A Review Of Robert Martin's The Christian Sabbath

Published: Thursday 21st of July 2016 16:43 by Simon Wartanian
URL: https://www.thecalvinist.net/post/A-Review-Of-Robert-Martins-The-Christian-Sabbath



Dr. Robert Paul Martin

The Christian Sabbath

Its Redemptive-Historical Foundation, Present Obligation, and Practical Observance

"A masterpiece and a biblically grounded book" is how I would describe this amazing work. He engaged with those with whom he disagrees. He demonstrate a spirit of love and respect toward those with whom he disagrees. The tone is never harsh.

He grounds the Sabbath in Creation, goes to every major text in the Old Testament concerning the Sabbath. Demonstrates his ability in linguistics and in his knowledge of various interpretations of some texts. The footnotes are just great!

He then goes on to make a case for Sabbath observance under the New Covenant, but he does this by first going to major texts on the abiding validity of the Law in the New Covenant. He goes on to demonstrate our Lord's teaching on the Sabbath. He never did abrogated it, but cleared it from Pharisaic legalism. He has two chapters on works of piety and necessity and works of mercy.

He then moves to consider four misused texts: Rom 14:5-6; Gal 4:9-11; Eph 2:14-15; Col 2:16. He makes a case that none of these texts speak of the abrogation of the moral duty of observing one day out of seven as a Sabbath already established at Creation. He then moves on to consider Hebrews 4:9 wherein we are clearly told that there is still, for the New Covenant people of God, an obligation of Sabbath-keeping.



Until now he had not made a case for the change of the day. His book was about the Christian Sabbath, but what he argued for until now was the seventh-day Sabbath. To be sure, he made passing remarks on the change of the day. But he treats the change of the day in two chapters. The first one is dedicated to "the Apostolic Witness" where he examines the resurrection and the resurrection appearances as the prime reason for the change of the day, the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1), the gathering of the church on the first day to break bread and have Paul preached to them (Acts 20:7), the gathering of alms on the first day (1Cor 16:1-2) and finally, the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10). In my opinion, he makes a good case for the change of the day from these passages and also from his treatment of the abiding Sabbath from Hebrews 4:9.

Then he moves to the post-apostolic testimony to the Lord's Day. He notes that often the word Sabbath was retrained for the Jewish Sabbath and was not frequently used for Sunday. Rather, from the earliest times, the expression "the Lord's Day" was used for the first day of the week on which Christ rose.

Finally, he moves on in the last part (3) to teach us how we should observe the Sabbath. He is careful in his suggestions and what He may say and deduce from God's Word. His desire is not to bind consciences where God has not bound them, but carefully give guidelines and suggestions.

Overall, I very much enjoyed reading this book and I used it a lot in my own study for the 1689 Baptist Confession's chapter 22 on the Sabbath (sections 7-8). It is detailed, it is biblical and it is written in a loving and respectful tone. What more can we expect? Get it and read it already!