

BOOK REVIEWS

Douglass, Herbert E. *Why Jesus Waits: How the Sanctuary Message Explains the Delay of the Second Coming*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2001. 96 pp., paper.

Herbert Douglass is the author of *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Pacific Press, 1998), which is a comprehensive study of Ellen White's prophetic ministry. He is also the author of *The Faith of Jesus* (Upward Way, 1991), in which he seeks to find the true biblical meaning of faith. He received his doctoral degree in theology at the Pacific School of Religion in 1964. In his long professional career, Douglass worked as theology professor, editor, president of Atlantic Union College, and president of Weimar Institute.

In *Why Jesus Waits*, as other advocates of so-called Historical Adventism usually do, Douglass emphasizes the close relationship between the development of our character and the second coming of Jesus Christ. His main task in this book is to find out the reason why the second coming is delayed. He does this by studying the interrelationship between the sanctuary message, the theme of the great controversy, and the plan of salvation. According to him, the sanctuary message is where we can find the reason why we have been waiting for Christ's coming for so long. In other words, the sanctuary message shows us what Heaven is waiting for.

Douglass begins his argument with emphasizing the significance of the sanctuary doctrine, especially in Seventh-day Adventism. He contends that "the sanctuary doctrine is God's way of picturing the plan of salvation—both His part and ours" (20). This doctrine, which is closely related to the "distinctive mission of the Adventist Church" (19), constitutes "the historical and theological uniqueness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (29).

The discussion then moves to the twofold role of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. As Sacrifice, "He silences the accusations of Satan," and as High Priest, "He is free to provide the power of grace to all those who choose to live overcoming lives" (46). By this power "sins are truly eradicated from the character of trusting, willing Christians" (51). In his conclusion, Douglass argues that the delay of the second coming is not because of "heavenly inefficiency or change in His plans" (69), but because of the imperfection of the character of His people. In 1844, entering the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, Christ began the

work of “the character fitness of the last generation” (69). When this work is done, that is, when God's people demonstrate the perfection of their characters, God's character will be gloriously vindicated in the whole universe and Jesus will return.

In relation to his arguments in this book, I want to contest Douglass on two points. First, in this book, he presupposes that the second coming of Christ has been delayed. But in this presupposition he overlooks the fact that the concept of delay is possible only from a human perspective. From God's perspective, nothing is delayed, for He is the God for whom there is no past, no present, and no future.

Secondly, it is also hard for me to agree with the author on his idea of “divine-human cooperation” (63) in the work of human salvation. It seems to me that Douglass argues that the completion of the plan of salvation is dependent on human works, for he believes that God is waiting for the demonstration of the perfection of character by human beings, and that this is why Christ has not come yet. In this argument, however, one important fact is ignored. It is that the plan of salvation is entirely God's work. The perfection of character, if it were possible, is to be understood as one of the results of God's salvific work, not as the condition of Christ's coming, for this great event of the Second Coming is also a part of the plan of salvation.

Despite these perceived weaknesses in its argument, this book, though quantitatively small, is quite commendable to those who study the doctrines of the sanctuary and salvation, for the following two reasons. First, it presents the significance of the sanctuary doctrine, which has been ignored for a long time by most of the schools of Christian theology. The other reason is that this book gives us an overall picture of the great controversy between good and evil. The author, throughout the whole book, tries to show the inseparable relationship between the great controversy theme and the plan of salvation.

Kyung Ho Song

Johnsson, William G. *Glimpses of Grace: Scenes from My Journey*.

Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001. 126 pp.

In seventeen brief chapters, Johnsson provides a biblical exposition on grace. He does not approach this subject from a strictly theological perspective. Rather, his approach is experimental; that is, for Johnsson, grace is the fruition of living life to the fullest because of the indwelling Christ. Indeed, “there is a word that, better than any other, describes Jesus. Grace” (24).

While the book holds theological language to a minimum, this does not mean that Johnsson disregards exegesis. Indeed, to the contrary, he makes excellent use of exegetical method, as can be easily detected in his word studies (for example, see his description of *sapros*, “decayed,” “rotten,” on p. 74) and extended discussions on certain pericopes (for example, see his evaluation of 2 Cor 12:7-10