

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Faculty Publications

12-1-1974

Recommended Reading: Commentaries on the Gospels

Walter F. Specht
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Specht, Walter F., "Recommended Reading: Commentaries on the Gospels" (1974). *Faculty Publications*. 4136.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/4136>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

recommended reading

Diseases of Food Animals, The, Owen S. Parrett, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1973, 30 pages, \$.50.

Meat on the Menu—Who Needs It? Raymond H. Woolsey, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974, 80 pages, \$.50.

These two small but important booklets have recently come from the presses of the Review and Herald. Both deal in the area of health. One is an updated edition of Dr. Parrett's book and the other is written by Ray Woolsey, an associate book editor at the Review and Herald.

Both of these books bring us up-to-date information on the blessings and benefits of vegetarianism and the dangers of meat eating. A friend of mine who read Dr. Parrett's book said: "I had to make a decision. I must either quit eating meat or read no more of Dr. Parrett's book. So I closed it and put it down."

With all the rich blessings of our total health message before us, including vegetarianism, how can we continue to ignore the light God has given us on this subject? We appeal to all of our ministers to read these two booklets and recommend them to our people. Then let us follow the clear counsels in the writings of the servant of the Lord. Let us pray to God for grace to bring our lives into full harmony with the light given to us.

N. R. Dower

The Fat Is In Your Head, Charlie Shedd, Word Press, Waco, Texas, 1972, 122 pages, \$3.95.

The author is a Presbyterian minister who has taken off eighty-five pounds, and kept them off using the psychospiritual techniques he outlines in this fascinating volume.

Dr. Shedd has developed forty meditations—one a day for forty days, but you probably won't take forty days to complete it. Such gems are included as "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3), and "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (Prov. 5:21) including the path to the refrigerator, the bakery, and the malt shop.

The author overreaches himself in speculating that overweight may have been Paul's "thorn in the flesh." He also paraphrases Omar Khayyam, "A piece of lettuce, exercise, and thou."

Titus A. Frazee

Commentaries on the Gospels

Walter F. Specht, chairman, Department of New Testament, Andrews University, reviews new publications in the field of New Testament studies.

Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament, F. F. Bruce, William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1974, 216 pages, \$3.45.

This is an authoritative account of all that is known of Jesus and Christian origins from non-Biblical sources. It is written by an outstanding British evangelical scholar, who is Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester.

Bruce analyzes and evaluates the statements regarding Christ and Christianity found in pagan writers, such as Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger and Trajan. He discusses what the Jewish historian Josephus has to say about John the Baptist and James the Just, and the disputed passage about Jesus in the eighteenth book of the *Jewish Antiquities*.

A chapter is devoted to the references to John the Baptist, Jesus, and other New Testament persons and incidents in the Slavonic version of the *History of the Jewish War*. He not only examines passages in Rabbinic writings but sets forth the Messianic expectation as reflected in the Qumran literature found in the Dead Sea caves.

More than eighty pages are devoted to supposed sayings of Jesus found in variant readings in our Gospel manuscripts, apocryphal Gospels, Greek papyri, and the Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. He also brings together the sayings found in the Qumran scrolls that give a picture of Jesus and Mary derived from our canonical New Testament as well as apocryphal Gospels.

The final chapter gives an insight into what can be learned about early Christian origins from the discoveries of archeology, particularly from papyrus documents, inscriptions, and coins. Professor Bruce has brought together into one volume a mass of interesting information.

Commentary on the Gospel of Mark, William L. Lane, William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1974, 652 pages, \$12.95.

This work is volume two of the New International Commentary on the New Testament, produced by evangelical scholars. Lane is professor of New Tes-

tament and Judaic Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. His ten years of work on this volume have resulted in a major commentary—one of the best available on the Gospel of Mark today. The author shows a mastery of all of the chief reports of recent research bearing on the Gospel.

The commentary is designed to serve the interest of both the pastor and the scholar. To facilitate its use by those unfamiliar with the original text of Mark, the introduction and exposition proper are written exclusively in English. Behind the exposition, however, there lies a thorough investigation of the manuscript tradition and its interpretation. The more technical aspects which concern the scholar, including grammatical, textual, and historical problems, are dealt with in footnotes, special notes, or the appendices.

As a basis for the exposition, use is made of the American Standard Version of 1901, which was noted for its verbal accuracy. The textual and grammatical notes serve to bring this version into line with manuscript discoveries and research since it was produced.

The introduction, consisting of thirty-eight pages including a selected bibliography, endeavors to reconstruct the particular life situation that produced what is generally regarded as the earliest of the Gospels. Lane speaks of Mark as a "witness document." "It is intended to be neither a formal historical treatise nor a biography of Jesus, but proclamation" (p. 1).

For the minister who desires an up-to-date commentary that uses the results of the current research, and yet one that is written from a conservative point of view, we recommend this volume on Mark.

Mark, A Portrait of the Servant, D. Edmond Hiebert, Moody Press, Chicago, 1974, 437 pages, \$7.95.

A commentary by the professor of Greek and New Testament at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. Although we would not place this work in the same category with Lane's, it is a solid interpretation of the text of Mark.

The English text quoted is the American Standard Version of 1901. The author, however, interprets the text in the light of his understanding of the original Greek and of the historical setting of the Gospel. This is done in a nontechnical manner. There is very little use made of Greek words on technical matters.

The introduction is very brief. The notes are printed at the end of the volume, followed by a helpful bibliography. It is a worthwhile commentary by a prolific Mennonite scholar.