

These six columns include (1) the original excavation number, (2) the *MEE* 1 catalogue number, (3) the name of the editor of the text when it was published, (4) the date of publication, (5) a brief reference to the publication in which it appears, and (6) if a photograph of the text is available, its source. A bibliography of Eblaite studies which are oriented around primary textual studies accompanies the table.

If one wonders what will become of this concordance when more texts are published, the editors have promised that the files will be updated as soon as such new texts are published and that new editions of the concordance will be forthcoming.

Because the Eblaite texts were written in two languages, Eblaite and Sumerian, and because Eblaite looks like a dialect of Old Canaanite (or Old Akkadian, according to some authorities), the contents of these texts will probably have a certain degree of continuing relevance for biblical studies, beyond their value in the realm of Assyriology and Syriology, to which they more properly belong. This concordance, and future editions of it, will undoubtedly be a considerable boon, therefore, to anyone working in biblical studies as well as to scholars in those other fields of study.

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Dennison, James T., Jr., *The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England, 1532-1700*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983. xii + 174 pp. \$19.75/\$9.75.

Two aspects of the bibliographical data cited above require initial comment: the title of this study, and its length. When James Dennison refers to the Puritan Sabbath, he means Sunday, in keeping with the mainstream Puritan view that the moral obligation of the fourth commandment had been transferred to the first day of the week. Here Dennison stands on a firm enough foundation, as the sources readily indicate. There is nothing new to those familiar with seventeenth-century religious history in the fact that Puritanism emphasized the Sabbath and sought its sanctification on Sunday.

In attempting to cover the Sabbatarian debate from 1532 to 1700 in 140 pages of text, more than half of which are given over to copious footnotes and lengthy quotations, Dennison is on rather shakier ground. One might justifiably wish for a more thorough discussion of this long-running and often-involved controversy than the remaining seventy pages or so of Dennison's own analysis permit. It has to be remembered, therefore, that this work is essentially an M.Th. dissertation (submitted originally in 1973), and that a certain superficiality is inevitable.

Dennison divides his topic into four chronological periods: (1) "The Formative Years: The Sabbath and the Desire for a Pure Reformation, 1532-1603"; (2) "The Restless Years: The Sabbath in the Era of the *Book of Sports*, 1603-1633"; (3) "Years of No Rest: The Sabbath Pamphlet Wars, Laud and the Revolution, 1633-1650"; and (4) "Years of Relative Rest: The Sabbath as an English Custom, 1650-1700." Despite this rather neat classification, one has to look hard at times for the distinctions suggested in these chapter titles. While progression did occur in the controversy as the years unfolded, there was also evident reiteration and entrenchment which Dennison's somewhat arbitrary division tends to conceal. This deficiency is to a degree remedied by Dennison's method, which essentially is to survey the works of the main protagonists in this debate, thus reflecting the repetitive nature of many of the arguments involved.

Reference has already been made to Dennison's excessive use of lengthy quotations. While this might be acceptable in an academic thesis, it makes for heavy reading, and might even be construed to suggest that the author found his sources overwhelming. To my mind, this latter charge could not be made to stick, but the book's heaviness is apparent on a number of occasions beyond the frequency of quotations.

Dennison's style is often clumsy, and his argument not developed along clearly discernible lines. What are we to understand by a "period of precisioning the Sabbath" (p. 22)? Or, what is meant by the remark, "It should be obvious that whatever effect the *Book of Sports* had on restraining 'merry ol' Englishmen' was short-lived" (p. 65)? Even in context, not very much is obvious from this statement. And, furthermore, it is also from no standpoint clear that "by 1650, the English Sabbath had apparently found its rest" (p. 116).

Despite its obvious limitations, Dennison's study does provide some helpful insights into the Sabbatarian controversy in Reformation and post-Reformation England. The author succeeds in convincing us that the Sabbath issue was very much alive long before Richard Greenham at the end of the sixteenth century and Nicholas Bownd at the beginning of the seventeenth century—the time at which the Sabbatarian debate is usually said to have begun. Hooper, Latimer, Cranmer, and Becon may all be cited as proto-Sabbatarians of the Puritan kind, and Dennison's observation that "future Sabbatarians would look back to the days of Henry VIII and Edward VI in order to find the rudiments of their doctrine" (p. 13) is fully justified. Several advocates of the Puritan Sabbath drew on the writings of early English reformers in defense of their argument that the anti-Sabbatarianism of Stuart kings and their bishops was a late English twist to traditional Christian doctrine.

It is also helpful to be reminded that the Puritan attitude to the Sabbath, so frequently caricatured beyond recognition, was not in reality

overstrict or burdensome. Some servile labor was regarded as essential, as were works of mercy and "extraordinary works of absolute necessity." Dennison provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that, given the Puritan commitment to a thoroughgoing biblical theology, its Sabbath doctrine was in principle opposed to extreme strictness. Hence, he is able to affirm, "The popular impression that the Puritans were 'kill-joys,' dour and sombre to the point of morbidity, is absurd" (p. 113).

Those who wish to pick their way with relative ease through the dense jungle of the Sabbatarian controversy could do much worse than follow Dennison through his third chapter. Here the arguments of two of the three contending sides in the debate, the Prelatical party and the Puritans, are clearly and fairly summarized. Seven questions are intended to encompass the controversy, of which the following are representative: When was the Sabbath instituted? Is the letter of the fourth commandment moral? Was the Lord's Day instituted by divine authority or by ecclesiastical authority?

Dennison shows that on virtually every issue, the establishment Prelatical party and the Puritans were irreconcilably opposed. By way of example, the Prelatical party argued that the Sabbath was instituted at Sinai and that Gen 2:1-3 was a proleptic assertion of a doctrine yet to come. The Puritans, on the other hand, maintained that the Sabbath was a "creation institution," given to the human race in Eden. The Prelatical party conceded that the Lord's Day had no foundation in Scripture, let alone in the fourth commandment, while the Puritans claimed full divine and biblical authority for the substitution of the first day for the seventh.

Indeed, it is at this point that, in Dennison's judgment, the underlying issue in the whole controversy comes most clearly to the surface—in the question of authority, ecclesiastical or biblical. Exponents of the Prelatical view saw quite clearly in which direction admission of biblical authority with regard to the Sabbath might take them, and sought to avoid it. Exponents of the Puritan view saw this with equal clarity, and also sought to avoid some of its implications, but by very different arguments.

Here, a note of disappointment with regard to Dennison's treatment must be sounded again. Dennison bases his study on the proposition that the Puritan view is one of three positions on the Sabbath which struggled for recognition in the English church of the seventeenth century, and goes on to say that it was flanked "on the left" by "the Prelatical party," and "on the right" by "the Seventh-day or Saturday-Sabbatarians" (p. xii). That being the case, we are left to conjecture why Dennison does not give as thorough an analysis of the views of the party to the "right" of the Puritans, as he does to the Prelatical party on the "left."

Indeed, the study as a whole could be described as a comparison of the Prelatical-party views with the views of the Puritans, with occasional

references to the Saturday-Sabbatarian position thrown in. It is true that the names and views of some of the more well-known seventh-day men do appear towards the end of the book—John Traske, Theophilus Brabourne, Thomas Tillam, and Francis and Thomas Bampfield—but we are not given any real idea of the strength of the Saturday-Sabbath arguments. In fact, Dennison himself seems totally unaware of the extent to which these views had spread throughout England by the end of the seventeenth century. And it must be noted, furthermore, that neither Traske nor Tillam is thoroughly representative of the Seventh-day movement as a whole.

Moreover, Dennison's insistence on the Puritan view as the *via media* between the two extremes of the Prelatical party and the Saturday-Sabbatarians may be considered to betray a subjective, if not biased, stance. It could be argued with equal logic that the Saturday-Sabbatarian position was a *via media* between two opposing views of the Lord's Day, or Sunday-Sabbath—the Prelatical view, which allowed that ecclesiastical authority could supersede biblical authority in matters adiaphorous, and the Puritan view, which tried to defend Sunday on the grounds that it had been substituted in apostolic times on divine authority. Perhaps the charge of subjectivism could be substantiated by a statement such as the following: "Without a doubt, the New Testament indicates that the Christian church assembled on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1, 2; Revelation 1:10" (p. 107). After all, the Saturday-Sabbatarians, in their many published works, dealt at length with all of these texts, although Dennison chooses to ignore this line of evidence.

Subjectivism aside, Dennison has provided a useful introduction—but no more than this—to one of the most significant and protracted theological controversies to arise in English-speaking Protestantism. It is a debate which continues today, still calling forth from all sides the arguments raised four centuries ago in the mature years of the English Reformation. When the questions are at last settled, it may well be that Dennison's final word on the subject might prove to be a shade too narrowly Calvinistic and predestinarian. The Puritan Sabbath, he concludes, is "an ideal to be attained perfectly in the *eschaton*—by the godly!" (p. 141). That the godly will participate in the eschatological attainment is hardly to be disputed. That the godly are those alone who continue to champion the Puritan Sabbath is altogether another matter.

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