

Listening to the Spirit in the Text. By Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000. 180 pp. Paper, \$12.00.

Gordon Fee certainly needs no introduction. He is considered one of the greatest NT exegetes of our day. Although much of Fee's work is aimed at a scholarly audience, he also has the rare ability to be of benefit to the person in the pew. In this fascinating compilation, Eerdmans unveils Fee's "greatest hits." Eleven of the twelve chapters were gathered from previous publications between 1981-1995, some which, were originally delivered orally. The only new material is Chapter 8, "The Holy Spirit and Worship in the Pauline Churches." Although this book is a collection, the unifying emphasis is the spirituality of Paul as expressed in the Scriptures.

There are two overarching sections in this book. The first section is "The Text and the life in the Spirit" (pp. 3-87). In these seven chapters, Fee discusses the balance between exegesis and spirituality. He also reflects on commentary writing, being a Trinitarian Christian, and Pauline spirituality. The first two chapters are very helpful for those immersed in biblical studies. Fee's determination to ensure his heart is right before God is inspiring. Like the Apostle Paul, he is not only a man of the Word; he is a man of the Spirit. Fee's diligent approach in writing commentaries is also noteworthy. For example, I was struck by the following: "Every morning I ran off a hard copy of the previous day's (sometimes days') work and read it aloud in its entirety, including footnotes. Every time I stumbled over a sentence, or had to catch my breath, I assumed another reader would also have difficulty; so I rewrote until I felt it read aloud smoothly. I also read the entire product through aloud one final time before submitting it to Eerdmans; not all the bugs are out, but I am convinced this has been the key to what measure of readability it might have" (p. 18). This explains why this reviewer has appreciated Fee's momentous commentary work: *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987).

The last three chapters focus on the NT view of wealth and possessions, Paul's perspective on gender issues, and the bishop and the Bible. In this final chapter, Fee takes John Spong (a liberal Episcopal bishop) to task for his liberal view of the Scriptures as they relate to homosexuality. This chapter serves as a great example of how to graciously and firmly critique.

The second section in this book, “The Text and the life of the church” (pp. 91-180) speaks to the questions of worship, tongues, clergy/laity distinctions, church order, and the Church’s global mission. Each of these chapters is worthwhile reading for those involved in pastoral ministry. Fee’s chapter, “Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia” (pp. 105-120) is worthy of careful consideration. Regardless of where one comes down on the issue of tongues, we would all benefit from reading the perspective of the man who has been called, “The Greatest Pentecostal Scholar alive.”

I heartily recommend *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* as to tool to inform and transform the reader. May those who read this work be challenged to be both scholarly and spiritual.