

SABBATH HISTORY

Volume 1

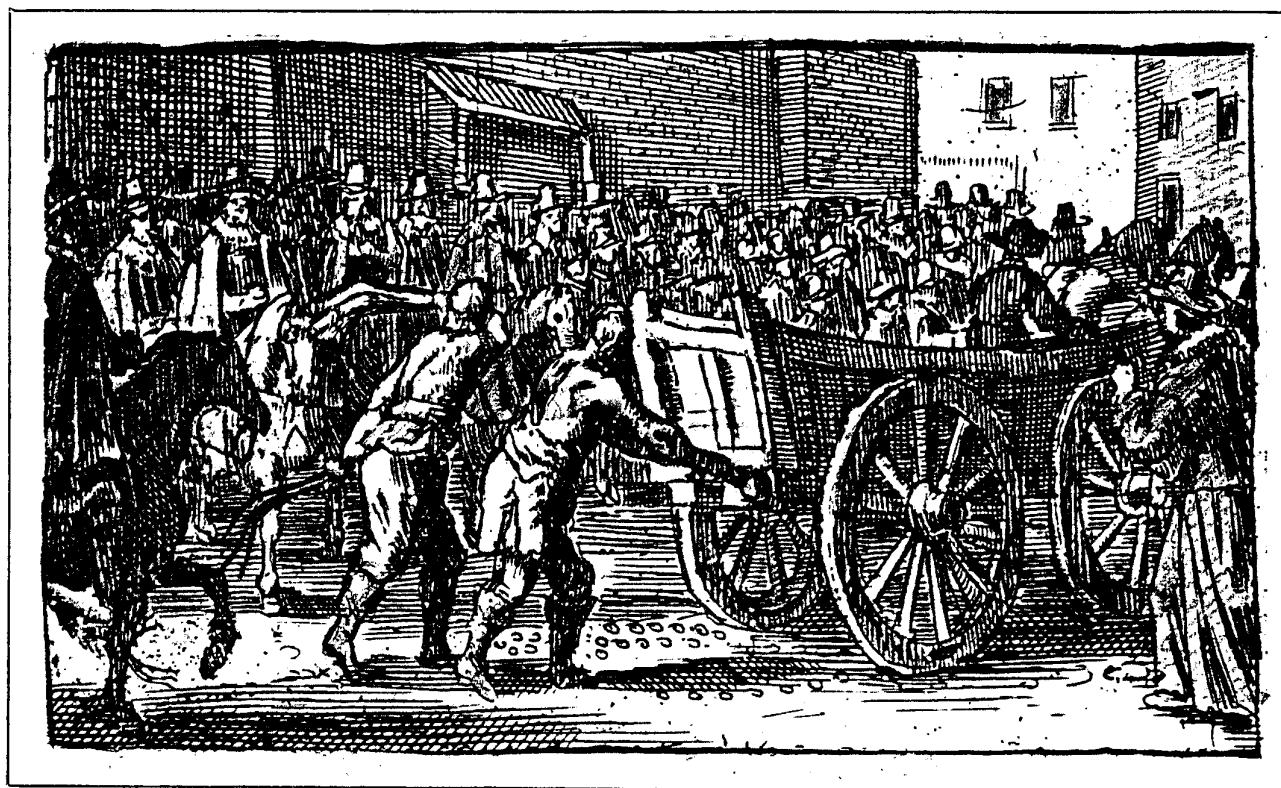
Number 1

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In this issue:

ISSN 0815-9246

- *the life of John Traske*
- *eyewitness account of the trial and execution of John James*



This illustration shows how the whipping which John Traske suffered would have been carried out; drawn behind a cart through the streets of London.

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Comment

You hold in your hands the first humble edition of Sabbath History. It is the result of an idea. It is now possible to gather together accurate historical material about the many Sabbath keeping Churches of the last two thousand years. How exciting it would be to make this information available to those who would derive the most encouragement and satisfaction from it - that small section of Christendom which today observes the Sabbath.

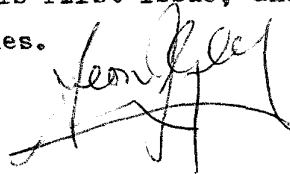
The aim of Sabbath History is to act as a focus for gathering and disseminating this historical material. Eventually, I hope to have enough information to produce a readable book on the subject. It is certainly needed, as there has been nothing really new on the subject in almost a century. At the same time the amount of information about the past has grown almost beyond belief.

And recently, some modern historians have begun to examine aspects of Sabbath keeping through the last two thousand years. This is a significant development. Before this present century, when the best historians were also staunch churchmen of this or that denomination, Sabbath keepers were either ignored or boiled in denominational vitriol! Historical accuracy was not as important as denominational support.

One of the results of this lack of information is that even modern Sabbath keepers have an 'idealised' view of their spiritual ancestors. The popular image of a single unbroken line of righteous Sabbath keepers, from the apostle's time to ours is simply not supported by the facts. While God could certainly have worked things that way, the history of Sabbath keeping looks much more like the history of ancient Israel, than it does the wishful thinking of some. Consider the Old Testament. In it is the story of Israel's faults, as well as Israel's victories. Both are recorded for 'our admonition'. I believe we should take the same approach to the history of Sabbath keeping.

Sabbath keepers have rarely formed one group, as today's situation is sufficient illustration. So it has been in the past, for Sabbath keeping is not an issue in isolation from others. What does seem surprising is that in spite of intense opposition, the Sabbath idea constantly springs up in various places at different times.

Please let me know what you think of this first issue, and feel free to offer your own contributions for future issues.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Henry J. ...', written over the end of the text.

JOHN TRASKE

The persecuted pastor of London's first modern Sabbath Church

"Now of the broakers of Judaism, John Traske was a principal." So wrote an historian of his day, reflecting the mans popular image.

Many seventeenth century Englishmen were disparagingly labelled 'Judaisers'. The fact that this was a crime in every sense highlights the intollence of the day, and underlines a problem those who discovered the Sabbath would face. Traske was so called because he was the first English pastor to lead his congregation into Sabbath keeping.

HISTORICAL PROBLEMS

Despite the fact that Traske caused a major scandal which even interested King James, virtually no reliable historical work exists which explores his life and congregation in any detail. Yet his life is most important in reconstructing the story of the modern rediscovery of the Sabbath.

A major problem in discovering any detail about the most significant period of Traske's life is that the surviving material was written by his enemies. Nonetheless a careful reading allows a broad, if sometimes blurred, picture of his life.

One of the tragedies of Traske's story is that he wrote a full account of his life and work as a Sabbath keeper while in prison in 1618. He had learned that Edmund Howes, who was preparing the continuation of Stow's General Chronical of England, wanted to see him.

Sadly, Howes only made a brief mention of Traske. The meagre entry must have been as disappointing to Traske as it is to us today.

John Traske and the 'Traskites' as his followers were called, were significant for other reasons also. The official reaction to their Judaising provided the first public forum for debate on the literal interpretation of the Old Testament law, and the nature of Jewish-Christian relations in over three hundred years.

TRASKE'S EARLY LIFE

John Traske was born in Somerset about 1585. The youngest son of Lionel Traske, he was baptised on 15 October 1585 at East Coker, Somerset and married on 23 November 1606 in the same parish.

Traske made his living as a school master at a gentleman's house, and could presumably have lived out a comfortable, and perhaps uneventful, life in that role.

Something changed his direction in life, however. What was it? Sadly, we do not know; but we do know that his wife died just before this new direction. One can imagine that to become a widower after only a few years of marriage must have been a dramatic blow to the schoolmaster. Perhaps the tragedy forced some deep soul searching upon him.

Whatever the cause, Traske now devoted himself to the religious life, and began preaching. He applied for ordination to James Montague, bishop of Bath and Wells, but was rejected by the bishop's chaplain Dr Samuel Ward because he did not have sufficient training.

Traske persisted, and by 1611 had been ordained. By 1615 he had visited London on at least one preaching tour and published one sermon. Towards the end of that year he was imprisoned in Newgate for 'going up and down as a wandering minister.'

It must be remembered that at this time preaching was the prerogative of the state supported Church of England. Only those trained and credentialed by the Church could instruct in public. Further, such instruction could not deviate from official doctrine, and could not be done anywhere or anytime. It was only after a tide of dissatisfaction with these policies by many such as Traske, and two civil wars, that some freedom of speech was allowed.

Traske, it seems, felt quite proud to have been admitted to the ministry as he had 'never been more than a guest at any University'. Apparently he had eventually qualified himself by the production of a summary of divinity, which was highly influenced by Wolfgang Marculus.

A PEARL FOR A PRINCE

To the influence of Marculus, Traske added an emphasis which he

took from the Puritan 'preparationist' theologians, and combined these in his book 'A Pearl For A Prince' published in 1615.

The 'Puritans' at this time were those within the Church seeking to reform its morals and practices. An open split would be some years away, although tensions were clearly evident at this early date.

Traske wrote to help those preparing for saving faith. He stressed that while faith is the gift of God;

"the ground where faith is sown, is a humble soul, a wounded spirit, or rent heart, to such God gives the grace of faith, as are so prepared for it."

While such teaching was acceptable to mainline Puritanism, Traske himself began to find it lacking. He had many doctrinal disagreements in public, which lead one detractor to write that he 'marched like Jehu most furiously, making divisions in the Church about London'. Again we have no details of these disagreements.

TRASKE AND CONTROVERSY

The above quote may give some early insight into Traske's volatile personality, if not his doctrine. It becomes clear that he was a bold man, who also had a gift for effective powerful preaching. Ever proud of the truths he held, he always spoke his mind, at this early period, in a way which opponents regarded as provocative.

It was also this strength of personality which enabled him to maintain views different from even the accepted opponents of the established Church, and to lead a congregation which had become now quite separate from the Church of England.

During this period, Traske lived with a Master Drake of Devonshire, gave public lectures, and left his door open to all comers for private instruction, both day and night.

One incident illustrates Traske's reputation at this time. One John Bodley left £400 in his will to Exeter for the maintenance of a preacher to speak on the "sabbath" (as the Puritans preferred to call Sunday). John Hazard was nominated.

The administrators of the fund wrote to William Cotton, the bishop

of Exeter, to ask if he had any objections to Hazard. Cotton interviewed Hazard on 5 April 1616, and told him;

"You have preached false doctrine...and besides you have been a companion with Traske.

"My lord", Hazard replied, "It is not so, for I can bring good testimony that I have twice publically in two seperate sermons at Lyme confuted the erroneous fancies of Traske...the whole town of Lyne can witness the same."

George Abbott, the archbishop of Canterbury was eventually asked to make the final decision, and gave Hazard the lectureship in spite of the alleged connection with Traske. He did however resign after a year for an unknown reason.

TRASKE REMARRIES

Traske arrived in London again about the beginning of 1617, and his reputation quickly spread. Listen to the words of his oponent again;

"His own and his disciples prayers are commonly roarings, and such loud out-crys as may be heard in distant rooms and houses, voluntarily framed and filled for the most part with frequent imprecations that God would confound the adversaries and persecutors of his little flock."

Soon after his arrival he married Dorothy Coome in February 1617. His bride was a spinster of the same age (about 31), and came from the same London city parish of St Sepulchre where he now made his home.

HIS TEACHING

An account of his teaching at this time indicates that Traske was developing an individual verson of preparationist theology.

While it had always been alleged that Traske had tended to "walk in the path of anon-conformity", it was now claimed that he considered all men to be in one of three spiritual conditions. In the first they were unconcerned for their salvation, in the second they were in a state of penitence seeking to reach the third and final state, that of grace.

Various other allegations about his teaching were made, but it is not clear how far these were the garbled and innacurate reports of enemies concerned at his growing effectivness.

It is certain that Traske's sermons moved his audience to tears, and to desire peace with God. Amongst other things, he advised his hearers to seek Gods will by fasting and prayer.

TRASKE'S CONGREGATION

As mentioned above, Traske's congregation was completely seperate from the Church of England. While the country was full of congregations which were non-conformist, it was a much more serious step to break all associations with the national Church.

Traske meanwhile was coming to require express Biblical instructions for most things that were done. Such an emphasis lead naturally enough to the detailed instructions of the Torah - the first five books of the Old Testament.

Traske was one of the first in modern times to regard the Old Testament not merely as the history of ancient Israel, but as a storehouse of timeless truths which God could speak to his own generation. Traske sought to understand and obey these newly discovered words of the Lord.

This aspect is significant because without it Traske would probably never have accepted the Sabbath once presented to him. This was not to happen for a short while however.

One of Traske's close associates, a tailor named Hamlet Jackson, seems to have been first to come to the conclusion that the regulations governing the diet of God's ancient people were also binding upon Christians (See Leviticus 11).

Jackson soon secured Traske's agreement, and Traske won over the rest of the group. Traske's congregation thus became the first of modern times to avoid unclean meat.

Their oponents now knew that it was Traske's belief that "whatsoever is to be done, is their be a law for the doing thereof, we are to leave all mens opinions, and follow that word in doing it."

Traske next began to adopt what mainstream Furitanism labled "laws ceremonial" to guide the congregation in their "building, planting, wearing of apparel, and sundry other things as well as eating."

Again we can only guess what these comments actually refer to, but presumably many of the instructions of Leviticus and Deuteronomy are being referred to. (See for example Deuteronomy 22:8, 20:8; Leviticus 25:1 - 7, Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Deuteronomy 22:5,11,12; Numbers 15:37-41)

Meanwhile, Hamlet Jackson's private Bible study was leading him to the belief that the Saturday Sabbath had never been abrogated by God, and that therefore Christians should observe it rather than Sunday as their weekly day of rest and worship. It seems that he did not discuss the matter with Traske.

At this stage Traske continued to observe the 'Lord's Day' (Sunday) although he now refrained from lighting fires or dressing meat on that day. In other words he sought to obey God's Sabbath laws to the best of his knowledge, applying them to the day he believed was the 'Christian Sabbath'. (See Exodus 35: 3)

TRASKE'S EVANGELIZATION CAMPAIGN

At a point just before the Sabbath became an issue of concern for Traske, he decided to ordain four messengers to proclaim their discoveries of principles for Christian living and obedience, and to cure diseases by anointing with oil. (See James 5: 14 - 15)

Traske also considered that his work might have prophetic significance. He apparently wondered whether he might be the second Elijah sent to discover the antiChrist (cf. Malachai 4:5-6). While there are other hints of Traske's prophetic interest, it is clear that his main interest lay elsewhere. He believed that his view of scripture had restored truth as it was in the days of the apostles.

For Traske the situation was that "the whole letter of the scriptures lying dead from the apostles days to our times, were now revived and stood on their feet. The Old Testament was much more than a 'type' pointing to Calvary, it offered infallible instruction in a society which had lost contact with God.

The Puritans in general had cried against the obvious corruption and ignorance of the clergy. Many looked for a more vital religion, and found that the new King James translation of the Bible into English allowed them to seek God for themselves.

Traske discovered not only spiritual answers, but instructions for the daily doings and diets of Englands saints. His straightforward reading of the Bible found ready acceptance amongst much of the populous.

TRASKE ACCEPTS THE SABBATH

It was with these convictions of the vitality of scriptural prescription, that the four new evangelists Hamlet Jackson, Returne Hebdon and two others were dispatched.

One Saturday, after the mission had been launched Hamlet Jackson - while still an observer of the Sunday Sabbath - "saw a shining light about him which struck him into amazement... and thereupon concluded that the light of the law was more fully discovered to him, than to any other since the apostles."

Jackson resolved then to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, and returned to Traske. Traske was convinced, and soon won over the entire congregation.

The most scandalous offence of the Traskites was that they now kept the Sabbath, and ignored the Lord's Day as an ordinary day or work.

One account speaks of Traske's wife who taught children to read. She would now only teach them five days a week, because she now observed the Sabbath, (a day on which most Englishmen worked), and thought it best not to work on Sunday for fear of persecution.

Many Englishmen now found it difficult to accept that Traske was still a Christian, and the widespread irrational fear of things 'Jewish' would now begin to effect the Traskites.

TRASKE IN PRISON

Towards the end of 1617, this 'Judaising sect' could no longer be ignored. Traske and some of his followers were soon in prison, though we have no details on the series of events that saw them arrested.

On February 14, 1618, John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton about Traske;

"...who was first a puritan, than a seperatist, and now is

become a Jewish-Christian, observing the Sabbath on Saturday, abstaining from swines flesh and all things commanded in the law. You will not think what a number of foolish followers he hath in this town and some other parts, and yet he has not been long of this opinion..."

King James himself followed the case. It seems that at one Sunday dinner, Traske and his flock were almost the sole subject of discussion. The king apparently thought it amusing that Traske found it unlawful to eat the popular black pudding. The Law, of course, prohibits eating blood in any form. (Leviticus 3: 17, 7: 26, 17: 10-12)

The immediate consequence of Traske's arrest, was his appearance before the Court of High Commission. There the bishops attempted to argue him back to orthodoxy. Finding him more stubborn than they expected, he was imprisoned "that he might not infect others".

This move was not immediately successful either in converting Traske, or keeping his views from others! While in prison he seems to have converted Edward and Nicholas Rookwood of Euston, Suffolk. The two gentlemen, father and son, had been imprisoned for debt, and after meeting Traske were won to the Sabbath.

Meanwhile, after studying the practices of the Quartodecimans as recorded in Eusebius' Church History, Traske adopted the date of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. The book had been one of many given to Traske by the bishops in order to encourage his reform! How amazed they must have been when he concluded that Easter was no more Christian than Sunday!

This most recent adoption was not merely a theoretical position. Traske lead his followers to conduct a Passover seder ritual in prison.

Fellow prisoners observed Traske in the unusual practise of eating white unleavened loaves, and discussing with his followers whether they should eat a pascal lamb with their meal. Traske thereby became the first known Christian of modern times to observe the date of the Passover, a practice *some* modern Sabbath keepers emulate.

TRASKE'S PERSECUTORS

It was reported that Traske not only boasted of his personal abilities, but that the King, the Church of England, and all other Protestant churches

would eventually come to agree with him. This attitude only made Traske's persecutors more angry.

Noting Traske's stubbornness, the court of High Commission adopted another method of persuasion. From November 1617 until he was brought before the Star Chamber the following June, Traske was only allowed to eat which "in his opinion is supposed to be forbidden".

Traske's reaction was to write directly to the King to complain of his treatment by the bishops. When this produced no reply, he wrote again. In the eyes of the authorities, however, he had made his situation worse because he addressed the king as one would address an equal. He had not used the terms usually reserved for royal petitions.

The Court of the Star Chamber quickly found him guilty of "detraction and scandle" upon the king, and of a serious attempt to "divert his majesties subjects from their obedience, to follow him and his Jewish opinions."

Before his sentence was delivered, the distinguished Lancelot Andrews delivered a speech against the "Judaical opinions of Mr Traske". It was one of only three occasions when Andrews took part in such cases, and is some indication of how influential Traske had been. Andrews admonished; "It is a good work to make a Jew a Christian, but to make a Christian a Jew, has always been a foul act, and severly to be punished."

Lord Chancellor Bacon was concerned as well. His notes for his speech to the judges in Star Chamber on 26 June 1618 show that he expressed the view that, "New opinions spread very dangerous, the late Traske a dangerous person."

Andrews had urged severity, and after his speech a barbaric sentence was given.

TRASKE'S SENTENCE

Traske was sentenced in Star Chamber on 19 June 1618 to be kept a prisoner in the Fleet for the rest of his life, so as to prevent him from infecting others. He was also fined a thousand pounds, and expelled from the ministry. But that was not the end of it.

Traske was to be whipped from the prison of the Fleet to the Palace of Westminster, with a paper on his head. The paper probably announced his crimes. There he was to be set on the Pillory and have one of his ears nailed to it.

After he had stood there some time, he was to be burned in the forehead with the letter 'J' because he had "broached Jewish opinions".

Finally, he was to be whipped from the Fleet to the Cheepside, again set up on the pillory, and there to have his other ear nailed to it.

Within twelve days the sentence had been carried out, and Traske was returned to prison.

TRASKE'S RECANTATION

The next episode we have on record may seem surprising after what had transpired. Traske seems to have changed his views, and because it so pleased his captors, his own words on the subject have been preserved.

After about a year in prison, Traske says, "God was pleased to withdraw the cloudy veil from my eyes". On December 1, 1619, Bacon wrote;

"This day Traske in open court made retraction of his wicked opinions in writing."

Traske was soon set free, and published the substance of his recantation in 1620, entitled A Treatise of Liberty from Judaism. The publication was presumably a condition of his release.

"The first thing I understood", Traske recalled in speaking of the Church of England, "was my Mother's great authority. This I was throughly settled in about six months, when I came to see my foul failing." This lesson in authority had come six months before his recantation - at the time of his whipping and branding. Pain indeed is an effective teacher!

But perhaps it was something other than physical pain which broke his resolve. Traske's arrogance towards his captors, and expectation that God would vindicate him before them, not only made his sufferings worse, it probably lead him to doubt God. Pride had become his stumbling block.

TRASKE STILL POPULAR

Traske resumed preaching after his release. He travelled around the country, and continued to impress those who heard him with his stentorian voice. Those near to him would have been able to clearly see the 'J' burned into his forehead, a branding which would remain for life.

By the summer of 1627, he was in trouble again. The event underlines Traske's continuing popularity.

Joshua Purcas was to be hanged in London at the end of July. Traske spoke to him in Newgate prison at the request of his relatives, and with the permission of the prison chaplain. He attempted to have Purcas confess his crimes before God, but to his death Purcas denied the charge.

Traske preached at the hanging, and was then invited to the funeral. He was obliged to refuse because he had already agreed to preach at a christening. Some of Purcas friends attended the christening under the false impression that Traske would speak against the hanging.

Meanwhile, when the local curate preached at Purcas funeral, the entire congregation walked out! In a later report, Bishop Montague of London wrote to Archbishop Laud that he had refused Traske permission to speak at the funeral because he was "an unworthy person, and a Jew".

The record of Traske's examination over the incident shows that while he claimed to have given up the Sabbath, he admitted that his wife still observed it, "notwithstanding all the reasons he can give her to the contrary." It is also a fact that many others of Traske's former congregation continued to observe the Sabbath publically.

DOROTHY TRASKE

Mrs Traske began to stay in prison with her husband, but later refused to share his quarters or his recantation. She consistently rejected all attempts by her friends to alleviate her poverty, even though all she had was an annuity of forty shillings and what she earned by doing small services for other prisoners. In those days, prisoners had to pay for all their living expenses.

For years Dorothy Traske lived on bread, water and vegetables.

Right. The title page of Return Hebdon's Guide, a collection of meditations left to Mrs. Traske.

Bottom. The introduction to the work, written by an unknown member of Traske's congregation.

A GUIDE

To the GODLY,

OR,

The dayly MEDITATIONS of
RETURNE HEBDON Gentleman,
who for his conscience, (through the
tyranny of the Bishops) suffered many years
imprisonment in the Kings-Bench,
and their remained till death.

BEING

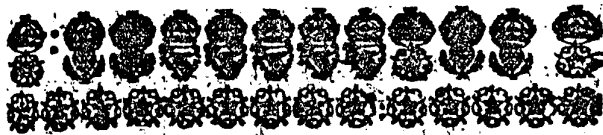
Very usefull for Instruction of all
those that desire to walke in the
paths of IESUS CHRIST.

Left to Mrs. TRASKE, who, not long since for
the same Judgment died in the Gate house,
and published by a friend of hers.

*Psal. 145. 2. Every day will I blesse thee, and
will prayse thy name for ever.*

*Jer. 6. 16. Inquiring for that good and old way,
to walke in it that they may find rest to their
soules. may 3^d*

Printed in the year. 1648



To the Reader.

Loving Reader, I suppose it is desired, that
something should be spoken, concerning the Au-
thour of this Booke, in what way, and with
what earnestnesse, it pleased God he did at-
taine to the truth of these Misteries in divine know-
ledge concerning himselfe; he was a Gentlemans Sonne
of Fashion, in the Town of Holmelhurst, in the Coun-
ty of Suffex; but he being stirred up, and desirous, ra-
ther to live a retired life, with little enjoyment of this
World, that he might enjoy more of God; desired to leave
both Father and Mother, and meaneas, and being after-
wards a prisoner, for the Commandement of Gods sake,
by his desiring to rest on the seventh day, according to
the Commandement (which the World calleth Satur-
day) who dyed about 23. years since; but he remained
about eight years in prison, in which time he gave him-
selfe to continuall study, in fasting and prayer, and
it hath pleased God, that he diseased, hath left
as a pledge to his friends, some of his Labours. There-
fore some who having the knowledge of him, and
of his manner of life, while living, desire

To the Reader.

*to print some of his workes; for the good of all whom it
shall please God to give power to seeke him in truth;
inquiring for that good and old way, to walke in it that
they may find rest to their soules, Jerem. 6. verſe 16.
and if this shall be received, it may be encouragement
to print more.*

Farewell.



Then, sometime after 1645, the Long Parliament arranged her transfer to the Gatehouse prison, where she met Paul Best. Best had been imprisoned for denying the doctrine of the Trinity, and seemed to find something in common with Mrs Trask. The two became firm friends.

Mrs Trask began to change her diet and eat meat again. However, she soon became ill, and it was this change that her death shortly afterwards was attributed.

In her final illness, she prevailed upon the gaoler that he would not bury her in any Church or Church yard, but rather in the fields. This last wish was apparently honoured.

Another prominent Traskite was Return Hebden. He was a Sussex gentleman, and one of Trask's four evangelists. Arrested with Trask he remained in prison till his death in 1625.

According to a friend, he gave himself to continual study, fasting and prayer. He left a book of meditations for Dorothy Trask, which was published in 1648. I have reprinted the title page and introduction of this book on the facing page.

HAMLET JACKSON

Jackson was originally imprisoned with the others, and believed that the prison doors would miraculously fly open one day to set him free. Like Trask, when this did not occur, he seems to have recanted and been released.

Upon his release he travelled with Christopher Sands and other 'Traskites' to Amsterdam, and made contact with the Jewish colony there.

Though some claimed that Jackson became a full Jewish convert, there is not the reference to him which could be expected in the records of Dutch Jewry.

Christopher Sands appears to have converted a minister, one Mr Wright and his wife, as well as Mary Chester to the Sabbath. Mary Chester became associated with Theophilus Brabourne, a later Sabbath keeper who will be described in the next issue of Sabbath History. Sands himself had been converted by Jackson.

In short, Traske and his congregation left very few first hand records. His followers though dispersed continued their beliefs in many cases. Traske's most lasting effect was to be on those who never met him, however. His name remained a popular focus for 'Judaising' jibes, and his views remained a viable spiritual force throughout the seventeenth century.

TRASKE'S LATER LIFE

Traske's later life is far more obscure than his long lasting popular reputation. There is very little we can be certain of, though once so harshly treated we can imagine that he would have been eager not to draw attention to himself.

Traske seems to have found a comfortable home among the "baptists". I have deliberately described them with a lower case 'b' to highlight the fact that they were quite different from modern Baptists in a number of important ways.

Apart from the fact that they did not form a separate denomination, they were not of uniform opinion on a number of issues - baptism included. The term 'baptist' merely is a descriptive one of those congregations which held to believers baptism. This point was of course their key feature in the public eye, and we can assume that Traske agreed with them on this point.

In 1636, Traske was arrested with other baptists of a congregation lead by Henry Jessey. Because of his failing health, Traske was quickly released. He died while visiting friends soon afterwards. These unknown baptists then carried him from their house to Lambeth Church yard.

The entry of the early baptists into the life of England's earliest Sabbath keeper of modern times is significant. Henry Jessey pastored the congregation Traske attended until 1663, and was also a powerful advocate of Jewish re-admission to England.

It has sometimes been claimed by Sabbath keepers that Jessey was also a Sabbath keeper. While we have no indication from anything Jessey wrote, his biographer says that he "kept his opinion much to himself" - which is not surprising.

According to this source, Jessey observed the Sabbath in his own home with only four or five others. We must surely wonder whether Traske

was amongst them, It is certain that the two would have discussed the matter at some time. Jessey would then continue his public ministry of Sundays.

Though the biography was written after Jessey's death, and is the only reference we have to his Sabbath keeping, there is no reason to doubt the credibility of it; especially as it was probably written by a non Sabbath-keeper.

As I hope to cover in later issues of Sabbath History, most of the Sabbath keepers from later in the seventeenth century were baptists and many were also closely involved in seeking the readmission of the Jews as well as their evangelisation. A link between Traske, Jessey and later Sabbath keepers is therefore quite plausible.

Traske's sad life carries many lessons in it for modern Christians, especially Sabbath keepers. For his own day the 'Judaising' tag remained, but in fact he was one of the first who began to see that the Old Testament recorded the voice of the Lord speaking directly to him as well as to ancient Israel. Before anyone can accept the Sabbath, they must first see the Old Testament in this way; as the timeless instructions and admonitions of God for His people in all generations.

oOo

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Questions and Answers

Q. "Does the Sabbath have anything to do with the identity of the 'lost' tribes of Israel?" M. J. Elk Grove. Illinois.

A. The question raises issues which cannot be covered in this brief space, but which I hope can be more completely explored in future.

Essentially, the 'lost' tribes lost their Israelite identity, which included Sabbath keeping. In fact the Sabbath was God's identifying sign upon his people. That tribe of Israel which kept the Sabbath - the Jews - have remained a clearly identified inheritor of ancient Israel. As one rabbi of the middle ages remarked, "More than the Jew has kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jew." Sabbath keeping, and the social, family and religious identity which go with it, has helped preserve the uniqueness of that group in cultures as diverse as Catholic Europe of the Dark Ages, and China of the Emperors.

It may be significant that Christian Sabbath keeping in modern times began in those countries which have been identified as the modern descendants of the 'lost' tribes by some. But that again is a complex issue. Many have now adopted the Sabbath who are clearly not the physical descendants of Abraham (A number of Sabbath keeping Churches have members in India, Africa, South America, Oceania and The Philippines) Nonetheless, all who keep the Sabbath would see themselves as the spiritual sons of Abraham.

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Q. "I have heard that Benjamin Franklin kept the Sabbath? Is this so?"
C. K. Melbourne, Australia

A. While at least one Sabbath keeping Church used to claim that Ben Franklin was a Sabbath keeper, the answer to the question is both 'Yes' and 'NO'.

In his Autobiography (Airmont Edition, 1965), Franklin says; 'We never worked on Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath, so that I had two days for reading.' p. 58. Samuel Keimer was Franklin's "associate" in the printing shop, so if one couldn't work, the other had to stop.

Franklin disagreed with Keimer's beliefs, but tolerated them. As for his own beliefs, Franklin was contemptuous of all organised religion or even written creeds. He described himself as a Deist - that is he believed in God - with a "high moral sense...and toleration". But Franklin never kept the Sabbath because he believed in the fourth commandment.

John James

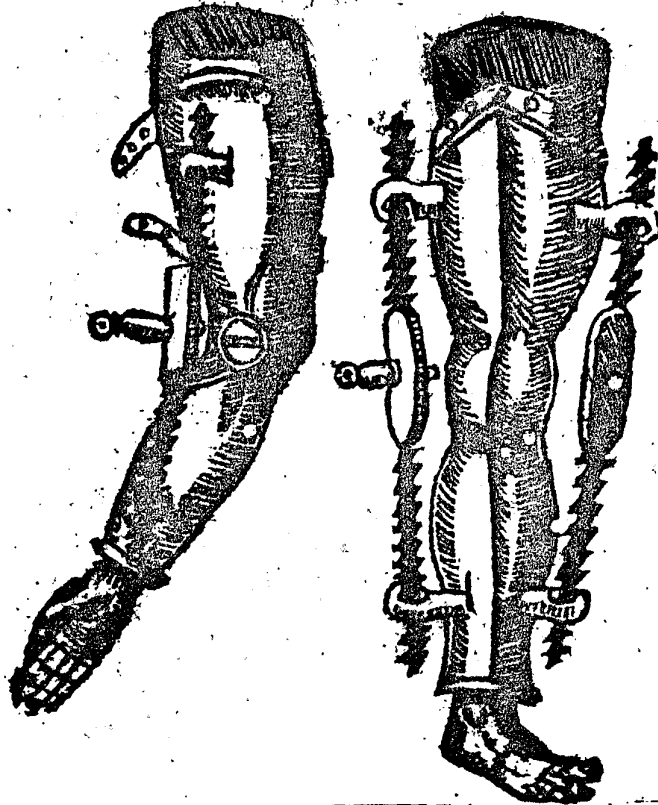
John James was the pastor of a Sabbath keeping church in Bullstake Alley, London, in 1661. The following account was written after his execution, by a witness who, though not a Sabbath keeper, deplored the event.

James was a silk weaver of humble origin. His service on the Sabbath of 19 October 1661 was cut short as he was arrested for treason. There is clear evidence that the so called eye-witnesses were 'picked men'. The authorities were determined to make an example of him, in order to encourage Englishmen to return to the Church of England.

The most interesting part of this account is his speech to the crowd, just before his execution. His heroic death, and the general persecution Sabbath keepers suffered at this time, did nothing to quell the spread of Sabbath keeping. A decade later there were at least twelve Sabbath keeping congregations in London alone.

The true and perfect
S P E E C H
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John James, a Baptist, and Fifth-Monarchy-man, on *Wednesday* last at *Tyburn*, the place of Execution; with his Prayer and Confession, in presence of many hundreds of people, and his desire to the Sheriff of *London*; Also a Declaration, concerning the Charge of High-Treason exhibited against him, touching his Sermon preached in *White-Chappel*, taking his Text out of the eighth Psalm, and the second Verse; his Doctrines thereupon; and a true Narrative of his proceedings, to the last minute of his being executed under the Gallows.



LONDON, Printed for George Horton, 1661.



The Speech and Declaration of John
James in the Press-yard at New-
gate, on Sunday last.

WHen the Christians in the primitive
Times had their private meetings,
the Church was hidden, and it was
death for any to profess Christ openly; then Cellars,
Garrets, and Woods, were their places of Assembly;
but who reigned then, *Nero*? Blessed be the Name of
God for ever more, we have the word preached a-
mongst us faithfully, we need not go into Corners and
Holes to hear the Word of our blessed Lord and Savi-
our taught; it abounds, through the great hand of Pro-
vidence, in a most miraculous way, to all Leige and
Loyal Subjects, and the Conduit-pipes of Heaven we
see apparently opened, from whence descends the
Fountain of Living Water, God in his great mercy con-
tinue the powerful influence thereof: And if there be
some (as I suppose too many) that have a design to soe
high beyond their Capacities and undertakings, let
them learn that good and Christian Lesson of the holy
Apostles, *Submit your selves to the Higher powers, &c.*
Blame me not therefore, I beseech you, though I urge
this with tenderness to tender Consciences; for I ve-
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rily believe *Ananias* the Button-maker, *Flash* the Cobler, or any others of that fraternity, never did more injury to poor Souls then the deluding Foxes of this Age; as is too manifest in these dayes, by the delusion of a Generation of men, whom I dare not call Loyal Subjects; witness the actions of a people that walk and go under the name of Fifth-monarchy men, whose principles to Monarchy are both dangerous and pernicious, as appears by their results at their meeting places; touching which, in reference to the following Discourse, the Reader may be pleased to take notice, that in one of their private Conventicles at White-Chappel, on Saturday October 19, 1661. *John James* a pretended Preacher to that Society, a Silk Weaver by Trade [mind that] took his Text out of the 8th. Psalm and second verse; the words these, *Out of the mouths of Babes and Sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.* From whence he raised several Doctrines, which alluded to Seditions and Rebellions, as appeared by the testimony of some witnesses, who being then present, departed the place, and acquainted the next Justice of Peace with it; upon which information, the said Justice sent for some Officers, and immediately came to the place where this Conventicle was, where they found the afore-named *John James* in the full height of his Seditious exercise; and making their approach near him, they commanded him to come down, he boldly answered, he would not, unless they pulled him down; whereupon an Officer took hold of his Coat, forcing him to decline his station; and was thereupon carried before the Right Worshipful

(3)

Sir John Robinson Lieutenant of the Tower of London, where was laid to his charge many traitorous expressions, uttered in his private Conventicle against the present Power and Government; for which, the Lieutenant told him *he would stretch for it*: And in order thereunto his Mittimus was made to be sent to Newgate, where he remained till the 19th of this instant Novem, being Wednesday, from whence he was carried to the Kings Bar in Westminster Hall, and there arraigned for preaching maliciously and traitorously against the life and safety of our Sovereign Lord the King, and against the peace and Government of the whole Realm, &c. But this is observable, that upon his coming to the Bar, and being commanded to hold up his hand, according to the ancient Law of England, he yielded obedience thereunto, but with his Glove on, which the Court perceiving, he was commanded to pull it off, saying, That he held up his hand as a testimony, that he was there present, to answer what that Honourable Court had to lay to his charge, &c. But to evade circumstances:

The Charge of High Treason being read, wherein he was accused, to Act, Plot, and Conspire, against His Royal Majesties Sacred person, to be instrumental of levying a New War, and that he should say, That if ever they could get the Power into their own hands (which God forbid) that they would cast off all Monarchy, and perfect the work formerly began thoroughly.

(4)

This and much more was made apparent and attested by several Witnesses; amongst whom, Mr. Tipler a Tobacco-pipe maker, made Oath, That he heard the said John James publickly declare at his private Conventicle in *White-chapple*, That *the Cup of Iniquity was filled more fuller by the blood of the Saints at Cherring-Cross a twelve moneth last, and by the blood of the Saints in Scotland to wit, the Covenanters, then it had in many years before, and that a sudden ruine and destruction would befall the Authors thereof.*

Thus did this sad Soul justify those Bloody Murderers, who for their horrid impieties were executed for their most notorious and wicked Treasons, and seemed to justify himself, pleading innocency: But this, and much more being fully proved by several Witnesses, before the Lord Chief Justice *Foster*, and the rest of the Justices of that Court, he was brought in *Guilty of High Treason*; which he seemed very obstinately to evade; for when it was demanded by the Honourable Court, *Who he would be tried by* He answered, *By the Lawes of God.* The Lord Chief Justice told him, *He must answer according to Law, otherwise he must be recorded for a Mute.* The Clerk then telling him, he must answer, *By God and his Countrey*, he desired to know what the meaning of that was; it was answered, *That by God was meant the Lawes of the Land, and by Countrey, twelve Middlesex men for his Jury, honest, and just, to deal impartially between the Kings most excellent Majesty and the Charge against the Prisoner at the Bar.* whereupon he replied, *that he was satisfied:* And the Jury going out, he desired them to be tender of spilling of Innocent blood; but finding the evidence of the Witness so clear
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and apparent, he was brought in *Guiltly of High Treason*, and soon after received Sentence to be Drawn, Hang- ed and Quartered. Which was accordingly put in executi- on on Tuesday last; being drawn upon a Sledge from New- gate to Tyburn: who upon his coming thither, was set up in a Cart right under the Gallows, where standing upright with his hat off, and a Sattin Cap upon his head, he ad- dressed himself to the Sheriff who was in his Coach close by) desiring to know what time he might have allowed him, the Sheriff told him he might take what time he thought good in reason, provided he spake nothing that was seditious, which he promised he should not, nor had he, as he said, the least intention or desire so to do. Then one of his friends giving him somewhat in a Glasse to drink, he took it and drank, and then began his speech in the manner as followeth.

First of all, I desire to clear my self of an aspersi- on cast upon me, and reported up and down, that I am a Jesuite: to which I answer, I was born in *England*, and never out of it since I was born; I understand no other Tongue, which will argue me very unfit to be a Jesuite; besides, I am a man but of weak parts, and those that are imployed for such, are commonly very learned and knowing men: I am born of very mean Parents, and I may say as *Gideon* did, *Judges 6. 15. Behold my Family is poor, and I am the least in my Fathers House*: I came indeed of a mean Family, the meanest that I know among the people of God, but my Parents were very careful to have me brought up in the fear of God; yea they were so careful, that I verily think, that my Father when he died, had not the least to trouble his Con- science for that; the like I may say of my Mother, who is still living, and attaining to a good old age.

The second thing I shall speak of, is about my Religion, I am of that Religion mentioned in the sixth of the *He- brews*, the second Verse, I am a Baptist, in which way I have walked

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walked some time: I believe the Resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement: I also own all the Commandements, as they are laid down in the 20 Chapter of Exodus, and I dare not to break one of them to save my life: I am for the seventh days sabbath, as it is commanded in the 4th Commandement.

Then desiring some time for prayer, he prayed to this effect.

Most gracious Lord God, in whose sight all the Nations of the Earth, is but as a drop of a Bucket, I beseech thee in mercy look upon thy poor Creature here before thee, blessed be thy holy Name, that such a poor worm as I am, can call thee Father, bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Lord I am now a coming to thee, send down thy holy Angels to convey my Soul into *Abrahams Bosom*.

Then the Executioner asking him if he had any more to say to the people, he answered, he had not, he being very weak in body, was spent: then he stood a little time praying privately, and lifting up his hands, when he had done, he gave the Sheriff thanks for his courtesie, and then told the Executioner he had done; upon which, he put the Rope about his neck, and just as the Cart was drawn off, he lift up his hands and cryed out, O Lord receive my Soul.

FINIS.

