PRE-20TH CENTURY COMMENTARIES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT IN CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Selected by Dr Leslie McFall

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If you are stuck for time then consult Patrick (1727), then Gouge (1651), and then Haak (1657). These are best Old Testament commentaries from an evangelical point of view. Then comes Wall, Wells and Thaddeus. These are the six most useful of the 27 commentaries on the Old Testament listed below. I have an almost complete list (about 500 index cards [not on disc!]) of pre-20th century Old Testament Commentaries on the whole of the Old Testament (not individual books) in Cambridge University Library and the British Library. If you manage to consult each of the top six commentaries you will not find very much new outside them in other 17th, 18th and 19th century works.

Book shelf numbers are located in UL = University Library, Cambridge, England.


13.2.41 Vol. I Pt 1. Genesis—Exodus
13.2.42 Vol. I Pt 2. Leviticus—Deuteronomy
13.2.43 Vol. II Joshua—1 Kings
13.2.44 Vol. III 2 Kings—Esther
13.2.45 Vol. IV Job—Song of Solomon
13.2.46 Vol. V Isaiah—Jeremiah—Lamentations
13.2.47 Vol. VI Ezekiel—Daniel—Minor Prophets
13.2.49 Vol. II John—Acts
13.2.50 Vol. III Romans—Philemon
13.2.51 Vol. IV Hebrews—Revelation
13.2.52 Vol. I Esdras to Wisdom
13.2.53 Vol. II Ecclesiastus to Maccabees


Gouge, W., Gataker, Th., etc., Annotations upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: John Legatt, 1651. UL: 6.32.22–; and SS.5.6–. UL: 6.32.18, also Ely.a.200 and Peterborough A.5.5–; and 6.32.20– [best is the1657 edition, UL: 6.32.20–. London: Evan Tyler, 1657; Vol I Genesis—Song of Solomon; Vol 2 Isaiah—Revelation]. Very worthwhile consulting. He and Patrick are the two best pre-19th century commentaries, in my opinion. There is an excellent spirit in his manner of commenting which is not censorious. If you have not enough time then read Patrick and Gouge (and Haak) and you have the best of OT commentary exposition in the pre-critical era. If you are really stuck for time then read Patrick.


London, 1876, UL: 1.29.36–.


Mede, Joseph (b. Oct 1586, d. 1 Oct 1638 at 52 yrs; buried in Christ’s College, Cambridge, about the middle of the area on the south side, close to the Bachelors and Sophists seats.) The Works of J. Mede. Corrected and enlarged according to the author’s own manuscripts [by J. Worthington]. 2 vols in 1. London: J. Flesher for R. Royston, 1663-64. UL: G.7.27; another copy Ee 13; 4th edition UL: Peterborough M.6.3 (1677); also Cam.a.677.1 and Cam.a.677.2.

Parker, Samuel (d. 1730), Bibliotheca Biblica. Being a Commentary upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament. 5 vols. Oxford: Charles Rivington, 1720-35. This work was never completed. It covers only Genesis—Numbers. UL: 4.28.7–. Vol 1 Genesis 1:1—21:34 [UL:
4.28.7]; Vol. 2 Gen 22:1—end [UL: 4.28.8]). It is worthwhile consulting because of the use of other contemporary commentaries. He proves the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch quoting Huettius, Allix, Kidder, Jenkin, Isaac Vossius, Friedrich Spanheim, Du Pin, etc. He is good at including all the views of Church Fathers before AD 451 on each problem text.


Richardson, John (Bp of Armagh), Choice Observations and explanations upon the Old Testament . . . to which are added . . . observations . . . upon the whole Book of Genesis, perused and attested by the Rev. Bishop of Armagh and Mr Gataker. London: G. Stafford, 1655. UL: Ff.61 and Hib.4.655.1 [Front cover is detached]. He says his 1651 edition is larger (comment at Hos 1:1, p. 434). Very worthwhile consulting.

Schrivener, Frederick Henry Ambrose, An Index to the Bp of Lincoln’s commentary on the Old Testament. London, 1871, UL: 14.2.252 (1871) and 10.27.6* (1876). This is Bishop Christopher Wordsworth’s work that is indexed, see below.


Thaddaeus, Johannes, [&] Man, T., The Reconciler of the Bible enlarged: wherein above three thousand seeming contradictions throughout the Old and New Testament, are fully and plainly reconciled. London: Simon Miller, 1662. UL: Syn.4.66.12 (this is a bad UL copy. Ask for Syn.4.66.13 instead). Really a commentary on the whole Bible. Very useful work.


Wordsworth, Christopher, The Holy Bible, in the Authorized Version; with Notes and Introduction. 6 vols. London: Rivington, 1864-66, UL: 14.12.22-3rd ed. London, 1867-76, UL: 14.2.20- [6 vols. but only OT; incomplete, 3 vols only as follows: 14.2.20 Gen—Exod; 14.2.22 Chron—Ezra-Neh & Esther (1872); 14.2.25 Dan, Minor Prophets + Index]; New ed. 4 vols, London, 1879-1884 (vol. 3 missing), UL: 10.27.18- [in 12 parts, but UL has only 4 parts as follows: Gen—Exos (=vol 1, pt 1)(1879); Josh—Jud—Ruth (=vol. II, pt 1) uncut pages; Psalms (=vol VI(1884) uncut pages; and 10.127.23 Dan & Minor Prophets (=vol. VI) + Index (1883)]. Excellent work. See F. H. A. Schrivener for complete Index to Wordsworth’s Commentary.

Not in Cambridge University Library but worth consulting:

WORKS DEALING WITH APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

(I have a card index list of about 120 works dealing exclusively with apparent contradictions in the Old and New Testaments. The best five works are listed below)

If you are stuck for time, consult Manasseh Ben Israel first then Baruh.

Baruh, Raphael [He sometimes goes under the name of Henry Owen] Critica Sacra examined: or an attempt to show that a New Method may be found to reconcile the seemingly glaring variations in parallel passages of Scripture and that such variations consequently, are of no proofs of corruptions, or mistakes, of transcribers. London, 1775. UL: 1.49.61. He is good on differences between Chronicles-Samuel-Kings parallel passages. I have made out an Index for it.

Manasseh Ben Israel, The Conciliator of R. Manasseh ben Israel; a reconcilement of the apparent contradictions in Holy Scripture, to which are added explanatory notes, and biographical notices of the quoted authorities. By E. H. Lindo. London: Published by the Translator, 1842. (2 vols in 1) UL: S100.c.84.21. I have made out an Index of texts for it. It is an excellent work because it gives solutions from a good grasp of Jewish literature and Jewish exegetical tradition. This was used by Thaddaeus in his 1662 work.


Streat, William H., The Dividing of the Hoof: or, seeming-contradictions throughout Sacred Scriptures, distinguish'd, resolu'd and appl'd. London: Printed by T. H. for the author, 1654. UL: 2.34.7. I have made out an Index of Scripture texts to this work because it does not have one.

Thaddaeus, Johannes, [&] Man, T., The Reconciler of the Bible enlarged: wherein above three thousand seeming contradictions throughout the Old and New Testament, are fully and plainly reconciled. London: Simon Miller, 1662. UL: Syn.4.66.12 (This is a bad UL copy. Ask for Syn.4.66.13 instead). Really a commentary on the whole Bible. A very useful work.

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