

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, by Daniel B. Wallace. Zondervan, 1996. 797 pp. \$39.95.

For a number of years, many of us teachers of second-year Greek complained about the need for a new textbook. The old standard, Dana and Mantey, was not wearing well. Among other things, many of its examples are either questionable or outright wrong. I gave up on it fifteen years ago, switching to Vaughan and Gideon. The latter had the advantage of integrating grammar with selected readings of the NT; however, it was weak on the grammar side and thus had to be supplemented with handouts. A few years ago (1994) we were treated to Richard Young's *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*. Though this book has many commendable qualities, its strong emphasis on linguistics and discourse analysis has not gained for it a wide following among us more traditionalists. More recently (1995) Wesley Perschbacher has produced *New Testament Greek Syntax: An Illustrated Manual*. The subtitle tells it all; this volume has many illustrations of syntactical categories but hardly any grammatical explanations—sort of a thicker Brooks and Winbery. Now comes Dan Wallace's new grammar. Its unusual name, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (GGBB)*, is apparently the work of the publisher, who obviously wishes to market it as the appropriate text for further study once the student graduates from Bill Mounce's beginning grammar, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, also published by Zondervan. However, Wallace's work is more aptly described by the subtitle, *An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*.

Many Greek teachers were already familiar with portions of this book. Its history goes back over a period of almost twenty years when Wallace was producing syntax notes while teaching at Dallas Theological Seminary and, for a short time, at Grace Theological Seminary. These notes grew to hundreds of pages, and, finally, to this published grammar. Because many of us were well aware of the quality of these notes, we were eagerly awaiting the day of publication, and, to be perfectly candid, we have not been disappointed. Certainly, there are minor complaints with *GGBB*, which I shall speak to shortly, but, overall, Wallace has given us the most important grammar to appear in years.

One reason for the importance of *GGBB* is the overall quality of the

work. Wallace has been a dedicated student of Greek grammar for many years and has grappled with syntactical issues as much as, if not more than, anyone in recent years. The results are readily evident. In *GGBB* we not only find superior explanations of syntactical principles and categories but also a number of important corrections to the work of others, not to mention valuable insights which have not been seen before. All of this is packaged in what is, with but few exceptions, the most readily accessible of the intermediate/advanced grammars.

*GGBB* contains the most thorough and nuanced explanations of grammatical categories to be found in any grammar. Each category is first clearly defined. This is followed by other sections appropriate to the category, such as “keys to identification,” “amplification,” “clarification,” “structure and semantics,” “cautions,” and several others. Finally, there are a good number of clear examples taken from various parts of the NT.

There are numerous other features which deserve mentioning, but only a few can be touched on here. *GGBB* makes good use of charts, tables, and graphs. Many of these were produced using the *acCordance* computer program, based on the *Gramcord* database, which played a significant part in the production of *GGBB*. Also, Wallace is acquainted with, and has adopted, many of the insights of modern linguistic theory; yet, *GGBB* is not overburdened by much of its technical vocabulary. Many of the scriptural examples given for the different syntactical categories are often accompanied by important exegetical discussions in light of the particular grammatical point. These discussions can go on for several paragraphs, even pages, and thus are evidence that *GGBB* is truly an exegetical grammar. The upshot of all this is that Wallace has given us a valuable exegetical as well as grammatical tool. One can more easily mine these nuggets by using the extensive Scripture index. Unfortunately, the first two printings of *GGBB* contained no subject index. Recently, Zondervan has made available, separately, both a subject and Greek-word index. These *are* included in the third printing.

*GGBB* offers a number of new insights into Greek grammar. Some have been previously noted by grammarians; however, they have often been misunderstood or not fully developed. For example, *GGBB* presents an important clarification and expansion of the work of E. C. Colwell on the Greek article. The same can be said for the so-called Granville Sharp rule. Wallace carefully explains Sharp and then goes on to deal with similar constructions involving plural and impersonal nouns, an area where there has been significant confusion. *GGBB* also contains an excellent discussion clarifying how one distinguishes a subject from its predicate nominative.

A common criticism one hears about *GGBB* is its tendency to multiply categories, and, to some extent, this criticism is justified. Wallace

admits that the difference between some categories is mild (e.g., p. 521). I, personally, do not find this to be a great problem, since the categories are usually carefully distinguished from one another, though it must be admitted that it is often daunting for students to discover there are over thirty kinds of genitives. Wallace has tried to lessen this problem pedagogically by marking the most important categories with an arrow (➔) symbol. Probably the only way to get through this book in a second-year Greek course is to focus only on these marked categories. New categories in Wallace's grammar, like the attributed genitive, are important contributions that help explain a number of texts (e.g., Phil 1:22). Also, the inclusion of a simple apposition category for each of the five cases helps fill a gap in most grammars, whose absence has generally been a stumbling block to the novice student. Wallace does follow the five-case system but provides subdivisions according to the eight-case plan.

There are some things, mostly minor, in *GGBB* to complain about. (1) There are a number of printing errors, but these should be corrected in subsequent printings. (2) Occasionally, one does find an explanation in need of more clarity (pp. 143, 241, 244). (3) In light of what some perceive as a tendency for *GGBB* to multiply syntactical categories, I still cannot, even after personal correspondence with Wallace, agree with reducing that number by including the dative of place under dative of sphere (p. 153). (4) It is difficult to understand some of the examples on page 57 ("Nominative for Vocative") unless one has first read footnote 6 on page 67, thus discovering that Wallace treats all plural forms which might be either vocative or nominative as nominative in form. (5) More substantial is my considerable disagreement with Wallace's belief that an "author may, at times, be *intentionally* ambiguous" [his emphasis] (p. 33, n. 7). This results in things like the plenary genitive (both objective and subjective at the same time, p. 119), which I find totally unconvincing. I also think that the subjective genitive understanding of the "faith of Christ" phrases in the NT is clearly wrong, in spite of Wallace's arguments to the contrary (p. 116). (6) Occasionally, Wallace seems to overstate the evidence as when he says that "although most scholars treat ἄγγελος κυρίου in the NT as 'an angel of the Lord,' there is no *linguistic* basis for doing so" [his emphasis] (p. 252). Yet his own statistics on the previous page would seem to allow for it on occasion. Other points could be made, but, fortunately, none of these problems diminish my overall, very positive assessment of *GGBB*.

This is a large work (797 pp.), and so Zondervan is correct in marketing it as a combination intermediate and reference grammar. Because of its length, many teachers may feel it is not suitable for a second-year course. I have had similar thoughts myself. But the value of this work is such that the student should be exposed to it while in school so that he may have it available to consult when he is out in ministry. I have

observed that students tend not to buy any more grammars than required by their college or seminary course requirements.

*GGBB* is already being widely used in colleges and seminaries. No serious student of NT Greek will want to be without it. Because *GGBB* is truly an exegetical grammar, it is the best grammar for the pastor who wishes to keep up with and effectively use his Greek. By making frequent use of the Scripture index when preaching through various texts, one can both polish and multiply his knowledge of Greek grammar, as well as improve the exegetical basis for one's sermons. Greek teachers are sometimes asked which grammar should the student own. While we hate to be limited to one choice, at least now, if forced to choose, that choice is much easier—*GGBB*.

William W. Combs

Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, by Mal Couch, Gen. Ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996. 442 pp. \$22.99.

Subtitled “A Practical Guide To the People, Viewpoints, and History of Prophetic Studies,” this book fulfills a longstanding need for a common source of information on premillennialism in general and dispensationalism in particular, as well as related prophetic themes. The purpose of the *Dictionary*, according the general editor, is to “explain the major tenets of dispensationalism as it has been taught historically...” (p. 10), which sounds a little more narrow than the subtitle indicates. As such, the book is generally unfriendly to the new revisionism known as “progressive dispensationalism.” This is especially seen in the articles on the subject by Charles C. Ryrie and Robert L. Thomas (pp. 96–99; cf. p. 152). The book seems to have arisen out of the Pre Trib Study Center, a think tank called together first in 1992 by Tim LaHaye and now directed by Thomas Ice.

There are 56 contributors, which inevitably makes for some unevenness in the quality of the articles. The articles by Roy Beacham seem especially well researched, theologically correlated, and exegetically articulate. He reflects more of the older Grace Seminary outlook instead of the prevailing Dallas Seminary positions seen in most of the book. Beacham's explanation of salvation by faith in the dispensations (pp. 115–17) is very good. His analysis of the eschatology of Joel (pp. 216–19) is thorough, and he correctly identifies Peter's Day-of-