

*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon.* By Dennis Hamm, S.J. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. Pp. 254. \$19.99.

In this commentary designed for the theologically inclined general reader, Hamm provides an engaging synopsis of some of the major theological and pastoral themes found in three of the so-called captivity letters of Paul: Philemon, Philippians, and the contested Colossians. Guided by the renewed emphasis on Scripture inspired by the vision of Vatican II, H. effectively links contemporary applications of the scriptural text to the original ancient situations to which Paul addressed himself. Indeed, a genuine strength of this study resides in the accessible manner in which H. balances his historical-critical and literary observations with his remarks on the contemporary relevance of these texts.

The most important contribution of the commentary is the emphasis placed on Paul as a shaper of communal identity in a countercultural mode. This emphasis is particularly evident in H.'s evaluation of Philemon and Philippians. H. begins his reflections on Philemon by echoing the scholarly consensus that Onesimus was not a runaway, but instead a slave who intentionally sought Paul out as a patron to mediate an otherwise unknown dispute that Onesimus had with his Christian master. H. helpfully demonstrates Paul's subtle use of familial language in an attempt to transform the relational paradigm that governs Philemon's customary way of viewing his slave. By depicting Onesimus as his "child" and "heart," Paul implicitly challenges Philemon to regard Onesimus through a new fraternal lens born of the transformation of identity that has occurred as a result of their common baptism into Christ. I especially appreciated H.'s emphasis on the possible sacrificial aspect of Paul's summons to Philemon. Much as Paul models his own ministry on the self-emptying life of Jesus exemplified in the Christ hymn of Philippians, Paul invites Philemon likewise to willingly renounce his slave-holding privilege for the sake of the new narrative of Christian existence that he and Onesimus now share as brothers in Christ.

In his treatment of Philippians, H. continues to probe the countercultural angle of Paul's task of communal pastoral formation. H. weds to this emphasis, however, some important observations on the potential anti-imperial themes that characterize a letter composed for a marginalized community resident in a major Roman colony. H. correctly underscores Paul's overriding pastoral intention—on display most pointedly in the Christ hymn—to transform the Philippian Christians' inherited ethic of what counts as honorable behavior. H. persuasively argues that the transformation Paul has in mind implies nothing less than an overturning of traditional Roman competitive values. Pivotal in this regard is the exaltation of Jesus that functions to confirm for the community that true honor derives from selfless service to others, not competitive victory over others. That said, I thought this section could have been stronger on two counts. First, while H. helpfully points to important intertextual echoes in the hymn to passages from Isaiah 45 and 52, he does not directly probe the implicit critique of Roman imperial propaganda evident in the hymn's conclusion where Christ is definitively addressed as "Lord." I found this omission surprising, given that H. effectively highlights other instances in the letter where Paul inverts traditional civic terminology.

Second, I wonder whether H. too quickly dismisses the relevance of the possible conceptual background of Adam's reflection in the hymn in preference to the more traditional theory that posits the conceptual background of preexistence as informing the hymn. The latter obviously assumes the essential divine status of Christ, one that H. tends to privilege toward the conclusion of his discussion of the hymn. The former, however, emphasizes the earthly obedience of Jesus, an obedience that arguably better complements Paul's evident pastoral intention in Philippians.

H.'s focus on the pastoral program of Paul continues in his treatment of Colossians, which H. views as a letter likely authorized, but not directly composed, by Paul. With this appraisal H. aligns himself with an increasing number of contemporary scholars who argue that the question of the authorship of the contested letters is best approached on the assumption of a spectrum of authorship. The main strength of this section of the commentary rests in H.'s focus on the important theme of ethical transformation in the pastoral program of Colossians. In particular, H. shows that Paul's emphasis in the early chapters of Colossians on the full sufficiency of Christ functions primarily as the basis for Paul's later exhortation to the Colossian Christians to live morally renewed lives in fulfillment of their baptismal identity.

In my judgment, H.'s study should prove especially useful not only as a solid exegetical assessment of these particular captivity letters of Paul, but also as an accessible introduction to Paul's vocation as a shaper of early Christian communal identity in conformity to the countercultural narrative of Christ-like existence.

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*An Ancient Commentary on the Book of Revelation: A Critical Edition of the Scholia in Apocalypsin.* Translated and edited by Panagiotēs Tzamalikos. New York: Cambridge University, 2013. Pp. xix + 464. \$200.

The *Scholia in Apocalypsin*, attributed to Origen by Adolf van Harnack, is no pure text. One does not have to search far or wide through its contents to find material at odds with aspects of Origen's thought. But commensurability of doctrinal content is only part of the problem. Scholars have long questioned whether Origen ever produced a "Commentary" on Revelation in the first place. Nevertheless, more than a little material in the *Scholia* rings true to the ear tuned to Origen's authentic *oeuvre*. This text has for a long time called for critical reassessment: what of it can be traced reliably to Origen, what is owed to later emendations, and does it contain Origenian material in the authorial sense at all?

Tzamalikos's volume purports to provide just what Origen scholars have long hoped to know. In order to assess the extent to which T. has given us what the title claims—a "critical edition" of the *Scholia*—it does not take long for a scholar to realize that an attentive reader must do more than absorb the volume's extensive introduction, which discusses the history of the text of the Apocalypse and its fate in Alexandrian