

or theologian—and the health professional, who often engages with suffering individuals, will find this reading particularly helpful.

In a fusion between good scholarship and practical usefulness, Rice succeeds to show that while suffering might not always make perfect sense, one can respond to it resourcefully. If only that, I believe his book achieves much.

Berriend Springs, Michigan

IRIANN IRIZARRY

Seifrid, Mark A. *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. 535 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

This is volume number fifteen of the *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* series. In his new commentary on 2 Corinthians, Mark A. Seifrid, Mildred and Ernest Hogan Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Seminary, presents Paul as the unimpressive minister of an infinitely powerful gospel. In the scholarly world of New Testament, Seifrid is best known for his thorough and judicious treatment of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, on which he is a competent expert. He brings exceptional erudition, exegetical accuracy, and theological reflection to the interpretation of this commentary on 2 Corinthians, considered by some scholars as one of the most controversial and difficult of Paul's letters.

In their preface to Seifrid's volume, the series editors outline the intent of the series as a project designed for serious pastors and teachers of the Bible. *The Pillar Commentaries* seek above all to make clear the text of Scripture as we have it. The scholars writing these volumes interact with the most significant informed contemporary debate but avoid getting caught up in undue technical detail. In accord with the series format, the commentary proper is preceded by a brief introduction, which is followed by four entries; and the rest of the volume is divided into three main sections that cover the whole letter: I) The opening of the letter: the call to fellowship (1:1–2:17); II) the body of the letter: apostolic mission (3:1–7:16); III) closing of the letter: the call to simplicity (8:1–13:14). The author of this commentary offers a unified reading of 2 Corinthians, which has frequently been regarded as a composite of excerpts and fragments (xxix). The contrast between 2 Cor 1–7 and 2 Cor 10–13 is more apparent than real. The notion that a letter that was instrumental in cementing the bond between the congregation at Corinth and Paul would be subject to a cut-and-paste operation, even at a later time, is difficult to imagine. The burden of proof clearly lies upon any hypothesis of a compilation letter.

The message of 2 Corinthians lies in its paradox: Paul is forced to legitimize his own apostolic ministry as superior to other, "super-apostle" claimants, but instead of drawing on impressive physical presence or rhetorical flair, he appeals to his own hardship and frailty. He is the suffering apostle of the crucified and resurrected Christ. Seifrid interprets Paul's thanksgiving to God, who "in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession" in 2 Cor 2:14, as Paul's participation in the suffering and shame of the crucified Christ. Paul

is “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus” (2 Cor 4:10-11). In his own life, and even in his boasting, he boasts in the midst of weakness and in the power of Christ expressed through him (2 Cor 12:9-10).

The life of Paul is also the life of the believer, Seifrid argues, for the apostolic experience is the Christian experience “written large” and in “large-screen display.” Paul not only begs us to understand his apostolic purpose but invites us to participate in the life of Christ in suffering just as he does. Salvation itself is the expression of God’s power working through human weakness, and the entirety of the Christian life is not only the proclamation of the way of the cross, but the personal experience of it.

For Seifrid, the nature of both Paul’s apostolic ministry and our experience as believers is counterintuitive: it is not judged by the outward appearance or by postures of power; it is legitimized by trials and built on an eschatological hope yet to be fully realized. Suffering and hope are unquestionably bound together for Paul (2 Cor 4:17). As we have seen, Seifrid interprets 2 Corinthians in a distinctly evangelical and fully unified manner, unlike the majority of scholarship on the letter. In his discussion of “Theological Issues,” he normally selects one or two topics that pertain in a special way to the chapter/section under consideration. His selection and brief explanations are excellent, helping students see the wide-range theological influence of 2 Corinthians.

Many interpreters argue that 2 Corinthians is a compilation of separate letters—the apparent shift in tone between chapters 1–7 and chapters 10–13 may indicate two different letters, and other possible insertions suggest as many as five disparate fragments. Seifrid dismisses these arguments and reads the letter as a unified whole, resisting the common maximalist “mirror-reading” of the Corinthian background and the precise theology of his opponents. His interaction with 2 Corinthians is thoroughly exegetical, deeply theological, and often pastoral in tone. He refreshingly avoids getting caught up in overly technical intramural debates between competing scholars, but focuses heavily on the text itself and its implications for the lives of believers. He also searches for Paul’s message once more and communicates it to our time. In discussing the letter closing (13:11-14), Seifrid observes that no two letters of Paul are alike, and the final three elements of the letter correspond to the variable patterns that appear elsewhere. Paul normally includes exhortations in the conclusion of his letters, almost always discernibly directed to the particular circumstances and problems within the congregation he addresses.

The end matter includes a bibliography and five indices. The relatively brief bibliography (xv-xxi) introduces the reader to a good selection of the important scholarly literature on 2 Corinthians in English, German, and French. In sum, Mark Seifrid takes a different approach to the commentary’s assignment: rather than cataloging and evaluating the judgment of modern scholars, he chooses to concentrate on his own interpretation of 2 Corinthians, its theology, and its importance for fundamental issues of interpretations. While we do not need to agree with all of Seifrid’s theological views and interpretations, he has produced an impressively thorough commentary,

which offers both judicious comment and useful documentation. This is an outstanding addition to an excellent commentary series. It deserves to be ranked among the leading commentaries on 2 Corinthians.

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PANAYOTIS COUTSOUMPOS

Strayer, Brian E. J. N. *Loughborough: The Last of the Adventist Pioneers*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014. 494 pp. + 14 pp. Index. Hardcover, \$29.99.

This new volume is the latest installment in the Adventist Biography series edited by George R. Knight with this particular volume written by Brian E. Strayer, professor of history at Andrews University, who has taught Adventist history among other courses for over four decades. It is fitting that such a consummate historian should write about the first Adventist historian, even if such a statement in reference to Loughborough should be qualified as the first “chronicler” of Adventist history. What is significant, for better or worse, is that Loughborough’s providential perspective of God’s leading in Seventh-day Adventist history has significantly shaped Adventist historiography.

This particular volume is substantially longer than previous volumes in the series and has the most footnotes (1,265) in the series, too. As such it is a benchmark of meticulous research. Strayer carefully wades through Loughborough’s published writings as well as unpublished diaries and correspondence, along with additional contextual materials from various local historical societies and genealogical databases. The historical landscape he paints is one that is refreshing and gives both greater clarity to Loughborough, but also includes plenty of historical context, especially the social, political, and economic milieu that in comparison is largely missing in earlier volumes in the series. In doing so Strayer comes up with a number of interesting discoveries, not the least of which is the significance of Loughborough’s surname: Loughborough believed that he came from an upper class English background, but historical evidence points to lower-class Irish roots (21-27). By the time he went to Great Britain in 1878, he was one of only 15 people bearing his name in the British isles with the majority who would leave by 1900 (236).

Strayer highlights the well-known fact that Loughborough, with regard to historical facts, made frequent historical blunders (cf. 119-120, footnote 21; 405, footnote 10). Despite this, Strayer highlights some broader contributions of his life that appear to have been largely overlooked. For example, he argues that “no Adventist minister in the nineteenth century (with the possible exception of James White) accomplished as much to promote good music in the church as J. N. Loughborough” (199, see also 31-32, 36). This included the “uphill battle to install pump organs in Adventist Churches to help members sing harmoniously and rhythmically” (200, see also 218). Another notable contribution was his recipe for communion bread, and how he encouraged Adventists to use unfermented grape juice (18; 217; 402; 407, footnote 10; 490). Loughborough was a skilled organizer and builder, and made significant