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impressive than the differences (p. 238). In chapter 11, Chiao Ek Ho argues that the Pastorals share the same missionary outlook and posture as Paul's other major epistles (p. 264). Finally, chapter 12 features a snapshot of the Pastorals in recent study. I. Howard Marshall masterfully surveys recent study on the Pastorals culled from his many articles and book reviews published elsewhere on the topic.

This volume has much to commend it. First, it excels as "one-stop shopping" on the interpretation of the Pastoral Epistles, which will benefit researchers, instructors, and students alike. For example, exegesis classes on the Pastorals often utilize a commentary as a required textbook for detailed discussions of exegetical and syntactical issues. Few students, however, walk away from an exegesis class with an up-to-date awareness of the state of scholarship. This book would serve as a superb supplementary textbook for use as a book review or a concise introduction to various topics. Second, the essays have a logical flow that enhances the effectiveness of the individual essays. For example, chapter 10 on ethics talks about the indicative preceding the imperative. By this point in the book, the indicative structure of who God is and what he has done in Christ (chaps. 5–7) has prepared the reader to grasp the indicative/imperative structure of ethics (chap. 10). Third, the editors have done an excellent job in assigning these chapters. Most of the contributors have written a dissertation on these topics (mostly at the University of Aberdeen) or have published on the Pastorals. They model sustained evangelical engagement with the work of critical scholarship without compromising evangelical convictions.

One should also briefly mention a couple of weaknesses. First, books of essays by different authors often suffer from imbalance in terms of the quality of the individual essays. This book is no different. Some chapters sparkle while others have solid information but fail to arrest the attention of the reader. Second, some repetition exists throughout the essays on issues such as authorship. One could argue, however, that authenticity needs repeated affirmation in light of the "critical consensus" that the letters are not authentic letters of Paul.

These weaknesses are somewhat minor (and somewhat expected in an edited volume) and did not dampen my overall enthusiasm for this book. Evangelical scholarship should shine with a rigorous quality that makes it extremely difficult to dismiss if given an honest and fair hearing. Liberal scholarship frequently dismisses evangelical scholarship without a fair hearing, but that does not mean that we should follow suit.

The collective labors of critical scholarship have cast a large shadow over the Pastoral Epistles. The result is that a large question mark hovers over these letters and their canonical value. The chapters in this book read like a breath of fresh air, because they continually assert the ongoing relevance and value of the Pastoral Epistles. This volume seeks to remove the muzzle from the mouth of the Pastorals so that the church will once again hear and obey the "sound words" (2 Tim 1:13) they speak.

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The Letter to the Hebrews. By Peter T. O'Brien. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxxiii + 596 pp., \$50.00.

As a two-time contributor to the Pillar commentary series, first on *The Letter to the Ephesians* (1999) and now on *The Letter to the Hebrews* (2010), O'Brien has once again achieved the editor's goal for the series: "The writers of this series," according to D. A. Carson, "aim for an evenhanded openness to the text that is the best kind of 'objectiv-

ity' of all" (p. xi). O'Brien interacts evenhandedly with important issues without, as Carson desires, "getting mired in undue technical detail." After the prefaces from the editor and author, a list of abbreviations, and select bibliography (xi–xxxiii), O'Brien's commentary divides into two parts: an introduction (pp. 1–43) and the commentary proper (pp. 44–541), with subject, author, Scripture, and extrabiblical indexes closing out the volume (pp. 542–96).

Within forty-three pages, O'Brien tackles the typical introductory issues for Hebrews: authorship and canonicity (pp. 2–8), the situation of the recipients (pp. 9–13), destination (pp. 14–15), date (pp. 15–20), genre (pp. 20–22), structure (pp. 22–34), purpose (pp. 35–36), the first-century world (pp. 36–40), and Christian origins (pp. 40–43). With one exception, O'Brien's conclusions are in concord with most recently published evangelical commentaries concerning date, authorship, genre, destination, and situation. Thus, O'Brien believes that sometime between AD 60 and 70 an unknown author (most commentators today argue for Apollos) wrote this sermonic letter to a group of Jewish Christians in Rome "in danger of returning to a 'reliance on the cultic structures of the old covenant'" (p. 13).

Of some significance, O'Brien rejects Ernst Käsemann's proposal in *The Wandering People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) that suggests the conceptual background of Hebrews was pre-Christian Gnosticism. More importantly, however, he rejects the lingering idea that Hebrews should be read against the background of Philo, Alexandria, and Platonism. This view was initially argued quite definitively by Spicq in *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1952–53)—a view Spicq himself later rejected once the Dead Sea Scrolls were published (see "L'Épître aux Hébreux: Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumran," *Revue de Qumran* [1959])—and yet a view Luke Timothy Johnson has again recently expressed in *Hebrews: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006). "Philo chose to develop certain themes Platonically," argues O'Brien, "while the author of Hebrews, influenced by Jewish apocalyptic (deriving from the OT) and primitive Christian tradition, chose to develop them eschatologically" (p. 37). Nevertheless, O'Brien is sensitive to the current debate concerning both the presence and function of apocalyptic elements in Hebrews, while taking into account the numerous elements of Greco-Roman language and rhetoric and interpretation of OT in Greek.

With minor variations, O'Brien follows George H. Guthrie's text-linguistic structure or discourse analysis (*The Structure of Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998]) and thereby divides the Book of Hebrews into nine sections: God's final word to us in his Son, 1:1–4 (pp. 44–63); the position of the Son in relation to that of angels, 1:5–2:18 (pp. 63–124); fix your attention on Jesus—a warning against unbelief—a promise of entering God's rest, 3:1–4:13 (pp. 125–79); since we have a great high priest, let us hold fast and draw near, 4:14–16 (pp. 179–86); the Son's appointment as unique high priest, 5:1–7:28 (pp. 187–285); the superior offering of the appointed high priest, 8:1–10:18 (pp. 286–360); since we have access to God through Christ's sacrifice, let us draw near and hold fast, 10:19–25 (pp. 360–71); a call to perseverance and faith, 10:26–12:29 (pp. 371–501); and concluding exhortations, final prayers, and greetings, 13:1–25 (pp. 502–41). In this sense, O'Brien differs little with William L. Lane (*Hebrews 1–8 and Hebrews 9–13* [WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991]). Nevertheless, O'Brien underscores two summary statements in Heb 4:14–16 ("since we have a great high priest, let us hold fast and draw near") and 10:19–25 ("since we have access to God through Christ's sacrifice, let us draw near and hold fast"). It is self-evident throughout his commentary that O'Brien considers these two statements to be major turning points in the book and that Heb 5:1–10:18 is "the main theological exposition" of the book (p. 34).

Of particular import, however, is O'Brien's handling of the warning passages in Hebrews. For O'Brien, there are five warning passages: "Warning: Do Not Reject the

Word Spoken through God's Son" (2:1-4); "Warning: Avoid Israel's Example of Unbelief" (3:7-19); "Warning and Encouragement: The Peril of Apostasy" (5:11-6:12); "A Warning against Apostasy and a Summons to Perseverance" (10:26-39); and "A Final Warning: Do not Reject the One Who Speaks" (12:25-29). Of these five warnings, the latter four are clearly concerned, according to O'Brien, with "apostasy" (pp. 146-47, 224-25, 373-82, 492-94). Yet, how does O'Brien understand the outcome of "apostasy" in comparison to others? Whereas David Allen proposes Luke warns against "apostasy" that ends in the loss of reward (*Hebrews* [NAC; Nashville: B & H, 2010]) and Gareth L. Cockerill suggests the unknown author warns against "apostasy" that ends in losing one's salvation (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming]), O'Brien supports the idea that "apostasy" means the readers never understood nor possessed the salvific message. To proceed in returning to Judaism, to turn away from the gospel message, or to abandon the Christian community is to assign to them, avers O'Brien, "a redemptive effectiveness that they never possessed and simultaneously to depreciate the exclusive significance of Christ's sacrifice" (p. 13). Thus for O'Brien, the author "hammers home repeatedly the importance of faithful endurance in order to reach the eternal rest in the heavenly city" (p. 35).

It would be inappropriate to stress the brevity of O'Brien's handling of any one of the multitude of issues that plague the Book of Hebrews. To the contrary, O'Brien majors on the majors in a manner that keeps a contemporary reader focused to the task at hand: What does the author of Hebrews say (as O'Brien understands the text)? Regrettably, the commentary just ends at Heb 13:25. An artfully crafted précis for this ancient sermon would have made for a nearly perfect commentary. Instead there is no closure to the commentary. Yet, my above-mentioned regret may have been beyond O'Brien's control.

Despite the fact that O'Brien follows Guthrie's text-linguistic structure with nine divisions, the editor of the series presents O'Brien's commentary by the Book of Hebrews' thirteen chapters, which both disrupts and often times detracts from O'Brien's literary analysis. For instance, "Hebrews 1" (pp. 44-80) and "Hebrews 2" (pp. 81-124) stand as individual chapters for the commentary. Yet according to O'Brien's literary analysis a reader might expect a chapter entitled "God's Final Word to Us in His Son (Heb 1:1-4)" with a chapter break and then the start of a new chapter entitled "The Position of the Son in Relation to that of Angels (Heb 1:5-2:18)." Rather than interact with the Book of Hebrews rhetorically according to O'Brien's literary divisions, readers do so according to the book's thirteen chapters. The reader would have been better served had O'Brien's literary divisions been pursued.

Nevertheless, O'Brien's presentation is exceptional. All Greek and overly critical discussions are reserved for footnotes, and thereby the presentation provides for an enjoyable read that is uninterrupted by technical discussion. Of all the critical commentaries I have read on the Book of Hebrews, O'Brien's is well thought out, well written, and without question preeminent.

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I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary. By Lewis R. Donelson. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010, xxiii + 301 pp., \$39.95.

Lewis R. Donelson's commentary on the Petrine Epistles and Jude makes a useful study companion through the complexities of these short but important epistles