The first time I heard of Gordon Fee, I was a student at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri in the late 1970s. I was a transfer student, completing the final three semesters of a BA degree and intent on continuing my study of the Bible in a graduate program. I asked a few CBC professors which programs they would recommend. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary was mentioned, and the name Gordon Fee came up repeatedly in conversation. What struck me as curious, however, was the hushed, almost hesitant, manner in which Gordon was mentioned. That was my first hint that Gordon was a scholar highly regarded by academics within the pentecostal tradition, yet at the same time someone who did not enjoy the full endorsement or support of everyone who identifies with the tradition.

When I eventually arrived at Gordon-Conwell in the Fall of 1980, I was assigned Gordon as my advisor, which I believe was the default allocation for all incoming students who identified themselves as charismatic or pentecostal. I remember Gordon’s lecture style as quite energetic, even forceful, and yet always stimulating. Even outside of the classroom he displayed a robust vitality and competitiveness. Although in his late forties at the time, he would regularly participate in a pickup game of basketball with students half his age. Gordon’s spirited and competitive nature pushed him to hold his own among a highly distinguished Biblical Studies faculty which included the likes of Douglas Stuart, David Scholer, and Ramsey Michaels. A cartoon that well captured...
his dynamism was drawn by a student and posted next to Gordon's office door. It depicted a caricature of Gordon in a wrestling ring sparring with an anthropomorphized Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament. The caption read, “Dr. Fee wrestling with the text.” It was hard, decades later, to see that high level of energy slowly dissipate from Gordon. On one occasion, while we were talking in an airport departure lounge at the end of an SBL conference, he confided how the aging process was presenting him with many difficult challenges, but, typical of the man, even that was expressed in a spirit of acceptance and grace.

Among my fondest memories of Gordon at Gordon-Conwell are the times he would invite his advisees and their spouses over to his home for a time of fellowship and worship. There one saw another side of Gordon. While his wife, Maudine, played the piano, he would lead us in old time pentecostal choruses often with tears streaming down his cheeks. Gordon set a model of genuine pentecostal scholarship. He was serious and meticulous in his approach to exegesis and the interpretation of Scripture and matched this with a rich and palpable spiritual commitment. He often shared the testimony of how as a young man he was motivated by a letter to the editor in Christianity Today in which the writer stated that he would rather be a fool on fire than a scholar on ice. Gordon rejected such a blatant either/or and took the remark as a personal challenge to become a scholar on fire. He accomplished this goal in his own incomparable fashion.

Gordon's work as a Bible scholar and textual critic requires little review. His book *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (coauthored with Doug Stuart) filled an important place as a valuable introduction to reading the genres of the Bible. It inspired many imitations, yet remains in print decades later, having gone into several editions. As Gordon's student, I remember him saying that the best course in exegesis is a careful reading of C.K. Barrett's commentary on 1 Corinthians. Now I recommend Gordon’s own commentary on 1 Corinthians as meeting the same exacting standard. Pentecostal readers have found his volume *God's Empowering Presence* especially helpful as an authoritative commentary on Paul’s teaching on the Holy Spirit. I remember hearing Gordon give a talk while in the process of writing that volume. With tears welling up he shared what an enriching experience it was to work on the book. Scholarship for Gordon was never as much about academic accomplishment as about serving God through careful study and exposition of the text.

Earlier I noted that Gordon was often a prophet without honor in his own denomination, the Assemblies of God, despite the fact that throughout his career he remained an ordained minister in good standing. I have never fully understood the suspicion with which he was regarded by some denominational leaders. On one occasion, when being interviewed for a New Testament posi-
tion at an AG university, I was asked by the president of the school to name some people who had significantly influenced me in my academic preparation. Among others I mentioned Gordon’s name, at which point the interview dramatically shifted from a friendly conversation to a frosty interrogation. I believe the reason my candidacy for the position was ultimately unsuccessful is that the president found my comment too troubling (thank you, Gordon!). On the positive side, shortly after that I received an offer to join the faculty of Northwest University, where I presently teach. I am proud to say that Northwest University has a Fee Hall, named in honor of Gordon’s father, Donald, and awarded Gordon an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 2010.

Gordon was greatly loved within the pentecostal academic community. A significant highlight of my own academic career was when, in my position as the liaison between the Society for Pentecostal Studies and the Society of Biblical Literature, I organized and chaired a session honoring Gordon at the annual meeting of SBL held in San Diego in November 2014. The room was packed to overflowing as family, former colleagues, and former students (including Mark Fee, Russell Spittler, Murray Dempster, Sven Soderlund, Andrew Lincoln, Rikk Watts, Marianne Thompson, and Ron Herms) shared affectionate and entertaining memories as they expressed to Gordon their admiration. Gordon inspired and influenced many people in the course of a distinguished career, some directly and even more through his writings. He did much to establish and advance pentecostal scholarship, and those like myself who work in biblical studies owe him a very great debt.