

NT COMMENTARIES FOR BIBLE EXPOSITORS, 1987-92¹

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The following is a continuation of the annotated bibliography begun in the Spring 1993 number of The Master's Seminary Journal. This listing treats NT books in much the same way as the earlier one dealt with the OT. A sample ranking of commentaries in different categories closes the article.

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NT COMMENTARY SETS

¹Editor's note: As in the Spring 1993 issue of *The Master's Seminary Journal* which treated works on the OT, the volumes and annotations in this article have been selected from a larger annotated bibliography compiled by Professor Rosscup. Recently revised, updated, and enlarged (1993 revision of a 1983 ed.), this larger work *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors* includes approximately 1,300 individual commentaries or sets of commentaries with annotations on all sixty-six books of the Bible, the volumes deemed to be the most helpful for expositors and teachers of the Word based on the compiler's thirty-five years of seminary involvement and teaching. The unabridged bibliography is available through Grace Book Shack at the same address as *The Master's Seminary Journal*. This article has selected works from the last five years, 1987-92, and pertaining to the NT only. The listings below are not exhaustive, because in some cases where a set of commentaries is discussed in the early section, individual works in that set are omitted in dealing with individual commentaries.

Paul Enns, ed. *Moody Gospel Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1992`

This very readable evangelical series purposes to provide help to expositors and will cover the four gospels. J. Carl Laney's 407-page volume on John is the first to appear. Other volumes will follow. Enns and Laney are premillennial and dispensational.

Arno C. Gaebelien. *Gaebelien's Concise Commentary on the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

This is a one-volume revision of the NT portion of the multivolume set *The Annotated Bible* written by one of America's most popular Bible teachers during the early twentieth century. It incorporates diligent explanation and frequent application to help pastors and lay readers. It resembles the general works of H. A. Ironside.

New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1990` .

This is a replacement of the older *American Commentary on the New Testament*, which included the outstanding work by John Broadus on Matthew. All *NAC* authors "affirm the divine inspiration, inerrancy, complete truthfulness, and full authority of the Bible" (Editor's Preface). Craig Blomberg's commentary on Matthew is a very good survey, marked by careful study, wide acquaintance with literature, and perceptive handling of many problems. John Polhill's work on Acts is also quite good. Some volumes, as the one on the Pastorals, are surveys that make good contributions at times, but do not come up to the quality of Matthew and Acts.

New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989` .

Such well-known evangelical scholars as Robert Mounce (Matt), F. F. Bruce (Phil), Gordon Fee (1 Tim`Tit), and Peter Davids (Jas) are contributors to this series. Much of the work by these high-ranking scholars rests on well-studied detail and sound hermeneutics. The series began in the early 1980's with Harper and Row as *The Good News Commentary* and using the GNB translation, but Hendrickson picked it up in the late 1980's and changed to the NIV.

Lloyd J. Ogilvie, gen. ed. *The Communicator's Commentary (NT)*. Waco, TX: Word, 1982`91.

This is a twelve-volume set by twelve expositors noted for the spiritual refreshment and insight they impart in their preaching: Myron S. Augsburger (Matt), David McKenna (Mark), Bruce Larson (Luke), Roger Fredrikson (John), Lloyd Ogilvie (Acts), D. Stuart Briscoe (Rom), Kenneth Chafin (1-2 Cor), Maxie Dunham (Gal`Phile),

Gary Demarest (1 Thess`Tit), Louis Evans, Jr. (Heb), Paul Cedar (Jas`Jude), and Earl Palmer (Rev). Basing their remarks on the NKJV, the contributors combine scholarly interpretations, illustrations leading to application, and book outlines. The last feature appears in frequent bold-faced headings for smaller sections of text. The following specific selected strengths and weaknesses represent the quality of the work: (1) Many times the sweeping comments on main emphases are good and well illustrated, but other times rest on debatable interpretations. An example of a disputed meaning is in Matt 19:9 when Augsburgers adopts Schweizer's meaning for *porneia* (*porneia*, "fornication"): "continual infidelity rather than a single act of adultery." (2) Another shortcoming is failure to explain how a point is consistent with another well-known truth. For example, how is a person's paying all to secure the pearl (Matt 13:46) in harmony with God's unconditional gift of eternal blessing? An explicit harmonization of such would be helpful. (3) Briscoe's work on Romans is very well-written and illustrated. His following of the explanations of Rom 2:7 by Cranfield and Ksemann is refreshing. His interpretation shuns the hypothetical route in favor of explaining the words as actual, lived-by-grace compliance consistent with the provisions of grace apart from human merit in Rom 3:28. Yet his treatment of 2:11-15 leaves many unanswered questions, as it does in 3:27-31 where his illustration is good, but the explanation is shallow. He does fairly well on 5:12 ff.; 6:6; and 7:14 ff., however. (4) The commentaries on John's Epistles and Revelation are very often so general that they impart little understanding of the text (e.g., 1 John 5:16; Rev 2:10-11; 7:1-8; 9:1-11). The bibliography for Revelation is particularly weak in solid interpretive works.

The best feature of this twelve-volume set is the refreshing and suggestive illustrations it furnishes for preachers. Verse-by-verse interpretation is quite good in some places, but weak or non-existent in others.

Pillars Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988` .

This is a substantial continuing project with three volumes complete so far: Leon Morris (Rom, 1988), D. A. Carson (John, 1991), and P. E. Hughes (Rev, 1990). The contributions of Morris and Carson are very helpful to expositors in their clarification of principal passages in fairly adequate detail and with readability. Hughes follows an amillennial understanding of Revelation. "Pillars" is a name for the set sometimes used because the dust jacket has broad lines resembling

pillars on it.

Ritchie New Testament Commentary Series. 10 vols.; Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie, or Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1988` .

These are commentaries for laypersons done with a firm evangelical conviction of inerrancy and a dispensational view of Scripture. The discussions often lack references to other relevant helpful literature.

Warren Wiersbe. *The Bible Exposition Commentary.* 2 vols.; Wheaton: Victor, 1990.

This author is one of America's most appreciated and staunchly evangelical Bible-conference teachers. He is noted for his diligent refreshing expositions. His twenty-three earlier books in the "Be" series comprise these two volumes. He appeals to lay people particularly in the way he crystallizes sections, deals with some of the verses, handles certain problems and backgrounds, and applies principles. He is premillennial.

COMMENTARIES ON INDIVIDUAL NT BOOKS

Matthew

D. Frederick Bruner. *The Christbook: Matthew.* 2 vols. in 1; Waco, TX: Word, 1987`1990.

This effort to teach Matthew doctrinally is too wordy. Bruner sees a doctrinal emphasis in each chapter: chap. 1, God with us; chap. 2, man (magi, human nature under the power of sin); chap. 3, repentance; etc. He assumes Markan priority (xvii), and says that Mark is Luther, Matthew is Calvin or Thomas, Luke is Wesley or Xavier or Chrysostom, and John is Augustine or Barth (p. xvii), parallels that many find dubious. His apparent liberal orientation appears in his understanding that Matthew erred in having only thirteen names in the third part of his genealogy (p. 15) and that Jesus as a child made mistakes (p. 15). His excessive detail at times is not relevant to Matthew, but he does sometimes help, for example, in his sections "The Roman Catholic position on Peter" and "The Reformation Position on Peter" in connection with 16:18. He sees a posttribulational rapture of the church in 24:40-41 (p. 882). He allows sexual infidelity as a ground for divorce in 19:9.

Donald A. Carson. *When Jesus Confronts the World: An Exposition of*

Matthew 8-10. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. 154 pp.

Sermons at Edon Baptist Church, Cambridge, England, are sources of six chapters on Jesus' authority, authenticity, mission, trustworthiness, compassion, and decisiveness. The book has much help for expositors and also applies some valid principles to life today.

W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. 3 vols., ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988` .

The first two volumes are complete and cover through Matthew 18, with a third volume yet to appear. This replaces the single-volume work by W. C. Allen (1912) in the ICC series. The volumes are very expensive, but contain an immense amount of information. It is very liberal, but informs evangelicals of differing views (e.g., eight views on the structure of 1:2-17, eight views on the Son of Man's coming in 16:28), arguments (e.g., nine reasons Mary's pregnancy is traced to the Holy Spirit [pp. 201-2]), and sources (e.g., the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt. 2:15 [p. 263]). The 26-page general bibliography has mostly liberal works, ignoring the work of William Hendriksen, but including that of evangelical R. H. Mounce. It has a 148-page introduction. The authors argue that the Jewish flavor and use of the OT point to a Jewish author (pp. 33, 58). They see a "massive unity" in the overall structure, but a "structurally mixed" situation that does not yield a clear outline (p. 72). They advocate the priority of Mark (p. 73) and sum up the most important of Allen's conclusions (e.g., p. 73). Helpful features include discussions of semitisms, triads, repetition, headings, and conclusions and different kinds of tables. They see a redactional source for many of the statements in the gospel. They date Matthew between 80 and 95 (p. 138) and give Antioch as the place of origin (pp. 146-47). This ranks at the top of technical works because of its exegetical detail.

John MacArthur, Jr. *Matthew*. 4 vols., MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1985`90.

This is a conservative, premillennial, and very readable exposition that often deals in some detail with problem verses and elaborates on vital lessons of Jesus' teachings. The author often explains customs and gives differing viewpoints and supporting reasons. In Matthew 13, he takes only the fourth soil to represent genuinely saved people and understands the leaven in a good sense. In Matthew 24, the one taken is removed in judgment and the one left is preserved on earth safely to enter the earthly kingdom promised in

the OT.

Herman N. Ridderbos. *Matthew*. Bible Students Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 556 pp.

This work is from the famous Dutch series (e.g., Aalders on Genesis, etc.) originally published in 1950-51. It provides expositors with much help with its competent interpretations and definitions and defenses of varying viewpoints. Ridderbos is amillennial and does not deal with critical issues as much as other scholars. Because of its earlier publication, it does not reflect awareness of works on Matthew since the 1940's.

Haddon W. Robinson. *What Jesus Said about Successful Living: Principles from the Sermon on the Mount for Today*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1989. 298 pp.

The author is an outstanding preacher, a former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and president at Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary and now a distinguished professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The book is popularly written and devotionally enriching and is a resource for sermon preparation and life application. Like Don Carson, D. M. Lloyd-Jones, and John R. W. Stott, Robinson develops the meaning for today in graphic style.

Mark

R. A. Guelich. *Mark 1:1-8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary, 1st of 2 vols.; Dallas: Word, 1989.

This is a much-praised moderately conservative work, though some would question that it is conservative. It features expertise on linguistic details, varying viewpoints with their supporting arguments, and citations of modern scholarly sources. It will provide assistance for scholars and pastors who grapple with interpretive issues.

R. Kent Hughes. *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*. 2 vols., Preaching the Word Commentary; Westchester, IL: Crossway/Good News Publishers, 1989.

Hughes is a good expositor who pastors Wheaton College Church and has completed several commentaries in the Preaching the Word series (e.g., Joshua). This work is a broad flowing study that can help in sermon preparation and stimulate spiritual enrichment in day-by-day lay reading. The author is conservative and premillennial, and

draws illustrative material from many sources.

W. D. Spencer and A. B. Spencer. *The Prayer Life of Jesus: Shout of Agony, Revelation of Love, a Commentary*. New York: University Press, 1990. 296 pp.

The authors teachers at Gordon-Conwell Seminary have prepared a comprehensive treatment of Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4, Jesus' parables on prayer and emphasis on prayer in His busy life, NT words for prayer, Jesus' positions in prayer, John 17, Gethsemane, and the cross. The volume has many good comments and will be refreshing to those who use it.

John

G. R. Beasley-Murray. *John*. Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1987. 441 pp.

Beasley-Murray, an evangelical with a somewhat critical leaning, has written this competent, usually detailed book on text, grammar, movement of passages, and bibliography. He has a fairly good survey of the relationship between the fourth gospel and the synoptics (pp. xxxv-xxxvii) and argues for leaving the text in its present order instead of rearranging it as Bultmann and others have done (p. xliii). Nevertheless, he sometimes devotes more attention to critical theories than he does to the text of John. Some of his conclusions are subjective, for example, his attributing of "Look, the Lamb of God" (1:36) to John the Baptist and of "who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29) to the evangelist writer (p. lii). Yet he voices his conviction of a high view of the reliability and divine origin of the material (p. liii). He assigns authorship to one of a circle associated with the beloved disciple whom he assumes was not one of the Twelve (p. lxxiv), though within that circle John the Apostle is a possibility. The treatment of the text is good at times, fair at others, and weak in some places. Some examples of the weaker places are his cursory discussion of "born of water and of the Spirit" (3:5), an even thinner discussion of 3:14-15, an unexplained relationship between 10:27 and 10:28-29, his pitiful glossing over the details of 15:2, and a confusing explanation of 20:22.

Robert M. Bowman, Jr. *Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ and the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 171 pp.

The focus of this work on John 1:1 is to respond to the Jehovah's Witnesses who have changed their line of argument from a few years

ago. It also deals with John 8:58 and 20:28. Bowman has a reputation for skillfulness in refuting cultic error as associate editor of *Christian Research Journal* and also in other capacities.

Donald A. Carson. *The Gospel according to John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. 715 pp.

This is an excellent commentary from an evangelical with a breadth of scholarly study and a keen awareness of recent literature. He gears the work for teachers and preachers, but it is readable for lay-people too. It has an 84-page introduction with characteristics of the gospel, the "how to's" of its interpretation, its genuineness, purpose, doctrinal distinctives, and other matters. Technical notes and comments appear, but more attention goes to following the flow of the text and drawing out doctrinal principles. Some will rate this at the top of evangelical works or in close contention with the similar work by Leon Morris.

D. M. Lloyd-Jones. *John 17*. 4 vols.; Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988-89.

The four volumes are entitled *Saved in Eternity* (17:1-5), *Safe in the World* (17:6-19), *Sanctified through the Truth* (17:17-19), and *Growing in the Spirit* (17:17-24). They stem from messages preached in 1952-53. Lloyd-Jones assists other pastors and lay readers in finding much devotional stimulation for spiritual triumph by dwelling on their position in God's grace. This is the best work on John 17 with Rainsford ranking next, Wiersbe third, and Brown fourth.

John Phillips. *Exploring the Gospel of John*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1988. 425 pp.

This articulate exposition relates well to life. It is the product of one of the fine Bible conference leaders and prolific writers of today. He is an evangelical and organizes his work well by following his outline step-by-step. It is, however, a puzzle why the outline comes at the end rather than at the beginning. A pastor or lay reader will derive help in following the flow of thought through John and in a light exposure to some of the book's problems. It possibly would serve best in daily readings.

Acts

F. L. Arrington. *The Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction and Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988. 298 pp.

This is a fairly good work by the professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at the Church of God School of Theology, Cleveland, TN. It helps on many basic points from an evangelical perspective, but it does not rank high.

F. F. Bruce. *The Acts of the Apostles. The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary.* 3rd ed., rev. and enlarged; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. 569 pp.

This commentary is more technical and refers to Greek grammar more than the author's work on Acts in the *NICNT*. It is briefer, but good. The larger work explains more. The works of this author, one of the foremost NT scholars of the late 20th century, are always exacting in their scholarship. This is a revision and enlargement of the earlier editions, the first in 1951 and the second in 1952. The fruit of scholarly study since those dates is interwoven into the volume's comments. The 96-page introduction has a new section on the theology of Acts.

F. F. Bruce. *The Book of Acts.* *NICNT*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 541 pp.

This is a revision of the commentary first issued in 1954. The revision, coming not long before Bruce's death, has a new translation of the Greek text in place of the ASV appearing in the first edition. The documentation in footnotes has been extensively updated. The author has interacted with later studies, arranged comments on fewer verses, and achieved a more lucid style in places. Yet the basic verse-by-verse comments are substantially the same. It is still the finest commentary on the details of Acts. Bruce defers to I. H. Marshall's commentary for detail on Luke's theology. He reflects a fine grasp of pertinent history, a sound explanation of most passages, and insights on many problems.

Hans Conzelmann. *Acts of the Apostles.* Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. 287 pp.

Using the RSV, the author supplies frequent assistance as he comments on syntax, background, customs, etc. He is liberal as exhibited in his copious use of redaction-criticism suppositions at various points. He denies the validity of miracles. A discerning pastor or student can derive what is worthwhile from this much-studied scholar immersed in Acts and literature relevant to it and leave behind the parts that are not valid.

Colin J. Hemer. *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*. Tbingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989. 482 pp.

This noted author argues for the historical accuracy of Acts on the ground of Luke's correctness in details not essential to the spiritual message (p. 104). His methodology lends itself to good support in some places and reliance on suppositions in others.

Simon J. Kistemaker. *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990. 1,010 pp.

A detailed commentary follows a 40-page introduction. The explanation comments on the Greek text, exposition, and doctrinal and practical remarks. Kistemaker as an evangelical contributes much in elucidating the flow of the book, goes behind problems, and shows relevance. As a continuation of the Hendriksen NT Commentary series, this is one of the better conservative works on Acts.

John R. W. Stott. *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the World*. Bible Speaks Today; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990. 405 pp.

This verse-by-verse evangelical exposition considers key questions such as charismatic gifts, signs and wonders, baptism in the Spirit, etc. After the introduction come four divisions: Jews (1:6-6:7), foundations for world mission (6:8-12:24), the apostle to the Gentiles (12:25-21:17), and on the way to Rome (21:18-28:31). As usual, Stott is very articulate in capturing the message, showing the flow, and letting the text come alive. This is lucid for lay people and also helpful at times for pastors.

Romans

Norman Anderson. *Freedom under Law*. Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1988.

A biblical scholar who is also a professor emeritus of legal studies shows how law relates to true freedom. Various types of freedoms flourish under protection by laws. Later, the author examines law in the spiritual life according to Scripture. He argues in Matt 5:17-20 for fulfillment of the law in the appropriate sense God has designed for it to have (p. 121). God purposed that Mosaic rules and regulations on ceremonial cleanness have their place in OT times, but also look forward to moral cleanness such as was realized in Jesus's spiritual life and teaching and spiritual power. The Mosaic law was

not designed to be a way to merit salvation by obeying, but revealed ways God willed for saved people to live for their well-being (p. 155). The law could speak of the need for life, but could not impart the life God gives in grace through Christ in the gospel. In the gospel-way God supplies power to obey God's will as portrayed in the moral principles of the law, etc.

James M. Boice. *Romans, an Expositional Commentary. Volume I, Justification by Faith, Romans 1-4*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.

This Philadelphia preacher expounds the text, highlighting doctrinal points and their application to human life. This will be another multivolume commentary. It is full of teaching that will build up the believer.

James D. G. Dunn. *Romans*. 2 vols.; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1988.

Dunn, professor of divinity, University of Durham, Scotland, has resorted to critical theories more than some conservatives would like, but he certainly reflects a massive amount of study in the work. He has much on viewpoints and their supports, word meanings, grammar, and bibliography on each pericope. His interaction with other scholarship makes this one of the best on Romans in that regard.

R. Kent Hughes. *Righteousness from Heaven*. Preaching the Word; Westchester, IL: Crossway/Good News, 1991. 339 pp.

This very readable exposition explains Romans, section-by-section, and frequently introduces items from broader reading to stimulate the user. Hughes is diligent in researching and communicating winsomely and pointedly what the text says, and then realistically applying it to daily life. His studies are broad and will be more useful for lay people desiring a quick and interesting escort through Romans.

Douglas Moo. *Romans 1-8*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1991. 591 pp.

Moo thoroughly analyzes each passage, interacting with various viewpoints and their supports and usually sifting out clearly his own preferences. His 21-page bibliography and citations are copious. His major sources are twelve in number: Barrett, Calvin, Cranfield, Dunn, Godet, Ksemann, Kuss, Michel, Murray, Nygren, Sanday and Headlam, and Wilckens. He is so cautious that at times it

is difficult to determine his viewpoint. Whether agreeing with Moo or not, one will find reward in a careful reading of his discussions of controversial issues. In commenting on the Greek and discussing theological ramifications, the work must rank as one of the top evangelical treatments, along with Cranfield and Murray.

Leon Morris. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 578 pp.

Completed at age 74 by this noted scholar, this is a work that is quite thorough in many places. Morris is evangelical, reformed in his theology, and amillennial, as his remarks on Romans 11 demonstrate. He has a mature and profound grasp of issues to be explained and a broad knowledge of literature on Romans from various perspectives. His judgment on problem passages is perceptive. He has excursions on God's righteousness, truth, the law, justification, judgment, and sin. All in all, the commentary is worthy of a place alongside those by Cranfield, Hendriksen, Moo, and Murray.

First Corinthians

Donald A. Carson. *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of I Corinthians 12-14*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. 229 pp.

This evangelical exposition at times offers good insight into issues related to 1 Corinthians 12-14. A section on the theology of spiritual gifts draws from texts in Acts and 1 Corinthians. In evaluating contemporary charismatic claims and experience (chap. 5), Carson concludes that charismatics should guard against pride in having gifts and in claiming that tongues are a sign of "the second blessing." He says that noncharismatics ought to guard against saying that the gifts ceased. He believes that "that which is perfect" (1 Cor 13:10) relates to Christ's parousia and that tongues can be valid privately and publicly today. He also defends women's right to prophesy.

Gordon H. Fee. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 880 pp.

This is the all-round best evangelical commentary on the epistle. Fee is well-organized, clear, and perceptive on issues. His work replaces the Grosheide commentary (1953) in this series. He is thorough, verse-by-verse, and skilled in Greek details. He keeps the argument of the epistle in view. His grasp of literature on 1 Corinthians is masterful, and his treatment includes more by way of

disputed-passage discussion and application than other commentaries on the letter. Many conservatives will disagree with him on some issues, of course. In a 10-page discussion of 14:34-35 he concludes the verses are a textual gloss and therefore have no bearing on woman's role in the church. He devotes 40 pages to 11:2-16 and takes "head" to denote source, not authority. He is affiliated with the Assemblies of God and is sure that all the spiritual gifts are for today. Yet those who disagree with him will admit that he argues his position well.

John F. MacArthur, Jr. *Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12)*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

This is an exposition of a key and much-discussed section and subject from a viewpoint that some gifts were intended to be permanent in the church age and some temporary, being limited to the early church. MacArthur's *Charismatic Chaos* (1991) is also relevant here.

Second Corinthians

Paul Barnett. *The Message of 2 Corinthians*. Bible Speaks Today; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988. 188 pp.

This flowing and competent commentary moves section-by-section. It also discusses Paul as a minister and human being with weaknesses, facing problems and criticisms but experiencing God's power in his weakness. The applications are often very good. He has more detail in chapters 1-6 (100 pp.), but is cursory on such problems as "thorn" in chapter 12. The book can provide refreshment for devotional times and can serve as a catalyst for grasping and ministering the Word to others.

Frederick W. Danker. *II Corinthians*. Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989. 223 pp.

This evangelical work ranks high among those conversant with scholarly study regarding the setting of that day and offering a great deal of information. One of the author's earlier works is *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study* (3rd ed.; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1970, 295 pp.). His background study of "benefactor" helps him illumine chapters 8-9. Benefactors might distribute wealth with a noble spirit of obligation, while also having a right to see those to whom they shared respond in a noble way according to their means. Danker is, overall, quite good in a number of ways and will provide benefit in the study of 2 Corinthians.

C. G. Kruse. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Tyndale NTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 224 pp.

R. V. G. Tasker's work served well for years, but Kruse's commentary replaces it with stronger exegesis. Based in the NIV, it is a fairly concise evangelical effort that brings together much that is of help in following the thought through and dealing with problems in a well-written flow.

J. P. Lewis, ed. *Interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. An Exercise in Hermeneutics*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, 17; Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1989. 194 pp.

Four writers have written this expensive book (\$49.95 in 1989). It deals penetratingly with interpretive history, exegesis, problems, and theology.

A. B. Spencer and W. D. Spencer. *2 Corinthians*. Bible Study Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989. 144 pp.

The Spencers are faculty members at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. They believe that Paul defends the leadership style that he and his associates model so as to help readers follow the right example and not be led astray. Their work is a survey, but displays a clear flushing out of principles that can assist Christ workers.

Galatians

R. A. Cole. *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 240 pp.

This is a revision of a work of twenty years earlier. It interacts with scholarly studies since then. It is a good evangelical commentary, well-informed, solid, clear with occasional good help on problem verses.

Ronald Y. K. Fung. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 342 pp.

This replaces Hermann Ridderbos's earlier work in the same series. It is thorough, usually reaching traditional conservative views, with many satisfactory and even some excellent explanations. Fung is lucid and detailed on some verses, but bypasses some real problems such as the meaning of falling from grace (5:4). The same weakness applies to what it means to be "crucified with Christ." He follows the south Galatian theory and adopts an early date of A.D. 48. His

reasonably good introduction updates scholarly discussion and relates 2:1-10 to the famine visit in Acts 11:27-30.

Richard N. Longenecker. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1990. 323 pp.

This noted evangelical scholar is professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. His long introduction to Galatians surveying scholarly issues precedes a verse-by-verse commentary. Each pericope has its own bibliography, translation, notes, and literary analysis. The author leaves few stones unturned, at least the more crucial ones. His discussions of problems and summations are helpful. He has an earlier fine commentary on Acts and also has written *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964, 310 pp.).

John MacArthur. *Galatians*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1987. 221 pp.

With sensitivity to grammar and word meaning, this fairly thorough evangelical treatment explains in a clear way the meaning of sections and verses. The author sees "the Israel of God" in 6:16 as literal Jews who have been saved, not as people of the church *per se* among the Gentiles. In most respects the commentary is articulate in helping pastors and lay people grasp matters of the gospel of grace and freedom of the Christian life. The first printing of the commentary had a discrepancy regarding the date of writing (pp. xii, 118).

Ephesians

F. Foulkes. *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale NTC, 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 189 pp.

The author has revised his own work of the 1960's, using the RSV and updated introductory matter. The evangelical author traces Paul's flow of thought well, summing up sections, looking at views and their supports, dealing competently with words and exegesis, but sometimes doing so more briefly than many readers would prefer.

R. Kent Hughes. *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*. Preaching the Word; Westchester, IL: Crossway/Good News, 1990. 304 pp.

Hughes has a highly readable, practical exposition that is refreshing for devotional use. He both explains Ephesians

competently in a general way and relates it engagingly and vitally to Christian life. In remaining true to the text, it is like an alpine breeze in its spiritually invigorating tone.

Andrew Lincoln. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1990.

This detailed evangelical effort ranks at the top or near the best in overall exegetical explanation. The author evidences a background of immense reading, a thorough grasp of disputed passages and turning of details, a good ability to summarize, and often judicious decisions.

Philippians

John Gwyn-Thomas. *Rejoice . . . Always! Studies in Philippians 4*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989. 159 pp.

These are messages on one chapter delivered by a pastor in Cambridge, England. The book explains verses perceptively and sensitively and shows how they apply today. J. I. Packer in the introduction commends the book and the author as a good spiritual shepherd.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *The Life of Joy and The Life of Peace*. 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.

This two-volume work on Philippians has typically rich pastoral comments from a master preacher who is well-known for his *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* and expositions on Romans, Ephesians, and 2 Peter. This is a republication of a 1989 British edition containing messages preached at Westminster Chapel in 1947-48. Both pastors and lay readers will find stimulation in this capable and refreshing effort.

Ralph P. Martin. *The Epistle to the Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale NTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

This is a revision and updating of the 1959 edition by the same author, one of America's foremost moderate evangelical NT scholars. It displays unusual insight in regard to Greek grammar and exegesis and a fairly frequent use of other scholarly literature, critical positions, etc.

Moises Silva. *Philippians*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1988. 255 pp.

Silva's treatment is a high-quality evangelical production, usually with good insights into the Greek and in the handling of differing viewpoints in current literature. This was the first commentary in the Wycliffe series. On many verses he is top-notch in perceiving and addressing issues with clear language. He sees two groups against Paul in Philippi, true Jewish Christians holding that grace ideas led Paul too far in freedom from the law (Philippians 1) and Judaizers within the Christian circle (Philippians 3). To him the theme of the book is not joy, but steadfast continuance in sanctification, victorious over difficulties. The author weighs differing interpretations carefully in his vast awareness of literature on the book.

Colossians and Philemon

Murray J. Harris. *Colossians and Philemon*. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

This is the first of a projected twenty commentaries in this series. The author, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has an earlier commentary on 2 Corinthians. This 1991 work helps a student who is beginning to review Greek to see, paragraph-by-paragraph, a structural analysis of every phrase and every word and virtually every feature of the message of the Greek text. It teaches much about the Greek of the two epistles and also passes along some homiletical suggestions from a meticulous scholar.

R. Kent Hughes. *Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ*. Preaching the Word; Westchester, IL: Crossway/Good News, 1989. 183 pp.

The evaluation of this work corresponds closely to that of the discussions of Mark and Ephesians by the same author. In vivid strokes he displays the vital message for Christians in a refreshing devotional way and also gives ideas to expositors.

N. T. Wright. *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Tyndale NTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

As typical of this evangelical series, the author furnishes readers with concise and clear but well-thought-out comments on verses, sometimes with aid on difficult verses.

First and Second Thessalonians

John R. W. Stott. *The Gospel and the End of Time: The Message of 1*

and 2 Thessalonians. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991. 220 pp.

Stott is evangelical, well-informed in good scholarly thinking, and has unusual ability to write understandably and to sum up. As in his other expositions (e.g., Sermon on the Mount, Romans 5-8, Acts, Galatians, Ephesians), his comments are good. His introductions are too brief, a total of eight pages on both books, but his commentary is well-organized and articulate. In this work he tends to be general and without detail on individual verses, but the flow of the exposition is refreshing. He stops to deal with a few problems (e.g., how Satan hindered Paul's return [2:18], what "vessel" means [4:4]). In 2 Thessalonians 2, he favors the state as the "restrainer" (p. 170). This is not a top commentary, but will serve lay people well as a devotional guide.

Charles A. Wanamaker. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*. New Testament Greek Text Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. 316 pp.

As part of a relatively new series, this work offers considerable expertise on details of the Greek, views on interpretive issues, lines of argumentation, and interaction with other scholars. This evangelical work must rate among the best on the Thessalonian epistles.

Pastoral Epistles

Gordon D. Fee. *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*. New International Bible Commentary; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988.

This is a reworking of Fee's 1984 work in the *Good News Commentary*. Fee is clear in most cases, but hard to follow when he becomes very terse. He is good on Greek grammar and local setting and on the unity and integrity of the books. His contribution is that Paul authored the books and wrote to meet specific situations in the churches, not to give a manual for the church as some have held.

Donald Guthrie. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Tyndale NTC, rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

This recent revision of a 1957 publication has a good introduction, but the commentary lacks the detail of Bernard and Huther. The author is better known for his large work on New Testament Introduction. This commentary is especially helpful in supplying conservative answers to radical critical views concerning introductory matters.

Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin, Jr. *I, II Timothy, Titus*. New

American Commentary; Nashville: Broadman, 1992. 352 pp.

Lea, a professor at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, handles 1 and 2 Timothy, while Griffin, a PhD graduate of the University of Aberdeen, comments on Titus. The authors have seven arguments to prove Pauline authorship (pp. 23-49). Their discussions of doctrinal themes are good, as are their book outlines and the amount of space devoted to individual verses. Their work on problems is not always thorough, however (e.g., the law made for the righteous [1 Tim 1:9], the spiritual status of the two trouble-causers [1 Tim 1:19], "the husband of one wife" [1 Tim 3:2], Timothy's saving himself and others [1 Tim 4:16], the status of the unfaithful [2 Tim 2:20], the crown of righteousness [2 Tim 4:8]. It does have a pretty good survey of viewpoints and their supports in regard to women being saved through child-bearing (1 Tim 2:15). Occasional excursions occur, such as those on biblical evidence and the Baptist practice of ordination (pp. 141-44). Footnotes containing explanations and sources for further study add to the value.

Hebrews

F. F. Bruce. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Before his death the author updated this outstanding evangelical work that first appeared in 1964. The introduction discusses recent developments regarding the main facets of the book. The discussion of how the epistle uses the OT and its harmonization of the epistle with the gospel witness about Jesus (pp. 25-34) are two of the areas. This, the best evangelical work on Hebrews, is clear and excellent on detail in most verses, competent in Greek grammar, word study, and background.

William L. Lane. *Hebrews 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1987.

This volume provides much in the details of the Greek text, exegesis, and bibliography. It will inform readers of a wealth of scholarly opinion and be especially helpful to teachers, preachers, and Bible class leaders who are serious about their preparation. Its bibliography rates higher than its commentary which is a bit inferior to that of Bruce.

James

Ralph P. Martin. *James*. Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX:

Word, 1988. 240 pp.

Here a moderate evangelical shows a broad awareness of scholarly opinions and lines of argument in both the introduction and the verse-by-verse commentary. His expertise in Greek details, his good grasp of relationships with other Scripture, and his thorough bibliography are evident. It is overrated, however, when called "the best longer work on James" (Douglas Stewart, *A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries* [Dallas: Word, 1990] p. 126).

First and Second Peter and Jude

Peter H. Davids. *The First Epistle of Peter*. NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Davids has an earlier highly respected commentary on James. Here he uses a 42-page introduction to review issues and discuss scholarly literature from an evangelical perspective. Then follows a 266-page commentary in which he capably handles the Greek and deals with the differing views on problem passages.

Wayne A. Grudem. *I Peter*. Tyndale NTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 239 pp.

At many points this evangelical work is good in regard to views and helpful in regard to the Greek text. The author advocates double predestination in 2:8 and says that God destined the stumbling and disobedience of the unsaved (p. 106). In 3:19-20, he takes the spirits in prison to be unsaved humans of Noah's day, who are now in prison. A special appendix details the "spirits" passage at some length. His 36-page discussion of this passage takes one of several conservative options. He also favors traditional conservative viewpoints elsewhere.

D. E. Hiebert. *Second Peter and Jude*. Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1989. 324 pp.

Hiebert adopts conservative positions, even to the point of understanding Jude to be written after 2 Peter. He usually provides clarification and evidences considerable awareness of viewpoints and issues. Both preachers and lay people will find this work worth the time.

Simon J. Kistemaker. *Peter and Jude*. Hendriksen NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. 441 pp.

This careful evangelical scholar of the reformed tradition continues the Hendriksen series with good attention to exegesis,

viewpoints, arguments, and some practical applications. The work is quite readable for preacher or lay person.

I. Howard Marshall. *I Peter*. IVP NTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991. 184 pp.

This volume launches a new series under the general editorship of Grant R. Osborne. It is designed for brevity, for capturing the message competently, and for practical use by the church. Marshall writes with clarity and refreshment. He shows awareness of differing perspectives on interpretation and usually reasons well and crystallizes data beneficially. Five points defend Petrine authorship, and nine points summarize Peter's theology. His remarks about trials in 1:6-7 and purity and growth in 2:1-3 are outstanding. He lists the views in 3:19-21 capably, but ends with a questionable conclusion to the matter. All in all, this is a very fine concise work that is bound to provide students and all Christians with a quick, well-informed review of the text and a daily reading guide.

J. Ramsay Michaels. *I Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary; Waco, TX: Word, 1988. 337 pp.

Many view this as the current basic evangelical work in English on 1 Peter. The author deals well with Greek details and is abreast of scholarly writings as evidenced by his helpful lists. His discussions of debatable issues is thorough, with frequent good defenses of his own views. One unusual feature is his theory that Peter lived through the persecution under Nero, contrary to evidence of his death under Nero, and wrote the epistle in the A.D. 70's with help from the church at Rome.

1, 2, 3 John

John R. W. Stott. *The Epistles of John*. Tyndale NTC, 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 234 pp.

Here is a clear and stimulating treatment by a gifted writer who has served as rector of the All Souls (Anglican) Church, London. Several NT scholars have hailed the commentary as outstanding in exegesis, exposition, and warm application. This 1988 edition updates the 1964 work. Stott displays a vast breadth of reading in the best conservative commentaries on the Johannine epistles.

Revelation

David Chilton. *Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of*

Revelation. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987. 721 pp.

This is a learned case for postmillennialism. Gary North in the "Publisher's Preface" says that what Chilton generalized in an earlier book "is now supported with chapter and verse indeed, lots and lots of chapters and verses" (p. xv). He asserts that Chilton has at long last found the secret key to unlock the code of the book of Revelation (p. xvi).

David S. Clark. *The Message from Patmos: A Postmillennial Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 148 pp.

This is a more succinct effort than Chilton's volume to support the postmillennial interpretation.

Philip E. Hughes. *The Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. 242 pp.

Hughes was a renowned NT scholar and Anglican clergyman. He has provided an amillennial work (p. 211) that is clear, but not outstanding in exegesis. His commentary on 2 Corinthians is very good and the one on Hebrews is fairly good.

Leon Morris. *The Book of Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale NTC, rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 256 pp.

Morris concisely comments on verses in an amillennial vein, as in Revelation 20. He frequently helps on views and information based on his wide reading. Noteworthy here and there, the work as a whole does not rank as high as his commentaries on John, Romans, and the Thessalonian epistles.

Robert L. Thomas. *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary*. vol. 1 of 2 vol. set; Chicago: Moody, 1992. xxvii + 524 pp.

Thomas has a second volume yet to come in this most exegetically detailed effort yet by a premillennialist. The field is one of his specialties since his ThD dissertation was "The Argument of the Book of Revelation." He brings more than thirty years of Greek-teaching expertise to the task. He argues for authorship by the Apostle John (pp. 2-19) and a date of ca. A.D. 95 (pp. 20-23). His wide interaction looks at issues fairly and carefully. A good section explores hermeneutics for interpreting the Apocalypse (pp. 29-39). He employs his own translation verse-by-verse. He deals in considerable detail

with many interpretive issues, gives reasons for viewpoints, is clear, and follows a detailed outline. He favors seeing the Lord's day (1:10) as Sunday, sees in 1:19 a threefold division of the book based on grammar, opts for human messengers in 1:20, and sees a mixed group in the churches (i.e., some genuinely saved, others only professors). He looks penetratingly at views on the Nicolaitans (2:6), sees "the overcomer" as applicable to all genuinely saved persons, reasoning this out with awareness of relevant factors, and prefers taking "crown of life" in 2:10 as a genitive of apposition i.e. "crown which is (eternal) life" understood as a crown received through grace and not merit. Thomas favors a pretribulational removal of the church in 3:10, devoting six pages to an appraisal of arguments for differing views. The twenty-four elders are exalted celestial beings. The decision on the white-horse rider in 6:2, after a long evaluation of views, is that he personifies a movement or force working against the Messiah's interests in the future tribulation period. He defends the view that the 144,000 in chapter 7 are distinctively certain men of Israel, not the church.

CLASSIFICATION AND RATING OF COMMENTARIES

As explained in the reviews of OT commentaries,² space does not permit a ranking of all the NT commentaries, even the ones done in the last five years. This comprehensive table appears in the unabridged work described in footnote #1. All that can be furnished here is a sample categorization, for which the book of Revelation has been chosen. An asterisk following the author's name indicates a work discussed in the pages above.

Table 1 showing the rating of commentaries on Revelation appears on the next page.

²James E. Rosscup, "OT Commentaries for Bible Expositors, 1987-92," *TMSJ* 4/1 (Spring 1993):93.

RATING OF COMMENTARIES ON REVELATION

Table 1

<i>Detailed Exegetical</i>		

Expositional Survey

Devotional Flavor

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| 1. R. L. Thomas*
(premil dispen.)
W. Hendriksen
(amil)
H. B. Swete
(technical)
D. Chilton*
(postmil) | 1.J. F. Walvoord
(premil dispen.) | 1.J. Stott (Rev. 2`3) |
| 2. I. T. Beckwith
(amil)
D. Clark* (post-
mil) | 2.J. B. Smith (premil
dispen.) | 2.W. Newell (premil) |
| 3. R. H. Mounce
(amil) | 3. L. Morris* (amil) | 3.M. Wilcock (amil) |
| 4. G. R. Beasley-
Murray (amil) | 4.J. A. Seiss (premil)
5.G. E. Ladd (premil)
6.C. Colclasure
(amil) | |