

PREFACE

This commentary is the result of the work of a number of individuals. Several years ago, College Press engaged the services of Dr. Beauford Bryant to write the John commentary for a new series based on the New International Version. Dr. Bryant was a well-known scholar and preacher in the Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ. He taught for many years at Milligan College and was one of the founding professors of Emmanuel School of Religion. In these roles he taught the New Testament to thousands of men and women who now have ministries all over the world.

Dr. Bryant was a remarkable man. He had one of the finest educations of any person I have ever known. He had degrees from Johnson Bible College, Phillips University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Edinburgh. He traveled to Germany to hear Rudolf Bultmann lecture. In the period after World War II he was one of the very few teaching in our colleges with an earned doctorate, a legitimate Ph.D. He had obtained this degree in Scotland at great personal sacrifice. He told me of being so cold while there that he would put on every piece of clothing he owned and crawl into bed in order to be warm enough to study. He also taught me the trick of standing up to read late into the night so that you do not fall asleep.

Dr. Bryant's career at Emmanuel was legendary. There are probably still underground editions floating around of the class notes from his famous "New Testament Introduction," a year-long course from which many of his students have borrowed in their own teaching careers (including me). The amazing collection of books he assembled for the "New Testament Seminar Library" has astounded learned visitors to Emmanuel and is a source of great pride for the institution. His chapel messages surprised those who had grown used to this gentle man with his soft Virginian accent, for his voice

would rise as he thundered home his passion for the lost and his love for his Savior.

One of the last times I saw Dr. Bryant was at a Society of Biblical Literature convention in Kansas City. I was reading a paper at this convention, and he made a special effort to attend the session. His simple pride in this modest accomplishment of his student both gave me joy and humbled me. At that meeting Dr. Bryant spoke eagerly of his last big project: this commentary on John. But alas, death took him home to be with the Lord on September 27, 1997 before he finished it.

I have attempted to complete this book in the spirit of Dr. Bryant. In some ways that is not difficult, for he probably influenced me more than any other teacher, and a great deal of him is in me. He finished through chapter 5 of John and did some work on chapter 6. I had access to transcribed sermon notes and other material from Dr. Bryant, but from chapter 6 on don't blame him for what you find; the responsibility falls on my head. I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge the influence of Dr. D.A. Carson, my Ph.D. dissertation mentor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. I have tried not to steal too much from his own marvelous commentary on John.

Credit should be given to Mrs. Dorothy Bryant, who would not give up on this project, to Dr. Bryant's son, John, and daughter, Susan, who took notes from his bedside, to Eric Thomason, who helped compile Dr. Bryant's notes, and to John Hunter of College Press, who gave important and timely editorial assistance. A final thanks to my faithful Sunday School class at Shoreline Christian Church in Seattle, who have patiently allowed me to bounce my interpretive ideas around with them for the last six months.

To God be the glory!

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