

why the Mohammedan paradigm was the most popular one between 1800 and 1850 (pp. 168, 174). Today's readers have great difficulty understanding this interpretation and its relevance. A historical-theological and political perspective would have explained why so many saw the Ottoman Empire in prophecy at that time. Unless this is explained in its historical context, the readers end up with more questions than answers.

Another difficulty is that at times the author could have been more accurate in his explanations. Speaking of Dowling, he writes that the "'2300 evening-mornings' can not be a prophetic day (i.e., a year), but a natural day," which gives the impression of a period of 2300 literal days (p. 184). Yet later he states that "Dowling reckoned the 2300 'evening-mornings'" as "1150 natural days" (p. 228). What should the reader conclude?

It is unfortunate that such an extensive and detailed study was published without an index. This limits the practical use of the book considerably.

Despite these shortcomings, Nuñez's study may be considered a major contribution in creating meaning out of an often-confusing spectrum of prophetic interpretations.

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Parker, Kenneth L. *The English Sabbath: A Study of Doctrine and Discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988. xii + 250 pp. \$42.50.

The *English Sabbath* is undoubtedly one of the best books discussing the Puritan Sabbath as doctrine and discipline to appear in recent times. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sabbatarianism is still a vigorously debated subject among Puritan scholars. Kenneth Parker takes a position which challenges a long-established and cherished historiographical orthodoxy. After establishing the need to reassess previous discussions surrounding sabbatarianism, Parker begins his investigation with a careful examination of the historical roots of the sabbatarian controversy. Going back to the medieval period, his research reveals that the manner and practice of the Sabbath as doctrine and discipline were widely discussed by some of the leading scholastics. Therefore, he argues, it is historically inaccurate to locate the origin of the discussion in the Elizabethan period. He challenges some well-established authors in the field, from Peter Heylyn right down to Winton Solberg in our day. Parker argues against the view that the doctrine of a morally binding Sabbath was a late Elizabethan innovation that divided precisionists from conformists. He postulates that

sabbatarianism was not used as the basis of some sort of conspiratorial design to undermine the authority of established Anglicanism. Accordingly, he rejects the "assertion that this doctrine was a long standing source of tension" and that it was kicked around as a "theological football during the 1630s in an attempt to justify two different visions of the English Church" (pp. 6, 7). In spite of his iconoclastic interpretation, the author acknowledges that his position "does not deny the special attention given to the issue by precisionists, especially Elizabethan Presbyterians" (p. 6).

The two visions Parker identifies are the Reformed tradition, with its emphasis on scripture as the ultimate authority, and a Catholic vision with the hierarchy as the recognized interpreters and arbitrators of doctrinal tradition for the English Church. Unfortunately, Parker's discussion of sabbatarian doctrine and discipline during the Reformation is rather scanty. Indeed, he focuses mainly on the reaction of the leading reformers, thereby neglecting the fuller discussion that appears to be required by the book's subtitle. The author seems convinced that the reformers' reactions were influenced by the scholastic understanding and interpretation of the doctrine of the Sabbath. He asserts that Luther's opposition to the scholastic interpretation of the Church as the channel through which the Holy Spirit worked in transferring the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday reduced to human tradition what had formerly been regarded as a divine institution.

The major portion of the book is devoted to the investigation and description of documents, events, and accounts of sabbatarianism from the first half of Elizabeth's reign (1558-1582) to the end of Charles I's reign (1625-1649). In this regard Parker pays considerable attention to the Book of Sports, Laudian prelacy, parliamentary debates over doctrine and discipline, holy days, and the controversies these produced.

In concluding his work, the author makes the very serious claim that "the assumption that the doctrine was a unique characteristic of puritanism must be revised, for sabbatarianism did not become a 'puritan *cause célèbre*' until a few Laudians made it so" (p. 216).

This is a careful and provocative study that deserves the attention of anyone who is seriously concerned with the historical roots and development of sabbatarianism. In detective-like fashion, Parker investigates the various sources and weaves his thesis with great dexterity to emerge with a well-documented and historically exciting study of a somewhat-unsettled debate among Puritan scholars. The book is written in a flowing, attractive style and will take its place among the best studies on Puritanism and sabbatarianism.