

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Moskala, Jiří, and John C. Peckham, eds. *God's Character and the Last Generation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2018). 286 pp. US\$29.99.

This volume contains 14 chapters written by 12 prominent Seventh-Day Adventist church scholars, compiled by Jiří Moskala and John C. Peckham. The book is a rebuttal of and a response of the Seventh-Day Adventist church to the last generation theology (LGT). All the topics surround the theme of how and who the primary agent is to end the great controversy. The book discusses how perfection, sanctification, purification, the identity of the 144 000, human nature, the cross, the atonement, the delay of Christ, and human nature fit into the great controversy's culmination. In the first chapter, Peckham highlights that the end of the great controversy for the LGT is in the hands of those who will live a perfect life to revindicate Christ. In other words, the end of the great controversy lies in the hands of people who will duplicate the life of Christ. The author of the second chapter, Woodrow Whidden, emphasizes the historical background and roots of the LGT. The author shows that proponents of LGT base their theology on the post-fall human nature of Christ, and that they understand the cross as not completing the work of the atonement.

One of the most significant responses to the LGT is found in chapter 3, where Martin Hannah elaborates on the nature of humanity in relation to sin. With the understanding of sin as a mere transgression of God's law, as

LGT claims, this chapter shows that sin is more than just a transgression of God's law. It is also embedded in our nature. He bases his analysis on understanding sin in the Epistle to the Romans. Also, in chapter 9, Cortez asks one of the crucial questions related to chapter 3: Why could Adam and Eve not just receive a sacrificial offering of forgiveness? The author has answered by saying that the sin committed by Adam and Eve was beyond their sphere. Their sin was the key point for the curse of the whole of humanity, and the image of God was lost through their sin. Therefore, what was lost in the Garden of Eden was restored only through Christ on the cross.

In chapter 4, Davidson explains the contrast between the protestant and catholic understanding of justification. He concludes by saying that the protestant understanding of justification is biblical because it makes Christ the center of justification. In this context, he uses the expression that we are saved by faith, which is imputed to humankind. Also, the chapter emphasizes that we are justified not by what we have done but by who God is. Following the same line of thought, Fortin, in chapter 5 says that the idea that we are justified by what we do, and that we can reach perfection and sanctification, leads to perfectionism and legalism. In chapter 7, H. Peter Swanson emphasized that there is no efficient way to measure our faith or spirituality. The methods we may use to evaluate our perfection or faith will never be sure because they make us focus on ourselves and rule out Christ, our ultimate agent for salvation. In addition, in chapter 10, Jiří Moskala emphasizes the role of Christ and the cross by citing Ellen G. White from the book *The Only Mediator* which declare that Christ was the perfect atonement for our sin. Also he adds by saying that the saying of Christ "It is finished" is a powerful confirmation of salvation for everyone who believes ( John 19:30; 3:16).

One could ask the question, if none of our actions can cause the end of the great controversy, then why is Christ taking so long? Jo Ann Davidson, in chapter 13, goes through the contemporary beliefs about eschatology and then attempts to develop the biblical view of why Christ is delayed. Her conclusions shows that God's time is beyond our interpretation.

After reading the volume, one should appreciate the simplicity and the scholarship embedded in the book. Also, through chapters 1–14, one can notice that the Adventist understanding of the great controversy is that Christ is the culmination of everything, while for the Last Generation The-

ology is anthropocentric. The language that all the writers used in disagreeing with the Last Generation Theology is gracious and kind. The use of the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White is something to congratulate all the writers for. In addition, based on the limitation of the pages per article, I see that most of the writers have invested in the endnotes for references and elaborations on some of the terms that needed further explanation. In other words, throughout the reading, one can sense many questions were not answered. Therefore, I would suggest that the book be entitled *God's Character and Last Generation: An Introduction*. Here are some of the reasons for this suggested title. First, I sense the need to develop the role of the remnant and their role in the great controversy. Second, it would have been an advantage if the book would have elaborated more on the role of Christian conduct or life style in the great controversy. Though, in the book's last chapter, chapter 14, Peckham elaborates slightly on the role of the good deeds of followers of Christ on a missiological level. I think it would have been more enlightening to develop a good understanding of the role of Christian conduct in the spectrum of great controversy. And last, I would love to see the book dedicating a section to the significance of preaching the good news of salvation and its impact in the great controversy.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book to every member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but mainly to pastors and theologians because it contains good discussions of what the Bible and Ellen G. White teaches us about our salvation.

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