

COMMENTING ON COMMENTARIES ON 2 CORINTHIANS

DAVID S. DOCKERY
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, KY 40280

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.

Commentaries

- Barnett, Paul. *The Message of 2 Corinthians*. BST. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988.
- Barrett, C. K. *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. HNTC. New York: Harper, 1973.
- Beasley-Murray, George R. "2 Corinthians." In the *Broadman Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, ed. by C. J. Allen. Nashville: Broadman, 1971.
- Bernard, J. H. "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians." In *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol. 3, ed. by W. R. Nicoll. 1903 reprint. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Bratcher, R. G. *A Translator's Guide to Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*. London: United Bible Societies, 1983.
- Bruce, F. F. *1 and 2 Corinthians*. NCB. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Bultmann, R. *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*. Trans. by R. A. Harrisville. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985.
- Calvin, J. *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960.
- Denney, J. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.
- Duduit, Michael. *Joy in Ministry: Messages from II. Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- Furnish, V. P. *II Corinthians*. AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984.
- Goudge, H. L. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. London: Methuen, 1927.
- Hanson, R. P. C. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Torch. London: I SCM, 1954.
- Harris, M. J. "2 Corinthians." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, ed. by F. E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.

- Hering, Jean. *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*. Trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock. London: Epworth, 1967.
- Hodge, C. *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.
- Hughes, P. E. *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. NICT; Grand Eerdmans, 1962.
- Kruse, C. G. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Grand Eerdmans, 1987.
- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle the Corinthians*. Columbus: Wartburg, 1946.
- Martin, R. P. *2 Corinthians*. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1986.
- Meyer, H. A. W. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884.
- Moule, H. C. G. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. London: and Inglis, 1962.
- Plummer, A. A. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915.
- _____. *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903.
- Strachan, R. H. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Moffatt; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935.
- Tasker, R. V. G. *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Tyndale. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958.

General Works

- Baird, W. "Visions, Revelations, and Ministry: Reflections on 2 Corinthians 12:1-5 and Galatians 1:11-17." *JBL* 104 (1985) 651-62.
- Barrett, C. K. *The Signs of an Apostle*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972.
- _____. "Paul's Opponents in II Corinthians." *NTS* 17 (1971) 233-54.
- Berry, R. "Death and Life in Christ: The Meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10." *SJT* 14 (1961) 60-76.
- Betz, H. D. *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*. Ed. by G. W. MacRae. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.
- Black, D. A. *Paul: Apostle of Weakness*. New York: Lang, 1984.
- Bornkamm, G. "The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians." *NTS* 8 (1961) 258-64.
- Carson, D. A. *From Triumphalism to Maturity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984.
- Dunn, J. D. G. "2 Corinthians III. 17 - 'The Lord is the Spirit.'" *JTS* 21 (1970) 309-20.
- Fee, G. D. "2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and Food Offered to Idols." *NTS* 23 (1977) 140-61.
- Forbes, C. "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric.." *NTS* 32 (1986) 1-30.
- Friesen, I. I. *The Glory of the Ministry of Jesus Christ Illustrated by a Study of 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:18*. Basel: Reinhardt, 1971.

- Georgi, D. *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- Harris, M. J. "Paul's View of Death in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10." In *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. by R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, 317-28.
- Hock, R. F. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
- Kennedy, J. H. *The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. London: Methuen, 1900.
- Lincoln, A. T. *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology*. SNTSMS 43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- _____. "Paul the Visionary': The Setting and Significance of the Rapture to Paradise in 2 Corinthians XII:1-10." *NTS* 25 (1978) 204-20.
- Marshall, P. *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1987.
- Martin, R. P. "The Setting of 2 Corinthians." *TB* 37 (1986) 3-19.
- Meeks, W. A. *The First Urban Christians*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
- Moule, C. F. D. "St. Paul and Dualism: The Pauline Concept of Resurrection." *NTS* 12 (1966) 100-23.
- Nickle, K. F. *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*. Naperville: Allenson, 1966.
- Oostendorp, D. W. *Another Jesus: A Gospel of Jewish-Christian Superiority in II Corinthians*. Amsterdam: Kampen, 1967.
- Proudfoot, C. M. "Imitation of Realistic Participation? A Study of Paul's Concept of 'Suffering with Christ'" *Int* 17 (1963) 140-00.
- Robertson, A. T. *The Glory of the Ministry*. New York: Revell, 1911.
- Schmithals, W. *Gnosticism in Corinth*. Trans. by John E. Steely. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.
- Spencer, A. B. "The Wise Fool (And the Foolish Wise): A Study of Irony in Paul." *NovT* 4 (1981) 349-60.
- Stephenson, A. M. G. "A Defense of the Integrity of 2 Corinthians" in *The Authority and Integrity of the New Testament*, 82-97. London: SPCK 1965.
- Tabor, J. D. *Things Unutterable: Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986.
- Theissen, G. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Trans. by J. H. Schutz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- Thrall, M. E. "Super Apostles, Servants of Christ, and Servants of Satan." *JSNT* 6 (1980) 42-57.
- Watson, F. "2 Corinthians X-XIII and Paul's Painful Visit to the Corinthians." *JTS* 35 (1984) 324-46.
- Young, B. H. "The Ascension Motif of 2 Corinthians 12 in Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic Texts." *GTJ* 9 (1988) 73-103.
- Young, F. and D. Ford. *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

This material is cited with gracious permission from:

The Criswell College

4010 Gaston Ave.

Dallas, TX 75246

www.criswell.edu

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: thildebrandt@gordon.edu