

The Independent Sabbatarian Groups

c1800-c1860

**Compilation of
Research Notes**

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Version 2.7**

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Comments

During periods in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, America experience evangelical fervour, known as the 'Great Awakening'. The influence of these movements may have given impetuosity to the eventual awakening and revival of a slumbering and virtually dead church. God indeed works in mysterious and circuitous ways.

Over the centuries, the true believers may not have officially called themselves 'Church of God' but would have gone under a similar title or another descriptive title.

As researcher of Sabbatarian history, Leon Lyell stated in an e-mail dated 3 June 2008 regarding the Seventh Day Baptists:

"It's true that it took a long-time for 'seventh-day baptist' to become an official name - but most sabbatarians were 'baptist' (originally a pejorative term) and preferred a congregational model - i.e. they resisted being organised (which was an issue for HWA to deal with). They often referred to themselves descriptively as 'sabbatarian baptist' or 'seventh-day baptist' but also simply as the 'church of God' or 'church of Christ' as was [also] common amongst Church of England clergy. They didn't have our sense of corporate identity!

"In seventeenth century England with the rise of literacy and the availability of printed Bibles many Englishmen began to read the Word of God for themselves. As the result many long-forgotten prophecies, history and teachings were re-discovered. Amongst these was the seventh-day sabbath. The topic was widely discussed from the King to the Parliament to the common man. Many, from a variety of what we would today call 'denominations', accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. In time this enthusiasm for the truth seems to have passed in England but from the flowers that bloomed there the seeds travelled to North America on the winds of persecution. The first known sabbatarian baptist church in America was founded in 1671 at Newport Rhode Island with the support of English sabbatarians."

This is one example of the different names the community of believers went under. Herman L Hoeh wrote that

"... God's people were commonly referred to as Sabbatarians in the 17th and 18th centuries and that is how we identified them – rather than by the now common denominational term Seventh Day Baptist ... the church of God was used as a generic term, not a denominational term. We ... do not dispute the use of other terms in the Sabbatarian churches, for the New Testament does the same" ("The Plain Truth Responds," *The Sabbath Sentinel*, March 1992, page 10).

A *Church of God Timeline since 1800* has been developed tracking the major events during the history of this little flock. Further details may be found in the bibliography.

In the collection of information in *The Independent Sabbatarian Groups (non-SDB) c1800-c1860*, I brought together whatever sources that could be sought to find out more about the offshoots from – or those Sabbatarian groups that didn't join the first Sabbatarian General Conference in 1801. At that time only 8 churches joined the General Conference with the majority remaining independent. Full organisation came about in 1806. Information on these early conferences and how some congregations did not join with it is available in *Seventh Day Baptist Conference. It's Origin*.

Twelve years later, in 1818, the General Conference voted to change the term Sabbatarian to Seventh Day Baptist. **Some congregations remained outside of the General Conference and do not know if there are any records of them in State libraries in America or held by the Seventh-day Baptists themselves.**

Did they become or merge with the Church of God groups that sprung up? Did they die out? Or did they become part of the Seventh Day Baptist Conference?

We can speculate that these remnant Sabbatarian groups, in existence alongside the Seventh Day Baptists continued on and found their way among the Sunday Adventists per the below. Or, we might understand that the Seventh-day Baptists are the continuing chain of groups since the 1600s with a new set of groups emerging in the mid-1800s.

When Baptist preacher William Miller proclaimed the imminent return of Christ commencing about 1831, many began to respond (he was a Sunday keeper and never became a Sabbatarian). Whilst his followers were popularly known as 'Millerites' among themselves they were known as 'Adventists' – proclaimers of Christ's second coming – His literal second coming.

The second coming of Christ literally to the earth, a 1,000 year reign of His upon the earth and other truths were very seldom mentioned or believed in Christianity – until the Advent movement. Indeed, Christianity was indifferent to Christ's return or was seeking it to occur after the millennium!

It took some years before a handful of the Adventists adopted the seventh-day Sabbath. This is how God, in His mysterious ways did this:

"Rachel (Harris) Oakes Preston (1809-1868), had a great influence on the Sabbatarian movement. She was a Seventh Day Baptist who persuaded a group of Adventists to accept the Sabbath and thus to become in that sense, the first Seventh-day Adventists. Born in Vernon, Vermont, she joined the Methodist Church, then joined the Seventh Day Baptist church of Verona, Oneida County, New York. Later she moved to Washington, New Hampshire, to be near her daughter, Delight Oakes, who taught school there. When Mrs. Oakes sought to introduce the Sabbath to the company of Adventists in the Christian church there, she found them so engrossed in preparation for the

coming of the Lord that they paid little attention to her Seventh Day Baptist literature.

She did eventually gain as a convert, Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist preacher. One Sunday while conducting the communion service for the Christian congregation, he remarked that all who confess communion with Christ in such a service as this "should be ready to obey God and keep His commandments in all things." Later Mrs. Oakes told him that she had almost risen in the service to tell him that he had better push back the communion table and put the communion cloth back over it until he was willing to keep all the commandments of God, including the fourth. Knowing she was a Seventh Day Baptist, Wheeler thus began serious thinking and earnest study, and not long after about March, 1844, as he later related, he began to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. After the Great Disappointment in October, 1844, during a Sunday service in the Washington church, William Farnsworth stated publicly that he was convinced that the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath and that he had decided to keep it. He was immediately followed by his brother Cyrus and several others. And Mrs. Oakes, in turn, soon embraced the Adventist teachings. Thus it was that the first little Sabbatarian Adventist group came into being.

Mrs. Oakes later married Nathan T. Preston and moved away. Not until the last year of her life did she join what had meanwhile become the SDA Church." (Adapted from the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Volume 10, page 1149, 1976. Review and Herald Publishing Association.)

Five groups emerged directly from the original Adventist/Millerite movement: Seventh-day Adventists (1863), Church of God (1866), and three Sunday-observing Adventist groups: Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith (1888), Advent Christian Church (1860) and the Life and Advent Union (1862) (the latter two merged in 1964). Except for the Sabbath, the Sunday observing Adventists groups have some major similarities to the Sabbatarian Churches of God, including the future Kingdom of God on earth, conditionalism (soul sleep), anti-trinitarianism and water baptism.

Both Adventists and Churches of God are familiar with their common roots and beginnings during the nineteenth century. With the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some individuals and fellowships either never joined and remained outside of the SDA Church, withdrew in 1863 or withdrew three years later in 1866 (see Linden, *1844 and the Shut Door Problem*, pages 80-81; Bjorling, *The Churches of God, Seventh Day. A Bibliography*, pages 10-14). Of course the Seventh Day Baptists remained a separate entity.

Later, with the incorporation of the scattered non-SDA and non-SDB churches, the new group eventually became known as Church of God (Adventist) which indicates intertwined links and relationships between the Church of God and the SDAs. In 1922, the name Church of God (Seventh Day) was officially adopted and has remained such to this day.

A True History of the True Church by H L Hoeh:

"In America the NUMBER OF CHURCHES gradually increased as the gospel was spread from state to state. But so nearly dead were these congregations that in 1802 MANY began to ORGANIZE THEMSELVES together into a General Conference instead of submitting to the government of God for the carrying out of the gospel. At this serious juncture, MOST of the local churches JOINED THEMSELVES TOGETHER to form the Seventh-day Baptist General Conference and thereby ceased to be the true Church of God. Soon they began teaching the pagan Trinity doctrine and the immortality of human souls!

Several faithful congregations did not become members of the Conference because they would not submit to the new Protestant doctrines being introduced (see p. 246 of Belcher's "Religious Denominations"). For another half century the congregations maintained the little truth they possessed, although most of them did not go all the way in obedience to God. John aptly described this period: "Be watchful, and establish the things remaining, WHICH ARE ABOUT TO DIE, for I have not found thy works perfected before my God" (Rev. 3:2).

The Adventist Movement

During this time the advent movement among SUNDAY-OBSERVING CHURCHES was begun by the uninspired William Miller. In 1843 several followers of Miller in Washington, New Hampshire, became acquainted with the truth of the Sabbath. It was not until after the miserable disappointment of 1844, however, that the general body of adventists had the Sabbath question called to their attention. A small number accepted the Sabbath and SOON UNITED WITH THE FEW REMAINING CHURCH OF GOD BRETHREN who refused to be affiliated with the Seventh-day Baptist Conference."

Old Bible Correspondence Course (Lesson 53):

By 1800, these and other Protestant doctrines were prevalent in the Sabbath-keeping congregations. Many began to try to ORGANIZE, so that at first seven or eight, and later a majority of the congregations united to form a denomination. This group officially adopted the name "Seventh Day Baptist" in 1818.

Ten or twelve congregations -- in the Pennsylvania to Rhode Island area alone -- would not at first affiliate with this denomination of men. Even as late as 1828, only 16 to 20 congregations were being represented at the Seventh Day Baptist Conference meetings, while they spoke disparagingly of other -- "fanatical and unworthy" -- Sabbath keepers (*"The Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America"*, pages 153, 175).

As always, the FEW had refused to go along, and had remained faithful to the name and doctrine of the Church of God!

... Recall that only a FEW remained faithful in the Sardis Era of the Church of God (Rev. 3:4).

When the Adventists organized themselves as a denomination in 1860, only a few -- mostly in the states of Ohio, Iowa and Missouri -- did not go along. The printing plant and the magazine formerly published in the name of The Church of God were taken over by the Adventists. But a group of the faithful in 1861 began the publication of a new monthly paper called "The Remnant of Israel", later changed to the "Sabbath Advocate", and finally the "Bible Advocate".

Soon these people, greatly influenced by the Protestants around them, again began to organize themselves into a general conference and various state conferences. See Mead's "Handbook of Denominations in the United States", article "Church of God (Seventh Day)." Through the remainder of the century their numbers slowly increased, though they still remained relatively few.

Certain strong families provided the Church of God a tenuous continuity. These came to be located mainly in Missouri, Oklahoma and Oregon. SOME of them retained a knowledge of God's Holy Days and the identity of modern Israel.

During the same period, Church of God ministers began missionary-like work in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, the Philippines, etc. A few thousand of their converts and/or their descendants remain throughout Latin America to this day. Spanish-speaking congregations in Chile and Argentina kept the Holy Days continuously from their beginning in the 1890's until the middle of the twentieth century.

Joseph Belcher writes in *The Religious Denominations in the United States*:

"For more than thirty years after its organization, the Newport Church included nearly all persons observing the seventh day in the States of Rhode Island and Connecticut; and its pastors were accustomed to hold stated meetings at several distant places, for the better accommodation of the widely-scattered members. But in 1708, the brethren living in what was then called Westerly, R.I., (comprehending all the south-western corner of the State,) thought best to form another society. Accordingly they proceeded to organize the Hopkinton Church, which had a succession of worthy pastors, became very numerous, and built three meeting-houses for the accommodation of the members in the different neighborhoods. At present (1854) there are seven church in Rhode Island, and two in Connecticut, all in a healthy condition." p. 243

Note:

1. *In 1818 become officially known as 7th Day Baptists.*
2. *Reason for name change: didn't like to be called Sabbatarians.*
3. *(1840's) they formed missionary assignments going all over the world.*
4. *Established three small colleges located in West Virginia, Wisconsin, and New York.*

5. Not much spiritual growth. Gained new members through births.

“The Seventh Day Baptists” by Helen M Weston, *The Ministry*, January 1949, page 18:

Not long after the Newport church was organized, some of the Sabbatarians settled in Westerly, Rhode Island, and New London, Connecticut, establishing churches, one of the largest being the First Hopkinton, Rhode Island, church. At the annual meeting of this church in 1802 the General Conference was first formed. These annual meetings for the spiritual edification of the Seventh Day Baptists had been in effect since 1696, the first being held at the Newport church.

ORGANIZATION.—Only eight churches combined at first to establish the General Conference. Full organization was not completed until 1806. Control of church government was given the individual churches, the General Conference holding only advisory powers. In 1818 by vote of the conference the term *Sabbatarian* was changed to *Seventh Day Baptist*. In 1835 the conference recommended that the church form themselves into three associations because of the distance between churches. (*Ibid.*, p. 180.) As a result the Eastern, Middle, and Western associations were established, and yearly sessions were held.

A General History of the Sabbatarian Churches (1851) by Tamar Davis:

The term Sabbatarian was formerly adopted by those of the same persuasion in England, subsequent to the Reformation, when the word Sabbath was applied exclusively to the seventh day of the week, and those observant of it as holy time were regarded as the only Sabbath-keepers.

This term, though highly expressive of the main Sabbath doctrine, was, on account of its supposed indefiniteness, rejected by the General Conference of the American Churches, in 1818, and the appellation of *Seventh-day Baptist*, which was considered more generally expressive, adopted in its stead. (page 130)

The authority of the General Conference was subject to several limitations, which will be perceived by attending to the form and government of the Sabbatarian fraternities. **Every church is in itself a distinct body**, capable of transacting its own concerns, of receiving or expelling members, of appointing its own pastor and other officers, fixing their salaries, and suspending their ministrations in case of impiety or gross immorality. The internal regulations of these churches are simple and democratic, every member being equally entitled to a vote, and the pastor, except by the superior respect attached to his station, having no more voice, and exercising no more influence in business affairs, than a private individual. It could not be expected that these churches, after having experienced the benefits of their equal and

impartial government, would accede to the establishment of any ecclesiastical organization that might tend to subvert their independence, or to centralize in an extraneous body the authority which was then disseminated through and exercised by the members of the churches themselves. Accordingly, we find that the right to choose, elect, and ordain their own deacons was still retained by the churches, as well as the privilege of specifying from their numbers such candidates for the ministry as appeared eligible for that sacred office, which specification and appointment, being submitted to the Presbytery (a board of ministers appointed for that purpose), by whom the qualifications, talents, and character, of the candidate is examined, which examination proving satisfactory, he is forthwith ordained by the laying on of hands.

Neither has the Conference any right to institute a judicial investigation of any difficulties that may arise between individual members and the churches to which they belong, nor to attempt any interference with dissensions between sister churches, except by special and particular invitation, and unless the subject has been previously laid before the respective churches, and their delegates to the Conference instructed to take cognizance of the matter.

Such churches of the Sabbatarian order as desired admission into this confederacy, were required to furnish a written exposition of their doctrinal sentiments respecting regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, and salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ, which, proving satisfactory, the right hand of fellowship was extended to their delegate on behalf of the Conference. Here **we may observe that this proceeding was not calculated nor intended to establish any inquisitorial censorship of doctrinal views**, but to perpetuate good order, unanimity of sentiment, and purity of faith.

At the time of the organization of the General Conference, there were several churches of Seventh-day Baptists who remained aloof from that confederacy. Of these, one was situated in a very pleasant country, on the west fork of the Monongahela River, in Harrison County, Virginia. This church, in 1808, sent a letter to the Conference, requesting admission into that body, but stating their practice of receiving first-day members. In consequence of this, their reception was postponed, and an admonitory message upon the subject prepared and sent to them. This church soon fell into a decline; its members removed into other parts, and it finally became extinct.

With the exception of the minutes of the General Conference, and one or two other works scarcely deserving of consideration, **the Seventh-day Baptists made no attempt to form a denominational literature until 1820**, when an association of ministers edited and published a periodical designated the Missionary Magazine. About the same time a collection of hymns for the use of the denomination was made, which met with very general acceptance and applause. After the publication of the magazine had been continued for two or three years, various causes contributed to render the further prosecution of the enterprise inexpedient and unadvisable. Upon the discontinuance of the magazine, the necessity of a denominational literary organ was very generally felt, but engagements in other pursuits, fears of pecuniary losses, and other causes, operated to prevent the enterprise until 1827, when Deacon John Maxson, of Scott, projected and brought into successful operation a weekly newspaper, called the Protestant Sentinel... (pages 134-6)

SEVENTH-DAY BAPTIST CHURCH, PRESTON, CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK.

This church dates back to a very early period. In 1804, Davis Rogers, who had been ordained in 1784, with several members of the Waterford (Connecticut) Church, emigrated to this place, where they organized a church, which, under his ministry, continued for a long time in a flourishing condition. In 1818, it was admitted into the Conference, at which period David Davis was associated with Elder Rogers in the ministry. (p 185)

John Kiesz in *History of the Church of God (7th day)*, p.2:

It is evident that there were Sabbath-keeping groups (independent) besides the Seventh Day Baptists, before and during the time of William Miller's preaching and prediction of the end of the world, in 1844. Elder Gilbert Cranmer of Michigan wrote in his memoirs that he received his first light on the Sabbath in 1843 from an article in the *Midnight Cry*, a Millerite publication, written by J. C. Day of Ashburhan, Massachusetts. S. C. Hancock of Forestville, Connecticut, also advocated the doctrine in the same year ...

Many isolated groups had sprung up in various areas, it is said, before the 1844 disappointment, that is, seventh-day local groups, as well as isolated individuals. This may be readily ascertained from things that were written by Elder James White (and by others) about their various trips they made to groups which they tried to get into their fellowship. When the Whites made their tours over the Eastern and Midwestern states in the early 1860's for the purpose of effecting cooperation and general organization, they found many congregations of Sabbath-keepers. Many of them became affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventists, while others began to fellowship and cooperate with those who later became known as the "Church of God." Some of the groups remained independent of all general organizations. Subsequent church history shows that although some of the independent Sabbatarian groups aligned themselves neither with the Seventh Day Baptists, nor with the Seventh-day Adventists, yet for logical reasons, as far as they were concerned, did actually desire cooperation and fellowship in order to more effectively propagate gospel truths as they saw them.

John Kiesz in *Some Church of God History (7th Day)*:

The earliest Sabbath-keeping churches in America were composed of local groups, not formally organized or incorporated into conferences. Local groups went by various names, such as: Sabbatarians, Church of God, Church of Christ, Seventh Day Baptists, and even Independents.

The Seventh Day Baptists were among the earliest Sabbatarians to effect a General Conference organization (in 1802), which evidently embraced the majority of the then known Sabbath-keepers.

Arthur Elwell Main, D. D., in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Vol. 1, says that just when or how the Sabbath truth first came to America from England was not known. We have learned, however, since that was written, that there were Sabbath-keepers among the Pilgrims in 1620. Doctor Main also stated that as early as 1646 it was the occasion of much earnest discussion in New England. Just who, may we ask, were the folk who at that time engaged in much earnest Sabbath discussion? Were they not the Puritan Sabbath-keepers?

This dates Sabbath agitation about eighteen years prior to the London Seventh Day Baptists' sending of Stephen Mumford to America. He arrived in 1664 at Newport, Rhode Island and through his teaching a number of first-day Baptists embraced his sentiments, and accordingly, in 1671, they covenanted together in a Sabbatarian church organization. This group later, when the Seventh Day Baptists organized their General Conference (in 1802), was considered a definite part of it. Some of this history may also be ascertained from Felt's *Ecclesiastical History of New England*, Vol. 1, p. 593.

Between the years of 1833 and 1844 William Miller, a student of prophecy, who received his license to preach from a Baptist church, stirred many thousands into believing that the Lord would return to earth in 1844. His conclusions were largely based on Daniel 8:13,14, respecting the 2300 days (evenings-mornings), which he believed were symbolic and stood for years instead of literal days. He believed that the earth was the sanctuary, and that it would be cleansed by fire when Jesus returned. This disappointment was great and caused much consternation.

Miller, after the disappointment, honestly admitted that he had made a mistake, but there were others who had heard him preach that believed he was right with his figures. Thereupon they made a special study of the sanctuary question, comparing the earthly with the heavenly, and decided that Jesus at His ascension to heaven did not sit down at the right hand of God in the Most Holy Apartment, but entered and remained in the first or Holy Place until 1844, when He entered the Most Holy, there to cleanse the sanctuary, blot out sins, make a final atonement, and start the investigative judgment. These still are, in general, the Beliefs of those who shortly after that became known as Seventh-day Adventists.

The little group of Advent people of Washington, New Hampshire, had the Sabbath first introduced to their attention by a faithful Seventh Day Baptist Sister, Rachel Preston. Nearly the entire church at that place became observers of the Seventh-day Sabbath.

Elder Joseph Bates, who had acted a prominent part in the time-setting Advent Movement, also had the Sabbath brought to his attention, and in 1845 took hold of this truth and began to set it before his fellowmen. Elder and Mrs. James White accepted the light of the Sabbath a little later, and became the most prominent leaders of what became officially know as the Seventh-day Adventists. "An association was incorporated in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, May 3, 1861, under the name of the Seventh-day Adventists Association"(J. N. Andrews in *History of the Sabbath*). And according to the *Seventh-day Adventists Yearbook*, the "denomination was organized May 21, 1863...."

It is evident that there were Sabbath-keeping groups (independent) besides the Seventh Day Baptists, before and during the time of William Miller's preaching and prediction of the end of

the world, in 1844. Elder Gilbert Cranmer of Michigan wrote in his memoirs that he received his first light on the Sabbath in 1843 from an article in the *Midnight Cry*, a Millerite publication, written by J. C. Day of Ashburhan, Massachusetts. S. C. Hancock of Forestville, Connecticut, also advocated the doctrine in the same year.

Articles appearing in the *Review and Herald* show that by the time they, in 1860, chose the name of "Seventh-day Adventist," the name of the "Church of God" had become a "bone of contention" and the "Visions" of Ellen G. White were discussed and debated. When the Whites traveled over the country to recruit and organize, they found many independent Sabbath-keepers. Some of the disappointments of the Whites were the refusal of numbers of local groups to join them, because of the church name, because of the "Vision," and because some believed in no general conference organization at all.

Many isolated groups had sprung up in various areas, it is said, before the 1844 disappointment, that is, seventh-day local groups, as well as isolated individuals. This may be readily ascertained from things that were written by Elder James White (and by others) about their various trips they made to groups which they tried to get into their fellowship. When the Whites made their tours over the Eastern and Midwestern states in the early 1860's for the purpose of effecting cooperation and general organization, they found many congregations of Sabbath-keepers. Many of them became affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventists, while others began to fellowship and cooperate with those who later became known as the "Church of God." Some of the groups remained independent of all general organizations.

Subsequent church history shows that although some of the independent Sabbatarian groups aligned themselves neither with the Seventh Day Baptists, nor with the Seventh-day Adventists, yet for logical reasons, as far as they were concerned, did actually desire cooperation and fellowship in order to more effectively propagate gospel truths as they saw them.

In tracing some of our own church history, of which we have some specific information, we find that Elder Gilbert Cranmer (1814-1904), who saw the falling of the stars in 1833, and who received light on the Sabbath in 1843, heard the preaching of William Miller about that time. He believed the message, including the setting of the date for the Lord's coming in 1844. After the disappointment, he fully accepted the keeping of the Sabbath, learned of the "Visions" and for a while worked with the Seventh-day Adventists (that was before they decided to go by the name of "Seventh-day Adventists") with headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Subject: Groups leaving Seventh Day Baptists:

Date: January 12, 1998

From: sdbgen@inwave.com

To: craig white

Your letter to Roy Marrs was referred through Rod Henry to me as the Historian for the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society. The question concerning any group which broke away

from the Seventh Day Baptists about 1800/02 I believe comes from the misinterpretation of history in Dugger and Dodd's book, ***History of the True Church***. He is so hung up on the name used by various churches that he did not get a true picture.

For example, he cites the Seventh Day Baptist Church at Piscataway, NJ as not being a Seventh Day Baptists Church because they used the title "The Church of God." Actually the church when it was first established in their church minutes of August 19, 1705 used the titles *The Church of Christ Keeping the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus Christ living in Piscataway and Hopewell in the Province of New Jersey*. Yet Dugger makes a great point of the fact they called themselves Church of God, therefore they must have been of that denomination. They later did adopt the name Seventh Day Baptist for legal reasons.

Our General Conference was not organized until 1802, and not all of the churches with roots to Seventh Day Baptists joined at that time. Therefore one cannot say that they separated when they had never been a part. The church at Shrewsbury founded in 1745 in New Jersey migrated almost in mass to Fayette County in western Pennsylvania in 1789 and then up the Monongahela River to western Virginia where they were reconstituted as the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church which is still in existence. They did not join the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference until about 1807 along with the Lost Creek Church. In Dugger's book he implies that because there were some differences of opinion and practice, some of the other churches in that area must have separated. What he failed to realize is the fact that Seventh Day Baptists never have required uniformity to a set creed, but follow the Baptist principle of local autonomy and personal interpretation of the scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

At the time that the Salem Church applied for membership in the General Conference there was a church known as the West Fork of the Monongahela River. Their membership was rejected because of their practice of open communion with their Sunday neighbors. But the church soon died out, or members joined other churches and gave up the practice of the Sabbath.

Don A. Sanford, Historian

Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society

A History of the Sabbath and Sunday by John Kiesz:

All who are familiar with American history remember that in A.D. 1620 the Puritans, or Pilgrims, landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, coming to the New World primarily to escape religious persecution which prevailed in Europe.

The Puritans had zealously endeavored to purify the Church of England, with the result that those who felt they could no longer remain with the established church went afterwards by such names as Non-Conformists and Separatists. Were any Sabbatarians on the Mayflower

which brought the Pilgrims to America? This has been a much-disputed question for a long time, some asserting vehemently that there were no seventh-day observers among them, and others contending just as strongly that there were. The overwhelming evidence seems to be in favor of their presence in the Plymouth Colony.

In the month of December, 1934, Hugh Sprague, editor of the *St. Joseph Gazette* (Missouri), wrote an editorial on this very matter.

"Strange as it may seem in the early history of America there was an attempt at suppression of the Christmas spirit. The stern Puritans at Plymouth, imbued with the rigorous fervor of the Old Testament, abhorred the celebration of the orthodox holidays. Their worship was on the Sabbath (Saturday), rather than Sunday, and Christmas in particular they considered a pagan celebration. Later immigrants attempted to observe Christmas as a time of joy, but were suppressed. Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster, Miles Standish and other leaders were firm against the yuletide spirit as we know it today."

In a private conversation between Elder A. N. Dugger and Editor Hugh Sprague, after this editorial appeared, the latter stated that the Pilgrims were his direct ancestors, and that he very well knew their religious beliefs and practices. And in addition, he stated that all his grandparents and great-grandparents knew that the Pilgrims of the Mayflower days were strict Sabbathkeepers on the seventh day of the week instead of Sunday.

What does appear evident is that among the Puritans, first in England, and then in America, were conscientious Sabbatarians. The earliest Sabbathkeeping churches in America were not formally incorporated or organized into conferences, but merely local congregations going by various designations or names, such as: Sabbatarians, Church of God, Church of Christ, Seventh Day Baptists, and even Independents. The Seventh Day Baptists were among the earliest to effect a General Conference organization (1802). The Seventh-day Adventists effected theirs in 1863; and the Church of God (Seventh Day) effected theirs much later.

Arthur Elwell Main, D.D., in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Volume 1, says that just when or how the Sabbath truth first came to America from England was not known, but that as early as 1646 it was the occasion of much earnest discussion in New England. This dates Sabbath agitation twenty-six years after the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, and about eighteen years prior to the London Seventh Day Baptists' sending of Stephen Mumford to America. Since Sunday observers would not have advocated seventh-day Sabbath observance, it appears evident that it came about by the Pilgrim descendants. The situations of those times may also be ascertained from Felt's *Ecclesiastical History of New England*, Volume 1, p. 593.

As far as historical records go, it appears that the first local organization of Sabbathkeeping Christians in America was that of the church at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1671. Mumford attended the first-day Baptist Church, and for several years taught the Sabbath truth among them. As a result, a number of them embraced the Sabbath in 1665 and in 1666, but the intention was not to sever their connection with the Baptist Church. They soon learned, however, that even in the church of Roger Williams, where liberty of conscience was supposed to prevail, it was not possible to have close communion on such drastic differences in beliefs as the Sabbath and Sunday brought about. Accordingly, the seventh-day observers left the

Baptist Church on December 7, 1671, and sixteen days later, on the 23rd of December, they covenanted together in a church organization.

Other Sabbathkeeping centers established shortly after the Newport group was formed were the group near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, through the labors of Able Noble, who came from England about 1684; and the group at Piscataway, New Jersey. From these centers streams of Sabbatarian emigration flowed westward and southward until there were not less than twenty churches and settlements of Sabbathkeepers in nine of the ten colonies or states when the General Conference of Seventh Day Baptists was organized in 1802. Their headquarters is at Plainfield, New Jersey.

There also is in the state of Pennsylvania a small body of German Seventh Day Baptists, who have a very interesting Sabbathkeeping heritage. It dates approximately from 1728 when Conrad Beissel, a native of Germany, became the real leader of an independent Sabbathkeeping group established in the Ephrata community.

In those years it was largely a monastic movement, comprised of the "Brotherhood of Zion" and the "Spiritual Order of the Roses of Saron," one of the most celebrated establishments of its kind in the country. Because of their unusual manner of life, and because it was feared that through their influence the whole state of Pennsylvania would be affected with their Sabbatarian teachings, they were at times persecuted. They also established and successfully maintained a Sabbath school at Ephrata, its headquarters, forty years before Robert Raikes of England introduced the system of Sunday schools.

Because of the circumstances of the times, the German Seventh Day Baptists had some associations with William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington. Franklin did some of Beissel's printing. Peter Miller, a member of the colony, was a close friend of the Penn family. He was also personally acquainted with George Washington. When the Continental Congress sought a trustworthy and loyal man to conduct its diplomatic correspondence with the governments of Europe, it was this recluse of the Ephrata Community who translated the Declaration of Independence into seven different languages.

During the Revolutionary War the cloister was converted into a military hospital for the sick and wounded, shortly after the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. Remember the Valley Forge miseries? A monument at Ephrata still marks the place of several hundred buried soldiers.

Between the years 1835 and 1844, William Miller, a student of prophecy, who received his license to preach from a Baptist church, stirred many thousands into believing that the Lord would return to earth on October 22, 1844. His conclusions were largely based on Daniel 8:13, 14, respecting the 2300 days (evenings and mornings), which he believed were symbolic and stood for years instead of literal days. He believed the earth was the sanctuary and that it would be cleansed by fire when Jesus returned. The disappointment was great and caused much consternation.

Miller, after this disappointment, honestly admitted that he had made a mistake, but there were some of those who had heard him preach who believed that he was right with his figures. Thereupon they made a special study of the sanctuary question, comparing the earthly with

the heavenly, and decided that Jesus at His ascension to heaven did not sit down at the right hand of God in the Most Holy Place (apartment), but entered and remained in the Holy Place (first apartment) until 1844, when He entered the Most Holy Place, there to cleanse the sanctuary, blot out sins, make a final atonement, and start the investigative judgment. These still are, in general, the beliefs of those who afterwards became known as Seventh-day Adventists.

The Advent people of Washington, New Hampshire, at about that time, had the Sabbath first introduced to their attention by a faithful Seventh Day Baptist sister, Mrs. Rachel Preston. Nearly the entire church in that place, consisting of about forty members, became observers of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Elder Joseph Bates, who had acted a prominent part in the time-setting Advent Movement, also had the Sabbath brought to his attention, and in 1845 he took hold of this truth and began to set it before his fellowman. Elder and Mrs. James White accepted this light a little later, and they became the most prominent leaders of what later became known as the Seventh-day Adventists.

"An association was incorporated in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, May 3, 1861, under the name of Seventh-day Adventist Association" (J. N. Andrews in *History of the Sabbath*). According to the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (1975), the "denomination was organized May 21, 1863, with a constituency of 125 churches." They are by far the most numerous and widely-known Sabbathkeepers in the world. Their headquarters is in Washington, D.C.

God's Church Through The Ages by John H. Ogwyn:

In the earliest days no special thought was given to an official church name. The congregations in their correspondence with one another referred to themselves as "the Church of Christ which is at Newport" or "the Church of God living in Piscataway." Most members simply called it "the Church." Outsiders referred to them as Sabbatarians or Sabbatarian Baptists. When the church in Newport received an official state charter in 1819 (it had been established in 1671, but legal requirements were changing), it was registered under the name "Seventh-Day Baptist Church of Christ."

In 1803 a general conference was organized by eight Sabbath-keeping congregations in the Northeast in order to coordinate their evangelistic efforts and cooperate in the publication of literature. **In 1805 they adopted the name "The Sabbatarian General Conference." By 1818 the name was changed to Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference and the organization had grown to include Sabbath-keeping congregations outside the Northeast.**

The Church was undergoing many changes during this time. We can note their progression from non-Trinitarianism to the Trinitarian position championed by the Davis family and others. A statement written in 1811 upheld the traditional teaching of the Church noting "that Sabbatarian Baptists believed the Holy Ghost to be the operative power or spirit of God...there

are few...who believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three absolute distinct persons, coequal...and yet one God" (Nickels, p. 91). Just 22 years later, in the 1833 *Expose of Sentiments*, however, the official position was, "We believe that there is a union existing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that they are equally divine and equally entitled to our adoration" (Nickels, p. 91). Even as late as 1866, it was acknowledged that some of the ministers still possessed a strong aversion to using the word "Trinity."

During this time many ministers and members had gotten so far from the Truth that they were now merely Protestants who met on Saturday. The November 18, 1983, edition of *The Westerly Sun* newspaper described the anniversary celebration of the oldest Sabbath-keeping church in the United States with this headline: "Church Will Celebrate 275 Years Marked with Change." The article in the newspaper said the "church will celebrate its 275th anniversary this weekend--an experience which has been marked by change from societal pressures, despite its Sabbath-keeping custom."

The changes that have occurred have been marked by a steady erosion of the Truth and a move into mainstream Protestantism. In fact, the Seventh-Day Baptist churches in Rhode Island have long since ceased housing the living Church of God. They are merely old buildings, museums of where the Truth was once taught and the Work of God was once carried on. The congregations that now meet there believe in the Trinity, observe Christmas and Easter, and have even gone back and built steeples--definite pagan symbols--onto some of the old buildings. They simply followed their leaders and stayed in the church [buildings]!

While the bulk of Sabbath-keepers were getting further and further from the Truth, there were individual members and congregations which remained faithful. We find records of the South Fork, West Virginia, Church which observed the Passover and avoided unclean meats in the early 1800s. This little group was forced to withdraw "fellowship from the General Conference and all other Seventh-Day Baptist organizations, because of doctrinal differences" (Nickels, p. 68). By the 1870s another generation was on the scene and, eventually, most of the South Fork Church accepted the Seventh-Day Baptist organization. By 1885 they had even ordained a woman minister, totally contrary to God's instructions in 1 Timothy 2:12!

Another group, calling itself the Church of God at Wilbur, was organized in 1859 by Elder J. W. Niles from Pennsylvania. It was still functioning in the 1930s and was called by Andrew Dugger, in his book, *A History of the True Religion*, the oldest true Church of God now functioning in the state of West Virginia (p. 311).

The Adventist Movement

In the 1830s a movement arose among Protestant churches in western New York that focused on the return of Jesus Christ to this earth and the establishment of a literal Kingdom. This message, which first began to be forcefully proclaimed by William Miller, was totally different from accepted Protestant doctrine. His teachings on prophecy attracted much interest and stirred increasing attention as his predicted 1844 date for the return of Christ drew near. After what was termed "the great disappointment," confusion set in among these Protestant Adventists. Ridiculed by mainline Protestants, some became disillusioned and gave up religion altogether. Others continued to search the Scriptures to see where they had gone wrong. The

stage was being set for a strengthening of the Truth. Around the beginning of 1844, Mrs. Rachel Oakes, a widow and member of a Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Verona, New York, came to Washington, New Hampshire, to visit her daughter. Her daughter attended a church pastored by Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist who had accepted the Adventist message (Second Coming of Christ and the literal establishment of His Kingdom). Hearing Mr. Wheeler call upon his congregation to obey God and keep His commandments in all things, Mrs. Oakes confronted him following the service with the truth that Sabbath-keeping played a vital part in obeying God's commandments. Taken aback, he promised to study the subject. Within weeks he was convinced of the truth of the Sabbath and began to proclaim it. The truth of the Sabbath spread like wildfire among disillusioned Adventists. Many hundreds of others responded as well to the simple truth of the real Gospel and of obedience to all of God's commandments.

Into the fellowship of these zealous Sabbatarian adventists came Roswell Cottrell, a long-time minister and Sabbath-keeper.

His family had been among the earliest members of the Church of God in Rhode Island, but the Cottrell family withdrew from the fellowship of what was then being called the Seventh-Day Baptist Church over doctrine. This was the time when such changes as the Trinity and the immortality of the soul were being adopted as official Seventh-Day Baptist doctrine. About 15 years after coming into the fellowship of the Sabbatarian Adventists, he found himself once again embroiled in controversy. **Elder James White, who had emerged as the main leader among the Sabbath-keeping, Adventist Churches of God, was pushing for an organizational conference and an official name, Seventh-Day Adventist Church.** There were those who opposed this change as unscriptural and also opposed giving credence to the visions of Elder White's wife, Ellen G. White. Roswell Cottrell opposed Mr. White's organizational moves. He wrote, in the May 3, 1860, *Review and Herald*, "I do not believe in popery; neither do I believe in anarchy; but in Bible order, discipline, and government in the Church of God" (Nickels, p. 162).

The Incredible History of God's True Church by Ivor C. Fletcher Chapter Thirteen – The New World:

"In America the number of churches gradually increased as the gospel was spread from state to state. But so nearly dead were these congregations that in 1802 many began to organize themselves together into a General Conference... At this serious juncture, most of the local churches joined themselves together to form the Seventh-day Baptist General Conference... Soon they began teaching the pagan Trinity doctrine and the immortality of human souls!

"Several faithful congregations did not become members of the Conference because they would not submit to the new Protestant doctrines being introduced... For another half century the congregations maintained the little truth they possessed, although most of them did not go all the way in obedience to God. John aptly described this period: `Be watchful, and establish

the things remaining, which are about to die, for I have not found they works perfect before my God' (Rev. 3:21)."32

A circular letter was sent out by the 1802 General Conference: "Beloved brethren, we having received the kind letters from various churches in our fellowship, are bound by the love of God and the law of gratitude, to give thanks to God for the common salvation he has provided for us all, and for civil and religious liberty, and for the day and means of grace and hopes of glory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"To effect so good an end and to keep order in the house or church of God, let every member have a home, or be under the watch and care of faithful brethren, and not scattered in the wide world where no church can see them walk or discipline them. Let them be careful to keep God's holy Sabbath, and join in social worship, statedly; likewise in private duties.

"It is expected that all the churches in our Communion will send letters or messengers, or both, to our next Yearly Meeting... with a statement of their liberality toward defraying the charges of the missionaries. As purity of heart and morality of life constitute our chief happiness, and we all are but stewards of the manifold grace of God, let us give unto all their due. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."33

One source gives the number of members of the Seventhday Baptist church, at the time of this Conference, as 1130, with nine ordained ministers.

The minutes of the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference for 1846 reveal that by 1807, numbers had risen to 1,648, and by 1846 they had increased to 6,092.

In 1818 the name "Seventh-Day Baptist" was officially adopted by the majority of Sabbatarian congregations.

By about 1917 this church had 73 church congregations and 6,000 members."34

At the time of writing, membership of this church, the figures provided by Seventh-Day Baptist headquarters in Plainfield, New Jersey, are "5,150 members in the United States, and a worldwide total of 52,700."

Conference records during the nineteenth century reveal a gradual change in attitude and doctrine. By 1803 decisions affecting Seventh-Day Baptists were reached by the process of voting. Each church had from one to four votes depending on its size. The Conference could only advise local churches; it assumed no powers over the churches beyond this. All contributions to the Conference were to be voluntary.

In 1804 a Circular Letter indicated that internal dissention was prevalent: "...do nothing to wound the weak and feeble lambs of Christ, who cannot endure much; and be not offended with those who cannot see as far and walk as fast as you... establish nothing new, although it might be for the better, until the whole be generally agreed thereon, that peace and harmony may be established among ourselves...."

A "have love" philosophy was advocated towards those of differing beliefs, including the preachers and people of other denominations at the 1820 Conference.

Two years later members were advised "not to sacrifice the Sabbath in marriage." In 1833 members voted unanimously to abstain from alcohol except for medicinal purposes.

A condition of "coldness and apathy" was said to have prevailed in 1836. By 1864 Seventh Day Baptists were "greatly absorbed in national affairs," meaning the Civil War. A policy of cooperation with Seventh Day Adventists was agreed in 1870.³⁵

Not all American Sabbath-keepers were in agreement with the "General Conference." One such church was established on the South Fork of the Hughes River in West Virginia. The congregation was raised up following revival meetings held by an evangelist, Alexander Campbell, in 1833. A public debate on the Sabbath was also conducted with a local Methodist minister which resulted in several of the listeners accepting the Sabbath. Church services began in 1834. The people called themselves "the Seventh Day Baptist church" and also the "Church of Christ."

Some of the practices of this group were described as "Mosaic." Biblical laws of "clean" and "unclean" meats were observed. The communion service was held "once in twelve months on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month." The foot-washing ceremony was also observed by this group.

They believed that a Christian should not hold public office, that tithing is commanded, and that a Christian should not marry a non-Christian. This church was governed from the top down with the ministers firmly in control.

Rules were imposed relating to courtship, dating and child rearing. A standard of dress was enforced, the violation of which even resulted in some being excommunicated.

Randolph records that over 130 people belonged to the South Fork congregation during its half century of existence.

Because of its rigid and literal application of the Bible, this group experienced severe persecution from "Christian" sources which viewed their beliefs as "half crazy ideas."

A group of five disaffected members established their own opposition church in order to challenge the "heretics" of South Fork; for several years a fierce struggle continued between the two factions. The dissidents eventually gained control of the "mother church." In 1885 they ordained a woman as a minister.³⁶

The West Virginia churches were closely associated with Sabbath-keepers in Ohio. A church was raised up in 1824 at Pike, Clarke County, Ohio. A division took place over the question of alcohol and a "Temperance Reform" movement began which led to the separation of "wet" and "dry churches in the area.

The nineteenth century saw a growing acceptance of Catholic and Protestant doctrines by Seventh-Day Baptists. Their 1833 General Conference produced an "Expose of Sentiments" which included a statement on the Trinity.

"We believe that there is a union existing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that they are equally divine and equally entitled to our adoration.

"Members were received only upon the vote of a Sabbatarian Baptist church at a business meeting. In the Westerly church (Hopkinton), a written confession of faith was required of candidates for membership, so that the initiate knew the step he was taking.

"After baptism, laying on of hands was generally performed. The Newport church practiced this from the start, in accord with the English Sabbatarian churches, and the 1833 Expose of Faith upholds it.

"Much internal dissension occurred within the churches. Personal and business differences among members were taken before a church council composed of the elders, deacons and several leading members. Recalcitrant members were sometimes excommunicated, with a formal 'Awful Sentence of Excommunication.' A frequent reason was for continual breach of Sabbath or other offense."³⁷

The general trend amongst Sabbath-keeping churches of the nineteenth century seems to have been that they desired to be more and more like the churches around them. They overlooked the fact that they were to be "a peculiar people" (I Pet. 2:9) set apart by God for a special purpose. This trend is evident in the observation of religious festivals.

"No fact is more fully established than that Sunday and its associate festivals came into Christianity through pagan influence." This included Easter, Christmas, Whitsunday, and others. This was the general Seventh-Day Baptist view until the late 1800's, when Christmas influence began to show itself in the holding of 'Founder's Day' on December 23, in order to hold the interest of the children during the holiday season. It was really only a pretense; a Christmas observation two days early. Now Christmas and Easter are commonly observed among Seventh-Day Baptists.³⁸

This period is marked by declining membership and spiritual power. True conversion was sadly lacking in the majority of Sabbatarians.

"Conference reports are rife with admissions of the cold and lethargic state of the Sabbatarian churches at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1836, there was said to be 'general coldness and apathy' in the whole church. In 1840, despite the 'revivals' in the church, there remained widespread, apathy and backsliding.' By 1846, little interest was shown in denominational matters.

"Periodical after periodical published by Seventh Day Baptists folded due to lack of support. In fact, the history of nineteenth century Seventh Day Baptists is the record of one paper's demise after another.

"A `tent campaign' began in 1878, with several evangelist preachers in the effort. But the program was soon abandoned, because church members would not support it. A feeble revival of the program was attempted in 1895, with few visible results."³⁹

Sabbatarian history in the mid-nineteenth century is dominated by the Adventist movement.

During this time the Advent movement among Sunday observing churches was begun by William Miller. "In 1843 several followers of Miller in Washington, New Hampshire, became acquainted with the truth of the Sabbath. It was not until after the miserable disappointment of 1844, however, that the general body of adventists had the Sabbath question called to their attention. A small number accepted the Sabbath and soon united with the few remaining Church of God brethren who refused to be affiliated with the Seventh-Day Baptist Conference.

"They called themselves the `Church of God' and began publishing `The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald.' Their first songbook was dedicated to `The Church of God scattered abroad.'"⁴⁰

"The `transition period' of Church of God history, from the 1840's to early 1860's, is difficult to record. History seems to focus almost entirely on those Sabbath keepers who adhered to the `visions' of Mrs. White, or on those who had lost the proper church name, or history focuses on Adventists who held to the name, `Church of God,' but did not observe the Sabbath.

"Independent Sabbath keepers existed throughout the period of 1840-1860 in New York, West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, and elsewhere. Of these, remnants of Sabbatarian Baptists in West Virginia in the late 1850's combined Sabbath keeping, Passover observance, and keeping of Biblical food laws with other beliefs strikingly similar to the modern Church of God (Seventh Day)."⁴¹

"With each passing year, new and different doctrines were being introduced by Ellen G. White to explain away the adventist failure of October 22, 1844," the predicted date for the second coming of Christ. "The original Church of God brethren generally did not go along with the `inspired testimony' of Ellen G. White. Finally, a meeting was held by some of the members in Battle Creek, Michigan, September 28 through October 1, 1860."⁴²

Seventeen delegates attended the Conference, the purpose of which was to discuss "loyal organization." Most of the speakers held the view that organization when applied to a church was of the devil, that "organization is Babylon." There seemed to be no clear understanding as to how the true church should be organized and governed.

The Conference did agree, however, that it should legally organize a publishing association. It also recommended that local Sabbath churches be organized.

Another subject which was considered by the delegates was that of a church name. Some pressed for "Church of God" and others "Seventh Day Adventist," objecting to the former name because it failed to emphasize the Sabbath and the belief in the Second Coming of Christ.

Footnotes:

32. *A True History of the True Church*, Herman L. Hoeh., page 23.
 33. *Our People Bound Together*, Albert N. Rogers, pages 4-5.
 34. See *A History of English Baptists by Underwood*.
 35. See *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, pages 153-209.
 36. *Ibid.*, pages 855-59, 887-88, 854-64, 1367.
 37. *Sabbatarian Baptists in America*, Richard C. Nickels, pages 57 and 59.
 38. *Ibid.*, page 60.
 39. *Ibid.*, page 66.
 40. *A True History of the True Church*, Herman L. Hoeh, page 23.
 41. *Sabbath Adventists, 1844-1863*, R.C. Nickels, page 40.
 42. *A True History of the True Church*, Herman L. Hoeh, page 23.
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Sabbatarian History - Our Own Thanksgiving Story by Doug Ward:

When the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference was organized in about 1802, it consisted of 1119 members in eight churches in four states. During the nineteenth century, the denomination spread across the United States, and by 1902, there were 9098 members in 100 churches in twenty-three states. Missionary efforts and the discovery of the Sabbath by people in various parts of the world have since resulted in the founding of Seventh Day Baptist congregations in a number of countries.

Today the churches in the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation include well over 50,000 members, the vast majority outside of the United States. For over 300 years, the Seventh Day Baptists have provided a living testimony to the fact that Sabbatarianism does not necessarily lead to legalism or exclusivism.

The Seventh Day Baptists are also indirectly responsible for the acceptance of the Sabbath by other groups of Christians. In particular, they helped introduce it to the Adventists of the Millerite movement. In 1841, Rachel Preston Oakes, a Seventh Day Baptist, joined a congregation of Adventists in Washington, New Hampshire, and convinced her pastor, Frederick Wheeler, to accept the Sabbath in 1844. Other Adventists soon adopted the seventh day Sabbath, and two Sabbatarian denominations---the Seventh-day Adventists and the Church of God Seventh Day---soon came out of the Millerite movement.

A True History of the True Religion by Dugger and Dodd Chapter 22 – Eighteen Hundred to Present Date A.D.:

While the Sabbath-keepers of Europe were under the fire of persecution, and being driven from one country to another, they were humble and devoted to God. They trusted in the Lord

to lead and deliver, and were fervent and instant in prayer, and earnest in spirit. However, after they came to America, and had enjoyed for a hundred years, or more, the religious liberties granted first by the charter of William Penn, and later extended to other colonies, some ceased to pray as earnestly as before, and settled down to a state of formality in worship, depending upon the laws of man for security, instead of the intervening hand of God. Consequently, some began gradually drifting away from the former piety and love for the Bible, and the Bible only, for their faith and practice, and took upon themselves another name besides the divinely given of God. In their history in America, this was mainly among the first signs which marked their drift toward the world.

In later records of the early Sabbatarians, who later became known as Seventh Day Baptists, we find them using the name the church of Christ, and the church of Jesus Christ. See *Seventh Day Baptist Memorial, Vol. 2, p. 27.*

Often the names, the Church of God, and the Church of Christ, were used interchangeably. -- Randolph, *History of Seventh Day Baptists*, pp. 11, 12.

In later records we find the name, Sabbatarian Church of Christ, and Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ. Later the words "of Christ" were dropped, and these people became known as Seventh Day Baptists. -- *Idem*, p. 36, Vol. 2 No. 1.

After the church at Newport had faithfully held the true light aloft for one hundred and forty-five years, in obtaining a charter the year 1819, their name was registered as "The Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ."

We get the following from the *History of the Seventh Day Baptists in America*, Vol. 2, page 610: "There were no by-laws, constitution, charter, or articles of faith, save the scriptures, which were considered all of these." On speaking of the west Newport church, or Hopkinton church, it further says on this page, "There seems to have been no special thought that it should have any special name It was referred to as the Sabbatarian church in Westerly (1758). In Hopkinton the church was known as the Hopkinton church."

Sixty-one years later (1880) the name "Church of Christ" had been dropped and the name "Seventh Day Baptist" retained, and a charter given that year under title of "The First Seventh Day Baptist Church" by the state legislature.

Thus we see how, by consecutive stages, the divine scriptural titles are supplanted by worldly names, which could not be pleasing, or bring rejoicing, to the divine courts of heaven.

We have given previously a record where the church at Shrewsbury, N.J., called themselves the Church of God.

The record of the history of this Sabbatarian church at Shrewsbury, N.J., begins as follows:

"This is a book of records of the settlement and proceedings of the Church of Christ, keeping the commandments of God, particularly the Holy Seventh Day, with the rest of the commandments of God, and believing and practicing the Holy Ordinances of the Gospel of

Christ and the doctrines thereof." . . . pp. 11, 12, *Randolph's History of the Seventh Day Baptists*.

A later record reads:

"The Church of Christ in Shrewsbury and Middletown in the observation of God's Holy Sanctified Sabbath. First agreed to, the -- (day) of the sixth month, 1774 . . . 13th. We believe that a company of sincere persons may truly be said to be the Church of God." -- Idem, p. 20.

It was the Shrewsbury church which in 1789 emigrated to Salem, West Virginia. The people from Shrewsbury founded the town of New Salem, Va., now Salem, West Virginia.

Although we know from the records above quoted, the Shrewsbury church was called the "Church of Christ" and the "Church of God," (while in New Jersey), it is a fact that when the church was reorganized, at Salem, the Bible name was dropped, and the members denominated themselves "The Seventh Day Baptists," which name is held by them until this present day.

It is an evident fact, however, that all of the Shrewsbury members who settled at Salem did not approve of the departure from the Bible for a church name, for upon settling in other parts of the State, and organizing other Sabbatarian bodies we find at least one church re-adopted the name "the Church of Christ." In addition to Sabbath-keeping, and believers' baptism, by immersion, some of these members in these assemblies observed other kindred truths held by the "Church of God" down through the centuries. The following extracts will bring out these facts:

Feet washing was practiced by some of the early congregations of the people now called Seventh Day Baptists. The following extract is taken from an epistle written by the Shrewsbury Church of Christ, in 1790 to another sister congregation. We quote:

"And now, dear Brethren, we shall use the freedom to acquaint you with one thing, and do heartily desire to recommend it to your serious and Christian consideration, and that is about the duty of washing one another's feet.

"This is a duty and work which some of us have been long thoughtful and in part persuaded of . . . and have concluded to put it in practice some time since, in the following manner; viz, at the . . . Lord's Supper . . . the Elder, in imitation of the Lord, takes a towel and girds himself; then he pours water in a basin and begins to wash the disciples' (viz., the brethren's) feet, and from him they take it, and the brethren to the brethren, and the sisters to the sisters, they wash one another's feet through the present assembly." -- page 15, *Randolph's History of the Seventh Day Baptists*.

"The practice of feet-washing was continued by this church after its removal to Virginia (now Salem, W.Va.) but was probably abandoned at sometime during the first half of the nineteenth century" -- Idem, p. 15.

Clark in his history of the Sabbatarians, page 64, states: "Some of these (western Virginia) churches, believe in the washing of one another's feet, at appointed times, etc., but the Sabbath and Baptism are their distinguishing tenets . . ."

Concerning the Passover, or the Lord's Supper, in at least one assembly of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, the following is illustrative:

"March 21, 1853, it was voted that communion service be held once in twelve months `on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month'; i. e., on the evening of the Passover." -- Idem., p. 201.

The diet of some of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, can be understood from the following extract concerning the South Fork of Hughes River Church in 1849:

"In their efforts to follow the mandates of the Mosaic law, the flesh of swine for food was placed under ban. Mutton and beef tallow took the place of lard in cooking. A few of the more well-to-do used olive oil." -- Idem, p. 203.

This church was called the "Church of Christ" in its records as given on page 20, and the Sabbath-keeping body at Lost Creek, W.Va., was also organized with the same name "Church of Christ," as recorded on page 146 of this same history.

Another congregation of early Sabbatarians settled on the South Fork of Hughes River in West Virginia, in Richie County, and among them were leaders who taught contrary to the Sabbatarians then known as Seventh Day Baptists. Of these Christians it is recorded that they "taught obedience to the Ceremonial Law, and enforced on the church, contrary to the faith of the (Seventh Day Baptist) Denomination, abstinence from certain meats, peculiarities of dress, and urged that the church should be governed by elders exclusively." -- Idem, p. 213.

The above records, we feel justified in saying, are enough to convince the most skeptical of our readers that the Lord left Himself not without witness during the centuries following the colonization of America; but that wherever these saints of God went, they carried with them the truths held dear to the Church of God in all ages, and preserved them for us of today.

The Seventh-day Adventists

While certain churches were growing cold and indifferent toward the truth, drifting toward the world, and becoming like the Gentiles around them, the Lord was raising up humble servants as they walked about and taught by the power of the Holy Spirit. New churches with new blood and new life were brought into existence, by the grace of God, and a real spiritual revival swept the country. The truth of the Bible Sabbath, with the fulfilling of prophecy, was stirring men and women everywhere into action for God.

William Miller, an earnest prophetic student and minister, was the main leader in the movement of 1835, in which the time of the second coming of the Lord was set. His great enthusiasm for Christ's return, and a partial knowledge of the prophecies, led him to believe the Lord would come in 1844. From the year 1835 onward, this belief gripped the minds of

young and old alike. Thousands in every walk of life were anxious to leave the world affairs behind and prepare to meet Jesus. Commandment observers sprang up in every quarter, and men and women, fired with zeal, went forth with the message depriving themselves of the necessities of life, that precious souls should be won to Christ and prepared to meet him at his coming. When the expected year arrived. the disappointment was bitter. Jesus did not come, but this did not dampen their zeal or slacken their work. Discovering their error in prophetic calculation and knowing that other conditions must first shape themselves for the Lord's return, they went on with the truth.

The year of the disappointment, 1844, James White began publishing *The Messenger* at Rochester, New York. The name of the paper was later changed to *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. It was launched by devoted Church of God brethren who were led by the Spirit of God upholding the precious truth, which God had called them to proclaim.

Names of Ministers from 1844 to 1860

It will be of interest to know who were leaders in the Church of God in America as the truth spread from state to state toward the west, and to the north and the south. Some of the leaders were as follows, J. N. Loughborough, M. E. Cornell, James White, Isaac Sanborn, Wm. S. Ingrahm, W. M. Allen, Joseph Bates, John Bostwick, J. N. Andrews, B. F. Snook, E. W. Shortridge, D. Richmond, C. Stanley, J. Sisley, J. Byington, H. Keeney, R. F. Cornwell, James Sawyer, B. F. Robbins, E. J. Wagoner, B. McCormick, E. E. Taylor, G. W. Holt, J. Dudley, L. E. Jones, J. P. Fleming, J. Clark, Brother Butler, S. W. Rhodes, Luther Kerr, Brother Cramner, R. V. Lyons, R. E. Cotterell, A. C. and D.C. Bordau, A. S. Hutchinson, Brother Sperry, H. S. Garney, M. S. Kellogg, Washington Morse, H. R. Lasher, and others.

State associations were formed and functioning in Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and in several of the southern states. Two gospel tents were paid for and in operation in the state of Iowa, and the other state associations had purchased tents, which were in use, and churches and isolated brethren were scattered from one end of the country to the other.

HL Hoeh, sermon 27 January 1990:

“In the 1500s and 1600s, the Church of God announced the 7th day. But in 1831 God used William Miller to announce the 2nd coming. Others from Protestant denominations supported him. They learned of the Sabbath in 1846.

They were generally called the Churches of Christ after the Seventh-day Baptists incorporated in 1802. Essentially they were not doing the Work. Miller had no connection with them.”

[NB: from this he seems to be saying that the groups that remained outside of the SDB General Conference in 1802 were called the Churches of Christ and were extant until the 1830s].

Seventh Day Baptists in America Prior to 1802 by Rev. L. A. Platts,
<http://www.geocities.com/Baja/Dunes/4535/cat5f.html>:

Thus from these original centers, Newport, Rhode Island; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Piscataway, New Jersey, streams of Seventh-day Baptist emigration flowed westward through Connecticut into New York State, through Long Island, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, into Virginia, and southwestward into the Carolinas and Georgia, until in 1802, there were not less than 20 churches and settlements of Sabbath-keepers, in nine or ten colonies or states, and numbering about 2,000 members. Eight of these churches, being the larger ones, numbering between 1,100 and 1,200 members reported to the General Conference at its first anniversary in 1803.

(The material on Seventh Day Baptists reprinted from *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America Historical Papers Written in Commemoration of the One Hundreth Anniversary of the Organization of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference Celebrated at Ashaway, RI, Aug. 20-25, 1902. Vol. 1.*)

Catholic Encyclopedia,
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02278a.htm>:

(8) *The Seventh-Day Baptists* differ from the tenets of the Baptists generally only in their observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord. They appeared in England in the latter part of the sixteenth century **under the name of "Sabbatarian Baptists"**. Their first church in this country was organized at Newport, R. I. in 1671. **In 1818 the name Seventh Day Baptists was adopted** (Communicants, 8493).

South American Groups:

"It was Robert Flores, I believe, who encountered the Argentinian Sabbath and holyday keepers" (e-mail from Ron Dart, 26 July 1995).

"Rupert was a one time SDA minister who left. He taught observance of the feasts of God, way before HWA. A number of SDA churches in South America followed his lead, and pulled out of the SDA organization.

In the 60's Dr. Dorothy and a few others came into contact with them. An article appeared in the *Good News* about them. They believed very close to the WCG teachings. The WCG was

excited about these people. Dr. Dorothy was sent back to see if they would become part of the fold.

When I met Dr. Dorothy in the 80's I asked him, and the reply was what I have just told you" (e-mail from Keith Hunt, 17 May 1997).

Select References and Suggested Further Reading

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| Linden, I (1982) | <i>1844 and the Shut Door Problem.</i> Libertryck, Stockholm. |
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