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rhetorical and he interprets the speech as a unified, coherent whole, he makes use of other exegetical approaches so that the result is a kind of "integrative" approach that surpasses previous redactional, structural, and sociological studies of this portion of John's Gospel.

Almost no recent interpreter of the Fourth Gospel has treated the discourse as a literary unit. The implications of failure to treat the discourse as a unit are significant: the discourse is said to be unintelligible in its present form, and its meaning is therefore to be sought outside the present text in any number of ways, including reconstructions of the history of composition and various layers of tradition. Segovia sees the Farewell Discourse as both an artistic and strategic whole, with a unified literary structure and unified aims or goals. The implication of this approach is that the discourse is understandable as it now exists—and this represents a considerable step forward. Segovia does not, however, completely ignore or overlook the literary difficulties in the speech as it stands, and he does ultimately see the speech as the final product of a process of growth and accretion.

This is a thorough and scholarly work. One could wish it were written in a more readable style; it is sometimes tedious and technical. Thus it is not likely to appeal to beginning students or individuals with primarily pastoral and homiletical concerns. Advanced students of the Gospel of John will find it a helpful and important addition to their libraries.

W. Hall Harris III

Colossians & Philemon. By Robert W. Wall. IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. 192 pp. \$15.99.

"The IVP New Testament Commentary Series" has two stated objectives. The first is to present traditional discussions of authorship and backgrounds for each New Testament book (p. 10). Wall, however, selectively presents traditional discussions for Colossians and Philemon. For instance, whereas Pauline authorship is clearly articulated (pp. 15–20), discussion on the place of origin for these two letters is missing. In fact Wall argues that what is "much more important is *how* Paul's prison experience shaped his understanding of the gospel" (p. 187 [italics his]). In addition Wall's discussion concerning the Colossian heresy is dubious. The issue, he says, is "the relationship between Judaism and Pauline Christianity" (p. 22). In an attempt to be brief, he has been overly simplistic.

Philemon, perhaps, serves to exemplify how Paul's prison experience shaped his previous understanding of the gospel as the gospel relates to a Christian's social status. Paul's purpose in Philemon, according to Wall, was "to redefine Philemon's relationship to Onesimus: he wants to bring the two together into a new union with both spiritual and social consequences" (p. 185), that is, to forgive Onesimus and even release him from slavery (p. 179). Although Wall does not believe that Paul promoted the reversal of social status after salvation (cf. Col. 4:1; p. 163), Wall's interpretation of Philemon might lead a reader to believe otherwise (pp. 188, 212). But Paul explicitly stated elsewhere that saints are to maintain their social status (1 Cor. 7:20). Paul hoped for Onesimus' freedom, but Wall overstates that hope.

The second objective of this IVP series is the provision of useful summaries of principal themes and contemporary applications for each New Testament book. Wall has risen to the occasion to provide good contemporary applications for Colossians, though one may question the degree to which he has applied Philemon.

On the one hand Wall is to be applauded when he writes that "Paul's point in writing to Philemon is this: *Spiritual conversion changes social relationships, making all equal in Christ*" (p. 179 [italics his]). Spiritual conversion certainly leveled out the large gap that existed in the first-century culture between Philemon and Onesimus. And today social distinctions between Christian blue and white collar workers, homeowners and apartment renters, rich and poor, and others should not blind them to the equality that exists in Christ. On the other hand Paul did not discard social structures. Although God may be "an equal-opportunity God" (p. 189), social structures are to be honored by the Spirit-minded person (1 Tim. 2:1-2; 6:1-2; Eph. 5:22-6:9; cf. 1 Pet. 2:13-19). Wall seems to impose a 20th-century American social issue of equal opportunity onto Philemon in much the same way abolitionists and Whigs of the 19th century overexaggerated Paul's teaching against slavery from Philemon. Even spiritual equal opportunity has built-in structures to be honored (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 3:1-12; 5:1-2, 17-19; Titus 2:1-10).

Although Wall's comments tend to be weak concerning the traditional and historical background discussions for Colossians and Philemon, he does furnish the reader with good summary statements and provocative applications. In fact the useful summaries of principal themes and contemporary applications reflect the uniqueness and the greatest value of this commentary series. *Colossians & Philemon* is a worthy work for pastors and Bible teachers if used with a more critical work like that of Peter T. O'Brien (*Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary [Dallas, TX: Word, 1982]).

Herbert W. Bateman IV

Colossians and Philemon. By John MacArthur Jr. The New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1992. 248 pp. \$17.99.

This commentary is another in the series by the well-known California pastor. As with other volumes, it proceeds through the text in order and mixes treatment of the book with a discussion of the theological issues the book raises. He sees the Colossian heresy as a mixture of Greek and Jewish elements. He seems unaware of approaches that connect it on the Jewish side, not with the Essenes (Lightfoot), but more directly with a type of Jewish mysticism known as Merkabah mysticism (O'Brien). This is the likely background Paul addressed. In fact O'Brien, whose commentary may be the best technical conservative commentary on these two books, is not mentioned in the bibliography. Those familiar with MacArthur will see his standard emphases in this volume (e.g., pp. 15-24 on the gospel). The exposition is competently done and the outlines are especially clear, making this a nice resource to enhance more technically oriented works on these books.

Darrell L. Bock