

## COMMENTING ON COMMENTARIES ON 2 CORINTHIANS

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As we prepare to teach the 1990 Winter Bible study on 2 Corinthians, there are several important works worth noting. After several years of neglect by Pauline scholars, 2 Corinthians has now attracted the attention it deserves. With the forthcoming works by M. J. Harris in the New International Greek New Testament Commentary, and M. E. Thrall, in the new International Critical Commentary, the interest in this epistle will certainly continue to grow. This important epistle has numerous challenges for the interpreter. In many ways, it is simultaneously the most passionate and most difficult of the Pauline epistles. Emphasis on ministry, suffering, weakness, and genuine maturity will bring rewards for students, teachers, and hearers as well.

For the evangelical student, the small work by M. J. Harris in vol. 10 of the Expositor's Bible Commentary (Zondervan, 1976), even though limited by space, is excellent and deserves careful reading and meditation. The top three full-length commentaries include C. K. Barrett (Harper, 1974), V. P. Furnish in the Anchor Bible (Doubleday, 1984), and R. P. Martin in the Word Bible Commentary (Word, 1985). Barrett's volume is outstanding, though his treatment of chaps. 10-13 will not satisfy everyone. Furnish has given us the most careful exegetical treatment and has not failed to tackle every major issue. If one disagrees with Furnish, it will require competent exegesis and theologizing to counter his conclusions. Martin's work is a bibliographical goldmine. It is worth consulting to trace out the important articles on the "problem passages" in 2 Corinthians 3, 5, and 10-13. Yet Martin evidences his growing tendency toward speculative interpretation, as well as E. Kasemann's influence upon him.

The second line of works on 2 Corinthians is headed by F. F. Bruce in the New Century Bible (Eerdmans, 1971). It is a brief work with great dependence on Barrett. P. Hughes, writing in the New International Commentary, has produced a solid and reliable theological work well worth consulting. Four other important works that need to be mentioned are: G. R. Beasley-Murray (Broadman, 1971); R. V. G. Tasker (Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 1958); C. Kruse (Eerdmans, 1987); P. Barnett, *The Message of 2 Corinthians* (InterVarsity, 1988).

Some older works are difficult to find, but are nevertheless very useful. These include: H. A. W. Meyer (Bannerman, 1884); A. Plummer (T. & T. Clark, 1915); C. Hodge (1857) and J. H. Bernard, in vol. 3 of the *Expositor's Greek Testament* (1903). J. Denney's (1894) older and out-of-print work is most reliable and helpful throughout.

While there are dozens of significant articles, in addition to the fine contributions in this issue of CTR, there are also more general works that are most informative for those who wish to focus on the more challenging sections of this book. D. A. Carson's *From Triumphalism to Maturity* (Baker, 1984) superbly handles chaps. 10-13. Carson's typical careful and warm exposition is evident throughout this volume. D. A. Black's *Paul: Apostle of Weakness* (Lang, 1984) makes an important contribution to the issues of weakness, suffering, and glory in this epistle. H. D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Fortress, 1985) adds insight to these two middle chapters. D. Georgi wrestles with the numerous attempts to identify the opponents and their doctrine in *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Fortress, 1986). Sociological approaches that provide useful insight to the issues surrounding the Corinthian community can be found in R. F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Fortress, 1980) and W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (Yale, 1983). Two other volumes that should be consulted are K. F. Nickle's *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (Allenson, 1966) and D. W. Oostendorp's *Another Jesus: A Gospel of Jewish-Christian Superiority in II Corinthians* (Kamper, 1967). Though dated, W. Schmithals' *Gnosticism in Corinth* (1971) has been significant for the discussion over the past two decades.

A recent work calling for a "hermeneutics of retrieval" that brings out the theology of 2 Corinthians, as well as arguing for the integrity of this complicated book, is *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (Eerdmans, 1987), by F. Young and D. Ford. I highly recommend this study. Another important and extremely valuable recent work is P. Marshall's *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations*

with the *Corinthians* (Mohr, 1987). A. T. Robertson's *The Glory of the Ministry* (Revell, 1911) is a classic.

While none of us will need to consult all of these works to prepare to teach 2 Corinthians, these works hopefully will guide us as we seek to minister the word of God in the churches in 1990. Second Corinthians depicts a powerful debate between Paul and the triumphalist opponents who had recently come to Corinth. While it is a fascinating account of this emotional conflict, it is primarily a book that communicates to Christ's church the message that God's power is made known in human weakness.

A bibliography of the works mentioned in this brief article, in addition to other works on 2 Corinthians, follows. Let us thank God for the labors that have gone into these works and ask for divine enablement in our study and exposition of this challenging epistle.

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A free Bible Version and Commentary on Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians in EasyEnglish.Â This commentary has been through Advanced Checking. Words in boxes are from the Bible. A word list at the end explains words with a \*star by them. About 2 Corinthians. Author. Paul wrote the letter called 2 Corinthians. See 2 Corinthians 1:1 and 2 Corinthians 10:1. The letter contains information and language that are in the style of Paul. The letter tells us about his life and the things that he did. No other letter that he wrote has so much information about Paul. Early church leaders like Polycarp (156 A.D.) say that Paul wrote it. The city called Corinth. The city was on a narrow piece of