been from the Creation, it still is; —the sole means of perpetuating that profession of belief in the Only True God, and that worship of the Creator, which are an essential part of natural religion" (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 10).

³⁵"And when the sin of man had brought the curse of God upon the ground, so that it no longer spontaneously yielded its increase, except in the shape of thorns and thistles, and man was doomed thenceforth to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, the Sabbath was designed as a season of merciful relaxation from the severity of that sentence" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 5).

³⁶Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 27.

³⁷M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 16.

³⁸Henry Hamlet Dobney, *The Day of Rest: A Lecture*, 2nd ed. (London: Ward and Co., 1856), 5.

Finally, God established the Sabbath for the welfare of workers.³⁹ Observing the Sabbath prevented the rich from exploiting the poor through requiring masters to give their servants a day off. God never intended for man's work to deplete him physically and spiritually.⁴⁰ Knowing that man's greed would motivate him to work constantly, God established the Sabbath as a "shield of his authority between the servant and his master, the labourer and his employer, the injured beast and its cruel proprietor."⁴¹

The Reappearance and Continuing Validity of the Sabbath

Though Nonconformists saw the Sabbath's origin at creation, its reinforcement⁴² came at Mount Sinai⁴³ through the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8-11).⁴⁴ Nonconformists insisted that though the Sabbath command at Mount Sinai was

³⁹“It [the Sabbath] was intended to prevent the poor from being oppressed, and beasts of burden from being over-wrought” (M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 17).

⁴⁰“Thus, the gracious Author of our existence made the sabbath for the happiness of man; and while it is the interest of all to keep it holy, it is especially the interest of the poor” (ibid., 19).

⁴¹Ibid., 18.

⁴²“We have, then, in Genesis the *institution* of the Sabbath, and the declaration that God set it apart at Creation for religious purposes; and in Exodus the moral law enforcing upon the Jews—not as such, which was done subsequently by Moses, but as men—by reference to Creation, in which we also are similarly interested, and to God’s resting—not as the Jehovah of the Theocracy, which was not established till five and twenty centuries later, but as the Creator of heaven and earth” (Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 14). Wallace also added, “It was not instituted for the Jew, although in course of time occupying a prominent place in the law given to the Jews, as distinguished from the Gentile; but for Jew and Gentile alike” (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 5).

⁴³“[The Sabbath] was revived and confirmed when God revealed his will to Israel by Moses at Sinai; and was placed by God himself in the Decalogue, which, as a summary of the moral law, is of universal and perpetual authority” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 3).

⁴⁴“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the seventh day and made it holy.”

given to the Jews, it had application to all mankind because of its earlier establishment.⁴⁵

The Sabbath's appearance in the Decalogue should not be understood as restricting its application to the Jews.⁴⁶ James Baldwin Brown explained, "The Sabbath of the Jews was a perennial monitor, pointing backwards to the earliest time."⁴⁷ The Sabbath had been in place for 2500 years before God established the Jewish people as a nation, wrote Hill. Thus, God's rest was not a Jewish rest⁴⁸—it was universal.⁴⁹

If God had not rested at creation, then the fourth commandment's application might have been limited to Israel. But, as Hill argued, considering that God had rested on the seventh day at creation, man must cease from all work because he is a creature of

⁴⁵"The Fourth Commandment is a law ordaining *the outward and public acknowledgement and worship of the Only True God, the Creator of the World*. That this is the primary design and essential character of the institution of the Sabbath, is evident from the very reason that is given for its sanctification as a standing memorial of the work of Creation" (J. M., "The Christian Sabbath," 491).

⁴⁶Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 13: "The fourth refers to nothing of *Jewish* interest, but to God's act of rest in creating the world, not for Jews, but men, to live in. . . . The motive for observing the Sabbath is in its nature universal." Sherman also noted that the Sabbath "exists as a part of the moral law, or ten commandments. A ritual injunction is of temporary obligation, and may be vacated by the same authority which appointed it, but a moral precept is of immutable and eternal obligation" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 28).

⁴⁷James Baldwin Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1853), 16. Wallace added, "[T]he Sabbath takes date from creation: not from the time of the giving of the law by Moses" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 6).

⁴⁸Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 11: If "God then rested—which no one denies—he did not rest as the God of the Jews—not in existence till twenty-five centuries later—but as the God of man primeval and universal."

⁴⁹"Now, we have to remark, that although God makes known to us his mind and will, in the way of giving to us his own example, rather than in formally promulgating a law, yet we, as God's creatures, are bound to recognize and reverence the revelation of God's mind contained in that example, in the light of a law, and to obey it accordingly. God's revelation of any truth, or of any institution, however that revelation may be made to us, ought to set at rest at once all questions as to our corresponding duty to believe and obey; and so if He hath made known to us his will as to the Sabbatic rest, by resting upon that day Himself, the Divine example becomes to us a law as fully as if He had proclaimed the Sabbath law in Paradise, as He did afterwards in the wilderness" (Thompson, "Lecture I," 7). Hill also wrote, "If God rested at creation, it was not without design. What that design was is seen in the fourth commandment, viz. to induce man to rest likewise—not as a Jew—or because he was Jew—but because he was a creature" (Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 10).

God.⁵⁰ The *law* of the Sabbath emerged first at Mount Sinai even though, as an institution, the Sabbath had already been established.⁵¹ This law was not simply a formal ceremonial institution. It had the force of moral law. The proof, according to Brown, is found in Isaiah 1:13-15,⁵² where God describes his displeasure over sacrificial offerings, one of which was the Sabbath. God desires heartfelt obedience when Sabbaths were observed instead of ritualistic rest.⁵³

Nonconformists regarded the Ten Commandments as God's moral law, which was distinct from the ceremonial law.⁵⁴ The moral law, they argued, revealed God's expectations for humanity in every generation as opposed to the ceremonial law, which

⁵⁰Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 10.

⁵¹John Weir commented on the Sabbath's institution at creation: "Born as the institution itself was, so to speak in Paradise; recognised by patriarchs from Noah onward, as indicated by the division of time into weeks; lost and trampled down under the hoof of slavery in Egypt (as it has ever been where slavery has prevailed), but experiencing a resurrection in the wilderness, where Israel was free to serve and sacrifice, to worship and give praise to their father's God—Sinai's thunders but gave awful sanction and permanent establishment to a 'law' from which the beginning had its moral claims over the whole race" (John Weir, *The New Crystal Palace and the Christian Sabbath* [London: N. H. Cotes, 1852], 19-20). Wallace inserted, "[T]he Sabbath is not to be classed with mere legal or Judaical observances, but is part of that divinely ordained constitution of things which pertains to *the perpetual government of human life*, and which preceded the law, and survives the law" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 11).

⁵²"Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon *festivals* and your appointed feasts. They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing *them*. So when you spread out your hands *in prayer*, I will hide my eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood."

⁵³"That God did not regard it as a mere formal institution is most evident, in that He himself protests against the mere form of it, when it was offered to him as a sacrifice widowed of the congenital soul" (Baldwin, *The Sabbath, The Crystal Palace, and the People*, 15).

⁵⁴"By the Moral law is generally understood the Ten Commandments, which are so denominated in contradistinction to the Levitical or Ceremonial Law, or what may be termed the Mosaic Code of civil and criminal law. The assertion, that the observance of the Sabbath is part of the Moral Law, is only in effect saying, that it is enjoined in the Ten Commandments; a position which is certainly very intelligible, being not a dogma, but a simple fact. . . . This, then, is the position on which we take our stand; that the *moral* law of the Sabbath has not been made void by the Christian dispensation, but has rather been established by it; that it is of Divine authority and perpetual obligation" (J. M. "The Christian Sabbath," 490, 502).

listed God's unique requirements for Israel.⁵⁵ The Sabbath's inclusion in the Decalogue meant that it was moral in nature and pertinent to all mankind.⁵⁶ Conder explained, "Were a plain Bible Christian to be asked, why he considers himself bound to keep holy the Lord's Day, there can be no doubt that he would refer to the Fourth Commandment as a law of moral obligation still substantially in force."⁵⁷ Wright explained that the moral law was superior and perennial while the ceremonial law was important but temporary in nature.⁵⁸

This can be seen in the mode of revelation through which each was given. God uses normal modes of revelation to introduce the ceremonial. Moses wrote it on parchment or another fragile material. But the moral law came directly from God by his own finger on tables of stone to Moses so all of Israel could witness God's presence.⁵⁹ If

⁵⁵"We admit that the Ten Commandments were delivered to the Jewish people; but so were the whole of God's early revelations, with a view, doubtless, to the ultimate benefit of the human race" (J. M. "The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?" *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [January 1856]: 14). J. M. also wrote, "What is obligatory upon Christians, is the Moral Law, not the Mosaic Code" (J. M., "The Christian Sabbath," 493).

⁵⁶"It is, we believe, very generally admitted, that the ten commandments given at Sinai, were the formal republication of ancient laws; in other words, that the patriarchs had been under obligations to keep them" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 338). Hamilton added, "[T]he law of the Sabbath, as to the statute of religion, must always survive, and always oblige, as long as man remain what he is" (Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 318-19).

⁵⁷Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 8. Sherman observed, "Such a command leaves us not at liberty to choose whether we will keep the Sabbath holy, or not. God has most clearly revealed his will" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 28).

⁵⁸"By the ceremonial law, we mean institutions temporary in their nature, and deriving their value not so much from any intrinsic excellence in them, as from their typical reference to the person and work of Christ" (Wright, *A Discourse*, 3-4).

⁵⁹"The ceremonial law was given by the ordinary methods of inspiration; whereas God spake all the words of the moral law with his own lips, in the audience of all the people, accompanied by such signs of majesty. . . . The ceremonial law was written by Moses on parchment, or some such perishable material; but God wrote the moral law, with his own finger, on tables of stone" (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 38-39).

the Sabbath were a part of the ceremonial law, it would have been listed with the numerous rituals and institutions that pertained to Jews alone.

Nonconformist writers argued that the New Testament teaches the moral law's continuing application. Christians were to adhere to it.⁶⁰ "It is God's will in the commandment that makes the commandment binding, and it is God's will as gathered equally from His example, that makes that example binding also."⁶¹ Jesus taught that He did not come to abolish the Law or the prophets but to fulfill them (Matt 5:17).⁶² Nonconformists believed that in this statement Jesus had the moral and ceremonial laws in mind. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law as God's Son. His perfect life upheld the moral law.⁶³

The Apostle Paul affirmed the moral law's value when he taught that knowledge of sin comes from the law (Rom 7:7). He upheld the moral law's authority over Christians, who are required to submit to the law and its application. This included Sabbath observance. M'Owan explained, "Whoever, therefore, denies the obligation of the sabbath on Christians, denies the obligation of the whole decalogue; and there is no

⁶⁰"The Decalogue, as a perfect whole, and as distinctly recognized by Christ and his Apostles, must be regarded as among those things which are not to pass away; but the Law of the Sabbath forms an integral part of that Divine code; and therefore the obligation to sanctify God's day is as imperative now as at any former period in the history of our world" (J. M., "The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?" 15). Close added, "It [the Sabbath] is not to be confined to any one dispensation, or age, or nation, or people, but, wherever the sun shines and man lives, there the Sabbath should be observed, and if observed will exert a cheering and salutary influence" (Close, "Lecture IV," 62).

⁶¹Thompson, "Lecture I," 7. Brock explained that since Adam was our representative in the Garden, the command applies to all of humanity: "What God commanded him to do, he commanded us to do. What God would have given him to enjoy, he would have given us to enjoy" (William Brock, *Three Sermons about the Sabbath* [London: Cooke & Whitley, 1853], 6).

⁶²"We believe his [Jesus'] reference was to the ten commandments, if not exclusively, certainly in part. He quotes several of the commandments expressly, and quotes them not to cancel them but to re-enforce them, and to enlarge the application of them as they had never been understood before" (Brock, *Three Sermons*, 7).

⁶³M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 43.

real medium between the acknowledgement of the divine authority of this sacred institution, as a universal law.”⁶⁴ The moral law was summed up in one word: love—love for God and love for one’s neighbor.⁶⁵ Jesus said that the Great Commandment was love for God and the second was love for one’s neighbor (Matt 22:37-40). Since God is love and expected love from his people, the moral law was unchangeable and universal in application, explained Wallace.⁶⁶ As moral law, the Sabbath thus reflected God’s love for man and demonstrated man’s love for God. Sabbath observance also provided a God appointed means through which men might love one another.

The Sabbath as a Creation Ordinance: Answers to Objections

Nonconformists recognized that some people did not agree with their interpretation that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance. The absence of a formal command to observe the Sabbath in Genesis led some to argue that the Sabbath was first instituted at Mount Sinai.⁶⁷ Though Nonconformists acknowledged that a directive to

⁶⁴Ibid., 44.

⁶⁵Wright, *A Discourse*, 4.

⁶⁶Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 11. J. M. wrote that the Ten Commandments were communicated to the Jewish people but so were all of God’s early revelations aiming to profit all of humanity: “The Decalogue, as a perfect whole, and as distinctly recognized by Christ and his Apostles, must be regarded as among those things which are not to pass away; but the Law of the Sabbath forms an integral part of that Divine code; and therefore the obligation to sanctify God’s day is as imperative now as at any former period in the history of our world” (J. M., “The Sabbath,” 14-15). He continued, “But will any man affirm that the Decalogue, though adapted to the Jews, bears any stamp upon it of a local, national, and temporary character? Is not its *first precept* a protest against all the gods of heathendom? Is not its *second*, an everlasting prohibition of image-worship? Is not its *third*, a condemnation of perjury and all profane use of the name of God? Is not its *fifth*, a plea for the original sacredness of the parental relation? Is not its *sixth*, an express law against murder? Its *seventh*, against adultery? Its *eighth*, against theft and dishonesty? Its *ninth*, against lying and false witness? And its tenth, against covetousness in all its multiplied forms” (14).

⁶⁷“We might well wonder how men can possibly evade the conclusion to which this fact seems to point, namely, that the Sabbath is no mere Judaical appointment, but one designed for the observance

observe the Sabbath was absent in Genesis 2:3, they insisted on its inauguration at creation, arguing that God's rest served a model for what is expected of man. Henry Hamlet Dobney explained, "But who does not perceive that such a statement [in Genesis 2:3] is grander, more influential, and elevating than any bare injunction could possibly be? In his love God teaches as the mother does her child, as Christ the world, by example."⁶⁸ Since God possessed all knowledge and since he rested on the seventh day, should not man rest as well? Conder explained that those who denied that the Sabbath was established at creation could not explain in what sense the Sabbath was "blessed" from creation. How could the Sabbath be blessed before it was established, asked Conder?⁶⁹ Dobney argued that the Sabbath was law, though unwritten, just as laws of nature are binding, though unwritten.

Very few of God's laws are given us in writing, or come to us in the form of a command. We speak, e.g. of the laws of gravitation, heat, health &c., and everybody knows that if any of them be violated painful consequences result. These laws, however, have to be discovered by observation and experience and thought and reasoning. They are not written commands. They are not express injunctions.⁷⁰

The Sabbath was in effect as law from the time of creation even though a formal command to observe it did not appear until the law is given in Exodus.

Opponents of the view that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance pointed to the absence of the Sabbath during the patriarchal era in support of their view. Nonconformist writers had to acknowledge that throughout the patriarchal age the Sabbath was not

and benefit of all men, from the beginning. But men do attempt to evade it" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 6).

⁶⁸Dobney, *The Day of Rest*, 5.

⁶⁹Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 12.

⁷⁰Dobney, *The Day of Rest*, 30.

specifically mentioned in Scripture.⁷¹ Opponents targeted this omission to argue for the Sabbath's beginning at Mount Sinai: "We know of no indubitable traces of the existence of a Sabbath in patriarchal times, nor of any allusions to its observance in the wilderness prior to the descent of the manna."⁷² Nonconformists believed this silence of Scripture should not imply that the Sabbath did not exist during the patriarchal era. Wallace argued that in the patriarchal period time was divided into weeks and this must imply the Sabbath's presence.⁷³ The seventh day concluded each week and offered a time marker. Thus, the Sabbath was observed during the patriarchal era even though it was not explicitly mentioned. Nonconformists argued that even though corporate worship was not mentioned during the patriarchal period, it must have been present.⁷⁴ Scripture did not mention the sun, moon, and stars from creation until the time of the flood, a period of 1656 years, and yet they survived.⁷⁵ The argument from silence was not weighty.⁷⁶

Though Scripture did not explicitly reveal the matter, Nonconformists believed the patriarchs observed the Sabbath. M'Owan explained that God's blessings upon the

⁷¹The Sabbath was born at creation, was recognized by the Patriarchs from Noah forward, and had been neglected by the Israelites for 400 years due to Egyptian bondage. Wallace added, "From Adam to Moses the law of the sabbath remained unrepealed, whether men observed it or not" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 9). See also Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 19-20.

⁷²"The Lord's Day," 624.

⁷³"But we are not prepared to admit that there is not even the obscurest allusion to the Sabbath from the creation till the exodus. There is, for example, the division of time into weeks, of which we have repeated notices in the history of the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, and which is found to have existed among all nations from the earliest periods" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 8).

⁷⁴"Article III," *British Quarterly Review* 21 (January 1855): 88.

⁷⁵Wright, *A Discourse*, 9.

⁷⁶Wallace explained that the argument from silence was not effective. In comparison, in the time that spanned between Joshua and Jeremiah, approximately 800 years, circumcision was not mentioned in Scripture. Yet, this does not mean that the Jews ignored practicing circumcision during this time. See Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 7.

patriarchs,⁷⁷ the division of time into weeks, and the patriarchal esteem for the number seven revealed the Sabbath's existence.⁷⁸ The seven-day pattern was present in the flood narrative. Once the water receded, Noah sent a dove to explore the water's depth. The dove returned and Noah waited seven days before resending it (Gen 8:9-10). The fact that worship of God continued for 2500 years was strong evidence that the Sabbath was observed in the period of the patriarchs.⁷⁹ The editors of the *British Quarterly Review* argued that, in light of a clear division of time and a fixed time of public worship, the Sabbath certainly survived during the patriarchal era.⁸⁰

If the argument from silence meant the Sabbath was not practiced, then readers would be forced to conclude that it was also not observed in the years following Mount Sinai, which included the period of the Judges, the time of Samuel, and the reign of Saul. Nonconformists believed the argument from silence would also have to apply to other issues beyond the Sabbath like the practice of circumcision. In the age between Joshua and Jeremiah the prophet, a period of about 800 years, the practice of circumcision did not appear, according to Wallace, although the rite must have been practiced through this

⁷⁷M'Owan referenced the blessings mentioned in Gen 5:22-4, 6:8-9, 7:1, 18:19, and 26:5. See M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 46.

⁷⁸Ibid.: "That the sabbath was sanctified by the patriarchs and their families may be inferred from the general fidelity with which they served God, and maintained his worship in the world; from the import of those eulogies which God bestowed upon them; and from the repeated references, in their memoirs, to the division of time into weeks, and the almost worshipful respect which they, and the nations of antiquity, paid to the number *seven*."

⁷⁹Ibid., 46-47: "The history of the flood demonstrates, that Noah, by God's direction, regulated all his official acts, in connection with this dreadful catastrophe, by a strict reference to the seventh day. And we ask, What possible reason can be assigned for the studied respect which was thus paid to it, if its sabbatic character be denied? And by what other means could it have been distinguished from the other days of the week, through the lapse of two thousand five hundred years, except by its regular consecration to the worship of God?"

⁸⁰"Article III," 88-89.

period.⁸¹

Those who rejected the view that the Sabbath was given at creation may have been a minority among Christians in England. Baines explained that while some Christians believed that the Sabbath was first given directly to the Jews and thereafter valid only for them, they were few in number. Most Christians believed that the Sabbath began at creation through God's blessing.⁸² It seemed illogical for God to create man, supply every one of his physical needs, and then neglect to implement a Sabbath for him to receive spiritual and physical refreshment.⁸³ Baines concluded that, in the giving of the Law, the Sabbath was simply being reaffirmed or sealed with a permanent safeguard that made it irrevocable.⁸⁴

The historical context of the Sabbath's reaffirmation in the wilderness in Exodus 16,⁸⁵ further validated that it had been observed by previous generations.⁸⁶ Two months prior to the giving of the Decalogue, the Israelites gathered manna on the sixth

⁸¹Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 7.

⁸²Edward Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston: On the Attempts Making in Parliament to Secularize the Sabbath* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1856), 7: "But (with certain exceptions) this is not the belief of English Christians. They regard the Sabbath as instituted from the creation of man, as consecrated by God, at once to his own honour and the happiness of his creatures, as one of the most precious blessings bestowed upon mankind, and intended for the enjoyment of the whole human family, as enshrined in the Moral Law delivered from Sinai, as therefore moral in its nature."

⁸³M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 33: "No! the sabbath was not postponed till the days of Moses. It was established at the birth of time, in the world's infancy, on the first day of man's existence—before his body was wearied with toil, or his soul stained with sin; and, consequently, before any ceremonial ordinances existed, or were at all necessary" (33-34).

⁸⁴Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 7.

⁸⁵"This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning" (Exod 16:23).

⁸⁶"At the early stages of Israel's encampment in the wilderness, before the publication of the law on Mount Sinai, the Sabbath is mentioned as well known. . . . It is spoken of not as a new, but as ancient institution" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 29).

day and were reminded by Moses that the following day was the Sabbath. So, Israel was evidently observing the Sabbath before it received the fourth commandment at Mount Sinai. This observance of the Sabbath in advance of Mount Sinai, with no explanation offered, was strong evidence that the Sabbath had been practiced before Sinai.⁸⁷ Hill explained: “The Sabbath restored at Sinai, points backward to the Patriarchs, and forwards to the Jews. The manna lifts up the veil that hung over the patriarchal age, and reveals Abraham delighting in the Sabbath of his Lord.”⁸⁸ So, Moses’ words, added Hill, in the wilderness in Exodus 16 disclosed that the Israelites were following “an old and not an unknown regulation.”⁸⁹ Wallace affirmed that the Sabbath’s presence prior to Mount Sinai ensured that it was not limited to Jews.⁹⁰ Indeed, Moses was no more the initiator of the Sabbath than he was the creator of the heavens or the giver of manna, wrote Hill.⁹¹

Next, Nonconformists argued that the manner in which the Sabbath is presented in Exodus makes it very clear that it was the reiteration of a known

⁸⁷M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 49. Wallace added, “And it is perfectly consistent with the fact of the original institution of the Sabbath at the creation to suppose, that in the narrative just quoted from the Book of Exodus [Exod 16:22-30] we are to discern, not the institution of an entirely new ordinance, nor yet of one with which the people were quite familiar, but rather the restoration of an ordinance which, in the lapse of centuries of oppression and slavery, had well nigh passed into oblivion” (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 10).

⁸⁸Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 52.

⁸⁹Ibid., 46: “Beyond all question we have here, not the first promulgation of an unknown ordinance, but the casual notice of a well-known but disused Sabbath” (49).

⁹⁰“[T]he Sabbath was appointed and observed as a day of rest among the Jews before the publication of the law from Mount Sinai. From which we infer, that the Sabbath is not to be classed with mere legal or Judaical observances, but is part of that divinely ordained constitution of things which pertains to *the perpetual government of human life*, and which preceded the law, and survives the law” (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 10-11).

⁹¹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 59.

observance.⁹² Christian divines who excused Sabbath breaking by arguing that the Sabbath was given in Exodus only to the Jews failed to see that this was a reenactment of something already given.⁹³ Adam had observed the Sabbath and had continued this pattern after Genesis 3. This insured that his offspring understood the importance of Sabbath observance.⁹⁴ How could God use the term, “remember,” for a practice not yet invented, Nonconformists wondered? The implication was that if God sanctified the Sabbath day at creation, “its sanctification must be abiding.”⁹⁵

Finally, opponents of the view that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance argued that Exodus 31:13⁹⁶ highlighted the Sabbath as a sign of the unique relationship between God and Israel. Hill responded to this view by pointing to circumcision as an analogue to the Sabbath. Circumcision became an established practice with Abraham and his family—long before the giving of the law, 430 years then passed before circumcision

⁹² “[A]t the giving of the law, the Sabbath is prominently placed before us, the manner in which it is introduced, implies its previous existence. Thus at the wilderness of Sin, the people conform to it as to an old and not an unknown regulation; and at Sinai, the fact that God had, at the creation, sanctified the seventh day, is urged as a reason for their reverence” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 340).

⁹³ Thompson, “Lecture I,” 5. Ivimey acknowledged, “It is deeply affecting, my hearers, to consider how many excuses have been framed, and that even Christian divines should have employed arguments to prove that the injunctions of the fourth commandment were binding only on the people of Judea; as though a positive law in regard to the worship of God, the homage of his rational creatures, relating, when first enacted, to the creatures of God in general, and re-enacted at Mount Sinai as a part of God’s covenant with the Jews, should not be of universal and perpetual obligation” (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 6). Sherman also wrote, “It is acknowledged, that the law of the Sabbath was renewed in the wilderness to commemorate the emancipation of Israel from Egyptian bondage” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 31).

⁹⁴ “For if the Sabbath were a blessing to him before, it would be infinitely more so now, not only as serving to remind him of the blessed seasons which he had spent in communion with God, but also as supplying a special means, by the grace of God, of assisting him to recover from his fall, and of restoring him in a degree, however low, to the privileges and intercourse he had before enjoyed” (Thompson, “Lecture I,” 6).

⁹⁵ “Article III,” 87.

⁹⁶ “You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for *this* is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”

was mentioned again in Scripture.⁹⁷ Circumcision resurfaced when the Passover was instituted but the Jews had not discontinued the custom.⁹⁸ For Hill, the same reasoning applied to the Sabbath. It did not cease to exist just because it went unmentioned for a long period of time. The fact that it was given to the Jews in Exodus does not mean that it was given to the Jews alone.⁹⁹

Jesus and the Sabbath

Nonconformist writers typically followed their discussion of the Jewish Sabbath in Exodus with a treatment of Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath. In the gospel accounts, they discovered that Jesus' words and actions enhanced the Sabbath's significance. Without question, Sabbath observance played a substantial role in Jesus' earthly life.¹⁰⁰ Jesus taught the true meaning of the moral law in explaining that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27).¹⁰¹ He also taught that he was Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8). This signified the end of the ceremonial law and confirmed the

⁹⁷“Circumcision is established as a law in Abraham’s family and descendants, and its time of institution being recorded, an interval of four hundred and thirty years elapses before anything more is said about the rite. The original establishment and an incidental notice are our only, but perfectly satisfactory, grounds for assuming, that Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, were circumcised” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 340-41).

⁹⁸Ibid., 341.

⁹⁹Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 15: “Circumcision was *the* great sign of Judaism, and continued so till Judaism perished. Yet circumcision was in vogue among Ishmaelites and even other surrounding nations, from time immemorial. It was a sign, though *not* confined to Jews. It does not follow that the Sabbath, because made a sign of God’s covenant with His people, was therefore a local or peculiar institution.”

¹⁰⁰“During our Lord’s abode on earth, how regularly did he and his disciples attend the synagogue, to hear or expound the law, and perform those works of piety and mercy which comported with the sanctity of the day” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 30).

¹⁰¹“There is not, perhaps, in all the New Testament, a declaration which partakes more of the character of an abstract proposition or moral axiom, than that which Our Lord uttered on this very subject, when He told the Pharisees, that ‘the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath’” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 11).

Sabbath's continuing significance.¹⁰² In Matthew 12:1-2, Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath when in actuality he fulfilled its true intent: He performed works of piety and mercy, which coincided with expectations for a proper Sabbath observance.¹⁰³ Jesus' public ministry commenced on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16) and with every miracle he executed on the Sabbath, he expounded its true intent.¹⁰⁴

If Jesus focused so much of his attention on the Sabbath, why would it cease as an institution, asked Nonconformists? “[The Sabbath was] the constant theme of the Saviour's ministry—miracles illustrate it—repeated discourses exhibit the true spirit of its observance; and by a constant appeal to first principles, he endeavours, as Lord of the Sabbath, to render it again a blessing to mankind.”¹⁰⁵ Jesus, Nonconformists argued, observed the Sabbath, and exhibited its true purpose. Through his resurrection, he changed the day of its observance and secured its significance for Christians in every generation.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Wright, *A Discourse*, 11. Noel added, “[The Sabbath] was confirmed by Christ, when, after expounding the law, and correcting popular mistakes, he added, ‘The Sabbath was given for man’ (Mark 2:27)” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 3). Hill also explained, “Christ came to fulfil the end—of what? the moral law? It is simply absurd—as long as we exist, we shall have to fulfil *that* law. Christ could not fulfill it for us. But the ceremonial law, as having its typical significance in Him, was fulfilled by Him; it cease, but was not destroyed” (Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 13-14).

¹⁰³Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 30.

¹⁰⁴“Article III,” 95.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰⁶Brock added, “To undermine the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath is an offence to Christ. To maintain, consistently to maintain its perpetual obligation is honourable to Christ, wherefore it is of perpetual obligation. We are required to keep holy a Sabbath day” (Brock, *Three Sermons*, 11).

Exhibition of the Sabbath's True Purpose

Nonconformist writers believed Jesus perfectly exhibited God's intention for the Sabbath—to love God and others. Jesus demonstrated love on the Sabbath day through his teaching and healing ministry. Accompanied by the disciples, Jesus often attended the synagogue and taught there on the Sabbath. In Capernaum, Wright explained, Jesus entered the synagogue and amazed the crowd with his teaching because his instruction possessed authority (Mark 1:21-2). Through his actions, Jesus also taught his people that the Sabbath existed for man to serve God.¹⁰⁷ Wright continued, “The Sabbath was made for man's benefit: man was not created on purpose to keep the sabbath, but to serve God in *every way* in which he had commanded himself to be served.”¹⁰⁸

The Sabbath was also properly observed in following God's moral law through loving others. In Luke 13, Jesus healed a woman that had been disabled for eighteen years. He taught the synagogue official that a person's spiritual condition took precedence over man-made regulations.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, in Matthew 12, Jesus taught the Pharisees that demonstrating compassion to others on the Sabbath trumped following a list of rules.¹¹⁰ Clearly, Jesus showed that it was appropriate to care for another's needs

¹⁰⁷Wright, *A Discourse*, 14: “The sabbath was made for man's benefit: man was not created on purpose to keep the sabbath, but to serve God in *every way* in which he had commanded himself to be served.”

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁰“Our Lord and his disciples, on their way to the synagogue, pass through a corn field – probably a public foot path. The hungry disciples, that they might obtain some sustentation to their exhausted strength, and be the better able to join in the public worship of God, ‘Plucked the ears of corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.’ . . . What is the principle of our Lord's defence? It is this, *that*

on the Sabbath.

Nonconformists pointed to several Scriptures to illustrate this point. In Luke 13:10-17, Jesus noticed that a woman had been sick for eighteen years, so he healed her. In addition, while in the synagogue, Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:25). Following this incident, Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law who had a fever (Mark 1:30). In Luke 14:1-4, Jesus cured a man that suffered from dropsy in front of leaders from the Pharisees and Sadducees who closely monitored him. Wright pointed out that John's gospel recorded Jesus performing two Sabbath healings. At the pool of Bethesda, a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years was present. Jesus had compassion on him and gave him the strength to walk, which angered the Jews because the miracle was performed on the Sabbath. Finally, Jesus healed a man who had been blind since birth (John 9:1-14). None of these healings, however, violated God's purposes for the Sabbath. Wright explained, "But neither this, nor any other action performed by our Lord throughout the whole course of his ministry, could be *proved* to be a violation of the law of the fourth commandment, else they would not have needed at his trial to have sought for *false* witnesses to justify their putting him to death."¹¹¹ Jesus' point was that if a need to serve others exists, work may be performed on the Sabbath.

Transition to a Sunday Sabbath

Nonconformist writers taught that Jesus' death and resurrection led to the transition of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, the seventh day to the first. They believed that as the mediator of a New Covenant, Jesus retained the authority to

what was necessary to enable one to perform the duties of the sabbath, could not be a violation of the law of the sabbath" (Wright, *A Discourse*, 14).

¹¹¹Ibid., 17.

implement such a shift in Sabbath observance.¹¹² The shift was not unprecedented; it was predicted in Psalm 118:22.¹¹³ The “stone” mentioned in that passage referred to Jesus and the builders were the Jews.¹¹⁴ Two verses later, the Psalmist writes, “This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Therefore, when Jesus rose from the dead on the first day, he inaugurated the day predicted in the psalm.¹¹⁵

Jesus applied Psalm 118:22 to himself in Matthew 21:42 when he quoted it at the temple in the presence of the chief priests and Pharisees. Sherman explained the verse’s significance: “No text in the Old Testament is quoted by the writers of the New so often as this. It is found in six different places, all of which expressly refer it to Christ.”¹¹⁶ In light of this verse’s repetition in the New Testament, Sunday was clearly the new day

¹¹² “[T]here are many reasons why the first day of the week should be regarded as the Sabbath now, in preference to any other. First of all, it was the day on which our Lord arose, and the work of redemption—more wonderful than even creation—was accomplished. The Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit took place also on that day. And in the absence of any positive command, we find the first day regularly observed by the apostles and early Christians” (J. M., “The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?” 17). M’Owan commented on the seventh day: “It will be readily admitted, that the seventh day had no inherent sanctify in itself” (M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 55). Brown also added, “On the first day of the week, the Saviour arose from the dead, and laid the foundation of a new creation. On the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to his disciples, On the first day of the week, the Apostles were baptized with tongues of fire. On the first day of het week, the disciples came together to break bread at Troas, On this day Paul thinks a work of charity specially graceful and appropriate” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 17).

¹¹³ “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner *stone*” (emphasis added).

¹¹⁴ Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 132.

¹¹⁵ Ibid: “The obvious inference is, that the day on which the stone became head of the corner, and in which, as predicted, men *do* rejoice and *are* glad, is that day which the Lord had made, or more literally, appointed for this very purpose.” Brown added, “The Jewish day commemorated a creation complete; the Christian Sabbath, a creation begun. The one a last day—the finishing of a work—looking backwards to the original condition and constitution; the other a first day, with the week days, the ages, the eternities before it, commemorating a new condition and constitution, or the old one transfigured, to bear fruit through a future eternity” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 19). Wright commented that Jesus “changed the *position* of the day, requiring that the *first* day of the week shall be kept sabbath rather than the seventh” (Wright, *A Discourse*, 20).

¹¹⁶ Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 30. M’Owan explained, “The psalmist not only foretells the happiness which the resurrection should occasion, but the joy and gladness which his people should take in ‘the day’ on which it should be accomplished” (M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 62).

set aside to worship God.¹¹⁷

In the view of Nonconformists, the transition of the Sabbath to the first day of the week linked the resurrection to creation. Jesus' resurrection occurred on Sunday, which coincided with Adam's first full day on earth, the seventh day.¹¹⁸ Before the resurrection, the seventh day served as the proper Sabbath because it represented God's rest. But, following Christ's resurrection Sunday¹¹⁹ became the new day to celebrate the creation and resurrection.¹²⁰ The original creation is properly commemorated on Sunday because through Christ all things came into being (See Col 1:16). Yet, more importantly, the new creation, or redemption, is remembered on Sunday. Jesus' resurrection was the defining moment of redemption because it represented that the full payment for sin had

¹¹⁷“It was a day of public worship, on which the gates of righteousness were to be opened; that is, the gates of the sanctuary. It was a day on which the righteous, as a body, were to enter into them. It was a day on which the Lord became their salvation. It was the day on which the stone was rejected of the builders. It was a day on which prayers were to be offered up, and praises sung to God. It was a day on which the righteous were to receive blessings from the ministers of the gospel, out of the house of the Lord. Now the Christian Sabbath is the only day which answers this prediction” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 30-31).

¹¹⁸Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 138: “The former was the commemorative day of God's creation of earth and heaven; the latter the memorial of the completion of that work, which is styled a ‘new earth and a new heaven.’ Now the analogy fails, and beautifully fails, in one particular. The Jewish Sabbath was God's seventh and man's first day; but our Lord's first day of the new creation was also man's first of the week, and again, first on which the world began to emerge from chaos. Adam, the type, kept his initial day of life as a Sabbath; Adam, the antitype, kept the first day of his new life as a Sabbath.” M'Owan added, “[W]e draw this general inference; namely, that the keeping of the sabbath, or sacred rest, on the seventh day, was a mere circumstance connected with its sanctification, wisely ordered at the first, and binding on man while the appointment continued in force; but which was alterable at the will of God, and not essential to the sanctify or blessedness of the sabbath itself” (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 56-57).

¹¹⁹Wright explained that the moral law never dictated a particular day for the Sabbath: “The commandment itself does not determine *the position* of the day. It simply requires the seventh day to be kept *after six days*; and supposing the week to have any other beginning and ending, the fourth commandment would remain without alteration” (Wright, *A Discourse*, 21).

¹²⁰Weir added, “Under the Christian dispensation, the seventh portion of time is still consecrated to God, the change of the day but adding a higher and holier lustre and sanction to the Sabbath than it every possessed before, because it commemorates the resurrection of Him by whom Paradise is to be restored, and who has declared from His throne, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 20).

been accomplished. The prophet Isaiah foretold Christ's resurrection or "new creation" (See Isa 65:17-18).¹²¹ Sherman concluded that the old creation became obsolete and was replaced by the new. He linked the new creation of redemption with the Christian Sabbath, which replaced the Jewish Sabbath of the old creation. "This prophecy, therefore, remains unfulfilled, unless it has had its accomplishment in the Christian Sabbath. For there neither is, nor ever was, any public commemoration of this work by the Christian church, except that which is holden on the first day of the week."¹²² So, for Nonconformists, it was inappropriate for Christians to gather on the seventh day since it represented the darkest days of Christ's passion; he lay in the grave on the seventh day.¹²³ Christians must worship on Sunday, which was the day that Christ defeated sin and death.¹²⁴ In doing so, Christians celebrated God's original creation and Christ's redemption simultaneously.

Nonconformists reasoned that Jesus' post-resurrection appearances were further validation of the Sabbath transition from Saturday to Sunday. On Sunday, Jesus appeared to the disciples after he rose from the dead (John 20:19) and the disciples

¹²¹“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness.”

¹²²Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 31. M'Owan noted, "This change is called 'a new creation;' and it is predicted, that the former creation shall not 'come into mind;' that is, in Hebrew phraseology, shall be remembered less, or commemorated only as an inferior event" (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 64).

¹²³“The seventh day was the season of his greatest sufferings, and deepest humiliation—therefore was not a fit day for rejoicing; but he first day of the week, the day on which the Lord arose to life, and entered into glory, was a proper season for the most lively exultation, and the choicest festival” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 31).

¹²⁴“From that day to this, I believe, on every first day of each returning week, some of his brethren have met to receive his benediction, to rehearse his praise, and renew their vows of loyalty and love to him” (Cox, "Lecture V," 87). Brock added, "How befitting that the Redeemer of the world should have his own day! How suitable that the occasion of the Saviour's victory should be the occasion of the Church's hallelujahs!" (Brock, *Three Sermons*, 35).

continued worshipping on the first day after Jesus' ascension.¹²⁵ On Sunday, Jesus displayed his crucifixion wounds to the disciples and they all rejoiced when they saw him, except for Thomas who was absent. One week later, Jesus appeared again on the first day and, at this time, Thomas was present. It was significant, noted M'Owan, that the disciples gathered on the first day of the week as opposed to the seventh. Evidently, they had already transitioned to the first day.¹²⁶ Jesus clearly preferred to gather with his disciples on the first day—his other appearances during the week were not recorded using time markers.¹²⁷ Besides meeting with his disciples, Jesus preferred to minister to people on the first day.¹²⁸ M'Owan concluded, “[I]t was his good pleasure that his disciples should transfer the sabbath festival from the seventh to the *first* day of the week.”¹²⁹

¹²⁵“It appears certain, however, that the First Day of the week was, from the very infancy of the Church, observed as the day sacred to the Divine Founder of Christianity, on which the Christians met for religious purposes” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 14).

¹²⁶“This solemn scene, it should be observed, not only took place on the first day of the second week, but the meeting was the first general meeting which the disciples had held since the preceding ‘first day.’ . . . It is worthy of remark, that though the disciples, no doubt, attended the temple and synagogue services, on the Jewish sabbaths which intervened between his resurrection and ascension, the Redeemer did not once appear to them while they were so employed; but his visits, in every instance, were vouchsafed when they were met apart, as *his* disciples” (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 68-69).

¹²⁷Hamilton, “The Law of the Sabbath,” 332: “Once more Jesus stands among them, triumphing over material resistance, and, as at the first, salutes them. It is religious recognition and greeting. Is there nothing marked in this interval of time? His other interviews are not thus marked.”

¹²⁸“He preferred this day above all others, to bestow his choicest mercies: for on this day he manifested himself to Mary, and the other women, as he does not to the world—he caused the hearts of the two disciples to burn within them, while he opened unto them the Scriptures—he removed the unbelief of Thomas, by showing him his hands and his side—he breathed on the apostles, and said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost;’ and commissioned them to preach the gospel to a lost world. And when he had ascended up on high, he honored this day above all others, by pouring out his Holy Spirit, whereby the apostles were qualified for the work, and instrumentally three thousand souls were gathered into the fold of God. And on this day he still gives his blessing” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 32). M'Owan also suggested that “[i]t was on the *first day* of the week that the Redeemer comforted his disciples with his royal ‘Peace be unto you’” (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 66).

¹²⁹M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 70. Weir commented on the Sabbath's continuance following its transition from the seventh to the first: “[T]he Sabbath remains an immutable institute and ordinance of Heaven. It still continues of Divine authority and of perpetual obligation. Under the gospel it is accompanied with fresh claims on our reverence and regard, and it is set apart under the most solemn

Following Christ's ascension, the apostles regularly honored the first day of the week as the new Sabbath. This was significant, argued Hill, since whatever the apostles practiced, the church must imitate in every generation.¹³⁰ The disciples celebrated the first day of the week as God's holy day for preaching and distributing the ordinances. This established an ongoing obligation for Christians to observe the Sabbath.

Nonconformists viewed the timing of Pentecost as providing further evidence that the Sabbath was now observed on Sunday. Pentecost occurred on the seventh first day following Christ's resurrection,¹³¹ or the fiftieth day after Passover.¹³² M'Owan noted that computing the days from Christ's crucifixion on Friday indicated that Christians were gathered together and received the Spirit on the first day of the week.¹³³ On that day, the Spirit descended, attendees witnessed the first Christian sermon, and the Christian church emerged.¹³⁴

After Pentecost, the Sunday Sabbath maintained its importance in the early church. Nonconformists observed that when Paul ministered at Troas in Acts 20, he stayed there seven days and met with the disciples on Sunday to break bread (Acts 20:6-

sanctions for the worship of Jehovah's name" (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 23). Wright added, "From the day on which our Lord lay in the grave onward, there is no notice of any stated meetings of Christians on the last day of the week" (Wright, *A Discourse*, 23).

¹³⁰Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 114: "[W]hatever the Apostles did—and in doing gave evidence that they expected their converts to imitate—is the rule of the Church of Christ."

¹³¹"For on the *seventh* first day of the week after the Resurrection, 'when the day of Pentecost was fully come'" (ibid., 111).

¹³²"As the first day was that on which the Saviour rose, so it was the day he honoured by sending down the promised Spirit, by whose divine influence on 'The *same day* there were added unto them about three thousand souls'" (Wright, *A Discourse*, 28).

¹³³M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 70.

¹³⁴Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 333.

12).¹³⁵ The importance of Sunday worship with other Christians explained Paul's travel schedule at Troas.¹³⁶ Similarly, when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth,¹³⁷ he instructed them to collect money for the saints in Jerusalem on Sunday (1 Cor 16:1-2).¹³⁸ Every first day was to be observed in Corinth as well as Galatia.¹³⁹ In addition, when Paul visited Tyre he instructed the churches to give money to the Lord on the first day, which implied labor for the other six days of the week.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, in Paul's epistles, the first-day was

¹³⁵Wright, *A Discourse*, 29: "Here there is no mention of any meeting of the church on any other day, though Paul had been at Troas a whole week previously. The church was not specially summoned by him. It 'came together' at its usual time." Hamilton added, "What we affirm is, the alteration in the time of the holy rest, together with its aggrandisement of meaning: it is to be celebrated by Christians upon the first day in the week instead of the last, and it is henceforth to be specifically commemorated by them in honour of the resurrection of their Lord" (Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 326). Hill also explained, "It is the design that is the proof that the first day was the recognized day of religious service, and not the accidental deferring or the communion through the exigencies of the case" (Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 20).

¹³⁶Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 20: "The previous day was the Jewish day of worship—but they did not come together!" Sherman asked, "Why, then, under such circumstances, does he lose any time at Troas, and, after the first day of the week, so hastily pursue his journey? The only satisfactory answer which can be given is, that the first day of the week was sacred to the purposes of fellowship and worship among the disciples, and that St. Paul fully expected them to meet together on that day" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 32). M'Owan explained, "It appears, from the context, that the apostle spent seven days at Troas, and, consequently, was there on the Jewish sabbath; but no mention is made of any meeting of the church on that day; or, indeed, on any other, till the *first day* arrived; and then he sanctified it with them" (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 71).

¹³⁷"The habit of systematic contribution was associated with the Christian Sabbath, which was thus sanctioned and confirmed by the Apostle. It is not, therefore, the law of charitable contributions that made the Lord's day, but it was the Lord's-day that afforded the opportunity to make weekly collections" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 119).

¹³⁸"This passage shows that there was *one day* in the churches generally, devoted to holy duties, and that this day was that which has continued to be the sabbath of God's people till now—the *first day* of the week" (Wright, *A Discourse*, 29-30).

¹³⁹"For it cannot be conceived that the apostle should order them to make collections for the saints on that day, for any other reason than this, that on the first day of the week churches customarily assembled for divine worship" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 32).

¹⁴⁰Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 334: "But does it not say more than that the first day was the Sabbath-rest? Does it not imply that the six preceding days were spent in labour whose profits God had prospered? Does it not remind of the ancient cast of expression—In it thou shalt do no work, six days shalt thou do all thy work!" Brock added that in Thessalonica (Acts 18:1-2) Paul did not travel or work as a tent maker on the Sabbath; "No sooner did the day return which witnessed the assembling of the people in the synagogues, than he assembled with them. There was no travelling on that day; there was no tent-

clearly seen as the day of Christian worship, and for Nonconformist writers, it was proper observance of the Sabbath as its new day.

Nonconformists addressed two verses in Colossians 2 (vv. 16-17) that pertained to Sabbath observance. Paul noted that no one should judge Christians concerning food and drink or with regard to a festival or new moon or a Sabbath day.¹⁴¹ Nonconformists argued that here Paul did not refer to the Sabbath as part of the moral law but was addressing ceremonial rituals.¹⁴² Paul envisioned the feasts and festivals that were determined by weeks, of which the Sabbath was the concluding point.¹⁴³ The Colossian context, according to M’Owan, did not refer to the Christian Sabbath at all.¹⁴⁴ Christians at Colossae worshiped on Sunday, which irritated the Jews who gathered on Saturday. The Jews insisted that the ceremonial law remained, that Christianity had tainted Judaism, and that altering the Sabbath had annulled its significance.¹⁴⁵ They

making; there was a keeping of the Sabbath, and that as carefully when far away among the Gentiles as when in Jerusalem, at home” (Brock, *Three Sermons*, 12).

¹⁴¹“Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col 2:16-17). Weir added, “Now, the Sabbath days here mentioned as not imperatively binding were the *seventh-day* Sabbaths, and not the *first day* of the week, the Christian Sabbath, commemorative of the *New Creation*, when God the Son finished the work of Redemption, as God the Father on the seventh day ended the works which He had made” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 22).

¹⁴²“We have no evidence that Paul or any of the Christians, at this period of ecclesiastical history, ever applied the word Sabbath to the Lord’s-day” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 155).

¹⁴³J. M., “The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?” 16: “We find this mode of calculating time existing from the beginning of the world; and can only account for it by the fact of the seventh-day rest, established by God at the close of the six days’ work of creation.”

¹⁴⁴“To understand the passage aright, it must be recollected, that the Colossians, as Christians, regarded the whole Jewish ceremonial as abrogated; and that they kept the first day of the week as their sabbath, in harmony with all the sister churches. The Jews resident among them were incensed at this: they maintained, that the ceremonial law was still in force, that Christianity was a corruption of the religion of their fathers; that unless the Christians were circumcised they could not be saved; that the seventh was the true sabbath-day; and that to change the day was to nullify the ordinance” (M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 93).

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 93.

ridiculed the Christians and posed as their superiors. So, Paul was here responding to the Jews' attempt to intimidate Christians. He argued that they had no authority to judge Christians and that Christians must not submit to Jewish regulations pertaining to the Sabbath.

Critics of the Sabbatarian position cited this verse in Colossians in their argument against the necessity for Christians to observe the Sabbath. But, Nonconformists explained that Paul's argument did not concern the Sabbath. Paul referred to "Sabbaths," not *the* Sabbath. "Sabbaths," wrote Wallace, represented festivals and Jewish ceremonies mentioned in Leviticus such as the Sabbath, which was connected to the Feast of Tabernacles and the seventh year's Sabbath (Lev 23:39, 25:3-4).¹⁴⁶ Thus, the true Sabbath now observed on Sunday, did apply to Christians. Hill explained, "The Sabbath is a great conservator. It is the greatest memorial of creation, the only memorial of the Resurrection, of the Pentecostal effusion. It is God's witness on earth."¹⁴⁷ The Sabbath requirement remained in effect for Christians because, as Hill noted, God said to remember the Sabbath, not the seventh day.¹⁴⁸

Some Nonconformists used other New Testament texts to support Sabbath observance. Hebrews 4¹⁴⁹ presents four types of rest for God's people explained Hamilton: the rest enjoyed when creation ceased, the rest associated in the Promised

¹⁴⁶Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 12.

¹⁴⁷Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 188.

¹⁴⁸Hill, *The Sabbath Primeval*, 18.

¹⁴⁹"So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" (Heb 4:9).

Land, heavenly rest, and a Sabbath rest.¹⁵⁰ The Sabbath rest, he argued, alluded to the first day of the week that celebrated Christ's resurrection. In Hebrews 4, the author explained that keeping the Sabbath follows God's rest at creation and Christ's rest, which he entered at his resurrection. Thus, Christians are obligated to keep the Sabbath.¹⁵¹ M'Owan found a second reference to the Sabbath outside of the gospels and Paul's epistles. In Revelation 1:10, John records that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. By that point, the church called Sunday the *Lord's Day* because it was on that day that the church celebrated Jesus' victory over death, inaugurating his kingdom on earth.¹⁵² John's statement confirmed that the first day was the appropriate day for Christian worship.

For Nonconformists, the treatment of the Sabbath in the New Testament further validated its place in the moral law. Not even Christianity could obstruct its practice, wrote Hamilton.¹⁵³ Some Nonconformists used an argument from silence, noting that no record survived of the early church debating whether to keep the Sabbath or not. Early church disregard for Jewish ceremonial practices like circumcision and Christian observance of the Sunday Sabbath distinguished Christians from Jews.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 335.

¹⁵¹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 131. Hill explained, "[T]he inspired Apostle establishes the *doctrine* of the Christian Sabbath, giving us a *reason* for its existence" (132).

¹⁵²M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 73. M'Owan also wrote, "The superior glory of the resurrection event demanded a change; the switch was essential to guard the disciples against blending Christianity with Judaism; third, it was necessary to display Christ's glory, his equality with the Father, and his leadership over the church" (77-82).

¹⁵³Hamilton, "The Law of the Sabbath," 339: "Circumcision may pass into baptism. The Passover may be translated into the Lord's Supper. But the Sabbath is the Sabbath, and nothing but the Sabbath can it be. It owed a particular construction to Judaism; it owes a specific application to Christianity. But to no dispensation owes its existence, or authority, or right. It is from the beginning. It is the parent of dispensations. It is the root of religions."

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 342: "How, otherwise, were the Christians to be distinguished? How withdrawn from Judaic attachments and scruples? How gathered into assemblies and organised into Churches? How taught

Conclusion

Nonconformists upheld the Sabbath as a permanent institution because it appeared to them to possess strong biblical warrant. Based on the Sabbath's inauguration at creation, reiteration at Mount Sinai, and confirmation by Christ, all Christians were obligated to observe the Sabbath.¹⁵⁵ Jesus' marvelous work of redemption transitioned the Sabbath to a new day for Christians, the first day.¹⁵⁶ The Sabbath's establishment at creation confirmed universal validity. In keeping the Sabbath, Christians affirm the love of the Father, the deity of the Son, and the victory of his resurrection.¹⁵⁷

and disciplines? They were a peculiar people, most social, most devout, their faith and worship most loving and fraternal: a specific day was most due and essential to them.”

¹⁵⁵“[The Sabbath] was given to be a universal and perpetual sign that God is the Lord of all men, claiming for himself one-seventh of our time, because he has a right to the whole; and therefore to be a universal and perpetual test whether men will own that He is their Lord or not; and further, it was given to be a universal and perpetual ‘blessing’ to man” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 3-4). Wright added that the moral law applied to Christians in any age and all Christians are thus obligated to observe the Sabbath until Christ returns. See Wright, *A Discourse*, 23.

¹⁵⁶“Shall we not, then, remember the *Sabbath of Redemption*, and humbly triumph in the provisions which our crucified and risen Saviour has made for man's full recovery to God, as also for the reparation of all the injuries which sin has inflicted on the works of creation, once so beautiful and pure? Great as it was originally to create, it is acknowledged to have been yet greater to redeem and restore. Let the Sabbath remind us, above all things, of our Christian redemption” (Hannah, “The Sabbath a Happy Day,” 176).

¹⁵⁷M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 28.

CHAPTER 3

PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

Introduction

In the view of Nonconformist writers of the mid-nineteenth century, the Sabbath was not being properly practiced.¹ Sunday seemed no different than any weekday. The English were working and playing on Sunday, especially in London.² In *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, James Sherman insisted that a convert to Christ from a heathen land would be shocked at the gross neglect of Sabbath observance and would conclude that he must be reading a different Bible than the English. In addition, he argued that no sin was more common “or committed with greater impunity” than improper Sabbath observance.³

¹“It will not be disputed by any one who takes even the most superficial view of the state of society in this country, that we are, as a nation, lamentably addicted to the sin of SABBATH-BREAKING” (H. E. “On the National Sins of Britain,” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 9 [April 1831]: 137). Also, Brown noted, “I fear, the Sabbath is not to any of us what it ought to be, in the measure in which it ought to be—a season of inward renewing of strength for daily labour—a height to which God affords us leisure and strength to climb, that we may look beyond the stars which watch our daily travail, to HIM. . . . Many remember fondly what Sabbaths once were, and willingly shut their eyes to the change” (James Baldwin Brown, *The Sabbath, The Crystal Palace, and the People* [London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co., 1853], 11-12. J. M. also recognized this trend: “We cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that there is, at this moment, a widely-concerted scheme in progress, for breaking down those tokens of outward respect for the Sabbath” (J. M., “The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [January 1856]: 12-13).

²“It is deeply affecting, that in this Metropolis, where there are so many places of worship, and so many Ministers of the Gospel, there should be so many thousands who are in this constant habit of profaning the Lord's day” (Joseph Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges of the Christian Sabbath, and the Sin and Danger of Neglecting or Profaning It* [London: George Wightman, 1832], 15).

³“If a convert from heathenism were to visit our country, how great would be his surprise, on seeing the gross profanation of the Sabbath! Surely he would conclude, that our Bible differed from his, or,

Nonconformists were troubled by many of the activities taking place on Sunday. People strolled through London's public parks and gardens on a leisurely walk while others crammed the city's roads with carriages and stagecoaches.⁴ Pedestrians pounded the streets en route to tea gardens and dinners or cabinet meetings while others cruised down the river on steamboats. Besides personal travel, businesses remained open on Sundays, forcing many individuals to work. Those who did not work on Sunday often squandered the day smoking and drinking alcohol.⁵ Thousands of people skipped corporate worship to engage in social, leisure, or entertainment pursuits.⁶ Nonconformists were troubled over these activities because it harmed the souls of men.⁷

Nonconformists believed that Sabbath violation reflected the true spiritual condition of citizens. Christians who neglected or dishonored the Sabbath, argued Josiah

to come nearer the fact, that we had rejected the counsel of God against ourselves" (James Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day* [London: Fisher, Son & Jackson, 1830], 26-27). Farquhar added, "Take a Scotchman from any of the sabbath-keeping districts of his native land, and place him in London, and, at first, he is appalled at the way in which the sabbath is desecrated, through labor and pleasure" (D. Farquhar, "Facts and Observations Relating to the Day of Rest," *Baptist Magazine* 41 [November 1849]: 685).

⁴Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 50: "In London, (the metropolis of England, and of the world,) what shameful scenes transpire every Lord's day! O the crowds of splendid guilty creatures that display themselves in the parks and public gardens on the Sabbath-day! See how the roads are lined with carriages, stage-coaches, gigs, and vehicles of all descriptions, for journeys of pleasure! Behold the number of pedestrians in the most frequented parts, toiling to tea-gardens and parties of amusement! See how the river is crowded with wherries and steam-packets, for Sabbath excursions on the water!"

⁵Ibid: "Think of the thousands of pounds which are spent every Sunday afternoon in spirituous liquors! Among the higher classes, this is the day when routs and dinners are given, and cabinet councils called. Among the middling classes, how many shops are open from morning to night. Among the lower classes, what smoking, drinking, and blasphemy, consume this day!"

⁶"Surely there is quite enough of Sabbath breaking in London already. Here, while hundreds of thousands never enter a place of worship, every Sunday pleasure vans are crowded with Sabbath breakers, steam-boats are plying up and down the river with thousands, excursion trains carry myriads more along the various lines, tea-gardens are thronged with them, and thousands of gin-shops gather innumerable swarms of them, to waste their health and their money in tobacco and drink" (Baptist W. Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath* [London: James Nisbet and Co., 1856], 29).

⁷"O, can we see these things, and not mourn over the sad devastation Sabbath-breaking is making on the souls of men. Are we not afflicted for the affliction of Joseph? Where are our compassions for men, if we are not affected with such scenes as these?" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 51).

Conder, lived as practicing pagans. Even Jews and Muslims set aside the sixth day for their deity.⁸ Nonconformists longed to see the negative trend reversed. They envisioned a Sabbath characterized by physical rest and heartfelt worship of God. Their preaching and writing exhorted residents to honor the Sabbath. For the Nonconformists, behavior reflected belief. Love for God was equated with an appropriate observance of the Sabbath. Aversion to God led to a disregard for Sundays.

Neglect of the Sabbath

Sabbath neglect was reflected in labor practices and leisure activities. Sunday commerce prevented people from participating in corporate worship. Leisure activities such as reading and walking were viewed as distracting people from proper Sabbath observance.

The Problem of Labor

Nonconformists often expressed concern over the increasing levels of commerce on the Sabbath in England. They expected people to work diligently during the week but not on Sundays. Regrettably, in their view, many London businesses chose to operate on Sundays⁹ when they should have remained closed.¹⁰ W. Holderness reported

⁸Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political*, 4th ed. (London: Patriot Office, 1853), 11: “The Jews still observes the seventh day as his Sabbath; the Mohammedan Sabbath is held on the sixth day.”

⁹“If labour be generally permitted on the Sabbath, the day, as a public institution, is abolished. . . . If Sabbath labour be permitted, it necessarily involves a large number of persons who are unwillingly deprived of a great privilege, and have yet, if unaided, no power to resist the invasion of these rights. For if business be permitted on the Sabbath, a crowd of dependents are reluctantly drawn within its circle who have no power of escape, and the liberty of a few is secured by the slavery of the many” (“Article III,” *British Quarterly Review* 21 [January 1855]: 105-06). J. M. added, “Is it [the Sabbath] mere slothful repose? —an absolute stagnation of the mental and physical faculties? No such thing. It is a much more simple and tangible conception. It is rest from the secular labours of other days, in order to a higher end. Worldly toils and occupations, except so far as necessity or mercy may require, are to be laid aside” (J. M.

that on February 15, 1852, in four out of five London districts, 248 shops conducted business while 81 of 82 pubs were open.¹¹ It was unnecessary for pubs to remain open since patrons at the pubs were locals pursuing pleasure instead of tourists requiring food.¹² John Allan Quinton described the industry and vice that characterized Sunday:

The mingled hum of busy multitudes, the heavy tramp of traffic, the rush of enterprise, the clamour of human passions, the noise of innumerable tools and implements of handicraft, the fierce panting of engines, the ringing of anvils, and the furious racings of machinery; the shout of crowds, the brawls of drunkenness, and the plaints of mendicant misery, all are sunk into silence, and disturb not with a ripple of agitation the still Sabbath air.¹³

Nonconformists warned that Sunday labor harmed employees and employers.

Working on Sunday deprived employees¹⁴ of the time for much needed physical

“The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [January 1856]: 18).

¹⁰“But there can be no doubt that one main and palpable design of the Sabbath institution, and that in its world-wide and universal application, is to put a stop during one whole day in seven to all unnecessary manual labour, and to the busy and absorbing occupations of this world’s trafficking” (Robert Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath* [London: Judd & Glass, 1856], 16-17).

¹¹W. Holderness, “Lecture VI,” in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1852), 114. Holderness was Chaplain to the Thames Church Mission and was an Anglican, yet his work is helpful in understanding the times.

¹²“Let no one delude himself by supposing that these public houses are required for the travellers; they are for the most part filled with persons drinking, or, as it is called, tippling, and in too many instances, with loose characters and persons in every stage of drunkenness” (ibid.).

¹³John Allan Quinton, *Heaven’s Antidote to the Curse of Labour; or, The Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath, Considered In Relation to the Working Classes* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1849), 10. Quinton’s essay on the Sabbath won first prize and a reward of twenty-five pounds. Mr. Henderson offered three prizes to the Working Class who submitted the three best essays upon the following subject; “The Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath to the Labouring Classes, and the consequent importance of preserving its rest from all the encroachments of unnecessary labour.” Second place offered fifteen pounds and third place ten pounds. Three months after the offer to submit essays was publicized, 1,045 were turned in (i).

¹⁴See Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man: or, The Origin, History, and Principles of the Lord’s Day* (London: John Farquhar Shaw, 1857), 333. For a helpful study on the harmful effects of overexertion from a medical perspective, see R. D. Grainger, “Lecture III,” *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1852): 44-61.

recuperation and led to weariness, corruption, and eventually death.¹⁵ John Angell James addressed merchants, manufacturers, and trade personnel who labored on Sunday admonishing them to close their companies so their employees could recover.¹⁶ Working seven days a week required employees to overexert themselves and would lead to death.¹⁷ Working without a Sabbath also led to poor moral choices. Micaiah Hill reported that individuals who drank alcohol regularly during weekdays labored on Sunday;¹⁸ “For God has not endued the human frame with powers of exertion over seven successive days; and if men will not rest, they must borrow delusive strength from alcohol.”¹⁹ Sunday labor also harmed employers as well as workers; it was unprofitable. Just as Israel’s manna rotted when gathered on the Sabbath, so God does not bless profits gained through Sunday labor.²⁰ Sherman warned employers about Sunday commerce:

Pause for a moment, and consider what floodgates of vice and licentiousness you are

¹⁵The *Baptist Magazine* editors included an article by a Journeyman Baker who expressed his desperate need for Sabbath rest: “That the employment in which your petitioner is engaged, is one of great bodily labour and fatigue through the week, requiring many hours of exertion at a time when persons in general are enjoying the sweets of repose, and that, consequently, your petitioner stands in especial need of the merciful provision of the sabbath” (“The Observance of the Sabbath,” *Baptist Magazine* 23 [January 1831]: 9).

¹⁶“In order to this it is essential that the day of sacred rest should be rescued from the pursuits of commerce. Not only close your shops, your counting-houses, and manufactories, which is already generally done, but do not in any covert way employ any of your servants in works of labour on that day which God has set apart for hallowed repose” (John Angell James, “The Sabbath—Its Religious Observance a National Duty and a National Blessing,” in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 409).

¹⁷“Let the labourer toil without intermission, and his body will languish and die” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 214).

¹⁸Physical weariness is mental lassitude; and mental lassitude indisposes the soul to moral considerations. Those whose only toil is the pursuit of pleasure, become weary and indifferent, through fatigue of body, to the exercise of the moral faculties . . . the Sabbath-day labourer is the ‘hard drinker’ of every day in the week” (Ibid., 215).

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰“Money gained thus, brings no blessing with it. The manna gathered on that day will breed worms on it. Forego the profits of such unhallowed trading” (James, “The Sabbath,” 409-10).

opening by such a course. You are not only endangering the peace and salvation of your own soul but you involve your wife and children in the same ruin. The object you propose to yourself is a little worldly gain; but do you calculate your loss—the sacrifice of your immortal soul, and the ruin of the souls of your family?²¹

Hill illustrated how resting on Sunday benefits employers by referencing a company known as the Gold Hill Iron Works. In previous years, this company had employed between 1500 and 2000 workers on Sunday.²² But, a decision was made to cease work on Sundays. Since then, more iron had been produced and fewer accidents had occurred.²³ Hill attributed this company's success to Sabbath rest.²⁴

One agency that received consideration for operating on Sunday was the Post Office, which was one target of Nonconformist criticism. In 1839, a parliamentary committee aspired to open the Post on Sunday for mail delivery. Sunday Post service encountered opposition from all of the primary London bankers who signed a memorial and presented it to the Lords of the Treasury who also agreed with the banker's perspective.²⁵ Nonconformists argued that Sunday Post service would lead to other

²¹Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 33.

²²“The number of ‘hands’ employed is between 1500 and 2000” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 274).

²³“[M]ore iron was made since the stoppage than before; that, having never but once during seven years worked either of their blast furnaces on the Sunday, more iron had been produced; they had enjoyed a greater exemption from interruptions and accidents, although the repairs were never allowed to be effected as formerly on the Sundays” (ibid., 274).

²⁴“It follows, as a natural consequence, that such periodical suspension of toil, is a source of gain to employers” (ibid., 273).

²⁵“The London Post-Office,” *Baptist Magazine* 31 (January 1839): 24. *Baptist Magazine* editors continued: “[T]he Lords of the Treasury have always felt a strong objection to any London delivery of letters on Sunday, and are happy to find that their opinion on this point is entirely in concurrence with the great body of the mercantile community. Should it, however, be obtruded on the legislature by any party, and it was with a parliamentary Committee that the project originated, we hope that all who appreciate the civil blessings of the Sabbath, to say nothing of its religious obligation, will arouse themselves immediately, and prevent the adoption of a scheme which would be productive of disastrous effects to the moral interests of thousands in the metropolis, and myriads in the provinces” (25).

companies being open on Sunday and people being required to work.²⁶ If any group should endeavor to open the Post on Sunday the government should make every effort to oppose the movement, argued James.²⁷ Despite such opposition, the Post did begin operating on Sunday and by 1857 had “the great majority” of 21,000 employees working on Sunday.²⁸

It was possible for a business to remain closed on Sunday and still be in violation of the Sabbath either because it worked its employees late on Saturday evening or due to their compensation schedule.²⁹ Employers that forced workers to stay late on Saturday evening and labor or permitted them to complete the job on Sunday morning dishonored the Sabbath³⁰ because they prevented workers from properly preparing for the

²⁶“London would demand the delivery of letters which might arrive on Sunday morning, and 600 letter-carriers, including the General and London district force, would be turned into the streets at half-past seven a.m., and it would occupy longer time in delivering on Sunday, as houses of business would not be opened, and private houses would not quickly answer the postman’s knock. 300 of these letter carriers would have to return in the evening to officiate as sorters and messengers, so that they would enjoy no sabbath either for their bodies or their souls. As soon as the Sunday delivery shall have commenced, hundreds of merchants’ clerks will have to attend at the counting-houses to receive their employers’ letters” (“London Post Office,” *Baptist Magazine* 39 [November 1847], 716).

²⁷James, “The Sabbath,” 402: “Should a spirit of commercial cupidity, grudging the day of rest to hands already engrossed with the cares of business, wish to open the Post-office to its daily avocations and pursuits, may we ever have a Government which will resolutely resist the effort, and secure to the metropolis this opportunity of repose and enjoyment. Instead of this, may the Government listen to the voice of public opinion, now so generally and so loudly expressed, for the closing of the provincial post-offices, and thus give to the country the privileges enjoyed by the metropolis.”

²⁸“There is a species of oppression to which our government is a party—we refer to the employment of 21,000 servants of the British Post-office. We have shown, that the great majority of them are unnecessarily employed on the Sunday” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 305-06).

²⁹“I maintain that men should not be so dead beat on the Saturday night, that the Sunday becomes of necessity a mere day for physical recovery or for sleep. If men work themselves or work others to such an excess as to unfit them for the sacred employments of the Lord’s Day, it is a grievous error. It is at once defrauding God, and wronging the immortal soul” (Edward Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ. and B. Oliveira, ESQ. M. P. on the Sunday Opening of the Crystal Palace* [London: Seeleys, 1854], 22).

³⁰“The payment of wages upon the very close of the week is a constant source of sabbath disobedience. It is made a plea for the late market, and sometimes for the early one. All the quiet preparation and prelude which are so essential for the calm ushering in of the holy day, are defeated”

sacred day.³¹ The schedule of weekly paychecks could also serve to undermine Sabbath observance. Two London businesses, the Royal Dock Yard and the Arsenal, distributed paychecks on Friday evenings and occasionally on Saturday mornings.³² Fridays were acceptable but issuing paychecks on Saturdays was ill advised, according to Nonconformists, because after receiving their pay workers rushed to the pub to unwind.³³ In doing so, workers depleted much of their income pursuing pleasure on Saturday night before bringing their checks home for family necessities. When the financial leftovers arrived, wives frantically rushed to the store on Sunday to purchase essentials like food for the upcoming week instead of attending corporate worship.³⁴

A final problem with Sunday labor stemmed from wealthy families that required their personal servants to work on Sunday. Nonconformists argued that servants' souls were entrusted to the care of their masters. Some Nonconformist writers even argued that if servants refused to attend worship, their masters should dismiss them and

(Richard Winter Hamilton *Horae Et Vindiciae Sabbaticae, or Familiar Disquisitions on the Revealed Sabbath* [London: Jackson and Walford, 1848], 202).

³¹“Unhappily, the modern habits of trade render this all but impossible with many, who are kept hard at work till almost, if not quite sabbath morning, and then retire to rest so jaded, that they find it difficult to rise early next day for the worship of God” (John Angell James, *Pastoral Addresses* [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1841], 95).

³²“At the Royal Dock Yard and Arsenal, wages are paid early on Saturday, and in some cases on Friday, so that most ample time is afforded for purchases to be made before the week expires” (Holderness, “Lecture VI,” 115).

³³“[L]et us have our work-men’s wages paid on *Friday*, and not at public-houses; and (as was once the case in Scotland, under the sanction alike of custom and of law) let labour cease early on Saturday afternoon. The poor man will thus have ample leisure furnished him to survey the works of nature, or the wonders of art, and breathe the fresh air” (John Weir, *The New Crystal Palace and the Christian Sabbath* [London: N. H. Cotes, 1852], 24).

³⁴“Ten anxious wives besiege the closed door of some butcher or baker, or green grocer, and beseech him by the value which he attaches to their future patronage, by the eager expectation of their little ones, and perhaps by tears, just to open the door, and sell them what the remains of the wages will allow” (Peter M’Owan, *Practical Considerations on the Christian Sabbath* [New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843], 115).

hire new ones.³⁵ Prohibition of work on the Sabbath was primarily intended to protect the welfare of servants.³⁶ But, masters must require their servants to remain in their house in order to prevent servants from wasting their time through pleasure seeking and gossiping. Peter M’Owan suggested that masters should invite their servants to sit with them in church.³⁷ In short, from businesses to wealthy families, Nonconformists opposed Sunday labor.

The Problem of Leisure Activities

Nonconformist writers, not surprisingly, opposed frivolous leisure activities on Sunday.³⁸ Nonconformists, however, identified even the failure to prepare for Sunday as a problem. It was possible for Christians to be so immersed in life affairs that they failed to prepare for a day of worship on Sunday.³⁹ A God-honoring Sabbath required eliminating worldly pursuits on Saturday. The Jews understood this and prepared in advance for the Sabbath. For them, Friday acted as the day of preparation.⁴⁰

³⁵Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 33.

³⁶“The prohibition to work on the Sabbath, we have seen, was designed less for the sake of the master, than for that of the servant; less as a religious restriction, than as a protective enactment” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 15).

³⁷M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 132. M’Owan added, “To prevent gossip and Sunday gadding, as well as to encourage punctual attendance and devotional habits, masters would do well to provide accommodation for their domestics, not only in their own place of worship, but in their own family pew” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 152).

³⁸“If to work on this day be sinful, to lounge, loiter, nap, and yawn, is to miss the end of the institution; is to debase man and to dishonour God” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 320-21).

³⁹“Do not allow yourselves to be so immersed in the affairs of the world, that the sabbath shall come upon you unawares: have respect to it through the whole of your week-day employments. Enter into no engagements which will entangle your consciences or lay you under temptations to neglect its duties, or to desecrate its hours” (M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 115).

⁴⁰“The Jews were led, by this solemn injunction, to spend the day before their sabbath in preliminary duties; and hence it was called, ‘the day of preparation’” (ibid.).

Nonconformists believed that Saturday afternoon and evening were needed for proper preparation. Joseph Ivimey attested that failure to properly prepare for the Sabbath yielded harmful spiritual results:

If then any of you, instead of seeking to “honour God” on his holy day, do *your own ways*, seek *your own pleasure*, and speak *your own* words, you need not expect to know any thing of the high enjoyments and spiritual pleasures experienced by those who on the Sabbath-day *honour* God, by doing *his* ways, aiming to please *him*, and to converse for his glory.⁴¹

M’Owan also noticed that even though ministers preached the gospel simply and persuasively on Sunday morning, they often encountered resistance from congregants because the attendees were unprepared to receive the truth.⁴² “The Sabbath must be remembered *before* it comes, in order to be enjoyed *when* it comes.”⁴³ Just as soil must be cultivated to receive seed, so the heart must be prepared to accept and apply God’s word.⁴⁴

Nonconformist writers bemoaned Christian indulgence in Sunday afternoon leisure activities. They squandered time at home, in gardens, or at farms as if there was no God who desired worship. Leisure led to idleness and empty conversation—some Christians spent the entire Sabbath without talking about Christ or the things of God, as if

⁴¹Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 11.

⁴²“Without denying the existence of auxiliary hindrances, it is our firm conviction that a chief cause of the inutility of Gospel ministrations with multitudes, both men and women, is the hurry and distraction of mind induced by the absorbing avidity and idolatrous devotedness with which they pursue the world, up to, and often beyond, the sacred precincts of the Sabbath-day” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 138-39).

⁴³“Sabbath ordinances must be approached in a Sabbath frame, otherwise they will harden rather than soften, and blind rather than enlighten; and, to secure this frame, we must not only lay the world aside with our hands in proper time, but eject it from our hearts; praying with all prayer, that the Lord of the Sabbath would possess them by His Spirit” (ibid., 139).

⁴⁴If the ground be unprepared, it avails nothing though the seed be good and the sower diligent, for it will lie on the surface; and, in that case, it will be either be devoured by the birds of the air, or scorched by the sun, or choked by the briars and weeds” (ibid.).

God was a stranger in their home.⁴⁵ In such homes, there was no mention of heaven on Sunday; instead, the focus of conversation was on temporal things like the latest fashions, national politics, and world news. Engaging in leisure also led many to become interested in novels and secular historical books. Such reading, argued Sherman, distracted one's mind from God. These were "infectious poisons" that detoured the mind from the eternal.⁴⁶

One common form of leisurely activity was Sunday walks. Nonconformists did not oppose walking on Sunday per se. They complained, however, that on these walks a participant focused on exercise and nature instead of on God. M'Owan noted that Sunday walkers often magnified the beauty of nature and devalued holiness.⁴⁷ They minimized God's requirement for Sabbath sanctity and indulged in their own desires. Walking for health purposes violated God's intention for the Sabbath. Leisurely walks nurtured an idle mind rather than leading to an active mind engaged in worshiping God.⁴⁸ Leisure walks carried the potential to cause weaker Christians to stumble by teaching them to

⁴⁵"This day, therefore, is not for *jesting*, or *foolish talking*, which are at no time convenient, but rather giving of thanks. How many spend this day without one word of Christ, as if he were a total stranger in their house: without a moment's conversation on the things of God, as if they were wholly unconcerned in them" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 35).

⁴⁶Ibid. Ivimey also had strong words for those who wasted the Sabbath pursuing personal pleasures: "I would advise all such persons to give up 'doing their own pleasure,' and attend divine worship more regularly, or give up the name of Christians, to which it is doubtful if they have any right, and to which their conduct is a public reproach" (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 9).

⁴⁷M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 192-93.

⁴⁸"Many that stroll in the field, do so to rid themselves of all thoughts of God. Many that wish to worship God in nature, dislike to adore God in Christ. But to contemplate God in his works, it is necessary to enjoy retirement and solitude. The ordinary Sunday walk is among crowds of those, whose general deportment proves them to be lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 324).

break the Sabbath.⁴⁹ Any other day of the week this type of activity would be permissible, argued Nonconformists—but not on Sundays.

Nonconformist writers highlighted the problem of tavern patronage of Sundays. This practice escalated crime and distracted Christians from worshiping God.⁵⁰ Frequenting pubs on the Sabbath was especially noticeable in London where drinking houses were common. Nonconformists commended pubs that refused to open their doors on Sunday. They criticized alcohol distributors because the consumption of alcohol interfered with Sunday worship. M’Owan noted that under the influence of alcohol, partakers were unfit to worship God in public or private.⁵¹ Nonconformist writers attributed crime to alcohol intake on the Sabbath. In 1841-42, the Liverpool jail contained 16,657 inmates. Each year the number of prisoners increased with the increase in the general population of Liverpool. In 1842-43, the number of inmates decreased to 15,512 though the populace of Liverpool continued to grow. M’Owan attributed this decrease of convicts to the partial closing of the taverns.⁵² But, M’Owan was not content with the

⁴⁹Popular sites for these walks were tea gardens and horticultural centers. At these destinations, numerous plants surrounded small bodies of water; sculptures were also present and provided an attractive, quiet place to congregate.

⁵⁰M’Owan noted it was “scarcely regarded as a sin” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 148). Also, the *Eclectic Review* reported that in Manchester 1487 public houses or pubs, beer-shops, and vaults were observed over a period of 10 Sundays. At the end of this period, it was estimated that there were 120,122 men and 71,111 women in these venues each Sunday. There were also 23,585 children present with a total of 214,818 people. Absent in this study were 610 other public houses. Based on this data, 75 percent of Manchester’s population, including infants, was attending drinking shops on Sundays. In Bradford, there were 134 public houses and 242 beer houses observed and 7520 individuals present during evening services. See “Article VIII,” *Eclectic Review* 9 (May 1855): 600.

⁵¹M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 158.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 158-59. M’Owan attained his statistics from the August 11, 1847 edition of the *Liverpool Courier*.

partial closing of taverns; he requested that they completely close. “All we require is to go one step further—close the public-houses altogether on that day of public rest.”⁵³

Sunday newspapers were a cause of great concern for Nonconformist writers. They argued that these newspapers diverted man’s attention from God’s ways to secular issues.⁵⁴ Reading rooms were constructed to accommodate those residents who desired a place to read and discuss world news. Unfortunately, as Nonconformists saw it, these rooms were used on Sundays as well. M’Owan argued that Sunday newspapers poisoned minds with secularism and fostered disrespect for God’s Word and his ordinances.⁵⁵ Seeing pagans in reading rooms should not alarm Christians. But, wrote M’Owan, when Christians observe other Christians in these rooms, it should cause serious concern because newspaper reading on Sunday secularized the mind.⁵⁶

Nonconformists believed that the sale, delivery, and reading of Sunday newspapers accelerated England’s moral decline.⁵⁷ By 1832, there were 13 Sunday

⁵³Ibid., 150.

⁵⁴“Do not converse with others about trade and politics on the day of rest, and never touch a newspaper. Such practices turn away the mind from spiritual things, and divert the whole current of its thoughts. There can be no real communion with God, no steadfast beholding the things that are unseen and eternal, if we thus keep the world at our elbow” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 97).

⁵⁵M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 159. Hill also stated, “It is scarcely necessary to glance at the practice of reading newspapers on the Sunday, either at home, or in public-rooms. The pious have no time to spend on the news of the week at home, and to be one of a literary coterie at a club-room, Lyceum, or coffee-room, is revolting to the instincts of a man whose Christianity is something more than a name” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 324-25).

⁵⁶“Numerous lyceums and other reading-rooms have been opened in our large towns on the Sabbath; for newspaper reading and political discussion; than which we know of no practices, short of absolute profanity, that have a more direct tendency to secularise the mind, obliterate serious impressions, foster scepticism, and beget a contempt for the Word and ordinances of God” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 158-59).

⁵⁷“The Sunday newspaper, immoral, irreligious, and infidel publications will be thrust into the hands of the artisan, and pollute the family board of the mechanic. What may be a grand instrument for

newspapers published in London alone. Typically, 40,000 copies were sold in 300 shops in addition to those sent beyond London.⁵⁸ “[How] awful,” cried Ivimey, “that such Sunday reading should be provided as ailment for dying souls, and to the excluding of the Bible, and attending the public worship of God!”⁵⁹ Even the title, “Sunday Newspaper,” noted Conder, was incongruent with the sacred nature of the Sabbath.⁶⁰ Secular news held value on weekdays because God’s hand can be traced through current events, but it was inappropriate to discuss on Sundays. Hill wrote, “Keep secular subjects for secular days, and sacred things for God’s day. Even when the heart is kept with all diligence, worldly thoughts will too often intrude, but he that invites them by Sunday newspapers will only have himself to blame for the evil consequences.”⁶¹ World news distracted the mind from meditating on God and his holiness.⁶² Sunday newspapers, according to Sherman, were one of the greatest curses on society because they led to irreligion and contributed to depravity.⁶³ Nonconformists observed that the subject of religion rarely appeared in the Sunday newspaper unless discussed in a negative tone. Topics presented in the Sunday newspaper included “fights, murders, robberies, cockfighting, badger-

diffusing Christianity, thus becomes the great engine of destruction to the morals of the industrial classes” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 179).

⁵⁸“I doubt not but one cause of this prevailing depravity, is the character of our Sunday newspapers” (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 15).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁶⁰“The title of the Sunday Newspaper has, indeed, an air of defiance to Religion and to the laws” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 29).

⁶¹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 118.

⁶²“The circulation given to newspapers, not of the highest description, fosters the predisposition to absent one’s self from the places of worship in country towns, villages, and hamlets” (*Ibid.*, 284).

⁶³Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 35.

baiting, hunting, shooting, coursing, dueling, [and] elopements.”⁶⁴ Reacting to this, James addressed newspaper writers and editors, encouraging them to use their platform of influence to shape the culture into something beneficial.⁶⁵ He argued that Sunday newspapers weakened Christianity, corrupted morality, and harmed human souls.⁶⁶ Given time, James believed that Sunday newspapers would create a nation of atheists.

The problem of inappropriate Sunday leisure activities was further aggravated by new means of transportation.⁶⁷ The steam engine’s inception during the Industrial Revolution increased travel on all days, including Sundays. The steamboat became a popular mode of Sunday travel in the early 1850s.⁶⁸ Hundreds of men and women boarded the steamboats to attend public precincts or amusements instead of observing the Sabbath.⁶⁹ Steamboat employees worked grueling 100-hour workweeks during the

⁶⁴Ibid., 36.

⁶⁵“It is yours not merely to reflect the public opinion, but to form and guide it; not only to delineate and establish, but to mould, to a considerable extent, the national character. Consider the momentous results of your high vocation. You speak to the multitude in our crowded cities, and to the scattered few in our rural districts, and are ever impregnating the mass of our teeming population with the seed of moral good or evil” (James, “The Sabbath,” 402).

⁶⁶“By some of these the poison of a concealed, and in others of an undisguised infidelity, is circulated through the length and breadth of our country, and an appetite for irreligion is both created and where it did not previously exist, and is fed where it did. It is calculated that no less than thirty million copies of infidel and demoralising publications, a large proportion of which are issued and sold on the Sabbath-day, are annually circulated among the population of this country; and that one of these Sabbath-breaking, irreligious newspapers consumes nearly one million more stamps yearly than the thirteen religious newspapers” (ibid., 405).

⁶⁷“Surely there is quite enough of Sabbath breaking in London already. Here, while hundreds of thousands never enter a place of worship, every Sunday pleasure vans are crowded with Sabbath breakers, steam-boats are plying up and down the river with thousands” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 29).

⁶⁸“The scene which the Thames presents on a fine Sunday, sufficiently proves the utter inefficiency of these Statutes, and the shameful growth of unchecked abuses. That the watermen on the Thames should be laid under restrictions, and steam-packets and pleasure-boats be allowed to proceed with impunity, is manifestly inequitable and absurd. Clearly, the law ought not to remain in its present state” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 30).

summer.⁷⁰ Winters were taxing as well. In the winter of 1851, the Woolwich Steamboat Company only gave their employees every third Sunday off.⁷¹ Steamboats also posed problems for London residents who lived in vicinity of the Thames River as the boats broadcasted loud music while sailing down the river.⁷²

Railways also disrupted Sabbath observance.⁷³ Thousands of employees and hundreds of passengers were transported from London to previously quiet towns and villages.⁷⁴ One particular railway, the Blackwall Railway Company, was renowned for its noisy decadence.⁷⁵ The railway terminal sat between the East India Docks and Brunswick Pier. Directors of this firm hired a band to play music and stationed it on the Brunswick

⁶⁹J. W. Close, "Lecture IV," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1852), 65: "You see hundreds of both sexes crowded upon the steam-boats."

⁷⁰Holderness, "Lecture VI," 121.

⁷¹"Last winter, the Woolwich Steam-boat Company made an arrangement, by which their employes had a release every third Sunday. This was a step in the right direction, and we hope next winter the directors of both companies will be encouraged to give their servants *every alternate Sabbath-day*" (ibid., 123).

⁷²"The Sabbath is desecrated by profane music. We speak feelingly of this sin, for often in the summer months, over-crowded steamers sweep past our floating Bethel, and attract for a time the attention of the congregation by strains of music anything but sacred; this is illegal as well as highly improper" (ibid., 116-17).

⁷³"Crowded railroads and thronged steamboats proclaim on each returning Sabbath that a large population, pent up and overwrought during the week at the loom and the ledger, are not only eager for air and sunshine, for gaiety and recreation, but also that they will have these things even at the price of despising the commands of God" (Baptist W. Noel, "Preface," in *The Christian Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 7).

⁷⁴"Trains rush across the startled country, robbing thousands of railway servants of their heritage of rest, and pouring influxes of dissipated strangers into quiet villages and distant towns; whence, after roaming and carousing for hours, they are again borne back by the returning train; but not without having given an additional stimulus to all that was evil, and leaving behind them broad sowings of demoralization, destined to spring up and yield a wild produce of corruption and sorrow in future years" (Quinton, *Heaven's Antidote to the Curse of Labour*, 13).

⁷⁵"The Blackwall Railway Directors take the lead in this vice, for they engage a band to play all sorts of airs on a covered platform erected for this nefarious purpose on the Brunswick Pier. It is idle to assert that there is no connection between music and ideas" (Holderness, "Lecture VI," 117).

Pier. The high volume of the drums and trumpets even interfered with the conclusion of sermons at local chapels. Nonconformists felt that the railway unnecessarily disturbed the quiet nature of Sundays in English villages and filled them with the busyness of urban Sabbath desecration.⁷⁶

Omnibuses functioned as a third mode of transportation that upset Sabbath observance. They required employees to labor on Sunday⁷⁷ and they roared through London's streets beginning in the early 1850s.⁷⁸ In 1856, Robert Wallace estimated that 70,000 people were employed on Sunday on the railways and 24,000 labored with either omnibuses or cabs.⁷⁹ A number of these employees were required to arrive at work by 7:00 a.m. and work until midnight, making it impossible for them to attend worship.⁸⁰

Conder commented,

No one can think that the earnings of the cabman and of the omnibus conductor, and of the individuals of various classes, who are robbed of the day of rest for the convenience of the community, afford them any adequate compensation for the

⁷⁶“With the Sunday train of excursionists, we must have inns built, enlarged, or multiplied in the outskirts of our towns, and habits of Sabbath desecration imported into the Sabbath-keeping village. The artisan must breathe fresh country air, and therefore our villager must be enveloped in an atmosphere filled with the moral infection of our towns and cities” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 287). The Sunday trains that ran between London and Brighton contained 46 carriages that could carry up to 1700 passengers and the total length of the train reached nearly half a mile. See Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 291.

⁷⁷M’Owan added that “in this Christian country, abounding with the means of grace, many thousands of coachmen, omnibus and cab drivers, are as effectually debarred from the house of God as though there were no Sabbath kept, no Gospel preached, and no worship performed in the land” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 153).

⁷⁸“The Paddington end of Marylebone parish has long been noted for the darkness and spiritual destitution of its inhabitants; and the fact is fully accounted for on the ground, that that neighbourhood, above most others, abounds with cab and omnibus drivers” (ibid., 160).

⁷⁹Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 20. Hill estimated that, in 1852, there were 10,500 omnibus drivers and, in addition to family members, the total numbered was 40,000. See Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 239.

⁸⁰“[O]ur railway servants and omnibus drivers and conductors have really less Sabbath rest than the slaves of America, that is a reason why a cry should go up to Heaven and to the high places of the land for them” (ibid., 21).

physical wear and tear, the intellectual degradation, and the domestic privations, to which, by what many of them feel to be a hard necessity, they are subjected.⁸¹

While these three modes of transportation benefited London residents on weekdays,

Nonconformists considered their Sunday operation inexcusable.

Acceptable Work on the Sabbath

Nonconformist writers did not oppose all Sunday activity. Certain endeavors such as traveling to church, labor for clergy, caring for animals, instructing children and preparing food were unavoidable. So, they made provision for these actions and categorized them as works of necessity, piety, and mercy.⁸² They argued that these three groups characterized Jesus' Sabbath actions: he ate (work of necessity), attended corporate worship at the synagogue (work of piety), and healed the sick (work of mercy; John 9; Luke 13:11-13).⁸³

For Nonconformists, works of necessity and piety covered numerous activities. Examples of necessary works were defending one's family from burglary or harm, travel to and from church, caring for the sick, preparing food, rescuing an animal, instructing

⁸¹Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 31.

⁸²Sherman also explained that the Sabbath "was given as a rest from all sorts of servile work, and the every-day occupations of life, such as journeying, trading, traveling to market, ploughing, sowing, reaping, writing letters of business, posting accounts, making bargains, and in fact all kinds of men's ordinary callings. The only works sanctioned by divine authority on this day are, works of necessity. . . . works of mercy. . . . works of piety" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 33).

⁸³"In imitating the Saviour's activity, we shall share the Saviour's rest" (John Cox, "Lecture V," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 94). Glyde added, "It is well for the remainder of the day be devoted to acts of kindness and works of Christian philanthropy. . . . Let the rich call on their poorer neighbours, or invite them to their own houses; and thus kind sympathies will be cherished between different classes, and the social inequalities of life be softened by a sense of oneness in Christ" (Jonathan Glyde, "How To Spend Sunday," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [April 1856]: 191).

children to read God's Word, and, when unavoidable, burying the dead.⁸⁴

Nonconformists understood their culture and knew that some people, like clergy, had to work on Sunday. Labor was appropriate for clergy since the Sabbath was a busy day of preaching and administering the sacraments. While in the pulpit, ministers should boldly proclaim the Sabbath's significance⁸⁵ but outside of their ministerial responsibilities, ministers should be the most zealous to honor the Sabbath.⁸⁶ Ministers must insist the Sabbath be properly observed and refuse to recede in spite of criticism.⁸⁷ Something that did not qualify as a work of necessity was the repair of the machinery at a factory. Employers who required their factory workers to mend broken machinery on Sunday violated the Sabbath because the focus of the repair was on earning money instead of serving the poor.⁸⁸

⁸⁴M'Owan, "Several Prevailing Forms," 146.

⁸⁵"Consider, then, your pulpit as one of the high places upon earth, from whence, as an eminence, you may send over a careless and worldly-minded generation the fourth solemn commandment of the Decalogue. Enforce the obligations of this holy day in all their strictness, and in their full extent" (James, "The Sabbath," 406-07).

⁸⁶"Let your precepts be enforced by example, remembering that he who preaches the sanctity of the Sabbath should, beyond all men, observe it in his own conduct" (ibid., 407).

⁸⁷Ibid. "Listen to no compromise. Heed no railing. Shrink from no discussion. Turn your back upon no enemy. Take counsel of no time-serving policy. Disregard, as so many empty, angry gusts of wind, the reproaches cast upon you, as morose enemies to the happiness of the people; and go on steadily and boldly to urge the performance of a duty, in which *you know* are bound up the interests of your country, and of each one of its inhabitants."

⁸⁸M'Owan, "Several Prevailing Forms," 148: "The *owners of factories*, and other public works, greatly err if they think they are justified in repairing their machinery on the Sabbath, under pretence that they thereby prevent their work-people from losing a day's wage. No! Such employers seek their own interest, not that of the poor. . . . In those factories in which the practice of repairing machinery on Sunday is kept up, repairs are continually required; which may be accounted for on the ground that fractures are aggravated by postponement, that repairs on Sunday are often necessarily superficial."

Works of mercy, Nonconformists believed, were permitted, even encouraged on the Sabbath.⁸⁹ Mercy acts included caring for animals and for persons who were sick or poor. Instead of working their animals on the Sabbath, Christians should demonstrate mercy by allowing them to rest.⁹⁰ Showing mercy to other humans, particularly servants should also be a priority.⁹¹ John Cox added, “Sabbath endeavours to be useful in the service of Christ, should have reference to the souls and bodies of our fellow creatures.”⁹² Christians are permitted to minister to man’s physical and spiritual needs. Jesus preached and healed the sick on the Sabbath. He healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 6), the daughter of Abraham who Satan had bound for eighteen years (Luke 13), the poor crippled man of thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda (John 5), and a blind man (John 9). These acts did not violate the Sabbath because they were for God’s glory and man’s benefit. Cox expressed the importance of serving others on the Sabbath:

It is a sad sign when professing Christians put away their religion with their Sunday dress. This is a formality of the worse kind. Such religion is an isolated thing. It resembles a stagnant pool, instead of a flowing brook; but we feel persuaded that if persons acquire the habit of zealous effort on the Lord’s Day, they will be most likely to carry their religion into the week, as opportunity offers.⁹³

⁸⁹Works of mercy, according to Sherman, included “relieving the sick and afflicted, and administering necessary aids to the poor and dying” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 33).

⁹⁰“It is to be a day of bodily rest to the whole house: your animals are to rest, to teach you to be merciful to your beasts” (ibid.).

⁹¹“[Y]our servants are to rest, to have opportunities to serve the Lord on his own day. Your servants have souls—and their souls also are committed to your trust” (ibid.).

⁹²Cox, “Lecture V,” 90.

⁹³Ibid., 92-93. Hannah added, “Christians have the privilege of imparting instruction, comfort, and relief, and to which, in their proper place and order, we are invited to attend, with the expectation of a blessing, not only to others, but to ourselves” (John Hannah, “The Sabbath a Happy Day, Viewed Especially in its Influences, when Rightly Observed, on the Religion of Individuals,” in *The Christian*

Honoring God on the Sabbath included external and inward holiness that were captured in one word—love: “We may be sure then that the *substance* of the fourth commandment is *love*. . . . It was love which gave it, and the loving heart alone can really keep it.”⁹⁴ Christians are loved infinitely by God and must respond to God by loving him and others.

Proper Sabbath Observance

Nonconformist writers laid out a pattern for a proper Sabbath. Preparation began on Saturday evening and the Sabbath’s observance lasted through Sunday evening. On Sunday morning, private and corporate worship was a priority. In the afternoon, physical and spiritual rest served as the theme. Families savored Sunday afternoons because they enjoyed quality time together in God’s Word. When evening arrived, corporate worship attendance, private devotions and spiritual conversations with friends and family were the norm. In the following sections, two overarching principles that characterized the Nonconformist’s Sabbath are explored—physical and spiritual rest. This is followed by a description of what Nonconformist writers presented as the norm for proper Sabbath observance.

Physical and Spiritual Rest

Physical rest on the Sabbath was a non-negotiable for Nonconformists. Adam needed rest in Genesis 2 before sin existed, and all of humanity needs it as well, added

Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 181).

⁹⁴Ibid., 95.

Parsons.⁹⁵ Enjoying physical rest required removing hindrances like unnecessary labor and recreation. Refraining from physical activity served as an act of worship because it acknowledged God's ownership of the day, wrote M'Owan.⁹⁶ Toiling long hours each week clouded man's spiritual senses but the Sabbath refreshed the thirsty soul, wrote Hamilton; the Sabbath was a "noiseless retreat."⁹⁷ Physical rest on the Sabbath proved essential because optimum human health resulted from repose.⁹⁸ Two London physicians, Dr. Farr and Dr. Conquest of Finsbury Square, verified the importance of rest. In a letter to the churchwardens of St. Luke's, the doctors confirmed that it was essential for the human body to have one day of rest in seven since the body cannot function properly without it. In addition, lack of rest shortened man's lifespan and robbed him of vigor in life's final days.⁹⁹ The body required energy to operate effectively and daily labor without a day of rest depleted the body's energy level.

While physical rest was important for Nonconformists, the primary goal of the Sabbath was spiritual rest. Physical rest offered the opportunity for spiritual rest. Ceasing

⁹⁵Parsons, *A Letter*, 12: "The body of Adam was stronger than ours. It knew no infirmity, was enfeebled by no disease; the labour of Paradise was comparatively light; and yet to Adam was given the rest of the seventh day." Parsons also added, "History and physiology show that man's corporeal frame requires rest from toil every seventh day; and the Bible teaches that our heavenly Father, who made us thus frail, has, in pure love and mercy, commanded that one day in seven for the repose and consequent reinvigoration of the body shall be reserved from worldly occupations" (14).

⁹⁶M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 16.

⁹⁷"The Sabbath is that noiseless retreat. It is the day most frequent when the Holy Spirit has revealed the Saviour to the soul. It is the day, more than any other, when the Lord Jesus has said to the weary worlding, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest'" (James Hamilton, "The Adaptation of the Sabbath to Man's Intellectual and Moral Nature," in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 130).

⁹⁸"Nature declares that, although nocturnal rest is refreshing and invigorating to the system, although it apparently equalizes the circulation well, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life" (P. S. I., "The Privileges and Duties of the Christian Sabbath," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 11 [September 1833]: 385).

⁹⁹Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 25.

from labor for physical rejuvenation alone did not fulfill God's intention because it refreshed the body but failed to replenish the soul.¹⁰⁰ God rested on the Sabbath but did not sit idle.¹⁰¹ Therefore, relaxing from work without activity directed towards God made the Sabbath slothful, not holy. Idleness was unacceptable: "Idleness is a sin on any day, much more on the Lord's day."¹⁰² According to Hill, appropriate spiritual rest included worship to God as Creator.¹⁰³ Pausing to celebrate God's creation generated genuine praise to God and prevented idolatry. Through praising God, Christians grew in holiness, which for Nonconformists was the Sabbath's goal.¹⁰⁴ "The bodily resting is but a means to an end, that end being the hallowing of the Sabbath day."¹⁰⁵ Advancing in piety was unattainable apart from spiritual rest. Man needed spiritual rest because he possessed a

¹⁰⁰"A man might rest from all his common labours, but keep no Sabbath" ("Reviews and Brief Notices," *Baptist Magazine* 23 [January 1831]: 19). Hamilton added, "[I]t is the day which has done the most to forward them in faith, and holiness, and meetness for heaven. In the outset of their Christian career, it was on these weekly stepping-stones that they were enabled to get over the Slough of Despond—the difficulties, and fears, and misgivings which encountered their entrance on the life of faith" (Hamilton, "The Adaptation of the Sabbath," 130-31).

¹⁰¹"And what is the rest of God? It is not the mere ceasing from the work of creation, as if wearied with the exercise of that Divine power which He had put forth. No; but it is the Divine refreshment—the holy complacency—the sweet satisfaction and delight which God took in the display of his own perfections and attributes" (William Martin Thompson, "Lecture I," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 16).

¹⁰²M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 170. Glyde added, "Thus let Sunday be spent; not in idleness and listless inactivity, but in the joyful worship of the Father of our risen Saviour" (Glyde, "How To Spend Sunday," 191).

¹⁰³Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 23.

¹⁰⁴"Holiness is its design—holiness is its observance, and holiness is its effect. And what is holiness? It is the essential qualification or fitness for living with God, and enjoying heaven, begun in regeneration and carried forward in sanctification" (Thompson, "Lecture I," 16). Hamilton also wrote, "The general aspect of this holy day which we would encourage, is not that of sternness, of morbid sensitiveness, of crouching will-worship, —but that of settled, solemn stillness. One word would interpret all we desire, as best agreeing it, without and within, —serenity" (Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindicae Sabbaticae*, 178-79).

¹⁰⁵Thompson, "Lecture I," 10: "The rest of the body, though profitable in its measure, is not the fullest of the blessing. This rest, though needful, as clearing the day from worldly and distracting occupations, and therefore so far well, is not the one thing needful; and if separated, as it too often is, from the essential principle of the day, which is its sanctification, it is like all other blessings conferred upon man, liable to be perverted to evil uses, by affording the opportunity of idleness for sin."

soul in addition to a body. Failure to nurture the soul equated man with animals who have a body without a soul.¹⁰⁶

The chief means of spiritual rest for Nonconformists was meditating on God's word and his works.¹⁰⁷ This practice offered spiritual nourishment and distinguished individuals controlled by the Spirit of God from others who professed to be Christians. Sherman summarized,

As physicians advise diseased patients to take exercise—breathe a pure air—and go to the sea-side; so allow me to advise you, Follow the plough of self-examination—breathe the air of communion with God—stand on Calvary, that hill of meditation—and take in the gales of the Spirit from the ocean of Christ's love; —this exercise shall make you long for the services of God's house, there to see his power and glory.¹⁰⁸

A particular subject worthy of meditation was redemption. Christians must not consider Christ's redemption in general but also personally.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 22-23. The editors of the *Evangelical Magazine* added, "But the Sabbath is not only a temporal rest for the body, but a spiritual rest for the soul" (P. S. I., "The Privileges and Duties of the Christian Sabbath," 385). Wallace also added, "And the typical Sabbath is rest in God, in his communion and fellowship, as well as rest from ordinary work. And instead of considering rest from work as the ultimate end which is realized and enjoyed in the spiritual and united worship of the Almighty. Man is so great and so noble a being, that there is no rest, no genuine Sabbatism for him, but in communion with God as his Father, and in the fellowship of the Christian brotherhood" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 23).

¹⁰⁷"Another portion of the day may wisely be given to solitude, and to retired meditation, study, and prayer. Of every day some part should be thus spent. Without it, it is hard to be a man, much more a Christian man; but on the Sunday, a larger part than usual should be thus consecrated" (Glyde, "How To Spend Sunday," 190). Close noted, "The hurry and bustle of life, combined with our natural apathy in things related to God, tend to banish thoughts of Redemption from our minds; but when the Sabbath returns, we are again reminded of these holy themes" (Close, "Lecture IV," 67).

¹⁰⁸Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 41. Hannah also wrote, "It is in these exercises, annexed to the offices of public worship, or intermingled with them, that a Christian man may inspect his own state, note his failings and declensions, reconsider the truth of God in its adaptation to his particular wants, and obtain, by this means, too, a renewal of his spiritual strength" (Hannah, "The Sabbath a Happy Day," 180).

¹⁰⁹"That Christ Jesus the Lord should die for you—for sinners; —not for sinful angels, but sinful men—that he should pass by golden vessels, and stoop to vessels of clay—that he should die numbered with the transgressors, and be made a sin offering for you—that he should love you without any hope of being loved by you, till he shed abroad his love in your heart, and made you comely with his

Spiritual rest included exercising the mind. During the workweek, mental training for citizens was often neglected due to the rigor of physical work. But the Sabbath was to be a time of mental engagement. The human mind was to be challenged.¹¹⁰ The Sabbath offered a remedy for intellectual lethargy: “From the din of competition and the dust of secularity, it is a calm asylum; and to the mind which was growing torpid it is a brisk restorative. It breaks the eagle’s chain, and sends it up again to its native sky. It gives freedom to cramped or imprisoned faculties, and encourages the thoughts to attempt their loftiest flight.”¹¹¹ In order to stretch the mind, subjects such as the existence of God, creation, the attributes of God, man’s fall into sin, the consequences of sin, the incarnation, the life the death of Christ, and eternal life must be considered.¹¹² Reading biographies and Christian history also provided a path to stimulate the mind.

Interestingly, one Nonconformist allowed an exception to the expectation that Christians engage their minds on Sunday for persons who employed their minds during the week through study or business. In this case, he believed the mind should enjoy total rest on Sunday. Man’s mental capacity was not an Artesian well that retains an indefinite

comeliness—that he should die so willingly for each a sinner as you. . . . O how sweetly is the Sabbath-day spent, when he is the object of delight!” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 42-43).

¹¹⁰“Sabbatic rest has its dangers. It may degrade the mind while it refreshes the body. It would be strange, indeed, if all Scripture should denounce what this day, according to some, ever encouraged. Idleness in itself disgusts, but its progeny is as loathsome as prolific. Yet a man, that would shrink from work, will remorselessly grovel in sloth. It is a singular delusion that deems listlessness and inanity, a tribute worthy of God. Yet some act as if the Sabbath were the season when man, like some brutes in winter, should hibernate” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 320).

¹¹¹Hamilton, “The Adaptation of the Sabbath,” 127. William Brock added, “We must read, we must think, we must meditate, we must pray. Things spiritual are to be compared with things spiritual. We are ourselves to go on to know the Lord. The Sabbath is especially the time to do this” (William Brock, *Three Sermons about the Sabbath* [London: Cooke & Whitley, 1853], 55).

¹¹²Hamilton, “The Adaptation of the Sabbath,” 128.

supply of water, wrote Hamilton.¹¹³ Rather, it was like a land-spring well that contained a limited supply. Once depleted, it was harmful to continue trying to extract water because the pump suffered damage. Hamilton explained, “There is a difference of intellectual activity, but the most powerful mind is a land-spring after all; and those who wish to preserve their thoughts fresh, pure, and pellucid, will put on the Sabbath padlock.”¹¹⁴ Thus, for those with intellectually demanding jobs, intellectual employment must cease or the mind will suffer from overexertion.

Proper Anticipation of the Sabbath

Nonconformist writers believed that honoring the Sabbath meant that one must anticipate and prepare for its arrival. They presented the Sabbath as a time to be yearned for—an extended time of fellowship with God. They were encouraged by the psalmist’s words in Psalm 84:10—“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” The Sabbath was the best and most delightful day of the week.

Nonconformists believed that Christians must expect its arrival and lament its passing.¹¹⁵

John Weir explained, “And let none say that we desire to make the Sabbath a day of

¹¹³“The mind is not an Artesian well, but a land-spring. The supply is limited. If you pump continually, the water will grow turbid; and if after it grows turbid you continue still to work it, you will not increase the quantity, and you will spoil the pump” (ibid., 129).

¹¹⁴Ibid., 128-29. Hill also noted, “Let the labourer pause on the seventh day, and there is a restorative energy in the human constitution, which will enable the operative to renew his work, on the Monday following, with fresh energy. But let him continue his toil without intermission, and the ill-consequences are multifarious and complex” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 270).

¹¹⁵The early Victorian Sunday for Nonconformists was not gloomy; it was a day of rest and joy. See G. M. Young, *Early Victorian England 1830-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 1:243.

gloom and not of gladness.”¹¹⁶ The Sabbath was designed for supreme pleasure, insisted Richard Winter Hamilton.¹¹⁷ Wallace observed that the Sabbath was “designed as the festal day of Paradise itself; the day in which man in innocence should rest from his work.”¹¹⁸

Nonconformists insisted that Christians should anticipate the Sabbath just as they eagerly wait for heaven. In fact, a person’s view of the Sabbath reflected his or her opinion of heaven. Unfortunately, not every Christian longed for the Sabbath’s appearance. Baines learned that some persons felt the Sabbath was boring and

¹¹⁶John Weir, *The New Crystal Palace and the Christian Sabbath* (London: N. H. Cotes, 1852), 17. Ivimey added, “Surely I need add nothing to prove, that if the pious Israelites under the ceremonial law, experienced such high and distinguished enjoyments in the worship of God on the Sabbath-day, that Christians now, if they are ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,’ may expect to participate still higher delights, because we possess that in reality which they saw only in prospect—the spiritual benefits secured to believers by the resurrection of Christ” (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 14-15).

¹¹⁷“O Sabbath! Needed for a world of innocence—without thee what would be a world of sin! There would be no pause for consideration, no check to passion, no remission of toil, no balm of care! He who had withheld thee would have forsaken the earth! Without thee, He had never given to us the Bible, the Gospel, the Spirit! We salute thee, as thou comest to us in the name of the Lord—radiant in the sunshine of that dawn which broke over creation’s achieved work—marching downward in the track of time, a pillar of refreshing cloud and of guiding flame—interweaving with all thy light new beams of discovery and promise—until thou standest forth more fair than when reflected in the dews, and imbibed by the flowers of Eden—more awful than when the trumpet rung of thee on Sinai! The Christian Sabbath! . . . It is a day of heaven upon earth! Life’s sweetest calm, poverty’s best birth-right, labour’s only rest! Nothing has such a hoar of antiquity on it! Nothing contains in it such a history! Nothing draws along with it such a glory! Nurse of virtue, seal of truth! The household’s richest patrimony, the nation’s noblest safeguard! The pledge of peace, the fountain of intelligence, the strength of law! The oracle of instruction, the ark of mercy! The patent of our manhood’s spiritual greatness! The harbinger of our soul’s sanctified perfection! The glory of religion, the watch-tower of immortality! The ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reacheth to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it!” (Richard Winter Hamilton, “The Law of the Sabbath, the Proper Statute of Religion, Identical in Principle and Invariable in Force through all Times and Dispensations,” in *The Christian Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 344-45). Ivimey stated that if “the Sabbath-day is properly observed in the worship of God; high spiritual mental enjoyments shall be experienced, and that these blessings are infallibly secured by the faithful promise of the infinite Jehovah” (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 8).

¹¹⁸Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 5. Noel also noted, “Meditation on the Scriptures, prayer, religious conversation, the thought of God, are all irksome to irreligious persons; and you might as well do away with all these duties to please such persons as do away with the Sabbath. The remedy for each man who finds the Sabbath burdensome, is to turn to God, and to take delight in His service, not to ask Government for pleasure. Christians do not find the Sabbath burdensome, and every man ought to be a Christian” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 34).

melancholy.¹¹⁹ So, he responded, what could supersede meditating on the character, word and patterns of God while thinking about the responsibilities and dreams of man? Ivimey agreed and added that the Sabbath was worthy of man's whole heart and energy.¹²⁰

Baines felt sorry for those who only gave an hour or two to God on the Sabbath out of ritualism. Most of all, he pitied their view of eternity, which they quickly approached.¹²¹

Hannah believed that anticipating the Sabbath was like waiting for heaven. In heaven, Christians will be released from worldly concerns in order to worship God.¹²² Thompson agreed: "[T]he Sabbath is a blessed emblem of heaven, where that spiritual rest is enjoyed in its fullness."¹²³ The Sabbath offered Christians similar freedom from worldly apprehensions.

Listening to the preached word in corporate worship reminded Christians that one day they would sit at Jesus' feet and worship him. Hearing spiritual songs prompted the believer to ponder the day when he or she will join the throng in heaven to praise to God. Thompson explained,

Can that day, which recalls thoughts like [listening to the Word preached and sung] be otherwise than dear to the hearts of the people of God? Can they do otherwise than love that day, which brings them as it were into contact with heaven while here

¹¹⁹“When we are told that to devote one day in seven exclusively to religion is to render it gloomy, and that such an employment is only worthy of ascetics or hypocrites, we stand amazed, and divided between indignation and pity” (Edward Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston: on the Attempts Making in Parliament to Secularize the Sabbath* [London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1856], 8).

¹²⁰“As then he has *made* the Sabbath-day for us Christians, for our observance, our enjoyment, and advantage, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 16).

¹²¹Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 9.

¹²²Hannah, “The Sabbath a Happy Day,” 167.

¹²³Thompson, “Lecture I,” 18.

below, and reminds them of that eternal Sabbath which shall be the measure of the duration of their full and blissful resting in God.¹²⁴

Hannah also stated that Christians can honor God daily, but Sunday was unique because all worldly concerns were quarantined in order to focus on God.¹²⁵ Eagerness for the Sabbath was fitting, wrote Nonconformists, because it awarded refreshment and sheer delight to humanity. Just as the water at Elim revived the Israelites in the desert when Moses led them, so the Sabbath rejuvenated Christians. God blessed Sabbath observers with physical, emotional, and spiritual revival, wrote Wallace.¹²⁶ Sherman declared, “O blessed day that brings such pleasures! Hail it as the day which the Lord hath made. Call it a delight. To a spiritual mind these are real delights.”¹²⁷ Since the Sabbath signified a snapshot of heaven, it should be a delightful day.

¹²⁴Ibid., 19: “When that blessed morn dawns it reminds them of the dawn of the eternal Sabbath of God; and when they go up to the house of God, they remember that glorious day when they who have come out of great tribulation, shall come body and soul into the presence of God and the Lamb; when they sit under the preached gospel, and hear the voice of the shepherd leading and feeding their souls, they are reminded of the day when the Lamb himself shall feed them and lead them.”

¹²⁵“When that day dawns upon the Christian disciple, he is taught by duty, and invited by privilege, to wake, not to the perplexities which so often beset and obstruct his daily path, but to a season of peace—to a cessation from all that might otherwise embarrass and disturb his meditations on better things” (Hannah, “The Sabbath a Happy Day,” 169). Hill added, the Sabbath “is a grand instrument in the hands of the believer, by which he may proclaim ‘glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men.’ It is a fearful instrument, when perverted, of self-immolation at the altar of vice, or of spreading infidelity and immorality among the masses of our countrymen. Deprive the Church of a Sabbath, and the Gospel is dumb, and its powers of aggression are paralysed” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 176).

¹²⁶Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 29. M’Owan acknowledged that “the virtues and self-denying labours of the Lord’s people, the wonders of creation, and felicities of the heavenly rest, should be the themes of our Sabbath-day discourse” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 156).

¹²⁷Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 36. Glyde added. “The book of God should be our companion, and other books in which the works of God are described, or the lives of good men are recorded, and their hearts speak to ours. An hour thus spent every Sunday will impart tenderness to piety and stability to character not otherwise attainable” (Glyde, “How To Spend Sunday,” 190).

Proper Preparation for the Sabbath

Anticipation for the Sabbath led to proper preparation. In order to plan, Nonconformists encouraged Christians to rest on Saturday evening and wake up early on Sunday morning. M’Owan wrote, “[A]nticipate the Sabbath, and do not allow yourselves to be so immersed in worldly pursuits that it shall come upon you unawares.”¹²⁸ Workers who were forced to labor on Saturday should cease early in the afternoon if possible so the remainder of the day may be spent enjoying God’s creation.¹²⁹ Taking a leisurely walk and admiring nature while breathing fresh air served as good training for the Sabbath.¹³⁰ After a walk, spending time alone with God also equipped the heart.¹³¹ Baines added, “There is scarcely a better usage of English life than the Saturday’s household preparation for the Sunday’s rest.”¹³² When Saturday evening arrived, it must be spent in quietness, avoiding socializing with friends unless to pray and engage in edifying conversations, noted James.¹³³

On Sunday mornings, Nonconformists believed that Christians should spend time in private prayer before corporate worship. It was important to rise early and not

¹²⁸M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 144.

¹²⁹“Unhappily, the modern habits of trade render this all but impossible with many, who are kept hard at work till almost, if not quite sabbath morning, and then retire to rest so jaded, that they find it difficult to rise early next day for the worship of God” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 95).

¹³⁰Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 24.

¹³¹“But where time *can* be commanded, it ought to be, and an extra half hour or hour spent in the closet on the eve of the sabbath, communing with God, the Bible” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 95).

¹³²Edward Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes* (Leeds: Edward Baines and Sons, 1855), 5.

¹³³“That evening ought not to be a visiting time, except it be such visits as would prepare the mind for sabbath occupations. Should a few pious friends in the same neighborhood determine to meet at that time for prayer and Christian communion, this would be not only proper in itself, but a useful method of preparing for the exercises of the sacred day” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 95).

squander the precious morning hours through excessive sleep.¹³⁴ As soon as the sun rose, Christians must rise and reflect on the sacrificial death of Christ and his glorious resurrection through Scripture reading and prayer. M’Owan commented on the importance of practicing a proper Sabbath on Sunday morning: “As soon as we awake, we are called to make a new election between God and mammon, between things divine and thoughts of earth, between holy self-denial and fleshly indulgence; and our subsequent spirituality and power depend, in a high degree, on the promptitude with which we choose the former, and reject the latter.”¹³⁵ When engaging in prayer, noted M’Owan, Christians must intercede for the church, their country, the world, and for their ministers so that they may shepherd the flock and see souls saved.¹³⁶ Failure to properly train on Sunday morning robbed Christians of spiritual value from the sermon at church.

Oversleeping was unacceptable because it interfered with private devotional time, breakfast, and it often led to tardiness at church.¹³⁷ Arriving to church late would distract other worshipers and rob them of the blessing of singing hymns to God.¹³⁸ Sherman explained, “Rise as early as you do on other days. If you had to go to market, attend a fair, accomplish some urgent business, or spend the day in pleasure, you would

¹³⁴“Early rising is essential to a devotional spirit” (ibid., 98).

¹³⁵M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 173-74.

¹³⁶Ibid., 178.

¹³⁷“If we secure no portion of time for private prayer before breakfast, we can rarely get any through the day. The sabbath is the last day we should allow to be abridged by lengthened slumbers” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 98).

¹³⁸“To this sad and most injurious practice of *late-coming* I beg especial attention. By it the more punctual worshippers are disturbed; the minister discouraged; and God’s service condemned. It *might* and it *ought* to be remedied at once” (Cox, “Lecture V,” 100).

make an effort to rise.”¹³⁹ Certainly, if a prince were coming to visit one’s house there would be multiple preparations made to anticipate his arrival. Likewise, God desired a full day with his people.¹⁴⁰ Nonconformists emphasized the importance of spiritual preparation because failure to do so led to uncaught spiritual truth.¹⁴¹ Christians who were not properly prepared might attend corporate worship and miss experiencing the presence of God and hearing from his Word.¹⁴²

Corporate Worship and the Complete Day

Nonconformists placed great value on attendance at corporate worship. Private devotions must be accompanied by worship with the church body, wrote Cox.¹⁴³ Jesus modeled both. He prayed privately in the morning (Mark 1:35) and attended the Synagogue on the Sabbath. Benefits of corporate worship were freedom from worldly cares, a heightened focus on God, encouragement from the Scriptures, and edifying conversations with other Christians.

Once at church, man’s attention rested on God. The Christian should arrive at church with a broken and contrite heart. One’s eyes must avoid aimlessly wandering

¹³⁹Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 38. Cox added, “As Ministers are preparing through the week for the Sabbath, so should the people ever keep it in view, and endeavour to act with reference to it” (Cox, “Lecture V,” 103-04).

¹⁴⁰Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 37.

¹⁴¹“Can he who goes prayerless to the sanctuary expect to be blessed in it” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 98-99)?

¹⁴²M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 117.

¹⁴³Cox, “Lecture V,” 90. Hannah wrote, “Is it no privilege, no blessing, to repair to the Lord’s house, to mingle with the companies of His worshippers, to engage in singing His high praises, to unite in prayer and supplication, to hear the truths of Holy Scripture expounded and applied, to commemorate our Saviour’s dying love, and to attend all the other ordinances which beautify and bless our Christian sanctuaries?” (Hannah, “The Sabbath a Happy Day,” 179).

throughout the sanctuary. Attending corporate worship in order to criticize the sermon or minister was inappropriate and revealed a heart unprepared to keep the Sabbath.¹⁴⁴ Ivimey explained, “Be assured of this, that a spiritual mind and a devoted heart and circumspect conduct, are essential qualifications for ‘keeping the Sabbath day.’”¹⁴⁵ God was not honored through appearance alone. Joining a church service with mistaken motives, such as for social or entertainment purposes, was inappropriate. M’Owan explained, “For though a good motive cannot sanctify a bad action, a corrupt motive does vitiate a service which is otherwise correct.”¹⁴⁶ God searched people’s hearts. Some Christians observed the Sabbath externally through refraining from work, attending church, conducting family devotions, and spending time with their family, but they neglected an inward devotion to God.¹⁴⁷ Their Sabbath routine was not done to glorify God but to impress their neighbors and atone for sins committed during the previous week.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴“In nothing, I believe, are professing Christians more deficient than in their manner *of*, and motives *for* attending the public means of grace” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 99).

¹⁴⁵Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 8: “God demands the heart in his service; if the whole heart be not carried into the public worship of God with sincerity, and godly simplicity, with evangelical and ardent piety, God does not consider himself to be *honoured* but rather insulted” (10). Cox added, “Christ should be served by inward and external worship on the Lord’s-day. The meditations of the closet, —the worship of the family, —the prayers and praises of the sanctuary, should all be attended to: all done heartily as unto God; all done in the name of our Lord Jesus” (Cox, “Lecture V,” 90).

¹⁴⁶M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 106.

¹⁴⁷“Observe, it is not enough to go to church or chapel and hear a sermon, for we may attend there without worshipping; and hearing a sermon is at best only part of worship. We should assemble with our fellow-Christians in brotherly love, and offer to God, as our Father, the homage of penitent, loving, and joyful hearts” (Glyde, “How To Spend Sunday,” 190).

¹⁴⁸Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 14. A letter to the editor in the *Baptist Magazine* listed the following modes of profaning the Sabbath in 1830: “The common and favourite modes of profaning the Lord’s day in this way, are spending our time in dress, in ministering to a luxurious appetite, in walking or riding for amusement, in writing letters of friendship, in visiting, in reading books which are

Nonconformist writers also addressed Sunday afternoons and evenings. The entire day must be devoted to God.¹⁴⁹ Attending public worship was expected, but it did not fulfill all the requirements for a proper Sabbath.¹⁵⁰ Following corporate worship, God's Word must be digested in the afternoon and applied to life. This implied avoiding vain conversation with friends. Instead, Christians must retire to their prayer closets at home and plead with God to water the seed that was sown that morning so that it might bear spiritual fruit.¹⁵¹ "The *day*, the *whole day*," exclaimed M'Owan, "is his, and he commands us to keep it holy. He scorns a divided allegiance; and it is at our peril if we divide its hours between his worship and the service of mammon. If we mar the type, we dishonor its Author, we destroy its efficacy, and we forfeit our interest in its heavenly antitype."¹⁵² Commerce and leisure had no place on Sunday afternoons because they did not contribute to devotion to God. Hill explained, "A whole Sabbath, or no Lord's-day. A partial Sabbath, is a total holiday with the multitude."¹⁵³ Noel agreed that the afternoon

not of a religious, but merely of a decent character, and ultimately those which are formed to be the means of amusement" (Philemon, "The Claims of the Sabbath," *Baptist Magazine* 22 [March 1830]: 103).

¹⁴⁹"To divide a Sabbath-day is to mutilate it; it is scarcely a diminution, it amounts to an absolute transformation of God's institution" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 316).

¹⁵⁰Sherman explained, "Public worship is but a part of Sabbath-sanctification, and if private devotion and spiritual conversation be neglected, how is it possible that the soul can prosper?" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 27). Hannah also remarked, "The more Christians value and use the Sabbath for its own peculiar purposes, the more will they themselves prosper in spiritual attainments—the more will the Church in general prosper—and the more will heedless persons be likely to be impressed by the force of example, with some sense of the sanctity and happiness of a day which they have so criminally disregarded and profaned" (Hannah, "The Sabbath a Happy Day," 184).

¹⁵¹Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 52.

¹⁵²M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 111.

¹⁵³Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 317. Parsons added, "Now, to keep the Sabbath *one half* of the day and violate it the other, is to furnish but a very poor proof that we feel any deference for the Fourth Commandment" (Parsons, *A Letter*, 6).

should be spent in prayer and meditation.¹⁵⁴ The other six days of the week required labor for the entire day. No one went to work Monday through Saturday and expected to work half a day. Baines added, “And be it never forgot, that the DIVINE claim is for a whole Sabbath, not for half or a quarter of a Sabbath.”¹⁵⁵ Spending the morning in corporate worship did not justify enjoying the afternoon pleasure seeking or conducting business affairs.¹⁵⁶ Based on the fourth commandment, Parsons asked the Earl of Derby if he would be satisfied if he gave orders to his servants and they only kept half of them? Or, would he want his food only cooked partly and not wholly? Certainly, the Earl would not answer yes to any of these questions, wrote Parsons.¹⁵⁷

Once Christians arrived at home following corporate worship, Sunday afternoon should be filled with spiritual conversation, prayer, and reflection. Appropriate discussions at home centered upon the “grace of redemption, the kind interventions of Providence, the progress of God’s work in the earth, the virtues of the Lord’s people, and

¹⁵⁴“The whole Sabbath employed earnestly is not too long for the duty of adding spiritual to secular knowledge. The man, who after hearing a sermon in the morning, gives the afternoon to pleasure, may spend the Sabbaths of many years without either an accurate or full acquaintance with the Bible” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 9).

¹⁵⁵Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 8.

¹⁵⁶“To rob God of a part of His day in private, after we have been professing to worship Him in public, is rank hypocrisy; it is to enact the sin of those deceivers who called Jesus ‘Lord, Lord,’ but did not the things He commanded them; and if we become partners in their guilt, we shall assuredly be made sharers in their punishment” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 141).

¹⁵⁷“My Lord, would you be satisfied that your commands to your servants be *half* broken and *half* kept? Are you pleased with your coachman if he drives you *half* way to church on the Sabbath when your command is to be driven *all* the way? Do you like to have your will in any other particular but *half* done? Would you be pleased to have your hunters and racehorses but *half* fed and *half* groomed, or your food but *half* cooked? Yet we may ask, Who is the Earl of Derby, that his commands should be *perfectly* obeyed to the very letter, while the God of Heaven, at the instance of this same Earl of Derby, is to be satisfied with only a moiety of that obedience which he has enjoined in the Scripture?” (Parsons, *A Letter*, 6).

the beauties of creation.”¹⁵⁸ The Sabbath also offered quietness along with the privilege to pray and draw close to God.¹⁵⁹ While praying, Sabbath supplications must consist of reflection, confession, and meditation on Jesus’ sacrificial death.¹⁶⁰ In addition to praying, the most impactful aspects of the sermon must be contemplated and rehearsed.

Families and the Sabbath

Nonconformists believed that the home served as a spiritual training ground on the Sabbath. Home was a place where husbands and wives sharpened each other through Sabbath observance. If necessary, husbands must practice self-denial concerning a warm meal and alone time in order that their wives may also participate in corporate worship.¹⁶¹ Parents also taught their children how to properly observe the Sabbath.¹⁶² Hamilton

¹⁵⁸M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 185.

¹⁵⁹Hamilton added that while the Sabbath is a closet in itself, prayer is a closet within a closet that allows one to shut out the world and be very near to God. See Hamilton, “The Adaptation of the Sabbath,” 123-33. James added, “Before the day quite departs, and sleep drowns in oblivion, or only keeps alive in dreams, the solemn engagements and topics which have filled its fleeting hours, we should be found again in our closets, reviewing the whole, and pouring over all the silent and dewy influence of prayer: this being done, then taking care, as the last duty of the day, as we lay our head upon our pillow, and resign ourselves to slumber, to fall asleep with the petition, ‘Seal instruction upon my heart, O God, and let my profiting appear unto all men’” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 103).

¹⁶⁰“[B]ut to spend the Sunday afternoon in hearing music in a suffocating crowd, instead of reflection on what has been heard and read in the morning, is to ensure the loss of the greater part” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 10).

¹⁶¹“Let not the husband deprive the wife of her day of repose by requiring her to give up her attendance upon public worship, or if detained at home by young children, to endure the additional privation of losing her opportunities of private and solitary devotion, in order to gratify his palate by a warm dinner. Nor should the husband refuse to take his turn in looking after the house and the young family at home, that his wife may have an opportunity to enjoy the refreshing influence of public worship, and ‘the communion of saints’” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 105).

¹⁶²“PARENTS, read, mark, learn, and tremble. Yours is a delightful, but, at the same time, an awful duty. It is on the family hearth, and around the family altar and table, that the citizen and the Christian should be trained. The family is, to a considerable extent, the mould of both the Church and the State.” (James, “The Sabbath,” 407).

explained, “The remembrance of the Sabbath-day is the life of Christian families.”¹⁶³ God was not honored through a couple’s attendance at Sunday’s services when they neglected their parental duties at home, wrote Sherman.¹⁶⁴ As the spiritual leader of the home, the father needed to instruct his children concerning the Sabbath’s importance just as Moses¹⁶⁵ did when he taught the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai.¹⁶⁶ On Sundays, dads could fulfill their roles as husbands and fathers whereas on weekdays they functioned mostly as an employee.¹⁶⁷ Certainly, both mother and father should read God’s Word to their children on weekdays but Sunday allowed families to go deeper and ponder God’s truth.¹⁶⁸ If parents would teach their children the Bible, Nonconformists believed the children had a greater opportunity to become godly.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindicae Sabbaticae*, 204: “Its forgetting is not seldom the decay of their fortunes, and is always the degeneracy of their descendants” (204-05). Hamilton added, “Its forgetting is not seldom the decay of their fortunes, and is always the degeneracy of their descendants.”

¹⁶⁴Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 39.

¹⁶⁵“Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to the LORD” (Exod 16:23).

¹⁶⁶“The Sabbath raises him in his own estimation, and all that is endearing in the society of wife and children, acts as a stimulant to diligence and sobriety. He goes to the house of prayer to hear the duties of a father to his child, and the fearful consequences of neglect of religious training, and the evil effects of bad parental example. It will suggest to him his own lack of early advantages, and awaken the desire to have his children religiously and morally educated” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 228).

¹⁶⁷“On this day [the Sabbath] he sees and becomes sensible to the necessities, temporal and spiritual, of his family. His sympathies are awakened; and wants, now perceived, are to be supplied by diligence and self-denial in the ensuing week of toil. He feels that he is a husband—a father, on this day, as on others that he is a labourer—a mechanic—a servant” (ibid., 227-28).

¹⁶⁸M’Owan noted that children and teenagers commonly violated the Sabbath through avoiding corporate worship, performing unnecessary work allocated for servants, reading newspapers and novels and taking pleasure trips. See M’Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 130.

¹⁶⁹“Juvenile delinquency generally commences in some form of sabbath profanation; whereas early piety is uniformly fostered and confirmed by conscientious sabbath-keeping. If we begin early, and persevere steadily, in setting a consistent example before our children, supplying them, at the same time, with Scriptural instruction, we may confidently hope that, by the blessing of God, they will choose him as their portion, and account his sabbath a delight” (ibid.).

In addition to reading Scripture parents could recite hymns, demonstrate pure love, and ensure that family time honored God, wrote M’Owan.¹⁷⁰ But, if parents neglected this stewardship, they quietly encouraged their children to live a life of wickedness, wrote Sherman.¹⁷¹ Children should witness their parent’s longing for the Sabbath as if the couple were hosting a prince in their house.¹⁷² A family that properly observed the Sabbath, wrote James, was a lovely sight:

One of the loveliest scenes which ever poetry has delighted to portray, is that of a Christian family amidst cleanliness, neatness, and order, keeping holy the Sabbath, where the parents, by an intelligent and cheerful religion, blended with kindness, gentleness, and love, diffuse an air of peace and delight over the circle of happy beings that rejoice around their board, bend before their altar, or pour out their gleeful, yet chastened feelings round their chair.¹⁷³

Nonconformist writers believed that children who received spiritual nurturing from their parents normally matured into godly men and women. The Sabbath offered children the

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 129-30. James added, “The afternoon should not be spent in lounging over the table and the wine, but partly in meditation and private prayer; partly in catechising the children; and partly, where it can be enjoyed, in domestic psalmody and thanksgiving. Every family should be a choir, where there is a capacity for vocal music, and, in order to do this, it would be desirable that singing should be more cultivated than it is” (James, *Pastoral Addresses*, 102-03).

¹⁷¹Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 39. Parents who attended church received help from Sunday School teachers who also taught children. James noted that “whether they shall be consigned as a prey to the wolves, the vultures, and the serpents of infidelity, which are ever waiting and watching to devour them; or shall be gathered under the eye and arm of the good Shepherd and Bishop of souls, depends much upon you. Be diligent, anxious, earnest, and persevering in teaching them to keep holy the Sabbath-day. Be it one great object in all your instructions to impress this upon them. Read to them, and hear *them* read, in the most devout and solemn manner, all the passages which relate to the Lord’s-day” (James, “The Sabbath,” 409).

¹⁷²M’Owan added that “we ought by precept and example; by the exercise of our authority; by the lure of our love; by the dread of our displeasure; and by a frequent and faithful exposition of the law, the promises, and the threatening of God—to encourage, persuade, and constrain them to spend it in public worship, private prayer, religious reading, and godly discourse. Our own peace and our children’s salvation are intimately involved in this matter” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 151).

¹⁷³James, “The Sabbath,” 408.

chance to have meaning spiritual conversations with their parents.¹⁷⁴ By hearing God's Word, children were strengthened and prepared for their enormous and permanent family in heaven. Nonconformists taught that a child's submission to his or her parent's practice of the Sabbath and participation in family prayer and devotions made the child more likely to obey his future employer and the government.

Conclusion

Nonconformists gave special attention to the Sabbath and its proper practice; it was a major focus in their writing and preaching. The Sabbath was so vitally important to them that they believed everyone should observe it correctly. It was a day of sheer delight and every Christian should long for its arrival.

¹⁷⁴“The Sabbath thus becomes the foster-parent of the offspring of those in the lower walks of life, as well as a tutor to the rude or uncultivated mechanic. It is, indeed, the greatest as well as the noblest, educational, sanitary, and moral institute that has ever been devised” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 228).

CHAPTER 4

BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Introduction

Embedded in many Nonconformist Sabbatarian works was a treatment of its implications for nations and individuals. Nonconformists were keenly aware of the Sabbath's neglect in European countries and they believed that serious repercussions had stemmed from violating God's holy day. Concern for England's integrity and prosperity propelled Nonconformists to devote attention to its national consequences.

Nonconformists saw from Scripture and through life experience that God rewards individuals and reproves them based on their Sabbath behavior. As a result, they alerted their countrymen about the seriousness of Sabbath observance. The following pages will present Nonconformity's perspective on societal and individual blessings and curses that flow from Sabbath observance.

Societal Blessings and Curses

Nonconformist writers believed that honoring the Sabbath was more than a Christian issue; it was a matter of national health.¹ Correct Sabbath observance yielded

¹“The Sabbath is for nations collectively, as well as for the Churches, families, and individuals of which it is composed” (John Angell James, “The Sabbath—Its Religious Observance a National Duty and a National Blessing,” in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 391). Micaiah Hill added, “To have our shops closed, our factories silent, our ‘land enjoying her Sabbaths,’ our streets now deserted, now crowded with serious, if not altogether devout multitudes, wending their way to the house of prayer and instruction; constitute a standing, solemn witness of God's presence among a nation. The extent to which this exists, and the degree

God's blessing upon society;² its neglect brought curses from God. According to Micaiah Hill, "[I]t will be impossible to deny that Sabbath observance is a national blessing—its desecration, a national curse."³ Nonconformists warned residents of the impending domestic danger that accompanied Sabbath.⁴ Violating the Sabbath removed God's blessing and brought his judgment upon society.⁵ If England chose faithfulness to the Sabbath, it could avoid national and moral destruction.⁶

of simplicity, purity, and spirituality to which it is conducted; in that degree and to that extent is God our God" (Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man: or, the Origin, History, and Principles of the Lord's Day* [London: John Farquhar Shaw, 1856], 188). During the Great Exhibition, a prominent London social attraction in 1851, the doors remained closed on Sundays. To other nations, this act displayed England's commitment to honor God on Sunday. John Weir explained how proper Sabbath observance reflected the nation's integrity: "England thus solemnly proclaimed to assembled nations that she exalted the spiritual above the material—the eternal above the temporal—the immortal above the perishable—in a word, by this public acknowledgment of the Divine law, the Royal Commissioners, in the nation's name, put honour on the Sabbath of God" (John Weir, *The New Crystal Palace and the Christian Sabbath* [London: N. H. Cotes, 1852], 4).

²Sabbath observance "is politically beneficial to a country, and highly conducive to the social welfare of all classes of the community" (*Patriot* [February 27, 1833]: 68). Hannah explained, "The seventh day, then, or the Sabbath, was designed in its original institution to be a *blessed* day, and a day of *blessing* to all who should duly observe it" (John Hannah, "The Sabbath a Happy Day, Viewed Especially in its Influence, when Rightly Observed, on the Religion of Individuals," in *The Christian Sabbath Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Edinburgh: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 164).

³Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 252: "I implore you to consider your ways, and, by the prevalence of a spirit of national religion, raise a conductor over your country, which, when the tempest shall rage, will protect her from the flashes of Heaven's fiery indignation. You would be patriots: remember that the truest patriotism is not that which passeth off under the name of glory, but which standeth by religion as strongest pillar of the state, and by the observance of the Sabbath, as the main prop of religion" (413).

⁴"A country without a sabbath must be a province of Satan's empire, and such alas is China" ("Want of a Sabbath," *Baptist Magazine* 40 [February 1848]: 120).

⁵"He who should deck society with every conceivable elegance would but inflict upon it a curse, if in so doing he deprived it of the Sabbaths which our Maker gave us, not merely for his own honour, but for our happiness and immortal welfare" (Edward Baines, *A Second Letter to B. Oliveira, ESQ. M.P., on Opening the Crystal Palace on Sunday* [London: Seeleys, 1854], 8).

⁶James, "The Sabbath," 401: "This principle should be rooted in the soul of every Briton, and with it the religious truth, that no man lives more effectually for his country's best welfare than he who promotes the sacred observance of the Sabbath. At how cheap a rate may this kind of patriotism be maintained!" Jonathan Glyde agreed and added, "No question, therefore, can be more important than how it [the Sabbath] *ought* to be spent, —how it may be turned to the best account, —how the largest amount of

Societal Blessings

Nonconformists explained the principle of societal blessings based on Sabbath observance to all of their countrymen, but especially to its leaders. A link existed between a country's obedience to God on the Sabbath and its moral character.⁷ John Angell James summarized this perspective: "The Sabbath is a national blessing, and by the whole nation its preservation should be sought."⁸ Editors of the *Baptist Magazine* agreed: "Nothing is more important for the welfare of a Christian country than the due observance of the Lord's-day."⁹ Benjamin Parsons informed the Earl of Derby through a letter that the Earl had violated the Lord's Day by allowing railways to operate on Sundays.¹⁰ The Earl's act carried serious consequences for Parsons. The Earl's sin, according to Parsons, threatened England's morality, constitution, and consequently, the

advantage and enjoyment can be drawn from it, —how it may be made most conducive to our mental and moral improvement, the welfare of society, and the glory of the great Father" (Jonathan Glyde, "How to Spend Sunday," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [April 1856]: 188).

⁷"Nor will it be possible, we apprehend, to rise from the perusal without the painful conviction, that in this nominally Christian country the desecration of the sacred day has alarmingly increased. When it is considered the connexion which subsists between the profanation of the Sabbath, and the moral character of a nation; between contempt for the divine authority and claims, and a disregard of all the rights and obligations of social and civilized life; the evil must be regarded as of an awfully portentous character" ("A Brief History of Proposed Enactments Relative to the Observance of the Sabbath," *Baptist Magazine* 26 [Supplement 1834]: 570).

⁸James, "The Sabbath," 400.

⁹"Review," *Baptist Magazine* 29 [February 1837]: 71. W. M. Thompson added, "[A]nd need I say that a land without a Sabbath is a land without religion, a land of dreary and bitter bondage, a land where God is unknown, save, it may be, by his retributive judgments, a land of fierce and cruel passions, of social and bloody convulsions, a land of moral pestilence, a land of spiritual death?" (William Martin Thompson, "Lecture I," in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 2).

¹⁰"In wishing to grant a charter for the violation of the Lord's-day, you, my Lord, tried to play the same game as your predecessors. The profit of a small company of railway kings was the chief thing sought; and to obtain their smile, you were willing to risk the favour of the King of Kings" (Benjamin Parsons, *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby, on the Cruelty and Injustice of Opening the Crystal Palace on the Sabbath* [London: John Snow, 1853], 4).

church.¹¹ James also stressed the Sabbath's significance when he addressed other English citizens and the Queen. He implored them to take Sabbath observance seriously¹² because the country's welfare depended on it, as Proverbs 14:34¹³ indicated.¹⁴ Ultimately, Nonconformists believed that Christians possessed citizenship in heaven but, in the meantime, they shouldered responsibility on earth to pursue their country's prosperity. A nation's happiness was attached to its religion, argued James.¹⁵ For without religion, society lacked a foundation of truth and morality.¹⁶

One particular blessing that stemmed from Sabbath observance was an elevation in national morality.¹⁷ According to Nonconformists, observing the Sabbath

¹¹Parsons, *A Letter*, 4. Weir noted that the fear of God and hope of eternal life with him is what made a nation great (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 26).

¹²“[T]here can be no hope of national regeneration which is not based upon the regeneration of individuals—it is well sometimes to consider the aspect which this subject bears towards the obligations and the interests of the empire, viewed in its aggregate form” (James, “The Sabbath,” 391-92).

¹³“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to *any* people.” Weir also commented that correct Sabbath observance brings “down upon our families and upon our country the blessing of Him who is the Governor of nations” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 20-21).

¹⁴“England has—her enemies and the foes of Protestantism being judges—risen to her glorious standing among the nations of the earth through her English Sunday, so England and her Sabbath will stand or fall together. When her Sunday ceases to be the Lord's Day she can be neither Protestant nor prosperous” (Micaiah Hill, “Preface,” in *The Sabbath Primeval* [London: Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1856], 4).

¹⁵James, “The Sabbath,” 392. By “religion,” James meant a “real, intelligent, cordial submission of the whole man to the revealed will of God. In the absence of such a religion as this, the most scriptural form of government and sacramental observance will avail nothing for individual salvation, and very little for national welfare.” Religion is composed of two parts, according to James: piety and morality. “By the first we understand a right state of heart towards God—that is, the existence of a supreme love, arising out of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; expressed by complacency in God's nature, reverence for His character, obedience to His commands, gratitude for His services, and all those acts of worship which He himself has enjoined in His Word” (395).

¹⁶Weir commented concerning the Sabbath that “morality and social order” depended on its proper observance (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 5). Hamilton referred to the Sabbath as “the nation's noblest safeguard” (Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindicae Sabbaticae*, 98).

¹⁷“My profound conviction is, that the very best thing for health, as well as for moral and religious improvement, is the peaceful, soothing, elevating employment of a religiously-spent Sabbath”

improved England's moral condition more effectively than adhering to the civil law. James explained why this was true for the millions of residents who participated in corporate worship across the United Kingdom. While at church, the Holy Spirit spoke to hearts through the preached word of God, which removed sins from individual minds and consequently from the streets.¹⁸ Civil law, which does not change the heart, cannot have the same positive effect. Through Sabbath observance God established truth as the bedrock of society, and as a result England witnessed crime reduction.¹⁹ Josiah Conder argued that honoring the Sabbath had the benefit of eradicating barriers between the rich and poor. The peasant enjoyed freedom and was elevated to the level of other men because the rich and poor worshiped the same God.²⁰

Nonconformist writers also held that God blessed societies that observed the Sabbath with national prosperity. Israel had enjoyed national success when it practiced the Sabbath. During the reign of Kings David and Solomon, Sabbath observance was common and Israel flourished. John Weir wrote that according to Isaiah 58:13-14,²¹ God

(Edward Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury* [Leeds: Edward Baines and Sons, 1855], 6).

¹⁸James, "The Sabbath," 398. James also noted that worshipping God and the preaching of God's word did "more to keep up our national morality than the stringency of law and the terror of its penalties—the solemnities of trial and the most dreadful inflictions of justice" (ibid.).

¹⁹Peter M'Owan, *Practical Considerations on the Christian Sabbath* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843), 24. James commented, "Order and obedience, morality and power, are all in Britain connected with the observance of the Sabbath" (James, "The Sabbath," 400).

²⁰Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political*, 4th ed. (London: Patriot Office, 1853), 19: "It is on the Sabbath that the peasant feels himself a free man: it is on this day, that, in the House of God, he is lifted up to the level of a man. There, the rich and the poor meet together before their common Maker; the mighty are put down from their seats, and those of low degree are exalted."

²¹"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of

blessed the nation that revered the Sabbath; “May he give us grace as a nation so to keep His own Day, that we may reap the blessing with which he has promised to crown its faithful observance.”²² These societal blessings were not simply outward. Numerous public virtues were also products of Sabbath observance: crime prevention through altered motives of individuals, improved physical health, and the maintenance of high morale.²³ England owed its national success, at least in part, to the proper observance of the Sabbath.²⁴

Societal Curses

As Sabbath observance brought societal blessing, so Sabbath neglect summoned God’s judgment upon society.²⁵ In order to explain this reality, Weir offered

your father Jacob.” Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references come from the New American Standard version of the Bible.

²²Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 30.

²³Robert Newstead, *The Book of the Sabbath: Or, Illustrations of the Divine Origin and Perpetual Obligations of the Lord’s Day* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1851), 26: “It is impossible not to see, in these impressive words, that the blessing of heaven shall rest upon that land where the Day of the Lord is publicly recognised, and nationally honoured; while all history, from the times of the Jews to the present day, bears witness to the same great truth. National prosperity, moral greatness, domestic tranquility, and commercial success, will ever be found to accompany a nation’s homage to the sanctity of the holy Sabbath” (67).

²⁴“England, I rejoice, with all its imperfections, is, and ought to be, ‘Merry England’ still; and so she may still remain if she does not provoke the Almighty to anger by her flagrant transgressions, than which I can conceive none more dreadful than violating the commandment, so direct, and so explicit, ‘Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day’” (*Patriot* [July 23, 1834]: 260). Weir added that observing the Sabbath “lies at the very basis of national morality and national greatness” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 11).

²⁵Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 187: “[T]he nation that has no Sabbath is on the highway to first, practical, and then, theoretical atheism. . . . National sins, if visited at all, must be visited in this life; and the most sceptical, if not wilfully blind, may see, in the contrast between Protestant lands where the Sabbath is honoured, and Popish countries where it is not, the retributive Providence guarding the interests of the institution. Political convulsions, and fierce social disorders, afflict the nations without a Sabbath” (250). James added, “So that, while iniquity as a cancer eats into the vital strength of an empire, the judgments of the Almighty, like the lightning’s flash, scathe and destroy it from without” (James, “The Sabbath,” 393).

an analogy from the natural world. In the natural world, fixed laws like gravity persist that enable the solar system to function properly; planets revolve around the sun and absorb the sun's light and heat. If this organization were to be disturbed, chaos would proceed.²⁶ So, in the spiritual arena, when God's laws are ignored, trouble comes.²⁷ James explained that since nations exist only in this world and not in heaven, God must deliver judgment on nations in the temporal order.²⁸

Nonconformists believed that Sunday labor invited national decline.²⁹ Joseph Ivimey commented, "Ye bring more wrath upon *England* by profaning the Sabbath-day."³⁰ God's curses on England for moral decline and Sabbath disobedience were evident. In 1831, a cholera outbreak invaded the nation and became widespread by 1832. Coal ships to London had carried the plague that cost 32,000 people their lives.³¹ Nonconformists and Evangelical Anglicans viewed the epidemic as God's judgment upon the country for its moral malaise and advised Parliament to repent from its sin and seek

²⁶Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 7.

²⁷"The kingdom of God will come when his commands are obeyed, just as the kingdom of our Queen extends wherever her laws are observed. Where the laws of England are trampled in the dust, there the scepter of Victoria is set at nought; and just in the same manner, so long as the laws of the decalogue are disregarded, the kingdom of God cannot come" (Parsons, *A Letter*, 11).

²⁸"If nations, as such, are ever rewarded or punished, it must be in this world, where only they exist; and though we are no longer under the covenant of temporal promises, we may still expect that God will put forth, in some intelligent manner, the tokens of his favour, or the expressions of his displeasure, according as the nations offend him by their impiety, or please him by their religion" (James, "The Sabbath," 394).

²⁹Parsons, *A Letter*, 28. Parsons explained, As "Sabbath labour and desecration increases, the nation will fall and will most certainly involve the nobility in its ruin." Thompson added, "I say that a land without a Sabbath is a land without religion, a land of dreary and bitter bondage, a land where God is unknown, save, it may be, by his retributive judgments, a land of fierce and cruel passions, of social and bloody convulsions, a land of moral pestilence" (Thompson, "Lecture I," 2).

³⁰Joseph Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges of the Christian Sabbath, and the Sin and Danger of Neglecting or Profaning It* (London: George Wightman, 1832), 8.

³¹Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 2:76.

God. The government responded favorably to their advice and reserved March 21, 1832, for fasting and prayer as a demonstration of humility over national sins.³² Years later, in 1847, a famine swept across Ireland and northern Scotland along with financial unrest that affected England.³³ These misfortunes, according to James, were divinely orchestrated, and England's financial downturn was also a consequence of Sabbath neglect.³⁴

One consequence that England would witness from Sabbath neglect was a declining moral condition. If the country permitted a local amusement like the Crystal Palace to open on Sunday afternoons, many residents would ignore Sabbath observance to attend the Palace.³⁵ Weir wrote, "And be assured, that if the Crystal Palace be opened on the Lord's day, and fifty or sixty thousand spectators be admitted, the nation's morality will be undermined more surely and more rapidly than ever it was before."³⁶

³²Herbert Schlossberg, *The Silent Revolution and the Making of Victorian England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 253. See also Judith Ryder and Harold Silver, *Modern English Society: History and Structure 1850-1970* (London: Methuen & Co., 1970), 35.

³³"Can you forget the famine, so mysterious in its origin, which ranged last year over Ireland, and the north of Scotland? Can you be ignorant that pestilence may now be lurking among the nations of the Continent, like a lion couchant, ready to be spring upon us? Can you be unmindful of the financial crash, which has lately convulsed our commercial fabric to its very foundation? . . . remember that the truest patriotism is not that which passeth off under the name of glory, but which standeth by religion as the strongest pillar of the state, and by the observance of the Sabbath" (James, "The Sabbath," 412-13).

³⁴Ibid. Hill added, "less men have to do with the punishment of sins against the Sabbath, the more we are to expect from divine retribution" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 246). In addressing senators, James explained that attending parties and traveling on Sundays contributed to England's national decay (James, "The Sabbath," 404).

³⁵Some people "after going to church very devoutly one half of the Sabbath, hurry away in full glee to the Crystal Palace on the other, and thus their future Sundays all through the year will be passed between the celestial paradise of the temple and the earthly Elysium at Sydenham!!" (Parsons, *A Letter*, 28-29).

³⁶Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 25. In referring to the Crystal Palace, Baines added, "If you set up your 'Temple of Art, Science, and Manufactures' as a counter-attraction to the Temple of Religion, it will be not wholly unlike the sin of Solomon in setting up shrines to idol-gods, which 'turned away his

England's downward spiral of ethics would eventually make it like France. The French were well educated and current in the latest trends of arts and sciences. But, they did not fear God and were strangers to what made a nation great.³⁷ If the Palace opened on Sunday, God might choose to send judgment upon England through France. The present ruler of France desired to imitate his uncle Napoleon's military efforts, argued Weir, and Sabbath neglect could provoke God to allow the French ruler to attack England and cause major destruction.³⁸

Nonconformists argued that if the populace doubted whether God would actually send judgment upon a nation, they needed only to examine the Old Testament³⁹ for multiple illustrations.⁴⁰ Egypt held Israel in bondage for 400 years, and the Egyptians worshiped numerous false gods. In response, God brought ten destructive plagues upon Egypt, and God delivered his people. Years later, the Canaanites disobeyed God and suffered his wrath when Israel entered the Promised Land and destroyed them. God judged the Ninevites who worshiped gods of stone. The Jews were not exempt either. Israel suffered God's judgment when they refused to observe the Sabbath. God said that if his people would not honor the Sabbath, he would kindle an unquenchable fire in the

heart from the Lord God of Israel” (Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ. and B. Oliveira*, 25).

³⁷Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 26.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 30.

³⁹“The Bible has been but partially studied by those nations who reject the Lord's-day, and their history and present condition show that they have paid very dearly for this neglect” (Parsons, *A Letter*, 9).

⁴⁰“He who reads the Bible with attention, will observe how this remark is exemplified in the history of the Jews. When they duly sanctified the Sabbath, the nation enjoyed both temporal and spiritual prosperity; but they violated this holy day, they were deluged with sin, and the Lord was provoked to send his severest judgments—famine, pestilence, captivity, and desolation” (James Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day* [London: Fisher, Son & Jackson, 1830], 26).

gates of Jerusalem that would consume her fortresses (Jer 17:27). In the prophet Ezekiel's era, Israel profaned the Sabbath,⁴¹ and God judged them by sending famine, captivity and military defeat through the Babylonians.⁴² England would not be exempt from God's judgment either.

Nonconformists pointedly warned their fellow residents of the impending risks associated with Sabbath neglect.⁴³ They argued that Sabbath-breaking was a national sin⁴⁴ and that God was furious with England over its Sabbath neglect.⁴⁵ According to Hill, God, in his anger, allowed catastrophes like steamboat explosions and railway accidents to occur.⁴⁶ Weekday railway misfortunes originated from fatigued conductors

⁴¹“But the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, nor were they careful to observe My ordinances, by which, *if* a man observes them, he will live; they profaned My sabbaths. So I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness” (Ezek 20:21).

⁴²Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 26. In referring to Israel's Sabbath neglect, Weir commented, “It was one of the crowning acts of Israel's wickedness and apostasy that she had ceased to honour the day of God; and one of the causes of the Babylonish captivity was indicated in the awful charge, ‘My Sabbaths have they greatly polluted’” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 10).

⁴³Weir added, “And if [the Sabbath] be wickedly violated, systematically, deliberately violated under the sanction of human authority, in direct defiance of Divine law, by any people, utter and irretrievable ruin must fall on that guilty nation; the Lord of Hosts will ‘break the pride of its power,’ and bring a sword that shall ‘avenge the quarrel of his covenant!’” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 11-12).

⁴⁴“The national sins of Britain, then, appear to be the following, and the catalogue is dark and alarming in the extreme: Sabbath-breaking, profaneness, intemperance, ungodliness, injustice, cruelty, lewdness, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (H. E., “On the National Sins of Britain,” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 9 [April 1831]: 137). Weir shared the same sentiment in 1852. In discussing the Sabbath, Weir wrote, “A SIMULTANEOUS effort is this day being made in this parish, by ministers of various sections of the one Church of Christ, to direct public attention to a question of no ordinary magnitude, with which the cause of national righteousness is identified; and to stir up the community to unite in vigorous, yet peaceful opposition to a project, which involves the perpetration of a great national sin” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 3).

⁴⁵“The nation or kingdom that will not serve him ‘shall be utterly wasted;’ and history, we repeat, has fearfully attested the exercise of his dread authority, and the vindication of his prerogative to ‘root out, to pull down, and to destroy’ the despisers of the law” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 8).

⁴⁶Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 247: “On the same general principle, the accidents on our railways, and explosions on our steam-boats, &c. &c., are justly explained as the result of the violation of a great natural law, which makes one day's rest in seven essential to mental and physical well-being.

who had labored on Sunday. Nonconformists insisted that the entire nation must either prioritize Sabbath observance or suffer the consequences.⁴⁷ Weir wrote, “It is clearly indicated that the law of God cannot be despised or violated by any nation without bringing down upon it the righteous judgments of Heaven (this being especially true with regard to the transgression of the law of the Sabbath).”⁴⁸

Nonconformist writers also explained⁴⁹ that God would send judgment until citizens repented.⁵⁰ Baptist W. Noel commented that England “will be injured, and the Government will derive from it no good. The nation will suffer loss, because our distinction in the world rests much on the religious character of our people, which this tends to destroy.”⁵¹ From the public’s perspective, Sunday amusements, like the military bands that played in London parks on Sundays in 1856, were harmless, but for

Exhausted by previous labours in the week, the steam-boat managers are physically incapable of proper attention to even ordinary toil; whereas on the Sunday a greater demand is made on account of the crowded state of the vessel.”

⁴⁷“But woe be to this land, if the love of money shall be suffered to blot our from our national character all regard for the fourth commandment of God’s holy law! Woe be to this land, if the ‘Man of sin’ shall be able to make that covetousness a vantage ground in his desperate efforts to regain his long lost ascendancy among us! Oh! that we were wise, that we could consider these things ere it be too late! Nothing less, suffer me to remind you, with all earnestness, brethren and friends, nothing less than keeping holy the Sabbath, will answer the requirements of the fourth commandment; nothing less than keeping it holy will be agreeable to God” (Thompson, “Lecture I,” 15).

⁴⁸Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 6.

⁴⁹“Convinced that the profanation of this blessed day is one of the great national sins on account of which God continues to visit us with judgment, and that its sanctification is essentially connected with our national prosperity, the advancement of the Divine glory, the salvation of the world, and the permanent revival of religion in the Churches of Christ” (M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms,” 143).

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 136. A report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons noted the following: “Your committee regret to be under the necessity of stating that the evidence which has been submitted to them exhibits a systematic and widely-spread violation of the Lord’s-day, which, in their judgment, cannot fail to be highly injurious to the best interests of the people, and which is calculated to bring down upon the country the divine displeasure” (“The Sabbath,” *Baptist Magazine* 25 [January 1833]: 29).

⁵¹Baptist W. Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1856), 27.

Nonconformists they violated God's standard. If this trend continued, wrote Baines, England would suffer multiple penalties from God.⁵²

Nonconformists pleaded their case to the country's political leaders. Baines addressed the Earl of Shaftesbury, explaining that England's Protestant leaders must aggressively protect the Sabbath from violation. If the carelessness continued, the "highest interests of the country will be sacrificed."⁵³ Benjamin Parsons expressed a similar sentiment in a letter to the Earl of Derby, who had recommended opening the Crystal Palace in 1853 on Sunday afternoons. Parsons explained, "Read history, my Lord, and you cannot find a single Sabbath breaking nation but has paid dearly for its ungodliness. The Lord's-day, scripturally observed, would have saved France from the convulsions and bloodshed which have made it a warning to the world."⁵⁴ God withheld national blessing and prosperity when the Sabbath was profaned.⁵⁵ Nonconformists warned that England would experience national decline because of Sabbath neglect and must wake up to this reality. Countries that dishonored the Sabbath had several traits in common: Churches remained empty, piety was cheapened, the poor suffered oppression,

⁵²Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 9: The presence of bands was a significant issue for Baines: "I cannot understand how any man can doubt that the whole question of the character of the Sabbath, for England, for her dependencies, and for all the countries whom she may influence, is now at stake" (7). Baines also noted, "If our rulers should go on in this course, we shall soon see our English Sabbath made like that of Paris or Vienna" (Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 7). Concerning England's moral character, Baines asked, "[S]hould we forfeit our character, by inconsistently opening the New Crystal Palace on the Lord's-day?" (Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ., and B. Oliveira*, 7).

⁵³Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 7.

⁵⁴Parsons, *A Letter*, 4-5: "Sabbath breaking sent the Jews to Babylon, and gave them seventy years of captivity that 'the land might enjoy her Sabbath,' and that all ages might learn that the Almighty will not have His commands set at nought with impunity" (5).

⁵⁵"God dealt with heathen nations of Canaan. The 'iniquity of the Amorites' was 'not yet full' when He made a covenant with Abraham, subsequently renewed to Jacob at the foot of the mystic ladder; but the cup was filled up to overflowing when Joshua crossed the Jordan" (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 8).

the righteous endured persecution, and God was forgotten.⁵⁶ Two particular countries, Portugal and Italy, were characterized by infidelity, tyranny, persecution, and superstition because they did not honor God.⁵⁷ Before God judged these Popish countries, the residents played football, wrestled in the meadow, drank in the public house, and the priests played cards on the evening of the Sabbath.⁵⁸ In light of God's judgment upon these nations, James wrote, citizens should wake up to the danger of Sabbath neglect.⁵⁹ Nonconformists believed that Christians must mourn over the state of the Sabbath and the effect that its neglect will have on men's souls. "It is only in proportion as we feel the guilt of our Sabbath neglect, that we can expect nationally or individually to improve, or the blessing of God to fall upon us."⁶⁰

Personal Blessings and Curses

Nonconformist writers argued that God not only held nations corporately responsible for honoring or dishonoring the Sabbath, he also rewarded and judged

⁵⁶M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 23.

⁵⁷James, "The Sabbath," 394. Hill added, "National sins, if visited at all, must be visited in this life; and the most skeptical, if not willfully blind, may see, in the contrast between Protestant lands where the Sabbath is honoured, and Popish countries where it is not, the retributive Providence guarding the interests of the institution. Political convulsions, and fierce social disorders, afflict the nations without a Sabbath" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 250).

⁵⁸Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 14: "Before famine and pestilence swept the neighbouring island with 'the besom of destruction,' crowds of the population might be found on the Sabbath playing at the game of football, wrestling in the meadow, or drinking and dancing in the public-house, whilst many of the priests were wont, as I have reason to know, to spend the evening of the Sabbath in gay society, and shared in card-playing and carousal."

⁵⁹James, "The Sabbath," 412-13: "Can you be unobservant of the unquiet heavings with which the European nations are agitated, and which threaten us with the earthquake of another war? Is there nothing in all this to awaken solicitude, and excite alarm?"

⁶⁰Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 51.

individuals for their commitment to the Sabbath.⁶¹ Sabbath blessings on people applied to both their spiritual and physical welfare.⁶² Every aspect of their lives was affected by either attention to or aloofness from the Sabbath. God brought intense judgment and even death upon persons who violated the Sabbath. In light of this danger, Nonconformists attempted to alert citizens of God's perspective on individual obedience to the Sabbath so that individuals could avoid judgment and experience God's best.

Individual Blessings

Nonconformists believed that Sabbath observers enjoyed spiritual blessings.⁶³ The first and foremost blessing was spiritual delight. Delighting in God on the Sabbath brought the highest spiritual pleasure known to man. According to Sherman, since God was the chief good in the universe, he was the only one worthy of delight.⁶⁴ Spiritual delight could not be found in the world. The world offered only temporal happiness; true

⁶¹“I regard it [the Sabbath], too, as one of the greatest blessings conferred by God upon his creatures” (Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ. and B. Oliveira*, 5). Hill commented on God's judgment: “the Sabbath is of God; and its profanation, as the violation of any other divine institution or command, renders man amenable to judgment” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 244).

⁶²“Thus has the Sabbath been sanctified of God wholly to Himself for man's use and blessing” (Thompson, “Lecture I,” 11).

⁶³Noel explained, “We must not either forget that there is a special blessing promised by God to those who out of a regard to his will, and to their own spiritual welfare, abstain from worldly pleasure on the Sabbath” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 13). Baines described the benefits of God's blessings: “The lifting up of heart-felt praise, the communicating of heart-felt sorrows, the entreating of all the blessings that he needs for body and soul, for wife and children, for neighbours, country, and mankind, the studying of sublime truth, the storing up of practical wisdom, the striving to secure, in his brief passage through this world, the everlasting happiness and honour of the skies” (Edward Baines, *On The Attempt to Change the Character of the Christian Sabbath* [London: John Snow, 1853], 3). Hamilton added, “The solitary feels that he is not alone. The exile sinks into the embraces of his family. The bereft goes in and out among departed friends. The wanderer lays down his staff. The sick finds a stillness which lulls his pain. The brow of care is smoothed. The heart, wasted by labour, sings for joy. The care-worn spirit throws off its load” (Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindiciae Sabbaticae*, 101).

⁶⁴Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 41. John Cox noted, “Surely there is proof amounting to full demonstration that God still blesses his own day, and blesses the efforts which his people put forth upon it” (John Cox, “Lecture V,” in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 97).

joy that nourished the soul came from God as James explained.⁶⁵ Sherman envisioned three avenues through which spiritual delight is imparted. First, it comes through beholding the glory of Christ by faith. Before the crucifixion, Jesus prays that his followers would behold his glory (John 17:24). Ultimately, Nonconformists affirmed that Christians would not see Christ literally until they arrived in heaven, but because they aspired to dwell in heaven they could view Christ now by faith. Sherman explained,

Now, faith is the blessed instrument whereby we comprehend that revelation—we see Christ to be the Savior it sets forth—a glorious, suitable, and all-sufficient Savior for us—and apprehend our interest in him. If men take delight in going to parks and public places of fashion and gaiety to see the great and noble of the earth, what delight must a spiritual mind receive in contemplating the glories of Christ by faith!⁶⁶

Second, spiritual delight arose when Christians meditated on God’s love. God is love, and his love was manifested through his Son’s death on the cross. Thoughtful attention to this love produces incredible joy.⁶⁷

The third and final spiritual delight centered on God’s gift of grace.

Nonconformists believed that God gave all things for his people to enjoy, and God dispensed multiple kinds of grace to Christians based on the need: comforting grace, preserving grace, pardoning grace, and sanctifying grace.⁶⁸ Christians who practice the

⁶⁵“[The Sabbaths] are the days of the soul’s gains; her golden seasons for growing rich, in all that constitutes spiritual prosperity; her times, not only for the enjoyment of devotion, but for gaining new light to guide the conscience, and fresh strength to invigorate all her religious and moral principles” (John Angell James, *Pastoral Addresses* [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1841], 92).

⁶⁶Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord’s Day*, 42.

⁶⁷“How suitable is such delight for the Sabbath-day! And this delight you shall abundantly enjoy, if you make this love the subject of your meditation” (ibid.).

⁶⁸Ibid., 43.

Sabbath enjoy God's grace and peace. The individual who tastes these pleasures on the Sabbath are no longer satisfied with worldly gratification.⁶⁹

Besides spiritual delight, Sabbath observers enjoy spiritual assistance.⁷⁰ Satan tempts Christians to depart from God instead of delighting in him, wrote Sherman, and the only hope of enduring these trials comes through the Holy Spirit's assistance.⁷¹ The promise of God in Jeremiah 29:12-13⁷² explains that those who seek God with all of their heart will find him, and this promise applies to Sabbath keepers, added Sherman. J. W. Close explained that keeping the Sabbath added quality and strength to one's physical and mental life.⁷³ Another form of assistance is that God prevents Sabbath observers from falling prey to destructive plans and ungodly tendencies.⁷⁴ The Christian's soul also

⁶⁹“[I]f a Christian, instead of listening to waltzes and operas in a suffocating crowd, will seek retirement, whether in his chamber or in the open air for reading and prayer, God will bless him with grace and peace” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 13). Cox added, “Those who thus delight in God, in his day, and his service; who prefer his will and words to their own; and who seek his glory and others' good above their own pleasure, shall prove that God delighteth in them, and shall be cheered on in their work by the assurance that they ‘are accepted in the beloved,’ and that God now accepteth their works;’ thus saved from legal fear, and raised above self-righteous motives, they shall ‘serve God in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter’” (Cox, “Lecture V,” 97).

⁷⁰“It ought also to be remembered by those in whom this delight is generated, that nothing but divine assistance can maintain it, or increase it” (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 44).

⁷¹Ibid: “We are in an enemy's country, and Satan, our malicious adversary, is constantly tempting us *to depart from*, not *to delight* in the Lord. We therefore require the constant and gracious aid of the Holy Spirit.”

⁷²“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

⁷³“Its religious observance will give tone, vigour, and sanctity both to the physical and mental constitution of the human race; it will bless them as citizens of this world and as probationers for eternity” (J. W. Close, “Lecture IV,” in *Seven Lectures on the Sabbath* [London: Nisbet & Co., 1852], 62).

⁷⁴“[E]ven when the soul is not truly converted to God, what a multitude of base thoughts, unworthy inclinations, shameful designs, destructive plans, suggested by ambition, avarice, or voluptuousness, are stifled in their birth, and their execution happily prevented” (James, “The Sabbath,” 397).

receives much-needed renewal on the Sabbath through the Chief Shepherd's soothing voice as God's word is preached.⁷⁵ In addition to a rejuvenated soul, the mind is sharpened and the Christian's faith is strengthened to take the spirit of religion into the weekly routine of life.⁷⁶

Individual and Family Curses

Unfortunately, not every person chose to observe the Sabbath, and Nonconformist writers believed this resulted in divine judgment upon individuals. Individuals who neglect to keep the Sabbath should not expect to receive God's aid through the Spirit.⁷⁷ Instead, God will give Sabbath breakers over to the hardness of their hearts. When this occurs, they will no longer sense conviction over sin, warnings, or corrections from the Spirit. The ability to distinguish right from wrong will erode because the Spirit refuses to compete with a hardened heart.⁷⁸ God refused to tolerate Sabbath

⁷⁵Ibid: "How much of the peace of families, the order of society, and the wellbeing of nations, depends, then, upon the ministry of the Word of God! We know very well that education, regard to public opinion, the power of law, and the salutary dread of justice, all help to repress crime and promote virtue; but what multitudes are there who need something else besides all these to restrain them from transgression, when temptation is urgent and the hope of impunity is flattering" (397-98).

⁷⁶"I need hardly say perhaps, that loving the Sabbath themselves, and feeling in their own experience how blessed a thing it is to have one day in the seven for rest, —rest to the body and to the mind from the exhausting toil of physical and mental labour, for such bodily and mental rest, that the entire day may be cleared for the things of God, the soul, and eternity," (Thompson, "Lecture I," 1). Wallace explained how one's faith was strengthened through Sabbath observance: "We rest from work on the Sabbath, that we may prosecute it with renewed energy during the week; and we worship God on the Sabbath, because it is seemly so to do, and that, through communion with himself and meditation on his truth, our faith may be confirmed, our affections sanctified, and we enabled to bring more of the spirit of religion into the duties and habits of every-day life" (Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath*, 31).

⁷⁷"You must not expect to be *forced into* delight; if you will seek worldly pleasures on the Sabbath, do not expect any compulsory force to drive you from them" (Sherman, *A Plea for the Lord's Day*, 44).

⁷⁸Ibid: "When sinners obstinately reject the easy yoke of Christ, and proceed to a certain degree of hardness and determination in their crimes, the Lord says, 'Let them alone,' then they receive no more warning, feel no more convictions, are visited with no more corrections, despise former chastisements, their conscience lies dormant, and the Spirit of God strives no more with them."

negligence⁷⁹ and displayed his displeasure by removing individual blessing and sending punishment.⁸⁰

Samuel Hobson illustrated this principle through the story of the death of a man named John who drowned in a pond while bathing on Sunday instead of attending church. During corporate worship on Sunday morning, congregants learned of John's fate and rushed to rescue him. Sadly, they were too late; John had passed away. Hobson pointedly attributed John's death to God's judgment for Sabbath-breaking.⁸¹

In another instance, Edmund Bushby was executed at Horsham in West Sussex for arson.⁸² Prior to his death, Bushby displayed a repentant demeanor and sought forgiveness from God. Finally, when Bushby's execution date arrived, the chaplain asked if Bushby wished to speak any final words to the audience that had gathered to witness his killing. Bushby answered affirmatively and turned to face the viewers. In a quiet tone, Bushby explained, "I hope you will take warning by my fate, and, my dear-fellows, ALWAYS ATTEND TO THE SABBATH-DAY and may the Lord have mercy upon my

⁷⁹ "[The] Sabbath is of God; and its profanation, as the violation of any other divine institution or command, renders man amenable to judgment" (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 244). Hobson added, "I only wish they [Sabbath breakers] would seriously ask themselves, whether they really suppose that such a reason [pursuing pleasure on the Sabbath] will avail them at God's tribunal, when they will be called to account for every violation of this commandment" (Hobson, *The Sin and Danger*, 22).

⁸⁰ "But individually, how much have we to answer for! That particular sin, on which we have been conversing, is alarmingly prevalent. Go where we may, into the largest cities, or into the smallest villages, how many are to be found who neglect to 'keep holy the Sabbath-day!' Unless this grievous negligence and pernicious contempt of the Divine command be corrected, it is to be feared, we soon shall fill up the measure of our iniquities, and be left 'to follow our own devices'" (Hobson, *The Sin and Danger*, 28).

⁸¹ "Such events are always afflictive, but how much more so, when they happen during an act of disobedience to the Divine commands—at the very moment when the Sabbath is violated" (ibid., 29-30).

⁸² "The next case I have to mention is not of so awful a description, although it shows, no less than the others, the danger of breaking the Sabbath. Edmund Bushby was executed at Horsham, for setting fire to a stack of wheat" (ibid., 35).

soul!'"⁸³ Nonconformist writers used accounts such as these to argue that Christians should carefully guard how they spend Sunday because God would display his judgment.⁸⁴ Baines explained that violating the Sabbath initiated a pattern of evil behavior that persisted. This trend was evident in some criminals who admitted that their first step down the road of crime was Sabbath neglect.⁸⁵

Beyond individuals, when families violated the Sabbath through recreation or outright neglect, they witnessed God's judgment upon the entire family, according to Nonconformists. On Sunday, recreation appealed to some families as a form of relaxation, but in the end it never delivered true fulfillment. In fact, Nonconformists argued that the opposite occurred. As Weir explained, families were broken up, churches were emptied, and personal discouragement ensued.⁸⁶ Other families neglected the

⁸³Ibid., 35. Hobson also explained that James Wood and Thomas Butler were convicted of sheep stealing. For some time, these men had avoided corporate worship attendance. Butler wrote and explained how his morality spiraled south: "*Let me consider how I got into these wicked ways. It was by keeping bad company, BY NEGLECTING THE LORD'S-DAY, AND DESPISING HIS HOLY WORD*" (36).

⁸⁴"[W]e may conclude from the *common* effects which a neglect of the Sabbath produces, that it is a sin which carries its own punishment with it, even in this life" (ibid., 30). M'Owan added, "Those who profane the sabbath, whether personally or by proxy, whether singly or in a confederated character, make God their enemy; and they can expect nothing else but that he will curse their blessings, and make their sabbath-gains a consuming rust to the treasures they were intended to increase" (M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 147-48). M'Owan also noted, "if we, on the Sabbath, abstain from labour, and attend ordinances, merely to refresh the body, to escape the charge of irreligion, or out of deference to human legislation and custom, or because we delight in pulpit oratory, in music, in dress, he will scorn our worship, and punish us." (M'Owan, "Several Prevailing Forms," 144).

⁸⁵"It is one of the best known of all facts, to those who have experience of the young, that the violation of the Sabbath is the beginning of evil courses. Multitudes of criminals have acknowledged that this was their first step in the downward road" (Baines, *On the Attempt to Change*, 7). Hobson told the story of a man who confessed "a little before his execution, that the first step which led to his melancholy end, was his neglecting to 'keep the Sabbath day.' He *had* been in the habit of attending his church regularly" (Hobson, *The Sin and Danger*, 33).

⁸⁶Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 25: "Sunday trading will receive a fresh impetus, and the afternoon spent by tens of thousands in these excursions of pleasure, our churches will be emptied and our domestic circles broken up; while, in the train of these evils, personal demoralization will inevitably follow."

Sabbath and, in doing so, set a poor example for their children to follow.⁸⁷ As a result, God removed his blessing, peace, success, and gratification from the family's life. Ivimey summarized, "Who hath wounds? Who hath rags? Who hath broken-hearted wives, and destitute children? Who are those who are constantly filling our prisons, and who end their lives on the gallows? I answer, Sabbath breakers: those who profane by dissipation, drunkenness, and vice, the Lord's day!"⁸⁸ A few hours of pleasure on Sunday evening was certainly not worth it if the curse of God hovered over one's family. Families who opened their homes on Sabbath evenings to entertain relatives and engage in worldly conversations such as politics damaged their children and servants by preventing them from observing the Sabbath. This was a "soul-destroying and a God-dishonouring custom," and if it continued spiritual gloom would reign.⁸⁹

Conclusion

Nonconformists possessed a deep love for their country and its residents. They wanted to maintain England's integrity by honoring Sunday. Likewise, they wanted individuals and families to thrive as Christians and not suffer under God's judgment. Yet, in spite of their zeal for proper Sabbath observance, they did not have any way to ensure that the nation adhered to God's will for the Sabbath apart from an appeal to Parliament for legislation to protect the Sabbath.

⁸⁷"Remember that your children will most likely walk in your steps; and therefore take heed that they are directed aright. When the church-going bell is heard, calling you to the house of God, let nothing short of necessity prevent you and your children from hastening to the sanctuary. Think, if by your negligence in this respect, any of them should afterwards take to these evil ways how much of the blame will belong to yourself" (Hobson, *The Sin and Danger*, 43-44).

⁸⁸Ivimey, *The Duties and Privileges*, 15.

⁸⁹M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 190-91. "It matters not whom you offend, or what reproach you incur, the practice must be renounced, or the curse of the Lord will be in your house" (191).

CHAPTER 5

LEGISLATING THE SABBATH

Introduction

Nonconformists opposed the unity of Church and State. The State represented the world and its carnal ways while the Church signified the bride of Christ; their union was unnatural. Citizens should have the freedom to choose the Christian faith in addition to their preferred worship style, location of church attendance and denomination.¹

Nonconformists expressed their concerns about the State's involvement in religious affairs,² insisting that the union of Church and State brings with it a host of problems.³

¹Jane Shaw, "Introduction: Why 'culture and the Nonconformist tradition?'" in *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition*, ed. Jane Shaw and Alan Kreider (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), 2. Dissenters had "a particular attitude toward the role of the state, namely, that the government should not establish a religion, but rather it should leave every person free to follow his or her own conscience without interference" (Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004], 152).

²Edward Miall, a Nonconformist, shared his concerns through a newspaper launched in 1841 known as the *Nonconformist*, mostly read by Baptists and Congregationalists. The *Nonconformist* attacked the State's intervention with the Church. Miall also founded the British Anti-State Church Association in 1844. See David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 9; and Larsen, *Contested Christianity*, 147-48.

³Dennis G. Paz, *Nineteenth Century Religious English Traditions: Retrospect and Prospect* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), 71. J. W. lists the following twelve reasons why Church and State should be separate: "The union of Church and State, as existing in England, denies liberty of conscience to the king; The union of Church and State, and the connecting religious forms, are directly calculated to ruin the souls of kings; The adaptation of religion to suit the union of Church and State, endangers the salvation of thousands upon thousands; Church and State religion binds a galling yoke on the consciences of the pious ministers of the gospel who conform to its prescriptions; The union of Church and State carnalizes the church, and that unavoidably; The union of Church and State provides large premiums for hypocrisy and deceit; The union of Church and State hinders the progress and success of the gospel; Church and State union engenders pride and vain ostentation in the ministers of the Established Church; The union of the Church with the State has broken down the divine order of that religion taught by the apostles of Christ; The union of Church and State always tends to intolerance; The union of Church and State uniformly

Nevertheless, Nonconformists were not anti-government. In fact, they upheld the government's role in society as divinely established. Nonconformist ministers gave evidence of their appreciation of the monarchy in a letter sent by the general body of Dissenting ministers⁴ to the newly crowned Queen Victoria upon the death of William IV in 1837.⁵ They expressed blessings on her ascendancy, sympathy over William's death, appreciation for his contributions toward the establishment of equality among British citizens, and assurance of their loyalty throughout her reign.⁶ Through Victoria's reign, Nonconformists increasingly gained more representation in Parliament⁷ and some Nonconformists began to promote moral reform through parliamentary legislation.

produces oppression and cruelty; The union of Church and State has not the shadow of support or countenance in any part of the New Testament" (J. W., "Cautions to Non-Conformists," *Baptist Magazine* 29 [February 1837]: 49-56).

⁴The body of Dissenting ministers consisted of orthodox Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists.

⁵The Protestant Dissenting Ministers previously wrote a letter to King William IV in 1830 when he became King as a result of his brother's (George IV) death. "We your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster, humbly approach your Royal presence to express our sincere condolence on the demise of your Royal brother, our late revered Sovereign; and to offer our heartfelt congratulations on the accession of your Majesty to the throne of these Realms" ("Address of the London Dissenting Ministers to the King," *Baptist Magazine* 22 [September 1830], 390).

⁶"Address to Queen Victoria From the Metropolitan Dissenters," *Baptist Magazine* 29 (August 1837): 358-59. "Our prayers, most gracious sovereign, shall continually ascend to the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, entreating him to be your helper in all the arduous duties of the state, long, very long, to preserve your majesty's invaluable life, and so to guide and strengthen you by his Holy Spirit" (359).

⁷Josiah Conder indicates that there were "some twenty" Nonconformists by 1853 (Josiah Conder, "Letter 1: The Number of Evangelical Nonconformists Returned to the Present House of Commons, a Significant and Important Fact," in *The Political Position of Protestant Dissenters in 1853* [London: Patriot Office, 1853], 3-4).

Sabbath Legislation

Nonconformists were deeply troubled by Sabbath neglect and some, though not all, advocated pursuing governmental intervention.⁸ Sabbath neglect drew considerable attention from many Nonconformists, who believed that legislative endeavors were pressing matters.⁹ Parliament's record was not a good one on this matter.¹⁰

Proponents of Sabbath Legislation

Nonconformist supporters of Sabbath legislation were encouraged to believe that Sabbath legislation might be possible.¹¹ Only the State had the power to protect the Sabbath from the abuse of unnecessary travel, labor and the opening of public

⁸Nonconformists had multiple views on the State's involvement with the Church. "However dissenters are agreed in their *general* views of the evils of the church 'by law established,' they are not yet quite of one mind as to the method of achieving its severance from the state, nor as to what should be the practical results of such a measure" (R., "The Alliance Between Church and State," *Baptist Magazine* 27 [November 1835]: 445). Sabbath neglect was not the only issue for which Nonconformists sought assistance. They also pursued relief from the State over stamp duties and Church Rates. See J. R., "On the Legal Interests of Dissenters," *Baptist Magazine* 28 [July 1836]: 279: "Let us by all means seek to be relieved from the stamp-duties at present payable upon the purchase and trust-deeds of our chapels and public school-houses, and upon the instruments appointing new trustees, and from the duties charged upon the materials employed in the erection of those buildings. Let us beseech the Legislature that we may be saved the present exorbitant expenses" (281). The Established Church enjoyed exemption from stamp duties. "By the rectification of our internal evils, and the removal of our external grievances, we shall be better able to display the native energy and the superior efficacy of the voluntary principle: and we shall, especially, be better prepared to contend for the Christian's ultimate aim—the separation of the church from every worldly alliance—the universal spread of pure and undefiled religion" (284).

⁹It is "expedient to unite in a petition to both Houses of Parliament, praying for a revision of the laws enforcing the civil observance of the Lord's Day, in order to the better protection of all classes of the community in the participation of the instruction, and the enjoyment of that rest, which God and the laws have provided for them" (*Patriot* [February 27, 1833]: 68). See also Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience*, 12.

¹⁰Edward Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes: A Letter to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury* (Leeds: Edward Baines and Sons, 1855), 3. "I deeply grieve that Parliament should have consented—after a one-sided inquiry and in a spirit of dastardly submission to interested parties—to extend the hours during which the public-houses may be open on the Lord's day" (6).

¹¹"We rejoice to find that, both in this country and in the United States of America, the subject of the legislative enforcement of the Sabbath is beginning to excite that share of public attention which it demands" ("Article IV," *Eclectic Review* 4 [October 1830]: 328).

amusements. Editors of the *Eclectic Review* explained, “It is our firm conviction, and we shall endeavor to make it appear before we close the present article, that the Sabbath is a legitimate subject for human legislation.”¹² Micaiah Hill saw the government’s role in protecting the Sabbath as a necessity. “Let this be conceded, and, as it will abundantly appear, if the government does not protect the Sabbath-day, it must sanction its profanation.”¹³ Eliminating needless activity and labor rested on the government’s shoulders. The Church possessed not any civil authority on this matter. Josiah Conder explained, “The power of the Church can neither bind the conscience as to the religious duty, nor is competent to ordain a suspension of secular employments.”¹⁴

Nonconformists felt comfortable with Sabbath legislation if it were defended on secular grounds instead of religious grounds.¹⁵ The *Patriot* editors explained, “The

¹²“The Christian Sabbath,” *Eclectic Review* 3 (June 1830): 488. Hamilton added, “And it becomes Christians not only to forbear to seek, but to solemnly abjure, every political enforcement of the sabbath” (Richard Winter Hamilton, *Horae Sabbaticae: or, Familiar Disquisitions on the Revealed Sabbath* [London: Jackson and Walford, 1848], 158).

¹³Micaiah Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man: or, The Origin, History, and Principles of the Lord’s Day* (London: John Farquhar Shaw, 1857), 294. Editors of the *British Quarterly Review* added, “In one other way we invoke the aid of the civil power—viz., when we require it to avoid most carefully any act of its own which interferes with the rest of the Sabbath; and we have a right to ask it” (“Article III,” *British Quarterly Review* 21 [1855]: 106). Josiah Conder commented, “Now, we conceive that the prevention of this injury, by cutting off the temptation and barring the opportunity of the crime, falls as much within the province of the Legislature, as does the protection of the religious man from being wronged” (Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political* [London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1830], 26).

¹⁴Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 17.

¹⁵“But it is to be recollected, that it is not on religious but political grounds that he acts. All that he has to do is to see, that every man can employ the day in religious exercises *if he chooses*” (*Patriot* [March 28, 1833]: 44). Nonconformists were part of various smaller associations aimed at protecting Sundays. For example, some Nonconformists in London supported the Sunday Trading Suppression Society. This particular organization favored employing legislative means to achieve its goal. In 1833, it presented a petition to the House of Commons, including 15,000 names of London residents who favored banning the Sunday trade. One other Society maintained by many Nonconformists in London was the Sabbath Protection Society. Both of these smaller organizations sought to forbid Sunday trading rather than focus on a wider range of Sabbath issues such as traveling, which the LDOS did. See the *Patriot* (November 1833): 409.

civil magistrate has a right to tell an individual from what occupations he shall abstain, because he knows that the toils he forbids would be injurious, not only to himself, but to the community.”¹⁶ As a secular institution, government owned the right to protect society’s health and already implemented that privilege through granting periodical days of rest.

The State defended order on the streets, protected property, guarded the weak from aggression and ensured that honest citizens had a respectable quality of life, wrote Baptist W. Noel.¹⁷ But, crime on Sunday was rising and the amount of police needed to curtail it had escalated. Legislative action was essential, wrote Hill.¹⁸ Conder agreed that the government had a role in protecting the Lord’s Day:

But, although the Civil Government cannot compel men to be religious, it can and ought to protect them in the exercise of their religion. Admitted, that it is not within the province of our Civil Governors to ordain, that every person should exercise himself on the Lord’s Day in the duties of piety and true religion, it is strictly within their province, it is moreover their bounden and sacred duty, to provide that *all and every person or persons should, on the Lord’s Day, have the LIBERTY, MEANS, and OPPORTUNITY of applying themselves to the observance of the Day by so*

¹⁶*Patriot* (March 28, 1833): 44. Hill added, “[In] dealing with the Sabbath, in connexion with the Legislature, we are justified in separating the religious aspect of the Lord’s-day from its social, and physiological character. You cannot, says the objector, make men religious by enforcing Sabbatarian laws. The truism none can question. But apply it to animals; they could not appreciate or enter the uses of a religious arrangement, yet the law requires their physical well-being to be taken into consideration. It is on this ground that the magistrate may enact, that a day’s rest shall be the inalienable right of every man under his jurisdiction” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 267).

¹⁷Baptist W. Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1856), 32. Edward Baines added, “In my judgment, parliament ought to shut the public-houses on Sunday, because of the enormous mischief proved to result from their being open” (Edward Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ. and B. Oliveira, ESQ. M. P. on the Sunday Opening of the Crystal Palace* [London: Seeleys, 1854], 9).

¹⁸Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 301: “Again; if the increase of crime, through any particular cause, renders that cause a fit matter for legislative interference; then the increase of crime, the consequent extension of our police force, the enlargement of our gaols, and the augmentation in the expenditure of the borough or the parish, which are continually demanded through Sunday dissipation, render Sabbath legislation an imperative necessity.”

*exercising themselves in the duties of religion.*¹⁹

Noel appreciated the fact that government had recently improved its prisons, reduced taxes and promoted education. But additional action was needed. The government must also protect the Sabbath.²⁰

Benjamin Parsons argued that love for one's neighbor required Sabbath legislation.²¹ Loving one's neighbor meant seeking the neighbor's best interests, which required protecting the Sabbath for its proper observance. Parsons wrote to the Earl of Derby arguing that prohibiting Christians from honoring the Sabbath by allowing labor and recreation inhibited them from showing reverence to God. Parsons added, "You must, my Lord, you must 'love your neighbor as yourself,' or you cannot be a Christian;

¹⁹Josiah Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath, Religious and Political*, 4th ed. (London: Patriot Office, 1853), 21.

²⁰Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 32: "It [the government] has improved our prisons and police, encouraged education, removed or lessened various taxes upon knowledge, and released trade from the shackles that bound it. Still there is more which it can do." Editors of the *Eclectic Review* wrote, "It is our firm conviction, and we shall endeavor to make it appear before we close the present article, that the Sabbath is a legitimate subject for human legislation; —nay, that the institution, in its very nature, requires the concurrence of the magistrate, being, in part, a political institution, having relation to man as the subject of human government. . . . If the observance of the Day is to be enforced upon the conscience, it must be done by the ministers of religion, taking for their ground the authority of Christ and his Apostles, whose laws are alone binding upon our faith. If the observance of the Day is to be enforced in any other way, it must be, not by the Church, which has no power, but by the State, which has, by the civil magistrate" ("The Christian Sabbath," 487-88). Noel noted, "Only let the Government not take the lead in a disregard to the law of God. If irreligious persons will seek amusement for themselves on the Sabbath, let not Government provide it for them" (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 31). The editors of the *British Quarterly Review* added, "We contend that the Sabbath is an institution productive of great civil advantages, and that, as such, it ought to be protected by civil authority. A large majority of the people are desirous that the Sabbath should be observed as a day of religious rest, and therefore, as we believe, the passive observance of the day should be enforced. One thing is clear—the Sabbath cannot be simultaneously observed without the sanction of common authority, and this can only be secured by legal enactment" ("Article III," 105).

²¹"Money gained at the risk of the health or life of but a single servant or operative is the price of blood; and that cup of pleasure will end in the bitterest sorrow which was procured by violating the divine injunction, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' You are therefore, my Lord, on the plain principles of humanity, called upon to use your influence that the grounds of the Crystal Palace shall not be opened on the Sabbath" (Benjamin Parsons, *A Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of Derby, on the Cruelty and Injustice of Opening the Crystal Palace on the Sabbath* [London: John Snow, 1853], 20).

and therefore you cannot be a Christian if you encourage Sabbath labour.”²² The earl was in a position to make this change, according to Parsons, and he should use his leverage to prevent labor and recreation on the Sabbath.²³

Nonconformists sought legislation to protect the Sabbath through curtailing harmful and unnecessary activities, not through promoting positive ones.²⁴ After all, Nonconformists noted, the Sabbath originated with God at creation, not with the government. This implied that man was ultimately accountable to God not the government. Failure to observe the Sabbath violated God’s standard, not the State’s, argued Hill.²⁵ So, though legislation could not dictate spiritual practice, it could offer a window of time for individuals to practice godliness.²⁶ Legislation, added Parsons, must

²²Ibid., 16. See “Reviews and Brief Notices,” *Baptist Magazine* 23 (January 1831): 16.

²³“Though you rejected revelation; though you supposed the moral law abolished; though you believed that human senators are prohibited from legislating on any subject on which Jehovah has given a law; yet it would then be your duty to exert yourself to prevent Sunday trading and labour” (ibid., 20).

²⁴To project a reform in the Sunday habits of a people in their privacy, is plainly as much an impossibility as it is beyond its province. The *intrusion* would be justly resented alike by the poor and the rich. The individual, whether working, carousing, or innocently diverting himself, is not amenable to political law, so long as his conduct ends in himself” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 293). See William Lower, “Observance of the Sabbath,” *Baptist Magazine* 26 (May 1834): 207.

²⁵Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 293: “Were the Sabbath simply a political arrangement, no difficulty would beset the question of legislative interference. But it came from God, its dominion is over conscience, and its violation is a sin so subtle in its operation, so deeply rooted in its heart, and so diffusive in its manifestation, that no human law can define it, in order to prohibit, or having proscribed it, can enforce its own provisions. Its own security and dignity require, that the government should not attempt impossibilities.”

²⁶*Patriot* (November 14, 1832): 344: “It is obvious that government, if it legislate at all on this subject, can do no more than stop ‘trading;’ in other words, enforce a suspension of all ordinary business. To proceed further than this, —to enforce the religious observance of the day—would be a flagrant violation of the rights of conscience, not to say that the attempts must prove utterly ineffectual; it would multiply hypocrites, but could not increase piety.” The editors of the *Patriot* added, “We have never advocated the enforcement of the civil observance of the Sabbath, except as a law of *protection*. But surely there is some medium between compelling men, by pains and penalties, to be or seem religious, and raising up, as this clause would do, a legislative opposition to the attempts of the ministers of religion to form them to religious habits” (*Patriot* [July 23, 1834], 260).

not ordain how time should be spent on the Sabbath.²⁷ The government could not force someone to stay at home and read the Bible or attend corporate worship.²⁸ Regulations concerning the amount of time devoted to corporate worship, private Bible study time and family time were inappropriate.

On the other hand, Sunday laws that guarded public health and people's rights were acceptable, and needed. Parsons explained, "[W]e call on the legislature in the name of humanity, of justice, of health, life, right, and freedom, to prohibit Sabbath labour."²⁹ Nonconformists insisted that legislation would also contribute to Christian growth since Sundays provided the best opportunity for Christians to receive religious instruction. Conder noted, "it is the bounden duty of the Legislature, to provide that its observance should be protected and encouraged to the utmost."³⁰ Legislation that would prevent subjects from being deprived of their right to worship was a way of protecting "the rights

²⁷“Again we repeat, we desire no interference with the religious opinions of anyone. Let men spend their Sabbath as they please provided they do not compel others to any unnecessary work” (Parsons, *A Letter*, 29-30).

²⁸“With enforcing its observance the civil power has no business whatsoever” (William Brock, *Three Sermons about the Sabbath* [London: Cooke & Whitley, 1853], 45).

²⁹Parsons, *A Letter*, 30: “[H]uman legislation has nothing to do, except to see that no one shall be robbed of the liberty or power of attending to it. There is no government, prince, monarch, or emperor in the world that has a right to dictate to mankind respecting the *religious* observance of the Lord’s-day You have to guard that he be robbed of no right, that he receive no personal injury, that his life be safe, and his property secure; and it is on these principles of physical, civil, and social legislation that we demand that *one* day in seven shall be the possession of every British subject” (12). Hill also noted, “What the Sabbatarian seeks is, protection in the exercise of liberty to worship, without compelling any other to worship” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 300).

³⁰Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 21. The *British Quarterly Review* editors added, “We ask, indeed, that the civil government should maintain the Sabbath as an institution which confers invaluable civil benefits, but we demand it as a right, because in this way it protects the great majority of its subjects in the exercise of their conscientious convictions, whilst it does not compel any one to do what conscience forbids” (“Article III,” 105). The *Baptist Magazine* editors explained, “In this we are agreed; recollecting that it is not merely with regard to the Sabbath, but every other institution or practice in which the community, or any part of it should be agreed, that a similar protection ought to be afforded. The design of establishing government is not to infringe upon the liberties of the subjects, but to protect them, and to protect them to the utmost even in their conscientious scruples, or it may be absurdities, so long as they do not interfere with the public good” (“Reviews and Brief Notices,” 16).

and liberties of the subject.”³¹

Sabbath legislation served to maintain the health of society. Thus it pertained to social and physical aspects of life, an appropriate sphere for the exercise of legislative authority. If civil laws that prohibited murder and theft related to the physical realm of civilization and were essential, why asked Parsons, was the Sabbath not a legitimate law since it pertained to man’s physical well being? Allowing Sabbath labor was an injustice to all the poor souls who must work that day.³² Parsons explained, “For say what you will, Sunday labour is not only inhumane and cruel, but it is persecution, and ought to be as much restrained by the hand of the law as any other oppression which would prevent men from worshipping God.”³³

Nonconformist writers often stressed the moral obligation that Parliament had of passing Sabbath legislation.³⁴ If the government did not protect the Sabbath and allowed amusements to open on Sunday afternoons, they tempted people to ignore the

³¹“[T]he Sabbath is a proper subject for human legislation. To compel a man to worship on the Sabbath, would be to step beyond the province of human jurisdiction: for God alone is Lord of the conscience, and no human enactment can make a man a true worshipper. But to prevent men—and especially public and organized bodies of men—from exercising their power and influence to deprive the working man, or any man, of his Sabbath’s rest, yea, and worship too, if he will, is no more than a due protection on the part of the state of the rights and liberties of the subject” (Robert Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath* [London: Judd & Glass, 1856], 22).

³²“Sabbath labour is inhuman; Sabbath labour is robbery; Sabbath labour is cruelty; Sabbath labour is persecution; Sabbath labour is deadly; and therefore ought to be restrained by the authority of the law” (Parsons, *A Letter*, 30).

³³*Ibid.*, 29.

³⁴“[Although] Government cannot compel men to be religious, it can and ought to protect them in the exercise of their religion. Although a man ought not to be compelled by the civil authority to keep the Sabbath, he may and ought to be restrained from robbing his neighbor of the day of rest, or from taking an unfair advantage of his conscientious observance of it. . . . It is surely as proper as it is necessary, that the legislature of a free country should make some provision on behalf of that class of the community” (“The Christian Sabbath,” 508).

Sabbath.³⁵ Hill argued that the government's job was not only to prevent crime but also to serve as a promoter of virtue.³⁶ Promoting goodness through a Sabbath law profited every level of society, wrote Conder, but without law, England would lose its distinguishing feature and this should be viewed with great dismay.³⁷ Sabbath legislation was so crucial that Thomas Greenfield wrote that a politician's stance on the Sabbath question must determine whether he should receive the vote of godly people.³⁸

Nonconformists wanted Sabbath legislation to prohibit pursuits that conflicted with corporate worship and private devotion—pursuits such as markets, fairs, shows, bands playing in the streets and public sports. Hill discussed these pursuits and their intrusion upon Sabbath practice: “That such disturb worshippers, cannot be disputed; and, as they must take place in the majority of cases, where there are many whose Sunday quiet is absolutely destroyed, or whose progress to and from places of worship is

³⁵“[A]nd now Government becomes their [London residents] temper, by calling them to listen on the Sabbath to waltzes and operas, in violation of conscience which whispers in the early of each” (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 29-30).

³⁶Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 296: “It is, moreover, not only within its province, but the bounden duty of the government, to act on the basis of the fourth commandment. The magistrate is not only a terror of the evil-doer, but a ‘*minister of God for good.*’ As a body of Christian legislators it should, by example, promote its observance; and see that every one of its subjects has the opportunity, if disposed, to avail himself of its religious advantages.”

³⁷“The English Sabbath, hitherto the happy distinction of our country, is, in a certain sense, the palladium of our commonwealth, the safeguard of morals, the nurse of manly thought, and freedom, and piety. Nor is any sign of the times to be viewed with greater dismay, than the increasing profanation of the sacred day” (Conder, *The Law of the Sabbath*, 4th ed., 20).

³⁸Thomas Greenfield, “The Sunday-Observance Question,” *Patriot* (August 22, 1855): 1: “No question of party politics is of any importance, in my estimation, in comparison with the Sabbath question. And electors who feel as strongly as you do on the subject, need not fear to take their stand firmly and avowedly on this point. If all religious electors would at once anew their determination to vote for no man who will not pledge himself to respect the Fourth Commandment, we shall soon see that those who take the lead. . . . will look out for representatives who, at least, will do nothing to promote the desecration of the Sabbath.”

interrupted; it is one of the plainest duties of the government to forbid them.”³⁹ In addition, Nonconformist writers wanted legislation that would restrain employers who forced their employees to work on Sundays and other entrepreneurs who kept companies open for business on Sundays.⁴⁰

Nonconformists realized that applying legislation governing the Sabbath only removed hindrances to worship—legislation could not guarantee a proper Sabbath.⁴¹ Parsons noted, “human legislation has nothing to do, except to ensure that no one shall be robbed of the liberty or power of attending to it.”⁴² One example of a Nonconformist appeal for Sabbath legislation is found in John Angell James’ work, “The Sabbath.” He addressed Members of Parliament and asked them to guard the Sabbath by their power: “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? You are set as a city on a hill, which cannot be hid. I ask not for the interposition of your power to enforce or uphold the *religious observance* of the Sabbath.”⁴³ As James noted, government should not impose spiritual requirements to Christianity upon anyone. But,

³⁹Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 303.

⁴⁰Ibid: “For seven days’ work the labourer gains no more than he would for six days’ employment, while his physical as well as moral well-being is sacrificed to the convenience of the employer” (304). Hill added, “Again; by the laws of servitude, apprenticeship, and the licensing system, the legislature gives the master, or the shopkeeper, power to compel an apprentice and certain classes of servants to sacrifice their property in Sunday time and leisure. There ought, therefore, to be restrictions on travelling by rail, steamboat, and omnibus, and on Sunday employment of apprentices” (ibid.).

⁴¹“The Christian Sabbath,” 487: “A religious obligation, an obligation laid upon the conscience, must be created by the law of God; and in the discharge of that obligation, so far as it is purely religious, man, as an accountable agent, is answerable to God alone.”

⁴²Parsons, *A Letter*, 12. Hill added, “Acts of Parliament have cared more for the convenience of the public, than their moral and physical well-being; while nothing has been done to rescue them from spiritual debasement” (Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 240).

⁴³James, “The Sabbath,” 402.

the State could protect the day from employment.⁴⁴ Members of Parliament should have an interest in passing Sabbath laws, according to James, because such laws are good for the general welfare.⁴⁵ In addition, Members of Parliament should be role models, adopting a lifestyle of honoring the Sabbath. Sundays for Members of Parliament should consist of corporate worship, refraining from political parties, avoiding unnecessary travel and other activities that dishonored God and enhanced moral corrosion.⁴⁶

Another example of Nonconformist appeal for legislation came from Edward Baines, Jr. He wrote a letter to a Member of Parliament who openly favored the Crystal Palace's⁴⁷ Sunday opening. Baines argued from the Sabbath's value as a creation ordinance and for its practical benefits: First, it was a reprieve from secular employment, which without the Sabbath would drain man of his health and strength. Second, the

⁴⁴Ibid., 402-03: "Men cannot be made pious by Acts of Parliament, nor compelled by statute to worship God. But legislation may be righteously employed in protecting the poor man from oppression and from being robbed, by the craving, unsatisfied, and remorseless spirit of trade, of his opportunity to give rest to his weary limbs, and to worship his Creator."

⁴⁵Ibid., 404: "But leaving legislation out of consideration, we may ask, and have a right to expect, senators, you would concede what we require—your example and your influence on behalf of the sacred day. You are supposed, from your situation, to have a deeper interest in your country's welfare, and better opportunities for knowing what will conduce to it; both God and man look for more from you, and the nobles of the land, than from any other class of laymen. You have station and influence: give both to God."

⁴⁶Ibid. The *Patriot* reported, "We see no reason why any class claiming protection from the Legislature in this respect should be overlooked or denied relief. . . . Wise and efficient legislation should keep just a-head of public sentiment, without attempting to force it onward at too rapid a pace" (*Patriot* [November 1833]: 409). This also implied that Parliament must not pass any laws to prevent honoring the Sabbath such as allowing recreational venues to open for business. J. M. noted, "[W]e do plead, in the name of our God, that, for the sake of our beloved country, open and flagrant violations of God's holy day may not be the result of the official orders of members of Government; and that the Parliament of this Protestant land may never spread the shield of its mighty sanction over professed plans for the recreation of the people" (J. M., "The Sabbath: or, How Shall We Deal With Its Political Antagonists?" *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [January 1856]: 20).

⁴⁷The Crystal Palace was a London attraction that opened in 1851.

Sabbath provided the opportunity for moral and spiritual improvement which God desires.⁴⁸

Parsons openly petitioned the Earl of Derby and asked him to pass a law protecting workers from Sunday labor. Sunday labor was the most common form of Sabbath neglect and could only be brought to an end if prohibited by legislation.⁴⁹

Parsons also asked the Earl to resolve the Sunday labor issue by intervening between employers and employees:

You are therefore, my Lord, about to inflict incalculable evils and injuries upon a large portion of the most valuable of your fellow citizens. The working classes are very important members of the commonwealth. We cannot all be kings and queens; and trade, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, railways and domestic life, would be in a very pitiable condition if all were lords, squires, great capitalists, and Crystal Palace speculators. Our clerks, operatives, peasants, hard handed fustian jackets, smock frocks, &c., make the wealth and the comforts of the nation.⁵⁰

Employees needed Sabbath legislation to provide them a day of rest. The father who labored on Sunday had time with his children stolen from him since he departed home before they rose and arrived late at night when they were asleep.⁵¹ No amount of money could reimburse him for the precious time he lost with his family.⁵² The working class

⁴⁸Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ., and B. Oliveira, ESQ., M.P.*, 6. Baines added, "Without this Heaven-appointed relief, the labourer would be brutalized by incessant toil, and all above the labourer would be secularized by incessant worldly engagements."

⁴⁹Sunday trading is "the most frequent form which the sin of Sabbath-breaking assumes" (*Patriot* [November 14, 1832]: 344).

⁵⁰Parsons, *A Letter*, 24.

⁵¹"We pity the orphan and the widow, but Sunday labour deprives the mother and her children of their best friend for months and years in succession. It is true he may come home every night, but then it is generally when his little ones are in bed, and he leaves in the morning before they are up; and should he visit his house during the day, in many cases they are at work, or at school" (*ibid.*, 23).

⁵²"You cannot, my Lord, give another day that will be a compensation for the loss of the Sunday" (*ibid.*).

suffered most from Sunday labor, and the Earl was responsible for such anguish, as Parsons saw it.

Nonconformists who supported Sabbath legislation lobbied hard for its passage. Many supported a bill to prevent pubs and beer shops from opening on Sundays. In 1854, 2,182 petitions with 415,027 signatures were presented to Parliament backing a bill to keep the public houses and beer shops closed on Sundays.⁵³ The editors of the *Eclectic Review* encouraged all Christians to petition Parliament in support of this bill.⁵⁴ “Why, for example, should not every clergyman and his churchwardens, and every dissenting minister and his deacons, send up a petition?”⁵⁵ Appeals that remained in the church lobby instead of the hands of Parliament were ineffective, according to Nonconformists. One of the largest Congregational churches in England was criticized for having fewer than 100 signatures attached to it. Nonconformist activists argued that Parliament might act if it sensed strong support for Sabbath legislation from the public. If Parliament agreed to close recreational venues on Sunday surely it would close public houses and beer shops as well if the conscience of the religious public were heard.⁵⁶

⁵³“The Liquor Traffic and Sunday Legislation,” *Eclectic Review* 9 (May 1855): 601. Baines added, “I deeply grieve that Parliament should have consented—after a one-sided inquiry and in a spirit of dastardly submission to interested parties—to extend the hours during which the public-houses may be open on the Lord’s day” (Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 6).

⁵⁴“The Liquor Traffic and Sunday Legislation,” 618: “We are, however, anxiously desirous of leading all those who are impressed with the facts above detailed, to lose no time, and withhold no energy, both to preserve the present English law from the hands of the spoiler, and to procure one co-extensive with the whole of the Lord’s Day. . . . Our own hope lies with the Christian public, to whom we make an earnest and ultimate appeal.”

⁵⁵Ibid., 619: “In the session of 1854, only 459 petitions emanated from Christian congregations, signed by 62,273 persons—an average of 136 names to each petition.”

⁵⁶Ibid.: “If Parliament, in deference, as Lord Palmerston said, to the sentiments of the religious public, would not consent to the Sunday opening of our temples of science and places of amusement innocence in itself, surely it cannot be too much to hope that, in deference to the same public, it will cheerfully consent to close throughout the Sunday temples of dissipation.”

In 1855, editors of the *Patriot* voiced concern over the Sunday Trading Prevention Bill presented by Lord Robert Grosvenor. This group supported the bill's core, which thwarted Sunday trade within the Metropolitan Police district and London, but ultimately opposed it because Sunday trade was legalized during set hours on Sunday. This practice would lead to further Sabbath neglect.⁵⁷

James encouraged the residents of the United Kingdom and Queen Victoria to support Sabbath legislation. Addressing her personally, James wrote that he desired God to bless her rule and enable her to submit to God's supreme authority and keep the Sabbath holy.⁵⁸ James also implored other political leaders to observe the Sabbath in their own houses and ensure the Sabbath is kept among their constituents.⁵⁹

Opponents of Sabbath Legislation

While many Nonconformists supported Sabbath legislation, others did not,

⁵⁷“The Sunday Trading Prevention Bill,” *Patriot* (June 28, 1855): 429: “While prescribing the hours during which trading on the Sabbath shall be allowed, it also legalizes and sanctions it within those hours, and would unquestionably tend to increase and enlarge trading within those limits, by taking away the stigma which at present attaches to the open violation of the day among the more respectable classes of tradesmen. Moreover, a precedent would be established that might hereafter be made the justification of a large extension of legalised trading. This is one serious objection to the Bill; and another is, that, by confining the civil observance of the Sabbath to ‘Church-going hours,’ it undermines the religious obligation of observing the whole day as a day of rest. A half Sabbath is no Sabbath; and we have good reason to be on our guard against any legislative enactment that would tend to secularise any portion of the day.”

⁵⁸James, “The Sabbath,” 401: “ILLUSTRIOUS QUEEN of these realms, enthroned not only in the palace, but in the hearts of your loyal and devoted subjects, long may God preserve you to an admiring people, the pattern of every personal and relative virtue; and ever may He vouchsafe to you His grace, to acknowledge an authority higher than your own, and to enable you, in subjection to Him by whom Kings reign and Princes decree justice, together with your Royal Consort, to keep holy the Sabbath-day, that so the sanctity of the Court, as well as its purity, may always be maintained, and an example continue to be given from the throne of that righteousness which exalteth a nation!”

⁵⁹“Nor let THE RULERS OF OUR COUNTRY be backward to follow the pattern which may be set them in this particular by their Royal mistress. As they would guide with a steady hand and a clear vision the helm of the state, and obtain from above the wisdom which is profitable to direct—as they would bring upon their counsels the blessing of Him without whom nothing is wise, or strong, or good, let them take heed in their own households, and in the various departments of the state over which they severally preside, to remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy” (ibid., 401-02).

even though they may personally observe the Sabbath.⁶⁰ In a review of *A Catechism on the Sabbath Day* by Thomas Veryworth, the *Baptist Magazine* editors wrote, “when the appeal is made to human legislation, for the purpose of enforcing its observance, we think that our brethren err.”⁶¹ Thomas Toller expressed similar concerns in a letter to the editor of the *Patriot*. He wrote that all believers have “the solemn duty” to observe the Lord’s Day but it is “unjust in principle, and of injurious tendency” for the government to impose Sabbatarian regulations.⁶²

Some opponents of Sabbath legislation argued that the early church in not engaging in civil affairs had set a good precedent.⁶³ Parsons argued against this view, pointing out that the early Christians also did not lobby on any civil or criminal issue, not even against murder, slavery, theft, or separation of Church and State. So, imitating the early church implied abandoning all attempts to influence civil involvement. Parsons disagreed with the political approach of the early church and concluded the early church did not offer a good example to follow: “What Paul would have done, if he had been a Member of Parliament, we can hardly say; still, we may safely affirm that he would as soon have voted to keep men from being robbed, persecuted, and killed by Sabbath

⁶⁰“It is to be feared that many will frequent the Crystal Palace on Sunday, who otherwise would be in the House of God. This is, no doubt, a very serious matter, but a simply preventive legislation will not remedy the moral mischief out of which the evil springs. For such, no system of safeguards can be successful. Men are beyond the reach of protection, who would use the term ‘national sanction’ as the cloak of sin” (James Baldwin Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People* [London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co., 1853], 29).

⁶¹“Review,” *Baptist Magazine* 29 (February 1837): 71.

⁶²Thomas Toller, “Objections to Laws for the Observance of the Sabbath,” *Patriot* (April 1833): 127.

⁶³Parsons noted that the Earl of Derby’s “new friends” highlighted the early church’s lack of involvement with civil affairs (Parsons, *A Letter*, 31-32).

labour.”⁶⁴ Christians must protect God’s holy day through legislation, argued Parsons, so that workers will have the opportunity to worship.⁶⁵

Some opponents of Sabbath legislation argued that efforts to enforce the Sabbath would lead to its further profanation. They pointed out that enforcement would require hired detectives to monitor citizens.⁶⁶ Appointing such detectives meant employing people, which profaned the Sabbath. Similarly, adversaries noted that as early as 1833, that Sabbath negligence had become so widespread that eradicating it seemed next to impossible.⁶⁷

Opponents of Sabbath legislation argued that it was an incorrect approach because enforcement of a spiritual law did not belong to the government. James Baldwin Brown contested a proposed petition against the Crystal Palace’s Sunday opening in an 1853 Congregational Union meeting. At the time, he felt “wholly unsupported” but later realized there was sizeable support for his view though it had not been expressed at the meeting.⁶⁸ Brown revered the Sabbath but contended that it was not the government’s job

⁶⁴Ibid., 32.

⁶⁵“We do not want to shut every man, woman, and child up on a Sabbath. All that we desire is, that Sunday labour shall be restrained by law; and we demand this on the same broad principle of justice that we ask for any regulation connected with the civil rights of the country” (ibid.).

⁶⁶J. F., “Remarks on Sabbath Legislation,” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 11 (Supplement 1833): 570: “[A]ny legislative measure on the subject would ultimately fail to answer the end proposed. . . . Should the friends of Sabbath legislation be successful in procuring from the Government severer laws and heavier penalties against those who break it, are they prepared to follow them up, by the employment of spies and informers, to enforce them throughout the country, and to incur the odium which such a course of proceeding would naturally engender in the public mind?”

⁶⁷Ibid., 571: “I regard the evils which now afflict society as too deeply seated in its constitution to be removed by Sabbath legislation (which, to my mind, is only covering the surface of the disease, whilst all its virulence and poison remain).”

⁶⁸Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 4-5.

to protect it.⁶⁹ Would England really experience a national Sabbath if the Crystal Palace were closed on Sunday, asked Brown? If England was determined to disregard Sabbath observance, any government interference would only prove ineffective.⁷⁰

Yet, these opponents did not want to resign from advocating Sabbath observance. In their view, heart change was necessary to yield life change. Jesus had taught that good fruit originated from a good tree. So, ministers must focus on people's hearts instead of their actions. Allowing God to work on the heart would produce permanent change.⁷¹ Besides preaching, they advocated education to address Sabbath neglect. A nationwide instructional system was needed to instruct citizens on the necessity of Sabbath observance. No human law could enforce a proper Sabbath, wrote Richard Winter Hamilton. The problem is man's sinful heart that pursues covetousness.⁷²

⁶⁹“For myself, I would handle as reverently the Lord's day which the Spirit has delivered to us through the Church, as the Jew his Sabbath, protected by the penalties of the law. Only, as Christians, we are bound to go further back than the Jew could go, dared go, even beneath and behind the commandment, and enter into the counsels of Him who gave to us the Sabbath day. We are to regard the purpose and spirit of the Sabbath” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 19). Thomas Toller argued that the government did not possess jurisdiction to impose Sabbath observance. God established the Sabbath not the government, wrote Toller. Man answered to God for its observance not the government. Nowhere in Scripture did God grant authority to the civil magistrates for imposing Sabbath observance. He continued, “But prayer, the perusal of the Scriptures, attendance on public worship, are religious duties no less than the observance of the Sabbath. Does the province of the magistrate include the enforcement of all these duties? If it does not, how comes the Sabbath to be an exception? If it does, why not call upon the legislature to compel men to read the Bible, to attend public worship, &c., as well as to abstain from labour on the Lord's-day?” (Toller, “Objections to Laws for the Observance of the Sabbath,” 127).

⁷⁰“[The] reality is too decisively the other way, for us to hope that a Government Act can give to us a character before man or before God. . . . We may shut the Crystal Palace and be no nearer a national Sabbath keeping, nay, farther from it” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 28).

⁷¹J. F., “Remarks on Sabbath Legislation,” 571: “[Sabbath desecration] lies too deep for human legislation, and which nothing but moral means can effectually reach, I therefore think that all such legislation would be utterly useless.”

⁷²Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindicae Sabbaticae*, 160: “If the sabbath be kept, it must be from conviction, approval, choice: it must be in the spirit of religion. If the sabbath-breaker be reclaimed, it must be by process of intelligent impression: it must be by the influence of religion on the mind. We dare not bring the machinery of the State, the inflictions of the Tribunal, to the punishment of spiritual wickedness, of any thing simply infringing religious law” (161).

Brown admitted that some patrons visiting the Palace would have attended church had the Palace remained closed. Yet, legislation did not alter the core problem, which is the heart. “[S]imply preventative legislation will not remedy the moral mischief out of which the evil springs.”⁷³ Restricting people from recreational activities on the Sabbath would not connect them with the church. The solution rested on introducing people to God. People need to know that the church had good news to tell. Only when people are transformed by the power of the Gospel will England’s Sabbath return.⁷⁴

Sabbath Legislation and the Working Class

Nonconformist advocates of Sabbath legislation believed that it would benefit the working class, though many within the working class did not agree. Legislation offered the working class a chance to rest, according to Nonconformists. The idea of closing taverns on Sunday irritated some working class members since they enjoyed relaxing there. Preventing Sunday trade by closing businesses caused inconvenience because the working class purchased necessities at local stores on Sunday. But, as Noel

⁷³Hearts needed to be changed and the government could not do that. Only faithful pastors who preached God’s Word on Sundays could bring about change: “The call to us now is for work; work—not by platform crudities, vanities, and falsities; not by protests, preventions, petitions, and bills of spiritual rights; —but by earnest, manful, godly, spiritual effort to make the Gospel known and felt as the power of God unto salvation. The power of the Gospel is not felt as it once was. Admirable sermons are preached, and with admirable emphasis and theatric art, but power does not go forth from them. Men look at us, hear us, admire us, but our prehensile power is gone. . . . We need to take hold on men, and say, ‘We have good news—good news of God.’ . . . Let us be humble-hearted and full of charity; let us work, work harder and more lovingly, with more oneness of heart and voice, to make men feel that it is God’s good news to them which we have in charge, and then will our Sabbaths return to us” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 34-35).

⁷⁴William Bromley Cadogan traveled through Chelsea insisting that shops close on the Sabbath. Yet, he found it impossible to accomplish his objective and met great resistance. So, he resorted to preaching Christ crucified. Soon after, he witnessed a drastic change. God softened hearts and led people to repent from evil works. Sabbath legislation would be as ineffective as Cadogan’s efforts in Chelsea were apart from preaching, argued the writer. Appeals are needed from the pulpit not parliament. See J. R., “Sabbath Legislation,” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 11 (November 1833): 477.

argued, Nonconformists never endeavored to deprive the working class of relaxation or opportunity to obtain life essentials.⁷⁵ Instead, Sabbath legislation was intended to guarantee that the only free day for the working class would not be squandered at a tavern or amusement. Legislation was required for the working class to have opportunity for a Sabbath.⁷⁶ Baines explained, “Now, to my mind, the Working Classes are precisely those who are most interested in the maintenance of the Sabbath as a day of religion, and most exposed to irreparable injury from its secularization.”⁷⁷ Baines responded to a critic who argued it was unfair to eliminate opportunities for the working class to be away from their poor living conditions.⁷⁸ Certainly, their living conditions needed improvement, Baines wrote, but time at home with their families was invaluable and had to be protected.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 31-32. “With all my heart, I wish for the working-classes abundant employment and good wages, short hours of work and more holidays, health, air, recreation, and all possible happiness, but I wish them all these in conjunction with a good conscience and the blessing of God” (ibid.).

⁷⁶James Hamilton recorded the story of a tradesman who woke up to pure delight on Sunday morning: “He felt that he had time for everything. He had time to think of the past—its progress and its shortcomings; and time to forecast the future—its dangers and its exigencies. And he had time to pray. Often on other days he grieved at stunted devotions, and went feebly through his work, from a fear that prayer had been stunted or restrained” (James Hamilton, “The Adaptation of the Sabbath to Man’s Intellectual and Moral Nature” in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* [Glasgow: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856], 120). In addition, Richard Winter Hamilton wrote, “Emphatically is it the poor man’s day. It is his all. If it be taken from him, and it cannot be taken from him *without his consent*, his last independence is broken down, his only portion confiscated” (Hamilton, *Horae Et Vindiciae Sabbaticae*, 170).

⁷⁷Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 2: “But of all the classes of human society, it is (as I have endeavoured to show) the *working man* to whom the religious Sabbath is most precious. His toil makes the day of repose doubly sweet” (7).

⁷⁸Ibid., 4. Baines added, “[To] the working classes especially, there could be no loss so disastrous as the breaking down of that safeguard, and the secularizing of the Lord’s day” (Edward Baines, *On the Attempt to Change the Character of the Christian Sabbath* [Leeds: Edward Baines and Sons, 1853], 2).

⁷⁹Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 6: “My profound conviction is, that the very best thing for health, as well as for moral and religious improvement, is the peaceful, soothing,

At the mercy of his employer, the poor man needed the government to enforce a day off. He could then enjoy physical and spiritual replenishment through Sabbath observance.⁸⁰ Noel noted, “What the air and bright sunshine are to his body, which has been pent up during the week in the workshop, that all the varieties of sacred knowledge are to his mind, which has been no less confined to his work. Among these, he expatiates, breathes freely, and grows strong. Still more does the Sabbath do for the heart of the working man.”⁸¹ Critics who asserted that giving the poor a day off would hurt the economy or reduce their income did not truly care for them, according to Nonconformists. Sabbath legislation was very beneficial for the workingman, wrote Baines; they needed it most.⁸² Taking one day off would not jeopardize the workingman’s financial status since God did not bless Sabbath labor. The working class received wages in six days what would have taken seven days to earn without the Sabbath, explained Noel.⁸³ During the other six days, workingmen had to endure

elevating employment of a religiously-spent Sabbath. I believe that calm is more needed than exercise, — that the sanctuary is far better than the steamboat or the railway train, —that the sweet psalmody of the house of prayer infinitely excels the din of military music, and that a man at his own table, with his wife by his side, his children around his knees, and telling them the matchless stories of the Divine book, is ten thousand times better, safer, and happier than he who roves with doubtful company.”

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⁸¹Baptist W. Noel, “Preface,” in *The Christian Sabbath, Considered in Its Various Aspects* (Edinburgh: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856), 4.

⁸²“If to any class a Sabbath of sacred rest is a priceless boon, it is to the sons of toil. If to any class the destruction of its sacredness would be a curse, it would be so to them” (Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 2).

⁸³Noel, “Preface,” 3: “The wages of labour for seven days in this land, were the Sabbath to be abolished, would exactly equal the present wages for the labour of six days; because wages are determined, not by the absolute value of labour, but by the competition for employment. The Sabbath is, therefore, a clear gain to working men.”

companionship of co-workers, the noise of the steam engine, and long workdays. By Sunday, wrote Noel, they desired rest rather than employment.⁸⁴

Some Nonconformists supported Sabbath legislation because it offered spiritual benefits for the working class. Six days a week, the workingman departed for work early in the morning while his children slept and returned home at night when they were tired and ready for bed. If he did not have to labor on Sunday, he would be able to eat, talk and worship with loved ones. This precious family time fostered a healthy household where love for God and one another was present. Wives felt honored, children were nurtured with the attention of their father, and the workingman's body was rejuvenated.⁸⁵ Baines commented, "There cannot, then, be a greater error than to suppose that it is the interest of the working classes to relax the observance of the Sabbath."⁸⁶ The workingman enjoyed a nourished soul through a proper Sabbath. He was prepared for the

⁸⁴Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 11: "What they really want is *rest—repose of mind and body*; enjoyment in the bosom of their families; the pleasant walk to and from the place of worship, with wife and little ones; the comfortable and hearty meal in common; the reading of the best books, and such others as elevate the thoughts of man above mere secular subjects. These, and such like engagements, are infinitely better for a working man."

⁸⁵Ibid., 12: "Let any workman or employer compare in the number of his associate operatives, or the people in his employment, those who spend the Lord's-day thus at home, and those who make it a day of pastime and excitement abroad, and say which are the most punctual at their work on Monday—which are in the best condition to do it well—which are best off at the end of the week or the year—which have best homes—which most comforts—which most money in the savings'-bank—which, in fact, are rising in their condition and class. Let them compare, again, the occasional holiday spent in the country, at the Crystal Palace or other place, mutually agreed on, in company with wives and children, with the selfish Sunday excursion, which so generally separates the family, which violates, in most who have been at all taught in the things of God, the convictions of conscience, and which, by its frequent recurrence, entails extravagant waste of money, extensive loss of home comforts, neglect of children, and mutual reproaches and estrangement between man and wife."

⁸⁶Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 8. "It is said as an excuse for opening the Crystal Palace and other places of amusement on Sunday, that working men need 'recreation and refreshing.' Undoubtedly they do; but nothing that the wit of man could devise would be so conducive to the renovation of the toil-worn frame, as the peaceful calm of a religious Sabbath, the intellectual and spiritual exercise of the sanctuary, and the tranquility of the domestic hearth, where parents collect their children to instruct them in their highest duties and assist them in their heavenward course" (Baines, *On the Attempt to Change the Character of the Christian Sabbath*, 7).

upcoming week's challenges through Bible study, singing to God in addition to meditating on the attributes of God and benefits of redemption.

Many of the working class did not appreciate the Nonconformist attempt to protect them. In June 1855, Lord Robert Grosvenor delivered his Sunday Trading Bill to the House of Commons. The bill aimed to close pubs and beer shops and preventing Sunday transportation, all of which affected the working class.⁸⁷ But, the poor revolted against this bill. Several thousand assembled in Hyde Park on June 24 in public opposition. Several thousand people showed up. They yelled as carriages passed by with the wealthy, "Go to church!!" "Why allow your servants to work on Sundays?" or "Down with the Sabbatarians!" "Away with the Sunday bill!"⁸⁸ Lord Grosvenor was asked in the House of Commons to withdraw his Sunday bill. He refused. Opposition mounted. The following Sunday, on July 1, between 100,000-150,000 people gathered in Hyde Park in defiance of the bill.⁸⁹ A portion of the crowd turned violent. Forty-nine policemen were injured and seventy-one people were arrested.⁹⁰ Rioters even gathered around Lord

⁸⁷"The bill had for its objects the prevention of the whole of that small trading by poor vendors, with which we are familiar in certain parts of the metropolis today. Who has not seen or heard of the Sunday marketing in Petticoat Lane, Leather Lane, Golden Lane, Whitecross Street, and many such another place? This small trading is very useful, and in many cases absolutely necessary to the very poor, who, being at work all the week, would not otherwise have time for the purchase of the Sunday dinner—the one real dinner of the week—shoes, or such other articles of clothing as decency compels them to have even when their slender purses almost forbid the purchase. Lord Robert Grosvenor's Bill fell amongst these like a bombshell, causing the wildest excitement and indignation" (Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, *Charles Bradlaugh* [London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895], 1:52).

⁸⁸Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pt. 1 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), 465.

⁸⁹"It is not easy to reconcile the conflicting statements and inferences concerning last Sunday's 'mob' in Hyde-park. . . . The multitude assembled has been estimated at from 100,000 to 150,000.

Assuming the lower figure to be nearer to the fact, would it be any wonder, if a comparatively small body of police lost patience in dealing, under a broiling sun, with such a mass of riotously dispossessed persons?" ("The Moral Aspects of the Hyde-Park Affair," *Patriot* [July 6, 1855], 10).

⁹⁰Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 465.

Grosvenor's house. Lord Grosvenor then withdrew his Sunday bill.

Two weeks later, on Sunday, July 8, Hyde Park once again hosted enthusiasts who opposed the treatment they received by police the previous Sunday (July 1). This rally did not prove as violent and the crowd was much smaller, but still numbered around 40,000.⁹¹ Following the Hyde Park riots, both Anglican and Nonconformist Evangelicals determined the best approach to protecting Sunday was a bill that did not have "Sunday" in the title, since the term fostered sensitivity. Regulating business hours on Sunday along with acts pertaining to shops and travel proved more effective in protecting the Sabbath than bills particularly focused on Sabbath observance.⁹²

Sabbath Legislation and Recreational Venues

In the 1850s, there was a push to open recreational venues on Sunday afternoons.⁹³ Key recreational sites that received consideration were the British Museum,

⁹¹"The Sunday Insurrection," *Patriot* (July 9, 1855): 15: "Yesterday afternoon Hyde-park was again the scene of an immense crowd, and considerable excitement, but accompanied, happily, but no violence or bloodshed. The assembly as for the twofold purpose of the 'public showing their disapprobation of the manner they were treated by the police on the previous Sunday, and for adopting measures to get the present Beer Bill repealed.' . . . The total number present did not exceed 40,000. . . . Up to six, when the crowd was retiring from the park, we heard of no accident or case of violence. Extensive preparations had been made by the police authorities, acting under directions from the Home Office, to meet any emergency; and even the military were ready for action should events of sufficiently grave importance demand their intervention."

⁹²Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 466.

⁹³"On Thursday last, the High Court of Parliament reassembled, and one of the most important questions to be discussed during the present session is, Shall the Sabbath in England continue to be a holy day, given to purposes of rest and religion, or, Shall it become a mere festival, parceled out between Divine worship and worldly amusements? Certain Resolutions, bearing upon this question, are to be brought before the House of Commons, the notices of which read as follows: —1. By Lord Ebrington (one of the honourable Members for Marylebone): —'That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, should, like the Botanic Gardens at Kew and the Hampton Court Palace and Gardens, be open to the public on Sunday afternoon'" (Joseph Bush, *The Sabbath: Whose Day Is It?* [London: John Mason, 1856], 3). According to *The Clergy List for*

the National Gallery, public parks and the Crystal Palace.⁹⁴ The Crystal Palace, which has been called the “pre-eminent symbol of the Victorian Age,” deserves special attention in this study⁹⁵ since Nonconformists devoted special attention to keeping it closed on Sunday.⁹⁶

The Problem of Recreational Venues

Nonconformists viewed recreational sites prior to the 1850s with concern because they created a precedent for other businesses to open on Sunday.⁹⁷ In the 1830s and early 1840s, amusement locations such as tea gardens, zoos and botanical gardens opened on Sundays. These were all dangerous, argued M’Owan. He feared that theatres hosting Sunday entertainment would be next to open in London.

Let the Metropolis throw open her wonders and her beauties to the nation on the Lord’s day, and our public institutions will soon present the spectacle of our Railway Stations on that day, and the comparative Sabbath quiet of our streets be as much disturbed by the influx of provincial sight seers, as the stillness of many a

1841, Joseph Bush was an Anglican and Curate of Long Ashton, Somersetshire, but his publication helps understand the times.

⁹⁴“Hitherto those institutions being of a secular nature, have been closed on the Lord’s-day, and it is sought to have them opened. They have been closed in deference to the religious character of the day. They cannot be opened without infringing that religious character” (Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 10). The *Patriot* added, “Of this, however, we feel quite sure, —that, unless a stand be made, it will not stop, until the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Crystal Palace, and every place of amusement and recreation, public or private, have been rendered as accessible on Sunday as on other days” (“The Sabbath-Observance Question,” *Patriot* [August 15, 1855], 80).

⁹⁵On the Crystal Palace, see below, pages 155-62.

⁹⁶Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 1: “According to traditional accounts, it symbolized ‘peace, progress, and prosperity,’ and boldly asserted Britain’s position not only as the first industrialized nation and as the ‘workshop of the world,’ but also as the most powerful and advanced state, a paragon of liberalism.”

⁹⁷“Would not recreation itself, without intelligence and morality, rapidly degenerate into brutal licentiousness?” (Close, “Lecture IV,” 65).

rural neighbourhood is now by the outpouring of London revellers.⁹⁸

As the number of venues open on Sunday increases, the number of people removed from Sabbath observance grows.⁹⁹ M'Owan argued that just as it would be absurd for the Emperor of Russia to share control of England with Queen Victoria, so it would be with Sundays half dedicated to worldly affairs and the other half devoted to God.¹⁰⁰ In this unstable state of affairs, growing numbers of businesses would participate in Sunday openings. Paris and Vienna already witnessed this practice.

Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of such institutions might be named in London, and tens of thousands throughout England. Every philosophical, literary, and mechanics' institution, every public library, reading-room, and news-room, every debating society and lecture-room, every gallery, museum, and pictorial exhibition, every school and college, every public garden, shooting-gallery, billiard-room, cricket-ground, and race-ground, every concert-room, theatre, and circus. All places of these descriptions are open in Paris and Vienna; and why not here, if the principle of the religious Sabbath be abandoned in England?¹⁰¹

Recreational attractions, Nonconformist writers argued, posed the further problem of tempting Sabbath observers from the country to come into towns and cities to pursue

⁹⁸M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 11.

⁹⁹“We are satisfied, that the Legislature must interpose, if the rights of the labourer and of the small shopkeeper are not to be utterly ignored and trampled down; and the more so, inasmuch as every measure promotive of the so-called recreations of the people, tends, in its degree, to multiply the number of those who, in one way or another, must sacrifice their day of rest in order to minister to the restless rest of others” (“The Sabbath-Observance Question,” 80). Baines noted that if parks were allowed to open it would be impossible to prevent other businesses from opening: “If one kind of secular amusement is allowed, why not every other kind?—why not Sunday evening concerts, Sunday operas, Sunday theatres and circuses, Sunday games and sports of every description? It is a mockery to pretend that there is any ground on which resistance to these things can be based, if Government is to set the example of providing Sunday amusements for the populace of London” (Edward Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands in the Parks of London on Sundays* [London: Seeley, Jackson, & Halliday, 1856], 10).

¹⁰⁰M'Owan, *Practical Considerations*, 10-11.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 11.

pleasure.¹⁰² Amusements also threatened to secularize the Sabbath by steering society's hearts away from God. They only offered temporary entertainment. They had no power for promoting good. Baines explained, "Science, letters, art may refine the manners and cultivate the intellect; religion alone can purify the soul."¹⁰³ Nonconformists believed that opening recreational venues on Sunday would have a devastating effect on the nation and its families. Baines explained,

My object in addressing your Lordship was to lay before you a most simple argument, and the plainest and most practical view of the case. I wished to show that the House of Commons cannot pass Sir JOSHUA WALMSLEY'S resolution without *secularizing* the Sabbath, —that to secularize would really be to *destroy* it, —that either to secularize or to destroy it would be one of the greatest evils to England and the world.¹⁰⁴

Baines wrote a letter to Lord Palmerston informing him that the "thousands and millions in the land" opposed opening these sites on Sundays.¹⁰⁵ The most astute, devout, genuine, and productive members of society opposed transforming Sunday into an irreligious day, he wrote.¹⁰⁶ He added, "But, my Lord, it would be an enormous error to allow pursuits and recreations, which, however innocent, are still purely secular, to intrude upon hours set apart for the service of God and the sacred duties of religion."¹⁰⁷ Baines believed these national attractions did have value because they heightened the

¹⁰²Robert Wallace, *Man and the Sabbath* (London: Judd & Glass, 1856), 20.

¹⁰³Baines, *A Second Letter to B. Oliveira, ESQ. M.P.*, 8.

¹⁰⁴Edward Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston: on the Attempts Making in Parliament to Secularize the Sabbath* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1856), 9.

¹⁰⁵"I am sure there are thousands and millions in the land, from the peer to the peasant—including Members of Parliament, magistrates, ministers of religion, Sunday School teachers. . . . who will raise their united voices in support of our English Sabbath" (Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 7).

¹⁰⁶Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 3.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 5-6.

public's knowledge of history and pleasure. In fact, he had openly supported these venues as an educational tool for the working class.¹⁰⁸ But, it was a grave mistake, he insisted, to permit them to open on Sunday because they diverted man's attention away from God. Further, Baines explained that if Sunday became a secular day, it would lead to something worse. "What possible hope can we have, that if the Sabbath is made a *secular* day, it will not become a *working* day?"¹⁰⁹

Nonconformists, who supported Sabbath legislation, encouraged others to petition Parliament in order to prevent these venues from opening. If the public refused to lobby its lawmakers, England would soon become like Paris.¹¹⁰ Once the Sabbath command was ignored, Sunday would be open for all labor.¹¹¹ Given this pressing danger, Baines pleaded for every congregation and Sunday school in the United Kingdom to petition Parliament and implore it to end the evil of Sunday music in the London parks immediately.¹¹² Christians must not rely upon Members of Parliament to initiate a movement against Sabbath desecration; Christians must lobby Parliament to do so.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 5: "Let me here declare my warm approbation of all institutions like the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Crystal Palace, which tend to popularize science, diffuse knowledge, and improve the taste of the people, by exhibiting the admirable works of nature and some of the choicest productions of art."

¹⁰⁹Baines, *Value of the Sabbath to the Working Classes*, 3.

¹¹⁰"I cannot but feel that the argument is ridiculous. Does the thing work so in Paris?" (Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 12).

¹¹¹"[T]o expect this steadfastness on the part of the poor, when the Government of the country has set the example of desecrating the Sabbath, is wholly unreasonable. We must at least anticipate a lamentably general falling off. When the Divine authority for consecrating the day to *religion* had been set aside, it is hopeless to expect that it would be preserved as a day of *rest*" (ibid., 14).

¹¹²Baines provided a sample petition at the end of his document: "TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED: The Petition of the undersigned Humbly sheweth, That your petitioners view with equal sorrow and alarm the orders lately issued for the performance of military bands accompanied by the sale of refreshments in Kensington-gardens, and other places of public resort on the

The British Museum, National Gallery, and Public Parks

Against the wishes of Nonconformists, the National Sunday League (NSL henceforth) attempted to open the British Museum and other amusements on Sunday's beginning in 1855.¹¹³ The NSL formed in 1854 to encourage the government to open recreational venues.¹¹⁴ They believed that allowing the public to spend Sundays at entertainment venues would cure the practice of Sunday evils and raise public morale.¹¹⁵ The NSL argued that Scotland's rigid Sabbatarian standards caused physical and moral decline.¹¹⁶ In February 1855, the NSL presented a petition containing 24,000 signatures

Lord's-day. That your petitions regard all such amusements on the Lords-day, whether public or private, as at variance with the ordinance of God; but they especially bear in mind that the military music, now for the first time publicly provided by the Government, is something more offensive than bands playing by private authority within the inclosure of a barrack, or even of a Royal palace, on Sundays. That your petitioners are, therefore, compelled to regard the recent orders as a serious aggression on the Lord's-day, as an outrage on the religious feelings of the country so lately expressed in Parliament, as a means of withdrawing multitudes of the people from public worship, and multitudes of the young from Sunday-schools, and, therefore, as constituting a national sin alike offensive to Almighty God and injurious to the best interests of the nation. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House to address Her Majesty the Queen, that Her Majesty will be pleased to issue her Royal orders that no military band be permitted henceforth to play for public amusement on any part of the Lord's-day, and that no further countenance be given to Sunday trading by the sale of refreshments by public authority" (ibid., 15).

¹¹³“The ‘League’ intends, by means of the press, of public meetings, and of petitions to Parliament, to persuade the Lower House, that it is the wish of the majority of Englishmen that the character of our Sabbath should be changed, and that it should, by law, be divided between public worship and public amusement” (Bush, *The Sabbath*, 4).

¹¹⁴Joseph Kingsmill, *The Sabbath the Working Man's True Charter: Thoughts for Thinking Men of the Industrial Classes, on the Sabbath Question* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 4. Kingsmill was not a Nonconformist but his work aids in understanding the period. The NSL's founder, R. M. Morrell, served as the Honorable Secretary from 1854 when the League began to 1880. John Gritton, who functioned as the LDOS's Secretary for many years, said no one else in England had done more to destroy the English Sabbath than Morrell. Morrell responded, “I accept it as a compliment from such an opponent. To my last breath I shall give thanks for having been the humble instrument in promoting what is now universally admitted to be a peaceful, beneficial and social revolution” (R. M. Morrell, *The National Sunday League: Its Origin and Its Work, 1854 to 1896* [London: R. M. Morrell, 1896], 20).

¹¹⁵*The National Sunday League, to Obtain the Opening of the British Museum, Crystal Palace, and Similar Institutions, on Sunday Afternoon* (London: National Sunday League, 1855), 10-11.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 17-18. Morrell also wrote, “In ignorance of there being any political or puritanical influences to thwart us, we had assumed that it was only necessary to show the House of Commons how

from London residents supporting the British Museum and National Gallery's Sunday opening. One year later, supporters who favored opening the British Museum on Sunday had collected 115 petitions and 22,161 signatures. In 1856, Sir Joshua Walmsley¹¹⁷ introduced a bill to the House of Commons calling for the opening of the British Museum and National Gallery on Sunday afternoons.¹¹⁸

The *Patriot* argued that there was no stable middle ground. Any compromise would lead to complete obliteration of any distinction between the Lord's Day and the rest of the week. Opening amusements on Sunday would lead to the destruction of the Sabbath and this would be one of the supreme tragedies to England and the world.¹¹⁹ Walmsley wanted to help the working class and his resolution aimed to assist their morale and education. Yet, this, Baines argued, was faulty logic on Walmsley's part since the working class would end up laboring at these venues instead of enjoying them.¹²⁰ Fortunately, for Nonconformists, the bill received little support from Members of

much the Sunday Opening of the Museums and Galleries would benefit the people, for the request to be complied with" (Morrell, *The National Sunday League*, 3).

¹¹⁷Walmsley was a Member of Parliament for Leicester from 1847-1857.

¹¹⁸According to Baines, Walmsley moved "[t]hat in the opinion of this House it would promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the working classes of this metropolis, if the collections of natural history and of art in the British Museum and the National Gallery were open to the public inspection after morning service on Sundays" (Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 3).

¹¹⁹Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 9. The *Patriot* editors added, "Let the natural history of Sabbath-desecration, as developed in France, Italy, and Germany, be analysed; and it will be discovered, that there *is* no stopping at any mid-distance between a strict observance of the Day of Rest, and the complete obliteration of every mark of distinction between that day and the business-days of the week. Recreation is the plea; but what do we see in Germany, for instance? Why, not only recreation on the Sabbath-day, but business; the fact being notorious, that, in several German states, the greatest fairs are held upon the Sabbath-day" ("The Sabbath-Observance Question," 80).

¹²⁰Baines added, "I am persuaded, my Lord, that a seventh day of labour would add nothing to the amount of wages, whilst it would detract immensely from the comfort, the happiness, and the character of the labourer. To oppress the hireling in his wages is a crime against which GOD will be a swift witness: but to rob him of his Sabbaths is in my judgment a deeper sin, because the consequences extend to a life which has no end" (Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 15).

Parliament and encountered great opposition from Sabbatarians.¹²¹ Opponents of the bill were able to generate 4,985 petitions and 627,652 signatures,¹²² and the motion was defeated 376-48. For the time being, the British Museum and National Gallery remained closed.¹²³

Those who favored opening recreational venues on Sunday refused to surrender and established entertainment venues in London's public parks. Government officials opened Kensington Gardens on Sunday afternoons in 1855.¹²⁴ The initiator was Benjamin Hall, a Member of the House of Commons, and the implementer was Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple). Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, argued that Sunday amusements benefited the working class because they gave workers a legitimate reason to enjoy a day off. If they already had plans to attend an amusement, they would not succumb to working on Sunday.

Once Kensington Gardens opened, the government attempted to attract people to the Gardens. Tents and booths were stationed to sell refreshments, and a band was

¹²¹In the House of Commons, an MP named Ebrington, acknowledged that he was “unhappily, one of the small minority who voted in favour of opening the British Museum and the National Gallery on Sundays” (“The Moral Aspects of the Hyde-Park Affair,” 10). Baines also wrote that he hoped Walmsley’s motion would “be defeated [this year] by even a larger majority than last year” (Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 4).

¹²²Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 4.

¹²³According to Noel, The House of Commons opposed the Museum’s opening for two reasons: the Government must not offer amusements to the public on Sundays, and it should prevent its citizens’ servants from unnecessary labor. See Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 40.

¹²⁴“We have no doubt, that these orders have been given from a desire to please the public, by rendering the Crown property yet more subservient to the ‘recreation of the people.’ But, where is this to stop? Unfortunately, no one can tell. Of this, however, we feel quite sure, —that, unless a stand be made, it will not stop, until the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Crystal Palace, and every place of amusement and recreation, public or private, have been rendered accessible on Sunday as on other days, — until, in fact, there be no difference, in this respect, between London and Paris, or any other continental city” (“The Sabbath-Observance Question,” 80).

ordered to play.¹²⁵ This further irritated Nonconformists.¹²⁶ 79,247 attended Kensington Gardens on Sunday April 13, 1856. On the following Sunday almost 90,000 listened to music in Regent's Park.¹²⁷ At Kensington, pristine weather and the Royal Horse Guards Blue band attracted the massive crowd.¹²⁸ Later in 1856, military bands were placed in several of London's public parks on Sundays for entertainment purposes. The government instructed the bands to play at Kensington each Sunday evening for two hours. Baines saw the bands as a danger not only because it was harmful to Sabbath observance, but also because it placed young men and women together in a way that brought "extreme peril."¹²⁹ Instead of attending the evening church service, crowds flocked to the parks seeking entertainment. Nonconformist writers believed that Sunday

¹²⁵Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 5: "All persons who are employed in the establishments, exhibitions, and institutions above referred to would be called upon to give up their Sabbath, at least in part, if not altogether. For example, the military bands who perform in the parks are required to obey, on pain of coming under the severe discipline of the army. Whatever may be their conscientious objection, or whatever their desire for the Sabbath rest, it is at their peril that they disobey orders. There must also be policemen employed to preserve order in so vast a crowd" (11). Baines also added, "SIR BENJAMIN HALL thinks it right that tents or booths should be set up for the sale of refreshments" (11-12).

¹²⁶"The friends of Sunday observance should communicate freely at once with each other, and we may then hope to admonish our rulers of the impolicy of their present course" ("Review of the Month," *Eclectic Review* 10 [October 1855]: 507).

¹²⁷Following Regents Park, another gathering was planned for Victoria Park for the lower classes on eastern London. At Kensington, the scene was rowdy. Hundreds of boys shouted and quarreled while others fought with wooden sticks. It was characterized as a "wild" scene of "excitement" (Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 18).

¹²⁸The *Times* reported the following on April 21, 1856: "Yesterday the band of the Royal Horse Guards Blue played again in Kensington Gardens, when, owing doubtless in a great measure to the magnificent weather, very nearly twice as many people were assembled as on the Sunday previous" (ibid., 6).

¹²⁹"The strains of martial music cause the pulse to bound, and fire the imagination, and they are wholly out of accordance with the sacred repose of the Sabbath. It is, however, their fascination which here constitutes their chief danger. Crowds are sure to follow them; and among these crowds, arrayed in their Sunday finery, thousands of young girls and young men, with no more than the average amount of vanity and weakness, will be brought into circumstances of extreme peril. At these places, I fear, thousands of Sunday scholars will first learn to desert the school and the place of worship, and to enter on the downward path of folly and vice" (Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 8).

concerts set a bad example for the rest of the country.¹³⁰ If they were tolerated in London, the rest of the United Kingdom would desire Sunday concerts as well, argued Baines.¹³¹

Baines called on the public to protest without delay. “It is now possible to nip the evil in the bud. Next year it would be too late. What conscience commands should be done without a day’s procrastination.”¹³² Noel was also disturbed and feared the consequences of providing refreshments at these parks. If the government opened a shop on Sunday for refreshments (cakes, lemonade, tea, coffee, ices and soda-water), which were a luxury, surely others would open their doors to sell life’s necessities, he argued.¹³³ Park visitors were not the only ones negatively affected by the amusements; the government had to require soldiers and policemen to work in order to manage the crowd. Baines admonished British citizens to avoid silence by speaking out against this evil practice:

It is with the people, and the people alone, that the decision of the great question rests, whether the day shall be preserved sacred, or shall be converted first into a day of amusement, and ultimately into a day of half-amusement and half-labour. Will the

¹³⁰The editors of the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* wrote that appeals should be sent to Parliament, and that those interested should pray for the following three things: “That the attendance of Regimental Bands, for amusement on the Lord’s-day, in Kensington Gardens, or in Garrison towns, or wherever else troops are stationed, may be discontinued. That the British Museum, the National Gallery, and other similar public establishments, may not be opened during any part of the Lord’s-day. And, That no alteration be made in the law which prevents the opening of the Crystal Palace, and other exhibitions, on that day” (“Sabbath Movement,” *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 34 [February 1856]: 100).

¹³¹“If the thing be right in London, it cannot be wrong in any town or village of the kingdom. If one kind of secular amusement is allowed, why not every other kind? —why not Sunday evening concerts, Sunday operas, Sunday theatres and circuses, Sunday games and sports of every description? It is a mockery to pretend that there is any ground on which resistance to these things can be based, if Government is to set the example of providing Sunday amusements for the populace of London. . . . The result will necessarily be, that the Lord’s Day will become a *general* day of amusement, nay, the *chief* day of amusement, in London and England, as it now is in Paris and France” (Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 10-11).

¹³²*Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹³³Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 24-25.

people of Britain again lift up their voice? —or will they, like an Eastern army, resign themselves to heedless slumber after their victory, and allow a vigilant foe to surprise them, and turn their victory into shameful rout?¹³⁴

The Crystal Palace

The Crystal Palace was a popular recreational venue that attracted the public's attention in the early 1850s.¹³⁵ The Palace hosted the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in Hyde Park from May to October of 1851.¹³⁶ The Exhibition attracted 58,000 international visitors,¹³⁷ mostly Europeans.¹³⁸ The Palace contained

¹³⁴Baines, *On the Performance of Military Bands*, 7.

¹³⁵Joseph Paxton designed the structure; the name “Crystal Palace” stemmed from the magazine *Punch*. Also, Brown suggested that the Crystal Palace be dedicated to industrious savvy English people. It far surpasses any private estate, he wrote, “It is emphatically a People’s Palace, and the organization of it on this gigantic scale, by men of shrewd understanding, is certainly a sign that the tide of public feeling has turned toward higher, more intellectual, more elevating pursuits and recreations, that it affected some fifteen years ago” (Brown, *The Sabbath, the Crystal Palace, and the People*, 22). Pearce added, “One can scarcely take up a newspaper, read a periodical, listen to an address, or hold conversation with a friend, but he finds a reference is made to the well known building—the Crystal Palace” (Standen Pearce, “The Crystal Palace,” *Baptist Magazine* 43 [September 1851]: 545). The Crystal Palace was enormous, boasting 772,824 square feet of enclosed ground.

¹³⁶Hyde Park was a natural fit because it contained more than 350 acres of grass, water, and gardens located in central London. One goal of the Exhibition was to display England’s economic superiority over the world through competition with other countries. Innovators that launched the Great Exhibition were Henry Cole, a notable inventor, who had designed the world’s first marketable Christmas card in 1843, and Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s cousin and husband. Both men envisioned the Exhibition as a display of England’s technological savvy. “From its inception, the world’s first international industrial display was presented as a truly global event, one which aimed at once to celebrate the material progress humankind had made and coordinate those advances in order that the world could work together” (Paul Young, “Mission Impossible: Globalization and the Great Exhibition,” in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, ed. Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008], 4).

¹³⁷James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers, and Eileen Gillooly, eds., *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 1, 4. “By the time the exhibition closed in October, there had been more than six million paid entrances to the Crystal Palace, which, allowing for foreign and repeat visits, represented almost one-fifth of the population of Britain” (Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, 1).

¹³⁸Paul Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 55. The *Times* described the Palace’s opening morning as the first morning since the world’s creation that peoples from all over the world assembled for a shared act. More than 25,000 people flooded the Palace on the day of its opening. The Queen was in attendance. See Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, 1.

nearly 100,000 exhibits during the Exhibition and almost 14,000 individual and business vendors.¹³⁹ Great excitement surrounded the Palace's opening. The *Times* predicted that one million persons would visit.¹⁴⁰ By the end of the Exhibition, England had won the most awards for its industrial products.¹⁴¹ The Exhibition closed at the end of October 1851. The Palace was disassembled and moved to Sydenham Hill, an affluent area of London.

After relocating, the Palace received immediate support from its directors¹⁴² to open on Sunday afternoons. Nonconformists opposed this decision.¹⁴³ The directors assured the government that alcohol would not be sold and only a portion of the Palace

¹³⁹Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition*, 42. The Exhibition functioned as a symbol of peace between European countries since nations that depended on each other's industrial innovations would not war against each other (Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain 1700-1914*, 2nd ed. [London: Methuen, 1983], 230).

¹⁴⁰Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition*, 18.

¹⁴¹Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 461. While the Exhibition excelled in exposing technology, it resisted spirituality at first. Prior to its opening on May 1, 1851, the British and Foreign Bible Society applied for an opportunity to display the Bible in 130 languages but was denied. Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, said the innovations of science had no correlation with the Bible. Yet when Lord Ashley Earl of Shaftesbury challenged the Prince by explaining that the Bible's translation into 130 languages and 230 dialects demonstrated its intellectual vigor, the Prince conceded and the Bible was displayed.

¹⁴²Baines commented on the Palace directors: "Of the Directors and principal shareholders in the Crystal Palace Company, we know that they have been the active promoters of railways and similar undertakings in this and foreign countries. It is no disparagement to them to state the notorious fact, —that they undertook the Crystal Palace as a great commercial enterprise. But this being the case, the plea of opening to them their own property on the Sunday, as though it was a private garden attached to their own dwellings, loses all its force, and even all its plausibility. If the Crystal Palace has any character whatever, it is that of a place of public resort" (Baines, *A Second Letter to B. Oliveira, ESQ. M.P.*, 4).

¹⁴³"At a time when attempts are making in Parliament, Session after Session, to convert the Lord's-day in great part to a secular holiday, it may be permitted to one who believes that their success would be a calamity of the first magnitude" (Baines, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston*, 3). Weir also wrote, "The new Crystal Palace, now in progress in the neighbourhood of this metropolis, is to be a spacious temple, dedicated to science and art, in which all that is ingenious and beautiful and rare may be exhibited for the improvement and intellectual gratification of the people" (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 26).

known as the Winter Garden would open at one o'clock in the afternoon.¹⁴⁴ They explained that the Palace's art and science exhibits would tutor the public and would have the additional benefit of reducing attendance at pubs.

Nonconformists objected to the Palace's Sunday opening because it would further transform Sunday into a day of amusement.¹⁴⁵ Opening the Palace on Sundays would bring 50,000-60,000 visitors, and the nation's morality would suffer. John Weir explained, "[W]e say, the day is God's, and we are not to do evil that good may come."¹⁴⁶ People would abandon homes and churches in order to see the Palace. Instead of opening the Palace to keep the public away from the pubs, Weir argued that the pubs should be closed. Then the problem would be solved. Though the Palace's opening would not compete with Sunday morning worship attendance, it was still a violation of God's law.

But notwithstanding these plausible concessions, nay all the more because of the false principles which I am persuaded they involve, I still regard the proposition with abhorrence, as opposed to an express command of Heaven, and I stand here to-night, resolved in the strength of God to lift up a solemn protest against it, and to urge on all who hear me the necessity of endeavouring, by dutiful remonstrance, to prevent the systematic violation of God's law under the sanction of the executive authority of the realm.¹⁴⁷

Prime Minister Lord Derby (Edward Stanley) approved the Palace directors' request for a Sunday opening and it was reported in the *Times* on August 2, 1852.

¹⁴⁴Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 462.

¹⁴⁵Hill, *The Sabbath Made for Man*, 280: "The drift of all such excuses is, that to prevent one evil, another may be committed; and the temper they betray is a very low view of either the sanctity of the day, or of its moral and physical influence upon mankind." Baines added, "And if the churches, chapels, and Sunday Schools are emptied, what kind of buildings would be filled? There might be a few such as the Crystal Palace; but the great majority of those who were not tied to labour would be found in the public-house, the tea gardens, and possibly in the theatre, the circus, or the casino. The Sabbath of England would become worse than the Sabbath of the Continent" (Edward Baines, *On the Attempt to Change the Character of the Christian Sabbath* [Leeds: Edward Baines and Sons, 1853], 7).

¹⁴⁶Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 24.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 6.

Nonconformists opposed the Prime Minister's decision and called on Christians to protest.¹⁴⁸ Weir admonished all Christians to protest immediately and emphatically.¹⁴⁹ He argued that a sustained and formidable complaint voiced by the Protestant nation would certainly get the government's attention. Opening the Palace, Parsons argued, "would be an infraction of the natural rights of many of your neighbours and fellow citizens, and therefore ought to be prohibited by law."¹⁵⁰ Baines was also burdened by the Palace's opening and implored all ministers to wake up and realize the impending danger that loomed and for all Christians to take a stand for the Sabbath.¹⁵¹ Nonconformists were deeply concerned and felt that opening the Palace foreshadowed further Sabbath desecration.¹⁵²

And when the Crystal Palace is opened—what then? The Committee are candid, and they tell us—museums and exhibitions of pictures, and public libraries are to follow. But can the line be drawn with a firm hand just where the Committee think right? For surely if government will cater for the public amusement on the Sunday, why may not the public in its own way provide amusements for itself?¹⁵³

A petition had already been drafted in London to oppose the Palace's Sunday opening and Baines wanted similar petitions from throughout the United Kingdom written.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 464.

¹⁴⁹Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 29.

¹⁵⁰Parsons, *A Letter*, 20-21.

¹⁵¹Baines, *On the Attempt*, 8.

¹⁵²"I apprehend it does not admit of the slightest doubt, that the more *pleasure-places* you open, the more *pleasure-takers* there will be" (Baines, *A Second Letter to B. Oliveira, ESQ. M.P.*, 7).

¹⁵³"Article III," 107. The Committee referred to a special committee of the House of Commons that advised opening the Crystal Palace to the public for part of the day on Sundays.

¹⁵⁴"IN this town the working men have for years conducted a 'Working Men's Sabbath Observance Society,' and from that Society a petition is now in course of signature, intended to counteract the London Petition, and to pray that no infringement may be made on the sacred institution they so highly

While many Nonconformists may have appreciated the Palace's educational value, they opposed its Sunday opening¹⁵⁵ because it did not possess spiritual value and it hurt families. Nonconformists could grant that the Palace offered a quality educational experience and that through it man's understanding of art and science was enhanced. Yet, since the Sabbath was God's day, even such normally edifying things were evil.¹⁵⁶ Paintings and industrial inventions were acceptable on weekdays but on Sunday they were unacceptable because they did not direct the sinner's heart to God.¹⁵⁷

Opening the Sabbath would empty churches of its attendees. The editors of the *British Quarterly Review* explained, "The choice lies here between Sabbath observance substantially in the form familiar to us, or the sort of holidays which a pagan or popish superstition would thrust into its place. Atheism, secularism, natural religion, all these would be powerless in the event of any great religious change among us."¹⁵⁸ Families would suffer if the Palace were opened on Sunday. Christians would be tempted to miss

prize. I TRUST that that example will be followed throughout the kingdom. The effort making in London is not to be despised" (Baines, *On The Attempt*, 8).

¹⁵⁵Baines passionately opposed the Palace's Sunday opening as did others: "[Y]ou will not be surprised at my promising to give all the opposition in my power—small as that power is—to the opening of the Crystal Palace on the Lord's-day. Happily there are many persons of vastly greater influence who will exert it in the same direction. I believe that the ministers of religion, the Sunday school teachers, and a very great number of those who venerate and love religion, will take the same course. The measure, depend upon it, will not be carried without an opposition of the most formidable nature" (Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ., and B. Oliveira, ESQ., M.P.*, 9-10).

¹⁵⁶Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 24: "The tendency of this exhibition (it is said) will be to elevate and purify the mind. Art, and science, and taste, will educate and reform; they will empty the public-houses, and wean the people from gross indulgence.' Still, we say, the day is God's, and we are not to do evil that good may come."

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 25: "Why, when vice loses its grossness, has it necessarily lost its power? Is it true that statuary and painting, and works of art and genius, can refine and regenerate men? In their own place we despise them not. They bring honour to the great Creator, who is the source of all excellence in genius and skill. But they cannot change the heart, or quicken the conscience, or prepare for eternity."

¹⁵⁸"Article III," 108.

family Bible reading time, the pastor's Bible-class, and public services, noted Noel.¹⁵⁹

In addition to its disrupting influence on family life, opening the Palace on Sunday would force people to work on the Sabbath. A large number of workers would be required in the Palace and in the train stations.¹⁶⁰ Baines noted that thousands of persons would visit the Palace from all throughout England and workers were needed to manage the crowd.¹⁶¹ Enlisting more employees on Sundays would reduce attendance at corporate worship and encourage Sabbath desecration, wrote Baines.¹⁶² He argued that opening the Crystal Palace would signal the end of the English Sunday, as it was known.¹⁶³

Some hoped that allowing the Crystal Palace to operate on Sunday would result in fewer persons in the public houses. But, Baines argued that Parliament would be encouraging one avenue of Sabbath profanation in order to discourage another.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹Noel, *Music and Pleasure on the Sabbath*, 12.

¹⁶⁰“And, moreover, instead of Sabbath rest, will not the opening of this building [the Crystal Palace] on the Lord's day lead to *a vast increase of Sabbath labour*? Must there not be a large addition to the staff of railway officials, as well as of police, required, not only on the main line of traffic, but also to attend to, to accommodate, or to keep in order the multitudes who, by excursion-trains on other lines, will fill our streets and crowd our public vehicles on their way to this scene of profanation?” (Weir, *The New Crystal Palace*, 28-29).

¹⁶¹“The more attractive and fascinating is the place, the more extensive is the Sabbath desecration that would ensue. If the building were opened at a low charge on Sunday—as it must be to answer the purpose—tens of thousands of persons would flock from London and all parts of Britain to visit it. All the railways would arrange cheap trips, to carry the working classes to the Sunday exhibition. It would be advertised in every newspaper and placarded on every wall. Never has there been an object that would draw so many persons from their homes and their duties. Of course the more distant travellers would need accommodation and refreshments, which would lead to the employment of great numbers of victuallers and their servants” (Baines, *A Correspondence Between Edward Baines, ESQ., and B. Oliveira, ESQ., M.P.*, 8-9).

¹⁶²*Ibid.*, 6, 8.

¹⁶³“If the palace at Sydenham be opened, all the public institutions and exhibitions I have named above, and all places of public amusement throughout Britain, must be opened likewise. In fact, the English Sabbath would then be gone” (*ibid.*, 8).

¹⁶⁴“You hope that the Crystal Palace would draw persons out of the public-house. It is not certain, however, that it would have that effect; because it is to be supposed that most of those who frequent

Nonconformists also argued that opening the Palace on Sunday would jeopardize the economic success of the Crystal Palace. Those who attended on Sunday most likely would not revisit the Palace during the week.¹⁶⁵ Ultimately, Parliament decided not to open the Palace doors on Sunday.

Conclusion

Sabbatarian Nonconformists were united in their desire to see the Sabbath honored. They were divided, however, on the issue of the use of Sabbath legislation in preserving the Sabbath. Many supported Sabbath laws that prohibited unnecessary activities but did not favor the government prescribing spiritual activities for the Sabbath. Others argued against any role for the State in defending the Sabbath.

the public-house on Sunday prefer the sensual gratification of drinking to the gratification of the taste and intellect” (ibid., 9).

¹⁶⁵“The Crystal Palace Sunday Opening,” *Patriot* (July 13, 1858): 451: “Those who come on Sunday for nothing will hardly come again to pay on Monday and Tuesday.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This project has sought to examine the character Sabbatarianism in Nonconformity, 1830-1860. In the Victorian era, the practices of evangelism and caring for others, or social concern, were married for evangelicals.¹ One way that Nonconformist writers demonstrated concern for others was by admonishing them to keep the Sabbath holy for their own spiritual health and for the nation's spiritual vitality. Clearly, the Sabbath was an important issue for Nonconformists in the nineteenth-century, especially in the 1850s, as it received much attention from the pulpit and the pen. Other issues such as the Temperance Movement and the separation of Church and State were also important to Nonconformists during this era as seen in their writings. Concerning Sabbatarianism, periodicals and newspapers produced numerous articles on the Sabbath's proper observance and many letters to editors were written on this topic. Nonconformist writers believed keeping the Sabbath honored God and communicated love for him by imitating his example established at creation. They believed that if the Sabbath were observed, God would provide strength for the workweek and adequate money to meet financial needs. Observance of the Sabbath was understood by Nonconformists to reveal true love for God and trust in his provision.

¹David W. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 3.

Nonconformist views of the Sabbath were grounded in a very high view of the Scriptures. They thoroughly investigated God's word and sought to apply it to their lives. Nearly every Sabbatarian treatise began with the biblical mandate for the Sabbath. They believed the Sabbath as a creation ordinance and was universally binding. The fourth commandment in Exodus was in reality a republication of an already known law. Jesus teaching provided additional support for the Sabbath and his resurrection provided the foundation for its shift from Saturday to Sunday. This shift was confirmed by the fact that the early church met on Sunday.

Nonconformists believed that Sabbath observance was to follow a set pattern. Preparation was to begin on Saturday evening and observance was to extend through Sunday evening. Hindrances to communion with God and fellowship with his people were to be removed. Man was to abstain from labor and leisure. The Sabbath was to be a day of great joy, a day to be anticipated and longed for all week long.

Nonconformist Sabbatarians believed that both national and personal blessing followed observance of the Sabbath. National and personal curses followed its disregard. They did not want England to suffer from God's judgment as Israel and continental European nations had. Many, but not all, Nonconformists supported legislation to restrict activities on the Sabbath. These included business activities and recreational activities. Certainly, other factors such as political change also influenced the decision to seek government help. Nonetheless, exertion for legislative protection disclosed that for some Nonconformists the Sabbath was so important that it was a hill on which to die.

This study has sought to address the lack of attention that has been given to what is clearly an important aspect of Nonconformist thought in the nineteenth-century.

To this writer's knowledge, a study prior to this one that surveys original Sabbatarian documents does not exist. Several leading Nonconformists during this era and their writings were well known (e.g. Josiah Conder, John Angell James, Edward Miall, Edward Baines Jr., Baptist Noel and Joseph Ivimey). Yet, many other Nonconformist writings examined in this study were more obscure. The collection of writings assembled for this study, especially the obscure ones, will hopefully aid future study within Nonconformity.

In 1934, G. M. Young explained that the Victorian Sunday was not gloomy but a day of rest and joy.² This study validates Young's claim. Nonconformists anticipated the Sabbath with great joy and expectation. They longed for more time with their families and the opportunity to have spiritual and meaningful conversations in addition to prayer and Bible study.

This study has sought to correct the view that Wesleyans were the leading Nonconformist denomination that advocated for Sabbath legislation. Ellis explained, "Independents, Baptist and Presbyterians were relatively indifferent to the question of Sabbath legislation, as contrasted with the activities of the Wesleyan Methodists."³ But, chapter five reveals that the following Nonconformist ministers were proponents of Sabbath legislation: Josiah Conder, Micaiah Hill, Robert Wallace, Baptist Noel, John Weir, Benjamin Parsons, and Thomas Greenfield. None of these men were Wesleyans; they were all either Baptists or Congregationalists, or as in Weir's case, a Presbyterian.

²G. M. Young, *Early Victorian England 1830-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 1:243.

³George Mark Ellis, "The Evangelicals and the Sunday Question, 1830-1860: Organized Sabbatarianism as an Aspect of the Evangelical Movement," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1951), 12-13.

They were clearly proponents of Sabbath legislation. In similar fashion, this study disagrees with Bebbington's claim that Wesleyan Methodism was more inclined to endorse Sabbatarianism than Congregationalists or Baptists.⁴ The evidence presented lists 14 Nonconformists writers who were Sabbatarians, seven Baptists, four Methodists, and three Presbyterians. Wesleyans made a significant contribution to Sabbatarian thought during this era but they were not more inclined to endorse Sabbatarianism than Congregationalists or Baptists.

This project has sought to demonstrate that Nonconformists from 1830-1860 believed that every Christian was required to observe the Sabbath. The Sabbath was instituted at creation, which required Christians in every age to keep it. It was a permanent obligation and a joy. No one was exempt.

⁴Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, 50.

APPENDIX 1

NONCONFORMIST WRITERS

Edward Baines Jr. (1800-1890) was editor of the *Nonconformist* newspaper and Member of Parliament for Leeds.

William Brock (1807-1875) was Pastor of the Baptist Church in St. Mary's, Norwich and of Bloomsbury Chapel in London.¹

James Baldwin Brown (1820-1884) was the Congregational Minister at Clapham-Road Chapel and Clayland's Chapel in London.

J. W. Close (1824-1894) was a Wesleyan itinerant Minister who traveled for 40 years.²

Eustace Rogers Conder (1820-1892) was Pastor of the Congregational Church at Poole and the son of Josiah Conder.

Josiah Conder (1789-1855) was an influential Congregationalist who edited the *Patriot*, a Nonconformist newspaper, in addition to writing hymns.³ He had a rich

¹See Charles Morton Birrell, *The Life of William Brock: First Minister of Bloomsbury Chapel, London* (London: James Nisbet & Company, 1878).

²See Dissenting Academies Online at <http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk> that is associated with Dr. Williams's Library in London.

³One day after Conder's death, the editors of the *Patriot* referred to him as a "beloved friend and esteemed colleague" ("The Death of Mr. Josiah Conder," *Patriot* [Friday, December 28, 1855]: 320. See also "Review of Religious Publication," *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* 35 (November 1857): 669-70.

Dissenting heritage since his grandfather, Dr. John Conder, served as a theological tutor of the Dissenting College at Mile End and pastor of a church in Moorfields.⁴

John Cox (1802-1878) was a Baptist and the Minister of Queen Street Baptist Chapel, Woolwich.

Jonathan Glyde (1808-1854) was a Nonconformist who worked as a classical tutor. At his death, he was serving in Yorkshire where he had been since 1836.

Thomas Greenfield (1807-1885) was the Pastor of an Independent church in Kidderminster.

James Hamilton (1814-1867) was a Scottish minister who was assigned to the National Scotch Church in London and led it to divide from the Church of Scotland. He was instrumental in forming the Presbyterian Church in England.⁵

Richard Winter Hamilton (1794-1848) served as a Congregational Pastor at Belgrave Chapel, Leeds. He had a very eloquent oratorical style and an intellectual mind.⁶

John Hannah (1792-1867) was a Wesleyan minister at Wesleyan Chapel, Didsbury.

Micaiah Hill (1824-1884) was a Congregationalist who served at the Birmingham Town Mission in Birmingham from 1856 until his death in 1884.⁷

⁴“Article III,” *Eclectic Review* 2 (September 1857): 245.

⁵David Bebbington, Kenneth Dix, and Alan Ruston, eds., *Protestant Nonconformist Texts* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 3:382.

⁶See “Article V,” *Eclectic Review* 27 (April 1850): 455-70.

⁷See also The Surman Index online at <http://surman.english.qmul.ac.uk>. The Surman Index Online is free and associated with Dr. Williams’s Library in London. It contains the names of

Samuel Hobson (1779-1841) was a Congregationalist minister in Bedfordshire. He studied at Newport Pagnell Academy (a Dissenting Academy).⁸

Joseph Ivimey (1773-1834) was a highly esteemed Baptist historian and minister.⁹ He was the Pastor of the Baptist Church in Eagle Street, London for 29 years. He also founded the Baptist Irish Society.¹⁰

John Angell James (1785-1859) was a leading Congregationalist who ministered in Birmingham at the Carr's Lane Church. He began his ministry in 1805.¹¹

Edward Miall (1809-1881) was an English writer and the Pastor of a Congregational Church in Leicester. He felt so strongly that the Established Church's influence on England was harmful that he resigned from his pastorate in 1841 and went to London where he began a weekly newspaper that lobbied for religious equality.¹²

approximately 32,000 individuals most of whom were Congregationalists although some Presbyterians are listed.

⁸See Dissenting Academies Online at <http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk>.

⁹"Death of Mr. Ivimey," *Patriot* (February 12, 1834): 53.

¹⁰"Reviews," *Baptist Magazine* 27 (June 1835): 225. Ivimey's ministry was greatly blessed of the Lord as more than 800 were added to the church fellowship and 20 young men surrendered to full-time Christian service (226).

¹¹"The Rev. J. A. James of Birmingham," *Patriot* (September 10, 1855): 124. James promoted civil and religious liberty and supported the government's intervention in protecting the Sabbath.

¹²R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*, ed. A. W. W. Dale (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 625: "Mr. Miall had many great qualities which are rarely combined in the same person. He was singularly gentle, but absolutely fearless; kind and affectionate, but unsparing in his criticism and denunciation of every form of injustice and tyranny." Miall also was an MP for Rochdale, 1852-57, and for Bradford, 1869-784. "He became a respected figure in political circles, widely recognized as the leading spokesman on political issues for liberal Nonconformity" (Richard J. Helmstadter, "The Nonconformist Conscience," in *The Conscience of the Victorian State*, ed. Peter Marsh [Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979], 150).

Peter M'Owan (1795-1870) served as a minister for 52 years. He was a Wesleyan minister at Mount Pleasant Chapel in Liverpool.¹³

James Phillippo Mursell (1799-1885) served as a particular Baptist minister. He ministered for over 50 years and began at the Harvey Lane Chapel in 1826. His congregation moved with him to the new Baptist Chapel at Belvoir Street Chapel in Leicester in 1845. He remained at Belvoir Street Chapel until 1876.¹⁴

Robert Newstead (1789-1865) was a Wesleyan minister in Woolwich and Bath who retired in 1861.

Baptist Wriothlesley Noel (1799-1873) was minister of St. John's Chapel for 22 years in London until 1848 when he became a Nonconformist (Baptist). Noel grew uncomfortable with the connection between Church and State and published a massive essay in 1848 known as *Essay on the Union of Church and State* where he attacked the union.¹⁵

Benjamin Parsons (1787-1855) served as the Congregational minister at Ebley.

Standen Pearce (1811-1878) was a Baptist Minister at Crewkerne Somerset.¹⁶

John Allan Quinton (1817-1906) was a Nonconformist layman from an Independent church in Ipswich.

¹³See John M'Owan, *A Man of God: or Providence and Grace Exemplified in a Memoir of the Rev. Peter M'Owan*, ed. G. Osborn (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1873).

¹⁴See Agnes Johnson, "Supplementary Notes," in *Glimpses of Ancient Leicester, in Six Periods* (Leicester: Clarke and Satchell, 1906), 430.

¹⁵See "Article IV," *British Quarterly Review* 9 (February 1849): 99-117. "We have since been informed, on trustworthy authority, that the above rumor [that Noel was leaving the Established Church] is strictly correct, and that in a few days Mr. Noel will probably make a public statement of his reasons for seceding the church, but that he will not resign his pastorate until Midsummer next. We understand that the church and state question is the only cause assigned for the step" ("Secession of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel," *Baptist Magazine* 40 [December 1848]: 756).

¹⁶"Deaths," *Baptist Magazine* 70 (October 1878): 480.

James Sherman (1796-1862) served as a Congregational pastor at Surrey Chapel. Surrey Chapel was originally an Independent Methodist church founded by Rowland Hill in 1783. Sherman assumed became pastor in 1833 as a Congregationalist.

William Martin Thompson (1809-1893) served the Pastor at the Presbyterian Church of Woolwich from 1838-1879 and Minister Emeritus from 1879-1893.¹⁷

Thomas Toller (1796-1885) served as Co-Pastor of a Congregational church in Kettering, Northamptonshire beginning in 1820. Toller succeeded his father as pastor of the Congregational church known as “Toller’s Chapel” when his father died in 1821. Thomas served as pastor of Toller’s Chapel for more than 50 years.

Robert Wallace (1797-1892) was the Pastor of Scotch Presbyterian Church on Broad Street in Birmingham until 1846 when he moved to the Baptist Church in Tottenham.¹⁸

John Weir (1811-1877) served as minister of the Presbyterian Church at River Terrace, Islington (1847-1861) and Secretary of the Religious Tract Society (1861-1877).¹⁹

¹⁷“Woolwich Schools,” *The English Presbyterian Messenger* 1 (November 1847): 524-25. See also David Cornick, “The Disruption in London: English Presbyterians and the Scottish Disruption of 1843,” in *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations*, ed. David W. Bebbington and Timothy Larsen (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003): 302. Dates on Thompson’s life came from Helen Weller, Archivist at Westminster College, University of Cambridge.

¹⁸“Intelligence,” *The Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer* 20 (January 1846): 61. “The Rev. Robert Wallace, late pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian church, Broad Street, Birmingham, of whose baptism an account was given in our number for July last, has taken charge of the church at Tottenham, late under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. J. Davies” (*Baptist Magazine* 38 [February 1846]: 107).

¹⁹See “Ecclesiastical Notices,” *The English Presbyterian Messenger* 29 (August 1847): 473. See also Laicus, “Presbyterianism in London,” *The United Presbyterian Magazine* 6 (May 1862): 209. Dates on Weir’s life came from Helen Weller, Archivist at Westminster College, University of Cambridge.

Andrew Curr Wright (1808-1872) served as the Pastor of the Congregational Church in Melbourn, Derbyshire (1841-1872).

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ABSTRACT

THE SABBATH IN ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY,
1830-1860

Barry R. Chesney Jr., Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012
Chair: Dr. David L. Puckett

This dissertation examines the English Sabbath within Evangelical Nonconformity from 1830-1860. The thesis of this project is Nonconformists believed that Christians in every age must observe the Sabbath. No one was exempt. Nonconformists believed that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance, resurfaced at Mount Sinai, and was confirmed by Christ and the early church. Thus, all Christians must keep the Sabbath.

Nonconformity existed in the larger nineteenth-century British context. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nonconformity had little influence on society. But, by the mid-nineteenth century, Nonconformity's membership had swelled. A combination of deep concern for England's poor moral condition and a new found political voice inspired Nonconformists to pursue moral reform partly through proper Sabbath observance. Nonconformists wrote and preached frequently on proper Sabbath observance.

Chapter 2 explores the biblical position on the Sabbath held by Nonconformists. Nonconformity agreed that the Sabbath began at creation in Genesis 2:3 and continued until Mount Sinai where it reappeared. When Jesus came to earth, his

actions and speech affirmed the Sabbath's value and place in the moral law. When Jesus rose from the dead, the Lord's Day transitioned from Saturday to Sunday.

Chapter 3 presents the proper and improper views of Sabbath observance as supported by Nonconformity. In addition, a typical Sabbath within Nonconformity is detailed.

Chapter 4 discusses the national and personal blessings and curses that accompanied Sabbath observance or Sabbath neglect. Keeping the Sabbath was more than a personal issue for Nonconformists; it was a national one.

The topic of chapter 5 is Nonconformist's stance on Sabbath legislation. Not all Nonconformists embraced this effort but many did. Some Nonconformists sought to impose restrictions on particular activities on Sunday to protect it from abandonment.

The conclusion explains that Nonconformist writers affirmed that proper Sabbath practice pertained to all Christians and responds to claims made by secondary sources on Sabbatarianism within Nonconformity. This chapter also presents the contribution of this project to Nonconformist studies.

Finally, an appendix is provided with biographical information concerning the Nonconformist writers and their denominational affiliation.

VITA

Barry Randolph Chesney, Jr.

PERSONAL

Born: August 18, 1976, Clarksdale, Mississippi
Parents: Randy and Miriam Chesney
Married: Courtney Brunson, February 26, 2005

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Lamar High School, Meridian, Mississippi, 1994
B.S., Mississippi State University, 1998
Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004

MINISTERIAL

Minister of Pastoral Care, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky,
2005-2008
Pastoral Intern, First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, 2009
Minister of Single Adults, College Students, and Missions, First Baptist
Church, Plant City, Florida, 2010

ACADEMIC

Special Assistant to the President, Criswell College, Dallas, Texas, 2005

ORGANIZATIONAL

The Evangelical Theological Society