

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.

Silver Spring, Maryland

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 Strayer carefully wades through Loughborough’s published writings as well as unpublished diaries and correspondence, along with additional contextual materials from various local historical societies and genealogical databases.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

contributions to the architecture of early Adventist “meetinghouses” (a term he relinquished after 1875 when he transitioned to the term “churches” [213]). Hence the New England style of architecture is reflected among early California churches (198). Another notable contribution was his proposal for church giving, beginning with the 1859 proposal of Systematic Benevolence, and later the 1878 proposal of tithing. Both were intimately tied to economic depressions (105; 126; 138, footnote 12). From church organization to creative evangelistic techniques, there is no doubt that Loughborough exerted his influence.

A significant theme of Loughborough’s life was his admiration and respect for the prophetic gift as manifested in the life of Ellen G. White, including times when he accepted her stern rebukes. She played a pivotal role in his becoming an Adventist minister (69-71). Some of these early rebukes (cf. 90-91, 95, 127-129) showcased a pattern that developed of acceptance and humble (sometimes public) confession (180-181, 269-270, 297-298). She in turn considered some of his dreams as from God (161, 174-175), and furthermore “loved to hear Loughborough preach and debate the Adventist message” (115). One such sermon that she heard on the Laodicean message made a profound impact on her life (Ibid.). Later, when others criticized his missionary work in England, she staunchly defended his accomplishments (284). In his writings Loughborough highlighted the pivotal role of Ellen G. White’s prophetic ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although he claimed to have seen her in vision between 40 to 50 times, it was his personal interaction with the prophetic gift that convinced him that she genuinely received the prophetic gift from God (71). At times such claims supplanted historical accuracy, such as his befuddled claim that her last public vision was at the 1884 Portland camp meeting (291). Loughborough “was a firm believer in the divine inspiration of Ellen G. White, even when (perhaps especially when) she rebuked him in her testimonies” (171).

Perhaps the best part of the book is the intimate portrait of what Loughborough was like as an ordinary person. One discovers, for example, that his favorite fruit was apples (282), and that he loved to visit historic sites and museums (240, 251, 274, 282). His understanding of vegetarianism was quite flexible until he became a full vegetarian in 1886, a developmental pattern very similar to Ellen G. White as well as many other early Adventist health reformers (146-147, 250, 296). Loughborough was married three times, but it was his third wife, Annie, who Strayer believes was his favorite (228). At one point he speculates that marks in his diary may have indicated tokens of affection, perhaps even indications of sex, which seems a bit of a rare departure since this appears at best to be an educated guess (184, 227-228). His personal hygiene changed through his life. In his early years he bathed once a month, a practice that increased to weekly baths by the 1870s (206). He believed in limited sex (embracing the concept of vitalism or the depletion of vital force), as well as no shaving (157, 303). Loughborough was a “lifelong learner” who read widely even if he only had an eighth grade education (30, 92, 114).

On another level Strayer highlights the personal relationships that mattered so deeply to Loughborough. He was ordained most likely in January of 1853 (83) and re-baptized by M. E. Cornell in 1855 (89). The list of ministers he baptized or participated in their ordination service reads like a “who’s who” list of early Adventism. He converted J. H. Waggoner (84), J. G. Matteson, Moses Hull, and G. I. Butler (103), Nathan Fuller (108), and was influential to Abram LaRue (179). Stalwart families such as the Lindsays, Lamsons, and Amadons accepted the Adventist message as a result of his labor (85). Ironically, Loughborough had to discipline M. E. Cornell as they worked together in California due to his attachment to another woman (185-188). Some of these relationships became strained when some, such as Nathan Fuller and Moses Hull, later apostatized.

One area where Adventist historians will have to revise their narrative of Adventist history due to this volume is by noting that the 1866 Pilot Grove, Iowa, camp meeting “deserves to be considered as the church’s first ‘general camp meeting’” (167, footnote 79; see also 97, footnote 30). While people both then and now have generally considered the 1868 camp meeting in Wright, Michigan, as the denomination’s first “official” camp meeting (with due deference to a slightly earlier camp meeting held in Canada that same year), what this demonstrates is a more fluid transition from the monthly and quarterly meetings from the 1860s as Adventist organization developed. Thus Loughborough should be credited with “convening the first SDA camp meeting” (158-160, 490).

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this particular volume is Strayer’s astute treatment of Loughborough’s historiography. He observes that Loughborough was aware of two competing views of Adventist history (108) that included challenges related to Ellen G. White’s prophetic ministry from Miles Grant (183) and D. M. Canright (201). What is clear is that by 1884 he developed a pattern of sharing recollections of God’s providential leadings in Seventh-day Adventist history (289). The two most valuable chapters of the book are chapter 15 on “Reinterpreting the Past” (326-344) and chapter 19 on “Preaching the Past” (391-407). Loughborough “consulted a wide array of primary source material” including interviewing various pioneers including Ellen G. White, but his “most significant source” was himself (392). Thus “no one was more qualified to write about the Adventist past than he” (393). More important than the lack of correcting factual errors, between his two monographs on Adventist history published in 1892 and 1905, was the fact that “he makes not a single critical remark about their leaders, publications, or activities. Bypassing any mention of fanaticism, setbacks, or unwise decisions, he focuses instead on the positive aspects that support his ‘rise and progress’ theme” (393-394). A leading hallmark of this style was the use of statistics to show the steady progress of Adventism around the world (213). Such an uncritical reading of the Adventist past led to “the apologetic style of writing Adventist history.” Thus, above all else, “J. N. Loughborough deserves to be remembered as the preeminent chronicler of Adventist history” (492).

Strayer provides a compelling and detailed narrative of the life of “one of our church’s outstanding pioneers” for a variety of reasons (493). He was a leading promoter of books in Adventist publications (303), a leading fundraiser (203), and evangelist. As a mentor he played a significant role in training younger ministers. At the same time, he had a proclivity toward legalism (136). Although he demonstrated “to a greater extent than his contemporaries . . . visiting with individuals of different races and ethnic grounds (116, 226), he also shared a common prejudice toward Native Americans (249-250). He could also be a “blue-ribbon gossip” (306, footnote 15) who overworked himself so much that at times he fainted while preaching (216-217). This nuanced portrait, highlighting both strengths as well as flaws, provides a much more honest and thus scholarly biography of this significant Adventist pioneer.

If this biography has a flaw, it is that the book at times seems repetitious, and due to its length it may be unwieldy for those unfamiliar with Adventist history. As an example, while it is clear that Loughborough “never met a word he couldn’t misspell,” perhaps it is not quite necessary to highlight this fact so many times (cf. 114, 171, 184-185, 230, etc.). It furthermore seemed awkward to discuss James White’s counsels to Loughborough after discussing James White’s death (274, 280). Despite these minor quibbles, *J. N. Loughborough: The Last of the Adventist Pioneers* is a valuable scholarly contribution to Adventist historiography.

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Vance, Donald A., George Athas, and Yael Avrahami. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader’s Edition*. Bilingual edition. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015. 1800 pp. Flexible Leather, \$79.95.

It is the unfortunate fate of the majority of theology students that while having studied diligently to pass the Hebrew and Greek exams at the beginning of their studies, they have forgotten most of it at the moment they graduate from seminary. Thus the time-consuming investment and the mental discipline that has brought the student to a reasonably good level of reading and translating Hebrew and Greek is lost in a short time. Different causes lead to this situation. In the end, however, it all boils down to the fact that the biblical languages, once learned, are not used often enough to keep the language skills alive and let them mature. The introduction to the BHS Reader’s edition put it this way: “All that hard work spent in learning the language is seemingly wasted. Again, it is reading—and lots of it—that solves this problem.”

Consequently, with the loss of Biblical language skills the quality of the minister’s sermon is severely compromised as the preacher can no longer access the source text with competence and thus gain independence from traditions of interpretation.