
This is an excellent and much needed addition to anyone’s collection of commentaries, whether layman or preacher. Though I never preached through the book of 1 Corinthians, in preaching on individual texts I repeatedly found that there were few useful commentaries on the book. Nevertheless, this treatment is not only for preachers but is imminently readable and within the scope of any layman. Indeed, it will be most useful, not as a commentary, but as good Christian reading since it does not treat every verse in the book.

This is a review only of volume 1 (1 Corinthians 1–9). When the rest of the commentary will be available I do not know, though I trust it will be soon. If Rev. Langerak’s treatment of the rest of the book, including chapters 10, 11, 13 and 15 is as valuable as this, it will be well worth the purchase price of nearly $80.00 for the two volumes.

That the book does not treat every verse is my only criticism, if it is even criticism. Rev. Langerak’s treatment of chapter 1, for example, excludes verses 14–17, 19–20, and 25, and so with the rest of the chapters. Nevertheless, the book does not overlook any important material in 1 Corinthians and the verses skipped do not interfere with the readability of the book.

In this first volume of what I assume will be a two-volume set, Rev. Langerak certainly shows that the epistle of 1 Corinthians “is not an abstract treatment of love, but a pointed application of the calling of the Christian to walk in the way of love as that must characterize the believer’s whole walk in the world” (p. ix). He successfully relates each chapter to that main theme.

I suppose that in reviewing any commentary the reviewer always turns first to well-remembered and favorite passages. I certainly did and enjoyed reading again both those passages and their explanation. There are certainly points at which I would disagree with Rev. Langerak’s exegesis but they are minor. The book is doctrinally sound, pointed in its applications, up-to-date and right in its criticisms of the modern ecclesiastical world, and edifying.

I especially enjoyed Rev. Langerak’s chapters titled “The Powerful Word of the Cross (1:18)” and “Salvation by the Foolishness of Preaching (1:21–24)”, chapters 4 and 5, and the chapters on Christian liberty, chapters 24 and 25, but those are personal preferences. Others will find the book of particular value in other areas, perhaps in this first volume the chapters on sex, marriage and single
life, chapters 19–23, since those chapters address issues that are destroying the lives of many both within and outside the church.

One quote from chapter 19 that caught my attention had to do with what Rev. Langerak calls “A Peculiarly Christian Sexual Ethic”: “The Christian sexual ethic, the behavior of Christians regarding sex, is peculiar. Peculiar has to do with one’s property. What is peculiar to you is what you own. That belongs to the Christian’s sexual ethic. The Christian is owned by someone. He is owned by Christ. He was ‘bought with a [fair, goodly] price’ (v. 20). He was not bought cheaply. He was bought with blood. Having been bought, he is owned body and soul by Jesus Christ, who is then lord of his body. The Christian behaves in a certain way with respect to his body because he is owned by someone. He lives in the peculiarly Christian ethic according to the word of his Lord and because it is the word of his Lord.”

I look forward to volume 2.