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The Contributions of Theophilus Brabourne to Our Understanding of the Sabbath

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Theophilus Brabourne¹ was an English minister who wrote extensively on the Sabbath² during the 1600's.³ A well-known writer on the Sabbath issue in England, Bryan W. Ball, writes that Brabourne's book *Discourse vpon the Sabbath Day* (1628) was "the first major work to appear in the seventeenth century advocating the Christian observance of Saturday."⁴

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief introduction to the life of Brabourne, an introduction to his writings⁵ on the Sabbath issue, and a discus-

¹ Brabourne most often used this spelling for his name, although several variations exist. All quotations from Brabourne's books also reflect spelling which is different from today. I wish to express my appreciation to the following individuals for reading this paper and making helpful suggestions: Harold Baasch, Wilmore Eva, Karnik Doukmetzian, Ingrid I. Satelmajer, Ruth I. Satelmajer and Joanne Stango.

² Sabbath in this paper, unless otherwise stated, refers to Saturday, the seventh day of the week.

³ See Nikolaus Satelmajer, "Theophilus Brabourne and the Sabbath," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 26:1 (Spring, 1988), 43-56. I used this article as a secondary source for the current paper.

⁴ Bryan W. Ball, *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Cambridge: [PUBLISHER?], 1981), 139.

⁵ I believe the following to be a complete list of Brabourne's writing on the Sabbath: *A Discourse vpon the Sabbath Day* (n.p., 1628) (hereinafter *Discourse*); *A Defence Of that most Ancient, and Sacred ordinance of GODS, the SABBATH DAY* (Academix Cantabrigiensis Liber, 1632; first published in 1631, I have been able to locate only the 1632 edition) (hereinafter *Defence*); *A Reply to Mr Collings Provocatus: or, To His Answer Made to Mr Boatman, Touching Suspension from the Sacrament* (London, 1654); *A Reply to the Indoctus Doctor Edoctus, or, To Master Collings His Answer Made to Master Brabourn's First Part of the Change of Church-Discipline* (London, 1654) (hereinafter *A Reply to the Indoctus Doctor*); *An Answer to M. Cawdry's Two Books of the Sabbath Lately Come Forth* (n.p. 1654); *The Second Vindication of My First Book of the Change of*

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sion of his contributions to the Sabbath issue which will be of particular interest to us today. It is my position that Brabourne can be of great value in our understanding of the Sabbath from a biblical, theological, and historical perspective. His writings can also will help us in our understanding of the question of what it means to keep the Sabbath.

Biographical Sketch

Theophilus Brabourne was born in 1590 in Norwich, approximately 120 miles northeast of London. He lived and worked there most of his life until he died in 1662.⁶ In a book published later in his life Brabourne gives an autobiographical sketch (*A Reply to the Indoctus Doctor*, 94). He writes that he was brought up in Norwich and attended the free school until fifteen years of age. At that point he was ready to attend Cambridge, but the religious climate was such that he was not given the opportunity. His father wanted young Theophilus to study for the ministry, but as an alternative sent him to London as a sales representative for the family stocking business. Brabourne married in London and returned to Norwich to live with his father. Upon his return, he began studying for the ministry under the tutorship of three ministers. After completing his studies, he received the M.A. degree. Alexander Gordon states that Thomas Dove, Bishop of Peterborough and previously Dean of Norwich, ordained Brabourne on September 24, 1621, as a priest in the Church of England. On April 18, 1622, he was licensed for the Norwich diocese by Bishop Harsnett. In about 1630 he was appointed to lead a church in Catton (outskirts of Norwich) at a salary of £40 a year (Gordon, 566).

Unfortunately for Brabourne but fortunately for advocates of the biblical Sabbath, Brabourne was not satisfied to only carry out his pastoral responsibilities. In 1628 he published his first book on the Sabbath, *A Discourse vpon the Sabbath Day*, which signalled the beginning of serious problems for Brabourne.

In 1631 he issued another, larger book, which attracted much more attention.⁷ Brabourne had the audacity to dedicate this book to the King, Charles I,⁸

Discipline: Being a Reply to Mr Collings His Second Answer to It (London, 1654); *An Answer to Two Books on the Sabbath* (London, 1659) (hereinafter *Answer to Two Books*); *Of the Sabbath Day, Which Is Now the Highest Controversy in the Church of England* (n.p., 1660); "An Answer to Mr Burt. on Ye L. Day Sabbath . . ." (unpublished book manuscript, Bodleian Library, Oxford Microfilm ms. Bodley 538) [although the date of this manuscript has not been established, we know that Burton's book was published in 1631].

⁶ Most place his death in 1661. Alexander Gordon, "Theophilus Brabourne, M.A.," *The Sabbath Memorial* 13 (January & April 1887): 567, argues convincingly that Brabourne died in 1662. Gordon reaches his conclusion based on an examination of Brabourne's will.

⁷ *Defence*. The title suggests a more aggressive position taken by Brabourne. Although this book was first published in 1631, it does not seem that any copies of that edition have survived. The 1632 edition is used in this article. All secondary sources also refer to the 1632 edition

⁸ *Defence*,(a)2. Richard Müller incorrectly states that it was dedicated to James I: "Dieses Buch, das dem Kōenig Jakob I gewidmet wurde, verursachte grosses Aufsehen." See Müller, *Adventisten—Sabbat—Reformation* (Lund:[PUBLISHER?], 1979), p. 156.

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and challenged Charles I to call for a return to the biblical Sabbath (*Defence*, a3). He even reminded the King that Old Testament monarchs such as Hezekiah and Josiah became famous by instituting Sabbath reform (*Defence*, a3v.).

The reaction to Brabourne's book was swift and brutal. Charles I directed Bishop Francis White of Ely to deal with the heretic. White's benign response was a book which appeared several years later.⁹ Meanwhile, Brabourne was required to defend his view and his writings. More than twenty years later he recalled some of these occasions: "Many years since, I held a Conference with that Reverend Bishop, D. White, at Ely House in Holbourn, about the Sabbath, it lasted many dayes, an houre or two in a day; after that, I did the like once before Archbishop of Lambeth" (*Indoctus*, 74).

These meetings, however, did not change Brabourne's position on the Sabbath, and neither did the attitude of his opponents soften toward him. He was forced to appear before the High Commission and defend himself

On the day of my censure in the high Commission Court, which lasted a whole afternoon of a long Summers day, neer an hundred Ministers present as I was told, besides hundred of other people: the Bishop of Ely (after the King's advocate had pleaded a long time against me read a discourse against me, about an houre long, wherein he argued against the Sabbath day; some of his Arguments were new things to me not heard of before which at present I could not answer.) (but since as soon as I got out of prison, I have answered his book, though I have not printed it). (*Indoctus*, 100)

Brabourne's chief accuser, Bishop White, did not have a sympathetic recollection of the hearing. White wrote: "But while he was in this heat . . . crying in all places where he came, *Victoria, victoria*: he fell into an *ambuscado*, and being intercepted, he was convented and called to an account, before *Your Grace, and the Honourable Court of High Commission*" (White, a2).

The High Commission, which possessed both ecclesiastical and judicial authority, saw to it that Brabourne served eighteen months at the Gate-House in Westminster. In addition, he spent nine weeks in the prison while being examined. He describes the prison as "nasty" and "loathe-some,"

and the prisoners as "rogues, and louise fellons, and cheaters" (*Indoctus*, 101). Sir Henry Martin, one of Brabourne's judges, was not satisfied that Brabourne merely serve time in prison. This judge called for the death sentence. Brabourne's wife was even given reports that her husband was to be burned (*Indoctus*, 100).

After a year of prison time, Brabourne appeared before William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. Six months later Brabourne signed a document and was released from prison (Gordon, 567). The document was misunderstood during Brabourne's lifetime, and even today there is confusion as to how it was obtained and what it really stated.

⁹ Francis White, *A Treatise of the Sabbath-day* (London: [PUBLISHER?], 1635).

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Bishop White, Brabourne's chief accuser, wrote that Brabourne became "an unfained conuert, and in a publike and honourable audience, he made his voluntary and humble submission." (White, 305). White failed to mention that it was the prison experience which pushed Brabourne into considering submission to the authorities. A more recent writer, Winton Solberg, is even less accurate, since he does not even mention the prison experience. Solberg writes that the "High Commission induced him to abandon his Judaical views."¹⁰ This statement is incorrect. It was *because* the High Commission could not induce Brabourne to abandon his view that he was forced to serve prison time.

Brabourne certainly did not acknowledge that the statement was offered voluntarily. Two decades later, he reminds his readers that he "did not easily give away to submission." He signed it only after the terrible prison experience, calling the signing a "recantation of a rash word, not of the matter." He reminds his antagonist, Collings, that "I wrote that I confessed it [Sunday] to be an holy day of the Church; and so much I might have said of Christmas Day also" (*In-doctus*, 101).

My examination of the statement¹¹ leads me to the conclusion that Brabourne's analysis is correct. He submitted himself to the church and acknowledged Sunday to be a day of the church. He did not change his position on the Sabbath, but only admitted that he had written and spoken rashly in articulating his position. Did he, as Solberg maintains, abandon his views on the Sabbath? Not at all! After his release from prison, Brabourne wrote six additional books on the Sabbath and one unpublished manuscript which has survived.¹²

Brabourne on the Sabbath

In this section, I will examine Brabourne's views on the Sabbath. It is not within the scope of this paper to thoroughly examine all of his many writings on the subject. The main emphasis will be his 1628 book (*Discourse*), which is foundational to his theology of the Sabbath. In my 1988 article (*AUSS*) I introduced Brabourne and his writings on the Sabbath. In this paper I am focusing on his 1628 book. Limited references will be made to his other writings on the topic.

Brabourne is an aggressive and able defender of the Sabbath. He approaches the topic by discussing the positions of the critics of the Sabbath, analyzing appropriate biblical passages, reviewing historical developments, and discussing ways that the Sabbath should be kept. I will point out the major themes about the Sabbath that he develops.

¹⁰ Winton U. Solberg, *Redeem the Time: The Puritan Sabbath in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: [PUBLISHER?], 1977), 79.

¹¹ The statement is reproduced in Erick T. Bjorck, *A Little Olive Leaf Put in the Mouth of that (so called) Noah's Dove* (New York: [PUBLISHER?], 1704), 30-31.

¹² See n. 5 for a list of his writings on the Sabbath. He also wrote other books (mostly on church government), but they are not related to the subject of this study.

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The Word of God, the Law of God and the Fourth Commandment

According to Brabourne, the Sabbath must be discussed in the context of the authority of the Word of God, the law of God, and the nature of the commandments—and more specifically, the fourth commandment.

The authority of the Word of God is foundational to the Sabbath issue, according to Brabourne. He portrays human reason as feeble and insufficient, at best (*Discourse*, 54). In fact, ministers dare not "trust to their reason vntill they finde God in his word to backe them" (55). As evidenced by his writings, Brabourne is not against human reason, but human reason is for him "subseruient and handmaide to the Holy Scriptures" (56). Because Brabourne takes this position about the role of the Bible, he spends considerable effort dealing with texts used by Sabbath critics and texts which support the Sabbath. Likewise, in his discussion of Sunday he appeals to the authority of the Bible. If God intended that Sunday should become the Sabbath, would Christ not have given a command for Sunday to become the Sabbath? asks Brabourne (57). Human conclusions, no matter how logical they are, do not have equal authority to God's revealed will. "Neuer with me, I trust to God," Brabourne proclaims (144).

Brabourne's view of the Word of God leads him to a detailed discussion of the law of God and specifically the ten commandments. For Brabourne it is clear that God's moral law, or commandments, are still in force. The Sabbath, he writes, is "a partice of the Morall Law which is perpetuall" (80).

Brabourne reminds the reader that Christ himself clarified any questions about the moral law, for "Our Sauour Christ himselfe *ratified* the Morall Law, and euery iote and title of it vnto the vvorlde end, Matt. 5.17.18" (183, *emph. added*). The apostles likewise supported the Sabbath as a part of this moral law (212). This moral law is still in force, and it should trouble the conscience of any person to hear it questioned (179).

While Brabourne emphatically maintains the perpetuity of the moral law, he recognizes that there are ceremonial laws that were limited in duration. This distinction separates Brabourne from other Sabbath advocates, such as John Trask, who did not affirm such a distinction in their writings on the Sabbath.¹³

Brabourne defines the differences between the laws very specifically. Here is how he defines the moral law: "I vnderstand nothting else but such a thing as now pertaineth to maneres and our practise, as doth the Sabbath day: and I call the 7th day Sabbath, the Morall Sabbath, because it is a branch of the Morall Law" (*Discourse*, 63). On the ceremonial law, he writes: "I vnderstand such a thing as whilst it stode had respect vnto Christ to be incarnate, and it is now no parte of maneres or our practise, because abolished" (63). This distinction is consistently followed by Brabourne, and it helps him to keep the Sabbath sepa-

¹³ Bryan W. Ball, *The Seventh-Day Men*, (Oxford: [PUBLISHER?], 1997), 58-59.

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rate from ceremonial laws, which had a valuable but nevertheless time-limited function.

The opponents of the Sabbath maintain that the Sabbath is part of the ceremonial law, while Brabourne insists that it is part of the moral law. In order to prove their point, the critics of the Sabbath refer to certain biblical texts. I will now show how Brabourne responds to these texts:

Numbers 28:9-10: In this passage, worshipers are instructed to bring two lambs as an offering on the Sabbath. Opponents of the Sabbath claim that because the instructions for the offering are different from other days, it proves the Sabbath to be ceremonial. Brabourne points out that in Num 28:4-6 the worshipers were to bring one lamb on other days, but that did not "make the working dayes of the weeke ceremoniall and abolisht." And furthermore, why was it that only the time of the Sabbath and not the rest and holiness were abolished, he asks. He concludes that the "Sabbath was a Sabbath in nature and institution before there was any sacrifices" (115). Once again, Brabourne secures the Sabbath to God's act of creation and God's act of giving or instituting the Sabbath.

Deuteronomy 5:15: Critics of the Sabbath claim it to be ceremonial because of its connection to the Exodus from Egypt. Brabourne responds that there are two aspects to the Sabbath: institution and observation. He points out that it was not instituted because of deliverance from Egypt, "for the Sabbath was before they euer went downe into Egypt" (116). While the Sabbath was not given because of the deliverance from Egypt, the deliverance from Egypt may be a cause for the observation of the Sabbath, Brabourne argues (116-17). Even though Christians have not experienced the deliverance from Egypt, Brabourne asks "haue vve [Christians] no many other blessings and deliuerance to moue vs to obedience?" (117).

Matthew 12:8: Opponents of the Sabbath point out that since Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, He may change it. Brabourne dismisses that argument by asking, "whats that to our question?" The issue is not what may or may not do, but "what Christ did" (154). And since there is no evidence that Christ abolished it, the Sabbath is still with us.

Romans 14:5: In this text (and also Gal. 4:10), critics of the Sabbath claim we are shown that the Sabbath is not different from the other days. Brabourne responds that Paul is referring to days which "vvere in vse amongst the Gentiles, the Romanes and Galatians, before their conversion to the faith." Gal. 4:8-9, he points out, shows that Paul is referring to a time when they did not know God. On the other hand, Brabourne writes that even if Paul is referring to Sabbath, he is only referring to the ceremonial Sabbath, and that is not cause for the Christian to give up the moral Sabbath (119).

Colossians 2:16-17: Opponents of the Sabbath maintain that this passage shows the Sabbath is not only a shadow of things to come, but that the Christian actually is forbidden to keep the Sabbath (121). Brabourne responds that there are two laws: The moral, written by God, and the ceremonial, written by Moses.

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Likewise, he maintains there is the moral Sabbath and there are ceremonial Sabbaths (121). It is his conclusion that this passage refers to the ceremonial Sabbaths and the weekly Sabbath. He claims that four "vvorthy diuines of their owne side [in other words, Sunday proponents] recognize the distinction between the moral Sabbath and the ceremonial Sabbaths in this passage. One reason that Brabourne sees v. 16 as referring to ceremonial Sabbaths is because he maintains that the premise is given in v. 14. If v. 14 is the premise, then for him v. 16 is the conclusion (122). He states that the differences between him and the opponents of the Sabbath are not about the duties of the Sabbath, which are rest and holiness, but about the time and day (128).

His concluding comment on Col 2:15 is "if you by this text of Co. 2.16. Doe abolish the very duties of the Sabbath, Rest, and Holines, as you doe, haue you not made faire worke think you, by abolishing that which you call the morality of the Sabbath, euer Rest, and Holinesse."¹⁴

Hebrews 4:10-11: Critics of the Sabbath claim this passage shows the Sabbath to be in heaven only, the early one having been ceremonial and temporary (111). Brabourne asks if it is a good argument to prove the Sabbath is ceremonial, if it is a type of the heavenly Sabbath. He believes that this actually proves the Sabbath to be "an eternal ceremony." And, he goes on, types are not abolished until "their types antetypes and bodies be comne, but must last and endure till then; so circumcision and the passeouer and other the like, they lasted till Christ came." That brings him to this conclusion about the Sabbath: "So then must the Sabbath if a type of heauen, endnre [sic] vntill Heauen be comne" (111, *emph. added*). And finally, he reminds the reader that it is God who instituted the Sabbath at creation (112).

Biblical Prophecies Concerning the Change of the Sabbath

Brabourne maintains that the Bible is clear in upholding the Sabbath and does not in any way open the door for a change. He also maintains that the early church kept the Sabbath well past the New Testament era. While some regions may not have kept the Sabbath, he maintains that in general the Sabbath was kept until the Council of Laodicea changed it in AD 364 (217).

Brabourne maintains that the change of the Sabbath was predicted by the prophet Daniel. He disassociates himself from those who speak against the Sabbath and does not want to

partake of that brande of a wicked man prophecied of Daniel 7.25. in changing tymes, and the Law: now since it is a propriety of God to change tymes and seasons Dan 2.21. Had not I need be carefull there be no new day (as is the Lords day) fer vp for a Sabbath, vnles it can be expresly infallibly & demonstratiuely proued to be of Gods owne doing? *least I say be necessary to the sin of changeing Godes tymes, Dan 7.25. (28, emph. added)*

¹⁴ 130 (shown in error as p. 118 in the book).

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Brabourne recognizes the statement as a major prophecy concerning the Sabbath. He discusses the Dan 7:25 prophecy at least six times in his 1628 book (28, 102, 125, 167, 217). This position on Dan 7:25 should be of great interest to students of the biblical Sabbath. His identification of the little horn is not unique, but maintaining that the Sabbath is referred to in Dan 7:25 is a significant contribution by Brabourne, making him one of the earliest, if not the earliest, Christian scholars to interpret it as such. LeRoy E. Froom refers to Tillam (1651), Saller (1657), Chamberlen (1682), and Brampfield (1792), who give a similar interpretation to this prophecy.¹⁵ All of these individuals came on the scene after Brabourne. Froom does not even mention Brabourne's interpretation of Dan 7:25. It is of interest that one of these individuals, Peter Chamberlen, was court physician to Charles I at the time Brabourne found himself in great difficulties with the King. Chamberlen became a Sabbath advocate several decades later, but it is not within the purpose of this paper to ask if the writings of Brabourne influenced him.

Who then is responsible for the change? Brabourne gives two interpretations to this question. First, he writes of "that vvicked man, To change tymes and the Law, Dan 7.25" (*Discourse*, 102). In another place he warns the reader against fighting God and siding with "that branded vvicked one in Dan 7.25 vvho thought he might change tymes, and the law" (125). Who is this who would attempt to change the Sabbath? In his second book, Brabourne gives additional insight into his views. He writes: "Oh, how is this abused Commandement [4th], to be deplored & lamented! & how are the Agents herein, to be loathed and abhorred? for they attempt with that wicked man, prophecied on by *Daniel*, to change times & lawes, Dan 7.25. Gods 7th day, into the 8th day" (*Defence*, 296). In the same paragraph, he places responsibility on the papacy, or Roman Catholic Church, for attempting to make the second commandment ceremonial and claiming it is only applicable to Jews and not Christians (296). It is reasonable to reach the conclusion that Brabourne places responsibility for the attempted change predicted in Dan 7:25 on the papacy or the Roman Catholic Church. The fact that he personalizes the one responsible for the predicted changes gives weight to the interpretation that the papacy had significant responsibility.¹⁶

Protestants should not conclude that Brabourne is blaming only Roman Catholics for the attempted elimination of the Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment, writes Brabourne, "is forgotten at all hands vtterly by both Protestantes and Papistes: and so much of the word Remember" (*Discourse*, 78). He takes a somewhat softer position toward his own church, the Church of England. His church "was couered in the chaffe of popery, much a doe to hould life and soule,

¹⁵ LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington: Review & Herald, 1954), 4:919.

¹⁶ See for example *Discourse*, 125, where he uses wicked "one," and "he."

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and she hath not had a visible face till now of later yeeres from about Luthers tyme, so that this error is to be imputed to the Romishe Church" (62).

Brabourne also assigns to another group the responsibility for the attempted change predicted in Dan 7:25. He holds the Council of Laodicea (AD 364) as one of the parties responsible for the attempt to get rid of God's Sabbath. That council is "guildty of that sine foretould by Daniel 7.25" (167). Even though this attempt at changing the Sabbath was prophesied by Daniel, Brabourne does not take away from the council the responsibility for the act. He reminds the reader that in the Book of Revelation Laodicea is the "worst of the 7 [churches]" (167, *emph. added*).

Brabourne also warns the reader about participating in this act predicted in Daniel. He exhorts the reader to "Beware ye be not found fighters against God; and to side it vvith that branded vvicked one in Dan 7.25. vvho thought he might change tymes, and the law" (125). The change of the Sabbath was not a random act. God foresaw that "after a longe time, that is about 364. yeeres after Christ, this his Sabbath wold be not in part violated, but vvtterly and altogether blotted out of remembrance in the Church for 1200. yeeres" (77). Students of history and the Sabbath know that the Sabbath did not disappear as much as Brabourne believes, but there is no question that a major blow was given to the Sabbath. This act against the Sabbath, he points out, was foreseen by God and communicated by God's prophet.

Other Aspects of the Sabbath

A prolific writer on the Sabbath, Brabourne deals with various aspects of this topic. I am not able to deal with every aspect he covers, but in this section I will identify some of the other aspects of the Sabbath that Brabourne develops.

Sabbath given at creation. Throughout his writings, Brabourne persistently reminds the reader that the Sabbath is universal and not given to only a particular people for a limited period of time. Brabourne points out that because God gave the Sabbath at creation, if Christ had intended to leave another Sabbath (Lord's day, or Sunday), Christ likewise have left a commandment for it (57).

The Sabbath, thus, is "a signe of the work of creation" (195). The Sabbath is an active sign because it "is a meanes to keepe in memory the miraculouse worke of creation" (191). Brabourne then puts forth an argument for the perpetuity of the Sabbath which is biblically supported, logical, and obvious, except that I have not noticed it advanced by other writers. He states that "there was neuer any helpe or meanes, once appointed to keep memory of the vvordls creation, which was afterwards abolisht, and if none were abolisht, then euery one that once vvas, remaineth still" (192). Indeed, how could a memorial to creation be abolished as long as God's creation exists? The Sabbath, which is a memorial to creation, must then exist along with God's creation.

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Uniqueness of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a specific day because, writes Brabourne, "Seventh it is to be noted, that it is not a Cardinall number, but an Ordinall, notifying which for order" (69). In other words, God did not appoint one day out of seven to be the Sabbath, He appointed the seventh day. To those who claim that it does not matter which day we give to God, Brabourne responds, "vvy then did God take such care to decipher out the very day vvherein he vvold be served?" (71). Further, Brabourne emphasizes the uniqueness by writing that God "culled out the 7th day from the others" (71). The Sabbath thus gives "God the full glory of his worke of creation [more] then can any man" (97, *emph. added*).

Justification, Sanctification and the Sabbath. For Brabourne, the "Sacramentes be signs of justification" (198). For him, justification is an act of God. Sanctification is also an act of God, for it is He "hath freely bestowed vpon vs, euery good and perfect gifte vvhatsoever is in vs, Iam. 1.17" (199). The Sabbath, he maintains, is a sign of our sanctification (198), for the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people (130). The weekly Sabbath reminds us that "the Holy God is that fountaine and authour of our sanctification and holinesse" (197). God is our sanctifier, and the Sabbath, which God has appointed to teach us sanctification, cannot be eliminated (196).

Keeping the Sabbath. Brabourne offers a rather lengthy explanation that the Sabbath should be kept only during the daylight hours of the seventh day. It is not, he maintains, a period of twenty-four hours that is to be kept (83). More important, however, are his statements on what it means to keep the Sabbath. While it is true that God forbade "vnnecessary seruile vvork" (107). God does not forbid "works of charity and necessity" (105). After all (107), Christ allowed a healed man to carry his bed on the Sabbath. Brabourne, we may note, places greater emphasis on what can be done on the Sabbath rather than on what cannot be done. He writes that it is acceptable on the Sabbath to lead a beast to water, "pluck and ruble eares of corne," help a beast out of a ditch, and kindle a fire (106). Brabourne concludes that there are broad reasons for keeping the Sabbath: (1) For worship and service, or specifically to honor God with our worship and service. (2) For the good of mankind, benefitting both the soul and the body, and, (3) For the good of the animals (146).

The Sabbath in the early Christian Church. Brabourne is familiar with some of the early references to the conflict between Sabbath and Sunday. For example, he maintains that Ignatius did not speak against the Sabbath, but rather he spoke against the wrong understanding of the Sabbath (161). He argues that the Sabbath was kept for 300-400 years after Christ by the churches "reputed [to be] the most pure Churches" (215, *emph. added*). The Sabbath, he posits, was in use until the Council of Laodicea action in AD 364, at "which they exacted a Lavv against it, [the Sabbath] or else they made a Law against nothing" (217). Indeed, why would the Council of Laodicea address the Sabbath issue if the Sabbath was abandoned by the very early Christians? This obvious, but ignored,

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point by Brabourne does show that the Sabbath was alive nearly four hundred years after the start of the Christian church.

Sunday in the Christian Church and Appeal for Patience. This strong proponent of the Sabbath felt that there is a role for Sunday in the Christian church. It does not in any way replace the Sabbath, because there is no biblical support for such a position. Sunday can never become the Sabbath (32, 36, 50, 57, 59). The rightful role of Sunday, or Lord's day, is to remind Christians of the resurrection, for it "was insituted for the memory of the resurrection (193).

Brabourne recognizes that his position on the Sabbath must sound radical to his fellow Christians. The Sabbath has been forgotten because the "Romish Church" blotted out the fourth and second commandments. Since Luther's time, however, "by the mercy of God, the chaffe hath beene fanned away, yet haue we not had a setteled constant shine of the Sune of the Gospell" (225). Because God is a God of mercy, He understands the challenges Christians have, and we need to be tolerant on the Sabbath issue "vntill the tyme of reformation" (235).

Conclusions and Need for Further Research

Theophilus Brabourne is a major contributor to our understanding of the theology of the biblical Sabbath. In this paper I have provided a summary of his position on the Sabbath as he stated it in his first book, with only incidental references to his other writings. Three hundred seventy years after his book was published, what can we learn from Brabourne? What directions does he point to for additional research? I believe the following helps us to focus on these questions:

1. The Sabbath is not an appendix to the biblical message. It is integral part of the Word of God. Brabourne does not see the need to make any apologies for the Sabbath. It is a gift from God.

2. There is no conflict between God's law, the Gospel, and the Sabbath. Brabourne is biblically sound in his explanation of how we receive justification and salvation—it is from God. As part of God's plan for humanity, the Sabbath in no way conflicts with God's plan of salvation.

3. The opponents of the Sabbath demonstrate a dearth of creativity in their efforts to explain away the Sabbath. I make this statement from the perspective of a Sabbath proponent, yet I believe I can be objective enough to observe that while the anti-Jewish arguments have been toned down or eliminated, today's arguments otherwise sound very much the same as the ones used during Brabourne's time.

4. Brabourne is more interested in explaining what it means to keep the Sabbath than in arguing about what cannot be done on the Sabbath. It seems to me that Sabbath proponents today would do well to follow his lead.

5. It is fair to conclude from Brabourne's writings that many others addressed the question of the Sabbath, but that their writings have been ignored. Because the writings of Sabbath proponents were often labeled heretical, a sig-

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nificant number have been destroyed. On the other hand, Sabbath proponents would do well to research further that which is available. Sabbath proponents must go beyond the question of which day is the Sabbath and what cannot be done on the Sabbath. There is a need to get away from shallow arguments for or against the Sabbath and a need to address the biblical, theological, and historical issues of the Sabbath.

6. Brabourne rightly places the Sabbath question in the context of the total biblical message. The Sabbath, apart from God's act of giving it and the biblical message about it, has no value other than to be a day of physical rest and inactivity.

7. Brabourne ably shows that the Sabbath is a part of the biblical prophecies given by God for His people. Thus, the Sabbath is central to the conflict between God and His adversaries.