

# Remembering the Sabbath Day

Samuele Bacchiocchi. *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*. 319pp., illus., bibl. Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1980. \$8.95 (paper).

John C. Brunt. *A Day for Healing*. 63 pp. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981. \$2.50.

reviewed by Gary Patterson

These two books, so vastly different in size and approach, possess a similarity of subject and background that uniquely binds them together. Both John C. Brunt and Samuele Bacchiocchi write from the perspective of a happy, Sabbath-keeping family, and it is as if this blessed Sabbath tradition, which was precious to their childhood experience, now is manifested in scholarly pursuits. In intellectual maturity they celebrate and defend a warm memory. Bacchiocchi approaches the vast subject of the Sabbath with an obviously enormous wealth of knowledge that he only briefly summarizes, despite the book's considerable length (319 pages). Brunt, by contrast, speaks only of a small aspect of the Sabbath, dealing in depth with a topic that Bacchiocchi touches only briefly in part of one chapter, the Sabbath miracles.

Bacchiocchi's work truncates and translates many years of research. This is not to say that the work is a cheapened version of scholarly research, but rather to indicate that much of the technical jargon and extensive documentation of a typical thesis

are eliminated. The subtitle of the book, as well as each chapter heading, contain the words "Good News," suggesting the book's role as a Sabbath evangel. It seems as if Bacchiocchi intends, as the evangelist of the Sabbath, to save this God-created institution from the destructive forces of both the legalist and the antinomian.

Bacchiocchi presents his subject in seven chapters. In fact at times, through content and illustration, the number seven seems to take on the special significance it possessed for the Jewish audience of Scripture. Chapter four lists seven redemptive symbols of the Sabbath in the covenant relationship. Chapter five suggests seven redemptive meanings of the Sabbath in the New Testament. The closing chapter summarizes the entire book in seven promises of rest found in the Sabbath. No doubt this frequent use of the number seven is unintentional, yet the profound respect the author demonstrates for the Sabbath may surface subconsciously in his writing.

Numerous drawings, credited to Franco Payne, illustrate Bacchiocchi's book. On page 14 the author states, "His ability to portray abstract ideas visually will undoubtedly be appreciated by many readers." Indeed some of them are very good, but as a whole they do not seem to come across well in the printing and many of them remain as abstract as the ideas they seek to portray.

In his first chapter Bacchiocchi establishes the roots of the Sabbath in the creative acts of God and argues ably against positions that would place its origins in cultural, astronomical, or cultic backgrounds. After placing its roots in Eden, he then moves in the second chapter to its purpose as a memorial of creation, binding man to God in its celebration. Chapter three deals with the

priorities established for life in Sabbath observance, while chapter four describes the Sabbath as a covenant bond. Chapter five traces the redemptive purpose of the Sabbath in both Old and New Testaments, dealing particularly with Jesus' Sabbath miracles and activities with His disciples. Chapter six is full of practical suggestions on Sabbath activity, and the closing chapter serves as a concluding summary.

The rest of the book contains a brief summary of Bacchiocchi's published dissertation, 56 pages of footnotes, an impressive bibliography of over 100 relevant books and a table of contents. Though its size may be a bit overwhelming to the casual reader, those willing to read something a bit difficult can gain much from this outstanding work.

Brunt's book, on the other hand, is short and easy to read. This ease should not be allowed to obscure the significant and scholarly contribution it makes to Sabbath literature. In fact, Brunt gently introduces the reader to some of the terms of biblical scholarship not familiar to readers of Seventh-day Adventist publications. For example, on page 28 he explains the word "chiasm" to his readers. On page 26 we are introduced to the term "pronouncement stories," which is explained for the uninitiated reader. Brunt also breaks through the useful but often obscuring screen of the "harmony" approach to gospel study by showing the unique and meaningful differences in the varied reports of the gospel writers.

The first chapter is really an introduction or foreword to the book, in which Brunt makes it clear that his purpose is not Sabbath apologetics, fine as such an endeavor may be, but to aid in finding the meaning of Sabbath. Chapter two provides the setting in which the Sabbath miracles occurred while chapter three constructs a framework for understanding Jesus' miracles. Chapter four examines the Sabbath miracles themselves, comparing, contrasting, and explaining them in depth. The first part of chapter

five provides some excellent summary material of the issues raised in chapter four, but the diagrams of healing, Sabbath, and salvation at its close remain a bit of an enigma to me. Chapter six of Brunt's book does much the same as Bacchiocchi's sixth chapter, giving many practical observations on Sabbath keeping.

Both books provide a significant addition to Sabbath literature. No doubt they will contribute to "proper Sabbath observance" on some cold, winter, Sabbath afternoon by the fire—provided the children don't get bored while we read.

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## Sex and the Healthy Adventist

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Sakae Kubo. *Theology and Ethics of Sex*. 128pp. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980. \$4.95 (paper).

reviewed by William K. Faber

The questioning in the past 20 years of traditional beliefs and attitudes toward sex is not a process that excludes Christians, nor should it. A recent attempt to divide truth from error on the subject comes from former seminary Greek and theology professor Sakae Kubo, who is currently president of Newbold College in England. In *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, Kubo intends to develop a biblically-based theology of sex and to apply it to a number of specific sex-related ethical issues.

The first half of the book exposes some of the post-biblical roots of the negative attitudes toward sex—sex is shameful and a