

Romans. Also helpful is the way Schreiner lists commentators in a chronological manner, with years of publication in parentheses.

Schreiner's commentary is a good textbook in that he helps set the agenda for the discussion of a passage. But it is easy to get bogged down in a passage, making it difficult to get through Romans in a quarter or semester. By limiting discussion more or less within the parameters of the present debate, Schreiner gives an exegesis course a much-needed focus. Thus the dearth of personal insight and creative exegesis is more than compensated by the way the commentary provides a road map for class discussion. At the same time, its value may be limited for laypeople who are trying to gain insights into particular passages. They could get lost in the maze of scholarly debate and the discursive manner in which the discussion proceeds. For a serious scholar, the commentary offers little more than a rehash of the same old material.

Andrews University

P. RICHARD CHOI

Zurcher, J. R. *Touched With Our Feelings: A Historical Survey of Adventist Thought on the Human Nature of Christ*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999. 308 pp. Paperback, \$15.99.

In Seventh-day Adventism few subjects can generate as much heat as a discussion on the human nature of Christ. For decades Adventists have been debating whether Christ's human nature was identical to that of Adam before the Fall (prelapsarianism), or that of Adam after the Fall (postlapsarianism), or even somewhere in between. Although many theological factors come into play in this debate, at stake is the question of whether Christ can truly be a moral example to humanity. The latest book in this debate is veteran theologian Jean R. Zurcher's work translated from French, *Touched With Our Feelings*. In his historical survey of Adventist thought on the human nature of Christ, Zurcher attempts to resolve the issues by demonstrating how Adventist thought has evolved over the last century and a half from a strictly postlapsarian position to the current views.

The sixteen chapters in this book are grouped into five parts. The first briefly surveys the theological discussion on the divine nature of Christ and rightly ascertains that many early Seventh-day Adventist theologians, with the exception of Ellen G. White, had a semi-Arian view of Christ's divinity. In part two, Zurcher examines the Christology of Adventist pioneers such as Ellen G. White, Ellet J. Waggoner, Alonzo T. Jones, and William W. Prescott. The third studies extracts from official church publications on the human nature of Christ from 1895 to 1952. The fourth is the longest and deals with the controversy brought about by the book *Questions on Doctrine* (1957), reactions to its publication, and current theological positions. The final section is Zurcher's plea for a return to an authentic postlapsarian Christology as taught before the 1950s.

Apart from some awkward translations of French expressions, Zurcher's book is a good piece of historical research and endeavors to present an accurate picture of the development of Adventist thought on the human nature of Christ. His survey of numerous publications presents an astonishing picture to the contemporary reader, who may not be familiar with earlier theological writings on the nature of Christ. His comparisons between different editions of official documents and books, such as *Bible*

*Readings for the Home Circle* (155), illustrate the changes in Adventist thought regarding the nature of Christ. The historical and theological evidences the author presents are abundant. Yet even though the author purports to present an authoritative solution to the debate by showing how Adventist theologians in the 1950s and 1960s have “abandoned” the traditional understanding of Christ’s human nature, his work is far from being neutral and unbiased. His treatment of positions held by various theologians is clearly polemical. Even the preface by former *Adventist Review* editor Kenneth Wood sets the tone: the work is one to buttress the postlapsarian position.

While Zurcher is to be highly commended for his thorough research on this subject, his work is nonetheless weak in some important areas. The greatest weakness is his treatment of Ellen White’s statements on the human nature of Christ, which are the focus of this Adventist controversy. In his chapter on the Christology of Ellen White (53-67) Zurcher provides a synthesis of her thought, highlighting the similarities between Christ’s human nature and ours. But he avoids any mention of other statements that emphasize the differences between Christ’s nature and ours. Moreover, among several explicit statements supporting the Adventist prelapsarian position since the 1950s, Ellen White’s 1895 letter to W. H. L. Baker is completely ignored here. Zurcher discusses the content and implications of this letter a few times throughout the book in other places, but never in a clear and systematic way. This, I believe, is a great oversight.

Like many other postlapsarian theologians, Zurcher fails to consider how White presents a tension between similarities and differences between Christ’s nature and ours. Most of her statements highlighting similarities with our nature are made in the context of discussions on how Christ was tempted to sin just as we are. The author gives a good example on p. 302. Yet, he fails to recognize that in the Baker letter she categorically objects to a complete similarity between Christ and sinful human beings, even in the manner of his temptations. While early Adventists placed their christological discussions in the context of the doctrines of salvation and eschatology (how they could follow Christ’s example in overcoming temptations and sin in preparation for Christ’s Second Advent), the post-1950s discussions have often been situated within the context of the doctrine of humankind and how sin affects us, and to what extent Christ’s nature was and was not affected by sin. Zurcher comments on this significant theological shift, caused to a great extent by the “rediscovery” of Ellen White’s Baker letter, but cannot reconcile this shift and finds it antithetical to the early Adventist position.

Not only is Zurcher avoiding a clear exposition of the Baker letter; he is also misquoting it and taking statements out of context. In his “Evaluation and Critique” he discusses the current theological hybrid that Christ had a postlapsarian physical nature and a prelapsarian moral nature. Twice Zurcher quotes from the Baker letter to support his view that such a position is historically invalid and that Ellen White did not believe in a prelapsarian moral nature. He argues that LeRoy Froom did violence to Ellen White’s thought when he quoted from the Baker letter (277-278). However, to prove his point, Zurcher quotes only part of the same letter and leaves out two important short sentences in which Ellen White sets up a sharp contrast between Christ’s nature and ours. The same thing happens again on p. 281. Here the author attempts to distinguish between Ellen White’s expressions “inherent propensities” and “evil propensities,” arguing that

“inherent propensities’ become ‘evil propensities’ only after yielding to temptation.” Then he quotes from the Baker letter, stopping short of including a sentence in which Ellen White likens Christ’s temptations in the desert to those of Adam in Eden. The distinction between “inherent propensities” and “evil propensities” is not supported by Ellen White in this letter. Rather she uses the two expressions as synonyms to argue that Christ did not have such propensities. In both instances, Zurcher violates the context to sustain his views.

This book will certainly rank among the best apologies for the postlapsarian position. But like many others, it fails to be convincing, because it approaches the subject with such bias. The book is so intent on making our sinful human nature the standard to measure Christ’s nature that it fails to show how Christ’s humanity is the true and unadulterated standard by which we are to be measured.

Andrews University

DENIS FORTIN