

Labor, Leisure, and Liberty

—A Review Essay

By Karl E. Johnson

Anna Coote and Jane Franklin, eds. *Time on Our Side: Why We All Need a Shorter Working Week* (London: New Economics Foundation, 2013). 225 pp. 1574 KB. \$9.99 (ePub), ISBN 1908506393.

Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt. *Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2013). 250 pp. \$34.95, ISBN 9781439907153.

William Mirola. *Redeeming Time: Protestantism and Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement, 1866-1912* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015). 240 pp. \$55.00, ISBN 9780252038839.

Introduction

G. K. Chesterton once provocatively quipped, “It might reasonably be maintained that the true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.”¹ C. S. Lewis similarly stated,

I do *not* think that the life of Heaven bears any analogy to play or dance in respect of frivolity. I do think that while we are in this “valley of tears” cursed with labor ... certain qualities that must belong to the celestial condition have no chance to get through, can project no image of themselves, except in activities which, for us here and now, are frivolous.²

I was reminded of these musings when reading *Time on Our Side: Why We All Need a Shorter Working Week*, a recent volume that raises fundamental questions about labor, leisure, and human flourishing. In fact, the literature in this field consists largely of volumes with questions for titles, including *Why Work?*, *What's the Economy For, Anyway?*, and *How Much is Enough?*³ In this essay, I review *Time on Our Side* and two other new and noteworthy contributions to the literature on labor and leisure that address somewhat more directly the one question that *Time on Our Side* largely ignores: religion.

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The conversation regarding shorter hours at work is more robust in Europe than America. Unsurprisingly, then, *Time on Our Side*, a stimulating collection of a dozen short essays, comes to us from the New Economics Foundation (NEF), a UK-based “think-and-do-tank” that has as its motto “economics as if people and the planet mattered.” This volume follows a 2010 NEF manifesto entitled “21 hours: Why a shorter working week can help us all to flourish in the 21st century.”⁴

For half a century following the Great Depression, many pundits predicted vastly shorter workweeks and a new horizon of leisure. Among them, the contributors to *Time on Our Side* remind us, was none other than John Maynard Keynes, who thought that weekly working hours likely would be trimmed to 15 by the early 21st century.⁵ Needless to say, Keynes was wrong. More interesting, perhaps, is that so few are even asking why. In the context of modern political promises regarding jobs and increased economic growth, the vision of a 15- or 21-hour workweek may seem almost antediluvian. And to those steeped in the virtues of the Protestant work ethic, the vision may seem morally misguided.

Through publications such as “21 hours” and *Time on Our Side*, however, NEF is keeping the conversation going. At a time when many people report feeling stressed and overwhelmed, this is a great public service. It is also a public service because the conversation about the balance, significance, and relative merits of labor and leisure is nothing less than a conversation about the good life or *telos* of human existence.

The essays in *Time on Our Side*, though diverse in disciplinary perspective, collectively cast a common vision. Elaborating on the vision of “21 hours,” a shorter workweek is offered as a solution to three sets of problems: economic problems such as overwork and unemployment, environmental problems such as climate change and resource depletion, and social problems such as inequality and time poverty.

The essays are almost as reasonable as the vision is radical. The vision of “21 hours” is described as provocative rather than prescriptive: “We want to overturn current assumptions about work and time, and change what is considered

¹G. K. Chesterton, *All Things Considered* (New York: John Lane Company, 1909), 96.

²C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1964), 92.

³Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work?* (McLean, VA: The Trinity Forum, 2011); John de Graaf and David K. Batker, *What's the Economy For, Anyway?: Why It's Time to Stop Chasing Growth and Start Pursuing Happiness* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011); Robert Skidelsky and Edward Skidelsky, *How Much is Enough? Money and the Good Life* (New York: Other Press, 2013).

⁴Anna Coote, Andrew Simms, and Jane Franklin, “21 hours: Why a shorter working week can help us all to flourish in the 21st century” (London: New Economics Foundation, 2010). Available as a free pdf from www.neweconomics.org.

⁵John Maynard Keynes, “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren,” in *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: Norton & Co., 1930), 358-373.

'normal'.⁶ Yet many of the essays in *Time on Our Side* are more empirical than ideological. In "The Triple Dividend," Juliet Schor reports finding that shorter hours are conducive to reduced carbon footprints and other ecological impacts. Angela Druckman et al., in "Time, Gender and Carbon: How British Adults Use Their Leisure Time," similarly find that leisure activities consume less carbon than non-leisure activities. They add that "a higher proportion of an average man's carbon footprint is due to leisure than an average woman's" (xxvi).

Other essays are more normative. In "The Trouble with Productivity," Tim Jackson proposes letting go of our "fetish for labour productivity" and "building an economy of care and culture" (27-28). Mark Davis, in "Hurried and Alone: Time and Technology in the Consumer Society," suggests that thanks to technology, the good life has given way to the "hurried life," and that time itself moves so fast as to be "pointillist" in nature—a series of fleeting but disconnected moments in time (42).

Why 21? In its publications, NEF points out that accounting for all persons of working age in Britain—the employed, unemployed, and those not looking for work—the average number of hours spent in paid work per week is 19.6 hours. In one sense, then, 21 hours approximates a present reality. It is not, however, the reality of particular persons, because most of us work much more or much less. The vision of 21 hours is thus less about work reduction than work restructuring.

There are, of course, arguments against shorter hours. Some of these arguments are economic, such as the "lump of labor fallacy." According to critics, those who advocate for shorter hours in order to reduce unemployment falsely assume that the amount of work available to laborers is fixed. Moreover, critics rightly add, new employees cost employers more money because of the fixed costs associated with recruitment, selection, training, insurance, and—in Europe—statutory paid vacation. Some arguments are legal, such as individuals' "liberty of contract," which libertarians argue is infringed upon by labor legislation. Additional resistance to shorter hours comes from cultural sources such as established ways of thinking about masculinity, parental leave, and the sharing of unpaid housework. If critics wish to take aim at NEF, however, they will have to do their homework. The authors of *Time on Our Side* anticipate these objections and more.

Surprisingly, the authors ignore what historically has been considered one of the greatest impediments to shorter hours at work: Protestantism. Fortunately, two other recent volumes take up the complex and fascinating relationship of religion to work and leisure in the North American context.

Free Time

Readers tempted to dismiss the notion of a 21-hour workweek will do well to recall that visions of shorter workweeks have a long history, even in America.

⁶"21 hours," 28.

Ben Franklin anticipated that a four-hour workday would be sufficient for “all the necessaries and comforts of life,” and Henry Thoreau mused upon reversing our rhythms altogether: “the seventh should be man’s day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and the other six his Sabbath of the affections and the soul.”⁷ When in 1948 B. F. Skinner’s utopian *Walden Two* imagined four-hour workdays, it was not mere idle talk. Back in 1910, when the economy was strong, increased productivity had led Republican President Taft to advocate for three months of vacation. Twenty years later, when the economy was weak, widespread unemployment had led the U. S. Senate to pass a bill limiting the workweek to 30 hours. Both good times and bad have provided independent rationales for shorter hours.

These reminders come to us by way of Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt’s *Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream* (2013). Briefly stated, Hunnicutt’s thesis is that prior to the 1930s, work was widely understood as an instrumental rather than an intrinsic good. He frames the book with reference to Aristotle’s notion that political and economic life are means to the greater end of *eudaimonia* (human flourishing), as well as John Adams’s famous restatement of that hierarchy:

I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, Natural History, Naval Architecture, Navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine. (4)

To Adams and Aristotle alike, work was good for something rather than an end in itself.

Even prior to the republican era, those in the Puritan tradition wrestled with what the coming kingdom meant for work and leisure. Jonathan Edwards, a postmillennialist, believed that

The world shall be more like heaven in the millennium. ... There will be so many contrivances and inventions to facilitate and expedite [the saint’s] necessary secular business that they will have more time for more noble exercise, and ... the whole earth may be as one community, one body in Christ. (15)

Samuel Hopkins likewise imagined that there will be “much less labor and toil. ... It will not be necessary for each one to labor more than two or three hours in a day” (17). In other words, the kingdom of God will entail liberation from work as much or more than liberation in work.

If the traditional work ethic was tempered by religion and republicanism, it was crushed by industrialism.⁸ Faith in work may have helped build factories,

⁷Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt, *Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 5, 1.

⁸Here Hunnicutt follows Daniel Rodgers’s seminal *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974).

but monotonous and mind-numbing factory toil raised questions about the intrinsic value of work. Although the Arts and Crafts movement sought to redeem the quality of modern work, laborers focused rather on reducing the quantity of work. Simply put, the work ethic was a victim of its own success.

Nothing animated antebellum America more than the language of liberty, and to laborers, the shorter hours movement was the new War for Independence. Merchant capitalists constituted an American aristocracy likened to King George, and shorter hours offered “a practical way to make real the freedoms promised by the Declaration of Independence” (35). The authors of one labor periodical, concerned that factory labor subverted republicanism by creating a dependent populace, resolved

That the fourth of July 1846, shall be the day fixed upon by the operatives of America to declare their INDEPENDENCE of the oppressive Manufacturing power, which has been imported from the Old monarchical England, and now being grafted upon the business institutions of our country. (36)

Whereas the Liberty Bell signified independence from political oppression, New York City shipyard workers rang a Mechanics’ Bell to proclaim the “liberty of leisure” from economic oppression.

This liberty of leisure is the forgotten American dream of Hunnicutt’s title. Laborers sought liberty from work precisely for leisure—to read, garden, play ball, and above all, to be with family and friends. In leisure lay the hope not only for self-development, but also for the rebuilding of communities and traditional institutions that industrialism had fractured and fragmented. Even some middle-class reformers turned toward leisure. Frederick Law Olmstead and Joseph Lee, for example, designed parks and playgrounds not merely for respite, but because they believed freedom and fulfillment are found in play, recreation, and leisure. Beginning with labor strikes for the 10-hour day circa 1835, those who sought to take back their time enjoyed a century of success—in the first few decades of the 20th century alone, working hours fell from about 60 to just under 35.⁹

Meanwhile, businessmen worried. They worried about what workers would do with their newfound leisure; but above all they worried about the “threat of leisure” (the title of a popular 1926 book) to industrial capitalism. Indeed, economic production and free time could not both grow indefinitely. According to Hunnicutt, “Middle-class moralists and businesspeople ... began trying to convince the nation of the glory of labor that was its own reward and that hard work, in and of itself, was the organizing principle of the individual’s life and the defining virtue of the nation” (74). This was not the old Protestant work ethic, but rather a new, *secular* work ethic “founded on the consumerist needs of the modern economy rather than on sixteenth-century Protestant theology” (74). As the middle class increasingly embraced a “new economic gospel of consumption,” in which luxu-

⁹Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt, *Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Hours for the Right to Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 1.

ries were preferred to leisure, middle-class and working-class views of progress and the good life diverged.

Ironically, the Great Depression complicated the trend toward shorter hours. At first, mass unemployment seemed to confirm the view that progressively shorter hours were essential for full employment. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) drafted legislation for a 30-hour week that mandated work sharing, and many businesses voluntarily adopted work sharing. It was also at this time that Keynes spoke of a 15-hour workweek. In Hunnicutt's words, "Few other historical trends were as clear in 1933" (118). Then came the narrative twist: the Great Depression marked not the beginning of the Age of Leisure, but more nearly its end.

On April 6, 1933, the Democratic Black-Connery bill, which legislated a six-hour, five-day week, passed the Senate. Initially, President Roosevelt supported the bill, and on April 13, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins expressed the administration's support to the House Labor Committee. Two days later, the cover of *Newsweek* announced what must have seemed to many inevitable: the arrival of the 30-hour week.

For reasons that are not altogether clear, Roosevelt changed course. Just as business leaders worried about revenue to sustain the private sector, it is likely that the administration worried about tax revenue to sustain the public sector. In any case, Roosevelt delayed Black-Connery and eventually articulated an alternative solution to unemployment: "perpetual economic growth and Full-Time, Full Employment" (119), or what critic Robert Maynard Hutchins called "Salvation by Work" (125). Hence Roosevelt turned down the path of stimulus spending, budget deficits, and liberal treasury policies, as well as public sector projects and employment. In other words, the very thing that Roosevelt is best known for almost never happened.

When it came to advocating for full-time, full employment, Roosevelt's rhetorical victory was remarkable. In the early years of his presidency, the 40-hour workweek was intensely unpopular with many of Roosevelt's fellow Democrats. "[D]angling employment before a man," wrote Frank Lloyd Wright, is "only the means of keeping him tied to a form of slavery—now [to] some money-getting or money-distributing [government] system that amounts to some form of conscription" (123). Indeed, from the perspective of the shorter hours movement, Roosevelt was arguably the bad guy—the one who, through the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, legislated longer rather than shorter hours. Over time, however, most liberals bought Roosevelt's vision. So complete was Roosevelt's reframing of government for economic growth that Democratic politicians not only have given up advocating for shorter hours, they often outdo Republicans in promising jobs, growth, and full employment. Hunnicutt persuasively suggests that the heart of the New Deal was nothing less than a New American Dream.

On the topic of strategic rhetoric, another recent volume focused explicitly on Protestantism and shorter hours is William Mirola's *Redeeming Time: Protestantism and Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement, 1866-1912* (2015). *Redeeming Time* is as focused as *Free Time* is sweeping. The strength of Mirola's text is captured by the title—one issue, one city, one half-century.

Like Hunnicutt, Mirola reminds us that industrial capitalism disrupted not only work life but also community life. In preindustrial society, "work was never reducible to the economics of production and making a living. ... Work was tied to the life of communities and always was regulated by community religious and moral beliefs and codes of conduct" (44). For all its alleged radicalism, the shorter hours movement was in part an effort to preserve the norms, traditions, and rhythms of community life enjoyed in preindustrial society, a world that was rapidly passing away. Not surprisingly, then, the movement sought resonance with the interests of religion.

Briefly, the narrative goes as follows: When, in 1867, Chicago's newly passed eight-hour legislation went unenforced, workers appealed to clergy for support. At least initially, Protestant clergy were unsympathetic and unhelpful. Although over time they became more sympathetic in speech, they remained relatively unhelpful in practice. Workers became so frustrated with clergy inaction that they eventually gave up on such appeals and advanced their cause by other means—direct action and more secular, economic arguments. Having failed to form an effective alliance over the issue, Mirola concludes, "Protestantism and eight-hour reform in Chicago were fated to be like two ships passing in the night."

The narrative is fascinating, but, being a sociologist and not a historian, Mirola's emphasis is more on rhetoric than narrative. When workers appealed to clergy for support, they did so in explicitly religious language. In 1866, for example, the *Workingman's Advocate* suggested that the pattern of eight hours for labor, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours for rest and recreation was a tradition established by Solomon upon building the temple and "sustained by the Gospel of Christ" (48). Such religious framing was strategic; it likened their cause to other nineteenth-century moral reform movements such as abolition, temperance, and especially sabbatarianism. Clergy had already supported restrictions on Sunday labor, and so the campaign for a shorter workday seemed to follow logically from the campaign for a shorter workweek. After all, though Sunday laws were not merely labor laws, infused as they were with symbolic efforts to establish Christianity as the law of the land, they were not less than labor laws. But workers' employment of religious language was not merely strategic. Mirola argues that many workers really believed eight-hour reform was a religious cause and that Protestantism had economic and political implications (62).

Protestant clergy, however, were not persuaded. Although they conceded that workers deserved justice and even refreshment from toil, and that Jesus was

an advocate of the common man, they could not bring themselves to support eight-hour legislation. Part of this hesitation almost certainly had to do with the political and economic threat Protestants perceived in the face of Catholic immigration, but the stated concern was cultural. Simply put, they associated leisure with immorality. As the Congregationalist *Advance* put it, Sodom's iniquity was a function of idleness, the lesson of which was sternly portrayed:

We might select out of the community today thousands who could not safely be trusted with an hour's leisure beyond what they now enjoy. If it were secured for them, it would only be abused and perverted into a curse. ... [T]he indiscriminate bestowal of [leisure], as society is now constituted, would prove a great and deplorable evil. ... But to this end it is essential that Christianity should pervade the masses. They must be taught that dissipation is the reverse of recreation. (65)

The press, dominated as it was by the Protestant establishment, echoed these concerns. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, "workers found what the demagogues had told them about the value of two hours for 'improving their minds' was moonshine" (61), "two hours gained for recreation were not worth the cost" (64), and "many are led to the belief that the less leisure the working people ... have the better" (56).

In the early years of the eight-hour campaign, then, workers' appeals for clergy support were unsuccessful, largely because clergy processed such appeals through the lens of the work ethic. Not only did association of worker leisure with drinking and gambling suggest that long hours at work actually placed a constraint on vice, but industrialists' success in business seemingly evidenced faithfulness and morality. And it did not help workers that saloon keepers were in favor of eight-hour legislation. In contrast to workers, there is little evidence that clergy regarded the labor question as a serious religious question.

Following the financial collapse of 1873, the divide among workers and reformers into conservative and radical camps became more established. Anglo-American trade unionists retained faith in the democratic process, whereas German, Irish, and Eastern European workers were far more critical of the system and pursued a more militant course of action. Some groups formed militias, and the railroad strike of 1877 became bloody. Meanwhile, employers continued to defend long hours in the name of the free market, and the *Chicago Tribune* largely followed suit.

At first glance, the escalating conflict appears to have reinforced and even intensified clergy attitudes. According to a Methodist pastor writing in the *North-west Christian Advocate*, "at least eighty-five percent of the active sinning is done in human society, not when men are employed, but when they are at leisure." Similar views are found in the Episcopalian *Living Church*; and the Presbyterian *Interior* went so far in its condemnation of the eight-hour movement as to print, "Strikers must be put down with musketry, not fired to frighten but to kill" (85). As in the 1860s, workers were up against a deeply entrenched worldview. To many Protestants, long hours were divinely ordered. Mirola summarizes this

view, "That thousands of the city's working classes were unemployed resulted from their own low moral standing rather than the activity of employers. More leisure would only make this condition worse" (87).

At the same time, and perhaps in part because clergy were concerned about the absence of workers at Sunday services, aspects of worker rhetoric began finding more resonance with the Protestant establishment. The Christian Labor Union, in its periodical *Equity*, began making an altogether new kind of argument. What is needed, the editors argued in language that foreshadowed the Social Gospel movement, is not only the transformation of individuals but also the transformation of society. "The full cure is two-fold—change in persons, and a change in the relations. The persons must be changed. . . . But society must also be changed. It must be so reformed in structure that the antagonism of positions shall be abolished" (81-82). The answer to social ills, they argued, is Jesus Christ, and if they could only help people see Jesus, then they would see Labor Reform as part of his work. It was thus in 1874, Mirola writes, that "For the first time, a Protestant minister emphatically argued that the eight-hour movement was the practical application of evangelical Protestantism" (82).

Such rhetoric, combined with increased social concerns, led to a gradual shift in sympathies among many Protestants. While still skeptical of leisure, they were willing to think more critically about the role of employers in general and about the problem of overwork in particular. Crucially, though largely out of necessity, they warmed to the idea that the labor question was worthy of serious, religious reflection. In this account, Protestantism was not merely an agent of transformation, but also an object of transformation.

Secular Time and Sacramental Time

Free Time and Redeeming the Time raise both critical and contemporary questions. "In many ways," Mirola writes, "the end of the twentieth century and the opening decades of the twenty-first are not dissimilar to the 1890s and 1900s" (206). Some workers still face mandatory overtime, and even amidst the recent recession, there has been little public discussion of increasing leisure. Hunnicutt, citing Juliet Schor, similarly notes that for two decades now, we have had ample evidence of "overworked individuals, stressed families, and anemic communities languishing for want of time" (183). Indeed, we witness a growing literature not only on time poverty but also on time stress. Brigid Schulte, for example, painting a word picture of the way always-on technology always interrupts, develops the notion of "confetti time"—like pointillist time, confetti time is "one big chaotic burst of exploding slivers, bits, and scraps."¹⁰ We also witness a small but growing

¹⁰Brigid Schulte, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2014). On family vacations, see "Who Killed Summer Vacation?" *Time Magazine* 185.20 (June 1, 2015).

movement to guarantee American workers paid time off.¹¹

To be sure, busyness is not a new phenomenon. Still, the frenetic pace of life at the turn of the 21st century is arguably an instance of hypermodernity—that is, an intensification of the processes of modernity that have been unfolding for half a millennium. This hypermodernity includes the discontinuity of past and present that results in the experience of ephemerality. In any case, given the Protestant roots of modernity in general, and Protestantism's disruption of time, work, and leisure in particular, there seems no avoiding the matter of religion, which brings us back to *Time on Our Side*.

Time on Our Side articulates arguments to which more and more people seem sympathetic. Perhaps most notable, in terms of a shift in consciousness, is the view that idolatry of work and purchasing power is a plague on modern life individually, relationally, and environmentally. That the recovery of free time almost certainly entails public policy as well as personal discipline seems incontrovertible. Moreover, the volume helpfully addresses complex aspects of leisure such as spousal division of labor and life-cycle issues such as retirement.

Still, one wonders to what extent the authors are getting to the root of the matter. Barbara Adam, in "Clock Time: Tyrannies and Alternatives," may come the closest. According to Adam, environmental, economic, and social implications of work time are just a starting point for contemplating our temporal needs. The very language of free time, she suggests, by describing discretionary time quantitatively as non-work time, fails to capture the complex and potentially rich reality of time that stands altogether outside of economic time, such as childhood, education, unemployment, and retirement. À la Adam, modern time management will never completely solve our problems, for time has a qualitative as well as a quantitative dimension.

But how do we get beyond clock time? How can we reweave past, present, and future into a more holistic tapestry? Religion is almost certainly part of the solution, even if only because it is part of the problem. Arguably, NEF's motto bears a subtle and perhaps unknowing testimony to this fact. "Economics as if people and the planet mattered" is an environmental riff on E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*.¹² Schumacher, who published *Small is Beautiful* two years after his conversion to Catholicism in 1971, was in turn influenced by Chesterton. And Chesterton, who was writing in the years following Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, regarded time as "sacramental."¹³

Sacramental time, according to thinkers from Augustine to Charles Taylor,

¹¹"Bernie Sanders Suggests More Time Off for Workers," *New York Times* (May 27, 2015). See also the work of John de Graaf's non-profit organization Take Back Your Time.

¹²E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973). See also Joseph Pearce, *Small is Still Beautiful: Economics as if Families Mattered* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2006).

¹³"[T]he things of earth cannot be valued aright without taking into account the life to come." Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), par. 21.

intersects and transforms secular time.¹⁴ “‘Secular’ time is what to *us* is ordinary time, indeed, to us it’s just time, period. One thing happens after another, and when something is past, it’s past.”¹⁵ (The root of *secular* is *saeculum*, a long period of time roughly equivalent to a person’s age span; hence economists sometimes speak of secular stagnation.) But religious traditions often conceive of time as having a vertical as well as a horizontal dimension—*kairos* as well as *chronos*. In the Christian tradition, for example, the Incarnation of Christ constitutes a temporalization of the eternal, and thus “time *participates* in the eternity of God’s life, and it is this participation that is able to gather past, present, and future together into one.”¹⁶ Liturgy in general and the Eucharist in particular tell the story of the world from creation to consummation and situate worshippers as actors within that story.

The economic vision of *Time on Our Side* sounds at times like Chesterton and Schumacher without the sacramentalism—a Catholic vision without the Catholicism. Like the authors of *Time on Our Side*, Chesterton was a critic of capitalism. But he took religion seriously enough to criticize the Protestant ethic as well. He was troubled not only by modernity’s disruption of clock time but also by an *ethos* that effectively reduced time to a resource to be measured and managed. In a word, Chesterton’s quarrel with both the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism was *wages*. In contrast to capitalism’s tendency toward wage slavery, he advocated widespread ownership of capital in the form of small farms and shops, in part for the freedom that comes with free time. In contrast to Protestantism’s association of morality with work, he held that the meaning of life is more likely found in play and leisure. His affirmation of leisure, however, was grounded in liturgy—specifically, the liturgical calendar and many festivals of “Merry England”—an admittedly nostalgic vision of a bygone society characterized by conviviality, sociability, and rural games and pastimes. In contrast to *Time on Our Side*, then, his was a pre-Protestant rather than post-Protestant vision of the good life.

One virtue of this Chestertonian or pre-Protestant view of work and leisure is that it gives the devil his due. Instead of celebrating hard work as almost always meritorious, it acknowledges that labor is cursed. It is characterized by duty and obligation and merit, and as such bears no analogy to grace or unmerited favor. In contrast to wages, it is only the deliverances of leisure that provide an analogy of grace. Hence Chesterton and Lewis’s association of play and leisure is not only with liberty but also with heaven.

As Benjamin Hunnicutt has shown, this older vision of the good life, which tempers its affirmation of work with an affirmation of leisure, is not altogether un-American, glimpsed as it was by Jonathan Edwards among others. As William Mirola has shown, however, Protestants have often been more comfortable with

¹⁴It is “inexact language to speak of three times—past, present, and future.” Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 235 (XI.20).

¹⁵Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 55.

¹⁶Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 126.

the merit-based world of work than with the more unpredictable and at times unruly sphere of leisure. These concrete, historical narratives provide a helpful complement to the burgeoning literature on vocation and calling. If we can finally agree, as many of the actors in these narratives claim, and as even the authors of *Time on Our Side* seem to suggest, that time is a religious issue, then perhaps we can get beyond modernity's tendency to render time two-dimensional and begin imagining an economics as if people and the planet *and God* mattered.