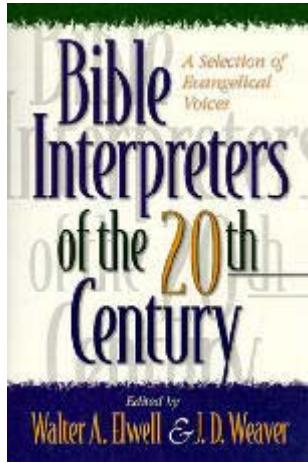


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Elwell, Walter A. and J. D. Weaver, eds.

Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices

Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999. Pp. 445, Paperback, \$24.99, ISBN 0801020735.

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It is the rare biblical student or scholar who has not had the frustrating experience of digging around a dusty library in multiple journals or terse book introductions in an attempt to glean some bibliographic data on a scholar. While there is no dearth of information on many scholars in the discipline (including *Festschriften*, multiple biblical/theological/religious dictionaries or encyclopedias, or entire books devoted to scholars of note), detailed information on evangelical scholars can at times be very difficult to locate. This makes *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices* by Walter A. Elwell (Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Wheaton College Graduate School) and J. D. Weaver (Senior Acquisitions Editor of Academic and Reference Books at Baker Book House) a welcome addition to the academe. Covering thirty-five 20th century evangelical scholars with an average of 12-13 pages per scholar, this volume gathers information on the scholars' biographical backgrounds, theological development, and scholarly contributions. It also includes the reviewer's personal observations and evaluations of the biblical interpreters and their writings. Whether as a quick reference tool, a guide to further analysis of a particular scholar, or a classroom textbook on those who spoke for 20th century evangelical scholarship, this book will certainly become a standard reference tool.

The scholars chosen for inclusion in the text along with the authors writing about them (shown in italics) are listed following the chapter order of the book:

John Charles Ryle/*Peter Toon*
William Henry Green/*Marion Ann Taylor*
John Albert Broadus/*David S. Dockery*
Theodor Zahn/*Erich H. Kiehl*
Adolf Schlatter/*Robert W. Yarbrough*
Robert Dick Wilson/*Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.*
Geerhardus Vos/*James T. Dennison, Jr.*
A. T. Robertson/*Edgar V. McKnight*
Richard C. H. Lenski/*Robert Rosin*
Oswald T. Allis/*John H. Skilton*
Arthur W. Pink/*Richard P. Belcher*
William Hendriksen/*Simon J. Kistemaker*
Ned Bernard Stonehouse/*Dan G. McCartney*
Edward Musgrave Blaiklock/*David G. Stewart*
Merrill Chapin Tenney/*Walter A. Elwell*
Edward Joseph Young/*Allan Harmon*
Merrill Frederick Unger/*John Hannah*
Frederick Fyvie Bruce/*Murray J. Harris*
George Eldon Ladd/*Donald A. Hagner*
William Sanford LaSor/*David Allan Hubbard*
John Wenham/*Roger Beckwith*
Bruce M. Metzger/*James A. Brooks*
Leon Lamb Morris/*David John Williams*
Donald Guthrie/*Steve Motyer*
Donald J. Wiseman/*Martin J. Selman*
R. K. Harrison/*J. Glen Taylor*
Joyce Baldwin-Caine/*Valerie Griffiths*
J. Barton Payne/*Philip Barton Payne*
Ralph Philip Martin/*Michael J. Wilkins*
Walter C. Kaiser, Jr./*John H. Sailhamer*
Gordon D. Fee/*Patrick H. Alexander*
Edwin M. Yamauchi/*Kenneth R. Calvert*
Peter C. Craigie/*Lyle Eslinger*
D. A. Carson/*Andreas J. Köstenberger*
Nicholas Thomas Wright/*John J. Hartmann*

The immediate question that arises involves what criteria were used to select the scholars included in the text. The editors address this issue in the preface first by giving a definition of "evangelicalism" (including a substantial bibliography), and then by indicating that they included those biblical interpreters who "have had a marked influence on the evangelical movement and considered themselves evangelical" (8). Further criteria for inclusion are that at least part of the scholar's career had to have been during the 20th century (although John Albert Broadus died in 1895 and both John Charles Ryle and

William Henry Green died in 1900) and the scholar's major interest must have been in biblical rather than systematic studies (the later could perhaps be the subject of another volume). Those writing about the evangelical biblical interpreters had (or still have) some type of relationship with the people they reviewed. For example, Lyle Eslinger was a colleague of Peter Craigie's at the University of Calgary, Canada and edited a *Festschrift* for his deceased colleague (*Ascribe to the Lord*, JSOTSup 67, 1988). Patrick H. Alexander teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where Gordon D. Fee taught before he moved to Regent College (Vancouver). Robert W. Yarbrough has translated several of Adolf Schlatter's works into English, and David Allan Hubbard has co-authored the popular *Old Testament Survey* (1982; 1996 [2nd ed.]) with William Sanford LaSor (and Frederic William Bush). Their trenchant observations have a personal flavor that is rarely found in other reference works.

Of course, there will always be questions as to why certain scholars were left out of the volume. Ronald E. Clements, Tremper Longman III, Moises Silva, Mark A. Noll, George M. Marsden, Victor P. Hamilton, are but a few that could have been included. Moreover, several of the reviewing authors could themselves have been included as Bible interpreters. There are certainly enough scholars to warrant another volume. It is also should be noted that only one woman was included for review, Joyce Baldwin-Caine (1921-1995), the peerless female British Old Testament scholar of this century and Principal of Trinity College. Despite incredible odds, both personal and cultural, she was able to produce numerous volumes that testify to her abilities as a scholar. (No one has produced more Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries other than Derek Kidner [who also was not included in the book].) Two women served as reviewers. Marion Ann Taylor (Associate Professor of Old Testament at Wycliff College, University of Toronto, Canada) reviewed William Henry Green, and Valerie Griffiths (M.A., Oxford University; Th.M., Regent College) wrote on Joyce Baldwin-Caine. Perhaps future volumes will include more chapters on the women who currently labor to interpret holy writ for the church and the academe.

The book would have been more user-friendly if the chapters on the Bible interpreters had been arranged alphabetically (or at least a secondary alphabetical table of contents had been included). In the present format it is difficult to locate individual scholars without scanning the entire table of contents. Providing the bibliographical dates of the scholars (birth and death where applicable) in the chapter headings and the table of contents would also have been helpful and would make it unnecessary to scan through the entire article simply to find such dates. (A quick review of the first ten chapters reveals that the arrangement of Bible interpreters is chronologically by birth date.) Moreover, some of the bibliographic citations are too brief. A text such as this should point the reader to additional sources for further reading not simply list books cited in the review.

Reading this text makes one think of Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders

and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" [NIV]. Although many of the Bible interpreters in this text remain little more than names to the younger generation of biblical students, surely these scholars form part of that larger cloud of witnesses that extends back into antiquity. Perhaps this text will act as a catalyst to those who follow in their path.