Introduction to the Second Edition

Reviewers of the first edition of *The Seventh-day Men* (1994) were generally very kind. One thought that the book was "tedious", but he may be assured that the reading of it was not nearly as tedious as the making of it, with the years of research, writing and re-writing that preceded publication, to say nothing of further years of enquiry, revising and checking that have made this revised edition possible. That aside, the general consensus seems to have been that the book was adequately researched, objective and "definitive", and that it would be "the standard reference book" on the English Sabbatarian movement "for many years to come".[1] So it is something of a surprise to the author, as well, perhaps, as to some readers, to find that this new edition is now available within the relatively short time that has elapsed since the publication of the original. There seem to be at least two good reasons for a second, revised edition at this time.

There is firstly the matter of supply. The first edition sold out within eighteen months of publication, before some reviews even appeared, but the original publishers felt disinclined to print further copies. Thereafter for some years I continued to receive enquiries from various parts of the world regarding availability. The potential interest at the time did not seem to have been exhausted. There are enough historians of Nonconformity and socio-religious thought in the academic world and in the various churches with a Protestant, biblical heritage, it might be thought, as well as several million adherents in the Christian denominations which continue to observe the seventh day and who might be interested in their historical and theological roots, to encourage even the most cautious publisher. Hopefully many who were unable to obtain a copy of the first edition will now be able to do so, with the additional information and clarifications which this edition provides.

[1] *The Journal of Theological Studies,* 46(1995), 778-782*; Church History,* 64 (1995), 496-7; *BQ* 36(1995): 153-4.

More important is the fact that substantially more information has come to light regarding the Sabbatarian movement in various parts of the country since the original research was concluded c.1990. In that regard I am most grateful for a research grant from Avondale College, which made further investigation possible. Most of the additional information contained in this second edition relates to congregations, localities and individuals which were included in the first edition. Much of this new information is presented in mainly short notes in Appendix VI, 'Additional Notes', and follows the pagination of the first edition. A few matters of significance or special interest in the history of English Sabbatarianism and which require more extended comment are dealt with in this introduction.

Continuing neglect or misunderstanding of the English Sabbatarian movement by recent historians and perpetuation of the mistaken notions of its alleged Fifth Monarchist origins may be cited as further reasons for this revised edition. Both these trends appear, for example, in R.G. Torbet's *A History of the Baptists* in which Seventh Day Baptists merit one paragraph in a work of over five hundred pages, and in M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters,* in which there are four casual references to Seventh Day Baptists in vol. I, another substantial and lengthy work.[2] H.L. McBeth's *The Baptist Heritage* (Broadman Press, TN, 1987) is only marginally better, with two paragraphs on seventeenth-century English Sabbatarian beginnings in a book of over eight hundred and fifty pages. Of greater concern is Bill Leonard's *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), in which the still meagre treatment of the early English Seventh-day movement is marked by several errors, the most unfortunate of which is that Nicholas Bound's now well-known book concerning the Sabbath, published in 1595, is in favour of the seventh day. The title which Leonard attributes to this work is inaccurate and, as has long been recognised, it is manifestly not pro-seventh-day, but an apology for the Puritan Sunday Sabbath, the first and seminal work of the genre.[3]

We can be sure that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Sab-

[2] R.G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (1966), 54, 264; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. I, (Oxford, 1978), vol. II(1995).

[3] Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways : A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), 34. Nicholas Bound (or Bownd), *Sabbatum Veteris et Novi Testamenti: or, The True Doctrine of the Sabbath* (1595, 2nd edn. 1606), according to Cox, *Literature of the Sabbath Question*, i, 146, asserted "for the first time broadly and prominently" the Puritan doctrine of Sunday as the Sabbath and the obligation of all Christians to keep it holy.

batarians themselves would have protested vigorously at such neglect or casual treatment of their history, as indeed would many of their First-day brethren of the time with whom there were for the most part mutually cordial relations.[4] It should not be forgotten that for many years a Seventh Day Baptist, Joseph Stennett, represented the entire Baptist community at court and spoke for that community on matters of national concern when occasion demanded,[5] or that his son, Joseph II, was a friend of the scholarly Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London and was known to the King.[6] In their day both the General Baptist Seventh-day congregation at Mill Yard and the Particular Baptist Sabbatarian Church at Pinners' Hall attracted worshippers from the upper levels of London society. Seventh Day Baptists featured more prominently in the story of early English Dissent than many historians of either secular or religious English history have allowed.

There is also new information relating to previously undiscovered localities and individuals with Sabbatarian connections. Two further possible Seventh-day congregations, or mixed-communion congregations which may have included Sabbatarians, have come to light, at Edlesborough in Buckinghamshire and Tisbury in Wiltshire.[7] Sabbatarian groups are already known in both counties at relatively short distances from both these locations. There may also have been a Sabbatarian interest at other places not previously mentioned, including Cranbrook in Kent, Trowbridge in Wiltshire and Morcott in Rutland. Of particular interest is Walsham, probably Walsham-le-

[4] That animosity did raise its head from time to time is perhaps not surprising in the intense atmosphere of the day. In 1658 Edward Stennett referred to feelings he had encountered in the early years, "I have seen more gall and wormwood at the bottom of those objections that have been made against the Sabbath", he wrote, "than ever I saw in any objections against any other command", Edward Stennett, *The Royal Law Contended for* (1658), Ep. Ded., sig. A3*v.* It is worth noting that complaints of this nature were relatively rare, even though the late 1650s through to the 1670s appears to have been a period of forceful debate. Joseph Davis noted that "of late [c.1670], eminent leaders of Baptist and Congregational churches have taken upon them to preach down and write against God's holy Seventh-Day Sabbath".

[5] On Stennett's standing in the wider Baptist community, see p. 112.

[6] A. Gabb, *A History of Baptist Beginnings, with an Account of the Rise of the Baptist Witness in Exeter and the Founding of the South Street Church* (1954), 37. On Joseph Stennett II see also L.G. Champion, 'The Social Status of some Eighteenth Century Baptist Ministers', *BQ* 25: 11-13.

[7] See additional notes for p. 186 and p. 139 for Edlesborough and Tisbury respectively.

Willows,[8] in Suffolk, mentioned in the John Evans list of Dissenting congregations existing c.1715-1729.

The entry in the Evans list refers to 400 "hearers" at Walsham c.1715 under Daniel Wright, with the note that Wright himself was dead by 1729.[9] Walsham, although not known from any other source relating to Sabbatarian or mixed-communion congregations, is near enough to the Braintree-Colchester-Woodbridge axis of strong Seventh-day churches in Essex and also to Pulham Margaret (Market) in Norfolk where the Sabbatarian John Rutland from Woodbridge often preached c.1718,[10] to merit attention. Moreover, Daniel Wright of Braintree and Colchester was a prominent leader among the Essex Sabbatarians at the time, his reputation and influence extending even into London.[11] While too much cannot be claimed from one, isolated reference, neither can it be ignored. Even allowing for the fact that John Evans' figures and dates are not always reliable, this reference to a large congregation, presumably Baptist, but not necessarily entirely of that mind, under the leadership of one of the more widely-known Sabbatarians of the day, cannot simply be overlooked. Perhaps the least that can justifiably be extrapolated from the Evans reference and the contingent facts is that some sympathy for Sabbatarian views prevailed among some believers at Walsham in the early decades of the eighteenth century.

Several new names also appear in this revision, including George Tempest of Kent and Mill Yard, Martha Squibb of Chertsey and Pinners' Hall, Thomas Lucas of Trowbridge, Francis Macey and John Labory of Bell Lane, John Brayne, Hannah Waterell, Henry Holly, Christopher North, Joseph Stennett IV and Joseph Stennett V, Nicholas Wincop, Henry Shymonds of Mersea and Colchester, and last but by no means least, Robert Boyle and William Whiston, all of whom were Sabbatarian by conviction and practise or who endorsed basic Sabbatarian theology for one reason or another. Boyle and Whiston are well known for other reasons and both are individuals whose opinions would in general have been treated with respect in their day.

[8] Often referred to simply as Walsham by Whitley and others, *BB* ii, 78, 256. Walsham is not noted again by Whitley until nearly a century later, *BB* ii, 106.

[9] John Evans, 'Dissenting Congregations and Ministers in England and Wales, 1715-1729', DWL, MS 38.4, 109.

[10] See pp. 253, 278.

[11] See pp. 267-8, 275-6.

Another significant new name is Alexander Gretorix, or Gretricks, from Great Witcombe in Gloucestershire. He is one of those who requires more detailed scrutiny and whose significance can best be seen in geographical context and in the particular context of his time.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

In the first edition of this study it was demonstrated that Saturday Sabbatarianism existed at several places in south Gloucestershire in the mid-eighteenth century. As noted earlier, it possibly derived from the early Seventh Day Baptist Church at Kings Stanley in the 1640s, and while it may have persisted in the area, seems to have had little substance of its own before 1735 when it was reported in the diocesan returns.[12]

The area in question lies south of Cheltenham and Gloucester, extending further south to Kings Stanley near Stroud and eventually reached as far as Hillesley, which then as now, was nearer to Bristol than it was either to Gloucester or Cheltenham. It includes the villages of Badgeworth, Haresfield and Whitminster, besides Cheltenham itself, in all of which Sabbatarians were reported in Bishop Benson's diocesan surveys in 1735, 1743 and/or 1750.[13] In 1764 the Sabbatarian William Hitchman was called to the pastorate of the Baptist Church in Hillesley, an office he held until 1802.[14] It is beyond question that south Gloucestershire was tinged with Seventh-day views throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century.

It is now also clear that Sabbatarian views were present in the area nearly a hundred years earlier with Alexander Gretorix of Great Witcombe, who was known locally as a "Jew" on account of his observance of Saturday as the Sabbath.[15] The same demeaning designation appeared again in 1743 with reference to a Sabbatarian at Whitminster, a village situated south of Gloucester and north-east of Kings Stanley.[16] The terminology itself may represent a continuity in the Sabbatarian tradition in the area as well as some misgivings in the minds of local people in Great Witcombe and Whitminster about Sabbatarian belief. Gretorix is said to have "lived long" in Great Wit-

[12] See pp. 217-8.
[13] Ibid.
[14] See pp. 219-221.
[15] *CR* 235.
[16] See p. 218. Whitminster was also known as Wheatenhurst in the eighteenth century.

combe and was also known for his Sabbatarian convictions further afield. In 1677 John Cowell of Tewkesbury, who had himself recently turned away from the seventh day and published the reasons for his change of mind in *The Snare Broken* (1677), referred to "Mr. Gretrix, a Sabbath-keeper" who lived "not far" from Tewkesbury.[17] The actual distance was twelve miles or seventeen kilometres as the crow flew, but somewhat further than that by the roads of the day and is another indicator that knowledge of the Sabbatarians in south Gloucestershire villages had spread beyond their own immediate localities.

Great Witcombe lies between Badgeworth and Haresfield and is an important addition to the long list of Gloucestershire villages which harboured Seventh-day views for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whether or not Gretorix was the only Sabbatarian "Jew" in this area between the early beginnings at Kings Stanley and the mid-eighteenth century is unknown. His appearance on the Sabbatarian scene, however, is sufficient to affirm the existence of Seventh-day belief and practise in south Gloucestershire a century earlier than previously documented. One source states that Gretorix had been a preacher in the area since Cromwell's time and that he observed Saturday "with Mosaical strictness".[18] It is now also much more likely that Saturday Sabbatarianism persisted in this area from some point in the first half of the seventeenth century at Kings Stanley to the late eighteenth century and perhaps even into the early years of the nineteenth century at Hillesley under William Hitchman.

Of greater import, however, is the fact that Gretorix was not a Baptist as were all the other known south Gloucestershire Sabbatarians, but an Anglican. He was, in fact, Rector of Great Witcombe, ejected in 1660 and who, according to Calamy, is the Gretricks who was reported as curate at nearby Cowley a year or so later and who was perhaps also ejected there in 1662.[19] Whatever the precise details of his last years as an Anglican priest, Alexander Gretorix now comes forward as the only Sabbatarian known by name in the mid to late seventeenth century in south Gloucestershire and as the only known evidence anywhere in the country to give substance to the remarkable assertion made by Theophilus Brabourne in the year of Gretorix's

[17] John Cowell, *The Snare Broken* (1677), 9.
[18] Bodl. MS Walker C 8, fol. 165.
[19] *CR* 235.

ejection from Great Witcombe, 1660, that the Saturday-Sunday issue was then "the highest controversy in the Church of England".[20] And he seems to have stood his ground. After the tumultuous events of 1660 and 1662 he remained in Great Witcombe as teacher in the local school, where he lived for many years "undisturbed", not attending the parish church or "religious assemblies", and "accounted a Jew for observing Saturday".[21] Whether or not he ever worshipped with a Seventh-day congregation is unknown.

FURTHER NAMES OF NOTE

Four other persons with interests in the seventh day warrant comment, or further comment, depending on whether or not they appeared in the first edition of this study. Returne Hebdon, originally from Sussex but better known from his London days is among the latter.

Returne Hebdon

Hebdon first came to our attention as a disciple of John Traske, c.1617.[22] While the reliability of some of the information concerning both Traske and Hebdon is questionable, since much of it came from openly hostile sources, Hebdon's association with Traske is beyond doubt. Whether as a result of Traske's influence or for other reasons, Hebdon had begun to observe the seventh day well before 1620, had come to the attention of the authorities, like Traske, and had spent the rest of his life in gaol. While there he had written a little book, *A Guide to the Godly*, which was eventually published in 1646, twenty-three years after his death in prison. It had remained in manuscript until then, probably in the care of Dorothy Traske,[23] when an anonymous friend added a brief introduction and sent it to the printer. *A Guide to the Godly* is not well written and its theology is confused, but neither is it subversive, extreme or sectarian. It dwells much on mortality and immortality and the life of faith and obedience in the

[20] Theophilus Brabourne, *Of the Sabbath Day* (1660), title-page. In 1704 Joseph Stennett claimed that there were observers of the seventh day in the Anglican church, Joseph Stennett, *An Answer to Mr. David Russen's Book Entituled, Fundamentals Without a Foundation, or a True Picture of the Anabaptists* (1704), 228.

[21] *CR* 235; Bodl. MS Walker C 8, fol. 165.

[22] See pp. 49, 52.

[23] Returne Hebdon, *A Guide to the Godly* (1646), title-page.

face of adversity, but does not once advocate the seventh day. It belies the traditional characterisation of Hebdon as a fanatical extremist and might even have modified the opinion of contemporaries had it been known in their day.[24]

The book, or more specifically its anonymous introduction, is notable on two counts. It contains one of the earliest published references to observance of the Saturday Sabbath in England and thereby helps to confirm a date for the origins of an early Seventh-day congregation in London. The author states that he, Hebdon, had been imprisoned for "desiring to rest on the seventh day, according to the commandment (which the world calleth Saturday)".[25] If, as the author also states, Hebdon had been in prison for eight years, this would put the commencement of his observance of the Sabbath c.1615, a date earlier than previously thought likely, but a date that is still compatible with Traske's first appearance in London. According to records among the State Papers referred to previously, there were "many" other "foolish followers" of Traske in London at the time,[26] and all this, together with John Sprint's denunciation, in 1607, of "Sabbatary Christians" who also observed the seventh day,[27] substantiates the conclusion that a Sabbatarian congregation worshipped in the capital well before 1620 and perhaps even before 1610. Hebdon had in all likelihood belonged to it before his imprisonment.

The other important fact arising from Hebdon's book is that its author, like Traske, was not a Baptist. It is highly improbable that Hebdon had any connection whatsoever with the nascent Baptist church in London at the time, a General Baptist congregation which had recently returned to England from Amsterdam and which met at Spitalfields. No hint of any such connection exists and Whitley does not claim Hebdon as a Baptist author.[28] We recall that in 1628 another pedobaptist, Theophilus Brabourne of Norwich, published *A Discourse on the Sabbath Day,* the first apology for the Seventh-day Sabbath in the English language. It seems clear enough that although the seventh day was captured and in the main held by Baptists for most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its origins lay with

[24] Observance of the seventh day in 1617 was, of course, radical in itself.

[25] Hebdon, *Guide to the Godly,* Ep. Ded., sig. A2*r*.

[26] See p. 54.

[27] John Sprint, *Propositions Tending to Prove the Necessary Use of the Christian Sabbath, or Lord's Day* (1607), 2.

[28] *BB* i. 33, 20-648. Whitley was unaware of the 1646 edition.

pedobaptists and Anglicans. Whether there were other Sabbath-keepers besides Hebdon in Sussex, or where he himself obtained the doctrine remain unanswered questions.

John Brayne

John Brayne, (?- d. 1654), invites attention for an altogether different reason. He was no Sabbatarian, but as an Anglican, or perhaps Independent, cleric may be assumed to have worshipped with his people on the first day of the week in a succession of localities.[29] Brayne has escaped notice until relatively recently, but it now seems that he was well-known in the 1640s and 1650s for his radical religious and political views and that as a convinced millenarian, and perhaps as a Seeker, he exerted "considerable influence on other millenarian and spiritual writers" of the time, including the prominent London Sabbatarian elder, Peter Chamberlen.[30]

Brayne's unique views of the Sabbath set him apart from all other writers on the subject and deserve mention because they illustrate yet another dimension of the Sabbatarian debate which was already well under way by the late 1640s and 1650s. Brayne's own distinctive version of Sabbatarian thought can only be seen adequately in the context of his underlying and primary interest, the nature of the church, particularly as it would prevail in the coming millennial age. The church in the age to come was the central theme of several pamphlets which Brayne produced in the final years of his life, including *The Gospel-Pattern for the Government of Gospel Churches, Babel's Fall* and *The Churches Going In, and Coming Out of the Wilderness* which followed each other in quick succession in 1649, all setting the scene for the presentation of his views on the Seventh-day Sabbath, which were published in 1653.

In Brayne's millennial scheme of things a new age was about to dawn when the true church, which had been changed and greatly corrupted through the preceding centuries by the Roman Antichrist, would re-emerge in the form of a modified Congregationalism.[31] This restored and renovated church would appear very shortly, at the end of the 1260-year prophetic period in the "wilderness", which

[29] See *BDBR*, I, 21. There is some ambiguity concerning Brayne's church affiliations in his later years; cf. Ball, *The Soul Sleepers*, 76-7, where Brayne's distinctive views on another controverted doctrine are also discussed.

[30] Ibid; *DNB Missing Persons* (1993), 86; *ODNB.*

[31] *ODNB*, after *DNB Missing Persons,* 86.

Brayne calculated would terminate in 1666. "The church now hid shall then come forth", he declared, but explaining that since God would shorten the time of Antichrist's reign, the true church would appear before 1660.[32] Since all this had been written in 1649, time was clearly fast running out.

Brayne's peculiar and sometimes contradictory views of the Sabbath became known when he set out his perceptions of the coming world order in another publication in 1653 with the ponderous title, *The New Earth, or, The True Magna Charta of the Past Ages, and of the Ages, or World to Come, called The Jews Commonweal.* Here Brayne explained that in the "new earth", i.e., the restored church in the soon-to-come millennial age, there would be two states or conditions of men. The true followers of Christ, those under the new covenant, would observe the first day of the week. All others, and it appears that Brayne thought that they would be in the majority, would continue to live under the old covenant and would observe the Seventh-day Sabbath.[33] This was certainly a new twist to the millennial expectations which were then running high, but which generally had no room for the unconverted in the coming kingdom.

In a detailed exposition of the Ten Commandments, which Brayne believed would be the basis of the coming new society, he explained the fourth commandment in terms which any Saturday Sabbatarian would readily have endorsed. The seventh day is always called Sabbath in Scripture. On it the apostles had met with Jews after the Resurrection and had instructed them in the Christian faith. The seventh day was grounded in Creation, and thus differed from the "ceremonies". Moreover, there was no support in Scripture for the idea that the seventh day had been abolished. "Not an iota or tittle of the law perisheth: the morality of the seventh-day Sabbath is continued, and yet no Judaizing in the thing",[34] he stated. It is all fairly familiar Seventh-day theology.

Why Brayne himself did not observe the seventh day while sharing such convictions, remains something of a mystery, as does his failure to explain adequately why there would be many in the new millennial kingdom who were not Christ's true followers. What can-

[32] John Brayne, *The Churches Going In, and Coming Out of the Wilderness* (1649), 2-4.

[33] John Brayne, *The New Earth, or, The True Magna Charta of The Past Ages, and of the Ages, or World to Come, called The Jews Commonweal* (1653), 32-4.

[34] Ibid. 28.

not be gainsaid is that he agreed with many of the arguments used by Anglican and Baptist Sabbatarians of the period in defending the perpetuity of the moral law and its binding claims on true believers, including observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath. Whether or not any of them would have been comfortable with his company is entirely another matter. Perhaps his own peculiar brand of millenarianism had distanced him from other millenarians and moderate Fifth Monarchists, to say nothing of Sabbatarians, most of whom had reached their own conclusions without the impetus of millenarian fervour at all. Cox's epitaph is reasonable enough, "It does not seem that Brayne had followers enough to bring his views into general notice".[35]

Robert Boyle

Robert Boyle, the seventeenth-century philosopher and chemist, also held convictons about the Seventh-day Sabbath. Arising as they did from philosophical rather than millenarian considerations, they reflected concerns markedly different from those of John Brayne, combining theological reflection, a knowledge of history and an understanding of Greek and Hebrew that are not at all surprising in a founding member of the Royal Society and an accomplished student of oriental languages.

As a believing scientist of his time Boyle was constrained at one point in his career to defend Christianity, in particular the Christian God, against the charge that scrutiny of the natural world tended inevitably to disbelief. In his essay on 'The Usefulness of Natural Philosophy' Boyle argues that the Creator, "the omniscient Author of nature", would not have given men so many opportunities ("invitations") to contemplate the created world if he had known beforehand that such contemplation would lead to unbelief. Boyle turns finally to "the ancient institution of the Sabbath" which, having been ordained specifically "to commemorate the creation", continues to give men the opportunity "every seventh-day to contemplate God" through his works. Indeed, the Creator himself had initiated the contemplative process by resting himself "on the first seventh day", reflecting on

[35] Cox, *Literature of The Sabbath Question*, i. 246. While including Brayne's *New Earth* in his catalogue of Sabbatarian literature, Cox comments, "This book deserves notice only as an odd attempt to reconcile the supposed abiding obligation of the Mosaic law with the admitted Christian duty to follow the Gospel", 245.

the work he had accomplished in the previous six days.[36]

It would be easy enough to conclude that if this was the sum of Boyle's argument it could as well refer to Sunday as to Saturday, particularly if the principle of "every seventh day" in the weekly cycle was applied as the advocates of Sunday applied it in Boyle's day. But this was not at all what Boyle had in mind. His concern is that the original seventh day, now known as Saturday, was the only day set aside by the Creator for the consideration of creation and the Creator himself, and he proceeds to establish the point with some care, since it is crucial to his argument.

Boyle is, to begin with, uneasy about the fact that the church in the west (for reasons which he proposed not to examine) had discarded the observance of Saturday in favour of Sunday - "long since disused the solemnising of the Saturday, and appointed the Sunday"- as the weekly day of rest and reflection. Boyle then recalls that in an earlier age of Christian history most believers had observed Saturday as well as Sunday and that Christians in Abyssinia, and also Maronite believers, "to this day keep Saturday in commemoration of God's having created the world", as well as the Lord's Day "to commemorate the resurrection of Christ".[37] It is quite clear that Boyle believed that the original seventh day was Saturday, that it had been instituted as the Sabbath in order that man could contemplate the Creator and his works, and that the Sabbath institution could not be transferred to another day without the sanction of the Creator.

In the context of Boyle's reasoning that the Creator had provided many opportunities for men to consider the natural world, the Sabbath being the most intentional and enduring, there is in his argument an implicit disappointment that the original Sabbath had been lost, particularly in the western churches. The very existence of the Sabbath and its continuity from the beginning of human history is, in Boyle's mind, an argument against the view that the study of the natural world mitigates against Christian faith. Boyle was not, as far as is known, a Sabbatarian of any shade or colour. That he understood and endorsed some of the basic principles of the Seventh-day Men of his age seems inescapable.

[36] Robert Boyle, *The Works of Robert Boyle* (ed. T. Birch, 1744), ii, 34.

[37] Ibid., citing Alexander Ross, *Παυσεβεια : or, A View of all Religions in the World* (1st edn. 1653) and "the Authors by him cited". In the first edition of this work it was pointed out that Peter Heylyn, in his *Cosmography,* had claimed that the Syrian Melchites also observed the seventh day, see p. 38.

William Whiston

It has been held for some time that William Whiston, Newton's successor as Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge, observed the Saturday Sabbath. More than a century ago Seventh Day Baptists in North America claimed him as one of their English antecedents, although without any documentation. Prior to that the usually reliable W.H. Black had made a similar claim, again without adequate references.[38] It cannot be doubted, however, that at some point in mid-life, perhaps even before that, Whiston did in fact become a Sabbatarian, observing the seventh day in a manner reminiscent of Henry Jessey nearly a century earlier, quietly in his home and without publicising the fact.[39]

Whiston's allegiance to the seventh day developed in the process of a long and sometimes painful transition from his early Anglicanism to fellowship with General Baptists, which finally occurred in 1747.[40] Although mainly remembered for a distinguished academic career in which he brought his considerable intellectual abilities to bear on early Christian history, biblical languages and biblical interpretation as well as science and mathematics, he remained throughout his life a clergyman, mostly within the Church of England. Ordained to Anglican orders in 1693 at the age of twenty-six, he became chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich and vicar of Lowestoft-with-Kissingland in Suffolk, a pastoral office he fulfilled until 1703, when he succeeded Newton.[41] In 1748, only four years before his death, he confessed that he had been a Baptist "in principle and practice" for thirty-five years and that during that time had only baptised adults.[42] According to one source, he was baptised himself in 1747 by the General Baptist, James Foster, joining the General Baptists, partly in protest at the use in Anglican circles of the Athanasian Creed, which in his opinion was "much worse, more heretical, and more horrid . . . than

[38] *SDBEA* 1, 112.

[39] See p. 129.

[40] William Whiston, *Mr. Whiston's Friendly Address to the Baptists* (1748), 2. The *Friendly Address* was incorporated verbatim in Whiston's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston*, published in 1749. Whiston was removed from his university position in 1710 for Arianism, a doctrine that was becoming popular among some General Baptists at the time.

[41] *DNB*, *sv* William Whiston.

[42] Whiston, *Memoirs*, 458-9.

the creed of Pope Pius itself".[43] Whiston began attending General Baptist worship at Morcot(t) in Rutland, near to his home.[44]

By then seventy years of age, Whiston had gradually come to the conclusion that General Baptists were "the best Christians, both in Doctrine and Practice" and that their doctrine was "nearest" to that of Christ and the apostles.[45] One of the doctrinal considerations which attracted him to the General Baptist community was the fact that "some" of them were Sabbatarians, "observers of the Saturday Sabbath". In his *Friendly Address to the Baptists* Whiston advised them, "as well as other Christians", that those who applied the fourth commandment to the Lord's day, a common application of Scripture at the time among advocates of First-day observance, "greatly misapply it". He expressed the hope that at least "some of the Baptists" were free from such misapplication.[46]

There is no known evidence that any other members of the Morcott congregation were inclined to Seventh-day observance, but given the practice of the times among General Baptists it is not impossible. We can be sure that Whiston would not have been made to feel uncomfortable among the Morcott people if he and his family were the only Sabbatarians in the congregation. In 1748, a year after beginning to worship there, Whiston wrote that he had observed the Saturday Sabbath in his family circle for several years, "as I in our family devotions . . . have long done", to use his own words.[47] It is incontrovertible evidence of a long-standing respect for the seventh day. His friendship with the respected Sabbatarian lawyer, Sir William Tempest, is noted later.

Whiston died in 1752, four years after testifying to his long observance of the seventh day. That he was an original thinker, bound to no authority but that of Scripture, is evident in matters other than Seventh-day observance. In addition to the Sabbath and believer's baptism, Whiston also held millenarian views about the future, believed in the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation, holding that fulfilment of the prophetic periods of 1260 days and 2300 days indicated the last days, believed in anointing the sick with oil, and

[43] *SO* 1: 189; Whiston, *Friendly Address*, 2.
[44] Whiston, *Friendly Address*, 2.
[45] Ibid. 2-3.
[46] Ibid. 10-11. Whiston seems to have believed that some of the Baptists who observed Saturday also observed Sunday.
[47] Ibid.

developed a series of lectures on the Old Testament sanctuary, for which he had models built which he used to illustrate his public lectures in London and other cities.[48] Whiston comes close to the Baptist Sabbatarians described by Henri Misson in the *Memoirs* of his travels in England in the 1690s.[49] If Whiston had in fact adopted the seventh day in the 1720s, which is distinctly feasible, he might even have been acquainted with some of Misson's "Seventh-day Men". It is an intriguing possibility.

THE ENIGMA OF KENT

Of all the English counties which might be thought to have been ripe for Seventh-day doctrine, Kent would be among the foremost. From the earliest days of the English Reformation Kent had proved to be fertile soil for seeds of radical religious belief and practice. Foxe refers to "Anabaptists lately springing up in Kent" in the sixteenth century and in 1562 Elizabeth I ordered the expulsion of Continental Anabaptists from England within twenty days, for contaminating English Christianity with their "poison".[50] By 1660 there were twenty-seven Baptist churches in the county.[51] A century later there were more Baptists in Kent than any other denomination, most of them General Baptists.[52] The Compton census in 1676 reported four hundred Dissenters in Cranbrook from a total population of some thirteen hundred above the age of sixteen, and Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchists, Brownists, Independents, Muggletonians and "sectaries of all sorts" from other parishes in the county and in one parish even "Neutralists" who professed themselves to be "between Presbyterian and Conformists".[53] I have elsewhere drawn attention to the extensive and sustained belief in the radical doctrine of Soul Sleep among Baptists in Kent and neighbouring east Sussex, which

[48] L.E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* (Washington, D.C.), II (1968), 672-3; *TBHS* 4: 157; Whiston, *Memoirs*, 653-8, where he recounts instances of healing among Baptists in several places.

[49] See p. 9.

[50] 'Continental Anabaptists and Early English Baptists', *BQ* 2: 24-5. See also G. F. Nuttall, 'Dissenting Churches in Kent before 1700', *JEH*, XIV, No. 2, for the Kentish predisposition to radical views.

[51] *TBHS* 2: 242-3.

[52] Gillian Rickard, *Kent Dissenting Ministers' Declarations, 1688-1836*(1995), 7.

[53] PRO, RG 4/9/17.

prevailed well into the eighteenth century.[54] Yet, with one notable exception, no record has survived in all this sectarian activity of one Seventh-day congregation anywhere in Kent.[55] It is one of the enigmas of the English Sabbatarian movement which extensive research has not been able to resolve.

The exception was the Tempest family of Cranbrook, more specifically Sir William Tempest - actually William Tempest III (1682-1761) since his father and father's uncle were also named William - and William Tempest III's second son, George, (1714-1797).[56] Cranbrook, according to one reliable source, had always been "an abode of heretics"[57] and by the 1640s a General Baptist Church had been formed there with members in Cranbrook and from neighbouring parishes under the leadership of George Hammon and James Blackburne, dividing into three groups in 1648 with Hammon the pastor of the Cranbrook assembly.[58] It was this congregation to which Daniel Dobel ministered a century later when in 1739 he published *The Seventh-Day Sabbath not Obligatory on Christians*. According to its title-page the book was to be sold in London and in Canterbury, where it was printed, and also in Cranbrook, Tenterden and Smarden, and while ostensibly a response to John Maulden's *Ancient and Honourable Way and Truth of God's Sacred Rest of the Seventh Day Sabbath* (1724) and Robert Cornthwaite's *The Seventh-Day Sabbath Farther Vindicated* (1736), we can be reasonably sure that it was prompted in part by Sir William Tempest's transfer from the Cranbrook General Baptist congregation to the Mill Yard Sabbath-keeping church in

[54] Bryan W. Ball, *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 2008).

[55] There is perhaps a hint that the matter was discussed and settled as early as 1657. At a meeting of the Kent Association that year it was decided "concerning the observation of days" that one day in seven "at least" should be set apart for worship, and seeing that the "primitive churches" met on the first day of the week, "we therefore judge it necessary that we observe ye same day likewise", *TBHS* 3: 248.

[56] On the Tempest family, including William Tempest III and his son George, see F.H.A Micklewright, 'A Mill Yard Layman – Sir William Tempest', *Notes and Queries,*192:514 and the Tempest Family records, Cranbrook Museum Archives, 2.1 TEM, including an offprint from *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* and a Tempest family tree spanning six generations from c.1600 to 1820.

[57] *VCH* Kent ii. 65.

[58] L.J. McGuire, 'The General Baptist Church Meeting at Cranbrook, Kent', GB Occasional Papers No. 24, DWL, 5106.Ke.76. See also, Frank Buffard, *Kent and Sussex Baptist Associations* (Faversham, [1904]), 16.

London in 1732[59] and perhaps by a fear on Dobel's part that others might follow the example of such a luminary.

It is therefore quite possible that Dobel's book was intended to counter incipient Sabbatarianism in Cranbrook and neighbouring villages which had been closely associated with the General Baptist cause in the area from its earliest days, but which had not surfaced as it had in other counties.[60] If that was the case it would help to explain why Dobel felt it necessary to respond to Maulden's book fifteen years after it had been published and also why he, Dobel, "a man of little culture", felt compelled to take issue with the contemporary Goliath of the Sabbatarian movement, Robert Cornthwaite, "one of the ablest defenders" of the Seventh-day position.[61] In the event, only one other person from the area is recorded as having adopted the Saturday Sabbath, William Tempest's son, George, who was also admitted to membership at Mill Yard in 1732.[62]

William Tempest III, later Sir William Tempest, was a figure of some significance in Cranbrook and also in London. Educated at Eton and King's College, he became, like his father and father-in-law, Prothonotary at the Court of Common Pleas, where he practised for more than half a century, making the acquaintance of several men of learning and influence. In addition to those mentioned previously, Tempest, the General Baptist with Arian or semi-Arian views and a Sabbatarian, was acquainted with William Warburton, Archbishop Thomas Secker and William Whiston, also Arian in theology and a Sabbatarian by conviction and the translator of the works of Jose-

[59] MYM 265. The references in an early issue of the *Baptist Quarterly* to a William Tempest representing the General Baptist church at Frittenden at the General Assembly in 1689 and to him being a Seventh Day Baptist, if correct, must refer to William Tempest II or to another member of the Tempest family, *BQ* ii, 382. There is no other known reference to Seventh-day views in Kent or in the Tempest family prior to William Tempest III of Cranbrook and Mill Yard, who was born in 1682 and who occasionally served as moderator of the Eastern Association more than half a century later. The *BQ* references are more likely to represent a misunderstanding of various generations or branches of the Tempest family.

[60] There were precedents if Dobel had needed them. Thomas Grantham had published *The Seventh-Day Sabbath Ceased as Ceremonial* in 1677 while leader of the General Baptists in south Lincolnshire, where Sabbatarianism had taken root in Boston, and in 1700 Benjamin Keach published *The Jewish Sabbath Abrogated, or The Saturday Sabbatarians Confuted* in an attempt to quell a growing interest in the seventh day among members of his Horsleydown congregation. On Grantham and Lincolnshire, see pp. 289-91, and on Keach and the problems at Horsleydown, see pp. 122-3.

[61] Cox, *Literature of the Sabbath Question*, ii. 464, 198.

[62] MYM 265.

phus.[63] Tempest was baptised by immersion at Cranbrook in 1725 and according to the Unitarian historian, F.H.A. Micklewright, adopted Seventh-day views at about the same time, serving on occasion as moderator of the Eastern Association of General Baptists, particularly when the Association met in Cranbrook.[64] He died in 1761, still in fellowship with Mill Yard and possessed of a considerable fortune, with estates in Yorkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Sussex and Kent.[65] Shortly after his admission to Mill Yard in 1732, he was asked to participate in the pastoral visitation of Mill Yard members,[66] a task he willingly undertook for more than twenty years. He who walked and talked with giants was equally at ease, it seems, with ordinary people. A fitting epitaph to this remarkable life might be that humility is a mark of greatness.

George Tempest, Sir William's son, is the only other known Sabbatarian with Kentish connections. It is not clear whether he derived his Seventh-day convictions from his father or from some other source, but he was proposed as a member of Mill Yard in 1732, three months before his father and while at the time in communion with Paul's Alley First-day Church in London.[67] It is also not known if William's wife, Elizabeth, nee Highland, of Bodiam, East Sussex or either of George's two wives, Susanna, nee Mercer, of Lewes, Sussex or Elizabeth, nee Morris of Hythe, Kent shared their husbands' Sabbatarian views. Although there is no mention of any female Tempest in the Mill Yard records it is not entirely out of the question. George was one of thirteen children born to William and Elizabeth Tempest and when he died in 1797 the last recorded trace of Sabbatarianism in Kent, slender as it had always been, died with him.[68]

WEST WILTSHIRE

Wiltshire was one of five counties visited by Francis Bampfield dur-

[63] See p. 96; Micklewright, *Notes and Queries*, 192:514.

[64] Ibid; DWL, MS 30.83, fol. 37.

[65] Cranbrook Museum Archives, 2.1 TEM, 'Four Tempest Bookplates and their Owners', 2, in *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* offprint.

[66] MYM 267, 282.

[67] Ibid, 265.

[68] It may be purely coincidental that in 1855 W.H. Black, then the Unitarian, Sabbatarian minister of Mill Yard Seventh Day Baptist church in London, first began preaching on Sundays to the Cranbrook General Baptist congregation, a role he continued to fulfil monthly until 1862, *Notes and Queries*, 191:186.

ing his preaching tour to Sabbatarian churches in the west of England in 1675.[69] At the time the only known Seventh-day church in Wiltshire was at Salisbury and had probably started out as General Baptist but by the time of Bampfield's visit had turned to the Particular position, which Bampfield himself shared. By 1690 Salisbury was under the pastoral care of John Laws [sic] and John Hall.[70] No other Sabbatarian congregation has been identified in Wiltshire although there are now strong indications of an interest in west Wiltshire, with links to Salisbury.

A General Baptist congregation had existed at Trowbridge from Commonwealth times, although its records date only from 1714.[71] Jerom Murch, the nineteenth-century General Baptist and Unitarian historian, says that Trowbridge was the oldest General Baptist congregation in the country.[72] The 1669 Episcopal visitation records show a congregation of "Anabaptists" already 140-150 strong, with "one King a stranger, and James Taylor, shearman" as teachers.[73] Baptists had, in fact, met in the Trowbridge district since the mid 1650s, both at Southweek (Southwick) and in Trowbridge itself, with General Baptist and Particular Baptist congregations finally distilling at Trowbridge and Southwick respectively late in the seventeenth century.[74] John Lawes is recorded as the minister at Southwick between 1692 and 1697 and then at Trowbridge Conigre, from 1697 to 1714,[75] and it is Lawes who may be considered as the first of two important links with the Seventh-day movement in the Trowbridge area.

Lawes (also known as Layes), recorded in the Llanwenarth list of Sabbatarian churches extant in England in 1690 as the minister of the Salisbury Sabbatarians, first came to light in that town in 1674 when presented for non-attendance at his parish church of St. Thom-

[69] See p. 114.

[70] See p. 228.

[71] The Trowbridge Conigre church book, commencing in 1714, is now held at the Wiltshire and Swindon Record office, WRO, 1241/10.

[72] Jerom Murch, *A History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England* (1835), 70.

[73] *TCHS* 2: 208, citing Tenison MS 639 at Lambeth Palace library. An Abraham King was prominent among the Colchester Sabbatarians in the 1690s, and it is tempting to think that he might have been the "stranger" at Trowbridge some twenty years earlier.

[74] W. Doel, *Twenty Golden Candlesticks, or A History of Baptist Nonconformity in Western Wiltshire* (1890), 35; R. Hayden, *Continuity and Change: Evangelicalism among 18th Century Particular Baptist ministers trained at Bristol Academy 1690-1791*(2005), 26.

[75] Doel, *Twenty Golden Candlesticks*, 72,110.

as.[76] By 1689 he seems to have been influential in Trowbridge as well as Salisbury for in that year a meeting-house in the names of John Lawes and Alexander Hillman was registered for Baptist worship in North Bradley, just south of Trowbridge and adjacent to Southwick.[77] In that same year John Lawes (Layes) was one of two messengers from Southwick to the General Assembly of Particular Baptists in London.[78] In 1708 a house belonging to John Lawes was again registered for worship, this time in Trowbridge, although records were not always precise and Trowbridge could easily have referred to North Bradley or Southwick.[79] When the Trowbridge General Baptist (Trowbridge Conigre) records first begin in 1714, John Lawes is recorded as one of the first two pastors or elders, the other being John Davisson, although other records indicate that both Lawes and Davisson by then had been leaders amongst the Trowbridge Baptists for more than twenty years.[80]

Lawes died later that year, 1714, and was succeeded by James Edwards, who was shortly "withdrawn from", in 1719, for "scandalous conversation", "tipling" and "Sabbath-breaking".[81] Davisson died in 1721 and was succeeded both as pastor at Conigre and tutor at the fledgling Trowbridge academy for the training of ministers by Thomas Lucas,[82] who ministered at Trowbridge until his death in 1743 although, as we shall shortly see, not always without let or hindrance. It is Lucas who must be considered as the second possible link with Seventh-day principles in the Trowbridge area.

[76] See p. 139.

[77] WRO, A1/110/T1689. See also J.H. Chandler (ed.), *Wiltshire Dissenters Meeting House Certificates and Registrations 1689-1852* (1985), 2, No. 16.

[78] Doel, *Twenty Golden Candlesticks*, 30,39; G.F. Nuttall, 'Association Records of the Particular Baptists', *BQ*, 26, 107, n.26. Lawes again represented Southwick as Messenger at the General Assembly in 1692.

[79] WRO, A1/250 and Chandler, *Wiltshire Meeting House Certificates*, 15, No. 167.

[80] Murch, *History*, 71; Doel, *Twenty Golden Candlesticks,* 32. Doel notes that it is unusual that no articles of faith or church rules are recorded in the church book and concludes that this is evidence that the congregation was already well established before the records commenced in 1714. Lawes, he states, had ministered at Southwick since 1692 and at Conigre since 1697, pp. 72, 110.

[81] WRO, 1241/10. The phrase "Sabbath-breaking" is interesting in this context. It appears two or three times in the early years of the Trowbridge records, always in connection with the disciplining of members. It is not usual eighteenth-century Baptist terminology, which would almost always refer to Sunday as the Lord's Day.

[82] Murch, *History*, 73. Some records suggest that Lucas had been at Trowbridge since 1715, WRO, 1241/10. See also, R. Hayden, C*ontinuity and Change*, 26.

By the last will of Joseph Davis, jun., of Mill Yard in London, proved in 1731, Lucas was one of seventeen beneficiaries, four of whom resided in Trowbridge, one in nearby Frome and one, John Sutten, in Winterbourne.[83] In 1734, Sutten, a known Sabbatarian, was named as one of the trustees of Brown Street Baptist Church in Salisbury,[84] a church which shared its building with Seventh Day Baptists for decades. Of the seventeen beneficiaries of the Joseph Davis will eight were known Sabbatarians, seven of them ministers or elders of Sabbatarian congregations in various parts of the country. Despite extensive research it has proved impossible to identify the remaining beneficiaries, but it is possible, even probable, that some at least also shared Seventh-day convictions.[85] Thomas Lucas may have been among them.[86]

Lucas had been invited to join John Davisson at Trowbridge in 1718 from Exeter. Apparently both he and the Trowbridge members, or some of them, had reservations about the appointment and while matters were still fresh in his mind, Lucas recorded the discussions and subsequent events in some detail.[87] He recalls that the Trowbridge people "persuaded" him to "come and sit down with them at the ordinance at Trowbridge the next Lord's day" to discuss matters, but gives no indication as to why he needed persuading.[88] The records clearly indicate that there was opposition to the appointment of Lucas from some at Trowbridge, the chief reason being that he was deemed to have regarded those who opposed him as being "too near of kin to the Antinomians".[89] It is a telling phrase and suggests at the least that Lucas held the Law of God in higher regard than did some of the congregation at Trowbridge, a position which was undoubt-

[83] See additional note for p. 153, n. 87, p. 365.

[84] See p. 141.

[85] Cf. the will of Benjamin Purser, yeoman, Sabbatarian of Natton, Gloucestershire, proved in 1757, in which all the beneficiaries were Sabbatarians and retained the right to inherit only if they also retained their Seventh-day principles, Jackie Perry, 'Natton Seventh Day Baptist Chapel, Ashchurch', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, cxiv (1996), 111.

[86] In 1731 William Hendy of Frome preached at the ordination of John Watts at Earl Stoke (Erlstoke), WRO, 1282/18.

[87] [Thomas Lucas], *An Exact account of all matters which have passed in writing between the members of the Church of Christ meeting at Trowbridge and Southwick, with regard to the accepting of Mr. Lucas as their Pastor* (1723). Bristol Baptist College library holds the only known copy of this publication, BBC, MS G 98 A.

[88] [Lucas], *Exact account*, BBC, MS G 98 A, fol. 5*v.*

[89] Ibid., fol. 6*v.*

edly consistent with that view of the Decalogue fundamental to Sabbatarian theology.[90] Reaction against Lucas set in again after a few years, resulting in a request for letters of recommendation for transfer from Trowbridge to other churches signed by thirty members, including Ann Lawes, sen. and Ann Lawes, jun.[91] Lucas was a General Baptist and while John Lawes had been a Particular Baptist, Doel suggests that in later life he, too, accepted the General position. The fundamental distinction between the Generals and the Particulars over free-will and election would have been sufficient for Ann Lawes and her daughter-in-law to seek fellowship elsewhere, if indeed they had retained the Calvinistic beliefs of the Particulars, and need not have had anything to do with Sabbatarian belief or practice.

It is not entirely clear whether any of this supports the view that either Lucas himself or some members in the Trowbridge congregation privately held Seventh-day views, but given the facts that men of Seventh-day persuasion ministered to First-day churches and that some First-day congregations admitted members who favoured the seventh day it is not impossible. The John Lawes connection is a strong argument and something must account for the inclusion of Thomas Lucas and three other Trowbridge men in the will of the London Sabbatarian, Joseph Davis, jun.

Two further Wiltshire links with the Seventh-day movement should be noted. In 1811 Joseph Stennett V left Coate in Oxfordshire, where he had ministered for thirteen years, having accepted an invitation to Calne in Wiltshire,[92] only fifteen miles from Trowbridge. It is not known for certain if this Stennett privately held Sabbatarian convictions as had so many of his illustrious forbears, but it would not be at all surprising if that was the case. Prior to his years at Coate he had assisted his father, the great Dr. Samuel Stennett, at Little Wild Street in London and when Samuel died in 1795 had succeeded him to the pastoral office. Father and son were deeply attached to each other and it is more likely than not that Joseph V inherited his father's Sabbatarian convictions as well as his talents for

[90] Cf. the titles of some of the pro-seventh-day publications of earlier years, e.g., James Ockford, *The Doctrine of the Fourth Commandment* (1650); Edward Stennett, *The Royal Law Contended for* (1658). The full titles of these publications can be found in Appendix IV.

[91] [Lucas], *Exact account*, BBC, MS G 98 A, fol. 18*v.* John Lawes had died in 1714.

[92] WRO, 2225/36 and 2225/1, fols. 56-8; John Stanley, 'The Courtly Stennetts of Westminster', 67-77, BBC, MS F C 3 (17).

ministry.[93] Calne, as far as is known, was First-day with regard to the weekly day of worship throughout the thirteen years of Joseph V's ministry there.

A less ambiguous Wiltshire Seventh-day connection appeared unexpectedly a few years later. In 1849 a certificate was issued for a General Baptist meeting-house in Rushall, some twenty miles north of Salisbury and a similar distance from both Trowbridge and Calne.[94] Three trustees of the building included W.H. Black, then pastor of the dwindling London Mill Yard General Seventh Day Baptist church and Nathaniel Wise. James Wise had worked the Southampton/Salisbury district in Fifth Monarchy and Sabbatarian interests in the 1660s and 1670s[95] and it is not inconceivable that Nathaniel was a descendent of the same family. Black, as we have seen, would shortly commence preaching, on Sundays, at another General Baptist church which once had Seventh-day connections. It seems unlikely that Black's interest in two widely separated congregations which once had, or might have had, links with the Sabbatarian movement was purely coincidental or antiquarian, even though there was no firm evidence of current Sabbatarianism in either.

The temptation to draw conclusions from insufficient evidence frequently confronts the historian and must be resolutely resisted. In the case of Seventh-day observance in west Wiltshire, particularly in the Trowbridge area, there is little information that is as clear-cut and indisputable as there is for so many of the Seventh-day congregations elsewhere in the country. That said, however, the cumulative weight of various relevant facts is persuasive, and we are left with the firm impression that a Sabbatarian presence there during the early eighteenth century is a distinct possibility.

THE SILENCE OF THE STENNETTS

The involvement of successive generations of the Stennett family with pastoral responsibilities at First-day congregations was previously noted as one possible reason for the eventual decline of the

[93] Stanley, 'The Courtly Stennetts', 70. Stanley, a descendant of the Stennett family, says "at least four generations" of Stennetts were Seventh-day men in belief and practice, p. 17.

[94] WRO, A1/252 and Chandler, *Wiltshire Dissenters Meeting House Certificates,* 166, No. 1731.

[95] See pp. 140, 143.

Sabbatarian cause.[96] The Stennetts, of course, were not the only Sabbatarian ministers who fell into that category, but there was in their case another issue, perhaps related and even more perplexing – the consistent failure on the part of generations of the Sabbatarian Stennetts to explain or defend the doctrine of the Seventh-day Sabbath.

The silence of the Stennetts in this matter should be seen in the context of pro-Sabbatarian publications as a whole. A total of sixty-six works in favour of the seventh day or in its defence was published between 1628 and 1745,[97] forty-six of them before 1700, i.e. during the formative years of the Sabbatarian movement and the years of its growth and development among General and Particular Baptists.[98] Between 1700 and 1745 when the last pro-seventh-day publication appeared,[99] another six authors contributed a further twenty works. This latter period included six works by Robert Cornthwaite between 1731 and 1745 which coincided with, and materially helped to generate, a period of revival and new growth at Mill Yard and elsewhere around the country.[100] It would not be hard to defend the proposition that the rise and consolidation of the English Sabbatarian movement was due in significant measure to a sustained sequence of publications in favour of the Seventh-day Sabbath. Many of these works were written in response to works against the seventh day and/or in favour of the first day as the divinely appointed day of rest and Christian worship.

In that context we note the total absence of any printed works in defence of the seventh day by any Stennett after Edward, the family patriarch who set an example that might have been followed by publishing three books in favour of the seventh day between 1658 and 1677. After that, the silence is complete. Whitley lists eighteen publications directly attributable to Joseph I, nineteen by Joseph II and thirteen by Samuel between 1684 and 1776.[101] The original Angus Library catalogue lists twenty-two works by Joseph I and twenty-four by Samuel. Joseph I wrote on baptism and conversion, published

[96] See pp. 320-1.

[97] Plus another five or six works which have not survived. See Appendix IV for a chronological list and the basis for the analysis which follows.

[98] Works by the Anglican Theophilus Brabourne are included in these figures.

[99] Excluding the lost work by Ann Alsop of Natton, *Remarks on the Rev. T. Edmond's pamphlet* (1801).

[100] On Cornthwaite's influence at Mill Yard, see pp. 90-1.

[101] *BB* i. 228.

sermons, poetry and hymns, translated works from French and was requested to write a history of Baptists and Baptist churches.[102] Joseph II wrote on the Psalms and also published sermons. Samuel published on baptism, the life of faith and also published sermons. Yet in all this output there is not a single work and scarcely a word proposing or defending the seventh day.[103] It is a strange, some might say culpable, silence from successive generations of a highly respected family widely known for its Sabbatarian convictions and observance of the seventh day in private.

In the case of Joseph I it is even more remarkable in the light of a comment recorded in his own hand on the fly-leaf of his copy of his father's *The Insnared Taken in the Work of his Hands* (1679).[104] In a note on contemporary observance of the seventh day in Ethiopia Joseph wrote, "So yt error and time have not totally and universally extirpated this so crucified truth". It is a revealing comment on Stennett's own attitude to the Seventh-day Sabbath. Some critics might say that Joseph Stennett I and his descendents did little to resuscitate that truth or to save it from decline in eighteenth-century England. It could also be argued that that silence itself sent the message to thousands of fellow Baptists and other Christians in London and elsewhere that the Seventh-day Sabbath, although a "crucified truth", did not in the final analysis count for much. If that was the intention, it was eminently successful.

That said, however, the Seventh-day churches, particularly those

[102] Crosby states that a title-page and a table of contents for the proposed history were prepared by Stennett and presented to the General Assembly in 1706 for approval. A committee was appointed to work with Stennett on the project, but it never materialised, *History of English Baptists*, IV, 12-13. Whitley maintained that Crosby's *History* was based on historical material gathered by Joseph Stennett, possibly the material he had intended to use in his own history, although neither Raymond Brown nor B.R. White in their more recent accounts make any reference to Stennett's possible influence, Whitley, *The Baptists of London*, 116; B.R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (1983), 12-15; Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, 26.

[103] But note the entry in the index (in vol. III) to Joseph Stennett I's *Works* (4 vols. 1732), "Seventh day of the week, whether that or the first the Christian Sabbath, ii, 482 & c.", referring to the conclusion of a sermon on Matt. 5:18, entitled 'The unchangeable duration of the Moral Law considered'. He also wrote a few poems on the Sabbath, collected in vol. IV, but which could also be read to refer to the Sunday Sabbath.

[104] The BL copy of this rare work, shelf no. 1471.de.11, has two title-pages, set differently, and dated 1679 and 1677, and bears the inscription "E[sic] libris Josephi Stennett". W.H. Black added a note in 1852 that Joseph Stennett had corrected many of the book's errors and had also added notes of his own on the fly-leaf, mainly concerning Seventh-day observance in Ethiopia.

in London, benefited greatly from the ministries of Joseph I, Joseph II and Samuel even though the main focus of their attentions were First-day congregations at the Barbican and Little Wild Street, Holborn. Nor should we overlook or minimise the immense contribution to Baptist life in eighteenth-century England and perhaps to the wider life of the nation, made by these three generations of the Stennett family and their descendents who ministered to other congregations at Ingham in Norfolk, Coate in Oxfordshire and Calne in Wiltshire.[105] This talented and respected family, which spanned eleven or twelve generations, linking the reigns of James I and Queen Victoria, deserves a careful and coherent account of its life and influence.[106] They will always be remembered, however, among other things, for their inexplicable silence on the Sabbath they professed to cherish and revere.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

Several typographical errors have been corrected in the following text, although they do not affect its substance. The research undertaken for this revision of the original work has not resulted in the discovery of information which necessitates any major change in the overall picture of the English Seventh-day Movement there outlined.

However, relevant further information has been included as Additional Notes, to be found in Appendix VI. These additional notes have been referenced in the text by the addition of an asterisk.

[105] Benjamin Stennett at Ingham/Stalham 1736-1748; Joseph III at Coate, or Cote, 1742-1769; Joseph IV at Coate 1769-1772; Joseph V at Calne 1811-1824. Joseph III was ordained in 1743, his father, Samuel Stennett and another Sabbatarian minister, Philip Jones, officiating, BBC, MS F C 3 (17). It should be noted that entries numbered 158 and 159 re Joseph Stennett I and II and the ministries of Stennetts at Coate and Calne are confused and unreliable.

[106] Little-known sources for Stennett family history include J.J. Howard (ed.), *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* (1900), III, third series, 87; John Stanley, 'The Courtly Stennetts of Westminster', unpublished typescript, BBC, MS FC3(17); John Stanley, letter to W.H.J. Page, with notes and a Stennett family tree, Oct. 27, 1929, WRO, 2225/36; Joshua Thomas, 'The History of the Baptist Churches in Wales', BBC, MS Z. d. 3., pp. 12-21; W. Mead Jones (ed.), *The Works of Samuel Stennett* (1824), 3 vols., with memoir; [W.H.J. Page], 'The Stennetts', handwritten ms., WRO 2225/36; *The Protestant Dissenters Magazine*, I, March, 1794; L.G. Champion, 'The Social Status of some Eighteenth Century Baptist Ministers', *BQ* 25: 10-14. The above are in addition to numerous articles and references in *TBHS, BQ* and Baptist histories of every vintage and in standard reference works such as *ODNB* and *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860*.

A bibliography to the information contained in this Introduction and in the Additional Notes is located after the original bibliography. All three indexes have been updated to cover both this Introduction and the Additional Notes. It remains to say that the conventions followed in the text and notes in this revision are those set out in the original Introduction.