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BOOK REVIEWS

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Book Reviews

James Henry Harris. *The Forbidden Word: The Symbol and Sign of Evil in American Literature, History, and Culture*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012. xiv + 132 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1620322604. \$18.00 (Paperback).

Pastor and theologian James Henry Harris writes a witty, engaging book that centers on the use of the “n-word” in Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and in American society in general. Part literary exegesis, part memoir, Harris criticizes America’s racist past as he positions his own experience, growing up African-American in central Virginia during the 1960s, within that history. Harris argues that there is no essential difference between Twain’s copious use of *nigger* in *Huck Finn* and the use of *nigga* by African-American Hip-Hop artists: both have capitalized on the American creed of African-American inferiority. One major implication of this argument is that every African-American has his or her own history with “the forbidden word,” which also serves as an index of the collective historical experiences of all African Americans.

Harris uses his experience as a first-time reader of the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and the only African-American student in an English class on the book in 2006, as the gateway to his commentary on certain aspects of African-American social history as well as his own family’s history. Harris’ text weaves different themes of *Huck Finn* and African-American life in ways that are quite insightful at times, and disjointed at others. In chapter five, for example, Harris re-tells a colorful and enjoyable story about his father and uncle watching the second Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston fight in May 1965. However, there is no discernible connection between this chapter and the issues that swirled around the forbidden word. The reader is forced to work overtime to make a link (assuming that there is one).

Then there’s Harris’ keen perception in relating a seemingly mundane theme in *Huck Finn*, smoking, and African-American social life. Harris states that in *Huck Finn* everyone smokes (as did nearly half of the students in his class). “Huck Finn loved smoking,” writes Harris (p. 36). From this point, Harris rehearses his history with smoking and how the tobacco culture of central Vir-

ginia pervaded every area of African-American life, producing an addicted and unhealthy society. Even though Harris makes this astute connection about the love of smoking in Huck Finn's day and in his own, he fails to connect the history of tobacco cultivation in Virginia with African slavery. There was Harris, a young African-American man, working in a tobacco factory in 1970 and then using an addictive substance. However, tens of thousands of African and African-American enslaved men and women cultivated tobacco in Virginia from the 17th century to the middle of the 19th century to enrich white plantation owners and tobacco companies. The bottom line is that the tobacco industry has exploited African-Americans since its colonial beginnings.

An aspect of the book in which Harris employs nuanced thinking is his application of Du Bois' double consciousness theory to African-American usage of *nigger*, or its street/Hip-Hop/phonetic version, *nigga*. Harris relates that in the class he "was on edge" as the word came up in scholarly conversation, but when he returned to his life as an African-American man living and working among other African-Americans he heard the word used too. He raises *the* question: is the use of *nigger* categorically different when used by African-Americans? Harris answers this question in the negative. In using another anecdote, he recalls having a conversation with one of his sons about the use of *nigga* in Hip-Hop and rap music. Harris' son contended that *nigga* meant nothing in that lyrical context (p. 116). Much to Harris' dismay, he had to remind his son that *nigger* represents African-American suffering historically and at present. He went on to assert that the use of *nigga* by African-American Hip-Hop artists is nothing more than "Black capitalist exploitation of its own people" (p. 116).

Harris' *The Forbidden Word* is a timely work that explores many aspects of African-American social history and grassroots thought. It is gritty at times because it reflects a major aspect of African-American history and contemporary life. The real strength of the book is that Harris acknowledges his discomfort with *nigger* regardless of who uses the word, whether it is the great American novelist and humorist Mark Twain, or the Grammy award winning rap group Three Six Mafia. As he applies Du Bois' double consciousness theory, Harris argues convincingly that the use of *nigger* perpetuates African-American oppression; and in the cases of Twain

and Hip-Hop artists, the use of the word capitalizes on the all-American perception of African-American inferiority.

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Walter Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. 448 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 978-0801039645. \$49.99 (Hardback).

Walter Elwell is emeritus professor of biblical and theological studies at Wheaton College, where he taught for more than twenty-five years. He also taught at North Park College and Belhaven College (Mississippi). Elwell's most well-known work is perhaps his *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (2001, 2d ed.). Robert Yarbrough has served as professor of New Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis since 2010. Prior to this position he taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1996–2010), Covenant Theological Seminary (1991–1996), Wheaton College (1987–1991) and Liberty University (1985–1987). Among other works, he has authored *1, 2, and 3 John* in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series (2008) and *The Salvation History Fallacy? Reassessing the History of New Testament Theology* (2004).

Elwell and Yarbrough's *Encountering the New Testament* first appeared in 1998, followed by a second edition in 2005. These previous editions were well received by professors and students. The third edition is the result of suggested improvements from dozens of professors from various Christian traditions (e.g. Baptist, Lutheran, charismatic, and Catholic) who used the book in their classes. Elwell and Yarbrough *did not* make dramatic changes to their most recent edition. Following the request of their reviewers, they retained the same basic design and much of the same content. Indeed, a comparison of the second and third editions shows a remarkable degree of similarity in regard to content. Nevertheless, noteworthy changes have been made. Elwell and Yarbrough attempt to make the third edition more reader-friendly by clarifying confusing sections and modifying diagrams and charts. In addition, they incorporate the findings of recent scholarship into the text and in the annotated bibliographies at the end of each chapter. Generally speaking, with the third edition the authors strive to produce a

New Testament survey that is more clear, concise and up-to-date than previous versions.

The authors' goal is to survey the New Testament canon with a special concern to identify and discuss the major theological themes of the New Testament. In addition, they seek to provide a basic understanding of the historical context within which the writings emerged. The authors successfully accomplish their goals. A careful reading of *Encountering the New Testament* will result in students gaining a sound theological and historical foundation for the New Testament from a conservative Evangelical perspective.

Elwell and Yarbrough give the most attention to exploring the contents of the New Testament writings. As with other surveys, they examine the authorship, date, provenance, outline, purpose(s), characteristics, theological emphases and critical issues of each book. Their survey of the biblical writings is marked by careful attention to the unique theological contribution of each work. Granted, with some writings one would have liked certain themes to have received greater attention. For instance, I would have liked a more thorough discussion of the gospel's progress and unity among believers in the section on Philippians (pp. 295–299). Nevertheless, for the most part Elwell and Yarbrough provide an excellent summary of each book's major themes.

Along with surveying the works of the New Testament canon, the authors also examine topics closely related to the study of the New Testament, such as the message and form of the four Gospels (Chapter 3), the teaching ministry of Jesus (Chapter 9) and historical criticism (Chapter 10). The authors' presentations of historical criticism (pp. 139–153), Jesus' life (pp. 105–121) and Jesus' teaching ministry (pp. 123–137) are particularly noteworthy. However, Elwell and Yarbrough's discussion of Scripture authority is too brief (pp. 9–10), especially given the important role it plays in interpretation. All chapters conclude with a summary of the authors' major points ("Summary"), an annotated bibliography ("Further Reading") and a list of relevant questions ("Study Questions") that give students the opportunity to review and reflect on the key points of the chapter.

The authors' intended audience is college students or older non-specialists. Those with little to no prior exposure to the New Testament will likely find the work quite challenging in certain sections. It is the unfortunate rise of biblical illiteracy, not Elwell and Yar-

brough's textbook, that is to blame. In truth the authors have gone out of their way to make the work accessible for most readers.

Evangelical scholarship has produced several new or revised New Testament surveys in recent years, including those by Carson and Moo (2005); Cohick, Green and Burge (2009); Gundry (2012) and Köstenberger, Kellum and Quarles (2012). Elwell and Yarbrough's *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (2013) is one of the better surveys to appear. I highly recommend this work.

Michael L. Bryant
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Victor H. Matthews. *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. xi + 244 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801048616. \$26.99 (Paperback).

Victor H. Matthews has offered a helpful introductory level book that focuses on the social setting and historical background of the Old Testament world and its impact on the Bible's prophetic message and interpretation. Matthews has written prolifically in the area of Old Testament and ancient Near East cultural backgrounds, having published the popular book *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, as well as *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, among many others. In fact *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World* is not a new work, but is rather a revised and updated edition of 2001's the *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*.

The book is a survey of both the main prophetic characters and books found in the Old Testament. Following the introduction, the first chapter offers a good orientating overview of the geography of the prophetic world, discussing the features of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria-Palestine. Chapter 2 is, perhaps, the most important in the book, as Matthews sets out a definition of the person and function of Old Testament prophets. In this chapter, a prophet is defined by his/her role within the economic, royal, and judicial systems of the day. Additionally, the prophet's call (call narrative), vocabulary, and social role as defender of the poor are introduced. Chapters 3 (Moses, Balaam), 4 (Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Man of God from Judah), and 5 (Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah) offer good discussion on the early non-writing prophets who lived before or during the monarchy. These are especially good chapters, as Matthews pays attention to the social world of some of the more overlooked

Old Testament prophets. For example, by discussing the details of the location and the symbols of power (e.g. thrones, robes) in 1 Kings 22, Matthews does a good job of illustrating the intimidating court scene facing Micaiah as he delivers a message of doom to King Ahab (pp. 66–67).

Chapters 6–15 transition to a discussion of the social setting and message of the writing prophets. Matthews handles the discussion of these prophets according to thematic concerns, and is in constant dialogue with other Old Testament prophets, historical books, and ANE parallels. For example, Matthews places Amos within the geographical and social setting of the eighth century BCE, before concluding with the thematic discussions of social injustice and religious hypocrisy. Likewise, his treatment of Hosea offers a brief discussion of the political realities of the prophet's day, his marriage to Gomer, and the possibility that Hosea was a Levite, before turning to the thematic concerns of the marriage metaphor, idolatry, and the knowledge of God.

In a decision that may raise some complaints, Matthews has chosen to present these prophets according to a commonly understood chronology of their ministry, rather than in terms of their final form and canonical location within the Old Testament. As a result, the book Amos is the first prophet mentioned, Isaiah is handled in terms of three traditional authors, and Obadiah follows a discussion of Habakkuk. While such a decision does make some sense if the aim is to discuss the historical settings of the prophets (e.g. the rise of ANE world powers and their influence on the individual books), it bypasses the current trend of discussing the Book of the Twelve and Isaiah as complete literary units. The result is a bit of a jumble as the reader is first introduced to Isaiah 1–39 in chapter 9, but has to wait until chapter 14 before returning again to that prophetic book. Chapter 14 is also broken up, and discusses the themes of Second Isaiah (Isa. 40–55) and Haggai-Zechariah 1–8, before returning to Trito-Isaiah (Isa. 56–66) and Zechariah 9–14. While understandable, this organization works against a more complete final form reading of prophetic themes as they are developed within the books themselves.

Such a criticism, however, should not distract from the overall value of the book, as there is much here to recommend. *The Hebrew Prophets and their Social World* is an introductory textbook, and the intended audience is never forgotten. The book offers a glossary which defines various boldfaced terms (e.g. theodicy; eschatology;

Shephelah), as well as a brief bibliography for further reading. Additionally, the book offers students numerous excursions, set apart in boxes within the text, which allow for further clarification by way of comparison with parallel biblical or ANE background texts. All discussions are well supported by examples from the biblical text, and additional text references fill the page. It is accessible and interesting, and by focusing on the social world of the prophets, offers a bit of a different approach than other introductory texts, and adds a real-world depth to the individual prophets that is often missed by beginning readers. Overall, this is an excellent resource for introductory level classes in both the academy and the church.

Jason T. LeCureux
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Mark David Hall. *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. xi + 224 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0199929849. \$45.00 (Hardback).

The most recent survey of the ideas that led to the creation of the American republic—Alan Gibson’s 2006 book, *Interpreting the Founding*—identifies progressive, liberal, classical republican, economic and even Scottish influences on the Founders, but generally discounts the notion that Protestantism played much of a role. For a while the primary voices raised in opposition to this prevailing view of the intellectual origins of America came in the form of polemical works written for a popular audience by Christian authors such as Peter Marshall, John Eidsmoe and Tim LaHaye. However, in recent years, a steady stream of more scholarly works published by respected university presses, has emerged likewise to challenge the reigning view of the American founding. Mark David Hall’s *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* is the latest installment of these books.

While ostensibly a biography of Roger Sherman, one of America’s Founding Fathers, this book is also a sustained argument in support of (1) historians acknowledging the influence of Protestant (namely Reformed) political theory on the formation of the American government, and (2) historians developing a fuller, more accurate understanding of the Founding by considering the Founders as a whole rather than focusing on a select few. In doing so, Hall builds upon and advances similar arguments made by Alan Heimert,

James H. Hutson, John G. West, Jr., David W. Hall, Jeffrey H. Morrison, Daniel Dreisbach, and others.

Roger Sherman provides a strong basis upon which to make these arguments. A self-identified Calvinist whose pastor was Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Sherman played an influential role in almost every stage of the Founding. Sherman was the *only* founder to help draft and sign the Articles of Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. He was one of the most influential delegates at the Constitutional Convention, he helped write the Bill of Rights, and he was the oldest and second-most active member of the First Congress. Though held in high esteem by his contemporaries, scholars have tended to overlook Sherman's role in early American history. This unjustified neglect is vividly illustrated by the fact that Supreme Court justices have made 112 distinct references to Thomas Jefferson when interpreting the First Amendment's religious clauses, but have only referenced Sherman three times. Sherman, however, had not only written extensively on church-state issues, he actually helped write the First Amendment. Jefferson, by contrast, was in France when the First Amendment was written, debated and passed by Sherman and his colleagues in the First Congress! Needless to say, neither Sherman nor many of his colleagues viewed the Establishment Clause they wrote as erecting a wall of separation between church and state, as the clause is generally interpreted today.

Hall not only shows that scholars need to give greater consideration to the roles played by Founders other than Jefferson, Madison, Washington, Franklin and Adams, but also to the influence of Reformed political theory on the formation of the American republic. Though averting the notion that America was founded as a Christian nation, Hall nevertheless convincingly argues that Reformed theology must be recognized as one of the intellectual foundations of the Founding (if not the primary foundation). Scholars generally credit John Locke with formulating the political philosophy that undergirded the American Founding. However, Hall, who himself is not a Calvinist, asserts that Reformed political philosophy pre-dated and likely influenced Locke. In a chapter dedicated to tracing the origins and development of Reformed political theory, Hall asserts that "within a generation of Calvin, virtually every Reformed civil and ecclesiastical leader was convinced that the Bible taught that governments should be limited, that they should be based on the consent of the governed, that rulers should

promote the common good and the Christian faith, and that unjust or ungodly rulers should be resisted or even overthrown” (p. 16). This Reformed political theory was being taught, preached, and articulated in books and pamphlets in the American colonies well before Locke’s works began to be widely read there. Hall buttresses his argument by claiming that many of the leaders (though not always the best-known ones) of the American Revolution were Reformed Christians, and that research has shown that the Bible was cited much more often than Locke’s writings by those who championed resistance to British authority. What made Locke so influential on the eve of the Revolution, according to Hall, was the fact that his views accorded so well with Reformed political philosophy.

Hall doesn’t demonstrate conclusively that Reformed political philosophy guided the Founding Fathers, but tracing the origins of influence is virtually impossible and has yet to be done for America’s founders. Nevertheless, Hall has written an important, readable book that is a valuable addition to the stream of books providing a scholarly and more accurate understanding of the Christian aspects of the American Founding.

Brent J. Aucoin
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Thomas R. Schreiner. *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. xx + 714 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801039393. \$44.99 (Hardback).

Tom Schreiner has given the church a magnificent resource in his recent whole Bible theology. While biblical scholarship has shied away from biblical theologies that cover the entire canon, Schreiner makes an important contribution to a growing corpus of such works. Along with adding to the list of biblical theologies of both Testaments, Schreiner also takes a unique approach, in that he focuses on the storyline of the Bible as his governing paradigm, rather than a particular “central theme.” G. K. Beale has taken a storyline approach in his *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, but Schreiner is among the forerunners for doing so with a whole Bible theology. Even though central themes are not at the forefront of Schreiner’s method, he still identifies 1) YHWH 2) dwelling in the land 3) with his people as central aspects of the storyline he traces.

The organization of the book is straightforward, as Schreiner walks the reader through the biblical material book by book. He mostly follows the English order of the Old and New Testaments, although he does place Acts with Luke and the Johannine Epistles with John's Gospel. Each chapter covers a book or section of the Bible, and the primary focus of each chapter is how the story advances, especially with respect to restoring what was lost in the Garden and to the three central aspects of the story. Schreiner deftly ties together the major covenants of the OT, demonstrating how Adam's tasks are lost in the Fall but redeemed in the promises to Abraham and David. He also masterfully leaves the reader expecting the messianic eschatological hope to be fulfilled at the end of his OT exploration, and carefully shows how the Gospels present Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, and giving of the Spirit at Pentecost as that fulfillment. Further, these connections and explanations of the story are not simply conjectures by the author; instead, Schreiner continually demonstrates the exegetical and narrative basis for his conclusions. The future reader should note, though, that Schreiner's exegetical points and intertextual insights can be understood by the layperson and the trained biblical scholar or theologian alike.

Talk of intertextual insights brings us to another strength of the book, namely that Schreiner is able to piece together various texts throughout the canon of Scripture to weave particular narrative threads. Sometimes these are woven using intertextuality, while at other times the connections are more conceptual. Either way, it is refreshing to see an esteemed biblical scholar explicitly recognize the inherent textual and conceptual unity of the Scriptures, which, as Schreiner notes in the introduction, is a product of his recognition of both the human and divine authors' role in producing a meaningful text. Schreiner does not shy away from appealing to the divine author, something that is sorely lacking today even amongst evangelical interpreters.

Two relatively minor criticisms bear mentioning, one organizational and one conceptual. On an organizational level, many of Schreiner's biblical theological conclusions are left within the paragraphs of each chapter (for instance, his mention of grace and election in the discussion of Jacob's story, p. 22), instead of in some sort of concluding summary of the biblical theological points to be made at the end of each chapter. Although he includes "interludes," where he summarizes each part of the biblical story (of

which there are nine in this book), there are no places in this volume where Schreiner collects his biblical theological points. It appears to me that he is content to summarize the biblical story, rather than also summarize his biblical theological conclusions. But this begs the question: is biblical theology merely summarizing the story, even if in doing so one is textually and conceptually connecting different parts of the narrative? Is there more required of the task, say listing central aspects, plot movements, or expectations? As mentioned above, Schreiner does list YHWH dwelling in the land with his people as defining central aspects of the story, but he does not come back to each of these in a tight organizational fashion. This is not to say that he doesn't return to these themes over and over again throughout his storyline summary, but it is to say that he does not do so with any regularity in terms of the book's organization. One also wonders here if there are not other central aspects of the story, or perhaps sub-categories of the three he mentions, that could not be teased out or listed somewhere in the book.

One other criticism comes in his understanding of canonical order. Schreiner says in the introduction that he wants to pay attention to the final form of the text, which includes the order of the books in the canon. He goes on to say, though, that any particular order will do (pp. xv–xvi). And as one reads, especially in the New Testament, it appears that not just any attested order but really any order one conceives will do, as he removes John from between Luke and Acts and places the Johannine Epistles with John's Gospel. For me, this appears to be a lack of critical engagement with the arguments for utilizing a particular order, and especially the difference it makes in OT theology to use the English order rather than Hebrew order. Schreiner is correct to say that one is not more inspired or correct than the other. However, to say it makes no difference in reading strategy is, to my mind, missing the mark in that discussion.

These two slight criticisms aside, *The King in His Beauty* is a magnificent compendium of the riches of evangelical biblical theology. Schreiner as always is a careful, meticulous, and engaging writer, and his walk through the biblical storyline is one that will be useful to both lay readers and scholars alike. I highly recommend it to anyone wanting to understand how the Bible is unified in its story about YHWH dwelling in the land with his people.

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Kutter Callaway. *Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. 253 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1602585355. \$29.95 (Paperback).

The rise of interest in film to integrate theology and overtly biblical narratives is a welcome practice, but hopefully not a trend. In his book *Scoring Transcendence* Kutter Callaway strikes out to analyze the role of music in cinematography as a medium for viewers to experience God aesthetically. More specifically, Callaway interacts with how music, when conjoined with deep existential themes in film, helps to reach our affective states and through that experience draw us closer to God. As Callaway notes, the artistic medium is particularly effective when the content of film and music coincide with our own experiences (e.g. the death of a loved one) and may provide insight into profitable ways in which we can understand such experiences. Thus his thesis is that “a musically aware engagement with film opens up new possibilities for theological dialogue and reflection that would remain otherwise inaccessible” (p. 4). There are few books with such a focused theme, and for this Callaway is to be commended.

The essence of his theological case for religious experience through artistic mediums is grounded in general revelation, and his commitment to the arts falls into that mold (p. 155). The Spirit is understood as Yahweh’s *ruach*, “The divine breath of life that perpetually animates the whole of the created order” (p. 164). Accordingly, the notion of “spirit” as incorporeal must be jettisoned and replaced with “the creative energy of the divine that is present in our physicality, the transcendent spirit whom we encounter in and through immanence” (p. 164). That is, we understand the transcendent through our experiences with the immanent. Borrowing from Moltmann, Callaway links the creative activity of God to the creative activity of persons created in the image of God. Aesthetics, as a manifestation of creativity, can be a medium through which people have a confronting experience of God’s presence. Given the focus on music in this text, Callaway advances the idea that music, as a nonrepresentational form of communication, is more effective in “signifying that which lies beyond the limits of visual representation” (p. 173).

To make the case clear Callaway advances the following ideas: First, aesthetic understanding is non-propositional, that is, it is not

a text (p. 189). Instead, a film is an audiovisual experience that the person encounters. Second, given the possibility of such an encounter, the “theological significance of music in film compels us to reconsider the devotional nature of filmgoing” (p. 192).

The films that Callaway chooses to integrate into the discussion are far-ranging. He analyzes the use of music in *There Will Be Blood*, *Up*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *The Tree of Life*, among others. This is not to say that these movies are overtly religious; many of them are not. Rather, the focus of his book is how music impacts the experience of the film as it allows us to *feel* the moment. Music may bring to bear in greater significance the intimacy of a kiss, the pain attending the death of a loved one, or the happiness that follows personal success in some form. So, beyond the image on the screen, there is the “surplus in need of interpretation” (p. 106). And to explain how we interpret, Callaway invokes Schleiermacher. He united feeling (an inward and immediate awareness of how the whole of our selves is affected by the existence of the Infinite in the finite), and intuition (our perception of the divine operating in our lives through our lived experiences). In other words, musical expression provides understanding that is ineffable.

If there is any criticism of this book, it is to note the sheer lack of interaction with philosophers and theologians that have both the expertise and interest in the cross section of aesthetics and theology. This is a concern because there is a solid history of such interaction, one such example being Nicholas Wolterstorff. Moreover, given the rise of interest in the epistemology of imagination and its implications for apologetics, a more concerted effort to dovetail artistic mediums with theological meaning would have greatly benefitted the book. Otherwise I recommend this book as a welcome advancement in studies pertaining to the Christian faith and the arts. It is clearly written, insightful, interesting, controversial at points, and trendsetting for further discussions.

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Robert B. Chisholm. *1 & 2 Samuel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. xiii + 337 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 978-0801092251. \$39.99 (Hardback).

This commentary is one of three volumes now published in the Teach the Text Series, whose aim is to combine strengths of tradi-

tional devotional commentaries with the sophistication of modern Hebrew linguistics and ancient Near Eastern history—a commentary that “utilizes the best of biblical scholarship but also presents the material in a clear, concise, and attractive format” (p. ix). The structure for each volume treats each successive pericope along five parallel lines: Big Idea, Key Themes, Understanding the Text, Teaching the Text, and Illustrating the Text. The meat of the commentary is in Understanding the Text, which is further divided into four interpretive perspectives (with minor exceptions in some volumes): The Text in Context, Historical and Cultural Background, Interpretive Insights, and Theological Insights.

The foreignness that is typical of any new format quickly gives way to a discussion that is consistent, clear, and easy to follow. A professional layout of color photos, figures, and cutouts adds significantly to the reading experience. Chisholm’s light-handed style, moreover, fits well with a commentary designed to be highly accessible. The author and editors also provide more than twenty superb sidebars that sit alongside this format, addressing difficult or controversial issues like, “Did Jonathan Sin?” (1 Sam 14), “The Problem of Genocide” (1 Sam 15), “David’s Expanding Harem” (2 Sam 5), and “The Legal Background of Tamar’s Request” (2 Sam 13). These sidebars and their footnotes alone make the commentary a valuable resource for teachers and preachers.

As for the commentary proper, the introduction is brief and sufficiently lucid to encourage readers not to pass it by, as is often the case. However, brevity comes with the weakness of saying too little about important historical and canonical issues. On the whole, Chisholm reads Samuel in the light of Judges, and only occasionally discusses theological parallels in the Pentateuch (law or narratives), Chronicles, and the New Testament. For example, and from a devotional or pastoral perspective, Chisholm’s otherwise illuminating discussion on the family division between Jonathan and Saul fails to pick up on echoes throughout the lives of Israel’s first family: Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Jacob and his children.

Without question, the “Interpretive Insights” are the heart and soul of this commentary. As an accomplished Hebrew scholar, Chisholm is well-suited to give novice readers an appreciation for the sophisticated repetition and wordplay that are so characteristic of the author(s) of 1–2 Samuel. These interpretative sections consistently guide the reader to the key twists and turns in the narrative.

The “Theological Insights” that follow are, by and large, typically summaries of the narrative and usually too brief to be of significant value to the reader. In the last two decades we have witnessed an outpouring of scholarship calling for a renewal of “theological interpretation” that goes beyond mere exegesis and historical study. While the dialogue has a wide range of opinions, there is a common desire to hear God speak into the issues facing our contemporary culture.¹ To be fair, Chisholm does not understand “theology” in this way and uses the “Teaching the Text” section to make the text applicable to modern audiences. But those sections tend to comment solely on devotional types of issues.

As an example, in light of the breakdown of the modern family in the West, it is surprising to see Chisholm dismiss the passage on Eli and his sons (1 Sam 2:12–36) as unfruitful for further discussion. The same could be said for his decision not to extend the commentary on David’s sin with Bathsheba to the poisonous effects that pornography and marital infidelity are having in our world today. Or again why not say more about the way Absalom used his gifts to steal the people’s loyalty from his father and the way contemporary leaders in businesses, politics, and churches are undermined by those who are able to use their charisma to gain a subversive own following? Doesn’t 1–2 Samuel have anything in it that might enlighten the problems of our overly economized culture, consumerism, sensualism, individualism, or ethical pluralism? Pastors and teachers could surely use help making those connections.

Finally, in the “Illustrating the Text” sections at the end of each chapter, Chisholm gathers an impressive range of quotes, music, images, stories, and illustrations for pastors and teachers to use in their preparation. Unfortunately, these often feel a little like an add-on with little help in knowing how Chisholm imagined they would be connected to the text.

By virtue of their unique focus, all commentaries have shortcomings; but this is a well-designed series and its weaknesses are minor. And if this volume is any indication, the series will become a trusted companion for those who use it to preach and teach.

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¹ See, e.g. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* ed. K.J. Vanhoozer, et al., (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 19–25.

J. Stephen Yuille. *Looking unto Jesus: The Christ-Centered Piety of Seventeenth-Century Baptists*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013. xxiv + 96 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1620321775. \$15.00 (Paperback).

J. Stephen Yuille has established himself as a trusted guide to the piety of the English Puritans with his numerous publications in that area. Now, Yuille has turned his attention toward a neglected group from the same time period. While some could question whether Baptists can properly be called Puritans, Yuille has rightly recognized the shared theological commitments and piety of these seventeenth-century contemporaries. In his introduction, Yuille highlights four reasons he is attracted to the Puritans. They are God-fearing, heaven-seeking, sin-hating, and Christ-exalting. In the seventeenth-century Particular Baptists, Yuille has found kindred spirits with the Puritans that he loves so much.

In *Looking unto Jesus*, Yuille introduces the modern reader to two of the more obscure of the admittedly little known group of Particular Baptists—Thomas Wilcox and Vavasor Powell. The book's structure is very straightforward. In chapters one and three, a primary source by each of the subjects is reproduced. In chapters two and four, Yuille provides a theological analysis of the Christ-centered piety of each of the respective authors. Chapter one is a modernized edition of the 1676 edition of Wilcox's *A Guide to Eternal Glory*. This sermon is a strong appeal to look to Christ for both justification and sanctification. In Wilcox's own words, "In every duty, look at Christ; before duty to pardon, in duty to assist, and after duty to accept" (p. 7). Chapter two features an examination of the Christ-centered piety of Wilcox in his lone extant work. Here Yuille summarizes *A Guide to Eternal Glory* as containing a call to examine self, a call to combat despair, and a call to consider Christ. Permeating the sermon is the kind of Christo-centric piety characterized by the Puritans.

Chapter three contains a modernized edition of Vavasor Powell's 1646 tract titled *Saving Faith Discovered in Three Heavenly Conferences*. In this short treatise, Powell presents three hypothetical conversations between Jesus and a Publican, Jesus and a Pharisee, and Jesus and a doubting Christian. Although these conversations are fictional, all of the comments by Jesus are either direct quotes from Scripture or a close paraphrase of biblical truths. To the Publican, who represents a sinner broken over his sin, Jesus responds with

mercy and compassion. To the Pharisee, who represents the self-righteous, Jesus calls for repentance. To the doubting Christian, Christ offers peace and assurance. All three are directed to look to Christ and away from themselves. Chapter four offers Yuille's analysis of Powell's Christ-centered piety. Yuille expertly shows that Powell has demonstrated how Christ alone can meet the needs of the Publican's thirst, the Pharisee's pride, and the Christian's doubt.

As a historian, a few things stood out to me as meriting more information. First, I would like to have seen a clear reference in the footnotes as to which edition of the primary sources Yuille was using (the details are in the bibliography, but absent from the text and footnotes). Second, I would have liked more information on how Yuille determined that Vavasor Powell in fact wrote *Saving Faith Discovered in Three Heavenly Conferences*. In a footnote, Yuille explained how the treatise became falsely attributed to Wilcox, but not how he knew it was written by Powell (the treatise was originally published in 1651 under Powell's name). Third, a comparison with other editions of the texts included would have provided clarity regarding some of the hard to read or understand portions of the primary texts. For example, a comparison with the 1699 edition of Wilcox's *A Guide to Eternal Glory* would have confirmed Yuille's conjecture that "religions" should have been "relations" (p. 12 fn. 11). Likewise, a comparison with the 1651 edition of Powell's *Saving Faith Discovered* would have revealed Scripture references which the editor noted as illegible (e.g. p. 53 fn. 7 and p. 58 fn. 8).

Despite these minor quibbles, *Looking unto Jesus* is a book worthy of being read and re-read by modern Christians desiring to have their hearts kindled in devotion to Christ. Yuille's selection of these two primary sources and his rich theological analysis accomplish his purpose of exposing the modern reader to Puritan piety. By reading these two seventeenth-century Particular Baptists, it is hoped that the interested reader's horizons might be expanded to realize that there is a larger body of Puritan literature available than one might previously have known.

G. Stephen Weaver Jr.
Frankfort, Kentucky

Barry Webb. *The Book of Judges*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. xx + 555 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0802826282. \$50.00 (Hardback).

Webb's long anticipated commentary on Judges was worth the wait, a welcome addition to scholarship on this interesting, engaging and often disturbing biblical book. Non-specialists will find Webb's writing to be not only informative, but surprisingly comprehensible; scholars will find the fruits of his research to offer a wealth of historical, literary and theological insights into Judges.

In his preface he explains his preference for "emotionally warm" over cool, detached academic writing, which accurately characterizes the tone of his work. He describes himself as an evangelical Christian and states his commendable desire that his effort will be of service to the church.

Webb's eighty-seven page introduction includes a black/white map of tribal Israel and the standard discussions relevant to the book of Judges: ancient commentators' references (pp. 4–9), historical issues (pp. 10–20), compositional concerns (pp. 20–32), book structure (pp. 32–35), recent scholarship (pp. 35–53), theological contributions (pp. 53–55), relationship to Christian canon (pp. 55–67), textual issues (pp. 67–69), translation (pp. 69–74) and bibliography (pp. 74–87). Readers who want Webb to get to the point might be frustrated at his meandering (albeit, engaging) style, as he begins by asking, "But what is a book?" and then does not mention his particular book (i.e., Judges) until the end of his third paragraph.

His discussion of the historical background for the book is well-informed and balanced (he tentatively favors an early 15th century date for the Exodus), but his conclusions about the dating of Judges still seem overly precise ("roughly 1326–1092 B.C."; p. 12). In his detailed overview of the history of the book's formation Webb provides readers with a clear summary of scholars who focus on the redaction of the Deuteronomistic History generally, as well as those who examine the book of Judges specifically (Noth, Richter, Smend, Veijola, Dietrich, Soggin, Cross, Auld, Boling and Gross). Webb also includes an extended overview of research on Judges (from 1970–2010) that is less concerned with redactors and more concerned with the final form of Judges as a literary work (Bal, Klein, Hamlin, Amit, Yee, O'Connell, Block, Schneider, McCann, Brettler, Matthews, Niditch, Butler and Gross).

In his summary of the book's content, Webb includes Barak in his list of judges (Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Barak, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon and Samson; p. 34), but curiously excludes Deborah despite the fact that the text states that Deborah "judged Israel" and Israel came to her "for judgment" (Judg. 6:4, 5), while Barak is never described similarly. Webb's three divisions of the book will not prove controversial though: first, a two-part introduction (1:1–3:6); second, an extended central section narrating the careers of the judges (3:7–16:31); third, a two-part epilogue (17–21). As he explains his translation conventions, Webb helpfully observes the problem of simply translating the Hebrew *hinné* as "behold", an archaic expression rarely used except in certain Bible translations (e.g., KJV, NAS, ESV), and then the textual commentary includes examples of his various alternatives (e.g., "hear this": 1:2; "look": 6:37).

Personally, I found Webb's discussions of women and violence in Judges particularly insightful as he addresses these notoriously problematic aspects of the book's narrative. Webb argues that the recorded abuses of women ("texts of terror") are "viewed as abhorrent" by the book of Judges and are consequences of their apostasy and idolatry (p. 58). He acknowledges that the book mixes violence and humor in a disturbing manner (e.g., Ehud's blade being enveloped by King Eglon's fat: Judg. 3:21–22), but as he notes, "the coarse humor of Judges is typical of the heroic genre" (p. 61). Webb goes into depth justifying the violence of the conquest in Joshua and of the ongoing battles against the Canaanites in Judges as necessary to teach Israel about warfare, about the necessity of obedience and about the consequences of disobedience. While readers may not be fully satisfied with his justifications for the book's violence, Webb humbly acknowledges that the Christian scholar's goal is not "to tame the Bible" but to help "the church listen to it" (p. 67).

Webb's textual commentary includes, in addition to a fresh translation, numerous tables, diagrams, outlines and schematics to encapsulate the structure of passages (less in the later sections), as well as frequent summaries and seven helpful excursuses. As he summarizes the Gideon narrative, he deftly brings together observations connecting the judge's story to characters in the Exodus story: "The man who started by being a 'Moses' ends here by being an 'Aaron,' the fashioner of an idol for Israel to worship" (p. 266). In his excursus entitled, "Should Jephthah have broken his vow?"

he concludes that Jephthah was wrong to make the vow and “compounded the wrong” by sacrificing his daughter to fulfill his obligation (p. 336).

Webb’s commentary effectively achieves his desire stated in the preface and will certainly serve the academy as well as the church to better understand the problematic book of Judges.

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Jonathan R. Wilson. *God’s Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. xvii + 283 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801038815. \$24.99 (Paperback).

Jonathan R. Wilson is Pioneer McDonald Professor of Theology at Carey Theological College in Vancouver, BC. In *God’s Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation*, he argues that the Church has neglected the biblical doctrine of Creation—Wilson calls it a case of “teleological amnesia”—and all of Western culture is the worse for it.

Rather than responding to the onslaught of naturalism, materialism, and Darwinism, Wilson argues that theologians of the last 250 years turned inward. Instead of developing a robust theology of Creation, they focused on salvation history. This abdication had consequences—nearly all of them bad. Theology as an intellectual discipline was banished from the academy, the Church embraced a nearly-Gnostic view of salvation (salvation came to be understood as deliverance from Creation rather than the redemption of Creation), and society came to view technology in messianic terms.

One of the worst effects of abandoning Creation as a worldview is that, in the modern mind, Creation has been transformed into Nature. This left the modern world with four miserable options: conclude that there is no meaning, purpose, or teleology to the universe; try to manufacture meaning for ourselves; try to believe that the universe creates its own purpose or telos (however, if death is the final outcome for all then it is difficult to avoid fatalism); or attempt to construe meaning in the light of another god besides the Triune God of the Bible. Wilson contends that the only proper telos is Jesus Christ (Col 1:15–21). Failure to recognize this leads to despair, and much of modern society’s frenetic activities are attempts to deny, manage, or ameliorate this despair. Only a recovered theology of Creation—a theology that always views Cre-

ation in the context of redemption—can heal the pathologies of society.

Wilson presents his case in three parts. First, he surveys the damage caused by ignoring the doctrine of creation. He likens modern theologians to a band of adventurers who have abandoned their guide but do not realize how lost they really are. Second, he presents an approach for developing a robust theology of creation. We should never separate the story of Creation from the story of redemption. We cannot understand Creation simply by looking at its beginning; it can be properly understood only in the light of the *eschaton*. A truly Christian approach to Creation will be Trinitarian, emphasizing the relational, life-giving work that involves each member of the Triune Godhead. Last, Wilson devotes the remainder of the book to applying the motifs developed in part two (what he calls “construing the world”). He engages with the concepts associated with the word “world” and then either coopts them or sets them in contrast to the biblical understanding of Creation. He examines concepts such as a clockwork universe, the blind watchmaker, the selfish gene, survival of the fittest, and natural selection—with varying degrees of success.

Concerning the charge that theologians avoided the modern challenges to the Christian view of Creation by focusing on salvation history, Wilson makes his case. This move may have protected biblical theology from modernity but it also removed theology from the public square. He convincingly shows the negative impact this move has had on the academy, society, and the church. Yet, in part three, Wilson gets mixed results when he applies his approach. For example, he critiques the ascendancy of technology over wisdom (he calls this phenomenon *techné*) and he examines the role of advertising. Though he makes very good points, Wilson sometimes gives the impression that he finds both the technological culture and the advertising industry intrinsically evil.

Wilson gives little attention to the question of why theology responded to the challenges of the Enlightenment by taking the inward turn that it did. The ascendancy of historical criticism seemed to undermine biblical authority at just the same time that scientific disciplines such as geology and biology appeared to leave no place for a historical fall. Further discussion in these areas would have been helpful. *God's Good World* is not the final word on the subject;

Wilson doesn't claim that it is. But he makes a good case for where the discussion should go from here.

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Jonathan Stökl. *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East. Vol. 56. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012. xvi+ 297 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-9004229921. \$151.00 (Hardback).

Prophecy in the Ancient Near East is the edited version of Stökl's Ph.D. dissertation, completed at the Oriental Institute, Oxford University, under the supervision of Hugh Williamson and Stephanie Dalley. Stökl is an expert in ANE languages and has published frequently in the area of ANE prophecy, particularly in regards to gender roles in the prophetic context. He is currently a part of the ERC (European Research Council) project "By the rivers of Babylon: New perspectives on Second Temple Judaism from cuneiform texts."

Because this is a revision of his doctoral work, the book bears all the marks of a Ph.D. dissertation. The first chapter defines terms and sets the limits of the project. One of the key aspects of the book is the definition of "prophet" as set apart from dreamers/astrologers and other diviners. For Stökl, a prophet "refers only to individuals who receive a divine message, the words of which are understandable without further analysis with a special skill (such as reading livers)" (p. 10). The rest of chapter one is spent in brief discussion of Egyptian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Greek prophetic inscription texts. Following chapter one, the book is divided into four sections: 1) Prophecy in Old Babylonian Sources; 2) Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources; 3) Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible; and 4) Comparison and Conclusion. In the first section, Stökl distinguishes between an *āpilum*, a court spokesman responsible to the king (p. 49), and a *muhbūm*, an ecstatic cult/temple official who may have had a secondary function as a prophet (p. 57). As with the Babylonian sources in section one, the second section begins with a list of known texts, and then defines key Assyrian terms associated with prophecy, lastly turning attention to compositional issues. What Stökl argues is that the Neo-Assyrians used prophecy in a number of different ways, which included incorporating older prophecies into contemporary ones, or using the older

prophecies as a type of template to give a recognizable shape and authority to new prophecies (p. 141). Such a process reflects a similar scholarly belief of the composition of OT prophetic texts.

In the section on the Hebrew Bible, Stökl discusses how the term **נביא** (a member of the court, not critical of the kingship, who communicated messages through letters, p. 171) eventually came to be understood as the dominant term for OT prophets, and differentiates it from **חֹזֶה** (a court official who received divine messages through visions, p. 196) and **רֹאֶה** (a diviner with no official court position, p. 200). Stökl argues that **נביא** was a term for a court prophet, not a pre-exilic writing prophet, (p. 184), but came to be associated with Jeremiah, and was then redactionally applied the three kinds of **נביאים** in the OT: 1) the ecstatic groups; 2) the technical diviners; and 3) the writing prophets (p. 174). Throughout all these sections Stökl covers a broad spectrum of issues associated with ancient prophets, including good discussions on gender, and the role of lay prophets within the society.

Despite the occasional typographical error, the book is well organized and well written. It is also exceptionally well researched. Stökl's knowledge of cuneiform texts, ANE languages, and modern research languages is impressive. Additionally, he presents all his findings with a cautious attitude, one that is quick to acknowledge the limited aspects of ANE cuneiform research, and the tenuous nature of many of its conclusions.

Because of the necessities of the research and the multiple languages used to present it, many may find reading the book a bit difficult. Also it quickly becomes apparent that Stökl's narrow definition of "prophet" controls much of his conclusions, and one wonders if the ancients would have had such strict boundaries between professions. Furthermore, Stökl's findings on the Hebrew prophets are based heavily on redactional arguments, which while well researched, always allow room for disagreement. For example, in order to arrive at the same conclusion on the use of the terms **חֹזֶה** and **נביא**, one has to agree that Amos 7:10–17 (as well as Judges 5:12) is a late addition to the text (pp. 182–184). Similar arguments are used to define/dismiss the use of "prophet" associated with Moses and Abraham in the Pentateuch as late (p. 176), as well as to read "prophet" in Isaiah 36–39 as postexilic, finding instead a more authentic reading in a pre-exilic Isa 3:1–7 (p. 179). Nonetheless, readers will find some of Stökl's conclusions very enlightening, for example, how music became associated with prophecy (pp. 211–

215), or that “more female prophets existed than the biblical text might suggest” (p. 217). For pastors of churches or undergraduate students looking to understand and apply OT prophetic texts better, this book should probably not be high on the reading list. However, for research students interested in examining the shared cultural world of the ANE and OT prophecy, this book presents a comprehensive, scholarly contribution.

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Jackson Wu. *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*. Evangelical Missiological Society Dissertation Series. Pasadena: WCIU Press, 2013. xii + 355 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0865850477. \$25.00 (Paperback).

In *Saving God's Face*, Jackson Wu (a pseudonym) provides a helpful integration of theory, cultural studies, theology, and biblical exegesis. He also presents a strong argument for utilizing the honor/shame motif as a lens for theologizing in general, though he focuses primarily on a (21st century Han) Chinese context. Wu, a Westerner, currently serves cross-culturally as a theological educator in such a context. The work at hand is his published dissertation completed through Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the third dissertation from this school published in the increasingly important EMS Dissertation Series.

Over a total of six chapters, Wu argues that “a dialogically contextualized Chinese soteriology, which draws heavily upon honor-shame concepts prevalent in Chinese culture, issues forth in a biblical understanding of atonement and justification” (p. 1). In the first major chapter, he critiques various models of contextualization, particularly those from a Western perspective. Overall, he makes the bold and apropos claim that Western missionaries and theologians have assumed too much about the content of the gospel when encountering non-Western worldviews. He thus calls for greater emphasis on biblical theology alongside cultural exegesis in lieu of overreliance on Western systematic categories. For him, contextualization is deeper than just communicating seemingly timeless a-cultural truths. Of particular concern to Wu, the West relies too heavily upon the law/guilt motif, supposedly arising out of Greco-Roman roots. He thus identifies this as an issue of theological method—contextualization itself must be part of the theo-

logical process. Contextualized theology, then, he argues, “empathiz[es] with a local context and then find[s] affinity with the Scripture” (p. 35).

Chapters three and four include Wu’s helpful treatment of various Chinese contextualizations followed by his detailed and scholarly discussion of honor/shame within a Chinese worldview. Any prospective theologian or missiologist in a Chinese context would greatly benefit from interacting with these chapters.

In the fifth, and arguably most important chapter, Wu emphasizes the biblical language of honor/shame which should inform theological discourse on soteriology. Wu discusses the terminology of atonement, righteousness, justification, honor, and shame, among others. He concludes with an invaluable study of Romans through honor/shame and group identity motifs. Central to his argument in this chapter, Wu maintains that Paul’s emphasis in Romans was not upon individuals and their guilt for offending general moral principles, but Paul was “countering ethnocentrism” by showing how “justification signifies one’s group identity” whereby Christians are members “of God’s family, which consists of those from among all nations who give their allegiance to Christ” (p. 292).

Wu’s conclusion includes thoughts on the implications of his study. His bibliography afterwards is expansive. Most helpful to the reader, Wu’s final inclusion is a scripture index.

This publication is thought-provoking—a must-read for any Westerner considering theological or missiological work in a Chinese context. Furthermore, this is a serious read for any ethnic Chinese theologian. What this work demands is a response, for good or ill, from Chinese thinkers. Wu honors the biblical text and also, as it appears to this Westerner’s review, the Chinese worldview. But more importantly, this work goes a long way towards demonstrating the strong honor/shame motif in Scripture.

If theologians were to take a dialogical approach, then the contributions Wu so aptly identifies are as important for correcting blind spots within Western theology as for theologizing Chinese-ly. In other words, Western theologians would do well to emphasize the honor/shame motif in Scripture, not because Western or Chinese culture demands it, but because Scripture demands it.

At the same time, while Wu reminds the reader more than once that the honor/shame motif is a starting point, not an exhaustive framework for theologizing, Scripture demands an interaction with

the law/guilt motif. Perhaps there is an unwarranted assumption in Wu's critique of Western theology. Could it be that the reason why Western theology has emphasized law/guilt is not primarily because of its Greco-Roman heritage but because of the rather large collection of laws in the Hebrew Scriptures, including the Ten Commandments? Could it be that the emphasis on penal substitution and imputed righteousness derive from biblical presentations, even if they fit within western frames of reference? While Wu presents his argument as both/and, not either/or, it will be important to see how the both/and works itself out in Chinese theologizing.

As a final and small point of contention, this review and this book use the term "Western" rather loosely. Even among cultures traditionally deemed "Western," there is plurality, cultural and theological plurality. This plurality is only increasing, not just because of immigration but because of the rightful challenge to hegemony previously exercised by majority groups, among a host of other reasons. Scholars would do well to be more precise when using this language. Nonetheless, Wu's dissertation is a valuable addition to the field and a must-read for theologians and missiologists alike.

Wesley L. Handy
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Heath Thomas, Jeremy Evans, and Paul Copan, eds. *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013. xii + 352 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0830839957. \$26.00 (Paperback).

This thirteen-essay collection, which began life as a 2009 colloquium involving Duke Divinity School and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, approaches the topic of biblical holy war from a variety of angles. It may be summarized as "a kind of 'reader' [to] enable discussion and deliberation from a number of different perspectives: biblical, ethical, philosophical and theological" (p. 18).

Following the introduction, Douglas Earl employs primary texts in order to reject "pervasive and powerful" assumptions that the book of Joshua fueled, inspired or justified later conquests like the Crusades. However, Stephen Chapman emphasizes that the goal of divine warfare (a term he prefers to "holy war") "is not violence but peace" (p. 61). God cannot be "fully extricated" from warfare

because God is involved in every aspect of life,” even in flawed or sinful human efforts like war. And Heath Thomas’ essay wraps itself like a scarf around Chapman’s, using Lamentations to explore divine warfare and the ability of God’s people to express lament for such warfare. Thomas thus notes the inapplicability of sacred-secular distinctions.

Tim Gombis stresses that believers’ warfare in the NT is not against other humans, but is supernatural in its nature and mechanics and based on the cosmic victory won by God and inaugurated by his Son (Eph 1:20–23). The question of whether God has waged, is waging, or will wage war against “children of wrath” (2:3) is not addressed. The following essay by Alan Bandy on Revelation takes up the question. Faithful witnesses (martyrs) present their case to the Judge; they do not take matters into their own hands. God is righteous in his judgments and their severity. His “warfare is not arbitrary but central to the question of divine justice” (p. 108).

David Lamb addresses God’s compassionate motivation in wars (even against Israel). He is the defender of the oppressed and the punisher of oppression. Thus “warfare motivated by compassion and by [justified] anger is less problematic” than thoughtless vengeance (p. 151). Like Lamb and other contributors, Earl (chapter eight, concerning holy war and *herem*) addresses the use of “Holy War” as a label, and the book’s discussion of this question begins to be repetitive. However, Earl finds *herem* to be non-genocidal in both Testaments.

Daniel Heimbach develops a theology of crusade, which is both initiated and led by God, but in a manner that could be verified by those called to participate (p. 196). He rejects a variety of Christian approaches to crusade, but affirms God’s right to do what he wills (not least because of the evidence in Revelation 19).

In chapter ten, “The Ethics of ‘Holy War’ for Christian Morality and Theology,” Copan and Matthew Flanagan take a philosophical approach to the biblical text and its critics. Here we find a rare reference to the judgment merited by the Canaanites (p. 233), noted also in Genesis 15:13–16 (pp. 230–1); these and related biblical warrants should perhaps have been more thoroughly explored elsewhere in this volume. Copan and Flanagan emphasize hyperbole in the text in light of ancient literary parallels, citing biblical scholars like Hess and philosophers like Wolterstorff. They illustrate the “hyperbole” phenomenon in scripture: for instance, in its own literary (Deuteronomy—Judges) and cultural contexts, “Josh-

ua . . . [sometimes appears] to be something other than a mere literal description of what occurred” (p. 215).

Glen Stassen avoids the “well-worn” question of when war is or is not just by focusing on “The Prophets’ Call for Peacemaking Practices,” which certainly helps calibrate readers’ expectations. Robert Stewart similarly encourages deeper reading practices that temper the criticisms of New Atheists who “have cherry-picked the Bible.”

Murray Rae carefully explores and critiques three 20th century approaches to “just war” (Niebuhr, Barth, O’Donovan), rejecting them in favor of a commitment to forgiveness, compassion and sacrifice that takes seriously Christ’s teachings and his cross: “The battle against evil waged there sets the pattern for those who seek to love others as Christ has loved us” (p. 310). Christians certainly need more resistance to violence. But does a pristine position of non-violence exist? Chapman casts doubts on this position (p. 65). Do verbal criticism, Jesus’ warfare against demons and verbal warfare against opponents, economic sanctions (whether international or ecclesial, 2 Thess 3:10), and excommunication flow from a pacifistic understanding of the cross and human conflict? While the early Christian commitment to pacifism is significant and widespread, it is far from comprehensive.

Finally, one of the best essays in the book is Stephen Williams’s “‘Holy War’ and the New Atheism,” who colorfully and thoughtfully rejects increasingly common false characterizations of the Bible and Christianity.

The book is more academic than apologetic. Some authors make no reference to OT warfare texts. However a significant common denominator is the authors’ insistence on placing controversial texts in canonical and theological perspective. God’s character is not determined solely with reference to his justice, nor his is justice solely determined with reference to particular instances of judgment. Evans and Thomas thus end the work by highlighting God’s lament of human sin: “Like a dam that finally breaks loose, God gives way to judgment and punishes a rebellious people. The point is, however, that God is not presented as overly quick in his judgment: his mercy is long and his anguish in bearing sin is sure.”

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W. Edward Glenny. *Hosea: A Commentary based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus*. Septuagint Commentary Series. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013. 203 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-9004245563. \$140.00 (Hardback).

The Septuagint Commentary Series aims to treat the LXX texts as literary works in their own right, with a focus on Hosea (in this case) as it would have come to early Greek readers unfamiliar with Hebrew. While the importance of Vaticanus (B) for Hosea studies lies entirely in the background as a dialogue partner for translations of the Masoretic Text (MT), the author puts B squarely in the foreground with mentions of the MT used to support or dialogue with B only when significant variances or interesting moments allow. Indeed, there seem to be more references to the New Testament than to the MT.

The author provides a critical text of B with full notes and translation followed by a standard verse-by-verse commentary, focusing on grammar and translation issues. Regarding the material choices made throughout, the author seems fairly unadventurous. For instance, he takes rather mainstream views of Hosea's marriages as both regarding Gomer, first as a woman who would be unfaithful, and then his "buying [her] back" as his wife in ch.3. The debated meaning of 6:7 with *'adam* (MT) taken as a generic "man" in B goes almost unnoticed, another byproduct of the series being uninterested in debates outside the LXX itself. And so on throughout, with rather standard readings for the larger interpretive questions in the book.

The drawback of the commentary comes in the aim of the series. On the one hand, the series can be seen as a natural extension of "canonical" interpretations: treating the texts in their final form, and so seeing B as a moment in Hosea's textual life. But then we would expect some kind of historical introduction to the audience of B, how particular lines of interpretation or cultural influences impacted the reading of the text. But nothing of the audience for B comes into play. Glenny offers a good defense for hesitance regarding the "theology" of the translator, which I fully appreciate. But the (normally unfair) criticism of canonical interpretations ignoring history seems to apply: historical knowledge is invoked for semantic matters but little more.

An illustration of the difficulty caused by this approach comes in the repeated references to the "Baals" in Hosea or to various

forms of cultic idolatry. Much debate has gone into whether or not Baal worship even existed in 8th century Israel, the nature of those (possible) ritual matters, and thus how to understand either the history or intent of the references. This commentary on B, because it has little concern for the “original” text or utterances, finds itself in a strange land. So after hinting at some of the debate on fertility/cult prostitutes mentioned by Herodotus, we are told, “However, such general practices, if they existed in the time the LXX was read, would not satisfy the grammatical requirements in this passage [4:11–13]” (p. 97).

The concern with the practices that existed when the LXX was *read* (a rather large stretch of history) completely detaches the text from 8th century Israel, or even from the concerns of the editor(s) of Hosea, whenever the book may have been put together. Likewise with the “vain practices” at 6:8 we are told that some of the early church fathers took it as “manufacturing images for worship,” an interesting point but strangely removed from what it might actually have meant in 8th century Israel. The commentary in such moments seems to offer little insight either on Hosea itself or the setting and audience of B.

These, however, are criticisms with the macro-level of the series and the volume: what the book is *not* rather than what it *is*. It *is* a wonderful piece of scholarship, offering technical and detailed comments on the Greek text of Hosea in B. The strength of the commentary lies in lexical and grammatical work that can often be difficult for non-specialists to find. If one picks up the work hoping for added insights into Hosea then, aside from an interesting point or two along the way, it will make for somewhat disappointing reading. But the work succeeds in nudging LXX scholarship into the broader public and allowing for more responsible use of the LXX by specialists and non-specialists alike. And for that reason alone this work will find itself at the elbow of LXX scholars generally, and commentators on the MT of Hosea for many years to come.

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Michael McClenahan. *Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. 218 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1409441786. \$99.95 (Hardback).

Recent years have witnessed considerable debate regarding Jonathan Edwards's understanding of justification. Revisionist scholars such as Anri Morimoto, Sang Lee, Robert Jenson, and Gerald McDermott have argued that Edwards departed from a traditional Reformed understanding of justification and at least opened the door to a more Catholic view of the doctrine. In response, a growing number of neo-traditionalist scholars have attempted to reassert Edwards's status as a faithful, albeit creative Reformed theologian. Several of the North American neo-traditionalists contributed to a recent collection of essays, edited by Josh Moody, titled *Jonathan Edwards and Justification* (Crossway, 2012). Irish pastor-theologian Michael McClenahan's further advances their work in his recent monograph *Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith*.

McClenahan argues that Edwards affirmed a traditionally Reformed view of justification that was informed by the milieu of the wider Reformed Orthodoxy movement and the immediate context of the Arminian controversy in eighteenth-century New England. Contra scholars influenced by Perry Miller who suggest that Arminianism represented an aberrant form of Calvinism that arose almost inevitably from covenant theology, McClenahan contends that the Arminianism opposed by Edwards has its roots in a different context: the post-Restoration Church of England. The main proponent of Arminianism was John Tillotson, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to 1694 and popularizer of anti-Calvinist sentiments among British Anglicans. When Timothy Cutler, rector of Yale University, converted to Anglicanism and embraced Tillotson's version of Arminianism in 1720, Edwards became engaged in the debate, beginning with his M.A. *Quaestio* (thesis) that year. His major work proved to be the treatise *Justification by Faith Alone* (1738), which was an expanded version of two lectures on the topic first delivered at Edwards's church in 1734. Based upon scattered footnotes and un-cited quotations and paraphrases, McClenahan shows that the major opponent in this apologetic work was Archbishop Tillotson.

McClenahan's book is not a comprehensive study of Edwards's views, but rather offers an analysis of Edwards's anti-Arminian polemic in the 1720s and 1730s, with special emphasis on *Justifica-*

tion by Faith Alone. He divides his monograph into five chapters plus a lengthy introduction and brief conclusion. The introduction provides a literature survey, criticizes revisionist understandings of Edwards on justification, and, most importantly, explains McClenahan's methodology. Rather than interpreting Edwards as a philosopher and granting his unpublished and often-speculative "Miscellanies" undue influence, McClenahan envisions Edwards as primarily a preacher and theologian and relies on his published treatises and sermons; many of the latter were revised from the Miscellanies. Chapters one and two explain the historical context of the New England debate over Arminianism and its background in the post-Restoration British Anglicanism of Tillotson. Edwards was not an esoteric philosopher flirting with Catholicism (or Eastern Orthodoxy), but rather was a theological polemicist countering a particular movement he understood to be erroneous. Chapters three, four, and five provide an exposition of *Justification by Faith Alone* that set the discourse in its polemical context and frame the work as representative of Reformed Orthodox thinking on justification, righteousness, and evangelical obedience.

In making his case for Edwards as a defender of Reformed theology and piety, McClenahan ably demonstrates that revisionists are largely unfamiliar with the British debates over Arminianism and the finer theological distinctions made by the leading theologians of Reformed Orthodoxy, especially Francis Turretin, whom Edwards regularly quotes. Revisionists, many of whom seem to be largely motivated by ecumenical concerns or trendy theological movements such as the New Perspective on Paul, fail to understand Edwards in his own context on his own terms. Furthermore, by focusing on Edwards's unpublished theorizing rather than his published beliefs, they overemphasize his unsettled speculations over his publicly articulated convictions. Their misunderstanding or outright ignorance of the interpretive tradition of Reformed Orthodoxy lead them to accuse Edwards of flirting with views that he flatly condemned as opposed to his understanding of the gospel. McClenahan has done scholars (and pastors) a favor by providing the historical legwork to demonstrate that traditional interpretations of Edwards's views are substantially correct.

Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith originated as a doctoral thesis at Exeter College, Oxford University. As such, it reads like a dissertation at times, including repetition (e.g. pp. 43 and 58) and the occasional use of the word "dissertation" rather than more ap-

appropriate terms such as “book,” “study,” or “monograph.” It is also necessarily limited in its scope, in this case to the 1720s and 1730s. While McClenahan rightly points out that Edwards never published a comprehensive treatise on justification (there is an unfinished draft in the Edwards corpus), with the availability of the Yale Edition of Edwards’s works, there is a need for a historical inquiry into any post-1738 developments in Edwards’s thinking on justification, especially in sermons and passing references in other published works. One hopes McClenahan’s fine monograph will inspire an intrepid doctoral student or seasoned Edwardsean scholar to engage in just such a study.

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Dominique Barthélemy. *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project. Textual Criticism and the Translator*. 3. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. xxxii + 688. Hardback. ISBN 978-1575062358. \$79.50 (Hardback).

Dominique Barthélemy’s book, *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project* is a translation from three French introductory chapters, which constitute the introductions to each of the three volumes of Barthélemy’s *Critique Textuelle de l’Ancien Testament* (CTAT). CTAT itself is the fruition of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, (HOTTP) a collaboration of six Old Testament textual critics, initiated by the United Bible Society under the leadership of the now famous Eugene Nida, as a means to help translators apply the results of text criticism to their work around the globe.

Barthélemy was already well known in the field of text criticism having helped to edit and publish the Cave One fragments from Qumran and later, the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever. His participation in HOTTP further prepared him to write CTAT and seal his place in Old Testament text criticism.

Studies in the Text of the Old Testament is divided into three sections, each corresponding to one of the introductions to CTAT, noted above. In addition, one of the six participants of HOTTP, James Sanders, writes an introduction to the present volume in which he situates the work of Barthélemy and HOTTP within current Old Testament text critical efforts.

Part One expresses a history of Old Testament textual criticism from the early medieval period (c. A.D. 840) until J. D. Michaelis at the end of the 18th century. Barthélemy also articulates the work of the committee and the how it initially envisioned its tasks and goals.

Part Two leads the reader through the different modern versions that HOTTP consulted and their own histories, influences, and revisions.

Part Three is divided into three portions: An Introduction expresses the methodology and purpose in the pursuit of a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible. Section One traces the authority of the highest-caliber, Masoretic, medieval manuscripts in conjunction with the process of how these manuscripts came into being. In addition, it traces the progression of a text type aligned with the Masoretic text (Proto-Masoretic), a textual tradition prior to the Masoretic text type (Pre-Masoretic), and one beyond a Masoretic stabilization (Extra-Masoretic). Finally, Section Two discusses the origin and development of ancient versions alongside Hebrew manuscripts.

Barthélemy's work exhibits an erudition and methodological rigor that immediately demonstrates his long-standing work in the field. By way of example, Barthélemy writes in Part One that the committee itself "recognized four phases in the development of the Hebrew text." The first phase consisted of the original oral or written literary materials. Barthélemy asserts that literary analysis would be necessary to pursue the constitution of these sources. The second phase consisted of what the committee called the earliest attested text. This evidence would necessarily be textual in nature and would require textual evidence for support. The third phase consisted of the proto-Masoretic text and the fourth stage is the Masoretic text (p. 87). This sort of clarity at the beginning of the committee's work demonstrates why the project was successful and upon what foundation Barthélemy is able to articulate these and other issues in the remaining introductions.

Another example of erudition concerns Barthélemy's distinction of Canonical Scriptures in contrast to what he calls "Holy Scripture" (p. 229). Canonical Scripture is a particular text regulated by authoritative paradigmatic texts. Holy Scripture, in contrast, "can constitute a legacy held by a relatively closed school, where the Scripture evolves by additions, alterations, and omissions to keep current the divine message which it transmits and which must retain its value for future generations" (p. 229). Barthélemy proceeds

with the example of Deuteronomy, in so far as it was scripture before its so-called canonization in the period of Josiah. Then, after the collapse of the state, it became Holy Scripture again with the necessity of development for its constituents and then finally, achieving canonical status thereafter.

However, the book does suffer from a few minor deficiencies, mainly stemming from the manner in which it is compiled. Parts One through Three are distinct introductions to different volumes, so they do not flow seamlessly. Some ideas are repeated or developed throughout the work of the committee. Although Barthélemy, along with Sanders (in his introduction to the work), attempts to alert the reader to these issues, some confusion is inevitable. Also, at various places, Barthélemy discusses the most detailed of minutiae (e.g. details of the Masorah Parva). At times, these detailed materials may be beyond the reach of the interested general reader, or even of the young scholar who has not delved into such areas. Perhaps a glossary or subject index could make the work more useful to these readers. Finally, Part Two, fascinating though it is to a reader interested in the history of these modern translations, appears less related to the application of textual criticism.

These minor criticisms aside, I found the material in Parts One and Three exhilarating. At times, I felt as though I was learning from the scholar himself, safeguarding his analysis with methodological succinctness while profoundly pointing out the obvious from his first-hand study of sources.

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