

SABBATH HISTORY

The story of Seventh-Day Sabbath keepers through the ages

How China almost became a Sabbath-Keeping Nation!

In southern China in the late 1840's a unique brand of Christianity emerged - the Taiping Movement. Millions accepted its leadership, but foreign 'Christian' missionaries rejected it.

The Taipings revered the Torah and adopted the seventh day Sabbath! This is the story of one man's search for God. It is the corruption of that search by the counsel of politically motivated associates. It is also the story of an attempt to bring a better life to the people of China and how that quest was thwarted.

Who were the Taipings? Is it easier for us to see their mistakes than our own? What might the world be like today if they had been successful?

Leon J Lyell

Many regard China as a homogenous society, which has existed in monolithic security for millennia. Such is not the case. In many ways it can be compared to Europe as both 'nations' encompass many cultural and dialect groups, which while

related are not homogenous. Recent research supports the view that the various Chinese 'dialects' are more like separate languages than is commonly supposed.

Many may be surprised to learn that Confucius (551-479 BC), who worked for the King of Zhou as an advisor on good government, decried the 'barbarians' outside of his own province. The parallel in European history would be the traditional animosity between various European 'countries'. The major difference in this regard is that Europe has never been able to sustain forced 'unification' for long

The forced unification of China under Qin ["Chin"] Shihuang in the third century BC was very successful at one level. Qin unified the 'country' by burning the cultural relics and books and wiping out the different written forms of these languages. All that

remained were the differing spoken forms of each language. This Napoleonic like figure of the first millennium BC imposed his iron will on the country and is credited with building the 'Great Wall'. While his reign encouraged the development of a particular state-sponsored culture the provincial varieties were destroyed as were many records of an earlier period of mankind.

Many 'dialect' groups have survived as 'provinces'. The records which do survive of the earlier period include references to stories of the flood and of family groupings which seemed more in tune with their environment and 'Heaven' or God, known to the ancient Chinese as 'Shangdi' the God above Heaven. Many later writers would try to recapture this earlier period of innocence, when men walked with their creator and understood the precepts of Heaven. *(continued on page 6)*

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Editorial

What use is history? It can't, of itself, teach good doctrine. Nor should it! Each of us must find our own way through the arguments about the nature of God, the purpose of life, or whether and how to observe the Sabbath. We can take the advice and counsel of good friends, read, study, research and seek the Wisdom of the Creator. History has a place in this quest. Reading history is like asking a friend for their opinion. We may or may not agree with 'that way' of seeing things. But we may of course learn from it.

The historian seeks out an ever-truer picture of 'what happened' or 'the way things were'. This role itself is ever changing. We discover more pieces of information about the past. But we can only make sense of it by 'selecting' pieces of the past which speak to us in some way. Our interest in the past is changing as well. Each time we look at the past we are looking with a different perspective.

We must be honest in seeking out our doctrinal answers. We must be just as honest when we make use of history. More than that we must try to see the history of our own church group or religious traditions as they are. [And we must do what we can to preserve them - but that is the subject of another article!]

Learning about other Sabbath keepers will not, of itself, convince us to become Sabbath keepers - nor should it! But once convinced about the Sabbath, learning of others who did likewise should make us better as people - and as Sabbath keepers. That is where the lessons lie - and that is why truth is better than fiction.

Church history must be truthful to be of any use. It must be set against the broader backdrop of the history of its time. In taking this approach, let us not overrate our own 'orthodoxy'. Let us not 'whitewash' our past. Too many denominational histories have toned down the eccentricities and aberrations of the past.

Let us not be angry with the eccentrics of the past when they don't conform to our image. We may not know what made them the way they were; and in our mature years we may think of the eccentricities of our own youth! How very plain is a church history which is all 'black and white' - whitewashing our heroes and denigrating the others. How unbiblical!

Truth is more colourful - and more costly - to uncover, whether in doctrine or history. Our faith and loyalty should be controlled by what the historian E G Rupp called 'an imaginative charity and love of truth'. This view of history has an eye for the shades, twilights, fading colours and changing perspective of the past. It will help us understand our present also. The future belongs to those who have learned to remember. Is this not one of the lessons of the Sabbath itself?

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Renewal in the Work of God

This article provides an insight into two eras of Sabbath keeping Christians - the age of Peter Waldo and the more recent 'new beginnings' of the United Church of God. Both eras have looked to the Bible for their inspiration and both have something to teach us all!

Jacques le Hou'dec

One day in AD. 1155 a young man marched confidently down the rocky slopes of the Alps. From his accent it was clear that he came from the *Pagis Waldensis*, the lands forming the Alpine region of Vaud. When asked where he was going, he replied, 'I'm going to Lyons to seek my fortune.' And fortune he found. Within 10 years he was a wealthy merchant, clad in silk. He had become 'the rich burgher of Lyons,' also known as Peter Waldo, after the region of his birth.

On another day, this time in 1173, while walking home with a group of business associates, Peter witnessed one of his friends fall to the ground without warning. The man had suddenly died. Deeply troubled, Peter wondered what his fate would be if the same thing should happen to him. This questioning was at the origin of the great spiritual adventure of the Waldensians.

Peter had portions of the Bible translated into French, something that had never been done before. This allowed common people to read the Scriptures. Armed with these French translations and with his zeal for Christ, Peter began preaching. He conducted this work with the same good sense that had guided him to success in business.

By the time Peter was a respected old man of 80 years, he had visited many groups of faithful followers. He saw with joy that the work which had begun with two or three friends had become a great movement. France, England, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Hungary, Germany, Bohemia it seemed that every corner of the earth had its group of Waldensians, living by the precepts of Christ.

But in 1532, at a synod in the city of Chanforans in Savoy, the Waldensian ministry chose to adhere to the tenets of the Protestant Reformation (*Chronique de l'Humaniti*, Paris, 1986, p.486). History records: 'The Waldensians, whose sect began in the 12th century, came of their own volition to this religion

[Protestantism], which was gaining more and more followers' (from *Chronique de la France et des Francais*, Paris, 1987, p.337). Betrayed by their ministry, the Waldensians, whether they wanted to or not, became Protestant. However, a few remained faithful to their beliefs; they moved to England and joined the disciples of Walter Lollard, a Waldensian preacher who had gone to England around 1315.

In considering the great spiritual renewal started by Peter Waldo, we might be tempted to think that, although it was wonderful, in the end it didn't do any real good. After all, didn't it finish as a failure? It might seem that way from a human point of view.

In the course of human history, and religious history in particular, there have been many new beginnings, with new zeal for God, the way of God, and the truth of God. That's the problem there have been many. Too many, if we consider things from a purely physical point of view. When Moses, a zealous spiritual leader, took Israel out of Egypt, the people were overflowing with a new energy and enthusiasm for God. We can read the great hymn of joy they sang after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15). It was a wonderful new beginning.

Forty years later, under Joshua, another renewal was necessary. Like Moses, Joshua was entirely devoted to God and His truth. He also was a great spiritual leader. The needed renewal occurred (Joshua 8:30-35). In Joshua 22 through 24 we see how zealous Israel was for God; note especially Joshua 24:31. But when we read the beginning of Judges, we see that the renewal had died out (Judges 2:10). So what good was it having a Moses and a Joshua?

The religious countryside is full of high summits and deep crevasses. The period of the judges is a succession of short-lived renewals. When on Mount Carmel the people shouted, 'The Eternal is God!' there were probably a few shaking their heads and saying it wouldn't last. In one sense, they were right.

The preaching of John the Baptist was like the refreshing coolness of the evening after the torrid heat of the day. For 400 long years there hadn't been a prophet. Huge crowds came to hear him speak on the banks of the Jordan. Then John was imprisoned and beheaded.

Along came Jesus of Nazareth with a small group of followers. There were probably many who watched to see what would become of *this* new movement. Some undoubtedly shook their heads when they saw the Master on the cross.

Then there was Pentecost, another new beginning. The first chapters of the book of Acts show the amazing results of the apostles preaching. Soon though, disciples were martyred. Stephen and then James were killed. The disciples were dispersed. There were, no doubt, some who said, 'I told you so; it was all for nothing.'

Why all these new beginnings? Since the renewals all seem to end in failure, why do some stubbornly keep trying to accomplish a spiritual work? Why not just live your own faith for yourself, and leave it at that?

In the first half of this century there was another new beginning, just as there had been so many times before. As with Peter Waldo, Herbert Armstrong used the same good sense that had guided him to success in business to accomplish a great work. At the apex of the work, there were few areas in the world where there weren't at least a few members of the Church of God. Then we suffered our 'Chanforans.'

Today we want to start over. We have begun a renewal. We are involved in a new beginning. It would be surprising if there weren't a few people shaking their heads and saying, 'This will end just like all the other times; I'll just wait and see.' But even if this new beginning does one day end like the others, would that mean that the head shakers are right? That renewal is useless? That it isn't necessary to participate?

When you preserve the truth of God - when you live it and share it - could that ever be useless? When Christ died on the cross, He seemed to the world to be a failure. But to God, Christ's death was actually a great victory. We see one part of one situation at one precise moment, and draw erroneous conclusions

because we can only see a small section of the great divine tapestry being woven. The work of God on earth cannot be judged in such a limited way.

The early days of the Church saw amazing growth (Acts 6:7). But before long came a terrible persecution, and everything seemed to fall apart (Acts 8:1-3). This was hard for people who had their hearts in the Church. Some probably thought: The Church doesn't exist any more! I don't understand why God is allowing this! Some of my friends have given up - others have gone back to Judaism. I'm not going to get involved in anything like that again!

But it hadn't all fallen apart! Acts 11:19-26 shows that instead of being limited to Judea, Galilee and Samaria as it had been, the Church grew out into Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, and Cyrene in Libya. Some of these became strategic bases for Paul's later missionary journeys.

Why was all this growth possible? It was because those who were scattered did not believe the Church was finished. They weren't able to predict what would happen next, but they knew they had a treasure that they didn't want to keep to themselves - indeed that they *couldn't* keep to themselves.

John D. Rockefeller was persuaded that his immense fortune was a gift from God, for the good of humanity. The well-known philanthropist explained: 'I believe that the ability to make money is a gift to develop and to use as best one can, for the good of humanity. Having been entrusted with this gift, I believe it is my duty to make money and to use it for the good of my fellowman, guided by the voice of my conscience.' (from *Le Secret des Millionnaires*, C H Godefroy, Chantilly, 1990, p.290).

What about us? Is our conscience telling us anything? Have we not been entrusted with a gift? Do we not consider the gospel a gift from God?

John Rockefeller reminds me, in this respect, of a man in the Bible - another man who considered himself to be in debt to his fellowman: Paul felt he owed something to mankind. Romans 1:14 is rendered differently in various translations and versions, but the essence of what Paul says is this: I'm a debtor to all people in the non-Jewish world - I have a debt and I want to pay it. Paul understood that the

gospel had been given to him so that he could live by it and receive salvation through it. But that was not all. He had also been given the gospel so that others could receive those same blessings.

What if someone had asked Paul, 'Why the sense of urgency? You see all the opposition you face. You see how you are forgotten in prison. What lasting result will there be from all your efforts, your sacrifices, your sufferings?'

Paul would have replied that the lasting result was not his responsibility. He no doubt hoped it would all last and prosper, of course, but in his view he had a debt, and he felt compelled to pay that debt. Paul knew that receiving the gospel placed him under a moral obligation to share it with others.

The Church doesn't have a choice. It is in debt to the world. Not because the world gave it something, but because God gave to the Church something for the world: God gave to the Church the gospel for the world.

Paul felt an obligation. But that wasn't the real starting point of his zeal for the work of God. The origin of his energy and ardour was gratitude. In Ephesians 3:6-7 Paul explained that he didn't see his mission as an obligation, although it was one. He saw it as 'a gift of the grace of God', a privilege, a blessing. Paul heard the pleas of desperate people in need of the truth (Acts 16:6-9). His heart went out to them, and he energetically sought to deliver the message to them (verse 10). He wasn't only thinking with his head - he was *also* thinking with his heart.

Do we hear the pleas of desperate people today? The news is full of desperation. We all have images in our minds of men, women, and children suffering - crying out in atrocious and bitter desperation. What can we do? What do we have that can help the desperate? We have the gospel.

Some may be thinking that, although the world wants help, it doesn't want God. That's partially true. But something else is completely true: *God* wants the world. He gave His only begotten Son for it. God wants all to receive the gospel, and all the desperate of the world to be saved.

How much time will that take? How much will result

from our work? Those are not questions we need to ask. We plant the seed. God knows when and how to cause the growth. Peter says that there is a day when God will visit everyone (1 Peter 2:12). At that time the fruits of our work will appear.

The important question for us to ask is: Why do we do what we do? When we read 1 Corinthians 9:16-17, we see that we can do it willingly or against our will. We can do the work motivated either by our hearts or by our heads. Paul was motivated by his heart. He could put himself in the shoes of those to whom he spoke (v. 19-21). He put himself in the shoes of the Jews, of the gentiles, of the weak. He could identify with those who needed the message - the desperate.

The mission of the gospel is to bring help to the desperate. Not because the world loves God, but because God loves the world. We must love the world as God does.

We sometimes measure the success of our activities by the number of people who become part of the Church. That is not the only way to measure things. Love doesn't count by numbers of people who join. Love counts how much help and relief is given to the desperate. Other measurements are invisible to us. Only God can see them.

We don't have the choice of whether or not to do the work of the gospel. But we do have the choice of doing a work of intelligence without love (by obligation), or of doing a work of love with intelligence. If we choose to do a work of love, we won't ask whether a new beginning is necessary, or whether we need to renew the work, or whether this renewal will finish like so many have done before.

God has the power to preserve the gift. He preserved it until our time. He will preserve it after us. Our part, since the gospel has been entrusted to us, is to share it with other people - with all people. Our responsibility is not to judge men, but to deliver to them a message of hope that brings them a little relief in their distress - to let them know that for them, too, God has in store something wonderful.

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(continued from page 1)

One unusual dialect group were the Hakka - or 'guest people'. While sometimes regarded as outcasts, they survived mainly in the south but the language and customs show distinct traces of northern Chinese speech and style. Their women did not have their feet bound for example; which is consistent with their nomadic past. It was amongst this group that the only Chinese 'home grown' variety of Christianity would emerge.

Despair of the Nineteenth Century

The China of the 1840s was a very different place from the visions of that early 'Eden'. The country was in a state of economic, social and political turmoil. The drainage of silver to pay for the import of opium and the new lines of trade which were opening up along the southern coast upset the local economies and put many peasants out of work.

A severe famine brought on by natural disasters, combined with the oppression by landlords and tax collectors, caused many of the dispossessed to join marauding gangs of bandits. Many others left their homeland to seek fortunes in far away places, including the far away 'gold mountains' of California and Australia.

When local authorities sought to restore order at the behest of the distant Manchu government, the unrest took an anti-dynastic turn. Many were upset at the corruption of the Government and its vacillation in the face of foreign influence and were outraged at the spread of corruption and the rise of opium use. The Government

had failed Heaven and the Country. It was weak, indecisive and corrupt. As had been the case many times in China's past, the time was ripe for a new religion or ideology - and a new Emperor.

The 'Taiping Tienguo' (The Great Peaceful Kingdom of Heaven) was a movement to step into the vacuum. Its leader was a young Hakka man born in southern China in 1814, Hong Xiuquan. At first he knew nothing of God or the Bible. Let us look at his earlier life and what led to the establishment of the Taiping Movement.

Who was Hong Xiuquan?

In common with many of his generation Hong sought to make a better life by sitting for the civil service exams. He travelled to the large port city of Canton for the exam. While he was there he came into contact with some of the many Christian missionaries seeking to sow in the Chinese field. Although they seem to have made no lasting impression on him, it may have been at this time that the avid student collected various tracts.

Hong made three attempts to pass the exams and three times he failed. It was a bitter and humiliating blow - and a failure well-known to his community who had pinned such hopes on him. As a result, in 1837, Hong suffered a nervous breakdown and was bed-ridden for forty days. During this time he had a vision in which he was carried to heaven. There he was confronted by an old man who identified himself as the Creator. He was commanded to exterminate evil demons and was given a large sword for this

purpose. In the vision he saw Confucius being rebuked for failing to keep mankind from worshipping demons. He also saw another prominent person, referred to as the 'Elder Brother', who exhorted him to be zealous in killing demons. However, the vision puzzled him and he did not know what it meant.

On recovery he spent the next six years teaching school in or near his native village, and by all accounts did the job very well. In 1843, his cousin Li borrowed his religious tracts and on returning them remarked on their unusual contents. This motivated Hong to study them for the first time in the six years that he had them. Suddenly the meaning of his earlier vision became clear to him! The old man was God, the elder brother was Jesus and the demons were the multitude of idols worshipped in China. Not only that, it seemed that God has given Hong a mission - to exterminate the idols and lead China to believe in the teachings of Jesus!

Hong and his cousin baptised each other - by immersion - and began to proclaim their new message. A large number were convinced including two distant cousins, Hong Rengan and Feng Yushan. They became iconoclastic zealots, destroying idols and abandoning long professed religious rites. Feng began preaching in a nearby town and won several thousand converts, largely amongst the Hakka people, and organised them into an assembly called 'God-worshippers' (*Bai-Shangdi-Hui*). Is this not the essence of the phrase 'church of God'?

Now at this stage Hong had not

seen a Bible, he had only read religious tracts and portions of the Bible translated roughly into Chinese. About this time he heard that there was a preacher in Canton who preached the doctrine he espoused, it was the eccentric Baptist missionary Issachar J Roberts. Hong sought him out and spent about two months with him learning all he could of Biblical religion. There were problems, however. Language problems and the fact that some of Robert's closest advisors were jealous of Hong's zeal and religious experience in the form of his visions, meant that the two could not walk together.

Taiping Movement Begins

Hong returned home disappointed but continued with what he knew, with his study of the Bible, and his task of preaching. He was a man of high moral standards - very strict in his own conduct and demanding of others. Apprehensive local authorities regarded the 'God-worshippers' as a religious movement, but were disturbed at its often violent iconoclasm. However, within a short period the movement began to take a stance against the ruling dynasty in order to deal with the many problems faced by members and others whom they tried to help. It was impossible not to blame the corruption and lack of vision of the central Manchu government for the predicament of the country.

Many who were not converted sought the protection of the 'God-Worshippers'. At this point the purpose of the movement broadened and its structure was expanded to include others who did not necessarily share Hong's

quest for God. Experts and 'consultants' were engaged whose focus was not the original religious aims of the group. An 'army'/police force was formed to help with the task but Hong insisted on stringent moral code of conduct.

These expanded activities and explosion of co-worker membership lead to the inclusion of many with questionable motives or whose motives were primarily political. In January 1851, the 'army' was engaged in armed conflict with the corrupt forces of the Manchu dynasty. Hong was convinced to take the title *Tian Wang* 'Heavenly King' and referred to his movement as *Taiping Tianguo* - Great Peaceful Kingdom of Heaven. The phrase is interesting and tells us something about the movement.

What does the name mean?

The term *Taiping* had an ancient history. It described a utopian age when mankind would return to the period of ancient wisdom - the period when they worshipped the only God *Shangdi* in spirit and in truth. Hong emphasised that accepting 'God-worshipping' was a return to the purity of religion of China's ancestors rather than a foreign imported religion. *Tian-Guo* or 'Kingdom of Heaven' was taken directly from the Bible. Rather than mixing two different concepts, it seems to me to be a way of reinforcing the same concept as *Taiping*, pointing out that this key Biblical concept had a long tradition in ancient Chinese writings.

Those who joined had to pledge loyalty to the Heavenly King and follow the laws of the Kingdom,

essentially the laws of the *Torah*. The growing movement had become a powerful magnet for anyone with religious economic or political complaints and moved from its base in Guangxi Province taking Nanjing, the old Southern Capital and took control of vast tracts of central China. Tens of millions were prepared to accept the leadership of the Peaceful Kingdom of Heaven! This was a significant period of Chinese history and a critical time in the development of the nation.

Tragic Demise

Nanjing had become the 'rebel' capital and foreign governments sent emissaries contemplating official recognition. The records of these visits show that the English, French and Americans were impressed with the moral vigour of the Taipings but put off by Hong's 'uncompromising' attitude. The foreigners were not pleased, as though the central government in Beijing (Peking) was obviously corrupt and in need of propping up, it was very open to influence.

From 1856 to 1863 the Taipings were increasingly plagued by internal dissention, external suspicion about the purity of their Christianity, and their poor relations with foreign powers whose support they needed. One point of contention was that they upset trade by refusing to deal in opium! In 1864 they were defeated by a combination of Chinese and Western forces.

In 1862, at the height of their influence, the 'God-worshippers' apparently numbered some 85,000! Beyond that some 45 million had yielded themselves to

the 'Peaceful Kingdom of Heaven'! The Kingdom itself covered an area of some 90,000 square miles.

The heartless massacre of the Taipings and their supporters was a tremendous human tragedy; a tragedy which would be repeated several times before China found its way almost a hundred years later.

The demise of the Taiping movement can be traced to a number of causes. One was its failure to obtain a working alliance with the many anti-Manchu groups, which were did not like Hong's opposition to idol worship. Some were not happy because Hong was determined to create a new kingdom rather than recreate a traditional Chinese kingdom. More critical, however, was the fact that the Taipings could not obtain the support of the Western powers. England and America, for example originally adopted a neutral stance because their treaty privileges were dependant on the continuance of the corrupt Manchu dynasty.

Many foreigners opposed the Taipings, not because of their moral strength and the fact that they were cleaning up the country, but because they objected to the Taiping brand of Christianity. Was Taiping religion was Christian or not? The debate has raged from the time Hong first appeared! Nonetheless, the question is worth considering as it came close to becoming the official religion of China! How sad it would be if Taiping religion had the potential to be more 'Christian' than traditional Christianity and how much sadder

of the 'Christian' nations were lured into destroying it and the millions of people who may have benefitted.

Taiping Christianity

There is no doubt that the Taipings sought to create a theocracy. Their constitution insisted on high moral standards, church attendance, and compassion towards the needy. For example, opium smoking, the use of tobacco and wine, prostitution, foot-binding, the sale of slaves, gambling and polygamy were all forbidden. Hong tried to model his government on the precepts of the Books of Moses to the extent that he understood these.

But what exactly was Hong's message? Do we have enough evidence to make our own judgement about whether his form of religion was Biblical? Where his beliefs differ from ours, how much of that is due to difference of culture and how much is about a substantial difference of understanding of the Word of God?

Remember that in the West we often assume that many customs are Biblical when in fact investigation proves this to be false. Remember too that in Hong's village the Bible as a single volume was simply not available. The other problem for Hong was that there were no reliable translations. One thing is certain, Hong did his best to adapt his life to the Biblical precepts which he had. Most of his religious concepts came from his own reading of the Bible.

So, how did Hong obtain his

beliefs and what exactly were they?

The prime source for Hong was the material he received on his earliest visits to Canton. Equally significant was the Bible translated by Gutzlaff. One observer of the day, Thomas Meadows, remarked that 'The Bible is his highest standard' amongst the Taipings. Traditional scholarship in China looked to the 'Four books and the Five Classics', and these formed the basis of the civil service exams. Hong did not abandon the best scholarship of the past, but he believed that if these books differed from the Bible in some way it was either because the Chinese classics had been misunderstood or because the classics themselves were wrong.

In Hong's kingdom, the civil service exam was based on the Bible!

In response to the accusation that he was simply following foreign ways, Hong replied that:

[Those who accuse us of this] do not know that in the ancient world monarchs and subjects alike all worshipped the Great God. As for the great Way or worshipping the Great God, from the very beginning, when the Great god created in six days heaven and earth, mountains and seas, man and things, both China and the barbarian countries of the west have continuously walked in the great Way. China also walked in the great Way,

but within the most recent one or two thousand years, China has erroneously followed the devil's path...[Michael II, p 113- 114]

Major Beliefs

It must be stated at the outset that as with all religious groups, it would be wrong to paint a picture of static beliefs. Understandings developed and one of the sad matters to contemplate is to consider where the Taiping belief system might have ended up if it been allowed to flourish. The other fact to consider is that once the movement became a political force, it is clear that some Taiping leaders used their religious positions to control the political direction of their followers, many of whom were not interested in becoming 'God-worshippers'. The directions of Hong's earlier period would seem to be the purer and form the background to Hong's adoption of the seventh day Sabbath.

God

The Taipings emphasised monotheism. There was only one God and his name was *Shangdi*, a term going back to the most ancient times in Chinese history. The phrase 'Jehovah' seems not to have been used in Taiping literature, however this may be because of a misunderstanding of a phrase *Shenyehuo* in a translation of the Bible by Morrison. Hong analysed the name to mean *Shenye* - 'God-Father' and *Huo* which Hong took to be God's given name. Hong objected to the Protestant missionaries emphasis on God as being formless and emphasised

that man was made in God's image.

Much of Taiping teaching about God came from the Pentateuch, which along with the book of Joshua is apparently all that they published of the Old Testament. Their understanding of history from the creation to the giving of the law was therefore excellent as was their acceptance of the lessons from that part of the Bible.

One of Hong's innovations was to see God as a family! Not entirely in the same way as Herbert Armstrong saw the concept, but there are some similarities and some differences. Here the strong emphasis on family life in Chinese culture can be seen as influential along with Hong's dislike of the argument of Christian missions that God was not anthropomorphic and the Chinese educated elite that the Great God was a non-personal 'ultimate principle'.

Hong saw God as the Father, Jesus was the first son, but Hong himself was a younger brother of Jesus. Both Hong as a son of heaven had a wife and this pattern was seen as repeated in heaven where God the Father had a wife also.

Before we condemn this latter notion as absurd, think for a moment about the difficulty on conceptualising the notion of the trinity, which Hong decried as meaningless. Above all Hong searched for a way of understanding God. He insisted that God could be understood and sought to understand Him in simple terms.

Sin

The Ten Commandments were the standard by which the whole community was expected to live. The Taipings quoted from them extensively and wrote commentaries on them which adding references from Chinese proverbs and other writings.

For example a commentary on the Ten Commandments has these comments:

'The Ten Heavenly Commandments were established by the Great God.

'The First heavenly Commandment: Thou shall honour and worship the Great God.

'The great God is the Universal Father of all nations of the world. All men are given birth and nourished by him, all men are protected by him and all men ought, therefore to worship him respectfully morning and evening, and to acknowledge his grace. There is a common saying, "Produced by Heaven, nourished by Heaven, and Protected by Heaven"...'[Michael II, 119-120]

The seventh Commandment was expanded to; 'Thou shall not commit adultery or be licentious.' The Commentary makes it clear that the commandment includes 'the casting of amorous glances...', which is consistent with the commentary of Christ himself on the subject.

Sin was thus breaking of the Law of Heaven, but while the Chinese classics often spoke of 'Heaven' as an impersonal principle, the Taipings recognised that Heaven was worthy of worship. From the beginning God had sought to rescue humanity from its sin. God sent Israel the Ten Commandments and when mankind later 'fell into misery', Heaven sent:

'[The] first born son, the Heavenly elder brother, Jesus down into the world to save mankind and to suffer extreme misery and grief in order to redeem mankind's sins... If men did but know the basis of their redemption, consisting in the sacrifice of his life for the salvation of the world, they would be able to estimate how worthy of all honour our Heavenly Elder Brother is; still more would they feel that our Heavenly Father ought constantly to be regarded with pious reverence.' [Michael II, 239-240].

Not only had God commissioned ancient Israel and His Son, in these latter times he had commissioned Hong:

'From whose coming the true doctrine began to be clearly manifest. Wisdom and intelligence endowed by Heaven far exceeded the common order; His disposition is benevolent and preserving the correct. he upholds

Heaven's command; With rewards and punishments clearly distinguished, Heaven's law is manifest. [Michael II, p 243]

Heaven's law was concretely manifest in the initial Taiping conquests in establishing the 'heavenly capital' in Nanjing.

Dealing with sin involved a strong measure of putting out sin and replacing sin with obedience to the Law. In promoting good character, Hong promoted rectitude and morality which had been emphasised in the Chinese classics. The 'God-worshippers' had to practice righteousness.

Because of this emphasis some had discounted the Taiping movement an non-Christian because they believed in 'original goodness' instead of the traditional view of 'original sin'. To some extent this is a false argument as it represents a difference of emphasis.

Gaps in our knowledge

There is much that we do not know about the Taiping Movement and a number of contradictions in what we do 'know'. In a large movement involving millions of people which came into being and rose to prominence in a short period of time, this should not be a surprise. One interesting source is a brief interview with one of Hong's fellow kings, Hong Renkan. His title was 'Kan-Wang' and he was perhaps better educated than many of his fellows 'kings'. Some very useful information come from this interview which is of interest to us.

Religious Observances

Baptism was probably the most important ceremony, and was used to picture freedom from sin. Candidates came to a table on which were placed two lamps and three cups of tea. A previously written confession of sins was burned. Candidates then had to agree orally not to worship demons or commit acts of evil. They pledged to follow the Laws of Heaven. Then water was poured over their head and they said, 'My sin is washed away. I have put aside the old man and am now made new.' They then rose and went to the river where they were immersed, calling on God to forgive them.

Taipings observe the seventh day Sabbath

The seventh day Sabbath was carefully observed. On Fridays a large flag was displayed, signalling the approach of the Sabbath. Its observance began at sunset on Friday. The service was one of worship, celebrated in traditional Chinese mode with cakes and fruit, and exposition of the Bible, and was held at midnight.

Sacrifices of animals, delicacies, tea and rice were offered in a tradition somewhat reminiscent of the Old Testament. These were not intended to 'gain merit' as was often the case in Chinese religious practice, as it was followed by a phrase acknowledging that it was through the 'merits of our Saviour and Heavenly Elder brother Jesus, who redeemed us from sin'. From this it seems clear that the Taiping sought to become perfect, there was no sense of earning salvation.

The Taiping Ceremonial

Regulations required the following:

Within [the court] and without, all the various officials and people must go every Sabbath to hear the expounding of the Holy Bible, reverently and offer their sacrifices and worship and praise the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God. On every seventh seven, the forty-ninth day, the Sabbath, the colonel, captains and lieutenants shall go in turn to the churches in which reside the sergeants under their commend and expound the Holy books, instruct the people, examine whether they obey the c o m m a n d m e n t s . . . ' [Michael II, p 320]

The custom of a special Sabbath every seven Sabbaths is an interesting one. Could this idea be derived in some way from a poor translation of Leviticus 23:15-16? Further research could uncover the answer. The King James translation of these verses read;

'And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days...'

And just in case there was any doubt about when the seventh day Sabbath was observed, in response to a question on this, the Hong

Renkan's response was:

'The Sabbath is observed by assembling at midnight for prayer and praise. When peace is restored, the Sabbath is to be strictly observed. It is kept on Saturday.' [Clarke and Gregory p 242]

As far as can be ascertained, while the traditional round of annual ceremonies of the Chinese calendar were not observed, there is no evidence that they observed any annual 'Christian' celebrations such as Christmas or Easter. Although they had a vigorous knowledge of the first five books at this stage I have found no clear evidence that they considered the place of the annual holy days of Leviticus 23 for example. One matter which is worthy of further investigation is a reference to the 'six festivals' observed by the Taiping. One of these was held on the 21 day of the second month, which I have assumed would coincide with the first month of the Hebrew calendar. The festival was ostensibly to celebrate Hong's enthronement, but in answer to the question 'What does this mean', Hong Renkan responded as follows:

'It is an attempt to make the time of the Saviour's crucifixion agree with that of the Tien-Wang's ["Heavenly King's = Hong] accession to his dignity. The Kan-Wang [=Hong Renkan] stated to his relative [that is Hong himself] that had formerly heard from Mr Hamburg that the Jewish Passover

occurred on the 24th. The Tien-Wang insisted on adopting the 21st, because the Chinese characters for two, ten and one together make up the character 'chu', lord.' [Clarke and Gregory p 243]

As mentioned above, I have found separate reference to the fact that every seventh-Sabbath there was a special 'examination' of how well each assembly was observing the commandments and senior officers of the Kingdom were required to expound the scriptures. These days would appear to be separate from the festivals referred to above as the festivals clearly fell on a particular day of the month rather than a specific day of the week. Again one hopes that further research can help with these questions.

In response to another question, the response was that the Taiping did not observe the Lord's Supper.

Commentary on the fourth commandment

It is interesting to try to get some feel for how the Taiping's approached the Bible. Following their translation of the ten commandments for example there were detailed explanations of the meanings of each commandment. These would often include reference to traditional Chinese classics or poems composed by Hong. The Tai-ping translation of the fourth commandment reads as follows:

'On the seventh day, the day of worship, thou shall praise the Great God for his grace and virtue. In the beginning, the Great

God made heaven and earth, land and sea, men and things, in six days, and having finished his works on the seventh day, he called it the day of rest. Therefore, all men of the world enjoy the blessing of the Great God, and should on every seventh day be especially reverent and should worship and praise the Great God for his grace and virtue.'

A poem is them quoted:

'All happiness enjoyed in the world comes from Heaven,
To praise His virtue and sing His merits is therefore natural.
At the morning and evening meal let there be Thanksgiving,
But upon the seventh-day, worship should be more devoted.'
[Michael II p 121]

Why did they keep the seventh day?

The Taiping Kingdom came up with its own calendar which was published each year. It was different from the traditional Western Calendar but also the traditional Chinese Calendar [which incidently is a lunar Calendar]. They initially adopted a 366 day year after the ancient Chinese *Book of History* and later corrected the dating error. There has been much speculation about who actually constructed the Taiping Calendar, though most are agreed that it was Feng Yun-shan, who would have had the training for the task. In assessing the

reasons for adopting the Sabbath, this is worth noting as Feng was one of Hong's early converts, a relative and a man who believed whole-heartedly in the religious values of the movement.

Early attempts by historians to reconstruct the Taiping Calendar and compare the dates to those on the Western Calendar kept failing. For a while no-one could work out why. Then painstaking research by two scholars, Kuo T'ing-i and Lo Erh-kang lead them to discover that a cyclical sign in the Taiping calendar occurred one day earlier than the same cyclical sign in the Chinese Imperial calendar. The reason was the Taiping's Sabbath had been assumed to be Sunday. But, when it was understood that the Taipings observed the Saturday-Sabbath the problem was solved.

But why did the Taiping adopt the seventh-day Sabbath? For some scholars this question is still not finally resolved. Kuo believed that the 'discrepancy' was an intentional error on the part of the Taiping's to confuse their enemies on the dates of troop movements. While this sounds like a plausible idea, the Taiping Calendar was not well enough known outside of their area of influence to make this a valid approach. More importantly Feng who put the calendar together was a man convinced of the need to observe the ten commandments.

Scholars next suggested that the discrepancy was simply a mistake after the Taipings occupied Nanjing or when they first prepared the Calendar. However one of the chief proponents of this theory, Lo, later changed his

mind. In the end he suggested that the origin of the idea was simple: the Taiping were following the teachings of the Old Testament in taking Saturday as the Sabbath day. No other explanation fits all the facts. Even granted that the Chinese did not have the concept of a week, it is absurd to suggest that once the idea was introduced that some one could 'lose count' on such an important matter!

The fact that the Sabbath was observed is beyond dispute and many copies of the Taiping calendars have survived and are in museums around the world. What a fascinating testament to the persistence of an idea which while rejected by much of Western Christianity was accepted without controversy by those taking a fresh look at the 'books of Moses' and the New Testament.

Weaknesses of Taiping Christianity

There were of course a number of 'weaknesses' with Taiping Christianity and it is incorrect to claim that Taiping Christianity was simply a Chinese variant of the Church of God which was flourishing in America. Their Bible was incomplete and the enthusiastic adoption of a political role allowed Hong's egotism to blur his original spiritual purity.

For example, while Hong was clearly convinced that God was one he regarded Christ was a step below in a sense as a created being. Hong himself was simply a younger brother of Jesus - a younger son of God. In time however this understanding was translated by political advisors into a belief in Hong's divinity, eventually claiming that he was

none other than Melchizedek. Such divine ancestry was clearly designed more to fortify his position of influence as a political force in China. It is not surprising that rival 'kings' within the Taiping movement also began to claim special revelations from God. And again the context of these claims is that literally tens of millions of people in China were looking to Hong to reform the nation, Many believing that the dynasties would change wanted to be sure that they were well secured within the new government.

Hong himself was not a good administrator and towards its latter years was given some support from within by Hong Rengan, who appears to have been more widely read in Christian literature and wished to introduce other useful western ideas such as trains, clocks, steamships and the like. But his intervention was too late to save the movement.

Many of the weaknesses of Taiping Christianity were the result of the poor influence of the Western missionaries. Basic terms were not explained and there was almost no understanding of the background from which Chinese audience would receive such concepts. Experienced teachers and a mature understanding of the scriptures were lacking.

While many of us may not be impressed with some of the reasons that Western missionaries denied that the Taiping movement was Christian, the key point is that it was a new faith. Author Franz Michael makes the point well:

The belief that united the members of the new society differed fundamentally from the vague Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian concepts used by the traditional societies. The members of the God Worshippers Society accepted a new religious faith, a faith quite contrary to all traditions of Chinese imperial society, a faith in a personal God and his guidance for one's personal salvation as well as in all matters of daily life and in the larger problem of economic, social and political affairs [I p 29].

Responses of missionaries

Not all missionaries were opposed to the Taiping movement and its form of Christianity. A number were convinced that the movement was in effect preparing the Chinese soil for a widespread turning to the real gospel. In this context some missionaries did attempt to influence Hong. But again many of these efforts were hampered by personality differences, cultural misunderstanding and the fact that most missionaries first wanted to 'correct' some notions. Many of the supposed errors of the Taipings were concepts which is was difficult to support Biblically. For example, the trinity doctrine and in particular the personality of the Holy Spirit were not accepted by the Taiping and for that reason it was often the first subject raised by Western missionaries. In many ways had there been appropriately trained representatives of those

from the Sabbatarian traditions, there may have been a better chance that Taiping Christianity would have developed. Instead, distrust and misunderstanding lead to a breakdown in real communication.

What might have happened?

This is an intriguing question. If we think at the progress which the Taipings made in their understanding of the God of the Bible and His ways in a short space of time, with an incomplete and poorly translated Bible, we can only wonder. The religious core of the early movement was it seems searching for the God who is ever willing to reveal himself those who diligently seek [Hebrews 11:6]. Who are we to judge whether they served the true God, who truly knows his own? For all of us our knowledge is partial - incomplete - the important thing is to follow up on what we know.

There are two sad lessons of course in the story. The first is that having set out with such vigour to draw near to God and to improve the lot of their country, the Taiping leadership appears to have been caught up in the politics of the world which for some then became an end in itself. The potential for power may have meant that the quest for truth came second. The other sad lesson is that those 'Christian' nations and their religious establishments in objecting to Taiping Christianity cut off all help to a movement which is successful would have seen an entirely new form of Christianity. Had it been permitted to follow the patterns of the past with regard to the changing of dynasties, China

would today be a Sabbath keeping nation. And after one hundred years of Sabbath keeping, where might that nation be today in its knowledge the Great God?

Such was not to be however, and the corrupt regime survived a little longer. Many lives were lost in the first half of this century as China suffered, a costly civil war, massive famine and economic hardship. While modern missionaries are again seeking entry China, we must not forget that the Bible itself can speak to men on its own as it were. If men have not the ears no amount of preaching can make him hear. At the same time, what was missing from the formula was a teacher prepared to make a commitment to the movement, swallow his pride and seek to understand where it was coming from. The Taiping episode is essentially a lost opportunity, which is unlikely to come again.

Napoleon is reputed to have remarked that China was a

sleeping giant, who when awoken would shake the world. China had to have a revolution. Without the intervention of the Western powers it could have been a revolution lead by Sabbath-keepers. But such was not to be and later revolutionaries, while acknowledging the social aims of the Taipings, forgot their religious motivations. The giant is now awake - how many of its modern citizens will look to their ancient past and see links with the stories of Genesis? How many of its 'nations' will find their own solutions to today's problems by searching the Bible? If they do, will the 'Western missionaries' lose a second opportunity?

Those who sought the 'peaceful kingdom of heaven' on earth have something to teach us all. Some of the lessons are obvious, some are yet to be understood...

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Of interest is Hoeh, H L 'The Dramatic Story of Chinese Sabbath Keepers' *The Good News* December 1955, pp 5-7, which was kindly located by Michael Vetter of the Sabbath Research Centre.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Many further lines of further investigation are obvious. I should be grateful if any readers could help with any of the following:

- Did any of the 'God-Worshippers' survive in China after the Manchu victory?
- What of the history of Sabbath keepers in China at earlier periods?
- What is the story of Sabbath keepers in China today?

Research Notes

Monitoring the Changes in the WCG

I have summarised my monitoring of changes in WCG in a paper of 36 pages. This was from 2 lever arch folders of notes and material plus 4 more folders of articles and papers. I hope to bring this up-to-date soon. The latest material is in handwriting. Could someone type up the last 3 1/2 years of notes and make changes on the

original? The typist can also suggest an inclusion of other changes. The paper is in a chronological, not subject, format. It is on disk and can be sent to the typist along with a hard copy in Word or WordPerfect. Any takers?
- Craig Martin White.

Wild tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley

I have been trying for years to get my hands on LA

Waddell's book *Wild Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley*. Can anyone assist?
- Craig Martin White, PO Box 864, Sydney, Australia 2001. +61 2 9745-2964
craigwh1@pop.ozonline.com.au

Articles wanted!

Sabbath History is interested in good writers able to prepare well researched articles dealing with the history of

Sabbath-keeping. If you haven't been published elsewhere, don't worry! This newsletter is an ideal opening for College or University students who have an interest in the history of the Sabbath to present their research. Write to Leon J Lyell, PO Box 206, Bundoora, Victoria 3083 Australia.. l.lyell@latrobe.edu.au

Did the Waldensians keep the Sabbath?

This article is a review of Darrell W. Conder's article, 'The Waldensians and the Seventh-day Sabbath' published by Commonwealth Publishing, PO Box 11476, Salt Lake City, Utah 84147. Interesting observations are made about the way history has been used as well as the nature of the Waldensian movement itself, and Waldo the man is compared to William Miller.

Mac Overton

Were the Waldensians, the 12th-century followers of Peter Waldo, Sabbath-keepers? This question is important, Darrell W. Conder believes, because the current leader of the Worldwide Church of God, Joseph Tkach Jr, 'grasped at a straw' in an interview on the Bible Answer Man radio program to use 'faulty history' by Herbert Armstrong and other WCG writers to disavow the seventh-day Sabbath.

This brief (six pages typeset) article coherently summarizes available evidence about who and what the Waldensians were.

Mr Conder, a former member of the Worldwide Church of God, was a personal assistant to Joseph Tkach Sr in the ministerial-services department in the late 1970s at WCG headquarters. Mr Conder is cofounder of Commonwealth Publishing Books of Salt Lake City and is the author of *Mystery Babylon the Great: The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth*. He is a professional genealogist.

Mr Conder, himself born into a Sabbatarian and Holy Day-keeping family, makes a case for the term Waldensian being a catch-all word applied to a broad range of accused heretics at odds with the Roman Catholic Church

in the Middle Ages.

He shows, from historical records, that the 'Waldenses' precede their supposed namesake, Peter Waldo, by perhaps 500 years.

'Interestingly, history reveals that the people in question rarely called themselves Waldensians', Mr Conder writes. 'The reason for this was clear: They were not all Waldensians! Here are some names, or labels, applied by historians to the 'heretics' of Catholicism: Pasaginians, Albigenses, Waldenses, Josephists, Cathari, Arnoldists, Henricians, Paulicians, Bogomils, Insabbatati, Berengarians, Subalpini, Patarines, Petrobrusians and Vallenses'.

Mr Conder says the word Waldensian is disputable. 'Most authorities agree, however, that it originated from the Italian word Valdesi, or French Vaudois (Latin Vallis), which meant 'valleys' and denoted the regions in which the Waldensians and many of the aforementioned people lived'.

Catholics linked Waldo to Waldenses

The one clear fact in Waldensian history is that a leader named Peter Waldo emerged, and his name-coincidentally similar to theirs-became synonymous with these people.

'In fact, the Catholic Church, in order to ignore their ancient history, put forward that the Waldensians-religion, name and all-originated with Peter Waldo: a claim that all reputable historians ignore'.

Who was Peter Waldo? He was a rich merchant of Lyons, France. In 1170 he underwent a religious experience and founded a religious movement, or order, known as the Poor Men of Lyons.

'The reason that Waldo and his 'Poor Men' (or ministers) came to overshadow the groups just mentioned is because they received recognition from the Catholic Church' writes Mr. Conder. 'It was this notoriety that not only cemented Waldo to the Waldensian history as a whole, but has caused him to become synonymous with the name'.

Mr Conder points out that, based on known history, 'there is no evidence that Peter Waldo ever accepted or worshipped on the seventh-day Sabbath'.

During most of his ministry, Waldo was considered within the framework of the Catholic Church. This led to his movement being tolerated by the church at Rome.

'In fact', Mr Conder states, 'the Poor Men of Lyons were so well

known within Catholicism that Pope Alexander III approved their doctrine of poverty and gave his consent, with restrictions, to their preaching. It was only later when Waldo went against some of these restrictions and began to denounce certain Catholic customs that he was excommunicated'.

The question of whether the Waldensians followed the seventh-day Sabbath is settled, Mr Conder says, by the knowledge that, when the Catholic inquisitor Sacconi (or Sacco) levied charges against the Waldensians, the Sabbath is conspicuous by its absence.

'Despite this', Mr Conder maintains, 'the fact remains that there were during this time seventh-day Sabbath-keepers in many parts of Europe. What's more, they were to be partly found in the aforementioned groups. It is even possible that some of these groups, as a whole and at specific times, may have been true Sabbatarians'.

Similarities to Millerites

Mr Conder likens Waldo to William Miller, the Protestant minister who founded the Millerite (or Advent) movement of the early 19th century from which derived Seventh-day Adventists and the Church of God (Seventh-day) and, thereby, the Radio (later Worldwide) Church of God and its many offshoots today.

While Mr Miller never accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and remained a Sunday-keeper throughout his life, his movement spawned the leading Sabbatarian movements of our day.

'This situation can be somewhat applied to Peter Waldo', states Mr Conder. 'Waldo's 12th-century effort led to a brief period in history when Sabbath-keeping came into the daylight. For the first time in centuries, those who kept the true Sabbath could practice their religion in the open. We learn, thanks to the efforts of Peter Waldo and the Poor Men of Lyons, that true Sabbatarians were still in existence and had long been underground: They had been hiding in fear of their lives so that they could obey the eternal command of God!'

'We should not however (as does the Catholic Church) dismiss the Pasaginians, Albigenses, Josephists, Arnoldists, Henricians, Paulicians, Bogomils, Insabbatati, Berengarians, Subalpini, Cathari, Patarines, Petrobrusians, and Vallenses, who predated Waldo by centuries. It was the history and Sabbath-keeping traditions of some of these Christians that were absorbed by Waldo and the later Waldensians.'

Mr Conder summarizes his article by noting that, while Waldensians were, in the main, not Sabbath-keepers, as taught erroneously by the Worldwide Church of God for many years, some observers of the Sabbath lived among those identified by this label through the centuries.

Justifying eras and apostolic series

He speculates that some WCG historians in the past erroneously taught that Peter Waldo and his followers were Sabbatarians to justify a belief in church eras.

'Even if you accept church eras as Scriptural, the true history of the Christian Sabbath and the people who kept it cannot be 'squeezed' into such a framework', Mr Conder writes. 'Nor can the doctrine of an 'apostolic' succession.'

'God', he says, 'has never in history had to rely on such an outline. When He has needed a special person to fulfill such a mission, He has simply raised up that individual and ordained him/her for the purpose. More to the point, it is demonstrable from history that Sabbath-keeping churches often did not overlap each other either in time or geography. This means that there was usually no ordination from a successor and that the only requirement to preach was an understanding of the laws of God'.

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Darrell W. Conder's article, 'The Waldensians and the Seventh-day Sabbath' is published by Commonwealth Publishing, PO Box 11476, Salt Lake City, Utah 84147. Write for details on prices for copies of the copyrighted article. Commonwealth Publishing also offers a catalog of Sabbatarian and hard-to-find materials. Here is a fruitful field for further research!

New Subscribers to *Sabbath History* receive a free copy of Francis Bampfield's account of 1683, which describes his imprisonment for Sabbath-keeping.

Book Reviews

The Celtic Church in Britain, Leslie Hardinge
(New York: TEACH Services, 1995)

Before the coming of Augustine to England in AD 597, the Christian Church in the British Isles was profoundly Celtic, rather than Roman. The beliefs and practices of the Celtic Christian Church were much closer to that of the first century Church than the Church of Rome. Seventh-day Adventist Leslie Hardinge has compiled a most fascinating, well-documented book on the Celtic Church.

Foremost in the Celtic belief was an insistence on a literal interpretation of the Bible, with a tendency to reject the writings of the "Church Fathers," and a disdain for the authority of Church Councils (Council of Elders). The Celtic Church did not have a central governmental leader. Leslie Hardinge notes on page 48, "But while the Celtic theologian was keenly interested in the whole of the Scriptures, his preoccupation with the Ten Commandments was even deeper. The earliest [Celtic] Christian service included a recitation of the Decalogue." In short, "no differences were made between the ethics and morality, the legal system and theology, of the Old and New Testaments," (page 202).

Many Celtic believers were Arians (anti-Trinitarian). They kept the Sabbath, believing that the day begins at sundown. They were known to be Quarto-decimans, observers of the annual Lord's Supper, or Christian Passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month in spring. They eschewed unclean meats. Their ministry had to be recognized, even by outsiders, to be honest and above reproach, and celibacy was not practised until later times.

The legendary Patrick (ca. 387-463) was born a Briton, and evangelized Ireland. He was said to have founded over 300 churches and baptized more than 120,000 converts, earning him the title of patron saint of Ireland. However, Christianity existed in Ireland long before his time.

Wherever Patrick went and established a church, he left an old Celtic law book, *Liber ex Lege Moisi* (Book of the Law of Moses), along with the books of the Gospel. The *Liber* begins with the Decalogue, and continues with selections from Exodus, Leviticus,

Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Citing Exodus 23:1-19, Part 4 of the *Liber* emphasizes that the Sabbath is to be kept, along with three annual feasts. Part 5, referring to Exodus 31:13, notes that the Sabbath is a sign of God's people, and must be kept. Patrick practised laying on of hands after baptism for the receipt of the Holy Spirit. While "St. Patrick" is revered as a Roman Catholic saint, his writings appear to place him squarely in the Sabbath-keeping Messianic tradition.

Hardinge indicates that the Celtic British Isles had a long history of Sabbath-keeping. Professor James C. Moffatt, DD, in his 1882 book, *The Church in Scotland*, p. 140, states, "It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week."

However, attacks on these Sabbath-keeping Celts was eventually launched from Rome itself. Emperor Justinian, who in AD 538 had attacked "heretics" in Europe, utilized the papacy to unify his empire. Gregory I (? - 604), the first real "pope" in the sense of wielding considerable political power, was a champion of Sunday observance. But around AD 600, there were still so many Sabbath-keepers that even Pope Gregory the Great had to walk a narrow line, in his letter to the Roman people: "It has come to my ears that certain men of perverse spirit have sown among you some things that are wrong and opposed to the holy faith, so as to forbid any work being done on the Sabbath day. What else can I call these but preachers of Antichrist, who, when he comes, will cause the Sabbath day as well as the Lord's day to be kept free from all work," (Hardinge, page 85).

When Gregory learned of the Sabbath-keeping Celts in the British Isles, he became incensed. In 597, Gregory sent Augustine and a band of Benedictine monks to convert England to the Roman Catholic faith. By force and persuasion, Augustine proved to be successful. In 601, Gregory made Augustine (?-604) the first Archbishop of Canterbury. (This Augustine is not to be confused with St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, 354-430.)

Italian forces in Britain eventually won out, and changed the Celtic Church practices to match those of Rome. Southern Ireland succumbed in 632, Northern Ireland by 695, most of Scotland by 717, and South and North Wales in 768 and 777 respectively. Pockets of resistance in remote areas held out, but the die was cast: the Celtic Church with its apostolic traditions gave way to Sunday and other tenets of Rome.

Besides Patrick, other prominent Celtic preachers were Columba (ca. 521-597), who founded a colony on the Island of Iona and converted parts of Scotland, and Columban (543-615), an Irish preacher who went to France and was convicted by a synod of French bishops for keeping Easter according to the Celtic usage. He was forced to leave for Switzerland, and later Italy, where at Bobbio, he founded a monastery in Waldensian country.

Hardinge notes that a key issue of conflict between the Roman and Celtic churches was the date of Easter. "When they [the Celts] eventually relinquished their adherence to this point in favour of Rome, they surrendered their independence on all points and soon became fused with Roman Christianity," page 96.

Another surprising conclusion has much relevance for us today. To its detriment, the Celtic Church was not unified. Hardinge notes, "Each group seems to have been dependent upon the founder and his tribe, but independent of all others No church leader among the Celts was held to be the spokesman of all... There was little unity of purpose. Had they presented a united front, the Celtic Church might have lasted for centuries, but they were absorbed into Roman Christianity piece by piece, and the remnants which withstood, weakened and alone, finally disappeared," page 207.

There is nothing inherently wrong with local church leadership. But, when there is a common enemy, the Almighty's people must rally together, and work together. Today, we face a similar attack against the Sabbath and the fundamentals of our belief. Are we going to give in to the enemy one by one? Or instead, will we co-operate with one another? Will we work together, or will we become a relic of history?

Joseph Tkach, Jr., leader of the Worldwide Church of God, believes that Sabbath-keepers today have a short

lineage. He says Sabbath-keeping churches can trace their history only as far back as seventeenth century British Separatists and Puritans. *The Celtic Church in Britain* destroys this theory. For six hundred years and more, the Celtic Church in the British Isles generally observed the seventh day Sabbath, kept a Quartodeciman Passover, eschewed unclean meats, and avoided a hierarchical government like that of Rome. That makes them our spiritual ancestors in deed.

Leslie Hardinge's book paints an interesting picture of the beliefs and practices of Celtic believers. His extensive footnotes and bibliography indicate much research. For those who cherish the history of Sabbath-keepers, *The Celtic Church in Britain* is a real treasure house. It is available from the Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. The suggested donation is \$9.00. - Richard C Nickels.

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Truth Triumphant, B G Wilkinson (424 pages)

Reliable, accurate, and comprehensive information about the history of Sabbath-keepers can be of great benefit to us today. The Sabbath is under attack. The inspiring story of others who have likewise struggled to maintain their faith can help us to strengthen our commitment to the commandments of our Creator and the faith of our Saviour.

Dr B.G. Wilkinson, an eminent Seventh-day Adventist scholar, who was fluent in six languages, produced an exceptional history of the Church in the Wilderness (AD. 538-1798), entitled *Truth Triumphant, the Church in the Wilderness*. His splendid bibliography and footnotes demonstrate rigorous scholarship. The history he relates is unknown to most Sabbath-keepers today, to their detriment.

The worldwide extensive scope of Sabbath-keeping for many hundreds of years is truly astounding. Lucian of Syria (ca. AD. 250-312) upheld the commandments of God and preserved the text of the New Testament (minus the spurious apocryphal books). Vigilantius Leo (AD. 364-408), not Peter

Waldo, was the first leader of the Waldenses in northern Italy and southern France. He influenced Patrick, the Sabbath-keeping saint of Celtic Ireland. Columba (b. 521), Columbanus (AD. 543-615) and other Celtic Sabbath-keepers evangelized Europe and maintained the highest standards of scholarship and learning during the Dark Ages.

In AD. 285, Papas was chosen head of the Church of the East (also called Assyrian Church, or wrongly called Nestorian Church). Excommunicated by Victor I, bishop of Rome in the late second century, the Church of the East flourished, and kept the Sabbath for hundreds of years, in spite of opposition from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The thrilling story of the Church of the East, including the St. Thomas Christians in India, and the profusion of Sabbath keepers in China and Japan, is tempered with the awful persecution in the 1500s of Sabbath-keepers by the Jesuits.

Wilkinson's thorough treatment of the Waldensians in the Alps should be enough to bury the false idea that the Waldenses did not begin until about 1160, and the wrong theory that most of the Waldenses never kept the Sabbath. He cites the fourth century church historian Socrates, who wrote, "For although almost all the churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this." Sozomen, another historian and contemporary of Socrates, declares, "The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria."

The council held at Elvira, Spain, ca. AD. 305, upholds the Sabbath. Spanish Sabbath-keepers of the Pyrenees influenced the Waldenses. The Latin word for "valley dweller" is *vallis*. It is *Vaudois* in French, *Valdesi* in Italian, and *Valdenses* in Spanish. Spanish Sabbath-keepers were also called *Sabbatati*. Wilkinson maintains, "A large portion of the Waldenses, whether called by that name or by other names, believed the observance of the fourth commandment to be obligatory upon the human race. Because of this, they were designated by the significant title of *Insabbati*, or *Insabbatati*. Farmers or townsmen going on Saturday about their work were so impressed by the sight of groups of Christians

assembling for worship on that day that they called them *Insabbatati*."

Some Bohemians of the fourteenth century held "that none of the ordinances of the church that have been introduced since Christ's ascension ought to be observed, being of no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church and the like, they utterly reject." They were in contact with the Waldenses of the Alps. Erasmus testified that as late as about 1500, these Bohemians kept the seventh day scrupulously, and were called Sabbatarians.

Wilkinson reports on Aba (ca. AD. 500-575) and the Church in Persia, Timothy of Baghdad (AD. 700-824), how the Apostle Thomas established a long-lived Sabbath-keeping community on the west coast of India, and how Sabbath-keepers flourished during the Tang Dynasty (AD. 618-907) in China.

It appears that the key to the long term survival of Sabbath-keepers in diverse groups scattered around the world was the fact that they were relatively independent. As Wilkinson notes, "It was the purpose of the Celtic Church to plant many centres rather than to concentrate numbers and wealth in some ecclesiastical capital." Wilkinson relates how many geographically diverse groups nevertheless maintained contact with their brethren in other lands. Today it is true that there is strength in a diversity that nevertheless maintains frequent contact among the scattered groups of brethren. Although Wilkinson's excellent book, *Truth Triumphant*, ends in 1798, the story of the Sabbath-keeping Church continues. We should be inspired to maintain the faith, and to continue to support the scattered brethren, around the world.

Truth Triumphant, 424 pages, by Dr B.G. Wilkinson, is available for a donation of US\$12.95 (plus \$2.00 postage) from The Bible Sabbath Association, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. In Australia, order *Truth Triumphant* from David Hill, PO Box 7, Beerburrum, Queensland 4517, for \$18.00 Australian, plus \$3.00 shipping. Books will be shipped from the USA. - Richard C Nickels

Our Authorised Bible Vindicated, G B Wilkinson

Origen (AD. 184-254), one of the most famous "Church fathers," was instrumental in editing manuscripts upon which the NIV, and all modern versions, are based. He expressly tells us that he would not hand down Christian teachings, pure and unmixed, but rather clothed with the precepts of pagan philosophy. Origen greatly influenced Eusebius (260-340), who produced fifty copies of a Latin version, at the behest of Emperor Constantine.

The Bishop of Rome needed a Bible version to keep the newly-converted pagans from northern Europe submissive to such doctrines as papal supremacy, transubstantiation, purgatory, celibacy of the priesthood, vigils, worship of relics, and the burning of daylight candles. Therefore, he turned to Jerome, a renowned scholar, to produce the authoritative Catholic Latin Bible. Jerome perused the library of Eusebius at Caesarea, where Origen's manuscripts had been preserved, along with a Greek Bible of the Vaticanus type. Both of these versions had the apocrypha, which Protestants rejected as spurious (Tobit, Wisdom, Judith, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, 1st and 2nd Maccabees). Jerome, however, included them in his Vulgate of AD. 338. For one thousand years, Jerome's Vulgate dominated Western Europe. Only the pesky Waldenses in the Alps and the original Celtic Church of Britain rejected the Vulgate.

Erasmus (1516) and other scholars printed copies of the Greek New Testament, and it became obvious that the Vulgate, based on corrupted Greek texts of the Vaticanus order, had strayed far from the Received Text.

Luther, Calvin, and the Protestant Movement had engulfed northern Europe, and threatened to take France and even parts of Italy away from the Papacy. Luther's German Bible was based on the same Greek Text printed by Erasmus. The Catholic Church launched a massive counter reformation. The Catholic-Protestant controversy was basically a battle

for the Bible.

William Tyndale translated Erasmus's Greek Text into English. To counter this version, the Jesuit order of the Catholic Church sponsored the 1582 Rheims-Douay version, based on the Vulgate. A more readable English translation appeared in 1611, at the behest of King James. It has been called the most beautiful piece of literature in any language, and for 300 years served as bulwark against the papacy.

The promulgation of the Received Text is largely the work of the Waldenses. John Calvin was a relative to Waldenses in the valley of St. Martin. Olivetan, a Waldensian pastor, translated the Received Text into French, later edited by his relative Calvin. The Olivetan became the basis of the Geneva Bible in English, the leading version in England in 1611 when the KJV appeared.

The two thousand year old contest between the Church of Roman and those she calls "heretics," is basically a battle for the Bible.

Benjamin G. Wilkinson's excellent book, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, originally published in 1930, provides much factual information. He shows how text after text has been perverted by the modern revised versions, which are based on corrupted Greek manuscripts. This is not a peripheral issue, but an essential core concept. If you believe modern higher critics, who believe in evolution as Hort did, then you do not have the reliable Word of God, and there is no basis for the Biblical faith.

This brief review is a substantially edited version of a much longer article written by Richard C. Nickels

Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, by B.G. Wilkinson, US\$6.00 suggested donation, plus \$2.00 shipping, from Giving & Sharing, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718 Australian orders: David Hill, PO Box 7, Beerburrum, Queensland 4517, \$10.00 Australian, plus \$2.00 shipping. Books will be shipped from the USA.

The Original Bible Project

The Original Bible Project is a fascinating academic endeavour of particular relevance to Sabbath-keepers and all who value discovering what the original Biblical texts were intended to communicate.

James D Tabor

The Original Bible Project is a five-year effort to produce an entirely new translation of the complete Bible. Why another translation of the Bible? Just in recent years we have seen the appearance of the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the New King James Version, the New English Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, and most recently, the New Revised Standard Version. All of these are excellent works, representing the collective wisdom of hundreds of top Biblical scholars. Do we really need another?

Obviously, those of us behind this Project will answer yes. If The Original Bible was merely one more version among so many then surely our efforts would be in question. However, the whole concept of The Original Bible Project is so unique, so unprecedented, that we are convinced this will be the Bible that many have wished for and only dreamed about for years. What are its special features? Why do we claim it is so unique?

There are four basic features of the Project which justify our claims and our efforts. First, this will be the first Bible ever produced which will put all the books of both the Old Testament and the New Testament in their proper, original, manuscript order. This order, once restored, will immediately reveal an amazing pattern and form to the entire collection of Scriptures which has been completely lost in all modern versions.

Second, the English translation will be impeccably accurate. It will be as literal as possible, in keeping with good standard English usage. There will be a high level of consistency in rendering the basic Hebrew and Greek vocabulary, and the text will reflect the highest standards of modern Biblical scholarship. This is a Bible you can rely upon to take you as close to the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek as possible in an English version.

Third, this version will be refreshingly non-ecclesiastical. It will restore and reflect the original Hebraic contexts of both the Old and New Testaments. In other words, the theological baggage of centuries of church-dominated translations will be thrown off. Even the New Testament, though written in Greek, is essentially a Hebraic production, reflecting a Jewish world-view and approach. There is not a single version of the complete Bible on the market that successfully reflects this important orientation and context.

Finally, this Bible will be filled with extensive historical, geographic, textual, and linguistic notes. These notes will be unlike any found in the typical 'Study Bible' on the market. They will not be theologically or doctrinally oriented. They will allow anyone to do the most in-depth kind of study possible on the original meaning of the essential words and concepts in the Biblical texts.

The Original Bible Project is a non-profit, IRS tax-exempt organization. Professor James D. Tabor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is the Chief Editor. Dr Robert L. Kuhn is Chairman of the Board with Robert D. Ellsworth serving as business and promotion manager. The project is supported by the gifts of individuals and organizations. For more information write: The Original Bible Project, 408 South Pasadena Avenue, Suite 1, Pasadena, CA 91105. 818-799-2000 or FAX 818-585-8180. Video and audio tapes and a regular newsletter are available.

Letters to the Editor

Christian Israelite Church

... We believe that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath {Mark 2:27-28} It was made to allow man to find Christ, and having found Him, we believe we should never let Him go, so every day is as a Sabbath to a True Christian Israelite. But not to give offense to either Jew or Gentile, we keep a Watch Hour between 6 and 9 O'clock on Friday Night in keeping with the Law and also a Watch Hour on Sunday Morning between 10 and 11 fulfilling the Gospel, as Jesus did in Matthew 26:40 to show his disciples that while in their sinful state they could not keep one hour let alone a whole day. We are no different today, but when the Spirit dwells within us, then we will be able to fulfill the Sabbath, the Day of Rest, in full unity with the Father, which we believe will be changed by God when He is ready, back to sunset Friday night to sunset Saturday night, although we do regard Sunday as the Sabbath at present because is it the law of the land. With this thought in mind, it is quite possible that one of our past members in the United Kingdom may have stated that to some one, but it has never been a law in our Church, just something to be fulfilled in the future...

Mervyn Eastes, Christian Israelite Church, Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia.

SH A fascinating letter in response to my search for further background on who the Christian Israelites were. In a future edition I will provide a more detailed

background, but clearly their belief about the Sabbath is both interesting and unusual! Originally they were concerned also with the identify of the 'lost tribes' of Israel believing them to have been scattered through Europe but in such a way as to be indistinguishable from non-Israelites.

Saturday Resurrection Doctrine

...An article on the history of the Saturday resurrection doctrine amongst Sabbath-keepers will definitely be prepared and sent to you in the first months of 1997...

Michael Vetter, Sabbath Research Centre Box 565 Westfield Indiana 46074.

SH I am looking forward to this article!

Wants a copy of the Briggs article

[Re the article 'Did Peter Waldo Keep God's Sabbath' by L Briggs, 1974] Do you know what magazine this article was published in?

James Fitzpatrick, Maineville OH

SH No James I'm afraid I don't. Can anyone help? I would be happy to make it available if anyone can forward me a copy.

Suggestions for the future!

...I think that besides articles dealing with past Sabbath-keeping, a *Sabbath History* must include, too, more doctrinal and biblical articles about the life of the Sabbath in the mind, as it

appears in the old books written in the past for or against the seventh-day Sabbath...Nearly all the books about the Sabbath/Sunday question, written in the past for or against the seventh day Sabbath are now out-of-print, inaccessible for many readers. These books may be the subject of two main lines of research: A] articles may focus on the exhaustive analysis of old and out-of-print books, with significant extracts or quotations; B]...articles dealing with the history of the exegesis of a particular Biblical text...the history of an argument for or against the seventh-day Sabbath...the history of an internal debate concerning the Sabbath between Sabbath keepers.

Y Andrieu, Chelles, France

SH Many thanks for your wonderfully supportive and thoughtful letter. There are some great ideas here which should be taken up and I hope some writers other than myself could assist. I shall try to give a more detailed insight into the 'Sabbath debates' of seventeenth century England in particular as that is my speciality and a fruitful field. But similar debates occurred at other periods as well. I agree it is a pity to ignore all the work done by serious Bible students of the past!

In due course I hope to be able to make available reprints of important Sabbatarian works from the past. There is a huge amount of this material from the seventeenth century which would be of great benefit. Look for further announcements!

International Biblical Learning Centre

The International Biblical Learning Centre (IBLC) is a little effort that is starting to bear at least a little bit of fruit. We have various courses available at the present time. Some of these courses are mini-courses recorded from a week long seminar in Big Sandy this past summer. And, we have just recently finished taping a course from Mark Kaplan entitled Introduction to the Old Testament. I had the opportunity to participate in the taping of Mr. Kaplan's course and I can tell you that the course content and teaching are quite good. It will comprise about 20 hours of instruction, on either audio or video tape and it will also have a workbook. You may request our new catalog, which contains ordering and other information, from IBLC, 7 Berean Way, Hawkins, Texas 75765.

Also, because the corporate churches are evidently trying to pretend we don't exist many of their members are reluctant to help us out. We don't have a lot of overhead but we do need some measure of financial support. Right now, the Trustees are funding about 65% plus of the donations. This level of funding from the Trustees cannot be sustained much longer. Because we have chosen to price our classes so low, in comparison to comparable college level classes, we do not generate very much usable cash from these classes. In other words, we need donations from a wider base in order to keep producing courses. None of the Trustees are paid and Dr Ward has taken what amounts to about a 50% pay cut to work for us.

The jury is out on IBLC and it will be for awhile. If Dr Ward and the Trustees do not genuinely serve others (instead of thinking we are serving them) then IBLC will go out of business and will deserve to do so. After all, there are only so many resources available and they must be employed as efficiently as possible in serving God and the people He calls. We are trying to bring a high quality of Bible training and instruction right into people's homes so that all members of the ekklesia can learn and hopefully become teachers themselves. Any consideration you might be kind enough to give us would be very timely and greatly appreciated. - Dale Stogner

Friends of the Sabbath Australia

Australian Conferences

Friends of the Sabbath Australia (FOSA) is dedicated to building friendships between Sabbath-keeping communities around Australia. Those who attended the pioneering FOSA conference in Sydney last July found the occasion inspiring, educational and stimulating.

For 1997, FOSA is planning to hold three major consecutive conferences, with Dr Bryan Ball, President of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as keynote speaker. Dr Ball is a scholar of international repute and is well known for his books, *The English Connection* and *The Seventh Day Men*. The dates for the conferences are:

Brisbane 5-6 April
 Sydney 12-13 April
 Melbourne 19-20 April.

Make plans now to attend! Pass this information to any who may benefit from attending! The conference will include a series of sessions/presentations each of which will be no longer than one hour.

Contact the National Committee now to register your interest and obtain further details! The FOSA National Committee is made up of David Currie, Geoff Robertson and Craig White.

Ron Dart to Visit Australia

Friends of the Sabbath, Australia is pleased to announce that evangelist Ron Dart has accepted an invitation to attend next year's conferences in Brisbane and Sydney in April (he is unable to make it to Melbourne).

He will be one of the keynote speakers and will also be engaging in other business while in Australia. We are sure that everyone will be excited about listening to the messages and information that will be provided by this great Bible teacher.

Contact: Craig Martin White, BA, Grad Dip Ed, MA
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The Sabbath Through the Ages

Presented by Derek M. Marley, BA

In studying these pages one is impressed by the wonderful way God preserved the knowledge of His Holy Sabbath down through the centuries since the days of Jesus as well as through all the Old Testament era. We read of peoples like the Waldenses who for centuries were noted for their Sabbath keeping, despite fierce persecutions. Again, we can clearly follow the record of the whole countries who faithfully clung to the true Sabbath, like Bohemia and Scotland, where it was observed until the 12th century; or Abyssinia, whose peoples observed it until the 17th century.

Here follows a short history of the Sabbath, the quotations from the time of Christ and onwards being taken from accredited and reliable sources. Note that these are not the records of the Jews keeping their Sabbath, but the Christians in every century holding aloft the lamp of the true Sabbath keeping. All references to the "Sabbath" in these notes refer to the seventh day (Saturday) Sabbath of the Bible, and not Sunday.

AT CREATION

"And on the 7th day, God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the 7th day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the 7th day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (Genesis 2:2-3)

1500BC (before the Commandments were given to Moses.)

"And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread ... and he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe (boil) that which ye will seeth, and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning ... six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." (Exodus 16:22-26)

This weekly miracle of providing twice as much manna on the sixth

day, and none on the seventh day was to stress the importance of the Sabbath and it continued for more than 2000 successive weekly Sabbath days.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ... for in six days the Lord made heaven, and the earth, the sea and all that in them is and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8-11)

Here God asks us to "remember" the Sabbath day, just as if He knew man would forget. God's people are to "remember" the Sabbath because "in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth" - that is, as a memorial of the Creator and Creation. God knew that man's natural tendency would be to become so engrossed with the things He had made, that they would forget the One who made them.

600 BC

"Hallow my Sabbaths, and they

shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." (Ezekiel 20:20)

1st CENTURY AD.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Luke 4:16)

"And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not for man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (Matthew 24:20). Here, Jesus, looking 40 years into the future to the fall of Jerusalem, asked His followers to pray that they would not have to flee on the Sabbath, indicating that He fully expected that the 7th day Sabbath would be kept after His death and resurrection.

The DISCIPLES

"And they returned and prepared

spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment." (Luke 23:56) This was the day after Christ's crucifixion.

PAUL AND THE GENTILES

"... the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them next Sabbath. And the next Sabbath came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God" - Acts 13:42,44. Here, 30 years after the cross, both Jews and Gentiles were keeping Sabbath.

JOSEPHUS' TESTIMONY

"There is not any city of the Grecians, not any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither the custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come."

EUSEBIUS

"Then the spiritual seed of Abraham (Christians) fled to Pella, on the other side of Jordan, where they found a safe place of refuge, and could serve their Master and keep His Sabbath." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* bk3, ch5). This is speaking of the time of the Roman siege of Jerusalem, AD. 66-70.

2nd CENTURY

"The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the day in devotions and sermons. And it is not doubted but they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves" (Dr T H Morer, *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, p. 189)

"The Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath" - (Gieselers *Church History*, vol.1, ch.2, p. 93)

2nd , 3rd and 4th CENTURIES

"From the Apostles' time until the council of Laodicea, which was about the year 364, the holy observance of the Sabbath continued, as may be proved out of many authors: yea, notwithstanding the decree of the council against it" - (John Iey, p. 163)

"Thou shalt observe the Sabbath, on account of Him who ceased from His work of creation, but ceased not from His work of providence: it is a rest for meditation..., not for idleness of the hands" - (*The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, page 413)

AFRICA (Alexandria)

"... it is fitting for whoever is among the saints to keep also the festival of Sabbath. There remaineth therefore a sabbatismus, that is " a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9) - (*Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 12, cols. 749, 750).

4th CENTURY

ITALY AND EAST

"It was the practice generally of the Eastern churches, and some churches of the West, for in the church of Milan it seems that the Saturday was held in a fair esteem ... Not that the Eastern churches, or any of the rest which observed that day were inclined to Judaism; but that they came together on the Sabbath day to worship Jesus Christ, Lord of the Sabbath" - (*History of the Sabbath*, part 2, p,

73, 74).

THE ORIENT

"The ancient Christians were very careful in the observance of Saturday, of the 7th day. It is plain that all the Oriental churches and the greatest part of the world, observed the Sabbath." - (*Antiquities of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, book 20, chapter 3)

SPAIN

Canon 26 of the Council of Elvira (AD. . 305) reveals that the church of Spain at the time kept Saturday, the seventh day, as the Sabbath.

PERSIA

"The popular complaint against the Christians was - "They despise our sun gods, they have divine services on Saturday" (*Truth Triumphant* p.170)

5th CENTURY

THE WORLD

"Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries (the Lord's Supper) on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome on account of some ancient tradition refuse to do this."

There is a footnote to this quotation which explains the use of the word "Sabbath". It says - Sabbath: that is upon the Saturday. It should be observed that Sunday is never called "the Sabbath" by the ancient Fathers and historians." - (*Ecclesiastical History*, Book, 7, ch. 19)

CONSTANTINOPLE

"The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble

together on the Sabbath" - (*Ecclesiastical History*, Book 7, Ch. 19)

"In Jerome's day (420 AD.) the devotest Christians rested and worshipped on Sabbath and did ordinary work on Sunday (*Treatise of the Sabbath Day* by Dr. White, p. 219)

SPAIN

Ambrose, a Sabbath keeper "had great influence in Spain, which was also observing the Saturday Sabbath" (*Truth Triumphant*, page 68)

6th CENTURY

SCOTLAND

"In this latter instance they seem to have followed a custom of which we find traces in the early monastic church of Ireland, by which they held Saturday to be the Sabbath on which they rested from all their labours" (*Life of St. Columba*, page 96)

Columba specifically referred to Saturday as the Sabbath and this was the custom of that early church on Iona.

7th CENTURY

SCOTLAND AND IRELAND " It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of the early times in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday as a day of rest from labour. They observed the fourth commandment literally on the seventh day of the week." (The church in Scotland, Moffatt, page 140)

"The Celts ...kept Saturday as a day of rest." (The rise of the Medieval Church, page 237)

ROME "Pope Gregory had issued an official pronouncement against a section of the city of Rome itself, because the Christian believers there rested and worshipped on the Sabbath." (Epistles of Gregory 1, book 13)

8th CENTURY

PERSIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

"The hills of Persia and valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates re-echoed their songs of praise ... They repaired to their churches on the Sabbath day for their worship of God." (The Book of Marco Polo, vol 2, page 409)

THE EAST AND INDIA

"Widespread and enduring was the observance of the seventh day Sabbath among the believers of the Church of the East and the St. Thomas Christians of India, who never were connected with them." (*The New Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*)

9th CENTURY

BULGARIA

"Bulgaria in the early season of its evangelization had been taught that no work should be performed on the Sabbath." (Hefele, vol. 4, sec. 478) The Bulgarians had been accustomed to rest on the Sabbath, but the Popes, particularly Pope Nicholas 1, wrote against this practice.

GREEK CHURCH

"The Pope had ruled that one should work on Saturday but not Sunday, and the head of the Greek church, offended at the interference of the Papacy, declared the Pope ex-communicated." (*Truth*

Triumphant, page 232)

10th CENTURY

SCOTLAND

"They worked on Sunday, but kept Saturday in a Sabbatical manner." (*A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation*, vol.1, p.96)

WALDENSES

"They observed no other day of rest but the Sabbath day." (Fore Runners, p.7,8)

11th CENTURY

SCOTLAND

"They held that Saturday was properly the Sabbath on which they abstained from work." (*Celtic Scotland*, vol.2, p.350) During the 11th century the Catholic Queen of Scotland, Margaret, tried to stamp out those that adhered to God's Sabbath and who refused to honour the papacy's day.

IRELAND

"The ancient Irish church observed Saturday instead of Sunday as the day of rest."

12th CENTURY

WALDENSES

"Robinson gives an account of some of the Waldenses of the Alps, who were called Sabbatati ... they were so named from the Hebrew word Sabbath, because they kept the Saturday for the Lord's Day." (*General History of the Baptist Denominations*, vol.2, p.413)

WALES

"There is much evidence that the Sabbath prevailed in Wales universally until AD 1115, when the first Roman Bishop was seated

at St. David's. the old Welsh Sabbath keeping churches did not even then altogether bow the knee to Rome but fled to their hiding places." (*Seventh day Baptists in Europe and America*, vol.1, p29)

FRANCE, BRITAIN, EASTERN CHURCHES

"For 20 years Peter de Bruys stirred southern France. He especially emphasised a day of worship that was recognised at that time among the Celtic Churches of the British Isles, among the Paulicians in the great church of the East, namely the seventh day of the fourth commandment."

13th CENTURY

MONGOLIA

"The Mongolian conquest did not injure the church of the East (Sabbath keeping). On the contrary, a number of the Mongolian princes and a larger number of Mongolian queens were members of this church."

FRANCE

The Catholic Council of Toulaice (1229) decreed that Sabbath keepers were 'heretics', and their property and belongings should be hunted out and destroyed. This council also decreed that no-one should be allowed to have a Bible.

14th CENTURY

WALDENSES

"We are to worship one only God, who is able to help us, and not the saints departed; and we ought to keep holy the Sabbath day." (*Luther's Fore-runners*, p.38)

BOHEMIA

"Erasmus pointed out how strictly

Bohemian Waldenses kept the seventh day Sabbath." (*The Literature of the Sabbath Question*, vol.2, p.201-202)

15th CENTURY

NORWAY (Church Council, 1435)

"It had come to the ears of the archbishops that people in different places of the kingdom had ventured the keeping holy of Saturday. It is strictly forbidden in the church law - for anyone to keep or to adopt holy days, outside those which the Pope, archbishop or bishops appoint." (*The History of the Norwegian Church under Catholicism*, p.488)

FRANCE

The French Waldenses were accused of several 'heinous crimes' and so the King sent a delegation to investigate. "On their return, they reported that they had visited all the parishes, but could not discover any traces of those crimes with which they were charged. On the contrary, they kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of baptism according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandment of God." (*History of the Christian Church*, vol.2, p.71,72)

16th CENTURY

ENGLAND

"In the reign of Elizabeth, it occurred to many conscientious and independent thinkers that the fourth commandment required of them the observance not of the first, but of the specified 'seventh' day of the week." (*Chambers 'Cyclopedia'*, vol.8, p.402)

RUSSIA

There were many eminent Sabbath keepers in Russia at this time, several of whom were put to death for their faith.

GERMANY

"However, the church has transferred the observance from Saturday to Sunday by virtue of her own power, without Scripture." (Dr Eck)

EUROPE

About the year 1520 many European Sabbath keepers found shelter on the estate of Lord Leonhardo of Lichtenstein, "as the princes of Lichtenstein held to the observance of the true Sabbath." (*History of the Sabbath*, Andrews, p.46a)

ABYSSINIA (1534)

"It is not, therefore, in imitation of the Jews, but in obedience to Christ and His holy Apostles, that we observe that day (Sabbath)." (*Church History of Ethiopia*, p.87)

DR MARTIN LUTHER

"God blessed the Sabbath and sanctified it to Himself, God willed that this command concerning the Sabbath should remain, he willed that on the seventh day the word should be preached." (*Commentary on Genesis*, p.138)

17th CENTURY

ENGLAND (1618)

"Here in England, are about 9 or 10 churches that keep the Sabbath, besides many scattered disciples, who have been eminently preserved." (Stennet's Letters, 1668)

Mr T Bampffield, who had been speaker in one of Cromwell's Parliaments, wrote also in behalf of seventh day observance, and was imprisoned for his religious principles in Tichester jail.

HUNGARY, RUMANIA

"As they rejected Sunday and rested on the Sabbath, Prince Sigmund Bathony ordered their persecutions."

SWEDEN, FINLAND

In the district of Upsala, the farmers kept Saturday instead of Sunday. About 1625, this religious tendency became so pronounced in these countries, that not only large numbers of the common people begun to keep Saturday as the day of rest, but many priests did the same." (*History of the Swedish Church*, p.256)

RUSSIA

"They solemnise Saturday." (*His Pilgrims*, p.350)

INDIA (1664)

"They keep Saturday holy. They have solemn service on Saturday." (*Pilgrims*, p.1269)

AMERICA (1664)

"Stephen Mumford, the first Sabbath keeper in America, came from London in 1664." (J. Bailey)

"They broke away from the Baptist church in order to keep the Sabbath." (Bailey, *History of the Seventh Day Baptists*, p.9)

ENGLAND (1647)

"It will not be found in Scripture where Saturday is no longer to be kept or turned into the Sunday, wherefore, it must be the church's authority that changed the one and

instituted the other." (King Charles I, Parliament)

"It will therefore be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to express commandments of God, than on the authority of mere human conjective to adopt the first." (John Milton)

The monument over the grave of Dr Peter Chamberlain, physician to King James, Queen Anne, King Charles I, Queen Mary, King Charles II and Queen Katherine, contains this inscription, that "Dr Chamberlain was a Christian, keeping the commandment of God and faith of Jesus, being baptised about the year 1648 and keeping the seventh day Sabbath above 32 years."

18th CENTURY

GERMANY (Tennhardt of Nuremburg)

"He holds strictly to the doctrine of the Sabbath, because it is one of the Ten Commandments." (Leben and Wirhen, p.579)

"It cannot be shown that Sunday has taken the place of the Sabbath. The Lord God has sanctified the last day of the week. Antichrist, on the other hand, has appointed the first day of the week." (Schrifren, p.49)

AMERICA (1741)

"It deserves to be noted that he (Zinzendorf, who had recently arrived from Moravia) is resolved with the church at Bethlehem to observe the seventh day as the rest day." (*History of Religious Denominations in the USA*, p.109)

19th CENTURY

CHINA

"The seventh day is most religiously and strictly observed. The Taiping Sabbath is kept upon our Saturday." (*The Ti-ping Revolution*, p.319)

"The Taipings when asked why they observed the seventh day Sabbath, replied that it was, first, because the Bible taught it and, second, because their ancestors observed it as a day of worship." (*A Critical History of the Sabbath and Sunday*)

INDIA AND PERSIA

"They maintain the solemn observance of Christian worship throughout our Empire on the seventh day." (*Christian Resources in Asia*, p.143)

AMERICA (1845)

"Thus we see Daniel 7:25 fulfilled and the little horn changing 'times and laws.' Therefore it appears to me that all who keep the first day for the Sabbath are the Pope's Sunday keepers, and God's Sabbath breakers." (TM Preble, February 13th, 1845)

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

Seventh Day Adventists also arose in mid-century, teaching that the seventh is the true Sabbath. By the end of the century, their work was established in nearly every country of the world.

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