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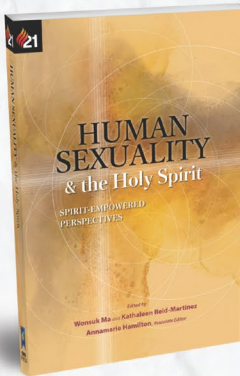
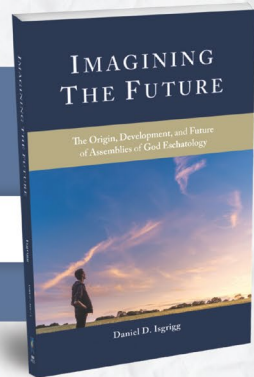
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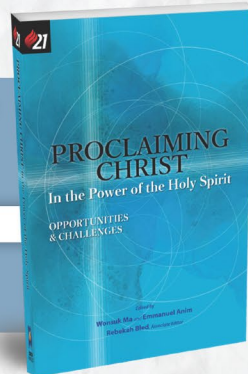
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Quoting Corinthians. By Edward Watson and Martin Culy. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018. 171 pp.

We notice quotation marks everywhere in the English language. When a person speaks, we place quotation marks around the words. This action in our writing is a way to be exact. Though many people believe that the Koine Greek of the New Testament is precise, our modern view of meticulous punctuation is lost because the ancient languages did not assign quotation marks in the documents. So as scholars began to notice what they considered to be slogans in the Corinthian letters, a study of their purpose commenced.

Edward Watson and Martin Culy collaborate in *Quoting Corinthians*, identifying eleven slogans that the apostle Paul utilizes with the Corinthian assembly to address the church's issues. Biblical scholars agree that Paul directly answers specific questions presented by insiders from the church, and thus, he attempts to answer their concerns in his first canonical letter to Corinth. A conversation transpires in the Corinthian correspondence, but we only hear one side.

The volume opens in chapter 2 with a description of the historical situation. First Corinthians contains well-known maxims called slogans. Paul's opponents coined a handful of these slogans. Commentators have studied the slogans, especially those attributed to Paul's rivals in the Corinthian assembly. Watson and Culy write that "there is a significant scholarly consensus regarding the existence of the Corinthians' slogans in Paul's letter, but widespread agreement on where quotations occur and where possible quotes begin and end is still lacking" (38). Indeed, an observant scholar assumes from reading the letter that the apostle's relationship with the church was both a labor of love yet filled with conflict.

After founding the congregation, Paul moved from Corinth (Acts 18:18). Parishioners kept him up to date on the status of the church, commenting on the factions (1 Cor 1), sexual issues (1 Cor 6), and inquiries about the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11). Amid the questions brought to his attention, the apostle engages with their problems, utilizing the Corinthians' dictums and sayings. Paul, a master of the rhetorical method of ancient Hellenistic society, countered many of their ideas with their own words in subtle and not so subtle ways.

Watson and Culy mention in chapter 3 the practice of Paul's diatribe as "the rhetoric of refutation in which the author addresses real or anticipated false positions and corrects them" (27). This method of diatribe assisted their investigation in discovering where the apostle

quoted the Corinthians. Additionally, Paul references Old Testament scripture and a Greek comic poet, Menandes (fourth century BCE), “Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Cor 15:33). In this fashion, 1 Corinthians contains numerous quotations, both from the people and other sources (though he did not cite the sources of his quotations).

In chapter 5, titled “Reconstructing Corinthian Slogans and Quotations,” the authors offer a helpful twelve-step program. This process identified quotations in the New Testament and assisted with the work in 1 Corinthians. These twelve steps involve the hermeneutical principles of context, grammar, rhetoric, and prior scholarly study. Furthermore, the authors employ “a representative sample of the ten English translations and fifteen commentators for each passage” (42–43). With this methodology in mind, they discovered slogans in these eleven passages (1 Cor 1:12; 6:12, 13–14, 18; 7:1; 8:1, 4, 8; 10:23; 14:21–25, 33b–35).

Chapters 6–10 unpack the specific topics of sexuality, community, speaking in tongues, and women in the church. Each chapter engages with these topics using the twelve-step hermeneutical process. Each chapter concludes with the theological ramifications of that specific scriptural text. Consequently, Paul takes the Corinthian slogans and states his own position. The apostle’s work was a marvelous method to refute the errors in the Corinthians’ thoughts.

Chapter 4, “Quotations in Greek Grammar and in Paul’s Letters,” is a valuable resource for locating the slogans. Yet, one question the authors did not answer was the role of Bible translations. For example, the NIV and NLT show a slogan by employing quotation marks and including the phrase “you say.” This phrase is not in the Greek text. The ESV and NRSV include quotation marks but do not have “you say.” Other translations vary with their use of quotation marks and the inclusion of a “you say” phrase to clarify the text. I am not arguing against the book’s premise or the scholarly interpretation of what happened in Corinth. Instead, my question is: how does one discern a quotation from a literal translation as compared to a dynamic equivalence translation or paraphrase? From my perspective, I would find the preciseness of a quotation hard to judge in a dynamic equivalence or paraphrase version. As a result, in unearthing slogans, one becomes subjective about what is or is not a slogan. Placing English grammar on the Greek text creates personal decisions that can be interpreted differently in our current theological environment.

In conclusion, I believe that *Quoting Corinthians* is a useful resource for study of 1 Corinthians for scholars, students, and ministers

as we interpret these intriguing sections of holy writ. Watson and Culy reveal how Paul engaged with the Corinthian believers and the slogans of the world of their day to correct their theological ideas and spread the message of the cross (1 Cor 1:18) in their Greco-Roman world.

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