

# CHAPTER 20

## SUNDAY DURING THE DARK AGES

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*The pope becomes the head of all the churches - The people of God retire into the wilderness - Sunday to be traced through the Dark Ages in the history of the Catholic church - State of that festival in the sixth century - It did not acquire the title of Sabbath for many ages - Time when it became a day of abstinence from labor in the east - When in the west - Sunday canon of the first council of Orleans - Of the council of Arragon - Of the third council of Orleans - Of a council at Mascon - At Narbon - At Auxerre - Miracles establishing the sacredness of Sunday - The pope advises men to atone, by the pious observance of Sunday, for the sins of the previous week - The Sabbath and Sunday both strictly kept by a class at Rome who were put down by the pope - According to Twisse they were two distinct classes - The Sabbath, like its Lord, crucified between two thieves - Council of Chalons - At Toledo, in which the Jews were forbidden to keep the Sabbath and commanded to keep Sunday - First English law for Sunday - Council at Constantinople - In England - In Bavaria - Canon of the archbishop of York - Statutes of Charlemagne and canons of councils which he called - The pope aids in the work - Council at Paris originates a famous first-day argument - The councils fail to establish Sunday sacredness - The emperors besought to send out some more terrible edict in order to compel the observance of that day - The pope takes the matter in hand in earnest and gives Sunday an effectual establishment - Other statutes and canons - Sunday piety of a Norwegian king - Sunday consecrated to the mass - Curious but obsolete first-day arguments - The eating of meat forbidden upon the Sabbath by the pope - Pope Urban II. ordains the Sabbath of the Lord to be a festival for the worship of the Virgin Mary - Apparition from St. Peter - The pope sends Eustace into England with a roll that fell from Heaven commanding Sunday observance under direful penalties - Miracles which followed - Sunday established in Scotland - Other Sunday laws down to the Reformation - Sunday always only a human ordinance.*

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The opening of the sixth century witnessed the development of the great apostasy to such an extent that the man of sin might be plainly seen sitting in the temple of God.<sup>1</sup> The western Roman Empire had been broken up into ten kingdoms, and the way was now prepared for the work of the little horn.<sup>2</sup> In the early part of this century, the bishop of Rome was made head over the entire church by the emperor of the east, Justinian.<sup>3</sup> The dragon gave unto the beast his power, and his seat, and great authority. From this accession to supremacy by the Roman pontiff, date the "time, times, and dividing of time," or twelve hundred and sixty years of the prophecies of Daniel and John.<sup>4</sup>

The true people of God now retired for safety into places of obscurity and seclusion, as represented by the prophecy: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."<sup>5</sup> Leaving their history for the present, let us follow that of the Catholic church, and trace in its record the history of the Sunday festival through the period of the Dark ages. Of the fifth and sixth centuries, Heylyn bears the following testimony:

"The faithful being united better than before, became more uniform in matters of devotion; and in that uniformity did agree together to give the Lord's day all the honors of an holy festival. Yet was

not this done all at once, but by degrees; the fifth and sixth centuries being well-nigh spent before it came into that height which hath since continued. The emperors and the prelates in these times had the same affections; both [being] earnest to advance this day above all other; and to the edicts of the one and ecclesiastical constitutions of the other, it stands indebted for many of those privileges and exemptions which it still enjoyeth."[6](#)

But Sunday had not yet acquired the title of Sabbath. Thus Brerewood bears testimony:

"The name of the Sabbath remained appropriated to the old Sabbath; and was never attributed to the Lord's day, not of many hundred years after our Saviour's time."[7](#)

And Heylyn says of the term Sabbath in the ancient church:

"The Saturday is called amongst them by no other name than that which formerly it had, the Sabbath. So that whenever for a thousand years and upwards, we meet with Sabbatum in any writer of what name soever, it must be understood of no day but Saturday."[8](#)

Dr. Francis White, bishop of Ely, also testifies:

"When the ancient fathers distinguish and give proper names to the particular days of the week, they always style the Saturday, Sabbatum, the Sabbath, and the Sunday, or first day of the week, Dominicum, the Lord's day."[9](#)

It should be observed, however, that the earliest mention of Sunday as the Lord's day, is in the writings of Tertullian; Justin Martyr, some sixty years before, styling it "the day called Sunday;" while the authoritative application of that term to Sunday was by Sylvester, bishop of Rome, more than one hundred years after the time of Tertullian. The earliest mention of Sunday as Christian Sabbath is thus noted by Heylyn:

"The first who ever used it to denote the Lord's day (the first that I have met with in all this search) is one Petrus Alfonsus - he lived about the time that Rupertus did - [which was the beginning of the twelfth century] who calls the Lord's day by the name of Christian Sabbath."[10](#)

Of Sunday labor in the eastern church, Heylyn says:

"It was near nine hundred years from our Saviour's birth if not quite so much, before restraint of husbandry on this day had been first thought of in the east; and probably being thus restrained did find no more obedience there than it had done before in the western parts."[11](#)

Of Sunday labor in the western church, Dr. Francis White thus testifies:

"The Catholic church for more than six hundred years after Christ, permitted labor, and gave license to many Christian people to work upon the Lord's day, at such hours as they were not commanded to be present at the public service by the precept of the church."[12](#)

But let us trace the several steps by which the festival of Sunday increased in strength until it attained its complete development. These will be found at present mostly in the edicts of emperors, and the decrees of councils. Morer tells us that,

"Under Clodoveus king of France met the bishops in the first council of Orleans [A.D. 507], where they obliged themselves and their successors, to be always at the church on the Lord's day, except in case of sickness or some great infirmity. And because they, with some other of the clergy in those days, took cognizance of judicial matters, therefore by a council at Arragon, about the year 518 in the reign of Theodorick, king of the Goths, it was decreed that 'No bishop or other person in holy orders should examine or pass judgment in any civil controversy on the Lord's day.' "[13](#)

This shows that civil courts were sometimes held on Sunday by the bishops in those days; otherwise such a prohibition would not have been put forth. Hengstenberg, in his notice of the third council of Orleans, gives us an insight into the then existing state of the Sunday festival:

"The third council of Orleans, A.D. 538, says in its twenty-ninth canon: 'The opinion is spreading amongst the people, that it is wrong to ride, or drive, or cook food, or do anything to the house, or the person on the Sunday. But since such opinions are more Jewish than Christian, that shall be lawful in future, which has been so to the present time. On the other hand agricultural labor ought to be laid aside, in order that the people may not be prevented from attending church.'" [14](#)

Observe the reason assigned. It is not lest they violate the law of the Sabbath, but it is that they may not be kept from church. Another authority states the case thus:

"Labor in the country [on Sunday] was not prohibited till the council of Orleans, A.D. 538. It was thus an institution of the church, as Dr. Paley has remarked. The earlier Christians met in the morning of that day for prayer and singing hymns in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, and then went about their usual duties. [15](#)

In A.D. 588, another council was holden, the occasion of which is thus stated:

"And because, notwithstanding all this care, the day was not duly observed, the bishops were again summoned to Mascon, a town in Burgundy, by King Gunthrum, and there they framed this canon: 'Notice is taken that Christian people, very much neglect and slight the Lord's day, giving themselves as on other days to common work, to redress which irreverence, for the future, we warn every Christian who bears not that name in vain, to give ear to our advice, knowing we have a concern on us for your good, and a power to hinder you to do evil. Keep then the Lord's day, the day of our new birth.'" [16](#)

Further legislation being necessary, we are told:

"About a year forward, there was a council at Narbon, which forbid all persons of what country or quality soever, to do any servile work on the Lord's day. But if any man presumed to disobey this canon he was to be fined if a freeman, and if a servant, severely lashed. Or as Surius represents the penalty in the edict of King Recaredus, which he put out, near the same time to strengthen the decrees of the council, 'Rich men were to be punished with the loss of a moiety of their estates, and the poorer sort with perpetual banishment,' in the year of grace 590. Another synod was held at Auxerre a city in Champain, in the reign of Clotair king of France, where it was decreed. . . . 'that no man should be allowed to plow, nor cart, or do any such thing on the Lord's day.' "[17](#)

Such were some of the efforts made in the sixth century to advance the sacredness of the Sunday festival. And

Morer tells us that,

"For fear the doctrine should not take without miracles to support it, Gregory of Tours [about A.D. 590] furnishes us with several to that purpose."[18](#)

Mr. Francis West, an English first-day writer, gravely adduces one of these miracles in support of first-day sacredness:

"Gregory of Tours reporteth, `that a husbandman, who upon the Lord's day went to plough his field, as he cleaned his plough with an iron, the iron stuck so fast in his hand that for two years he could not be delivered from it, but carried it about continually to his exceeding great pain and shame.' "[19](#)

In the conclusion of the sixth century, Pope Gregory exhorted the people of Rome to "expiate on the day of our Lord's resurrection what was remissly done for the six days before."[20](#) In the same epistle, this pope condemned a class of men at Rome who advocated the strict observance of both the Sabbath and the Sunday, styling them the preachers of Antichrist.[21](#) This shows the intolerant feeling of the papacy toward the Sabbath, even when joined with the strict observance of Sunday. It also shows that there were Sabbath-keepers even in Rome itself as late as the seventh century; although so far bewildered by the prevailing darkness that they joined with its observance a strict abstinence from labor on Sunday.

In the early part of the seventh century arose another foe to the Bible Sabbath in the person of Mahomet. To distinguish his followers alike from those who observed the Sabbath and those who observed the festival of Sunday, he selected Friday, the sixth day of the week, as their religious festival. And thus "the Mahometans and the Romanists crucified the Sabbath, as the Jews and the Romans did the Lord of the Sabbath, between two thieves, the sixth and first day of the week."[22](#) For Mahometanism and Romanism each suppressed the Sabbath over a wide extent of territory. About the middle of the seventh century, we have further canons of the church in behalf of Sunday:

"At Chalons, a city in Burgundy, about the year 654, there was a provincial synod which confirmed what had been done by the third council of Orleans, about the observation of the Lord's day, namely that `none should plow or reap, or do any other thing belonging to husbandry, on pain of the censures of the church; which was the more minded, because backed with the secular power, and by an edict menacing such as offended herein; who if bondmen, were to be soundly beaten, but if free, had three admonitions, and then if faulty, lost the third part of their patrimony, and if still obstinate were made slaves for the future. And in the first year of Eringius, about the time of Pope Agatho there sat the twelfth council of Toledo in Spain, A.D. 681, where the Jews were forbid to keep their own festivals, but so far at least observe the Lord's day as to do no manner of work on it, whereby they might express their contempt of Christ or his worship.' "[23](#)

These were weighty reasons indeed for Sunday observance. Nor can it be thought strange that in the Dark Ages a constant succession of such things should eventuate in the universal observance of that day. Even the Jews were to be compelled to desist from Sabbath observance, and to honor Sunday by resting on that day from their labor. The earliest mention of Sunday in English statutes appears to be the following:

A.D. 692. "Ina, king of the west Saxons, by the advice of Cenred his father, and Heddes and Erkenwald his bishops, with all his aldermen and sages, in a great assembly of the servants of God, for the health of their souls,

and common preservation of the kingdom, made several constitutions, of which this was the third: 'If a servant do any work on Sunday by his master's orders, he shall be free, and the master pay thirty shillings; but if he went to work on his own head, he shall be either beaten with stripes, or ransom himself with a price. A freeman, if he works on this day, shall lose his freedom or pay sixty shillings; if he be a priest, double.' "24

The same year that this law was enacted in England, the sixth general council convened at Constantinople, which decreed that,

"If any bishop or other clergyman, or any of the laity, absented himself from the church three Sundays together, except in cases of very great necessity, if a clergyman, he was to be deposed; if a layman, debarred the holy communion."25

In the year 747, a council of the English clergy was called under Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of Egbert, king of Kent, and this constitution made:

"It is ordered that the Lord's day be celebrated with due veneration, and wholly devoted to the worship of God. And that all abbots and priests, on this most holy day, remain in their respective monasteries and churches, and there do their duty according to their places."26

Another ecclesiastical statute of the eighth century was enacted at Dingosolinum in Bavaria, where a synod met about 772, which decreed that,

"If any man shall work his cart on this day, or do any such common business, his team shall be presently forfeited to the public use, and if the party persists in his folly, let him be sold for a bondman."27

The English were not behind their neighbors in the good work of establishing the sacredness of Sunday. Thus we read:

A.D. 784. "Egbert, archbishop of York, to show positively what was to be done on Sundays, and what the laws designed by prohibiting ordinary work to be done on such days, made this canon: 'Let nothing else, saith he, be done on the Lord's day, but to attend on God in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs. Whoever marries on Sunday, let him do penance for seven days.' "28

In the conclusion of the eighth century further efforts were made in behalf of this favored day:

"Charles the Great summoned the bishops to Friuli, in Italy, where . . . they decreed [A.D. 791] that all people should, with due reverence and devotion, honor the Lord's day. . . . Under the same prince another council was called three years later at Frankford in Germany, and there the limits of the Lord's day were determined from Saturday evening to Sunday evening."29

The five councils of Mentz, Rheims, Tours, Chalons, and Arles, were all called in the year 813 by Charlemagne. It would be irksome to the reader to dwell upon the several acts of these councils in behalf of Sunday. They are of the same character as those already quoted. The council of Chalons, however, is worthy of being noticed in that, according to Morer,

"They entreated the help of the secular power, and desired the emperor [Charlemagne] to provide for the stricter observation of it [Sunday]. Which he accordingly did, and left no stone unturned to

secure the honor of the day. His care succeeded; and during his reign, the Lord's day bore a considerable figure. But after his day, it put on another face."[30](#)

The pope lent a helping hand in checking the profanation of Sunday:

"And thereupon Pope Eugenius, in a synod held at Rome about 826, . . . gave directions that the parish priest should admonish such offenders and wish them to go to church and say their prayers, lest otherwise they might bring some great calamity on themselves and neighbors."[31](#)

All this, however, was not sufficient, and so another council was summoned. At this council was brought forward - perhaps for the first time - the famous first-day argument now so familiar to all, that Sunday is proved to be the true Sabbath because that men are struck by lightning who labor on that day. Thus we read:

"But these paternal admonitions turning to little account, a provincial council was held at Paris three years after . . . in 829, wherein the prelates complain that 'The Lord's day was not kept with reverence as became religion . . . which was the reason that God had sent several judgments on them, and in a very remarkable manner punished some people for slighting and abusing it. For, say they, many of us by our own knowledge, and some by hearsay know, that several countrymen following their husbandry on this day have been killed with lightning, others, being seized with convulsions in their joints, have miserably perished. Whereby it is apparent how high the displeasure of God was upon their neglect of this day.' And at last they conclude that 'in the first place the priests and ministers, then kings and princes, and all faithful people he beseeched to use their utmost endeavors and care that the day be restored to its honor, and for the credit of Christianity more devoutly observed for the time to come.' "[32](#)

Further legislation being necessary,

"It was decreed about seven years after in a council at Aken, under Lewis the Godly, that neither pleadings nor marriages should be allowed on the Lord's day."[33](#)

But the law of Charlemagne, though backed with the authority of the church, as expressed in the canons of the councils already quoted, by the remissness of Lewis, his successor became very feeble. It is evident that canons and decrees of councils, though fortified with the mention of terrible judgments that had befallen transgressors, were not yet sufficient to enforce the sacred day. Another and more terrific statute than any yet issued was sought at the hands of the emperor. Thus we read:

"Thereupon an address was made to the emperors, Lewis and Lotharius, that they would be pleased to take some care in it, and send out some precept or injunction more severe than what was hitherto extant, to strike terror into their subjects, and force them to forbear their ploughing, pleading, and marketing, then grown again into use; which was done about the year 853; and to that end a synod was called at Rome under the popedom of Leo IV."[34](#)

The advocates of the first-day Sabbath have in all ages sought for a law capable of striking terror into those who do not hallow that day. They still continue the vain endeavor. But if they would honor the day which God set apart for the Sabbath, they would find in that law of fire which proceeded from his right hand a statute which renders all human legislation entirely unnecessary.[35](#)

At this synod the pope took the matter in hand in good earnest. Thus Heylyn testifies that under the emperors, Lewis and Lotharius, a synod was held at Rome A.D. 853, under pope Leo IV.,

"Where it was ordered more precisely than in former times that no man should from thenceforth dare to make any markets on the Lord's day, no, not for things that were to eat: neither to do any kind of work that belonged to husbandry. Which canon being made at Rome, confirmed at Compeigne, and afterwards incorporated as it was into the body of the canon law, became to be admitted, without further question, in most parts of Christendom; especially when the popes had attained their height, and brought all Christian princes to be at their devotion. For then the people, who before had most opposed it, might have justly said, 'Behold two kings stood not before him, how then shall we stand?' Out of which consternation all men presently obeyed, tradesmen of all sorts being brought to lay by their labors; and amongst those, the miller, though his work was easiest, and least of all required his presence."[36](#)

This was a most effectual establishment of first-day sacredness. Five years after this we read as follows:

A.D. 858. "The Bulgarians sent some questions to Pope Nicholas, to which they desired answers. And that [answer] which concerned the Lord's day was that they should desist from all secular work, etc."[37](#)

Morer informs us respecting the civil power, that,

"In this century the emperor [of Constantinople] Leo, surnamed the philosopher, restrained the works of husbandry, which, according to Constantine's toleration, were permitted in the east. The same care was taken in the west, by Theodorus, king of the Bavarians, who made this order, that 'If any person on the Lord's day yoked his oxen, or drove his wain, his right-side ox should be forthwith forfeited; or if he made hay and carried it in, he was to be twice admonished to desist, which if he did not, he was to receive no less than fifty stripes.'[38](#)

Of Sunday laws in England in this century, we read:

A.D. 876. "Alfred the Great, was the first who united the Saxon Heptarchy, and it was not the least part of his care to make a law that among other festivals this day more especially might be solemnly kept, because it was the day whereon our Saviour Christ overcame the devil; meaning Sunday, which is the weekly memorial of our Lord's resurrection, whereby he overcame death, and him who had the power of death, that is the devil. And whereas before the single punishment for sacrilege committed on any other day, was to restore the value of the thing stolen, and withal lose one hand, he added that if any person was found guilty of this crime done on the Lord's day, he should be doubly punished."[39](#)

Nineteen years later, the pope and his council still further strengthened the sacred day. The council of Friburgh in Germany, A.D. 895, under Pope Formosus, decreed that the Lord's day, men "were to spend in prayers, and devote wholly to the service of God, who otherwise might be provoked to anger."[40](#) The work of establishing Sunday sacredness in England was carried steadily forward:

"King Athelston, . . . in the year 928, made a law that there should be no marketing or civil pleadings on the Lord's day, under the penalty of forfeiting the commodity, besides a fine of thirty

shillings for each offense."[41](#)

In a convocation of the English clergy about this time, it was decreed that all sorts of traffic and holding of courts, &c., on Sunday should cease. "And whoever transgressed in any of these instances, if a freeman, he was to pay twelve orae, if a servant, be severely whipt." We are further informed that,

"About the year 943, Otho, archbishop of Canterbury, had it decreed that above all things the Lord's day should be kept with all imaginable caution, according to the canon and ancient practice."[42](#)

A.D. 967. King Edgar "commanded that the festival should be kept from three of the clock in the afternoon on Saturday, till day-break on Monday."[43](#)

"King Ethelred the younger, son of Edgar, coming to the crown about the year 1009, called a general council of all the English clergy, under Elfeagus, archbishop of Canterbury, and Wolstan, archbishop of York. And there it was required that all persons in a more zealous manner should observe the Sunday, and what belonged to it."[44](#)

Nor did the Sunday festival fail to gain a footing in Norway. Heylyn tells us of the piety of a Norwegian king by the name of Olaus, A.D. 1028.

"For being taken up one Sunday in some serious thoughts, and having in his hand a small walking stick, he took his knife and whittled it as men do sometimes, when their minds are troubled or intent on business. And when it had been told him as by way of jest how he had trespassed therein against the Sabbath, he gathered the small chips together, put them upon his hand, and set fire to them, that so, saith Crantzius, he might revenge that on himself what unawares he had committed against God's commandment."[45](#)

In Spain also the work went forward. A council was held at Coy, in Spain, A.D. 1050, under Ferdinand, king of Castile, in the days of Pope Leo IX., where it was decreed that the Lord's day "was to be entirely consecrated to hearing of mass."[46](#)

To strengthen the sacredness of this venerable day in the minds of the people, the doctors of the church were not wanting. Heylyn makes the following statement:

"It was delivered of the souls in purgatory by Petrus Damiani, who lived A.D. 1056, that every Lord's day they were manumitted from their pains and fluttered up and down the lake Avernus, in the shape of birds."[47](#)

At the same time, another argument of a similar kind was brought forward to render the observance still more strict. Morer informs us respecting that class who in this age were most zealous advocates of Sunday observance:

"Yet still the others went on in their way; and to induce their proselytes to spend the day with greater exactness and care, they brought in the old argument of compassion and charity to the damned in hell, who during the day, have some respite from their torments, and the case and liberty they have is more or less according to the zeal and degrees of keeping it well."[48](#)

If therefore they would strictly observe this sacred festival, their friends in hell would reap the benefit, in a respite from their torments on that day! In a council at Rome, A.D. 1078, Pope Gregory VII decreed that as the Sabbath had been long regarded as a fast day, those who desired to be Christians should on that day abstain from eating meat.<sup>49</sup> In the eastern division of the Catholic church, in the eleventh century, the Sabbath was still regarded as a festival, equal in sacredness with Sunday. Heylyn contrasts with this the action of the western division of that church:

"But it was otherwise of old in the church of Rome, where they did labor and fast. . . . And this, with little opposition or interruption, save that which had been made in the city of Rome in the beginning of the seventh century, and was soon crushed by Gregory then bishop there, as before we noted. And howsoever Urban of that name the second, did consecrate it to the weekly service of the blessed virgin, and instituted in the council held at Clermont, A.D. 1095, that our lady's office should be said upon it, and that upon that day all Christian folks should worship her with their best devotion."<sup>50</sup>

It would seem that this was a crowning indignity to the Most High. The memorial of the great Creator was set apart as a festival on which to worship Mary, under the title of mother of God! In the middle of the twelfth century, the king of England was admonished not to suffer men to work upon Sunday. Henry II. entered on the government about the year 1155.

"Of him it is reported that he had an apparition at Cardiff (. . . in South Wales) which from St. Peter charged him, that upon Sundays throughout his dominions, there should be no buying or selling, and no servile work done."<sup>51</sup>

The sacredness of Sunday was not yet sufficiently established, because a divine warrant for its observance was still unprovided. The manner in which this urgent necessity was met is related by Roger Hoveden, a historian of high repute who lived at the very time when this much-needed precept was furnished by the pope. Hoveden informs us that Eustace the abbot of Flaye in Normandy, came into England in the year 1200, to preach the word of the Lord, and that his preaching was attended by many wonderful miracles. He was very earnest in behalf of Sunday. Thus Hoveden says:

"At London also, and many other places throughout England, he effected by his preaching, that from that time forward people did not dare to hold market of things exposed for sale on the Lord's Day."<sup>52</sup>

But Hoveden tells us that "the enemy of mankind raised against this man of God the ministers of iniquity," and it seems that having no commandment for Sunday he was in a strait place. The historian continues:

"However, the said abbot, on being censured by the ministers of Satan, was unwilling any longer to molest the prelates of England by his preaching, but returned to Normandy, unto his place whence he came."<sup>53</sup>

But Eustace, though repulsed, had no thought of abandoning the contest. He had no commandment from the Lord when he came into England the first time. But one year's sojourn on the continent was sufficient to provide that which he lacked. Hoveden tells us how he returned the following year with the needed precept:

"In the same year [1201], Eustace, abbot of Flaye, returned to England, and preaching therein the

word of the Lord from city to city, and from place to place, forbade any person to hold a market of goods on sale upon the Lord's day. For he said that the commandment under-written, as to the observance of the Lord's day, had come down from Heaven:

#### "THE HOLY COMMANDMENT AS TO THE LORD'S DAY,

"Which came from Heaven to Jerusalem, and was found upon the altar of Saint Simeon, in Golgotha, where Christ was crucified for the sins of the world. The Lord sent down this epistle, which was found upon the altar of Saint Simeon, and after looking upon which, three days and three nights, some men fell upon the earth, imploring mercy of God. And after the third hour, the patriarch arose, and Acharias, the archbishop, and they opened the scroll, and received the holy epistle from God. And when they had taken the same they found this writing therein:

" 'I am the Lord, who commanded you to observe the holy day of the Lord, and ye have not kept it, and have not repented of your sins, as I have said in my gospel, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Whereas, I caused to be preached unto you repentance and amendment of life, you did not believe me, I have sent against you the pagans, who have shed your blood on the earth; and yet you have not believed; and, because you did not keep the Lord's day holy, for a few days you suffered hunger, but soon I gave you fulness, and after that you did still worse again. Once more, it is my will, that no one, from the ninth hour on Saturday until sunrise on Monday, shall do any work except that which is good.

" `And if any person shall do so, he shall with penance make amends for the same. And if you do not pay obedience to this command, verily, I say unto you, and I swear unto you, by my seat and by my throne, and by the cherubim who watch my holy seat, that I will give you my commands by no other epistle, but I will open the heavens, and for rain I will rain upon you stones, and wood, and hot water, in the night, that no one may take precautions against the same, and that so I may destroy all wicked men.

" `This do I say unto you; for the Lord's holy day, you shall die the death, and for the other festivals of my saints which you have not kept: I will send unto you beasts that have the heads of lions, the hair of women, the tails of camels, and they shall be so ravenous that they shall devour your flesh, and you shall long to flee away to the tombs of the dead, and to hide yourselves for fear of the beasts; and I will take away the light of the sun from before your eyes, and will send darkness upon you, that not seeing, you may slay one another, and that I may remove from you my face, and may not show mercy upon you. For I will burn the bodies and the hearts of you, and of all of those who do not keep as the holy day of the Lord.

" `Hear ye my voice, that so ye may not perish in the land, for the holy day of the Lord. Depart from evil, and show repentance for your sins. For, if you do not do so, even as Sodom and Gomorrah shall you perish. Now, know ye, that you are saved by the prayers of my most holy mother, Mary, and of my most holy angels, who pray for you daily. I have given unto you wheat and wine in abundance, and for the same ye have not obeyed me. For the widows and orphans cry unto you daily, and unto them you show no mercy. The pagans show mercy, but you show none at all. The trees which bear fruit, I will cause to be dried up for your sins; the rivers and the fountains shall not give water.

" I gave unto you a law in Mount Sinai, which you have not kept. I gave you a law with mine own hands, which you have not observed. For you I was born into the world, and my festive day ye knew not. Being wicked men, ye have not kept the Lord's day of my resurrection. By my right hand I swear unto you, that if you do not observe the Lord's day, and the festivals of my saints, I will send unto you the pagan nations, that they may slay you. And still do you attend to the business of others, and take no consideration of this? For this will I send against you still worse beasts, who shall devour the breasts of your women. I will curse those who on the Lord's day have wrought evil.

" Those who act unjustly towards their brethren, will I curse. Those who judge unrighteously the poor and the orphans upon the earth, will I curse. For me you forsake, and you follow the prince of this world. Give heed to my voice, and you shall have the blessing of mercy. But you cease not from your bad works, nor from the works of the devil. Because you are guilty of perjuries and adulteries, therefore the nations shall surround you, and shall, like beasts, devour you.' "[54](#)

That such a document was actually brought into England at this time, and in the manner here described, is so amply attested as to leave no doubt.[55](#) Matthew Paris, like Hoveden, was actually a contemporary of Eustace. Hoveden properly belongs to the twelfth century, for he died shortly after the arrival of Eustace with his roll. But Matthew Paris belongs to the thirteenth, as he was but young at the time this roll (A.D. 1201) was brought into England. Both have a high reputation for truthfulness. In speaking of the writers of that century, Mosheim bears the following testimony to the credibility of Matthew Paris:

"Among the historians, the first place is due to Matthew Paris, a writer of the highest merit, both in point of knowledge and prudence."[56](#)

And Dr. Murdock says of him:

"He is accounted the best historian of the Middle Ages, learned, independent, honest, and judicious."[57](#)

Matthew Paris relates the return of the abbot Eustachius (as he spells the name) from Normandy, and gives us a copy of the roll which he brought, and an account of its fall from Heaven as related by the abbot himself. He also tells us how the abbot came by it, tracing the history of the roll from the point when the patriarch gathered courage to take it into his hands, till the time when our abbot was commissioned to bring it into England. Thus he says:

"But when the patriarch and clergy of all the holy land had diligently examined the contents of this epistle, it was decreed in a general deliberation that the epistle should be sent to the judgment of the Roman pontiff, seeing that whatever he decreed to be done, would please all. And when at length the epistle had come to the knowledge of the lord pope, immediately he ordained heralds, who being sent through different parts of the world, preached every where the doctrine of this epistle, the Lord working with them and confirming their words by signs following. Among whom the abbot of Flay, Eustachius by name, a devout and learned man, having entered the kingdom of England did there shine with many miracles."[58](#)

Now we know what the abbot was about during the year that he was absent from England. He could not establish first-day sacredness by his first mission to England, for he had no divine warrant in its behalf. He

therefore retired from the mission long enough to make known the necessities of the case to the "lord pope." But when he came the second time he brought the divine mandate for Sunday, and with the commission of the pope, authorizing him to proclaim that mandate to the people, and informing them that it was sent to His Holiness from Jerusalem by those who saw it fall from Heaven. Had Eustace framed this document himself, and then forged a commission from the pope, a few months would have discovered the imposture. But their genuineness was never questioned as shown by preservation of this roll by the best historians of that time. We therefore trace the responsibility for this roll by the best historians of that time. We therefore trace the responsibility for this roll directly to the pope of Rome. The statement of the pope that he received it from the hands of those who saw it fall from Heaven is the guaranty given by His Holiness to the people that the roll came from God. The historians then living, who record this transaction, were able to satisfy themselves that Eustace brought the roll from the pope; and they believed the pope's statement that he had received it from Heaven. It was Innocent III. who filled the office of pope at this time, of whom Bower speaks thus:

"Innocent was perfectly well qualified to raise the papal power and authority to the highest pitch, and we shall see him improving, with great address, every opportunity that offered to compass that end."[59](#)

Another eminent authority makes this statement:

"The external circumstances of his time also furthered Innocent's views, and enabled him to make his pontificate the most marked in the annals of Rome; the culminating point of the temporal as well as the spiritual supremacy of the Roman See."[60](#)

"His pontificate may be fairly considered to have been the period of the highest power of the Roman See."[61](#)

The dense darkness of the Dark Ages still covered the earth when that pontiff filled the papal throne who raised the papacy to its highest elevation. Two facts worthy of much thought should here be named in connection:

1. The first act of papal usurpation was by an edict in behalf of Sunday.[62](#)
2. The utmost height of papal usurpation was marked by the pope's act of furnishing a divine precept for Sunday observance.

The mission of Eustace was attested by miracles which are worthy of perusal by those who believe in first-day sacredness because their fathers thus believed. Here they may learn what was done six centuries since, to fix these ideas in the minds of their fathers. Eustace came to York, in the north of England, and, meeting an honorable reception,

"Preached the word of the Lord, and on the breaking of the Lord's day and the other festivals, and imposed upon the people penance and gave absolution, upon condition that, in future they would pay due reverence to the Lord's day and the other festivals of the saints, doing therein no servile work."[63](#)

"Upon this, the people who were dutiful to God at his preaching, vowed before God that, for the future, on the Lord's day, they would neither buy nor sell any thing, unless, perchance, victuals and drink of wayfarers."[64](#)

The abbot also made provision for the collection of alms for the benefit of the poor, and forbade the use of the churches for the sale of goods, and for the pleading of causes. Upon this, the king interfered as follows:

"Accordingly, through these and other warnings of this holy man, the enemy of mankind being rendered envious, he put it into the heart of the king and of the princes of darkness to command that all who should observe the before stated doctrines, and more especially all those who had discountenanced the markets on the Lord's day, should be brought before the king's court of justice, to make satisfaction as to the observance of the Lord's day."[65](#)

The markets of the Lord's day, it seems, were held in the churches, and Eustace was attempting to suppress these when he forbade the sale of goods in the churches. And now to confirm the authority of the roll, and to neutralize the opposition of the king, some very extraordinary prodigies were reported. The roll forbade labor "from the ninth hour (that is 3 P.M.) on Saturday until sunrise on Monday." Now read what happened to the disobedient:

"One Saturday, a certain carpenter of Beverly, who, after the ninth hour of the day was, contrary to the wholesome advice of his wife, making a wooden wedge, fell to the earth, being struck with paralysis. A woman also, a weaver, who, after the ninth hour, on Saturday, in her anxiety to finish a part of the web, persisted in so doing fell to the ground, struck with paralysis, and lost her voice. At Rafferton also, a vill belonging to Master Roger Arundel, a man made for himself a loaf and baked it under the ashes, after the ninth hour on Saturday, and ate thereof, and put part of it by till the morning, but when he broke it on the Lord's day blood started forth therefrom; and he who saw it bore witness, and his testimony is true.

"At Wakefield, also, one Saturday, while a miller was, after the ninth hour, attending to grinding his corn, there suddenly came forth, instead of flour, such a torrent of blood, that the vessel placed beneath was nearly filled with blood, and the mill wheel stood immovable, in spite of the strong rush of the water; and those who beheld it wondered thereat, saying, 'Spare us, O Lord, spare thy people!'

"Also, in Lincolnshire a woman had prepared some dough, and taking it to the oven after the ninth hour on Saturday, she placed it in the oven, which was then at a very great heat; but when she took it out, she found it raw, on which she again put it into the oven, which was very hot; and, both on the next day, and on Monday, when she supposed that she should find the loaves baked, she found raw dough.

"In the same county also, when a certain woman had prepared her dough, intending to carry it to the oven, her husband said to her, 'It is Saturday, and it is now past the ninth hour, put it one side till Monday;' on which the woman, obeying her husband, did as he commanded; and so, having covered over the dough with a linen cloth, on coming the next day to look at the dough, to see whether it had not, in rising, through the yeast that was in it, gone over the sides of the vessel, she found there the loaves ready made by the divine will, and well baked, without any fire of the material of this world. This was a change wrought by the right hand of Him on high."[66](#)

The historian laments that these miracles were lost upon the people, and that they feared the king more than they feared God, and so "like a dog to his vomit, returned to the holding of markets on the Lord's day."[67](#) Such was

the first attempt in England after the apparition of St. Peter, A.D. 1155, to supply divine authority for Sunday observance. "It shows," as Morer quaintly observes, "how industrious men were in those times to have this great day solemnly observed."[68](#) And Gilfillan, who has occasion to mention the story of the roll from Heaven, has not one word of condemnation for the pious fraud in behalf of Sunday, but he simply speaks of our abbot as "This ardent person."[69](#)

Two years after the arrival of Eustace in England with his roll, A.D. 1203, a council was held in Scotland concerning the introduction and establishment of the Lord's day in that kingdom.[70](#) The roll that had fallen from Heaven to supply the lack of scriptural testimony in behalf of this day, was admirably adapted to the business of this council, though Dr. Heylyn informs us that the Scotch were so ready to comply with the pope's wishes that the packet from the court of Heaven and the accompanying miracles were not needed.[71](#) Yet Morer asserts that the packet was actually produced on this occasion:

"To that end it was again produced and read in a council of Scotland, held under [pope] Innocent III, . . . A.D. 1203, in the reign of King William, who . . . passed it into a law that Saturday from twelve at noon ought to be accounted holy, and that no man shall deal in such worldly business as on feast days were forbidden. As also that at the tolling of a bell, the people were to be employed in holy actions, going to sermons and the like, and to continue thus until Monday morning, a penalty being laid on those who did the contrary. About the year 1214, which was eleven years after, it was again enacted, in a parliament at Scone, by Alexander III., king of the Scots, that none should fish in any waters, from Saturday after evening prayer, till sunrising on Monday, which was afterward confirmed by King James I.[72](#)

The sacredness of this papal Lord's day seems to have been more easily established by taking in with it a part of the ancient Sabbath. The work of establishing this institution was everywhere carried steadily forward. Of England we read:

"In the year 1237, Henry III. being king, and Edmund de Abendon archbishop of Canterbury, a constitution was made, requiring every minister to forbid his parioshners the frequenting of markets on the Lord's day, and leaving the church where they ought to meet and spend the day in prayer and hearing the word of God. And this on pain of excommunication."[73](#)

Of France we are informed:

"The council of Lyons sat about the year 1244, and it restrained the people from their ordinary work on the Lord's day, and other festivals on pain of ecclesiastical censures."

A.D. 1282. The council of Angeirs in France "forbid millers by water or otherwise to grind their corn from Saturday evening till Sunday evening."[74](#)

Nor were the Spaniards backward in this work:

A.D. 1322. This year "a synod was called at Valladolid in Castile, and then was ratified what was formerly required, that none should follow husbandry, or exercise himself in any mechanical employment on the Lord's day, or other holy days, but where it was a work of necessity or charity, of which the minister of the parish was to be judge." [75](#)

The rulers of the church and realm of England were diligent in establishing the sacredness of this day. Yet the following statutes show that they were not aware of any Bible authority for enforcing its observance:

A.D. 1358. "Istippe, archbishop of Canterbury, with very great concern and zeal, expresses himself thus: 'We have it from the relation of very credible persons, that in divers places within our province, a very naughty, nay, damnable custom has prevailed, to hold fairs and markets on the Lord's day. . . . Wherefore by virtue of canonical obedience, we strictly charge and command your brotherhood, that if you find your people faulty in the premises, you forthwith admonish or cause them to be admonished to refrain going to markets or fairs on the Lord's day. . . . And as for such who are obstinate and speak or act against you in this particular, you must endeavor to restrain them by ecclesiastical censures and by all lawful means put a stop to these extravagances.'

"Nor was the civil power silent; for much about that time King Edward made an act that wool should not be shown at the staple on Sundays and other solemn feasts in the year. In the reign of King Henry VI., Dr. Stafford being archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1444, it was decreed that fairs and markets should no more be kept in churches and church-yards on the Lord's day, or other festivals, except in time of harvest."[76](#)

Observe that fairs and markets were held in the churches in England on Sundays as late as 1444! And even later than this such fairs were allowed in harvest time. On the European continent the sacredness of Sunday was persistently urged. The council of Bourges urges its observance as follows:

A.D. 1532. "The Lord's day and other festivals were instituted for this purpose, that faithful Christians abstaining from external work, might more freely, and with greater piety devote themselves to God's worship."[77](#)

They did not seem to be aware of the fact however that when the fear of God is taught by the precepts of men such worship is vain.[78](#) The council of Rheims, which sat the next year, made this decree:

A.D. 1533. "Let the people assemble at their parish churches on the Lord's day, and other holidays, and be present at mass, sermons and vespers. Let no man on these days give himself to plays or dances, especially during service." And the historian adds: "In the same year another synod at Tours, ordered the Lord's day and other holidays to be reverently observed under pain of excommunication"[79](#)

A council which assembled the following year thus frankly confessed the divine origin of the Sabbath, and the human origin of that festival which has supplanted it:

A.D. 1584. "Let all Christians remember that the seventh day was consecrate by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others who pretend to worship God; though we Christians have changed their Sabbath into the Lord's day. A day therefore to be kept, by forbearing all worldly business, suits, contracts, carriages, &c., and by sanctifying the rest of mind and body, in the contemplation of God and things divine, we are to do nothing but works of charity, say prayers, and sing psalms."[80](#)

We have thus traced Sunday observance in the Catholic church down to a period subsequent to the Reformation. That it is an ordinance of man which has usurped the place of the Bible Sabbath is most distinctly

confessed by the council last quoted. Yet they endeavor to make amends of their violation of the Sabbath by spending Sunday in charity, prayers, and psalms: a course too often adopted at the present time to excuse the violation of the fourth commandment. Who can read this long list of Sunday laws, not from the "one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy," but from popes, emperors, and councils, without adopting the sentiment of Neander: "The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance?"

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1 2Thess.2. <[Return](#)>

2 Dan.7. <[Return](#)>

3 Shimeall's Bible Chronology, part ii. chap. ix. sect. 5, p. 175, 176; Croly on the Apocalypse, pp. 167-173. <[Return](#)>

4 Dan.7:8,24,25; Rev.13:1-5. <[Return](#)>

5 Rev.12. <[Return](#)>

6 Hist. Sab. part ii. chap. iv. sect. 1. <[Return](#)>

7 Learned Treatise of the Sabbath, p. 73, ed. 1631. <[Return](#)>

8 Hist. Sab. part ii, chap. ii, sect. 12. <[Return](#)>

9 Treatise of the Sabbath Day, p. 202. <[Return](#)>

10 Hist. Sab. part ii. chap. v. sect. 13. <[Return](#)>

11 Id. part ii. chap. v. sect. 6. <[Return](#)>

12 Treatise of the Sabbath Day, pp. 217, 218. <[Return](#)>

13 Dialogues on the Lord's Day, pp. 263, 264. <[Return](#)>

14 The Lord's Day, p. 58. <[Return](#)>

15 Dictionary of Chronology p. 813, art. Sunday. <[Return](#)>

16 Dialogues on the Lord's Day, p. 265. <[Return](#)>

17 Id. pp. 265, 266; Hist. Sab. part ii. chap. iv. sect 7. <[Return](#)>

18 Dialogues on the Lord's Day. p. 68. <[Return](#)>

19 Historical and Practical Discourse on the Lord's Day, p. 174. <[Return](#)>

20 Dialogues on the Lord's Day, p. 282. <[Return](#)>

21 Fleury, Hist. Eccl. Tome viii. Livre xxxvi. Sect 22; Heylyn's Hist. Sab. part ii. chap. v. sect. 1. Dr. Twisse,

however, asserts that the pope speaks of two classes. He gives Gregory's words as follows: "Relation is made unto me that certain men of a perverse spirit, have sowed among you some corrupt doctrines contrary to our holy faith; so as to forbid any work to be done on the Sabbath day: these men we may well call the preachers of Antichrist. . . . Another report was brought unto me; and what was that? That some perverse persons preach among you, that on the Lord's day none should be washed. This is clearly another point maintained by other persons, different from the former." - *Morality of the Fourth Commandment*, pp. 19, 20. If Dr. Twisse is right, the Sabbath-keepers in Rome about the year 600 were not chargeable with the Sunday observance above mentioned. <[Return](#)>

22 The idea is suggested by the language of an anonymous first-day writer of the seventeenth century, Irenaeus Philaethes, in a work entitled "Sabbato-Dominica," pref. p. 11, London, 1643. <[Return](#)>

23 *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, p. 267. <[Return](#)>

24 *Id.* p. 283. <[Return](#)>

25 *Dialogues, &c.* p. 268. <[Return](#)>

26 *Id.* pp. 283, 284. <[Return](#)>

27 *Id.* p. 268. <[Return](#)>

28 *Id.* p. 284. <[Return](#)>

29 *Dialogues, &c.* p. 269. <[Return](#)>

30 *Id.* p. 270. <[Return](#)>

31 *Id.* p. 271. <[Return](#)>

32 *Dialogue, &c.* p. 271; *Hist. Sab.* part ii, chap. v. sect. 7. <[Return](#)>

33 *Dialogues, &c.* p. 272. <[Return](#)>

34 *Dialogue, &c.* p. 261. <[Return](#)>

35 Ex.20:8-11; Deut.33:2. <[Return](#)>

36 *Hist. Sab.* part ii, chap. v, sect. 7; Morer, p. 272. <[Return](#)>

37 *Hist. Sab.* part. ii, chap. v, sect. 7; Morer, p. 272. <[Return](#)>

38 *Dialogues, &c.* pp. 261, 262. <[Return](#)>

39 *Id.* pp. 284, 285. <[Return](#)>

40 *Dialogues, &c.* p. 274. <[Return](#)>

41 *Id.* p. 285. <[Return](#)>

42 Id. p. 286. <[Return](#)>

43 Ib. Ib. <[Return](#)>

44 Id. pp. 286, 287. <[Return](#)>

45 Hist. Sab. part ii, chap. v, sect. 2. <[Return](#)>

46 Dialogues, &c. p. 274. <[Return](#)>

47 Hist. Sab. part ii, chap. v, sect. 2. <[Return](#)>

48 Dialogues, &c. p. 68. <[Return](#)>

49 Binius, vol. iii, p. 1285, ed. 1606. <[Return](#)>

50 Hist. Sab. part. ii, chap. v, sect. 13. <[Return](#)>

51 Morer, p. 288; Heylyn, part 2, chap. vii, sect. 6. <[Return](#)>

52 Roger de Hoveden's Annals, Bohn's ed. vol. ii, p. 487. <[Return](#)>

53 Id. Ib. <[Return](#)>

54 Hoveden, vol. ii, pp. 526-528. <[Return](#)>

55 See Matthew Paris's Historia Major, pp. 200, 201. ed. 1640; Binius' Councils, ad ann. 1201, vol. iii, pp. 1448, 1449; Wilkins' Concilia Magnae Britanniae, et Hibernae, vol. i, pp. 510, 511, London, 1737; Sir David Dalrymple's historical Memorials, pp. 7, 8, ed. 1769; Heyln's History of the Sabbath, part ii, chap. vii, sect. 5; Morer's Lord's Day, pp. 288-290; Hessey's Sunday pp. 90, 321; Gilfillan's Sabbath, p. 399. <[Return](#)>

56 Maclaine's Mosheim, cent. xiii, part ii, chap. i, sect. 5. <[Return](#)>

57 Murdock's Mosheim, cent. xiii, part ii, chap. i, sect. 5, note 19. <[Return](#)>

58 Matthew Paris's Historia Major, p. 201. His words are: "Cum autem l'atriarcha et clerus omnis Terrae sanctae, hunc epistolae tenorem diligenter examinassent; communi omnium deliberatione dectretum est, ut epistola ad iudicium Romani Pontificis transmitteretur; quatenus, quicquid ipse agendum dectretvit, placet universis. Cumque tandem epistola ad domini Papae notitiam pervenisset, continuo praedicatotres ordinavit; qui per diversas mundi partes profecti, praedicaverun ubuque epistolaf tenerem; Domino cooperante et sermonem eorum confirmante, sequentibus signis. Inter quos Abbas de Flai nomine Eustachius, vir religiosus et literali scientia eruditus, regnum Angliae agressus: multis ibidem miraculis corruscavit." - Library of Harvard College. <[Return](#)>

59 History of the Popes, vol. ii, p. 535. <[Return](#)>

60 M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, vol. iv, p. 590. <[Return](#)>

61 Id. vol. iv, p. 592. <[Return](#)>

62 See page 274 of this work. <[Return](#)>

63 Hoveden, vol. ii, p. 528. <[Return](#)>

64 Hoveden, vol. ii, p. 528. <[Return](#)>

65 Id. p. 529. <[Return](#)>

66 Hoveden, vol. ii. pp. 529, 530. <[Return](#)>

67 Id. Ib. Sabbath History. <[Return](#)>

68 Dialogues, &c. p. 290. <[Return](#)>

69 Gilfillan's Sabbath, p. 399. <[Return](#)>

70 Binius's Councils, vol. iii. p. 1448, 1449; Heylyn, part ii. chap. vii. sect. 7. <[Return](#)>

71 Heylyn, part ii. chap. vii. sect. 7. <[Return](#)>

72 Dialogues, &c. pp. 290, 291. <[Return](#)>

73 Id. p. 291. <[Return](#)>

74 Id. p. 275. <[Return](#)>

75 Id. Ib. <[Return](#)>

76 Id. pp. 293, 294 <[Return](#)>.

77 Id. p. 279. <[Return](#)>

78 Isa.29:13; Matt.15:9. <[Return](#)>

79 Morer, p. 280. <[Return](#)>

80 Id. pp. 281, 282. <[Return](#)>

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[Chapter 21](#)

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