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Benjamin Rojas, Teófilo Correa, Lael Caesar & Joel Turpo (editors). “*The end from the beginning / El fin desde el principio*”: *Festschrift honoring Merling Alomía / Festschrift en honor a Merling Alomía*. Lima: Universidad Peruana Unión, 2015. Hardcover. 549 + 1 (as Roman number) pages, Price unknown, ISBN: 978-9972-604-40-9.

The Roman-numbered pages cover a table of contents, a preface, a biography of Merling Alomía, a list of his publications, the contact details of the contributors (of whom only three have not explicitly associated with the Seventh-day Adventist theology) and a list of abbreviations used (all in Spanish) in the collection of 31 (unnumbered) essays of which 6 are in Spanish and the rest in English. The book concludes with a list of the Biblical references used (in Spanish) and a subject index (in English). Of the 39 OT books, 34, and of the 27 NT books, 23 have been referred to in this wide range of topics.

The articles are grouped under 6 headings (in Spanish): OT (10 articles), the book Daniel (7 articles), hermeneutics (4 articles), education and history (3 articles), theology (3 articles) and NT (4 articles). The emphasis is therefore strongly on the OT.

The back page features four brief recommendatory reviews of the book, two of which explicitly link it with Seventh-day Adventist scholarship. This alliance to a particular religious group can be regarded as undermining critical

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and independent scientific inquiry. So, for instance, does the article on the unique contribution of Seventh-day Adventist theological anthropology (from the education-and-history group) simply state that conditional immortality is soul-sleeping after death and the annihilation of the lost without explaining why, and so sounds more apologetic than scientific.

On the other hand, the article on leprosy (from the OT group), is an insightful summary of the implications of this condition, even when it closes off by tying it to one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventists and then giving the contribution a somewhat sermonic twist.

That the Festschrift is meant to be more than “cold” research is clear from one of the articles on the book of Daniel, this one written in Spanish, on the present relevance of the last five verses of its second chapter. After giving a history of its interpretation, that of the Seventh-day Adventists is then finally driven home as the correct one.

Particularly disappointing is the first article from the group about hermeneutics. This is yet another exposition of Seventh-day Adventist claims without a proper introduction to convince the reader of its sensibility. Disputable statements are simply lined up one after the other, as if to hammer home a view not open to possible falsification. This simplistic, propagandistic and didactical style is foreign to postmodern scientific circles. The rejection of the historical-critical method and the insistence on the inspiration of the canonised Bible (just as Ellen White, one of its pioneers) without any contradictions or historical inaccuracies does not show any understanding for the problems which have arisen from these positions. Phrases such as “the great controversy perspective” without explaining it, prove that this article has been written for a closed circle. The orthographic errors, the at times telegraphic style and problematic English make this article even more difficult to read.

The second shortest article, the first in the group of theology, probably spells out the fundamental difficulty in this book: categorising and separating history as if there is no continuity and mutuality between them. This brief and simplistic summary of three worldviews makes the reader ask what new perspective has been contributed.

The last article (written in Spanish) in the NT group deals with the locality and functionality of the temple in the book of Revelations. Once again, as in other articles, the structure of the article is initially polemical against contrary view-points given in a second-hand way but this is soon followed by a detailed and rich exposition of the theme as it stretches right across the whole Christian Bible.

In general, while references to earlier exponents of the Seventh-day Adventists are to be found in virtually every article, even when no such gesture

is made to the person in whose honour the collection has been compiled, there is enough critical quality scholarship for those readers who do not share this particularly religious loyalty.

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