

*Daniel (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)*. By Paul R. House. Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2018. 208 pp. Softcover \$19.00.

In general, Paul House, a well-respected evangelical scholar and former president of the Evangelical Theological Society, has produced a helpful resource for pastors and scholars with his commentary on Daniel. The work shows the same helpful characteristics of other works in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series.

The commentary reflects several strengths worth noting. First, House's work lies clearly in the conservative evangelical camp with a high view of Scripture. For example, the fact that Daniel is historically accurate is clearly stated (26). Furthermore, in the discussion on authorship, date, and setting, the author reflects a rejection of the common tendency to date the book in the Maccabean Period (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) due to a naturalistic worldview:

... predictive prophecy is a real phenomenon;...predictive prophecy should not be discounted as automatically arising after the fact.... While predictive prophecy will always require faith open to reason, this does not mean that a naturalistic worldview that denies it is possible deserves full acceptance (26).

These solid statements form the backbone of the strength of the commentary.

A second positive trait of House's work is its readability. Daniel is not the easiest book to read and understand among the prophets. The writing style of House's text allows the reader to enter the discussions with ease rather than consternation. This does not mean there are no difficult areas where rereading must be done. It also does not mean that House oversimplifies. His work is simply accessible for more than other scholars—for pastors, students, and laypeople.

A balanced approach to genre provides a third strength for the work. Many scholars hold that Daniel is the fountain for apocalyptic literature that became prevalent during the Second Temple Period. Unfortunately, overdose on apocalyptic genre in reading some biblical texts is widespread with associated interpretive problems. One finds, however, no exaggeration in House's analysis: "The book's contexts should therefore not be judged negatively by

someone starting with a definition of the whole apocalyptic genre which they then impose on Daniel's contents" (26). In short, apocalyptic elements can be observed in Daniel's text without dismantling its narrative framework or reducing other non-apocalyptic features. In addition to these observations, House correctly understands that the message of Daniel reveals details about God's will both near and far:

... apocalyptic literature takes special interest in the future. In this sense it emphasizes eschatology, the study of the end of time. It also emphasizes how people, especially suffering people, live now, and how God dispenses justice in this world prior to the day of final justice. Therefore, people always struggle to balance ethics now and judgment then. (36)

In this way, House avoids the pitfall of believing that end-time teaching somehow has no relevance for living today.

Despite such praiseworthy aspects of House's commentary (and more could be given), there are areas where questions can be raised. First, the absence of serious discussion of calendar issues is problematic. There is no robust exploration of whether chronology (e.g., for the 70 sevens prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27) is based upon the general solar calendar or the modified lunar calendar common to Israel. Such choices affect how one views the beginning and end points of the various calendar calculations. House's approach may be one of disinterest stemming from a belief that all the numbers represent a symbolic and indefinite period of time:

Since seven and ten are symbols of full and complete amounts in the Bible, multiplying them together and multiplying by seventy simply means a very long and complete time.... One cannot match this exact number of years to specific amounts of time and particular events, as the numerous failed attempts to do so throughout history have shown.... (157)

In dealing with the calendar issues in this way, House is somewhat dismissive of some of the credible work that has been done in chronology by serious scholars such as Hoehner (*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977], 115-

39); Walvoord (*Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* [Chicago: Moody, 1971]; and Miller (*Daniel*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994]). House sparingly alludes to Miller's work and provides a few other solid premillennial works in his bibliography (Walt Kaiser, Gleason Archer) but appears to avoid serious interaction with dispensationalists like Hoehner, Walvoord, and McClain.

House also omits any discussion of potential chiasmic structure in *Daniel*. While acknowledging (as all scholars do) a somewhat limited analogy between the kingdoms of the statue in chapter 2 and the beasts of chapter 7 (132), there is no hint of a possible larger structure which also provides the parallel of chapter 3 (fiery furnace) and chapter 6 (lion's den) and the corresponding of chapter 4 (the first great Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar brought low) and chapter 5 (the last Babylonian king Belshazzar brought low). Such a structure actually enhances the theme of the kingdoms of the world brought low while the kingdom of God rises, something House does not miss even though he does not present the structure. Here he misses the opportunity to strengthen the message.

In addition, some organizational issues bear scrutiny. The terse table of contents is almost unnecessary. Moreover, the absence of an index of any kind does not help the student who is working through cross references. Of course, such evaluation is not necessarily aimed at House. Such decisions are often made by editors and publishers. Finally, it is somewhat puzzling why the section on authorship, date, and setting is only one of many sections discussed under literary elements. The significance of the debates about authorship and date may suggest that this area needs be emphasized in the outline some more.

The dispensational interpreter will also sense some tensions in the content as he reads House's commentary. The future of national Israel is not as clearly spelled out as much as dispensationalists prefer, especially in light of the promises of the seventy sevens being for Daniel's people (Dan. 9:24). Moreover, in the analogy of the four kingdoms of chapters two and seven, the idea of four kingdoms in both is the key point for House. He views the listing of the four as a "periodization device one can adapt to continuing history." Beyond that, he holds that the four kingdoms of chapter 7 are not the same as those in chapter 2, opting to see differentiated details forcing the

distinction rather than seeing a more complete analogy from different perspectives (132-33). Finally, in perhaps the most confusing section of his commentary, House mentions modern scholarship's view of the four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece in contrast to the traditional interpretation that the fourth kingdom is Rome. He seems to opt for neither: "Daniel 2 and 7 do not identify four nations, in contrast to chapter 8" (132). This counters the customary dispensational position that the third world empire is Greece and the fourth is Rome. This would mean that the little horn of chapter 7 (fourth world empire) is not the same as the little horn of chapter 8 (third world empire). The dispensationalist notes this and sees a divinely intended analogy between the little horn in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Antiochus Epiphanes) from chapter 8 and the future antichrist figure or little horn in chapter 7. Theologically, the significance can be seen in the way that later writers in the canon use the description of the little horn from Daniel 7 to describe such a futuristic personage (Paul in 2 Thess 2; John in Rev 13, 17-18).

The negative portions of this evaluation should not be taken to devalue the fine work that House has provided. As iron sharpens iron, his work will help interpreters of different persuasions to double check their own understandings and think through the textual basis for their own interpretations. In the end, this commentary on Daniel is worth having on the shelf.

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***A Reader's Guide to the Bible.*** By John Goldingay. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 192 pp. Paperback \$20.00.

John Goldingay's *A Reader's Guide to the Bible* (hereafter *Reader's Guide*) introduces readers of the Bible to its story and teachings through a book-by-book overview of the Protestant canon. Although Goldingay never overtly limits his audience to the uninitiated, the occasional detail, like the reminder that Moses' story does not appear in Genesis (37), indicates his primary audience: the new reader of Scripture.

To guide this audience through Scripture's unfamiliar terrain, Goldingay reorganizes the biblical books using the roughly literary categories of God's story, God's word, and Israel's response. Overall, Goldingay's reorganization helps to maintain a fluidity for new readers by grouping those books concerned with the Bible's storyline separately from those with a more directly didactic style. God's story (chapters 3–7), then, focuses on the narrative storyline from Genesis's creation account to the record of the early church in the book of Acts. After laying out this storyline, Goldingay introduces the reader to what he calls "the word of God to his people" (chapters 8–12), those portions of Scripture that might broadly be described as more overtly didactic (e.g. the Law, wisdom, prophets, and epistles). The final segment of the overview of the biblical books, entitled "Israel's Response to God," includes Psalms and Lamentations (chapter 13) as well as Ecclesiastes and Job (chapter 14). *Reader's Guide* then concludes with an epilogue entitled "The Bible Today," guiding here-and-now readers to consider the abiding relevance of the then-and-there Bible to which they have now been introduced.

Those authors attempting to write works like Goldingay's *Reader's Guide* put themselves in the sobering position of coloring the way new readers look at the Bible. At times, Goldingay's work prods new readers toward a healthy approach to the Bible and its contents; unfortunately, however, at times, it does not.

Goldingay promotes a healthy view of the Bible by encouraging openness and by repeatedly demonstrating that the Bible contains real messages for real people. In his introduction, Goldingay invites readers to their best chance of understanding the Bible's message by encouraging open-mindedness in their reading. "You don't have to believe in God to understand the Bible," Goldingay writes, but "you do have to be sympathetic to the way it talks about God and about the world as his world" (3). This gentle prodding toward openness encourages new readers to begin their exploration with a healthy attitude unimpeded by bias or hindering presuppositions.

Not only does *Reader's Guide* encourage openness to the Bible's message, but it also promotes a healthy reading by encouraging the reader to look beyond content to the purpose of the biblical books. Goldingay's guide consistently moves beyond the question of "What?" to consider the question of "Why?" Goldingay writes, "[The biblical authors] are concerned to communicate, to make the story

interesting, to make it intelligible for the sake of later readers, and to show them how it is significant for them” (34). This emphasis on significance becomes a hallmark of the volume’s approach to introducing new readers to the Bible. Ruth, then, tells more than just a delightful love story: it demonstrates an openness to the non-Jew who commits to the God of Israel (68). Jonah does not simply recount the prophet’s flight from God: his story points to the gap that sometimes exists between God’s view and his people’s view of those who don’t know him (68–69). Esther does not tell just the story of Israel’s escape from Haman’s hateful plot: it demonstrates God’s providential working in man’s affairs (69). And Daniel does not just relate the harrowing experiences of the captive Jews: the book encourages faithfulness and demonstrates God’s knowledge of the flow of world events (70). In every book, Goldingay promotes this healthy approach of emphasis on the significance of each book, an emphasis that builds a strong foundation for his final appeal in the epilogue to the Bible’s abiding significance for its modern audience.

Although *Reader’s Guide* promotes a healthy approach to understanding Scripture, Goldingay makes multiple assertions that work to undermine this healthy approach with an unhealthy view of the nature of Scripture itself. To be sure, Goldingay is quick to affirm that the Bible is “God’s book,” that the human element of its authorship did not “spoil” it (3), and that its events did indeed “happen” (34). But these assertions are tempered by statements of a different sort. Regarding the historicity of the details of the biblical accounts of the fall, the battle of Jericho, and the story of Jonah, Goldingay suggests that it is “impossible” to answer the question as to whether these events occurred as recorded (34). Regarding creation, Goldingay avoids potential criticisms that the Bible is unscientific by claiming that the point is not in the details: that Genesis’s question is “not whether the world was created in six days or not, but rather, whether the world was created in a purposeful way at all” (42). And regarding the “stricter” OT laws requiring capital punishment for adultery and murder, Goldingay concludes that “no accounts of the execution of people guilty of such offenses suggests this sanction was more theory than practice” (91). Collectively, the statements introduce an approach to Scripture where details deemed unsavory are regularly explained away in favor of more congenial readings. Even if such readings promote greater receptivity of the

Bible, the question must be asked, what kind of Bible is being promoted? The implication is that the Bible is the kind of book that cannot be read at face value but instead likely contains embellished stories, insignificant and possibly incorrect details, and laws that were such in theory only.

This is not to say that Goldingay's *Reader's Guide* has no redeemable qualities. Its emphasis on the abiding importance of the Old Testament (177-85) provides an especially timely counterbalance to the current debate over its importance to Christian belief. And certainly, the volume is filled with a great number of insightful and accessible explanations of the contents of the biblical books. However, while its gentle tone and attempts to assuage the concerns of the modern Western sensibility will be perceived by some to be to its great credit, the repeated credence given to doubts surrounding the particulars of the biblical message do not, in the opinion of this reviewer, encourage the healthy view of the nature of the biblical books that an introduction of this sort must promote. Promoting a face value reading would have more clearly exemplified the openness to the biblical world and ideas that Goldingay himself endorses in his introduction to the reader.

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***An Introduction to the Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge.*** By Dirk Jongkind. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 128 pp. Softcover \$14.99.

In 2017, Dirk Jongkind and Peter Williams released *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* (abbreviated as THGNT). This much celebrated text is unique among Greek editions in that it places significant focus on scribal habits and gives priority to the earliest manuscripts available (For a complete summary and critique of the THGNT, see the Spring 2018 *JMAT* review by Wayne Slusser).

As an introduction and companion guide to the THGNT, Jongkind released *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*. The aim of this book is

twofold. First, Jongkind offers core background information about the THGNT. Second, he provides a concise summary of the broader discipline of NT textual criticism. As Jongkind notes, “This little book tells the story behind [the THGNT] and is a tool for all who have the privilege to learn New Testament Greek” (17). The book is divided into eight chapters spanning 128 pages (ninety-four pages if not including front or back matter): 1. Your Greek New Testament and the Manuscripts (17–26), 2. Practicalities (27–39), 3. Manuscripts (41–64), 4. How Decisions Are Made (65–85), 5. Why Not the Textus Receptus? (87–91), 6. Why Not the Byzantine Text? (93–100), 7. Biblical Theology and the Transmission of the Text (101–108), and 8. Where to Go from Here? (109–110).

Perhaps the most helpful chapters are two, three, and four (the first is an introduction to the topic of NT textual criticism in general, and the fifth through eighth are focused on select issues). The second chapter deals with unique aspects of the THGNT and is a valuable primer to this edition. The third offers a helpful summary of the textual apparatus, as well as the distinctives of important manuscripts. The fourth chapter discusses how the editors of the THGNT came to their conclusions and offers some criteria for readers on how to make their own decisions. Jongkind then offers practical discussion of controversial passages such as Mark 16:9–20 (78–82), John 7:53–8:11 (82–84), Luke 22:43–44 (84) and Luke 23:34a (85). At this point, it may have been helpful to include a few examples of how to work through less controversial passages.

There are several helpful and practical features of this book. For instance, there are several fairly high-resolution photographs and illustrations (black and white) to help the reader visualize the manuscripts discussed as well as the text of the THGNT itself. Additionally, Jongkind includes the link to a larger collection of articles about this text available on the Tyndale House website (109): <https://academic.tyndalehouse.com/thgnt/production-notes>. For readers unfamiliar with key text critical terms, Jongkind’s glossary at the back of the book will come in quite handy (113–16).

The beauty of *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament* is that there is little to critique. Some will disagree with Jongkind’s methodology and the approach of the THGNT. Others may take issue with his views, for instance, on the Byzantine text. However, by and large, Jongkind offers an evenhanded summary and introduction to a

rather complex topic. Again, in approaching this book, one must recognize that it is an introduction specific to the THGNT. If one expects Jongkind to be an unbiased observer, one will be disappointed.

Of course, *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament* does not replace more formal introductory or technical books on the topic (such as Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament* or Aland and Aland's book by the same name), yet it was never meant to. What Jongkind does is whet the reader's appetite to dig into the Greek NT. As such, his conclusion could not be better stated: "The important thing to take away from this little book is that you have every reason to read the Greek New Testament with confidence and pleasure" (109).

It almost goes without saying that *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament* should be required reading for any course on textual criticism. I heartily recommend this book to anyone interested in the topic. The undergraduate will be challenged, the seminary student will be engaged, the pastor will be encouraged, and the scholar will be refreshed. A difficult task for any book—especially one on textual criticism!

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***Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright.*** Edited by James M. Scott. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017. 343 pages. Hardcover \$40.00.

James M. Scott (DTheol, University of Tübingen) is professor of religious studies at Trinity Western University, British Columbia, Canada. N. T. Wright (M.A., D.D., Oxford University), was the Bishop of Durham between 2003 and 2010 and since then has served as Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, Scotland.

This volume is sub-titled "A Conversation with N. T. Wright." All participants are represented by essays. Some of the essays were written for a symposium on "exile" organized by Scott, in

collaboration with others, and held at Trinity Western University, in 2010. Many papers read at the symposium were revised for publication, and other essays were commissioned to round out the coverage of the book.

N. T. Wright has championed the view that even though there was a partial return of those who were exiled from their homeland to Babylon, the return to the land was not seen as the end of exile by many of the Jewish people into the Second Temple period. Elements of Wright's views have been presented in several of his publications, including *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (2013) (see especially vol. 1, 139ff.). The foundation of his paradigm is a biblical trajectory that begins in the promises and warnings of Moses in Deuteronomy, continues with the extended period (490 years) of exile described in Daniel 9, and ends with the finished work of Christ.

Wright argues that the Second Temple era writings, the teachings of Jesus, and the writings of Paul reflect the concept of continuing exile and of provided restoration. During his earthly ministry, Jesus was announcing "his belief that the real return from exile for the people, and the real return of YHWH to Zion, were happening in and through His own work" (46). Paul presents Jesus as the Messiah through whom the story of the Torah, including the restoration of Israel from exile, has been accomplished.

The editor of the volume introduces the conversation with an introductory chapter on issues and answers regarding Wright's "hypothesis" of an "Ongoing Exile." Wright then leads off the conversation with an essay in which he summarizes his views on exile and restoration. The eleven essays that follow are divided into four parts. They are Old Testament/Hebrew Bible/Septuagint; Early Judaism; New Testament; and Theology.

Part 1. Walter Brueggemann in his response is both appreciative of many interpretive connections and fresh insights he has gained from reading Wright on this subject and critical of some reduction in significance of biblical traditions he sees in Wright's argument. Robert Hiebert devotes his space to a detailed study of terminology for exile and restoration in the Septuagint and the NT. He provides a suggestion as to why Septuagint translators might have used captivity and displacement language even where their Hebrew/Aramaic source texts did not. Jörn Kiefer concludes the first part with an interesting article highlighting positive views of the condition of exile, reflecting

not the doom and gloom of God's wrath, but an experience of God's presence in the diaspora.

Part 2. The first essay in the second part of the book is by Philip Alexander. He attempts to see the extent to which the events in Palestine in the Second Temple period can be explained by the "political ideologies of the day." This would serve as another form of evidence of whether the Jews in Palestine believed that they were still in exile. He believes that the evidence shows that a "particular nationalist view of exile and restoration" was present in the Jewish community. While accepting as "uncontroversial" the idea that the first-century Jews felt themselves to be in exile in the land of Palestine, Robert Kugler argues that the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal that the Jews imagined endings to the exile that are not elaborated by Wright. He suggests several ways in which his observations from the Scrolls have consequences for Wright's project. Dorothy M. Peters wrote the last of the essays in this section with a lively discussion of the War Scroll, and the views of the Essenes regarding the word and the sword of vengeance of the Lord as bringing eschatological restoration and victory.

Part 3. The NT part of the conversation is begun by Scot McKnight. He is convinced that "exile and restoration" are the terms of choice (above millennium, heaven, rapture, etc.) for systematic theological thinking about eschatology. Based upon questions asked by Wright, he proposes a reorientation of the story Creation/Fall/Redemption/Consummation: A: God is king through his people/B: human kings are kings and God uses them/Revised A: God is king in King Jesus: "... the arrival of Jesus as God's King ends the exile and establishes the inauguration of the Kingdom of God" (215). In his essay, S. A. Cummins agrees with Wright that exile is an important theme in the NT, but he argues that in the context of the Pauline passages examined, exile can best be seen as one element of the "all-encompassing economy of God" (236), in which more can be said, for example, in the area of the regained glory of humanity. He expresses concern about the need for Wright to clarify his concept of the covenant and his views relating to the Sandersian view of Paul.

Part 4. In his concluding essay, Wright accuses the two essayists in the systematic theology part of the book of having not heard what he has been saying. Hans Boersma calls for a theological, sacramental grounding of the narrational history—the strictly historical biblical

interpretation—Wright is using. Ephraim Radner “offers a straightforward summary exposition of scriptural exile’s figural [spiritual as contrasted with historical] explication within the Christian tradition” (273). He argues that naming “exile” and “restoration” as one thing or another in historic, temporal terms can bring about an objection of historical contradiction.

Wright’s concluding essay is helpful in providing both thoughtful responses and objections and clarification of exactly what his position is and is not claiming.

Two concluding remarks are in order. First, for orthodox Jews who do believe in the coming of the Messiah, the consciousness of being in continuing exile is a commonplace. They continually wait for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, and it would be no surprise to them to be told that faithful Jews in the Second Temple period were conscious of being in exile. Second, in his eschatology, Wright sees the exile of Israel together with “exile” of the whole human race. He redefines the Western tradition’s view of the concept of personal salvation: escaping to a disembodied “heaven.” The end of the exile, Christ becoming the temple, and the establishment of his kingdom are themes that call for response by dispensationalists.

This book is must reading for Old and New Testament scholars, readers of Wright’s many insightful volumes, and for those who are concerned about explicating biblically, historically, and theologically, the relationships between Israel, Jesus, Paul, the church, soteriology, and eschatology.

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***How New is the New Testament?*** By Donald A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 224 pp. Softcover \$22.99.

In recent years there has been a movement to eliminate all discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism. In this understanding, Paul did not break with Judaism at all, but remained an observant Jew his whole life. In some ways this is a radicalization of the New Perspective on Paul, a view which argues that Paul only broke with Judaism as it concerned his attempt to preach to the Gentiles. Proponents of the New Perspective believe that Judaism assumed covenantal grace rather than being a purely merit-based religion. Furthermore, the works of the law that Paul attacked were Jewish badges of identity, like circumcision, not an attempt to earn righteousness by self-effort. These interpretations of Paul are the opposite of the strong discontinuity that was the primary teaching of the church from sub-apostolic times through to the 18th century.

Donald Hagner responds to the modern trend to see increasing continuity between the testaments without falling into the excessive discontinuity of earlier generations. Hagner is George Eldon Ladd Professor Emeritus of New Testament, senior professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, and a prolific author. He argues that Christianity is neither opposed to Judaism nor is it a Jewish sect. The NT is the fulfillment of the OT promises. As such it retains some continuity while remaining new. To demonstrate this thesis, Hagner surveys the NT to see how new it claims to be. He recognizes the unique contributions of each book. Some have a stronger emphasis on continuity while others focus on discontinuity, yet each book balances the two ideas. Luke shows continuity in that the promises of Israel are being fulfilled in Jesus, yet Jesus' radical statement of the fulfillment of these promises is also a discontinuity. John is the most Jewish gospel yet expresses a sharp discontinuity with Judaism. In the Pauline corpus, Paul's conversion required a break with his past life, yet he describes it by the language of God's call to the prophets. His gospel is the same as that to the circumcision, yet it is still the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles. Justification is available to both Jew and Gentile through faith in Christ, but it is also found in the Scriptures of Israel. The author of Hebrews argues for the superiority of Christ, yet compares Jesus' priesthood with Melchizedek. Christ came and offered the perfect sacrifice that

fulfilled the OT sacrifices. In 1 Peter, our salvation is already our possession, yet it lies in the indeterminate future. Christ's sacrificial atonement was the realization of God's purpose from the beginning but only revealed now at the end of the ages.

Hagner's views on NT authorship are not entirely conservative, but they remain within the evangelical camp. For many NT books, traditional authorship is assumed without argument since it is not the purpose of his book. For others he leaves the door open for pseudonymity without being dogmatic. He states, "Even if Ephesians was not written by Paul, which is far from certain, it certainly reflects Pauline theology" (183). Though he refers to the author of 1 Peter as Peter, the omission of a name for the author of 2 Peter is conspicuously absent (212). For the gospels, the prevailing four-source theory of origins is assumed (61, 79). Although this view is compatible with orthodoxy, there is no need in a book of this nature to assume a particular theory of gospel origins.

The question of dispensationalism is inevitable in a book on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Hagner rejects dispensationalism specifically: "Dispensationalism's a priori bifurcation of Israel and the church is an example of finding or creating an extreme discontinuity in Scripture, not to mention in the purpose of God." Therefore, "the promises to Israel are of a more symbolic or spiritual nature, so that the reference to Israel's national hope amounts to a kind of code language" (78). In his discussion on Galatians 6:16, he observes that it is far from certain that Paul refers to the church as the Israel of God, yet for him the evidence is slightly in favor of this being Paul's intent (149). Peter refers to the church by names originally given to Israel—a royal priesthood and a holy nation. This, says Hagner, "makes it a natural conclusion that the church is now regarded as the true Israel (212). Yet he is not ready to dispense with Israel entirely. He gladly states that "God is not through with Israel" in the sense that Jews can be grafted back into the church by faith (165). Indeed, he believes that "the church is an expression of God's faithfulness to Israel as a nation" (212).

Hagner has performed a valuable service in answering radical claims to continuity between the testaments. His exegesis on this score is methodical and balanced. Few conservatives will object to the idea that both continuity and discontinuity exists, and that the New Testament brought an era of prophetic fulfillment. His choices

on the authorship of NT books is unfortunate but seldom interferes with his argument. The greatest weakness is his rejection of dispensational hermeneutics. This holds him back from complete exegetical consistency. Yet he avoids an easy supercessionism and is irenic and balanced throughout. The discerning reader will profit by the sound logic and careful exposition.

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***1 & 2 Thessalonians (Zondervan Critical Introductions to the New Testament.*** By Nijay K. Gupta. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. 320 pp. Hardcover \$44.99.

Nijay K. Gupta, Associate Professor of New Testament at Portland Seminary, authors the critical introduction to Paul's Thessalonian correspondence as part of the *Zondervan Critical Introductions to the New Testament* series, a new commentary series that aims to address the major critical issues of a biblical text. For both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Gupta presents an evaluation of four areas in New Testament research. First, he evaluates the text of each letter, which includes an examination of major variants, authorship and dating, and literary features including genre, style, and possible sources for each letter. Second, Gupta presents an evaluation of their background and situation. Besides documenting important information on the city of Thessalonica and its culture, this section also evaluates the chronological relationship between the historical record of Acts and the Thessalonian correspondence, as well as the order of the letters. Third, Gupta presents an evaluation of the major themes and interpretive issues present in these works. Fourth, Gupta includes a history of interpretation for each letter.

*1 & 2 Thessalonians* does well in handling the major historical and interpretive issues of the Thessalonian correspondence, and especially in 1 Thessalonians. All these issues have important applicatory consequences and thus his evaluation will be received well by the preacher preparing to address the text from the pulpit. These issues include the textual variant of 1 Thessalonians 2:7b, i.e., should the text read "gentle" or "infants"? (106-14); the nature of

“vessel” in 4:4, i.e., is a “vessel” one’s body, a wife, or something else? (123-30); and the nature of “work” in 4:11, i.e., is Paul addressing eschatological fever, involvement in politics, or a neglect of work? (130-39). Perhaps Gupta’s most helpful evaluation is his address of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16, the one section of the Thessalonian correspondence sometimes considered to be an interpolation because of its supposedly anti-Semitic character. In response to this difficulty, he makes two key arguments against interpolation. First, Gupta notes that Paul’s rhetoric is theologically, and not racially, motivated. Citing Hagner, Gupta explains that Paul’s response to his kinsman is closer to a “Deuteronomistic-type judgment oracle” than racial slander (120). This evaluation makes sense, and especially because of the Jewish presence in the church at Thessalonica, individuals Paul would not be criticizing (cf. Acts 17:4). Second, Gupta cites studies which argue that the comma following “Jews” in verse 14 is an unnecessary inclusion in English translations. Its absence would restrict Paul’s reference to certain Jewish individuals and not the Jews at large (120-121). This response make sense as well. Paul’s concern was specifically with the unbelieving Jewish opposition to the gospel message, the same kind opposition coming from the unbelieving Gentiles in Thessalonica (cf. 1 Thess. 2:14).

On the other hand, some readers may desire a more thorough analysis of some of the major interpretive issues in 2 Thessalonians. For example, Gupta does not address the views of the nature of the “temple” in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, an interpretive issue that has major implications for the meaning of the text. While he does address the man of lawlessness and the proposed precursors to this individual, a helpful study in itself (244-249), there is little discussion as to how the man of lawlessness fits into broader eschatological themes. Although that topic would certainly take many more pages to flesh out, it is essential discussion because of the relationship between the man of lawlessness and the day of the Lord. Furthermore, the text does not address the issue of tradition (2 Thess 2:15), a major dividing line between Catholics and Protestants.

As a final comment, it might have also been helpful for Gupta to include a traditional chronology that links the events of Acts 17-18 with the events documented in the Thessalonian correspondence. Although Gupta does address some of the issues involving the

relationship between Acts and 1 and 2 Thessalonians (54-61), it would have been helpful to know how he pieces all the data together, especially Paul's reference to being left in Athens alone (cf. 1 Thess 3:1) and the movement of Silas (cf. Acts 17:10, 13; 18:5). This movement is one of the major obstacles in reconciling the two works, and it would be very helpful for the pastor to know as he looks to present these historical events to his congregation.

Overall, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* is a helpful addition to a pastor's library. Its strength is in providing direct presentations of the major historical and interpretive issues of the letters, which will certainly help the pastor quickly find the information he needs on difficult passages. However, the reader should be aware that he may need more resources when dealing with the major eschatological passages of the letters, especially in 2 Thessalonians.

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***Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host.***

By Michael S. Heiser. Bellingham, WA: Lexham P, 2019. 248 pp.  
Hardcover \$19.99.

*Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host* by Michael Heiser is a comprehensive, biblical, interesting, and, at times technical, and even humorous treatment on the subject of angels. In the introduction, Heiser states, "To clarify, this is not a book about demons.... I'm really only concerned with what the Bible says about the good guys" (xiii). He comments, "Much of what Christians think they know about angels is more informed by Christian tradition than Scripture" (xiv). Thus, Heiser has provided a well-exegeted, grammatical and historical study about angels. He writes,

Rather than jumping to the New Testament, the book will move from the Old Testament to Second Temple ("intertestamental") period literature,... The book then turns to the New Testament....

Finally, we will bring our study to a close with a fascinating (and hopefully fun) analysis of Christian myths about angels (xix-xx).

The footnotes and bibliography are extensive (179-91), and the indices of subjects and modern authors and of Scripture and other ancient literature are excellent references and resources (193-223).

There are two “red flags” regarding Heiser’s preliminary assertions or interpretations raised in the introduction. First, Heiser contends that Genesis 1:26 is not a cryptic reference to the Trinity. He states,

God is speaking to his heavenly host. He is sharing a decision with them—decreeing his will, as it were. If he were speaking to the members of the Trinity, they would already know what’s in God’s mind, because they are coequal and coeternal with him. (xv)

He further asserts that while man is God’s image bearer on earth, angels are his image bearers in heaven. I strongly disagree with this interpretation as it effectively makes man and angels coequal image bearers, just in different realms, one terrestrial and the other celestial. Nowhere in Scripture is it either explicitly stated or implied that angels were made in the image of God. Man is the unique image bearer of God, the crown of creation, not angels. Heiser also states that angels “were children of God before us” and that “the Bible makes it clear that God wanted more children” (xvi.). Then he refers to angels as “our spiritual siblings” (xvii). Again, I take strong exception with connecting man and angels as fellow image bearers and/or siblings. Thankfully, the body of the book is much more consistent with an historical and grammatical hermeneutic. Three of the better and more helpful offerings of Heiser’s book on angels include the following.

First, Heiser’s interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:10 is both interesting and insightful and includes extensive footnotes (125-27). He comments that angels are not infallible and indicated that Paul was concerned that they could fall again. This is something I had not considered, but find intriguing.

Second, Heiser’s commentary on guardian angels is the most comprehensive one I have read. It is well-documented and a good read (132-36). His summary statement is worth remembering:

The idea of guardian angels apparently includes protection, as angels rescue people, but angelic oversight in the human sphere also includes keeping track of evil perpetrated on the innocent for later judgment or a record of those who will inherit eternal life. (135-36)

Third, Heiser provides an outstanding treatment of the seven stars/angels of Revelation 1-3 (141-46). It's a thoughtful study addressing different views. His conclusion is that the seven stars are supernatural, heavenly beings assigned surrogacy of the churches of Asia Minor. Heiser states,

The angel of each church is therefore some sort of surrogate. The angels and the churches are not identical, but they are related.... It seems best to understand them as members of the heavenly host assigned to the churches in a surrogacy role. (146)

Heiser concludes his book with a chapter entitled "Myths and Questions about Angels" (163-77). I found this section to be very intriguing and interesting. It provides a "lighter" dimension to the book, without being flippant or irreverent. Some of the myths addressed by Heiser include: (1) "Angels have wings ... and they're women, too" (164-67); (2) "Angels can no longer rebel" (169); (3) "Angels take people to heaven" (173-74); and (4) "Christians become angels when they die" (176-77).

The reason Heiser wrote this book and his basic premise are stated in the introduction:

The angelology of Christian tradition is, to say the least, quite incomplete and, in some ways, inaccurate. But, again, why should we care? The simple answer is that, if God moved biblical writers to take care when talking about the unseen realm, then it matters. ...Why should we care about angels? Because angelology helps us think more clearly about familiar points of biblical theology. (xiv-xv)

This is well put. If an angel of the Lord announced the miraculous conception of God's only begotten Son to the virgin Mary and Joseph

on separate occasions, and if an angel of the Lord announced the actual birth of Jesus to the shepherds and then was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and proclaiming Jesus' birth, and if angels ministered to Jesus in the wilderness and were present at his resurrection and ascension, then indeed, they matter—a lot! Heiser certainly drives that truth home.

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***How to Read Theology: Engaging Doctrine Critically and Charitably.*** By Uche Anizor. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 182pp. \$21.99.

*How to Read Theology: Engaging Doctrine Critically and Charitably*, written by Uche Anizor (Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University), is uniquely written to help students of theology read theology *better*. Anizor's aim is to aid those who enjoy reading theology but need to grow in their ability to comprehend theology (xiv). He writes, "This book is about *evaluating* theologies. In writing it, I have sought to maximize readers' benefit from theological literature, especially texts with which they may have major disagreements" (xiv).

Anizor accomplishes this with a simple and clearly defined structure. Part One, "On Reading Charitably," educates readers on the challenge of reading theology charitably. Chapter one notes that charitable reading is often hindered by the attitudes of the reader. Attitudes such as pride, suspicion, favoritism, and impatience keep the reader from understanding the work accurately and therefore from assessing it correctly (5). In Chapter two, Anizor argues that the context of the author is essential for understanding the theology: "Theology is written from within a context and therefore bears certain contextual marks that must be attended to if we are to understand and assess it well" (28). This includes historical context, cultural context, and polemical context. A discerning reader must be willing to approach the work with a willingness to understand who the author is and to listen with the right attitude.

Part Two, “On Reading Critically,” “aims to develop skills for reading theology critically” (xiv). Chapter three discusses the various views of Scripture and how those play out in theology; chapter four discusses the different perspectives of tradition in theology; chapter five, the relationship between faith and reason; and finally chapter six, the role of experience in theology. Anizor defines the different views of each of these issues and then gives examples of how they are expressed in different theological writings. The intelligent reader must understand the various views and ascertain from which view an author is writing from if he is to understand and respond accurately.

The author closes the book with an epilogue where he urges the reader to practice the principles in his book and gives some helpful suggestions for putting those principles to work in practice. These include an encouragement to start small, to survey articles about the author, and to look for clues in the text that point to the reason for writing.

There are many positive things to note about Anizor’s book. First, the structure is so simple that it is easy to remember. It is difficult to apply what one cannot remember, and Anizor’s structure helps to combat that problem. It is hard to forget that we should engage doctrine “critically and charitably,” and those words bring to mind the principles found in their chapters. Second, Anizor uses detailed examples from theologians who greatly differ in their positions throughout the book. For example, he uses Gutierrez and liberation theology as an example in chapter two and Schleiermacher in chapter six. This helps to show the reader how to critically and charitably interact with positions that he may not agree with. Finally, Anizor grounds his approach in Scripture (Chapter one) by arguing that the most accurate reading is the most loving reading. Anizor notes that an attitude of love is not a suspicious attitude, but is one that is willing to trust and assume the best (12). This moves his book from a purely intellectual argument to the area of the heart.

Several drawbacks to Anizor’s book should also be noted. First, while Anizor targets the heart by urging us to read charitably, he spends little time on reading theology worshipfully. He does argue that good theology should lead to “an experience of the good, true, and beautiful” (165), but does not spend time writing on the attitude of worship that one should have when he reads theology. Second, while not inherently a drawback, *How to Read Theology* is for a

limited readership. Although the overall structure is simple, many of the chapters would be potentially dense for those new to the reading of theology. Anizor's book is probably best suited for those who have spent a couple years engaging with the basics of theological scholarship. Being grounded in their faith, they will be prepared to read and critique the theologians with which they may have major disagreements.

Overall, I would heartily recommend Uche Anizor's book to students of theology who want to grow in their ability to comprehend by reading charitably and critically, especially those works with which they may not agree. Anizor will help them to better understand the issues at hand and therefore better understand the theology that they read.

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***The God Who Gives: How the Trinity Shapes the Christian Story.***  
By Kelly M. Kapic with Justin Borger. Grand Rapids: Zondervan,  
2010. 288 pages. Paperback \$22.99.

Many believers wonder what the Christian life is all about. They are told about "grace," but struggle to understand it, much less live it. They are taught about God, but their vision of him does not always reflect the full biblical portrait of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians struggle to know the ways of God and how to joyfully participate in his work.

*The God Who Gives: How the Trinity Shapes the Christian Story* provides a vision of the Christian faith and life. As one reads this biblical theology, one will discover just how the Trinity frees believers from sin and allows them to more fully experience life. God gives himself, and this fullness of life comes through the gift of God's generosity. The author

became convinced, through conversations and his study, that when the Christian story is approached through the lens of the Gift, the

story and our lives opens up before God's glorious and empowering grace (264).

The book is set up in three parts. In Part 1, titled "From Belonging to Bondage," the author begins the "story" with creation (15). Everything was created by God and God gave his creation to humanity. Kopic then proceeds to the fall (36). Despite God's giving of creation to humanity, humanity disobeyed God, and humanity was thus subject to the punishment of sin. While God provided grace for his people through the giving of the law, the people did not obey God and they did not follow God. Instead, they wanted a king like the rest of the nations (56). So, God gave them their request, the first king named Saul (75).

The "story" continues into Part 2, titled "God Reclaims All by Giving All: Son, Spirit, and Kingdom." Here, the author writes about God reclaiming all by giving humanity his Son, Jesus (95). Some of humanity accepted the gift, and some did not (112). After the ascension of Jesus, God sent humanity the gift of the Holy Spirit (128). Believers received and experienced that gift (142). God also gave believers his kingdom.

The final part of the "story" is told in Part 3, titled "Living the Gifts: Cross, Resurrection, Church." Here the author describes the "gifts" of the cross, resurrection, and the church, and how they must influence the believer. He states that believers will want to serve God by doing his work (211). For Kopic, service to the Lord is the resurrection life in action (223). The remaining chapters are about the church. In the church, believers and members receive and grow in new life (248). They, in turn, give life to the poor and oppressed (248).

*The God Who Gives* is a fresh approach to a study of the Trinity and God, the great Giver. Kopic argues that fully embracing the truth of the Triune God's giving of grace changes how believers view God, themselves, and the world. By living in the God's gifts, they are freed to give themselves and truly experience life. When I started to read the book, I found it so interesting that I could not put it down. I agree with all the author's statements. He uses considerable Scriptures and quotations from numerous authors to support his arguments, and the book is an easy read. It is a good resource for anyone who wants to do a further study of the Trinity and God. It is also a good text for a

study into the plan of God for humanity and the church. I would highly recommend this book.

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***Honoring the Son: Jesus in Earliest Christian Devotional Practice.*** By Larry W. Hurtado. Bellingham, WA: Lexham P, 2018. 95 pp. Paperback \$15.99.

Larry Hurtado's book *Honoring the Son* is the newest volume added to the Snapshot Series edited by Michael Bird—a series aimed to engage the church in significant contemporary issues in a brief and accessible, yet masterful and inviting way. Hurtado's expertise in New Testament scholarship of early Christianity makes him an excellent choice as a contributor to this series.

*Honoring the Son* is a handy-size volume (5x8 inches) of only 94 pages (plus 15 pages of front matter). This slim volume accomplishes the series goal of being "accessible" to both the scholar and interested layman alike, with the footnotes providing the scholar ample grist for further scholarly pursuit. Chapters 1 and 6 form the Introduction and Conclusion, respectively, with the central four chapters unfolding Hurtado's argument. As he explains in the introduction, the impetus for his original exploration into this subject matter was the troubling claims by the History of Religions school, led mainly by Bousset's *Kyrios Christos: A History of Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, originally published in Germany in 1913. Basically, Bousset, and others from the History of Religions school, set out to demonstrate that the worship of Jesus as being equal with God the Father originated not in Jewish Palestine, where one would expect, but in the diaspora where the Jews were much more subject to pagan influence. In other words, the veneration of Jesus as a messianic divine was an accretion from the Gentile world outside of Palestine. Bousset's book thus set the trajectory of studies in early NT Christian worship for the next century. Even within four years of its publication, an essay by Geerhardus Vos required 68 pages just to review the ensuing academic debate the book had generated. As Hurtado points out, Bousset's premise was that the deeply embedded

commitment orthodox Jews have to monotheistic worship would have never allowed the early Christians to venerate Jesus to the level of worship that is equal to God. Hurtado's four chapters that comprise the heart of this slim volume masterfully show how inexplicable Bousset's premise is to the evidence we see in the NT, especially from Paul's letters.

In chapter 2, "Worship in the Ancient World," Hurtado shows how early Christian worship was mainly identified and characterized by their rituals more so than their creeds. The culture of that era did not demand loyalty to any one god, but it did require participation in the ritually cultic activities that showed honor to the overall polytheistic culture. Hurtado then builds on this in chapter 3, "Ancient Jewish Monotheism," where he observes that it was common practice when travelling abroad to join in the cultic worship of other gods. In doing so, the common people gave it no thought that one's own god would be offended by honoring the foreign god of the culture one was visiting. It was simply a form of religious politeness. Hurtado shows from various ancient sources (e.g., the book of Tobit) that the Jews refused to entertain these pagan influences and instead held unwaveringly to a monotheistic worship even in seemingly innocent and polite ritualistic observances. This, then, works against Bousset's foundational premise.

In many ways, chapter 4 ("The Early Christian 'Mutation'") gets to the heart of Hurtado's conclusion. He uses the word "mutation" to demonstrate that there is a parent-child relationship between ancient Judaism (i.e., the parent) and early Christian worship (i.e., the child). He also introduces the term "dyadic" to describe the "devotional pattern in which the risen/exalted Jesus featured centrally and uniquely with God as virtually a co-recipient of cultic devotion" (43). He then masterfully demonstrates that in the earliest years of Christianity various prominent Old Testament texts—always previously and exclusively applied to God alone (e.g., Joel 2:32 and Rom 10:9–13)—are now applied by the early Jewish Christians to Jesus. He points out that there is simply not enough time for these to be accretions from pagan Gentile diaspora influence. He states, "When viewed in the light of the Jewish concerns to restrict worship to the one God alone, the programmatic place of Jesus in earliest Christian devotion amounts to a novel and historically significant 'mutation'" (49).

In chapter 5, “Jesus in Earliest Christian Devotional Practice,” Hurtado marshals more evidence to further support what he presented in the previous chapter. He not only shows how prayer and worship were directed to God through or “in” Jesus’ name, but he also shows how prayer–wish formulas invoked both God and Jesus together. But there’s more: he also underscores salutations and benedictions, formulas in connection with early Christian rites such as baptism and the Lord’s supper, Christian hymns and odes, prophetic speeches, etc.—all these regularly and routinely include Jesus as part of the earliest Christian worship, which undermines the notion that such things were accretions from Gentile pagan influences in the diaspora. He sums it up well in his concluding chapter: “In my view, this early and rapid ‘mutation’ in typical Jewish devotional practice could have occurred only if earliest participants felt themselves obliged to take part. That is, I think that they must have come to the conviction that God required them to reverence Jesus, and so the dyadic pattern that emerged was, in their eyes, actually obedience to the one God ... as the appropriate response to his exaltation of Jesus and designation of him as Lord” (66).

This slim volume packs a punch and will serve well as a primer for those who are looking to pursue early Christian worship practices, especially against claims that seek to undermine the recognition of Jesus as divine from the outset of Christian worship.

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***Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9-11.*** Edited by Jared Compton and Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2019. 272 pp. Softcover \$21.99.

One of the greatest debates in Christian theology concerns the relationship between Israel and the church. Are Israel and the church distinct entities or is Israel a type of the church or Christ (or both)? One’s answers to these questions influences the way one understands the flow of redemptive history, the use of the Old Testament by the

New Testament, and the relationship between the old and new covenants.

In *Three Views on Israel and the Church: Perspectives on Romans 9-11*, editors Jared Compton (Pastor at Crossway Community Church in Bristol, Wisconsin) and Andrew Naselli (Associate Professor of New Testament and Theology at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis) bring together four recognized scholars to present the three leading interpretations of Romans 9-11 concerning Israel's role in redemptive history. In this important portion of Scripture, Paul confronts a major issue facing the success of the gospel: If God has made promises to the nation of Israel, and yet many Jews have rejected their Messiah, then are God's promises unreliable? In response, Paul explain the purpose of Israel in God's sovereign plan and then (controversially) concludes, "All Israel will be saved" (11:26). What that conclusion means and how Paul arrives at that conclusion is highly determinative of the relationship between Israel and the church.

Michael J. Vlach (Professor of Theology at The Master's Seminary) defends the Non-Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View. This view argues that Romans 9-11 promises salvation and a future role for national Israel while denying that the nation serves as a type of the church. Fred G. Zaspel (Pastor of Reformed Baptist Church in Franconia, PA) and James M. Hamilton Jr. (Professor of Biblical Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), defend the Typological Future-Mass-Conversion View. This view argues that Roman 9-11 promises a future salvation for the Jewish people but no distinct future role for the nation of Israel. Ben Merkle (Professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) defends the Typological Non-Future-Mass-Conversion View. This view argues that Romans 9-11 promises the salvation of elect Jews throughout history, but no special future role for the nation of Israel. The goal of *Three Views on Israel and the Church*, as stated by the editors, is to gain "clarity about the precise nature of our authors' disagreements about Romans 9-11" and to produce some "new consensus" on the key issues (238).

Do the editors achieve their desired goals in *Three Views on Israel and the Church*? On the one hand, Compton and Naselli do an excellent job refereeing the interaction between the contributors. Readers, and especially those who have tarried in one camp on the

issue with little exposure to other views, will appreciate the clear presentations and gracious rebuttals. In this way, *Three Views on Israel and the Church* will serve as a valuable and convenient reference for Bible students and pastors as they seek to work their way through this complicated issue. Nevertheless, the goal of “new consensus” is ambitious, as the editors themselves admit (239). It is not likely that “new consensus” is possible because the relationship between Israel and the church is a difficult issue that involves the evaluation of many texts as well as major theological and hermeneutical commitments. This challenge is probably most evident in the opening of Merkle’s defense of the Typological Non-Future-Mass-Conversion View. Here, Merkle establishes his understanding of typology through his interpretation of other texts (161-168). This strategy is critiqued by Vlach, who argues that “major parts of Merkle’s overall argument are not found in Romans 9-11,” including the symbolic interpretation of OT prophecies, the identification of the church as the “new Israel,” and Israel as a type of Jesus (211). However, the other contributors also reach beyond the text of Romans 9-11 to defend their interpretation, including Vlach, who, for instance, argues that both the Old Testament and New Testament promise Israel’s restoration and that sound hermeneutics demonstrate that promises given to the nation of Israel still belong to the nation (65-66). Zaspel and Hamilton do likewise by insisting that Gentiles are now typologically fulfilling OT patterns and promises using passages like Galatians 3 and Ephesians 1-3 in support, as well as arguing that the land promises given to Abraham now extend to the world through Christ based upon Romans 4 (132-139). This does not make any of the views right or wrong per se, but it does show that the debate is much greater than Romans 9-11. Because of this, the reader should have some awareness of the overarching issues involving the relationship between Israel and the church in order to fully appreciate the arguments presented in *Three Views on Israel and the Church*.

The reader should also be aware that the dialogue gets very technical at times. The reader must be prepared to evaluate key Greek phrases (e.g., ἄχρις οὗ in 11:25 and καὶ οὕτως in 11:26) as well as Paul’s use of key prophetic texts (e.g., Hos 2:23 and 1:10 in Rom 11:25-26; Isa 59:20-21 and 27:9 in Rom 11:27-29) and Paul’s definition of Israel (see esp. Merkle’s argument; 175-78; 194-97). To put it simply, *Three Views on Israel and the Church* is not

introductory material. Fortunately, Naselli presents an abbreviated version of each argument in the Conclusion (239-53), a helpful addition for those not familiar with the issues.

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***Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology.*** By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.

It has become fashionable in recent years for modern biblical scholarship to argue that the earliest Christology of the church was adoptionism, a view that argues that Jesus was a man who acquired divinity and was appointed the “Son of God” based upon his faithful life. Michael F. Bird, lecturer in theology at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, responds to these claims in his work *Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology*. To answer modern biblical scholarship, Bird first examines and explains Romans 1:3-4 and Acts 2:36, two key proof-texts used to support adoptionism. He then examines deification in the Greco-Roman world and its supposed influence upon Christianity, and particularly upon the Gospel of Mark. Bird follows with an evaluation of common historical referents to adoptionism (the Ebionites, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Theodotians). Lastly, Bird briefly surveys adoptionism in modern theology. Bird concludes, “If the preceding study is correct, then there is no tangible evidence for an adoptionist Christology in the New Testament, nor the Shepherd of Hermas, nor among the Ebionites, and it is not until we come across a group of Theodotians that we detect a full-blown adoptionism” (124).

*Jesus the Eternal Son* is a short read; the ambitious reader can complete it in a night. However, it is a valuable contribution to the study of Christology. The strength of Bird’s work is its precise responses to modern critics and their claims that the early church held an adoptionist Christology. Students of the New Testament will appreciate his exegesis of the key proof-texts. For example, Bird addresses of Romans 1:3-4 rightly explains the significance of Christ becoming the Son of God “in power” (v. 4), that “Jesus is installed to

a new position of divine lordship” (20), not that he became deified. Critics have tried to remove the phrase “in power” from the supposed “original” creed of Romans 1:3-4, but Bird understands what is really going on here: “Precisely because the phrase is injurious to the thesis that the creed espouses an early Adoptionist Christology, it becomes necessary to find a way to erase it” (19). Bird’s explanation of Acts 2:36 will also help students of the New Testament. Bird rightly reminds his readers that context and Luke’s overall purpose must guide one’s interpretation of Acts 2:36, and especially Luke’s citation of Joel 2:23-32 in Acts 2:17-21, which equates Jesus with Israel’s Lord (26). Obviously, adoptionism will struggle to explain this citation.

Bird’s review of Greco-Roman influences upon early Christianity (and especially the Gospel of Mark) is especially helpful. It is a common assertion from liberal scholars and critics that the early church made Jesus divine based upon Hellenistic divinization mythologies. In response, Bird, after surveying the relevant literature, rightly points out that, while some mythologies of this type did exist, “the process of divinization was open to question and ridicule” by Greco-Roman philosophers and statesmen (49). Furthermore, Jewish theology of the Second Temple Period was generally rigid in its monotheism and included an “absolute distinction between God and humanity that could not be traversed” (57). Bird concludes, “Adoptionism only really works within a particular Greco-Roman situation. It does not sit safely within a broadly Jewish view of divine ontology, and it requires either a heavily narrowed or hastily redacted canon from which to draw in order to fly” (126). Ultimately, to argue that Mark’s Gospel (a text written within both a Hellenistic and Jewish context) was influenced by such divinization mythologies is quite a stretch.

Perhaps the most significant portion of *Jesus the Eternal Son* is Bird’s clear identification of the consequences of an adoptionist Christology. Using Athanasius’ famous axiom, Bird questions how a divinized human Jesus could truly be the Savior of humanity. He further argues that adoptionism promotes a “merit theology” in which Jesus becomes the example of earning divine favor through works. Bird explains, “A Christology that presents us with a mere man who bids us to earn our salvation is an impoverished alternative to the God of grace and mercy who took on our flesh and “became sin” so that

we might become the “righteousness of God”” (130). Clearly, anyone considering adoptionism must weigh the consequences of this theology.

If there were anything I could desire of *Jesus the Eternal Son*, it would be a survey of the issues involving the “begetting” of the Son (e.g., Heb 1:5 and its quotation of Ps 2:7). Although these issues generally fall under the subject of eternal sonship, a significant topic in its own right and likely beyond the scope of the book, some passages relating to the subject get brought up in the conversation regarding adoptionism. I would love to hear what Bird has to say about those passages and their relationship to the issue presented in the book.

This point aside, *Jesus the Eternal Son* is an outstanding work. Bird has done well to address the key arguments of modern scholarship while giving clear explanations of tough passages. Readers will find the text a valuable resource for their theological studies.

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***Counseling Techniques: A Comprehensive Resource for Christian Counselors.*** Edited by John C. Thomas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 736 pp. Hardcover \$74.99.

Christian counseling has evolved significantly in the past several decades. For centuries, counseling was considered a responsibility of the clergy. However, in the last one hundred years a burgeoning interest in Christian counseling as a profession has encouraged many to attend Christian colleges and universities in search of training to prepare for a ministry that augments the work of the pastor.

In light of this interest and need to provide materials to assist the development of Christian counseling as a profession, one cannot help but notice that many new strategies, interventions, and techniques have appeared. Today Christian counseling is a profession that is constantly changing, and it is realized that research sheds new light on very familiar and not-so-familiar problems that people face. As

Christian counseling professionals are ever mindful that they have a daunting and yet profoundly important task, there is an urgency to stay abreast of developments in the field and adjust their delivery of services as appropriate. Therefore, Christian counseling professionals should be committed to a lifetime of inquiry, research, and refinement of their work so that the greatest opportunity to help is provided.

In order to help meet this responsibility, twenty-three skilled people-helpers share their expertise in *Counseling Techniques: A Comprehensive Resource for Christian Counselors*. This text, edited by John C. Thomas (Professor with the Center for Counseling and Family Studies at Liberty University) brings to the forefront a plethora of strategies, interventions, and techniques (SITs) to assist the experienced as well as the novice Christian counseling professional in providing treatment. In this volume, the abundance of vignettes and the follow-up application of the SITs to the vignettes allow the serious Christian professional an opportunity to glimpse how each can be effectively utilized.

In particular, the responsible Christian counseling professional is concerned with whether SITs under consideration demonstrate a faithfulness to Scripture. Although it is certain that Scripture itself is not necessarily a repository of the SITs found in this book, a Christian counselor should give Scripture the opportunity be the filter, focus, and foundation of all SITs being considered for use. But the Christian counselor should also be concerned with whether SITs being considered for implementation have solid empirical support as well. Therefore, with these significant concerns in mind, it is refreshing to see that at the beginning of each chapter introducing a particular family of strategies the author(s) of that chapter provide(s) an argument for the theological and the psychological validity of the strategies presented. It is of no small comfort to the Christian professional who is earnestly striving to be faithful to Scripture and to the findings of current psychological literature that the SITs presented in each chapter have been investigated for their validity in these areas. Since every Christian counseling professional should never blindly follow the views or positions of another, each chapter has enough information to point the counselor in a meaningful direction for further investigation and consideration.

This book is a tremendous addition to the shelf of a Christian counseling professional's office. However, this book should not be

regarded as a quick reference guide when a counseling need is encountered. Nor should it be considered a tool for use by the layperson. Rather, it should be considered as a resource for review and study so that Christian counseling professionals can examine the use of their own current SITs for the possible inclusion of, or replacement with, others. Although the book is not filled with technical jargon, making its information convoluted or confusing, it invites the Christian counseling professional to take a scholarly and biblically solid approach to the application of strategies, interventions, and techniques for the glory of God and for the benefit of those served.

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***Faith in the Shadows: Finding Christ in the Midst of Doubt.*** By Austin Fischer. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018. 184 pages. Paperback \$15.99.

Austin Fischer is a pastor with a burden: how to help others maintain a robust faith in Christ while dealing with persistent doubts about the truth of Christianity. Fischer asserts that having doubts is the necessary default for a truly authentic Christianity: “The church has always been a place for ... skeptical saints” (12) and “owning our uncertainty ... makes our faith more human and thus more honest” (20). While I heartily agree with Fischer that “the church should be the most honest place in the world” (35), I found some of his methods and solutions for handling doubt unconvincing.

One persistent trend in the book is Fischer’s excoriation of “fundamentalism” (referenced eight times in the first two pages of the foreword), which he calls “a sneaky but very serious threat to Christian faith” (83). According to Fischer, fundamentalism has turned many away from faith in Christ because, among other sins, it “seeks control by pursuing certainty” (84). In this regard, Charles Hodge, R. A. Torrey, and Lewis Sperry Chafer are taken to task for “trying to read all the Bible as literally as possible” (85–86). Not surprisingly, errant fundamentalist beliefs include the young-earth

creationist view of Genesis 1–2. By contrast, Fischer harbors no doubts that the modern evolutionary perspective of earth history is established fact (chapter 8 and elsewhere). Indeed, “when science *proves* something that seems to contradict Scripture, the proven scientific truth should take precedence over the literal sense of Scripture” (104, emphasis original). Finally, he charges the “self-assured, naïve, dogmatic biblicism of fundamentalism” with leaving “many Christians intellectually crippled and terrified” (91). Yet, his attempted defense of the orthodox doctrine of the fall of man through evolutionary processes and a metaphorical interpretation of Genesis left me gasping for theological air (107–109; see my review of *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013] in *JMAT* 18:1 [Spring 2014]:120–130 for a more thorough critique of this approach).

There is certainly some truth in what Fischer alleges (he cites and then channels Mark Noll’s incisive *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*). As I read the book, I was reminded of a phrase I heard often during my doctoral studies: “chastened epistemology.” That is, believers need to maintain a certain humility with regard to the conclusions they draw from the evidence for the truth of the Christian faith. I am sure most of us can identify with Fischer’s recollection that he “arrived at college with the brazen gait of someone who just doesn’t know how much he doesn’t know” (17). In addition, Fischer (mostly) champions a chastened epistemology throughout his book. Although I found myself duly “chastened” at times, I felt Fischer often conceded too much to the gods of modern science and post-modern hermeneutics.

In his discussion of the problem of evil (chapter 5), Fischer explains and then rejects a solution he formerly embraced, namely, a Reformed view of God’s sovereignty and human freedom (54–57; he previously authored *No Longer Reformed*). In its place, he favors what appears to be an Arminian view of human freedom (62), bordering on openness theology (he quotes Gregory Boyd approvingly), and an overwhelming emphasis on the love of God as the fount from which all other divine “expressions” (not “attributes”), including wrath and justice, flow (67). To me this is yet another concession to the post-modern spirit, though Fischer does pose some pungent challenges to the Reformed view, namely, “the troubling picture it conjures up of God ordaining the world to be set ablaze by

sin and evil so he can play the hero by rescuing some while letting others burn because, according to a strange sense of divine justice, they deserve it” (66). While certainly a caricature of Reformed theology, it strikes a chord.

In general, I found myself enjoying the book even as I disagreed at times with Fischer’s perspectives and arguments. He writes in a very engaging and self-effacing style, with many illustrative anecdotes and insightful assertions, along with a plethora of colorful citations of writers (e.g., Voltaire, Gustavo Gutierrez, Miguel de Unamuno, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Mother Teresa) whose worldviews are not wholly compatible with biblical Christianity. One minor but completely unnecessary irritation is Fischer’s occasional usage of the word “hell” as an adjective (12, 34, 37). If that is supposed to make his prose edgier or more authentic, I am not impressed. In addition, it is not always clear when he is citing a source, since instead of using footnotes or endnotes, introductory phrases from certain pages are listed in the back along with bibliographical data.

There are other arguments with which to differ, such as his chapter on hell in which he argues along the lines of C. S. Lewis’s famous dictum (which he also quotes): “the doors of hell are locked on the inside.” Hitler is used as a classic example of Fischer’s view that everyone in hell is there because they refused to yield to divine love (131). While there is certainly some truth to that, nowhere does Fischer even mention, let alone discuss, the much more specific requirement of saving faith in Jesus Christ as the sole condition for escaping the fires of hell (John 3:18).

Nevertheless, several thought-provoking statements make the book worth the read such as “[T]he only thing worse than the ‘problem’ of evil is not having the ‘problem’ of evil” (48); “[T]he gravest threat to modern Christianity is neither fundamentalism nor science, but stuff” (114); “Religion is the hope of the poor. Stuff is the opiate of the privileged” (123); “The ultimate remedy for doubt is love because love creates faith” (144); “Once you have glimpsed the beauty of Christ, there really is no going back .... To truly hear the gospel is to evolve past ever being satisfied with something less” (152); “We respond with cynicism when we don’t want to be duped; we respond with wonder when we don’t want to miss out. We respond with cynicism because we desire control; we respond with

wonder because we desire delight” (159–160); and “What I know will always be less than the great hope I feel” (162).

In summary, I would recommend this book to mature and knowledgeable Christians as a means of sharpening theological and apologetic perspectives. It could also serve as a supplemental text for an apologetics or philosophy class.

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***Palau: A Life of Fire: The Spiritual Memoir of Luis Palau.*** By Luis Palau with Paul J. Pastor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. 231 pp. Hardcover \$24.99.

*Palau: A Life of Fire* is a memoir by Luis Palau, a spiritual recounting from one of the most respected evangelists of our day. It is a glimpse into the formation of Palau’s spiritual legacy and his signature message. In each chapter, Luis Palau draws one foundational lesson that he has learned from his special relationships with the individuals in his life.

Chapter one documents the importance of Palau’s parents as they set the foundation for his life (17-18). His mother, Matilde Balfour de Palau, was Roman Catholic and played the organ in church. She received a New Testament from an individual who came to their home. She began reading the book of Matthew. She had a hunger in her heart, and the Lord spoke to her in the Scriptures (22-23). She read the Bible, prayed often, and taught her children to memorize Scripture. She had a rock-solid trust in God and his promises (34). She taught all her children to seek first the kingdom of God (35). Her faith had great influence on Palau’s becoming a preacher.

In chapter two, readers meet the special individual who influenced Luis Palau: his father Luis Palau Sr. (37) During the early years of Luis’s life, his father was not a believer. However, one evening Palau Sr. attended a church, stood up during the sermon, and made a profession of faith. It was an impulse, but he did not waver or waffle in his commitment (38). He became a street preacher and he, with a friend, planted churches. He died from pneumonia when Luis

was 10 years old. He taught his son to give everything to the Lord (47).

In chapter three, readers meet another individual who influenced Palau: Mr. Charles Rogers. This was the man who gave the New Testament to Luis's mother and partnered with Luis Palau, Sr. in street preaching and planting churches (51). During the week, Charles Rogers was a high-ranking oil executive. On Sundays, he was the pastor of the Plymouth Brethren Chapel, and weekends and holidays, he was a missionary doing street services and planting churches (52). He lived his faith and respected all individuals (55). He is known for stating "Preach the Truth" and "Preach the Light of the Gospel" (58). He lived his faith his entire life to the end (65).

In chapter 4, readers meet Ray Stedman, the pastor of the Peninsula Bible Church in California (71). When Stedman was in town preaching, Palau attended the meeting and thought Stedman was full of joy and was winsome (72). Stedman influenced Luis to come to the United States to study for the ministry. He became a second father to Luis.

In chapter 5, readers are introduced to Major Ian Thomas, a retired English military officer who was speaking at Multnomah School of the Bible (97). Palau attended the meeting and felt that the Major was speaking to him. The Major was speaking about Moses and the burning bush and the indwelling of Jesus (97). This influenced Palau. The Major said that you can be called to commit your life to a need, a task, or a field, and you will not be complete until you totally gave your life to God (93).

In chapter 6, readers meet Patricia Scofield de Palau, the wife of Luis. Her personality was different from that of Luis. Pat's example of combined strength and character made her incredible (109). Self-sacrifice was her secret (111). The sacrifice of her love, time, tears, and energy and a sense of safety and security influenced Luis (112).

In chapter 7, readers meet Billy Graham (121). He was a teacher, encourager, mentor, friend, and example to Palau. Palau was an interpreter and a member of the Graham team (126). Graham taught Palau about humility and its virtue (133).

In chapter 8, readers meet the Luis Palau Association Team (139). The Graham team showed Palau how to develop a team. A team member must take time with God, love the ministry, see the

vision, and have faith and humility. The team showed Palau that he cannot do it alone (154).

In chapter 9, readers meet Kevin, Keith, Andrew, and Stephen Palau, the sons of Luis Palau (159). Luis Palau relates how the four boys grew up. All four are born-again believers and are committed to God. Kevin is head of the Palau team (173). Andrew is preparing to take over the ministry started by his father (174). Stephen is a fifth-grade schoolteacher (175).

In chapters 10-12, Luis Palau moves from his thoughts on certain individuals to other topics. In chapter 10, he shares his thoughts about the unity of the church (179). In Chapter 11, Luis Palau shares his thoughts about dying. In chapter 12, he shares his thoughts about the future (217).

*Palau: A Life of Fire* is an easy read and written for any age of those who are interested in biographies and autobiographies. A record of Palau's life and influences makes for a very interesting book, one that readers cannot put down. The author pours out his thoughts in every chapter. Luis Palau's life is filled with adventure, risk, and faith, and it will spark the reader with a fiery faith to live out the Good News of Jesus Christ. I would recommend this book for anyone who is interested in the life of Palau or well-known church leaders.

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***Authorized: The Use and Misuse of the King James Bible.*** By Mark Ward. Bellingham, WA: Lexham P, 2018. 168 pp. Paperback \$12.99; Digital \$8.99.

Readers of Mark Ward's *Authorized: The Use and Misuse of the King James Bible* will find its trim size (5x8) delightful and refreshing. As the title suggests, Ward makes the case that there are valid uses of the KJV as well as invalid ones. But that is not what makes the book delightful, in my opinion. Rather, it is his down-to-earth, everyday speech, and good wit and humor. Plus, it quickly becomes clear that he is well-read in a wide variety of fields, especially in the area of Bible translation history and translation philosophy. This, coupled with his varied ministry venues, allows

him to draw upon some rich experiences and address the key issues clearly and effectively.

After a brief introduction (4 pages), Ward unfolds his argument in seven chapters, with the last chapter essentially functioning as his concluding plea. The back matter consists of an Epilogue (2 pages), Acknowledgements (2 pages), and Endnotes (11 pages).

Ward's thesis is that due to the changing nature of language, the academy must produce new translations on a regular basis (about every 30 years or so) in order to ensure that the common man has access to God's word in the everyday language that he speaks. He appeals to 1 Corinthians 14:11, where Paul underscores the principle that understandable language is what fosters edification in the church. Thus, Ward applies that principle in both a positive and negative way. Positively, this implies the need for new translations that keep up with the changing nature of language. Negatively, it means that since the KJV was published over 400 years ago, there are many words and phrases that are cumbersome at best and a stumbling block at worst for those new or immature believers who have not yet established good Bible reading disciplines.

Although Ward's thesis sounds a bit polemical, his delivery is anything but that. In fact, in most of the chapters he underscores the rich heritage of the KJV and argues for the many benefits it still yields today. Thus, he argues that there is a proper use of the KJV. Ward is clear, however, that he is not in favor of preachers preaching from the KJV, or teachers teaching from it, or children memorizing verses from it, or evangelists evangelizing from it. All such would be the *misuse* of the KJV because this violates 1 Corinthians 14:11. Rather, its proper use is primarily in personal study by consulting it as a reliable version among many others to enrich one's understanding of God's word.

He unpacks his thesis in greater detail in the last chapter where he seeks to level a broadside against what he calls "Bible translation tribalism." Such tribalism he defines as "the belief that a group's chosen translation is one of many marks of its superiority over other groups" (124). This must stop, he cries. He sees all the various translations available today as a field of treasure; as an embarrassment of riches. "So let's enjoy them," he urges. He wants to see the tide turn where people no longer ask which is the *best*

translation, but instead, which is the most *useful* one? And that depends on what any given person wants to use it for.

Those who are looking for a volume that will help them refute a “KJV-only” mindset will not find it here. To be sure, he is not in favor of such a mindset, but that is not his aim. The KJV is part of a rich heritage and should be treasured as such. It should not be thrown away, but balance is the key. It no longer qualifies as a vernacular translation. But it is still a treasured resource for the right reasons and occasions. The last paragraph of the book captures his sentiment fairly well:

[It] is a misuse of the KJV to ask it to do today what it did in 1611, namely, to serve as a vernacular English translation. For public preaching ministry, for evangelism, for discipleship materials, indeed for most situations outside individual study, using the KJV violates Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 14. The value of vernacular translation is so great that we must fight to protect it .... We need God’s word in our language, not in someone else’s (137-38).

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***Can “White” People be Saved? Triangulating Race, Theology, and Mission.*** Edited by Love L. Sechrest, Johnny Ramírez-Johnson, and Amos Yong. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. Softcover xii+336 pages. \$30.00.

The series *Missiological Engagements: Church, Theology and Culture in Global Contexts* “charts interdisciplinary and innovative trajectories in the history, theology and practice of Christian mission at the beginning of the third millennium.” It features leading thinkers from “evangelical, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions.” This book fits within the last of the guiding questions for the series: “What innovations in the theology and practice of missions are needed for renewed and revitalized Christian witness in a

postmodern, postcolonial, post-secular and post-Christian world?” (Quotations are from the series description on the InterVarsity Press website.)

The provocative title of this volume in the series attracts the eye and suggests that the book will be dealing with issues of race, but the subtitle narrows the discussion of that subject into some specific disciplines. Willie James Jennings, in the first essay, explains the “whiteness project” and the triangulation of race, theology, and mission, joining his voice to that of the other essayists in a prayer that there might be an end to the fusion of whiteness and Christianity in the church and missions. He describes whiteness as “people caught up in a deformed building project aimed at bringing the world to its full maturity . . . maturity of mind and body, land and animal (use), landscape and building, family and government . . .” (pp. 28-29). As explained in the essays of the book, this deformed project comes together with missions in that in the history of missions, many (but not all) Europeans and Americans with a critical and patronizing mindset toward the people of the rest of the world have gone to the rest of the world with the gospel plus a plan to mature the people to become more like them; and, in the process, taking many things away from the people.

Between the Introduction and Conclusion of the book, eleven essays are divided into five parts: I. Race and Place at the Dawn of Modernity; II. Race and the Colonial Enterprise; III. Race and Mission to Latin America; IV. Race in North America Between and Beyond Black-and-White; V. Scriptural Reconsiderations and Ethnoracial Hermeneutics. The concluding “essay” is a clever *Screwtape*-like letter from the Archdemon of Racialization to Her Angels in the U.S.

The authors of these essays are personally engaged in the fight against racism and discrimination in churches and institutions in the West, and they write with wisdom and fervor. They trace the philosophical basis of racism, the twisting of the Scriptures that justified it, the demeaning views of fellow humans held by those who consider themselves superior (views not limited to white supremacists). They challenge Christianity in general, and evangelical Christians in particular, to critically examine themselves concerning race, discrimination, ethnic diversity, migrants, and

others “not like us” to surrender to God every thought, emotion, and prejudice that corrupts love and destroys unity in this world.

One complaint that must be raised concerning a few of the essays is that they are written in philosophically rich academic language that obfuscates the vital information that begs to be communicated. An example would be Andrew T. Draper’s essay, “The End of ‘Mission.’” While it is an extremely helpful testimony of a servant of God who has obviously, humbly attempted to overcome his own “Whiteness” in ministry, and it is filled with useful examples, the message would be lost to many practitioners of mission because of language, references and allusions they would not understand. These essays were written to be delivered in a missiology lecture series in 2017 at Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of Intercultural Studies: an academic setting. Yet, the subject is of such importance that it demands clarity of presentation so that its message will be repeated and applied in our churches and in missions.

One example of clarity and usefulness of presentation is Johnny Ramirez-Johnson’s essay “Intercultural Communication Skills for a Missiology of Interdependent Mutuality,” in which he uses the Peter and Cornelius incident in the book of Acts and the Image-IQ Inventory to challenge the reader to acknowledge the difficulties of, and by the power of God to develop new skills for, intercultural communication. For the white child of God who has grown up in communication primarily with white peers, these skills are essential.

Each of the essays displays careful research, conveys much needed information, and produces great conviction in the reader. Most readers will disagree with some characterizations of the use of the Scriptures, as well as the use of Scripture and some theological and exegetical positions espoused by the contributors. Nevertheless, few readers will come away with a desire to remain silent and unaffected by the issues dealt with here. Every missionary, pastor, teacher, theological student, and Christian worker should read this book.

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***Good Arguments: Making Your Case in Writing and Public Speaking.*** By Richard A. Holland Jr. and Benjamin K. Forrest. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 138 pages. \$18.00.

Richard Holland (PhD, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is an assistant professor of philosophy at Grand Canyon University, and Benjamin Forrest (EdD, Liberty University) is an associate dean of general studies at Liberty University. Holland and Forrest have provided an accessible guide to critical thinking and sharpened communication, purposefully constructed for a Christian pedagogical context. In the volume's introduction, they maintain that good argumentation reflects God's character, who created us as rational beings in his image (xiii). Moreover, they contend that taking the time to develop one's argumentation reflects respect for one's interlocutors (xiv). Preaching, apologetic encounters, written communication, and even everyday life call for honed communication. They explain, "All of these reasons for understanding and employing good arguments motivated us to write this book" (xvi). This introductory material provides the theological rationale of the book, so perhaps a nod toward the noetic results of the fall might have rounded out the theological framework.

Chapter 1 tackles "The Basics of Good Arguments," including the rudimentary principles of syllogistic reasoning (properly arguing from premises to a necessarily valid conclusion). Chapter 2 describes and contrasts deductive and inductive logic. A clear and consistent implementation of the customary vocabulary of sound vs. unsound (as well as valid vs. invalid) would tighten the presentation of these initial chapters. The example of inductive reasoning given on page 22 could actually be interpreted as suppressing an inductive conclusion which then becomes the basis for subsequent deductive reasoning (thereby nuancing how the authors use the case study to discuss particulars and universals within inductive argumentation). The second chapter ends by explaining basic laws of logic, such as the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle. "The laws of logic just tell us how good reasoning works, and they are universally applicable across all times and all cultures" (30).

The beginning of chapter 3 discusses the formal fallacies of affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent. The second half of the chapter covers informal fallacies, ranging from *ad hominem* to

*ad populum*, and from begging the question to creating a false dilemma. Illustrative examples pepper the pages, spicing up the discussion. A few examples, however, could be disputed using strict logic. For example, the authors propose the following as a true dilemma: “If you are going to make a turn, you must turn either to the right or to the left” (44). Critically thinking “outside the box,” however, this represents a false dilemma for an airplane pilot. In such an instance, one is not limited to left or right turns alone, as one could make an upward or downward turn.

The discussion of “A Brief Lesson in Epistemology” (50-51) explains knowledge as “justified true belief.” In sum, “knowledge is *belief* that is held for *good reasons* and is *true*” (51). This epistemological discussion could be sharpened by the inclusion of the complexities of so-called “Gettier examples.” Moreover, Holland and Forrest connect “fact” with “objective” and public/external availability, and they attach “opinion/belief” with “subjective” and private/internal mental states (52-56). One consequence of this dual configuration is that propositional statements about one’s internal states cannot function as “facts,” even though they correspond to reality. Even if “I feel disappointed” in reality, this cannot be a fact, only an opinion/belief. The authors rightfully acknowledge, “Of course these descriptions are a bit oversimplified, but they are sufficient to get us going in the right direction to understand why this is important when we talk about claims made in arguments” (49).

The fifth chapter enjoins the defining of terms: “when you properly define your terms, you can avoid misunderstanding and confusion, and you can make your arguments stronger than they otherwise would have been” (57). Holland and Forrest caution against relying upon dictionaries alone since “they report how words are used; they don’t actually create the definitions” (61). Put differently, dictionaries reflect the “semantic range” of a word’s meaning, but they cannot necessarily identify a word’s meaning in a specific literary context. The authors also warn against stipulation, encroachment, equivocation, and self-serving definitions (65-68). The following chapter focuses upon analogies: “Properly employed, analogies can be powerful tools for communication” (69). Relevant analogies with compounded similarities are more powerful than “forced” analogies.

Chapter 7 concerns causal reasoning. The authors caution against conflating coincidental correlation with causation. They specifically warn against the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy, the unwarranted assumption that previous events have caused subsequent events. Furthermore, they discuss such intricacies as remote causation, contributive causation, composite causation, and mutual causation. It is always necessary to consider alternatives seriously (89). One could complicate a few of the chapter's own illustrations with alternative reasoning. As an example of correlation, they assert, "People who pray more often tend to report a deeper sense of connection to God" (81). But cannot frequent crying out to God, in some instances, stem from a sense of lacking a connection to God? The authors also declare that "Visits to the doctor's office do not cause the flu" (89). Certainly, just because a high percentage of visitors to doctors' offices have the flu does not mean that such visits cause their flu (a fallacious reversal of cause and effect, which is the authors' point). But could complex causality also play a role in some cases? A patient who visits the physician for an ear infection may contract the flu from a virus in the office left by a flu-ridden patient. In such specific circumstances, visits to the doctor's office can indeed cause the flu.

The subsequent chapter, entitled "On Good Authority," calls readers to employ recognized, current, objective, scholarly, and relevant authorities (similar to the so-called "CRAAP test" developed at California State University and commonly used in information studies—currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose). For instance, Holland and Forrest maintain that while shopping for a new refrigerator, the expertise of an appliance salesperson is more important than the expertise of an appliance technician, since the salesperson's goal is to satisfy customers who will not return the products, thereby not negating earned commissions. On the other hand, a salesperson may be motivated by the same commissions framework to "push" an equally satisfying yet more expensive product. The authors also properly recommend interacting with sources that disagree with one's perspective.

The final chapter, "Making Your Case," summarizes six tips embodied in the volume: "Know your audience and your purpose," "Check your attitude," "Start and finish with your claim," "Clearly show your reasoning," "Support the argument with arguments," and "Explain the benefits for the audience." Holland and Forrest remind

readers that winning the argument while losing one's audience does not constitute an ultimate victory. The volume wraps up with three tools: an appendix of case studies, a glossary of key terms, and an index of topics. The case studies could serve as discussion starters in the classroom or as the basis of written assignments.

The few critical reflections I mention above should not detract from the overall success of this splendid introductory volume. Rather, such tweaks of reasoning and delivery serve as small reminders of the continuing work of refined thinking and nuanced communication. Holland and Forrest's guidebook could serve as an effective text in either critical thinking or research writing coursework. Improving one's critical thinking and persuasive argumentation skills is well worth the time and effort. This volume is effectively designed to refine both abilities. I therefore confidently recommend a careful perusal as a worthy investment, for both students and general readers. Holland and Forrest have made a winning case for good argumentation.

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