

Theology of the Sabbath

A Selected Bibliography

Much has been written in recent years on the theology of the Sabbath by both Jewish and Christian writers. Especially encouraging is the increasing number of Adventist writings on this topic. The following annotated bibliography, which is limited to studies in English, includes works by Jews, a Seventh Day Baptist, Seventh-day Adventists and other Protestants.

Jewish Writers

Dresner, Samuel H. *The Sabbath*. New York: Burning Bush Press, 1970.

A less philosophical, more practical approach to the meaning of the Sabbath than Heschel's.

Friedman, Theodore. "The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption." *Judaism*, 16 (1967), 443-452.

Develops the view that the Sabbath as a foretaste of the world-to-come should be enjoyed in that manner. Thus, the Sabbath, frees man from "his consciousness of time, the competitiveness that pervades every sphere of life, and the diminishing pleasure man finds in work."

Heschel, Abraham J. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951.

The most stimulating, provocative and seminal work on the meaning of the Sabbath by a Jewish theologian. Builds his theology on the concept of holiness in time. Has had great influence.

This annotated bibliography has been compiled by Sakae Kubo and Fritz Guy.

Tsevat, Matitياهو. "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84 (1972), 447-459.

Sees the basic meaning of the Sabbath as acceptance of the sovereignty of God, because man renounces on every seventh day his dominion over time. Since it is not related to any agricultural or astronomical phenomenon, this sovereignty is absolute.

Protestant Writers

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958, 1961. Vol. 3, bk. 1, pp. 98-99, 213-28; vol. 3, bk. 4, pp. 47-72.

Brown, James. "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Sabbath." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 19 (1966), 409-433.

_____. "The Doctrine of the Sabbath in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 20 (1967), 1-24.

Among Protestant theologians, Karl Barth has been the most original in dealing with the theology of the Sabbath. Barth's wide-ranging theology is represented very well in Brown's articles. Barth's major contributions are his consideration of the Sabbath as a revelation of the nature of God, as the beginning of the covenant of grace, as man's first day to which he comes with nothing to offer, as a type of Jesus Christ "who is the living presence of Eternity in Time," as a sign of Christ's sovereignty and as a sign of justification and redemption.

Jewett, Paul K. *The Lord's Day: A Theological Guide to the Christian's Day of Worship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

Consists mainly of a justification for keeping the first day instead of the seventh (the OT Sabbath has been fulfilled in Christ but the first day is kept as a sign that the rest is still a future hope). Nevertheless, does go beyond this concern and explicates De Quervain's and Barth's theology.

Richardson, Herbert W. *Toward an American Theology*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967. Chapter 5, pp. 108-60.

Connects the Sabbath with the incarnation and with the Holy Spirit. For Richardson, the presence of Jesus, "God with us," is more important than his redemptive activity, "God for us." The meaning of the Sabbath as God's presence with us is extended by the Holy Spirit by the presence in us.

Wolff, Hans Walter. "The Day of Rest in the Old Testament." *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, 7 (July 1972), 65-76.

Draws out the implication of the Sabbath for modern man, especially emphasizing the freedom the Sabbath brings now and that which it points to in the future. It is directed to those who are particularly burdened with work and for those who are overzealous for work.

Seventh Day Baptist

Saunders, Herbert R. *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation*. Plainfield, N. J.: American Sabbath Tract Society, 1970.

Half of this book presents a theology of the Sabbath. Although some familiar themes are treated, this is a notable effort by a seventh-day-keeping Christian to deal with the Sabbath theologically.

Seventh-day Adventist

Books

Andreasen, Niels-Erik A. *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Tradition-Historical In-*

vestigation. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 7, 1972.

A thorough examination, using the methods and categories of current Old Testament studies, of the materials that must be the starting-point for a biblical theology of the Sabbath, including the Sabbath as an institution and as law, and the relation of the Sabbath to creation and the covenant.

Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*. Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977.

Chapter 2, "Christ and the Lord's Day," pp. 17-73, lays part of the biblical foundation for an understanding of the Sabbath in relation to redemption, concluding that "in the light of Christ's teaching and ministry, the Sabbath rest epitomizes the blessings of salvation." Scholarly, but not too technical for the general reader.

Holland, Kenneth J. *This Day Is Yours: Exploring the Many-faceted Wonders of God's Sabbath Day*. Nashville: Southern, 1969.

A devotional-theological consideration of the Sabbath, written in a popular homiletic style and including its biblical basis, religious importance, traditional observance and relationship to various aspects of Christian life.

Kubo, Sakae. *God Meets Man: The Meaning of the Sabbath and the Second Coming*. Nashville: Southern, 1978 (scheduled for publication in the spring).

The theological significance of the Sabbath in various dimensions, including the eschatological, bringing together and developing some of the ideas that have been recently emerging in Adventist thought about the Sabbath.

Articles and essays

Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *Rest for Modern Man: The Sabbath for Today*. Nashville: Southern, 1977.

The Sabbath rest in terms of completion, deliverance, peace and consecration. Reprinted from the *Review and Herald*, March 27 and April 3, 1975.

Guy, Fritz. "The Meaning of the Sabbath." *Insight*, February 5, 12 and 19, 1974.

Three highly compressed articles on the Sabbath as a symbol of the relationship between God and man, a celebration of God's activity and an opportunity for personal wholeness.

Larson, David. "Celebrating the Sabbath in the Secular Seventies." *Insight*, March 23, 1971, pp. 4-8.

Identifying "the Sabbath ideas" as creation, liberation and culmination, and briefly elaborating their implications for shaping a life-style.

_____. "Does a Sequoia Have Rights?" *Insight*, July 11, 1972, pp. 25-26.

Ecological implications of the Sabbath, which is a reminder that nature has value of its own.

Olsen, V. Norskov. "Theological Aspects of the Seventh-day Sabbath." *Spectrum*, vol. 4 (1972), no. 3, pp. 5-18.

The Sabbath as providing constitutive and corrective norms for other Christian doctrines, such as the concept of God, justification and sanctification, and eschatology, which are "not truly established unless they are erected within the theological framework" of the Sabbath.

Rosado, Caleb. "God's Solution to Man's Problems." *These Times*, March, 1973, pp. 7-11.

The significance of the Sabbath for man's understanding of God, himself and his environment, both before and after sin.

Scriven, Charles. "Beyond Arithmetic: A Look at the Meaning of the Sabbath." *Insight*, September 7, 1971, pp. 14-18.

The Sabbath as a reminder of the essential goodness of life as God's creation, a sign of protest against dehumanization and a celebration of hope.

_____. "Day of Gladness," "What the Sabbath Asks You to Be," and "Things Will Turn Out All Right." *Liberty*, January-February, March-April and May-June, 1977.

The Sabbath as fellowship with God, participation in the work of God and movement with God toward the future.

_____. "Forgotten Holiday: Why We Should Buck the Establishment to Get It Back." *Insight*, May 1972, p. 5.

The Sabbath as a reminder of the reality of God, the goodness of the created world, the freedom of human existence and the dependence of man upon God.

_____. "The Sabbath: Day of Rest and Worship." *The Demons Have Had It*. Nashville: Southern, 1976. Chapter 9, pp. 101-11.

Implications of God's rest in the Genesis record of creation in contrast with the Babylonian account: God's rest shared with human beings as a sign of meaning and a form of discipline.

Unpublished materials

Guy, Fritz. "Holiness in Time: A Preliminary Study of the Sabbath as Spiritual Experience." Term paper, Andrews University, 1961.

Based largely on the work of Heschel and Barth, an initial Adventist attempt to develop a theology of the Sabbath through the ideas of freedom, sanctification and worship.

Jones, John R. "A Theological Study of the Sabbath in Relation to the New Testament Understanding of Redemptive History." Bachelor of Divinity thesis, Andrews University, 1965.

Another early, but more extensive, Adventist effort to understand the Sabbath theologically, viewing it as a unification of the redemptive process, with the Sabbath healings pointing to Christ's authority and the completion of his redemptive activity, and the Crucifixion beginning the future spiritual rest.