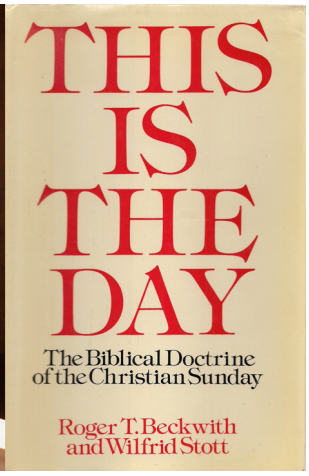
A Short Review of Beckwith's & Stott's This Is The Day

Published: Sunday 8th of January 2017 23:25 by Simon Wartanian
URL: https://www.thecalvinist.net/post/A-Short-Review-Of-Beckwiths-Stotts-This-Is-The-Day





This is the Day

The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in Its Jewish and Early Church Setting

by Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott

A well researched book by two readable authors. Makes a convincing and honest case from both the Holy Scriptures as well as the first four centuries from Christian history.

The biblical case is short and to the point. I love the fact there is always reference back to what he has said or established on earlier pages. Roger Beckwith goes on to demonstrate that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance and as such it is not connected with the Fall. Then he goes on to survey the passages speaking about the Sabbath. Very interesting was chapter 4 where he showed continuities between the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day (the Christian Sabbath). He makes the case that the Lord's Day is the day of the Lord Christ, the day on which He rose and which we keep to celebrate His resurrection. The first part was very well written and argued, although I would have liked it to be longer and more extensive, but oh well!

The second part has 9 chapters devoted to a historical study about the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. It is very interesting to many how many early references there are to the Christian observance of the Lord's Day as the day of worship. The New Testament has a handful of passages speaking about the Lord's Day (first day of the week), but apparently, in the mind of the early Christians, these passages were a firm foundation to show them that Sunday was the day of worship, the kyriake hemera! Dr. Stott makes a good survey of various pre-400 AD writings in these chapters. There are things which the Fathers believed that I don't agree with, neither do Beckwith nor Stott. But they are honest to lay out their views honestly and clearly. For example, although the observance of the Lord's Day is directly connected to the Fourth Commandment in the mind of the Christian Sabbatarian, the early Fathers, according to Stott, do not make a direct connection with it. As Christian Sabbatarians we believe that the Sabbath was instituted in the Garden and given to Adam to keep, but the Fathers did not agree or say that Adam had to keep a Sabbath, but some of them connected it with the existence of sin (i.e. trouble, sin in our lives and the need for rest). Stott lays these views out honestly and makes some observations on them. It is still amazing to me how much Christians wrote and said about the Lord's Day, although there were but a handful of passages on it in the New Testament. It goes to show that what is insignificant in our modern eyes, was more than enough for the early church. It was enough that the Lord Christ rose on the Lord's Day, for the Lord's Day to be considered the day of rest and worship--a holy day.

His chapter on Eusebius of Caesarea (8) is very interesting. He tries to demonstrate that Eusebius tried to systematize and

summarize the doctrines about the Lord's Day and the Sabbath which the Fathers taught. He was the systemizer of the Christian Sunday. He speaks of the Lord transferring the feast of the Sabbath to the first day and so on. Clearly connecting the Lord's Day with the Sabbath.

Overall, a very good and well argued book. I will certainly go back to it and check some stuff again!

Seeing that this book was published in 1978 it would be hard to come by, but fear not! An online (scanned) version is available **here**.