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CONTENTS

Enslaved to Slavery: An Application of a Sociological Method to the Complaint Motif	673
Timothy M. Pierce	
Of Muzzles and Oxen: Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:9	699
Jan L. Verbruggen	
Paul Confronts Paganism in the Church: A Case Study of First Corinthians 15:45	713
Peter Jones	
The Meaning of μορφή in Philippians 2:6-7	739
Dennis W. Jowers	
An Exegetical Basis for a Preterist-Idealist Understanding of the Book of Revelation	767
John Noë	
Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique	797
Douglas Kennard	
Cultural Pessimism in Modern Evangelical Thought: Francis Schaeffer, Carl Henry, and Charles Colson	807
James A. Patterson	
Book Reviews	821
Index of Book Reviews	889
Volume Index	891

Second, the force of Grindheim's argument against Sanders and the NP was (for me, at least) difficult to follow. He concludes, "In Paul's assessment, the Jewish confidence in the election of Israel must be reprov'd because it was incompatible with the cross of Christ . . . directed towards a visible religious status, rather than toward Christ and his cross" (p. 200). Paul's critique of Jewish confidence via cruciformity or christocentricity is purportedly radically different from what the NP holds regarding Paul's critique. However, would not many NP proponents find the heart of Paul's critique precisely in such a perceived Jewish reliance on visible markers of religious status (ἔργα νόμου) rather than on the cruciform πίστις χριστοῦ?

There is much to commend in this book, especially its argument that Paul's view of divine election revolves around the cross of Christ and is expressed in weakness and reversal of values rather than visible blessing and power. Grindheim's pointer to prophetic precursors of this view is also well taken, following the lead of K. Sandnes in *Paul, One of the Prophets?* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). Thus, divine election is radically Christocentric (echoes of Karl Barth?); Christ must be seen as the key point of discontinuity between Paul's pre- and post-conversion views. Whether this point of discontinuity is downplayed by the NP, as Grindheim claims, will probably depend on which NP proponent one queries.

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Colossians & Philemon. By Marianne Meye Thompson. Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, x + 287 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Thompson's commentary on *Colossians & Philemon* is part of the Two Horizons New Testament Commentary series that features both theological exegesis and theological reflection. Thompson's particular commentary divides into six sections. The first three are devoted to Colossians: Introduction to Colossians (pp. 1–12); Commentary on Colossians (pp. 13–109); and Theological Horizons of Colossians (pp. 111–91). The last three address Philemon: Introduction to Philemon (pp. 193–204); Commentary on Philemon (pp. 205–27); and Theological Horizons of Philemon (pp. 229–66).

As is characteristic of any introduction on Colossians, Thompson handles issues surrounding Colossians as a Pauline work (pp. 2–5); the setting of the letter in connection with Paul's circumstances (pp. 5–9); the situation at Colossae (pp. 6–9); and the theological contribution of Colossians (pp. 9–12). When addressing prefatory questions about Philemon, she treats the occasion for the letter (pp. 194–98); the purpose of the letter (pp. 198–200); authorship and canonicity (pp. 200–202); and slavery in the ancient world (pp. 202–4). Although she "rehearses briefly" the dissenting arguments against Pauline authorship for Colossians, she presents overwhelming acceptance of Paul's authorship for Philemon, beginning with but not limited to Marcion, Tertullian, Ignatius, Jerome, and others. Nevertheless, both are deemed Pauline.

She views the occasion for Colossians (and we might add Philemon because both are carried by the same person, Tychicus) to be twofold: a response to received reports about the church via Epaphras, and an opportunity to reconcile Onesimus to Philemon (Col 4:8–9, Phlm 12–13). What was the nature of these reports? Thompson's position is that "the Colossians are being influenced by Jews or, perhaps better, Jewish Christians, who advocated certain ascetic practices and ecstatic spiritual experiences in order to attain to 'higher levels' of understanding the mysteries of God" (p. 7). Subsequently, the theological contribution of Colossians to Paul's other works emerges: "The death of

Jesus brings redemption and forgiveness (1:13–14; 2:13–14), the pacification of those hostile to God (1:20–22), inclusion of all people in the family of God (1:12, 21–22; 2:11–13), and the granting of new life (2:12–13; 3:1–3)" (p. 12). In other words, Jesus is all we need. As for Philemon, and contrary to various traditions, Thompson avers that "Paul writes primarily to effect reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus, not as master and slave but as brothers in the Lord." She continues, "The key words that are to shape their relationship are not master and slave but brother, fellowship (partnership), and love (vv. 16–17)" (p. 199).

Thompson's commentaries on Colossians (pp. 13–109) and Philemon (pp. 193–204) are presented nicely in a paragraph-by-paragraph, expository-like discourse with the text. She breaks Colossians in fourteen units of thought. Her paragraph divisions for the salutation (1:1–2, 3–8, 9–14); the hymn (1:15–20, 21–23); and the pattern for living (2:16–23, 3:1–4, 5–11, 12–17, 18–4:1, 2–6, 7–18) are similar to those of Peter T. O'Brien (*Colossians, Philemon* [WBC; Waco: Word, 1982]); R. McL. Wilson (*Colossians and Philemon* [ICC; London: T & T Clark International, 2005]); Margaret Y. MacDonald (*Colossians and Ephesians* [SacPag; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000]); and James D. G. Dunn (*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996]). Thompson's differences are Col 1:21–29; 2:1–7; and 2:8–15. Likewise, her paragraph divisions for Philemon nearly always agree with others. Whereas O'Brien, Wilson, and Dunn divide the text into four units: Phlm 1–3, 4–7, 8–20, and 21–25 (MacDonald does not address Philemon), Thompson's four paragraph divisions differ only at Phlm 8–16 and 17–25. Nevertheless, most of her paragraph divisions parallel a cross-section of exegetical works.

Common to both the Colossians and Philemon commentary is her approach to the text and subsequent engagement with the text. Each paragraph unit begins with a translation followed by a discussion that addresses key phrases and their theological contribution to the book. Special attention is given to key words, which involve a discussion of the term and a translation. She presents in parenthesis the Greek word and its transliteration. She also interacts succinctly with Jewish and Greco-Roman material of the period, pre- and post-Nicene church fathers, and a variety of recent and not-so-recent commentators. Furthermore, she is deliberately theological, as expected, due to the intent of the series.

While canvassing the theological horizons for Colossians, Thompson begins with a theology of Colossians (pp. 111–31); moves to a continuity/discontinuity survey of Colossians with Paul's broader theology (pp. 131–54); and ends with a constructive theology for the book (pp. 155–191). Philemon's theological horizons, however, are limited to a theology of Philemon in the context of biblical theology (pp. 229–46) and a presentation of how Philemon was misconstrued by nineteenth-century American interpreters, although this section also concludes with a constructive theology for the book (pp. 246–66).

Although much could be said about Thompson's theological horizons, I will limit my comments to two. To begin with, Thompson rightly identifies the central theological theme in Colossians as Christ (p. 113). Although she admits, "Colossians *seems* to introduce no topic not carved or developed more fully in other letters" (p. 143, italics mine), she recognizes a distinctive contribution to Paul's other works: the letter's meta-narrative. By this she means it "claims or seeks to give an account of reality that is unified and universal: by explaining all, it can be owned by all" (p. 155). Thus she muses, "Colossians proposes a metanarrative that begins with God's creation of a good world; identifies the situation of the inhabitants of the world in terms of captivity, darkness, and sin; claims that in Christ, in his identification with humankind, and in his death on a cross God has provided for the world's deliverance and healing; and anticipates the renewal of the world, which will bring all creation to its consummation" (p. 163).

Next, she rejects any form of dualism in the book of Philemon that might suggest a separation of the "spiritual" from the "social" or any sort of move that might suggest the church is only a "spiritual reality" separated from the world. "Rather," she says, "the church embodies God's vision of *the new humanity*, part of God's purpose to bring peace, wholeness, and harmony, in the form of restored relationships with nature, other humans, and God" (p. 254; italics mine).

Thompson is to be applauded for her expositional and theological presentation. She covers in a direct and succinct manner background, exegetical, and theological issues that typically arise when studying Colossians and Philemon, while at the same time stirring up a fresh cauldron of spell-binding theological thoughts for today's readers. The well-written and easy-to-read presentation will be attractive for a broad audience. Unfortunately, Thompson fails to interact with William J. Webb's work on *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001). After her discussion of the hermeneutical approaches in the nineteenth century, a brief comment on Webb's work and a signaling of where she agreed (or disagreed) would have been helpful. Nevertheless, this commentary is an excellent work and well suited for students, pastors, and other Christian leaders.

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The Revelation of John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse. By Stephen S. Smalley. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005, xvii + 633 pp., \$52.00.

Why another book on Revelation and its symbolic world? In light of the numerous recent works on the Apocalypse, the casual reader may think that every possible angle has already been examined with regard to the last book of the NT. While it is true that there is a literal storehouse of materials in existence dealing with Revelation, the fact remains that the Apocalypse is an amazing book whose notoriety arises from an almost chaotic diversity of interpretations. Into this cacophony of voices Stephen Smalley offers a balanced treatment of Revelation as a cosmic drama. Smalley's treatment enlarges on his earlier introduction to the Apocalypse (*Thunder and Love* [Milton Keynes: Word, 1994]) and interacts with the works of other scholars from G. B. Caird through G. Beale. In fact, these works (and others) are constantly referenced throughout this new effort to explain the book of Revelation.

Smalley introduces his discussion with a brief twenty-two page treatment of his views on the origin, date, situation, character, and structure of Revelation. The introduction offers an explanation of the approach used in this new commentary, which involves a synchronic method in which the Apocalypse is treated as a unified narrative with special emphasis on its dramatic nature. The reader also finds here a view for the date of Revelation; the work came from the hand of John the beloved disciple sometime between AD 64 and 70. In fact, this commentary presents the Apocalypse as the first work of the disciple, followed by his writing (or influence on) the Epistles and the Gospel of John.

After this interesting introduction, the bulk of the work discusses Revelation as two "acts" comprising seven "scenes" sandwiched between a prologue (Rev 1:1-18) and an epilogue (Rev 22:18-21). Act 1 ("Creation, and Salvation through Judgment") comprises Rev 1:19-11:19, while Act 2 ("Salvation through Judgment, and New Creation") encompasses Rev 12:1-22:17. Simply stated, each "Act" contains several "scenes" and intervals (e.g. Act 1 contains the first three scenes and three intervals of the apocalyptic drama). There are few surprises in Smalley's discussion of structure of the book, but the in-