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***The Manifold Beauty of Genesis One: A Multi-Layered Approach***, By Gregg Davidson and Kenneth J. Turner. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021. 210 pp. Softcover \$17.93.

*The Manifold Beauty of Genesis One: A Multi-Layered Approach* is written by Gregg Davidson (Ph.D., University of Arizona), chair of the School of Geology and Geological Engineering at the University of Mississippi, and Kenneth Turner (Ph.D., SBTS), professor of OT and Biblical Languages at Toccoa Falls College. The book's aim is to show "that Genesis 1 contains layers of truth" (7). This statement is heavily qualified, but hopes to search for a "richness" in which multi-layered assessments/angles/emphases can contribute to complementary and expanded "appreciation of the grandeur and beauty" of the text of Genesis 1 while minimizing "unhealthy squabbles that undermine" the church's mission (12). After an introductory appeal to avoid such squabbles common to the young earth creationist and evolutionary debates, the authors then detail their model approach as applied to genealogies. The text then seeks to discuss seven layers, that of song (Layer 1), analogy (Layer 2), polemic (Layer 3), covenant (Layer 4), temple (Layer 5), calendar (Layer 6), land (Layer 7), and a chapter of conclusion.

The chapter on methodology begins with a hearty assertion that "Genesis 1 is history" (15). The authors then begin to describe the difference in historiographical expectations between Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai (a welcome, though implicit, nod to Mosaic authorship) and the current western audience of today. This methodological section attempts to show how a multi-layered approach can enlighten the interpretation of "plain and straightforward . . . history" such as those found in genealogies by evincing a richness of "literary devices and theological nuance" (15). Fans of Genesis would have rightfully expected an example from one of the numerous genealogies which Genesis is structured around to prove the case in point, however the authors instead opt to work from the genealogies of Matthew and Luke providing a comparison and contrastive evaluation. Their explicit reasoning for doing this is telling, "A deeper look at the opening of the New Testament sets the stage for an investigation of the opening of the Old Testament" (15). The chapter on Layer 2: Analogy, likewise begins with an appeal to New Testament material. This methodological concept seemingly

betrays a NT priority hermeneutic. Indeed, it is this hermeneutical leap which many dispensationalists ardently oppose, convinced that the genealogies of Genesis should influence the interpretation of Matthew and Luke's, not vice-versa. This methodological predisposition will raise concerns, evincing the authors' normal way of collating biblical materials in a way which seems to emphasize latter revelation. Though this may be fashionable among some evangelical circles, the same predisposition to prioritize later revelation is seemingly awarded to natural revelation through the authors' rejection of literal 24-hour days in Genesis 1, due to the spherical shape of the earth (23). This tendency is worth brief examination.

The objection to evenings and mornings without a sun is based on the idea that there was no designated light source, and that God was the light. The argument, as the author's articulate, is that this view requires that 1) God became the light; 2) that God was not omnipresent after he became light and must have fixed his brilliance in one spot; and 3) that God was simultaneously the sole observer from a fixed spot on the earth (23). These assertions can be challenged from within Genesis itself. First, light could have existed in some other form, and later confined to a different source, much like the primordial waters which seemingly had some boundary before Gen. 1:6, even if that boundary was the confines of the whole earth before the "sea." The second notion seems to discount the trinity, or the idea of a special localized presence, which is evinced in the text of Genesis itself via God walking in the garden with Adam and Eve, and in later theophanies. It is reasonable to assume that God can locate himself particularly on the earth, entering the time space continuum without forfeiting omnipresence, especially if the localized presence is that of the second member of the trinity. Thirdly, the text does not require God to be the sole observer of day and night from one fixed position, but to reveal this work from the point of view of the implied reader, someone located at a fixed time and place on the earth.

The authors seem to allow outside data to influence interpretations of the text in questionable ways by awarding more recent natural revelation, which was not available to the original audience, a priority in theologizing. The same type of problematic argument arises in Layer 2: Analogy concerning 24-hour days, where the analogical view is accused of circular reasoning (50–51). This is

problematic because it fails to note the authorial intention and artistry found in Genesis 1. If the days were not meant to be understood as 24-hours, a grammatically feasible use of יום, then why state “there was evening, and there was morning”? These are temporal clauses, and there is no reasonable explanation that the biblical author, or the original audience, would have been able to understand these temporal deictic markers any other way at the time of composition. The authors could have profitably supplemented their work by detailing their theological method, particularly as it pertains to collating biblical materials and integrating extrabiblical truth claims, so that readers might better understand their approach, presuppositions, and convictions.

Though the authors have an obvious disenchantment with the young earth creationist view, there are multiple aspects of their work which are worthy of praise. The chapter on polemics, Layer 3, was especially useful if the Pentateuch is viewed as a unified work, making good use of ANE comparative literature. Likewise, the chapter on covenants is rightfully emphasized since that concept forms “the backbone of Scripture” (77). The significance of the idea for Genesis 1 is the role of man in creation, and the ecological responsibility of mankind is something that is often neglected in evangelical works, to which this book offers a fair and timely corrective. Layer 5 detailing the temple concept is one which must be grappled with considering ANE discoveries. The most novel idea which the authors draw attention to is the calendar layer in Layer 6 positing that the texts of the Pentateuch were composed for liturgical use whereby the first triad of days would remind the audience of the festival of first fruits, while the second corresponds to the harvest, and day seven was an invitation to feast (137–138). This is a new interpretation and worthy of consideration and exploration.

While the book has an obvious bias against young earth creationism, it ultimately useful because it encourages the reader to ask different questions of the text. The authors could have been more faithful to their intention of avoiding what they deemed as “unhealthy squabbles” by positing their polemics against literal days in a different way. Their attempt to view Genesis 1 through a multitude of perspectives is worthy of imitation, even if some of their conclusions are to be otherwise rejected.

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***Psalms, Volume 1: The Wisdom Psalms. A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching (Kerux Commentaries).*** By W. Creighton Marlowe and Charles H. Savelle, Jr. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2021. 240 pp. Hardcover \$27.99.

W. Creighton Marlowe, Ph.D., currently serves as the Associate Professor of Old Testament at Evangelical Theological Faculty in Leuven, Belgium. He is a published author in several books and numerous journal publications. Charles H. Savelle, Jr., Ph.D., teaches as an adjunct professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Marlowe is the “exegetical author” and Savelle the “preaching author.” The latter aspect is a distinctive of the Kerux Commentaries series put out by Kregel Ministry as indicated by the subtitle, *A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching*. The word “Kerux” is from the Greek referring to a herald who announces official proclamations of the ruling magistrate, which the New Testament authors repurposed for those who proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The *Wisdom Psalms* volume is the first of a three-volume commentary on Psalms (with volumes 2 and 3 being *Lament Psalms* and *Praise Psalms*, respectively). They are unusually organized by literary genre, rather than canonical placement within the Psalter. While this might have some value for those who desire to preach from the Psalms by genre, others may find it less than desirable. The is because genre does not have clearly defined boundaries. There is

scholarly consensus on *Wisdom Psalms* as a genre, but there is much disparity over which ones should be included or excluded. For example, this volume includes fourteen psalms: 1, 15, 19, 37, 49, 73, 78, 91, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128, and 133. I quickly compared this with a volume off my shelf by OT scholar C. Hassell Bullock to see which ones he identified as such. He lists only nine, seven of which are included in the Kerux volume (viz., 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133) plus two others (viz., 32, 34). He also provides a chart of four other OT scholars and their respective designations. There were only five psalms that all four scholars included in their respective lists, namely, 1, 37, 49, 112, and 128. Such disparity would perhaps indicate an uneven reception for this work.

After the frontmatter, the commentary begins on page 29 with a forty-one page “Introduction to the Psalter.” The author (Marlowe?) briefly addresses all the common introductory matters (e.g., *authorship, readers, place and date of writing*, etc.). In addition, he provides seven charts and ten sidebars throughout the introduction. Most of the charts are embedded in a single page. But one of them spans seven pages and lists all 150 psalms by genre. As for the sidebars, these are set off in a shaded textbox designed to quickly catch the reader’s attention. Again, there is much helpful material here, but a word of caution is in order. On page 29, the author states rather dogmatically that the superscriptions of the psalms are not part of the original text and therefore are not to be regarded as divinely inspired. This is repeated (almost redundantly) two pages later in a sidebar titled “Divine Inspiration, Providence, and Canon.” In this sidebar, the author adds that the superscriptions were a result of “human invention and ingenuity.” Then he states, “So, inspiration cannot be claimed for such editorial activities.” Many scholars would take issue with this conclusion (myself included). Since the issue is debated, it would seem appropriate that he acknowledge the alternate viewpoint. I should note, however, that he does acknowledge there are those who argue for accepting the authority of the superscriptions due to God’s providence. But that is an argument of an entirely different nature than seeing them as under the inspiration of God.

As for the treatment of the fourteen psalms included in the commentary, I found good help both from an exegetical and preaching viewpoint. One example is the exegetical treatment of

Psalm 119. The author gave titles to each of the twenty-two sections of this lengthy alphabetic acrostic. Of course, few people agree entirely with the minutiae of exegetical detail in any given commentary, and this one is no exception. Yet, for the 176 verses of this Psalm, I found little to quibble with and much to profit from. On the homiletical contributions, I would say that this is probably the greatest strength of this volume overall. Perhaps the treatment of Psalm 73 is the best example of this. The author offers these three points:

- God is good, but the bad looks good to me (73:1–3).
- God is good and the bad are bad even if they look good (73:4–20).
- God is good, so I will praise him even when things are bad (73:21–28).

Despite the helpful material previously mentioned, there are, nevertheless, some significant shortcomings. The first is how the commentary identifies and treats messianic psalms. In the comment on Psalm 2, the author asserts that messianic theology did not emerge until the intertestamental period. He then asserts that NT authors read messianic significance into the OT that was not originally there. On page 63, the author says, “We have only two OT texts using ‘anointed one’ that could be applied to Jesus. So, to talk literally about OT Messianic prophecy is an overstatement and anachronistic.” In the treatment of Psalm 91 (esp. v. 12, “lest you strike your foot against a stone”), rather than seeing this as messianic, he passes it off as hyperbolic language for the psalmist’s personal situation. Then, on Psalm 37:13, (“The Lord laughs at the wicked for he sees his days coming”), he offers this comment: “A text in a psalm ... as this one ... is not a theological treatise; rather, it is an emotion laden [poetic] expression.” I see this as unwarranted restriction on biblical poetry. The biblical interpreter must take each psalm on a case-by-case basis. There are ample psalms that are either philosophical (e.g., Psalm 14) or contain strong theological propositions (e.g., Psalm 19).

Finally, I must make some critical remarks about the composition and layout of the book. There are an embarrassing number of mistakes throughout the commentary. The most significant are the many inversions of the Hebrew words throughout. A clear example



is on page 59, in a subsection titled *Afterlife* (“*Sheol*”/ שְׁאוֹל) — except in the commentary, the Hebrew is written backward as לוֹאֵשׁ — and this is even in a heading. In the commentary under this subheading, there are eight Hebrew words spelled backwards (*sheol*, 5x; *ruach* (2x), *nephesh* (1x). This type of error happens on pages 98 (3x), 99 (1x), 134 (1x), 171 (3x), 180 (2x). There is at least one more instance on page 150, where even the Tetragrammaton is spelled backward (!). In addition to these, there are other types of errors. There is a sidebar that begins in column A and ends in column B, but the shading does not extend to column B. This makes it initially difficult to know where the sidebar ends. There are also a few places where Hebrew words of only four or five letters are hyphenated (except without a hyphen). In my opinion, single Hebrew words should be forced to stay on the same line. On page 179, there is an extraneous verb that should be deleted. On page 180, the subheading omits part of the verse reference. On page 181 there are two errors: (1) there is an incorrect formatting of a citation from HALOT, and (2) there is a random period in the middle of a sentence.

Overall, I find it difficult to endorse this book. There is undoubtedly worthwhile material that would benefit a discerning pastor, teacher, or scholar. In particular, the theological focus and the preaching and teaching strategies are generally reliable and helpful. But the commentary’s low view of the superscriptions, the minimizing of messianic prophecy, and the apparent reluctance to allow biblical poetry to present dogmatic theological truth are sufficiently strong drawbacks for me. Add to that the numerous errors of either copyediting or proofreading and that makes an even stronger reason to withhold unqualified endorsement.

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***ESV Expository Commentary: Deuteronomy-Ruth.*** By August H. Konkel, David Reimer, Miles V. Van Pelt, and Mary Willson Hannah. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021. 743 pp. Hardcover \$39.68.

The ESV Expository commentary seeks “to provide a clear, crisp, and Christ-centered explanation of the Biblical text” under the conviction that “all Scripture speaks of Christ” (10). The contributors have been asked to be “exegetically sound,” “biblically theological,” “globally aware,” “broadly informed,” “doctrinally conversant,” “pastorally useful,” “application-minded” and “efficient in expression” (10–11). This Christ-centered hermeneutic has rightly been challenged in exegesis, however, the expressed goal of the commentary as being biblically theological gives some measure of theoretical legitimacy to the process if the proper exegetical restraints and theological methods are employed. Given that this particular commentary is on the Old Testament, there are areas in which the hermeneutical and theological methods should be rigorously critiqued for validity. This volume covers the books of Deuteronomy-Ruth in protestant canonical order.

The section on Deuteronomy is written by August H. Konkel, who earned his Ph.D. from Westminster Theological Seminary and serves as Professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College and is President Emeritus of Providence University College and Seminary (13). Konkel rejects the idea that Deuteronomy was composed during the time of Josiah, noting that the book’s specific instruction antedate Josiah’s reforms (35) and should be considered “a record of the covenant of Moses, perpetuated by scribes and preached by the prophets” (35). Konkel maintains Moses’ dominant authorship while noting that “features such as historical notes and explanations of people groups in the prologue. . . were added by scribes in their presentation of the speeches of Moses” (32). Konkel describes the structure of Deuteronomy based on the three speeches of Moses (26) and finds the correlations between the book of Deut. and late second-millennium treaties through the inclusion of a historical prologue somewhat useful, he notes only that these correlations “should be accounted for” without basing the structure of the book on such treaties. Konkel rejects Martin Noth’s assessment of the book as an introduction to the former prophets (51) noting the steady abandonment of the Graff-Wellhausen hypothesis (51). The

response section of the Konkel's portion makes application to social issues concerning migrants and indigenous people (82, 108), theological descriptions of a just war (12, 118–120, 198–200), emphasizes the regular confession of faith for both the OT and NT believer (28, 42–44, 152, 189) and notes covenantal obligations (39, 47, 152, etc.). Throughout the work Konkel avoids appeals to post-cedent Scripture until the response, in which he will mention intertextual allusions and their applications to present context. The work also strives to be historically and archaeologically informed, noting the issues of associations of Moses with the Aten cult in Egypt (228), bronze age treaties (243), and similar useful archaeological data.

The section Joshua is written by David Reimer, who earned a D.Phil from Oxford, and serves as the Academic Dean of Faith Mission Bible College, and is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Saint Andrews (13). Reimer begins by asserting that the book of Joshua is bookended by the death of Israel's two great leaders, he also notes that much of the book "affirms life and hope" (547). Reimer asserts that Joshua divides into three main sections, chaps. 1–12 describing Israel's entry to Canaan, the second section, 13–21, describing the allotment, and the concluding address of Joshua in 22–24 (548). Reimer notes that the narrative setting is late bronze/early iron age but notes that much of the book from a much later period and different times with final shaping coming in the exilic period (549). Reimer notes the similarities between Joshua and other war annals of the ANE (550–551) as well as various other sub-genres of stories, and direct speech, prophetic oracle, and administrative texts. God's sovereignty and holiness is stressed throughout the work, as God sovereignly fulfills his promise to Abraham through settlement of Abraham's descendants into the land, and the punishment upon both Canaanites and Israelites for their transgression through death (551–552). Reimer does find the conquest to be an account of Genocide, though God ordained, and poses the question of God's morality as an interpretive challenge. Eventually, Reimer finds that this judgement upon the Canaanites was an example of God's holiness in which "the severity of God, the saving of some and the tolerance of others is just one pointer in the trajectory of salvation history that finds its climax in the incarnation, humiliation, crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord

Jesus Christ" (559). The idea of land as a central theme is well noted when Reimer states cites Oliver O'Donovan who asserted that for the Old Testament audience's view of God, "a piece of land is the token of their affection and disaffection" (559). There are questions concerning his conclusion on the theological significance of land, which Reimer bases on Ezekiel and the New Testament, whereby he asserts that in the OT, there is a "growing realization the this is place for God's presence is not finally the place of 'rest' of which the book speaks on several occasions" (560). The Biblical witness throughout both testaments seem to imply that there will be a special manifestation of God's presence in a new Jerusalem by which this specific land will yet again be central to God's economy; therefore, Reimer's conclusion may be an overstatement due to his personal theological persuasion. There was little archaeological material incorporated into this section of the commentary when compared to that of its predecessor. This is especially problematic for the section on Jericho where scholarly audiences would seem to demand at least mention of the archaeological debate surrounding the site and mention of Kathleen Kenyan and her conversation partners, even if Reimer was unwilling to make an assessment. Though it does not detract from his theological emphasis, which is well handled, it does limit its usefulness as a resource to those only interested in a theological exposition.

The section on judges is written by Miles Van Pelt (Ph.D., SBTS) who is the professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages at Reformed Theological Seminary. Van Pelt notes the pivotal role of the former prophets in the Hebrew Bible as an account which depicts Israel's "ongoing and ever-increasing unfaithfulness" to the Lord compared to the Lord's faithfulness to Israel (896). Van Pelt notes problems of dating, but agrees that 18:30 seems to suggest an exilic or post-exilic composition, though he concedes that the book may have come together in stages or been subject to minor editing (898). Van Pelt does an excellent job of noting various literary devices throughout his commentary, whether repetitions, inclusios, word play, fables, poetry, or riddles. This leads him to give a macrostructure which makes mention of the dual-introductions and dual-conclusions of the book, bracketing the long known 12 judges (6 major and 6 minor). He also notes a chiasmic pattern to the introductions and conclusions, outer brackets being a crises of Israel's

inheritance, and the inner brackets being crises of Israel's faith with idolatry (900). The theology of Judges in Van Pelt's work focuses on Kingship, with the continuing plight of Benjamin, and the continuing rise of Judah throughout the work (902). If Samuel was the author, which Van Pelt notes as a possibility, then a deliberate rhetorical effect of this nature would surely be emphatic. Van Pelt is also quick to note the redemptive history and covenantal ramifications in the book, God judges Israel's unfaithfulness, but forgives when they repent and cry out to him by raising up a deliverer. Van Pelt makes short work of the question of violence in judges by showing the Lord's desire to protect Israel from idolatry of the surrounding nation, but also notes succinctly that "the command of complete destruction foreshadows the eschatological judgement that will again against all sin" (910). Though this might seem simplistic, there was no need to rehash what was dealt with in the contents of the Joshua section, and this brief assertion of God's coming judgement against sin was a welcome synopsis. Van Pelt does not seek to villainize the character of the judges in the book since they are sinners in need of grace and they are awarded the epithets of heroes in Hebrews 11. He instead seeks to magnify God's work through human weakness throughout his section (911).

The section on Ruth was written by Mary Willson Hannah, who earned a Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and is the Director of Women in Ministry at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, TN. Hannah seeks to place Ruth firmly within the context of the book of Judges highlighting the mercy of the Lord, particularly to the "widowed, childless, discouraged Naomi" (1188). Throughout the work, Hannah rightfully identifies the main character as Naomi, and not Ruth, as some mistakenly assume. In fact, Hannah's work is the most literarily focused, as it presents a complete narrative account, structuring her outline of the book based on a plot introduction in 1:1–5 and subsequent sections based on locational changes denoting a scene change (1192). Hannah finds the central drama to be centered around the Lord's personal kindness to Naomi but uses these seemingly ordinary circumstances and afflictions to advance his salvific purposes while showing the compatibility of providence and human agency (1194). The institution of redemption was highlighted in light of the notion of covenant kindness; a *leitwort* she notes three times in the account (1196). Hannah is a staff minister

of an Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which does allow the ordination of women, and her section on preaching Ruth noted the need to “avoid overemphasizing the genealogical epilogue’s royal interest in a manner that overshadows the book’s dominant concern to display God’s loving kindness to ordinary Israelites” (1198). In Hannah’s desire to do this, she practices more safeguards than others in the same work when making New Testament connections to Christ. The ESV Expository Commentary on Deuteronomy-Ruth is extremely useful for ministers seeking a reformed evangelical treatment of these books. It is contemporary, succinct, and practical. It does leave something to be desired in interaction with various views outside of the reformed tradition and fails to engage critically with more scholarly theological works, whether inside the reformed tradition or not. Though it would be serviceable as pleasure reading, or a ready reference for biblical-theological application, it lacks the exegetical rigor that one would find in other commentaries for serious exegesis.

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***Voice and Mood: A Linguistic Approach.*** By David Mathewson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. 191 pp. Hardcover \$22.99.

David L. Mathewson has been a professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary since 2011. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Colorado Christian University, a Master of Arts from Denver Seminary, and a PhD in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen. His research interests include the Book of Revelation/apocalyptic literature, Greek/linguistics, and biblical theology.

This book consists of an introduction, two major sections containing three chapters each, and a conclusion. The introductory chapter lays out the significance of voice and mood for understanding the Greek verb, and it introduces the reader to the various issues discussed in the book. The first major section of the book is a discussion of the linguistic significance of voice in the Greek verbal

system. The first chapter is a discussion of recent scholarship on voice in the Greek verbal system. The second chapter argues for the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to the analysis of the Greek voice system. In the third chapter, the author argues that voice is an important and exegetically significant component of the Greek verbal system and the primary differentiation of voice is the author's perception of causality. The author concludes there are three voices (active-direct causality, middle-internal causality, and passive-external causality) in the Greek verbal system.

The second major section of the book is a discussion of the linguistic significance of mood in the Greek language. Chapter four consists of a discussion of recent scholarship on mood. The fifth chapter is a discussion of the Greek mood system based on principles of SFL. The chapter differentiates and proposes semantic meanings for the indicative, imperative, subjunctive, and optative. Chapter six is a discussion of the semantic meaning of infinitives and participles with the participle indicating the truthfulness or reality of the verbal action and the infinitive making no assertion about the truthfulness or reality of the verbal action. The concluding chapter sums up the various conclusions of each chapter. One key takeaway from this book is the idea from SFL that variations between the uses of various grammatical forms indicate choice.

This book has at least five positive qualities. First, the chapters on current scholarship for both voice and mood distill the scholarship down into an easily understandable presentation. Various scholars' views are presented in a manner that is understandable to Greek students from seminary up to the Ph.D. level. Second, the discussion of voice does a good job of examining the underlying meaning of the voice system in a concise manner with a minimum of jargon. This is exceptionally helpful in differentiating between the middle and passive voices. Third, the author's explanation of the mood system is excellent and compelling because it differentiates in a logical manner the distinctions between the oblique moods. This is exceptionally helpful in distinguishing between the subjunctive and optative moods, which are many times hard to distinguish semantically. Fourth, the book does a very good job of giving examples from the Greek New Testament for the various functional categories. This significantly strengthens the book's argument. Finally, the book is an easy read for anyone with at least two years of Greek study.

In spite of these positive attributes, the book has three negative qualities. First, the book assumes the validity of SFL, rather than offering proof that SFL is the correct way of understanding and categorizing the semantic meaning of various grammatical forms. This is problematic because while SFL has gained in popularity it not accepted by all Greek scholars. Second, the semantic explanations of participles and infinitives are simply stated and not proved. This chapter was by far the weakest of the chapters. Finally, the explanation of the future tense form seems to be a workaround to try to fit in Porter's aspectual/non-temporal understanding of the Greek verbal system. The fact that the author does not interact with any counter arguments concerning the nature of the future tense (most notable by Buist Fanning) when making his argument significantly lessens the strength of his argument. The explanation is therefore not convincing to this reviewer.

Overall, this is an excellent introduction the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to voice and mood characteristics of the Greek verb. The book is an easy read, challenging the reader to go deeper but not overwhelming the reader with too much technical information. This reviewer would recommend this book for anyone who has at least two years of Greek study, especially considering the modest price of \$22.95.

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***The Septuagint: What It Is and Why It Matters.*** By Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021. 216 pp. Softcover \$21.99.

Peruse the bookshelves of most evangelical pastoral offices and you will not likely find a Septuagint. As a matter of fact, most pastors know very little about the *Greek Old Testament*. Dare I say that a knowledge of this translation across the faculty of a typical evangelical university, Bible college, or Seminary is also lacking. And a course on the *Greek Old Testament* (Septuagint) is absent from most curriculums. Why is this? Is it because not many know “what it



is” and “why it’s important”? This book attends to these two questions with the goal of providing a brief introduction for laypeople, as well as informative to scholars.

The focus is to answer two questions, “What is the Septuagint?” and “Why does it matter?” These serve as the two sections of the book respectively. The first section handles topics such as: the problematic label of ‘Septuagint,’ the origin of the Septuagint, the approach in translating from the Hebrew to Greek, and the transmission of the Greek throughout history. The second section discusses: the value of the Septuagint for studying both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the nature of the authority of the Septuagint for today’s church. The book then concludes with valuable insight and resources for a pastor and Bible teacher.

The authors advise labeling the Septuagint with terminology that seems to be more consistent with the translation of the text. They conclude that scholars today may be classifying the text more uniformly and stable (Septuagint) than what it really is; hence, they offer “*Greek Old Testament*” as the classification that best fits. The next few chapters develop the reason(s) for this classification. They say, “Stepping back, we can see how it is unlikely that the Greek Pentateuch was prompted by a single, identifiable factor either outside or inside early Hellenistic Judaism itself” (55). Rather, there were several factors within the Jewish community in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods that contributed to Greek translations of the OT. This likely makes it difficult to conclude that a consistent translation of seventy men was produced, as some scholars claim. Although the translators collaborated as a group, they still approached their task in a careful and critical way. As a matter of fact, the translators demonstrated a control of the Greek language, but also wrote in stylized ways that produced a distinctive translation. Therefore, Lanier and Ross contend that the Greek translation was not a unified entity as scholars think. The Greek Old Testament developed, through both intentional and unintentional variants, Jewish recensions by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and others such as Origen and Lucian.

Lanier and Ross move on to the second section to admirably contend and encourage the student of the Bible to have a knowledge of the Greek Old Testament for a better understanding of both the Old and New Testament. Why? Using several Old Testament examples,

the authors show that the Greek translations can provide better forms of the text at the clause and word level, as well as insight into Jewish interpretive principles and theology. Using several New Testament examples, the authors also show that the Greek translations offer valid evidence for interpreters to handle quotations of the OT in the NT. It helps to ensure that interpreters have captured the NT author's point. Also, exposure to the Greek Old Testament assists the interpreter with nuances of meaning for key words and/or phrases in the NT. Finally, Lanier and Ross offer these important points. The "Septuagint" is not a unified, singular entity that is equally authoritative to inspired Scripture. The Greek Old Testament does not have the final say in theological matters but can help to shape the theology of NT authors. And do not ignore the Greek Old Testament, rather study it for the benefit of assisting in one's understanding of the OT and NT.

This book is a must read for any pastor, teacher, missionary, and student of God's word. It is relevant, easy-to-read, and informative for all levels of Bible knowledge. The summaries throughout the chapters, and the concluding thoughts that wrap-up the chapters provide valuable take-aways for the reader. Charts, examples, indices, and appendix serve the reader with useful information for future reflection and instruction.

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***One in Hope and Doctrine: Origins of Baptist Fundamentalism, 1870-1950.*** By Kevin Bauder and Robert Delnay. Arlington Heights, IL: Regular Baptist Books, 2014. 400 pp. Softcover \$29.99.

Nearly 400 pages in length, this book is for the history buff who enjoys getting into the weeds of Baptist fundamentalism. This is a comprehensive, and at times ponderous, treatment of the Baptist Fundamentalist movement from the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it traces several prominent movements, such as The Baptist Union, the Northern Baptist Convention, the General Association of Regular Baptists, and the Sword, it's as much about

the men who led these movements. Prominent personalities such as W. B. Riley, Oliver W. Van Osdel, Robert Ketchum, J. Frank Norris, and John R. Rice are profiled “warts and all.” In this respect, *One in Hope and Doctrine* underscores that men of various personalities, abilities, and giftedness are used of the Lord to initiate and develop religious movements that have significant impact for better or worse.

Bauder and Delnay provide an excellent treatment on the background, growth, and marked contrasts of liberalism and fundamentalism. The authors’ stated purpose or goal was to provide a comprehensive narrative of the development of Baptist fundamentalism, filling the void that exists on this historical subject, and “to tell a story that has never been heard” (14). Admittedly, however, it’s easy to get lost in the details of historical information. But, for those who want the nitty gritty on the origins of Baptist fundamentalism, they will not be disappointed.

Several features to this book include an illustrated timeline on the development of Baptist fundamentalism in North America (before the preface), photographs throughout the book, and an extensive index (388–396). Another notable part of the book are chapter 6, *The GARBC*, chapter 7, *Growing Pains* (185–262). In 75 pages, the authors tell the story of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches; its birth, growth, and development, and the difficulties and challenges during the formative years. In addition, chapter 8, *The Norris Legacy* (265–301) details the life and ministry of J. Frank Norris, a rather notorious if not infamous part of Baptist fundamentalism. The repeated conflicts between Ketchum and Norris are regrettable, but interesting. Ketchum endeavored to take the high road while Norris always seemed to be looking for a fight.

The Epilogue is a fitting summary of the book. On page 385, Bauder and Delnay cite that historically Baptists of whatever stripe held to the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible, inerrancy, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, His miracles, the substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of Christ, and His ascension and bodily return. In the third paragraph on page 385, they ask and answer the question, “What did it mean to be a fundamentalist?” Their comment that many showed a genuine devotion to Christ and walk in the Spirit, but some did not is very telling. Unfortunately, there were some notable clanging cymbals and noisy gongs in the history of Baptist

fundamentalism. Fortunately, however, there were more who had and showed biblical love.

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***Bullies and Saints: An Honest Look at the Good and Evil of Christian History.*** John Dickson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. 352 pp. Softcover \$28.99.

John Dickson's training and experience as an author (ca. twenty books), a lecturer, popular speaker, a documentarian (three TV documentaries), and critical thinker commands respect for the topic he tackles in this book under review: *Bullies and Saints: An Honest Look at the Good and Evil of Christian History*. Dickson has a Ph.D. in Ancient History from Macquarie University and served in that department from 2004 to 2017. From 2017 to 2021, he served in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney in Australia. For five years (2016–2021), he served as Visiting Academic in the Faculty of Classics at Oxford University.

The book is 352 pages. It includes 24 pages of frontmatter and 44 pages of backmatter, which means the book proper is 286 pages. Considering that he covers two millennia of church history—which, at times, can be quite convoluted—it is remarkable what he has done. And he has done it in a refreshing way. I find him to be an engaging author, making free use of the first-person perspective, many times connecting the reader with his own life and history. Little touches like that help make his content sing.

When I say that he makes his content “sing,” I’m deliberately playing off the same metaphor that he uses as a motif through the book. In fact, the title of chapter three is “The Beautiful Tune” and the epilogue at the very end is titled “The Beautiful Tune—A Coda.” He uses this music metaphor to complement his premise that although the church has at times throughout its history sung “off tune” or hit discordant notes, in the main, the church has sought to honor the image of God in man and promote the Judaic-Christian

ethic of love. These two motifs, he suggests, drives the melody so that at any point in history the church at large is always making beautiful music.

Dickson does not approach his task in a strictly linear fashion. In the first chapter, he offers a personal testimony of his disillusionment with the church altogether, as indicated in the chapter title “The Day I Lost Faith in the Church: A Christian Massacre in the Year 1099.” Of course, the event he is referencing happened on July 15, 1099, when ten thousand European Crusaders descended upon Jerusalem, bursting through their walls and setting about killing men, women, and children. Then Dickson poses the question as to whether it was truly religious in nature, or more political? His answer is somewhat surprising. In essence, he says, yes and no. Yes, it was sanctioned by the church, but no, it did not happen in quite the barbaric way common history has presented it. In the next chapter, he gives a brief history of the Crusades, sketching out four distinct campaigns ranging in time from the 1000s to the 1200s. Thus, Chapters 1–2 introduce the book in much the same way a modern action movie does. The viewer gets immediately drawn into high-level action. Much of the background is unknown, but it is understood that the details will be supplied at a later point. That’s when he presents chapter three and the music metaphor, which is followed by Chapter 4 (“Log in the Eye of the Church”), a brief seven-page chapter establishing the fact that Jesus taught each person in the church should first work on his or her own flaws before trying to correct the flaws they see in others.

In the next seven chapters (chapters 5–11), he traces the history of the good and evil in the church. He identifies the persecution under the Roman emperors up until Constantine’s reforms, which resulted in two major developments: (1) religious freedom, and (2) leading the church in becoming a source of charity for the impoverished and sick. Despite a significant setback by his successor, the apostate Julian (chapter 8), the trajectory he set for the church revived under such men as Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory Nyssa, Basil, et al. Such men as these promoted what Dickson calls “muscular” Christianity that pushed a humanitarian ethic as one of the distinctives of the Empire. This led to the establishment of hospitals and orphanages, etc.

Chapter twelve is a significant one. It centers on none other than Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo. The thrust of the chapter is Augustine's book, *The City of God*. Dickson's specific interest is Augustine's reasoning on what constitutes a "just war." Even though this topic was somewhat ancillary to Augustine's primary purpose (and comparatively very brief), it nonetheless became the basis for future appeals to what constitutes a "holy war." Dickson is careful to point out that Augustine never referred to wars as "holy," only "just" or "unjust." He says: "Still Augustine's arguments were to have an influence out of all proportion to his brief concessions about the necessity of state violence. Whatever Augustine's hopes, the monumental influence of his writings in the west in the coming centuries meant that he opened the way to Christian 'holy war,' culminating in the Crusades" (136).

From chapters 13 to 17, Dickson traces the good and evil of the western church, from about AD 500–1000 and the fall of Rome. This, of course, takes the reader to the very point where he opened the book in chapters one and two. In chapter 18, he "rewinds" (as it were) and traces the eastern part of the empire up to the Crusades. The history, he says, "is totally different and yet strangely similar" (197). As he presents the material, he emphasizes that Byzantine was a bastion of intellectual power and resources, an observation rarely made by historians of this time. He notes that without the Byzantine's love for, and preservation of, the classics, we would have lost many great works of ancient history (e.g., Plato, Euclid, Sophocles, Thucydides, et al.).

Dickson also dedicates Chapter 19 to questioning whether the term "Dark Ages" is a proper characterization or was it more a political spin. He argues for the latter suggesting that the motif of "Dark" and "Light" (i.e., "Enlightenment") were deliberate characterizations by 18th century thinkers to elevate their contemporary era above prior eras, and also to largely demean the times of their forerunners. In chapters 20 and 21, he outlines the good and bad surrounding the Reformation and the many abuses that occurred on both sides of the conflict. He follows this with two chapters (22 and 23) that bring us to the modern time, where he points out, among other things, the blight of sexual child abuse that is infamously known in the Roman Catholic Church, but, in truth, is not limited to any one denomination.

He comes full circle in the last chapter of the book (chapter 25). The title is “The ‘Log in the Eye’ of Us All.” Several places throughout his book—but especially in this last chapter—he makes observations that there is a tendentiousness in recounting religious history. He readily admits that the Crusades, for instance, were a horrific blight upon the church. Yet, a closer look shows that apart from a few monstrous campaigns, the Inquisitions had a meticulous process that was monitored carefully and, in the main, was executed fairly and with a high degree of leniency. He also makes the point that however bad the abuses have been in the history of the church—and there have been some serious ones—he argues that it pales in comparison to the abuses that have happened in secular history. For example, he observes that there were more deaths under Joseph Stalin every week than there were during the 350 years of the Spanish Inquisition (279). He makes similar comparisons with China’s Mao Zedong, and Cambodia’s Pol Pot.

On page 281, he straightforwardly gives us his thesis when he says, “My argument is ... [that] the real problem is neither religion nor irreligion; the problem is the human heart in possession of a misdirected passion—a passion for power, land, rights, honor, wealth, or (yes) religion.”

I have learned much from reading this book. Although I was aware that current scholarship has moved away from designating the Middle Ages as the “Dark Ages,” I would not have been able to elaborate why that is so in any meaningful way. Dickson provides a decent explanation in that regard. So, it is with the Crusades. I think it would be fair to say that the Crusades are presented one-dimensionally as a violent, power gone wild, abusive tyranny of the Christian Church. Dickson shows us that there is much more to the story—and he does so without once dismissing the evils that were part and parcel of the Crusades.

I am glad I read this book and I commend it to anyone who wants a fresh take on many things in church history that often goes unquestioned. Not only will it help fill out one's knowledge base of two millennia of church history, but it will also provide much fodder for sermon and teaching illustrations for pastors and professors alike.

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***Faith in the Son of God. The Place of Christ-Oriented Faith Within Pauline Theology.*** By Kevin W. McFadden. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021. 303 pp. Softcover. \$26.99.

Kevin W. McFadden, who is Associate Professor of New Testament at Philadelphia's Cairn University, has written a welcome response to Richard Hays and other advocates of the "faithfulness of Christ" view of Paul's theological argument regarding faith and justification in Christ Jesus.

Through careful exegesis of the phrases that have traditionally been translated "faith in Christ," but have more recently been translated "through the faithfulness of Christ" in several modern versions of the Bible, McFadden has demonstrated that neither the passages themselves, nor the theology of justification in Paul, call for abandonment of the more traditional position. While the author is disagreeing with Hays and others who have adopted the "faithfulness of Christ" translation with its theological implications, he states that his positive thesis is that "*Paul significantly emphasizes Christ-oriented faith in his theology*" (49).

He begins his argument with the soteriological implications of the phrases like πίστewς Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ (Gal 3:22) in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians. These are the verses most frequently explained by those in the "faithfulness of Christ" position, such as Hays, Campbell, Hooker, Wright and others, as teaching that to Paul it is not the faith of the believer in Christ, but the faithfulness of Christ that is in view. He uses most of the space of the book to argue from other passages in Paul's writings that Paul's theology



featured Christ-oriented faith, that is, the necessity of faith in Christ to receive the benefits of justification and salvation.

While McFadden states clearly at the beginning of his argument that both translations of the Greek words are possible. Yet, he demonstrates that it is those words in their own contexts, and the overall theological presentation of Paul in his letters, that faith is “belief and trust” in the gospel with Christ as the “fundamental object” of our faith (268). He agrees at points with Hays and others in the other camp, and he also reminds the reader of the fact that these authors will occasionally mention that Christ-oriented faith is important, while then returning to the greater importance of the faithfulness of Christ. Part of their concern is that humans should not, by their faith, have any part in their own justification; but McFadden demonstrates that it is not the faith of the believer that justifies. The work of justification and redemption was accomplished by Christ. In faith, the believer receives the benefits of that work by assenting to it, not completing it.

The author addresses Paul’s quotations of the Old Testament, direct statements, and conceptual parallels to Christ-oriented faith, in addition to discussion of the theological implications of both views. He also argues extensively with Hays’ arguments in his book *Faith of Jesus Christ*.

The discerning reader will note that, at a few points, McFadden mentions the “disputed” authorship of some of the Pauline letters. Although he does not refute that position, on page 121 he does refer to it as the position of “some scholars” and illustrates that the similarities of the thanksgiving sections in Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians provide striking support for “the theory that Paul wrote these three letters at the same time and sent them together with Tychicus...”.

McFadden has provided a bibliography and indexes. Though the book can be read with profit by non-specialists, it should be read by teachers and students of the New Testament, theology, and biblical exegesis.

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***The Attributes of God: An Introduction (Short Studies in Systematic Theology)***. By Gerald Bray. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021. 160 pp. Softcover \$15.99.

Bray's work on the attributes of God is part of Crossway's series *Short Studies in Systematic Theology* edited by Graham A. Cole and Oren R. Martin. The aim of that series is to provide brief studies of important areas in Christian theology that give the essence of the doctrine as well as application to life. *The Attributes of God* by Bray appears to be successful at reaching the assigned goal in an area where Christians often struggle largely due to disinterest. While believers want to know some basic things about God and how to relate to Him in everyday life, they are not as focused on the sometimes-intricate details of logic that undergird a discussion of God's attributes.

Bray's book possesses clear organization. Similar to many theologians (although labels vary among the presenters), he divides God's attributes into two basic categories: 1) *essential* attributes, and 2) *relational* attributes. God's essential attributes are those which are essential "to His being and lie beyond our comprehension." God's relational attributes are those which describe how He relates to humans and which they can possess to a degree by analogy. For essential attributes, Bray arranges the discussion into two categories: 1) God's essential attributes *as they are in themselves* (25–59), and 2) God's essential attributes *as we perceive them* (59–76). Within God's essential attributes as they are in themselves, Bray discusses (a) attributes describing what God is, (b) attributes describing what God is like, (c) attributes contrasted with time, and (d) attributes contrasted with space. Under the heading of essential attributes as we perceive them, Bray concentrates on the three classical doctrines of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. Throughout his discussion of God's essential attributes, the most interesting area with the strongest analysis is Bray's defense of classical theism's understanding of impassibility over against open theistic ways of viewing the attributes of God (34–45). The same two general subcategories (*as they are in themselves* and *as we perceive them*) are repeated for the relational attributes (77–102). Under the first, Bray presents God as a personal being and as a rational being. Here he leads into a discussion of issues affecting the definition of the trinity.

Under the second, he analyzes God's holiness, righteousness, and goodness.

After his usually helpful outline of the various attributes, Bray attempts to describe the relevance of God's attributes for today (103–09). At the outset, he raises this significant point: “The divine attributes appear to be abstractions and are therefore best left to specialists who are free to argue about them in theological faculties and academic journals, without any impact on everyday life” (103). Bray attempts to change this perception. However, it is not clear that this section of his book has accomplished what he set out to do. Perhaps the section is too short. Nonetheless, he does affirm the most important practical implication of the holiness of God by agreeing with the Reformation and biblical teaching of justification by grace through faith and not by works of our own personal doing (107).

At the end of the book, Bray gives a helpful appendix on “God's Attributes in Christian Tradition.” This historical survey is as long as half of the earlier sections. However, he is wise in this reviewer's judgment to make this information an appendix. While scholars might prefer for this historical review up front, Bray stays true to the purpose of the book as something written to present the attributes in a simpler fashion for study by those who may not be as familiar with the details of Christian theology.

Some of the strengths of this work have already been pointed out. The organization (and the resultant readability) stands as the most positive aspect of Bray's book. In addition, there is a small bibliography that nonetheless allows the reader to explore the attributes more fully. There is also a credible general index which is sometimes missing in books like this. Another positive of Bray's writing is that he often uses Scripture. This is significant in this case because, as he honestly mentions in the opening words of the preface, “A century ago it was a commonplace of what was then ‘modern’ theology that Christianity had been corrupted in ancient times by an invasion of Hellenistic thought...That thesis is no longer as popular as it once was and today most scholars reject it. Yet, when it comes to the question of God's attributes, the case for accepting a significant Greek influence on Christian theology remains strong” (11). The only antidote to overuse of Greek philosophy is a dogged determinism to let Scripture decide the truth to be believed and acted upon.

Bray's opposition to open theism was acknowledged above as a positive. Here an additional doctrinal stance deserves praise. Bray properly rejects the unbiblical doctrine of the nonviolent atonement (89–91). God the Father cannot be accused of “divine child abuse” in sending His Son to die for our sins. Bray's main defense is the truth that humans do not have any basis for charging God in such matters. It may have been helpful if Bray provided a footnote citing the many Bible passages which support the doctrines of propitiation and God's judging activity involving the Cross for additional support. However, he is to be commended for staying true to the biblical doctrine of the nature of the atonement.

There are some areas that need improvement in Bray's work. None of these affect the overall positive assessment of the book. The following serve as examples of smaller areas of debate. First, the discussion on the simplicity of God needs more development. Bray honestly admits that God's simplicity is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible (28). Yet, he also asserts at the outset of the discussion that simplicity is the “most fundamental attribute of God's being” (this reviewer considers it a highly important theological matter). This is somewhat of a theological conundrum. How can the most fundamental attribute of God's being not be explicitly taught in Scripture? Bray's discussion of the various logical connections and the mention of a couple of tangential Bible passages seem somewhat inadequate.

Second, while discussing God's invisibility, Bray notes, “God's invisibility is a consequence of his incorporeality. If he has no body, his being has no sensory definition and so it is impossible to detect” (32). The logic of the last sentence goes against the account of the rich man in hades who existed there in his spirit but not in body. Yet the text says clearly that the rich man in hades experienced sensation (Luke 16:23–24). If this is a logical possibility with humans, then could it be a logical possibility with God? Of course, God would experience sensation in perfection if that would be the case. This potential contradiction to Bray's statement at least needs to be briefly addressed.

Third, Bray's outline of what the righteousness of God means may be his weakest section due to possible confusion. He notes, “Jesus Christ manifested God's righteousness because he was perfectly obedient to his Father's will in everything he did. It is our

imitation of that obedience, made possible by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, that makes us righteous in God's eyes (1 Cor. 11:1)" (98). Earlier Bray mentions 2 Cor. 5:21. His explanation in this section seems to mix possible discussion of being declared righteous by faith with being made righteous by obedience. Clarity in this area needs to be added.

Other areas of both positive and negative assessment could be discussed, but the ones presented above help to give the general thrust of Bray's fine work. No negatives detract from the important usefulness of the provided outline. Lay people, as well as pastors and professors, will benefit from reading and studying this book. It could even be used in adult Bible studies with competent teachers leading the way. All in all, this reviewer highly recommends this work by Bray to those interested in the attributes of our great God.

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***A History of Evangelism in North America.*** Edited by Thomas P. Johnston. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021. 345 pp. Softcover \$17.87.

Thomas P. Johnston (Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as a senior professor of evangelism at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also the president of the Southern Baptist Professors of Evangelism Fellowship. It is the latter role that gave Johnston the opportunity to lead a cadre of twenty Southern Baptist professors of evangelism in the creation of this unique book. This team of missional scholars has a wealth of experience within the Church and the Academy, and they care deeply about evangelism in American society. Johnston and his group of authors explore the historical development of evangelism in North America. They point us to the past so that we might discern how to faithfully do evangelism in the present and in the future. The goal of the volume "was to provide a biographical approach to evangelism, along with a focus on varieties of evangelism methodologies" (page 9). Toward that end, contributors surveyed the life and evangelistic impact of notable American Christians. The august list included

familiar figures such as Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, Billy Graham, and John Piper. It also included lesser-known individuals such as Shubal Stearns, Francis Asbury, John Mason Peck, and Henrietta Mears. Even though the authors are all Southern Baptist, they focus more broadly on the history of evangelism within American Evangelicalism. The chief strength of the book lies in the historical vignettes it provides. Whether retelling the narratives of popular evangelists (like Whitfield and Wesley) or more obscure individuals (such as J. Wilbur Chapman and Chuck Smith), the volume shines when it illuminates various historical approaches to evangelism. Two examples will suffice. First, missiologist J. D. Payne contributed a chapter on David Brainerd, the 18th century missionary to Native Americans. The essay was an excellent overview of Brainerd's life, one that demonstrated the challenges of cross-cultural evangelism in that era. Payne articulated both the sorrows and the successes of Brainerd's missional endeavors in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. A helpful feature of this essay was its direct engagement with Brainerd's evangelistic methods. Payne identified eight evangelistic approaches in the life and ministry of David Brainerd: 1) prayer, 2) Christocentric preaching, 3) Public baptism, 4) Catechetical meetings, 5) Cultural study, 6) Establishment of English schools and settlements, 7) Preference towards receptive peoples, and 8) Church planting from the harvest. In Payne's discussion of these methods, one can fairly hear the evangelistic heartbeat of David Brainerd. Although Payne notes that Brainerd was a sometimes-flawed evangelist, his approaches give hope that, through prayer, gospel faithfulness, and hard work, we can see the gospel take root in difficult soil. Second, educational expert Kristen Ferguson penned an essay on the merger of education and evangelism in the ministry of the Sunday School pioneer Henrietta Mears. The chapter provided historical data on a towering, yet less-known, figure in 20th century evangelicalism. Ferguson notes that Mears served the Lord as a single woman, claiming that the Apostle Paul was the only man she could have ever married! Her singular focus on serving Christ allowed her to develop skills in education, both as a teacher and as an administrator. When she moved to Hollywood to accept the position of Director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church, she inherited a Sunday School program that served 1600 students on a weekly basis.

During her 35-year tenure, the program grew to serve 6,000 students every week. Mears emphasized both excellence and evangelism in church education. She believed that Sunday School teachers ought to use the latest educational theories and techniques. As a professionally trained teacher, she brought the latest pedagogical insights to the field of Christian education. She was also fiercely committed to evangelizing people through the Sunday School. Mears provided evangelism training and opportunities, and the Sunday School provided a conduit for substantial church growth (much of it from new converts). There were also at least two weaknesses in *A History of Evangelism in North America*. As with any edited volume, certain essays were stronger than others. The critiques that are offered below apply to the project when viewed as a whole. First, the book suffered from a lack of diversity. In a book entitled *A History of Evangelism in North America*, it was noteworthy that all the examples came from the United States (our Canadian brothers and sisters might object). Furthermore, most of those profiled were professional clergy, and very few were women or people of color. The puzzled reader might wonder if women, minorities, and lay Christians contributed to the development of evangelism in the United States. Second, the lines between evangelism and other ministries were sometimes blurred. For instance, certain preachers were studied because they preached evangelistic sermons (for instance, Edwards and Lockridge). Other events (like revivals) were chronicled because mass conversions frequently accompanied revivals. At times, these discussions could be confusing, leaving the reader to wonder if the book was about preaching, revival, church planting, or evangelism.

Overall, this volume, edited by Thomas P. Johnston, is a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of evangelism in the United States. Its excellent, future-oriented final essay by Paul Akin points its readers in the direction of a fresh missionary encounter between the gospel and American culture. All Christians should learn from our past so that we may be ready for the fresh evangelistic challenge before us. This book will be invaluable in that task.

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***Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Comprehensive Guide.*** By Sam Storms. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. 353 pp. Softcover \$22.99.

*Understanding Spiritual Warfare* is another volume from the prolific pen of Sam Storms, senior pastor of Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City. In fact, many of its seventeen chapters have appeared previously in his other writings. The book is endorsed by such evangelical heavyweights as Wayne Grudem, Matt Chandler, and J. P. Moreland, along with a Foreword by Clinton Arnold, dean and professor of New Testament at Talbot School of Theology, whom he quotes often.

Storms is “unapologetically a functioning, practicing charismatic” (xix). This perspective is a major factor in his explanation of spiritual warfare. He also repudiates the dispensational teaching he received at Dallas Theological Seminary. Storms is concerned that too many Christians think far too little and lightly of the extent of Satan’s influence in our world (9), and he blames dispensationalism in part for this neglect (267). Finally, despite the claim to be comprehensive, Storms’ focus is strictly upon the demonic, giving no overt attention to the believer’s battle with the flesh and the world.

To his credit, Storms rigorously grounds most of his assertions and conclusions in the text of Scripture, since “our beliefs must be rooted in and fully consistent with Scripture” (6). When conclusions



are at best tentative, he generally leaves them so. He also takes his own charismatic camp to task on several occasions for beliefs and practices that go beyond the teaching of scripture, including his rejection of the practice to discern, pray against, or cast down “territorial spirits” (chapter 7).

But experience also looms large in this volume. Storms begins the book with the dramatic story of “a surprising encounter with the demonic,” and every chapter is concluded with a brief and often moving testimony of someone who has benefited from his church’s “inner healing and deliverance ministry.” Storms describes this ministry as “digging deeply into each individual’s past and present experience” with “a highly intensive, carefully constructed sequence of prayer, confession, repentance, and affirmation of the truth of God’s Word.” His desire is that through reading and applying the truths he shares in this book the reader will experience the same “healing and freedom” (xx).

There is much with which to agree in this extensive treatment. Storms’ pastoral heart comes through in many applications of his teaching as well as his transparency concerning his wife’s spiritual and emotional struggles (158–163) as well as his own struggles with depression (306–308). Though Storms writes for the average Christian, he does not shy away from in-depth discussion of highly debated issues. Several helpful sections provide counsel on dealing with shame (189–201), which he relates to Satan’s accusations against believers, unforgiveness (201–209), and temptation (213–230). He also has a lengthy exegesis of Ephesians 6 (288–305), though his discussion of vv. 18–20 in the context of “warfare prayer” goes beyond the text at several points (317–324). Finally, I heartily affirm Storm’s declaration that “Satan only wins when we love our lives more than we love God” (251).

Space does not allow for adequate treatment of every point with which I disagree, but two illustrate the general tenor of the book. First, he insists repeatedly it is wholly appropriate for Christians to both “rebuke” and “cast out” demonic spirits as part of a “deliverance ministry” (66, 242, 257, 260–264, 266–269). Indeed, Storms contends believers have the same authority that Jesus did when it comes to dealing with the demonic, based in part upon Jesus’ command to the 72 “ordinary” disciples, who had the same gift of exorcism (Luke 10:17–19). Yet, Jesus also instructed these disciples

not to carry moneybags, knapsacks, or sandals (v. 4). Does this instruction also carry over to today?

Second, because of Storms' rejection of dispensationalism, he spiritualizes the Book of Revelation. For example, the 144,000 (7:4) are "all God's people" (89), the army of 200 million (9:16) are "a symbolic portrayal of demonic hosts" (93), and Revelation 12 "describes Satan's efforts to destroy the church" (96, 246–247, 251–253). Indeed, Revelation concerns Satan's activity "throughout the course of church history" (102). However, it is noteworthy that he often omits discussion of many, specific details in the text that undermine his figurative and symbolic approach.

Interestingly, he distinguishes between what he calls *voluntary* and *involuntary* demonization (156). Voluntary demonization occurs when believers "willfully or deliberately" engage in "practices that are an open door for the enemy's activity," such as occultic arts or failing to extend forgiveness (Ephesian 4:26–27). Involuntary demonization occurs when believers persistently and unrepentantly fail to do what God says, such as resisting the devil or making proper use of the armor of God. Based upon incidents such as the demon possessed daughter of the Syrophoenician woman, he also includes in this category the impact of "generational spirits" (167–168).

Perhaps the most intriguing part of this book is his treatment of the question of whether Christians can be demon possessed (173–187). Storms "tentative, guarded conclusion" is that a believer can be demon possessed, despite numerous promises that believers will be "kept" or "protected" from Satan (John 17:15, 2 Thess 3:3; 1 John 5:18). He interprets these promises in terms of either eternal preservation or preservation conditioned upon obedience (176–177).

Because of Storms' charismatic and anti-dispensational bent, I cannot endorse this book as a resource for the average congregant or student. Instead, I would recommend two older but excellent treatments of the topic spiritual warfare: Thomas Ice and Robert Dean's *A Holy Rebellion: Strategy for Spiritual Warfare* and John MacArthur's *How to Meet the Enemy: Arming Yourself for Spiritual Warfare*. However, this book is useful as a reference work to understand better how charismatics deal with the issue of spiritual warfare.

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***In All the Scriptures: The Three Contexts of Biblical Hermeneutics.*** By Nicholas Piotrowski. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 304 pp. Softcover \$32.99.

It seems apropos for Nicholas Piotrowski to speak on hermeneutics—the *science* and *art* of *legitimately and ethically interpreting texts* (4). Dr. Piotrowski (Ph.D., Wheaton College) serves as the president and academic dean at Indianapolis Theological Seminary where he teaches hermeneutics and NT. Piotrowski's hermeneutical theory is the aim of the book, where his approach explores three layers of contexts: literary, historical, and Christological (9–15) resulting in a “theoretical-philosophical foundation to reading the Bible” (16). The importance of hermeneutics cannot be overstated, if we *do not* study this discipline: (1) we will create God in our own image; (2) we will miss important things in the text; (3) we will never have a consistent theology; and (4) our use of the text could be unethical (6–8).

*In All the Scriptures* is a timely and insightful book that every serious Bible student will want to explore. The work is organized into eight chapters, supplying an annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter, as well as a very helpful *Glossary of Hermeneutical Terms* (103 definitions). Three chapters though, serve to strengthen the value of this work. Chapter one (*The Text as a Mirror*) presents a history of hermeneutics from the *allegory* and *typology* of Alexandria and Antioch to the *existentialism*, *demythologization*, *relativism*, and

*deconstructionism* of Postmodernism. Piotrowski emphasizes the ramifications of *Sola Scriptura*. The Bible: (1) is the only authority for doctrine and piety; (2) is its own interpreter; (3) itself teaches us how to read it; and (4) is about Christ *in toto* (31–32). He stresses *biblical theology*, as well as the *hermeneutical spiral*, “an experience of reading the Bible where our presuppositions are tested and refined a little more each time we read” (48).

Chapter two (*What Did Jesus Do?*) proves to be the most meaningful and beneficial section. Piotrowski argues that Jesus and the apostles’ interpretative process: (1) paid attention to literary, historical, and redemptive-historical contexts when interpreting and applying the OT; (2) regularly saw typological patterns in the OT that they understood to climax in the person and work of Christ; and (3) serves as a hermeneutic template, revealing to us how to give careful attention to the literary, historical, and redemptive-historical context of any passage, as well as employing typological principles to the Bible as a whole (53). Piotrowski rightly asserts that if a *follower* of Christ *follows* him in doctrine, ethics, and values, would it not make sense to *follow Him in hermeneutics* as well (53, 73)? Chapter eight (*Be Doers of the Word*) will prove helpful to those seeking to walk in the Word and especially for preachers who strive to faithfully apply the sacred text. The author exhorts us that “without a legitimate and ethical approach to reading the Scriptures we will make *hasty* application. That can lead to unwise application, or even downright *wrong* application” (235). To be sure, good-proper-fruitful application will *only* come when we *first* get our hermeneutic right. He offers some thoughts on what application entails. We should: (1) remember application is not simply for the *individual*—there is a *corporate* aspect; (2) appreciate that right knowledge *is* application—when we stop thinking error, and start thinking truth, application *is* happening; (3) accept that application may be delayed; and (4) delight that Scripture gives us *wisdom*! Some decisions in life do not have “chapter and verse,” but require sound thinking (238–240).

Along with these strong chapters, this work provides a couple of thematic strengths—its emphasis on the context of the sacred text and the centrality of Jesus. First, interpreters will want to discern *what the text says*, Piotrowski asserts that “*texts exist in contexts too*. No text, utterance, or expression ever exists in abstract” (2–3), whether the context be literary, historical, or Christological. He provides a notable

example from Jesus (Matt 4:1–11), who uses *one whole context* (Deut 6–8) pertinent to his situation and interprets from that entire context, even though he only uses three sentences (vv. 4, 7, 10) (54–55). Jesus and the NT writers maintained contextual integrity when quoting the OT (as we should in all the Scriptures), contrary to Richard N. Longenecker’s view of an indistinct hermeneutic (57n8). To be sure, each book has its own *coherency* (the attribute of a book when its various parts fit together, relate to and depend on each other) that depends on its own *integrity* (the *wholeness* of any book, and its ability to hold itself together and even interpret itself) (76–77) ... when we atomize texts or isolate passages from their whole book context, we violate book integrity (77).

Building on that, next, the emphasis on Jesus Christ—his accurate hermeneutic concerning himself *in all the Scriptures* both *by* himself and *by* the apostolic witness, as well as all who presently seek to *rightly divide* the Word. This emphasis was both instructive and inspiring. Jesus and the writers of the NT were faithful to *literary contexts*, they did not “treat the Old Testament as a collection of pithy one-liners, but as *whole texts* with theological implications larger than just a single verse (54) ... they did not pluck versus or ideas out of their literary contexts or misappropriate verses” (57). They were faithful in *historical contexts* as well, knowing that the totality of the Scriptures coalesce as a witness to what God is doing in *salvation history* for his people (124). Moreover, their fidelity to *redemptive-historical contexts* were consistent—“Jesus and the apostles read in terms of big literary contexts, in a historically minded way, understanding that redemptive history builds to reach its crescendo in the person and work of Jesus Christ, *and that we should read the same way*” (71). In short, the OT is *Christotelic*, the NT is *Christocentric*, and altogether the Bible is *Christological*—in all of these, it *is the logic of the gospel* that ties the diversity of the Bible together (158). This is not an attempt to make the OT subordinate to the New (165, 262), it simply expresses that Christ is revealed *in all the Scriptures* through: 1) OT quotes, echoes, and allusions in the NT; 2) prophecy, 3) typology, 4) major recurring themes; and 5) whole-book contexts (168–195).

This book will prove beneficial, “As he inspired the biblical authors to write, he will also illumine your mind to understand, especially when you read prayerfully and carefully” (18). It is

recommended for: 1) anyone who wants gain more *legitimate* and *ethical* interpretations of the Scriptures; or 2) ministers who habitually practice hermeneutics as a part of their calling. He rightfully sees this as “a *starter* book ... [providing] hermeneutical pathways that the student will want to explore in a life-long journey of honing one’s exegetical skills” (15). For a deeper hermeneutical dive, one should consider Köstenberger and Patterson’s *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Kregel Academic, 2021) or Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard’s *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Zondervan Academic, 2017). Piotrowski is a must read for all who take the Scriptures seriously and want to interpret them with integrity.

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