

Peter T. O'Brien,
The Letter to the Ephesians
(Grand Rapids/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co./
Leicester, England: Apollos,
1999), xxxiv+536 pages.

A fact of great encouragement in recent days has been the renewed interest among Evangelicals in producing substantial commentaries on the various books of the Old and New Testaments. The Pillar New Testament Commentary series, under the direction of D.A. Carson, is among the best of these current series. And this volume by a renowned Australian Evangelical is a superb addition to this series.

O'Brien takes a conservative position with regard to the authorship of this letter, which he notes was John Calvin's favourite among the Pauline corpus. His argument for it being a genuinely Pauline letter is solid, utterly convincing, and argued at some length (4-47). The commentary that follows is extensive and based on the Greek text, though the NIV is used throughout as the preferred translation.

What is most heartening is that O'Brien is prepared to indicate how the text impinges on present issues. For example, commenting on the household table that relates to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:22-33, he rightly remarks: "theologically, we are not free to retain a supposedly exalted view of Christian marriage with its loving service, commitment, trust, and growth, on the one hand, and to jettison hierarchical patterns of submission or subordination, on the other, because they are expressions of an outmoded first-century world-view that are unacceptable in our contemporary situation" (408).

In sum, this is an excellent commentary all round that is faithful to the biblical text and that applies it judiciously to our world. Highly recommended.

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