

## BOOK REVIEW

David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003). xxi + 870 pp. \$49.99.

Together with a commentary on 2 Corinthians in the New American Commentary series (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), David E. Garland, a professor of New Testament at Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, has made another significant contribution to the Pauline studies with this commentary on 1 Corinthians. This commentary consists of three parts: a 23-page introduction, twelve sections of comment on 1 Corinthians, and a 45-page bibliography along with indexes.

Garland begins his analysis of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church (in fact, it is not the first letter, but the second) by presenting background information in his introduction. In it, he interacts with recent scholarly works largely in two areas. The first is the relationship between ancient rhetoric and epistolary formulas. Regarding 1 Corinthians as a personal letter, Garland accepts the recent critique coming from rhetorical criticism. He mentions that "Paul's letter writing was informal. He used rhetorical devices but was not constrained by the rules of formal rhetoric" (p. 19). Garland's outline of 1 Corinthians reflects this idea (pp. 21-23). The second is the area of socio-cultural background of Corinth. Instead of following a general introductory pattern that proceeds with a detailed explanation of the information of text, date, unity, and so on, he spends more than half of his introduction describing the religious and cultural backgrounds of Corinth. It seems to reflect his methodological interest to interpret the text with the help of both the grammatical-historical method and its socio-cultural background. His explanation is very clear, so although the introduction is relatively short (23 pages), it gives useful preliminary information for understanding 1 Corinthians.

After the introduction, Garland proceeds with detailed exegesis of the text. The exegetical part has several merits. First, its overall design is reader-friendly. As in the other commentaries of the Baker Exegetical Commentary series, Garland's commentary offers overviews and outlines with short practical expositions at the outset of each pericope in gray color. This commentary also indicates where the reader is by the headings in the top margin of each page. In addition, the flow of explanation in each section is not interrupted because the text-critical and grammatical matters are gathered in separate additional notes. These three things allow the reader to see the contents more easily and clearly.

Secondly, as far as his exegesis is concerned, he does not engage in a strict verse-by-verse exegesis; rather, he unfolds the meaning of the text mainly paragraph-by-paragraph. Sometimes, it may be bothersome if the reader wants to know the meaning of a certain verse. However, the verse-by-verse or word-by-word approach fails to show what each word or verse means in relation to the larger textual context (co-text). Thus, Garland's approach presents much help to the reader in understanding the passage not only by providing the meaning of an individual verse, but also by depicting the relationship within the immediate textual context. Besides, his treatment of the passage paragraph-by-paragraph is consistent with the outline of each pericope, so it is helpful for the reader to follow the author's explanation of the text.

As shown in the introduction, his apparent methodological interest in combining a grammatical-historical and socio-cultural approach is well disclosed throughout his analysis of the text. For example, in dealing with 1 Cor. 14.33b-35, one of the debated passages in 1 Corinthians, he interacts fully with recent archaeological evidence and socio-cultural data to understand its complications (pp. 664-73, 675-77).

Sometimes, however, Garland seems to give the impression that he deduces his conclusion not from analyzing the text *per se* but from scholars' opinions on certain issues. For example, in the above mentioned case of 1 Cor. 14.33b-35, he begins with a survey and critique of two other views on this problem: interpolation and Corinthian quotation. Then, he mentions another interpretation as his favourite: it is a matter of conservation of social convention. From this perspective, he explains the contents of the passage and concludes that "Paul's instructions are conditioned by the social realities of his age and a desire to prevent a serious breach in decorum" (p. 673). In comparison to Garland's process, Anthony T. Thiselton's approach is worth noting. Like Garland,

Thiselton begins with a survey of the various views on this issue. But Thiselton does not go directly to other scholars' views to draw his conclusion. Rather, he analyzes the text first (pp. 1150-61). As far as 1 Cor. 14.33b-15 is concerned, both approaches are legitimate, but Garland's approach reveals some weak points in his reading of 1 Cor. 13.13.

In dealing with 1 Cor. 13.13, Garland presents two opinions about understanding the meaning of *vv̄i δέ*: temporal and logical meaning (p. 626). Then, he sets up one perspective (logical meaning) and gives three sorts of evidence for it (p. 626). Here, also, his approach differs from Thiselton's (pp. 1071-74). Moreover, his three-fold evidence is not convincing. First, he cites the appearance of *μένει* in 1 Esd. 4.38 as a supporting example of *μένει* in 1 Cor. 13.13 (p. 626 n. 18). However, it is questionable in what sense the usage in 1 Esd. 4.38 can be supporting evidence for that in 1 Cor. 13.13. Is it just because of the same word? Secondly, he thinks that because the other two occurrences of *vv̄i δέ* (12.18; 15.20) have the logical sense, then 1 Cor. 13.13 also has a logical meaning. However, he does not consider the differences of co-text between them. The occurrences in 12.18 and 15.20 apparently have the logical sense because their immediate textual contexts do not have any temporal situation. However, the co-text of 1 Cor. 13.13 has a clear temporal contrast between present and future (1 Cor. 13.8-12). Thus, his second evidence is not adequate because he uses it without considering the importance of the co-text. Thirdly, he lists the contrasts between 'the triad of prophecy, knowledge, and tongues' and 'the triad of faith, hope, and love' as another evidence for the logical sense of *vv̄i δέ*. But, it is also doubtful in what sense they are in contrast. Moreover, there is no co-textual evidence of this kind of contrast. Thus, Thiselton's suggestion is correct: 'if *vv̄i δέ μένει* means "taking all into account," Paul does not yet quite part with the importance of faith in the God revealed and "hope in the ever-growing revelation"' (p. 1073).

However, the above minor criticisms should not take away from the overall excellent treatments in this commentary. In general, Garland provides well-balanced information from recent scholarly sources and ancient socio-cultural sources, and uses them to interpret the complex issues with clarity and readability. His commentary deserves to be one of the first references in studying Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

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