BOOK REVIEWS

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The aim of this book is to show that “the Bible has much wisdom to teach us about the place and role of government and its citizens” (xiii). The reader will quickly discover in the first chapter of this well-written book that the author, Cornelis Van Dam, who is Emeritus Professor of Old Testament at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Ontario, aims to interpret this biblical wisdom through the looking glass of Calvinist theology. Although Professor Van Dam presents this book as an “introduction” to lay readers who desire a basic understanding of the historically contentious relation between faith and politics,
he is just as determined to defend the Reformed tradition as the theological pathway towards comprehending this relation.

Van Dam’s theological preference would not be particularly problematic for a non-Calvinist reader if it were not for the fact that he applies the principles of this tradition to the current politics of Canada. Readers who have studied the Canadian founding and have noticed the utter lack of attention that the Fathers of Confederation gave to the Christian faith may be justifiably puzzled by Van Dam’s constant reference to the “Christian heritage of biblical morals and principles that have historically shaped so much of the life and institutions” of North America (99). Although historians like Barry Alan Shain and David Hackett Fischer have made a strong case for the pivotal influence of the Calvinist tradition in American history, it is hard to see how any faith tradition has persistently shaped the attitudes or the policies of Canadian prime ministers and leaders from Confederation onwards (unless pragmatism is a religion). The one time that John A. Macdonald was even remotely interested in religious matters, as Van Dam admits, was in opposing the right of Mormons to practice polygamy (140).

Nevertheless, Van Dam advances a traditional Calvinist position precisely because he even more ambitiously contends that the Reformation brought into being the modern liberal democratic regime with its attendant credos of liberty and equality for all: “by returning to Scripture and its teachings, [the Reformation] ended much of the abuse of power that both state and church had been guilty of and helped to open the way to true liberty” (14). Although he provides an informative discussion of John Calvin’s teachings that praise the rule of law as well as condemn the evils of tyranny, Van Dam painfully stretches the historical record when he then claims that these teachings “helped to fuel the struggle for freedom against Roman Catholic tyranny in France, the Netherlands, and Scotland” (80). Although it is true that Protestant movements ended Catholic tyranny, they did not necessarily usher in freedom for all Christians (including all Protestants) or non-Christians in the process. Any decent biography of the Jewish philosopher Spinoza, who lived a perilous existence in seventeenth century Holland, can easily refute Van Dam’s portrayal of the Calvinist hierarchy as a stalwart protector of both religious freedom and democratic reform: the Dutch Reformed Church banned Spinoza’s famous defence of liberal democracy, the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, in 1674.

In fairness to the author, Van Dam admits at times that the Reformers were often inconsistent in calling for religious freedom (along with church-state separation) while they also expected the government to “remove and destroy idolatry and false worship . . . and suppress heresies and prevent corruption in the church” (51–52). (Calvin himself was guilty of inconsistency in this regard.) Yet he doubts that this tension is intrinsic to the Calvinist tradition since conflicts over the roles
of church and of state were eventually addressed by the Reformers who embraced religious freedom in later centuries (54). What Van Dam refuses to acknowledge here is the role of the Enlightenment, not the Reformed tradition, in putting an end to these disputes over the relation between church and state, since he dismisses this philosophical revolution as dangerously humanistic and secular (80–81). Yet it is hard to imagine how Canada and the United States could have emerged as liberal, constitutional states without being indebted to the Enlightenment teaching that the state has no business in dictating matters of theology to the citizenry. It is equally hard to understand how the Reformed tradition that persists today could have made peace with a tolerant, secular, liberal state without eventually coming to terms with the Enlightenment as well.

Van Dam is on stronger ground when he accuses the modern secular democratic state of pretending to be morally “neutral” while it advances value-laden policies that promote abortion, gay rights, and euthanasia in a manner that marginalizes and that even vilifies opposing voices. (See chapters 5 and 6.) A “principled pluralism” would reject the secularist contradiction that a liberal regime must tolerate all voices except religious ones (64). He also presents good reasons to worry about Canadian immigration policy and multiculturalism, which often ignore the stark differences between Islam and other faiths on practices like democracy, religious freedom, and polygamy. It is hard to fault Van Dam for warning that Islam “has no interest in such [religions] freedom except when they [Muslims] are in a minority and utilize Western freedoms to their advantage” (211). To date, the once hailed “Arab Spring” of democracy has now become the “Arab Winter,” in which theocracies threaten to replace dictatorships. Still, Van Dam is oddly silent on whether Christians should then defend what is left of the Enlightenment tradition in western democracies, perhaps because he blames this tradition for removing Christianity from the public square.

What, then, are Christians to do in the political sphere? It is difficult to know what to do with Van Dam’s assertion that “ultimately it is not the voters who put governments in power but, at the end of the day, it is the sovereign God of heaven and earth who does so” (29). Should Christians then see a liberally permissive democracy as part of God’s divine plan for humanity? The author also confuses this reader when he contends, based on the teachings of Rom 13, that the “duty of government is to restrain sin and evil” even though “Christ is patient and bears with the weakness of the sinful human heart” (74, 72). Somehow a truly righteous state can tolerate vice as the price of freedom (91) while it seeks to provide “a coherent public order of justice, to restrain evil, and to encourage virtue” (98). Additionally, all religions deserve a say in politics even though one should worry about Islam’s threat (see above) to the Christian heritage of Canada (64, 95). Finally, “it is not the calling of the church as a corporate body to interfere in the
political process and attempt to apply the biblical principles to the government agenda” (75), even as we are called upon to make the reference to the “supremacy of God” in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms into more than an “empty gesture with no legal consequences” (83). After following all these twists and turns, even a philosophical lover of paradoxes will feel buried under the weight of these contradictions.

What the political philosopher Leo Strauss calls “the theologico-political problem,” or the eternal conflict between the roles of faith and politics, is left unaddressed and unclear at the end of this book. Short of establishing a theocracy in Canada, where no such regime has ever existed, it is hard to conceive how Van Dam could accomplish his goal of preserving and advancing the nation’s Christian heritage in a nation in which only a small minority regularly attends church and an even smaller one reads the Institutes. Although the author dislikes the Enlightenment, he and his like-minded brethren may have to rediscover their indebtedness to les philosophes for defending the philosophical and religious freedoms that are now being challenged in the mass democracies of our time.

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Man is a reciprocal being, homo reciprocus, where relationships are established and are strengthened through the exchange of gifts. In the economically stratified first century Mediterranean world, reciprocal relationships provided social cohesion to the fabric of society. The fidelity that was necessary to define and to stabilize these long term relationships was sustained through the dynamic of reciprocity. Reciprocal relationships, which refers to the social exchange between parties involved in the trade of services, has been of particular interest to scholars within the social-scientific field of research. In Enabling Fidelity to God, Jason Whiltlark, professor at Baylor University, considers both the dynamic of reciprocity as it is understood in the Mediterranean world and the message of Hebrews as it was heard within this context. Whiltlark attempts to come to terms with effects of the asymmetrical relationships of reciprocity by focusing on the methodological question: How did the original audience of Hebrews hear its message in light of the ancient Mediterranean reciprocity system—both Greco-Roman and Jewish—that permeated
these auditors’ world (9)? His introductory remarks and the survey of recent works provide the matrix upon which he wishes to demonstrate his thesis. Whitlark contends, against DaSilva among others, that in order to better understand Hebrews, the anthropological perspective and its interaction with reciprocity must be considered. Whitlark forms his thesis by observing that anthropological orientation determines the success of reciprocity to secure fidelity.

Advancing from Whitlark’s preliminary theoretical remarks in the introductory chapter, he moves our attention to an examination of the historical context of Hebrews. He employs a literary-critical method that may be called authorial audience criticism (8). He identifies four aspects characterizing bonds of reciprocity: (1) the relational nature, (2) fidelity, (3) cooperation, and (4) mutual dependence. He observes that reciprocity was meant to secure long-term amicable relationships of cooperative dependence (53). The study then attempts to demonstrate that the success of reciprocity to secure fidelity was supported by an optimistic anthropology. He defines an optimistic anthropology as a view that “says that what a beneficiary should do or be, that person can do or be” (54; emphasis original). He further states that a pessimistic anthropology “assumes that a person has no inherent ability to do what he or she should do” (54). In this chapter, Whitlark offers a fresh synthesis and a reexamination of primary and secondary sources, with special attention given to the philosophical systems of Aristotle and Seneca, in an attempt to demonstrate that ancient Mediterranean reciprocity is characterized by an optimistic anthropology.

Having discussed the ancient sources’ emphasis on persons being capable of virtue through knowledge and continual practice, Whitlark highlights views of the Jewish subculture of the Greco-Roman world. He endeavors to show that the belief in the possibility of reciprocity to secure ongoing fidelity in the divine-human relationship rested upon an optimistic anthropological assumption (69).

In the next chapter, he considers reciprocity in the religious heritage of the book of Hebrews. He describes the characterization of reciprocity in the Middle Judaic context in light of the characterization of reciprocity in the Greco-Roman context. He concludes that there was an exilic perspective represented in the Deuteronomistic History, in Jeremiah, and in Ezekiel that was critical of reciprocity. This perspective, according to Whitlark, continued to be represented by the Qumran community and by Paul. In his analysis, he observes that a pessimistic or optimistic anthropological assumption led to two different rationales for how fidelity was successfully secured between God and humans: (1) by means of reciprocity or (2) by means of divine enablement.

Having the basis of context, Whitlark commences in chapter 4 with “listening” to Hebrews’s summons to fidelity in order to determine whether fidelity in Hebrews is secured through indebted gratitude (reciprocity) or as a result of an ongo-
ing divine enablement. He describes two models that appropriate benefaction terminology to describe the divine-human relationship. One model maintained the concept of reciprocity as the foundation of fidelity whereas the other model rejected this rationale. Whitlark’s examination of the new covenant and of the pattern in Hebrews demonstrates that Hebrews follows a pessimistic anthropology and looks to divine enablement and to human transformation to secure fidelity. He does not endeavor to sort out the paradox in Hebrews concerning the dual emphasis on God’s enabling and on human responsibility.

Whitlark concludes (ch. 5) with a summation of his findings and an attempt to locate Hebrews in the trajectories of the church’s theological tradition, represented by Pelagius and by Augustine (173). He states that although Hebrews’s affirmation of election does not offer answers to predestination and although its pessimistic anthropology does not lend itself to a specific statement of original sin, it nonetheless combats synergistic views of the divine-human relationship (178).

This work is an important contribution to our understanding of ancient reciprocity and of its implications on the soteriology of Hebrews. Whitlark offers a way forward regarding the manner in which we can understand Hebrews in light of the new covenant’s emphasis on grace. His use of the category of divine enablement makes possible a refreshing reading. Not everyone will agree with Whitlark’s thesis, particularly his conclusions based on the lack of explicit concentration given to a pessimistic anthropology in Hebrews, but his provocative new reading will prompt students of Hebrews and New Testament soteriology to come to terms with Whitlark’s thesis.

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Introduction

The Orthodox Study Bible (OSB) is a new English Bible translation with study notes, tools, and articles designed to appeal to an English-speaking audience. The best way to understand its aims, intended audience, and contents is to describe the institution that is primarily responsible for its production: the St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology (SAAOT). The OSB’s trademarked Septuagint translation, the St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint™ (SAAS™) is the work of this institution. The academy has its roots in Protestant traditions, which explains the
impetus to produce an Orthodox Bible in a study Bible format that is used primarily by Protestants. Unlike Protestant traditions, the members of the Orthodox Church have exercised their faith without the common practice of personal Bible study for most of their long history. The offering of a study Bible for Orthodox Christians reflects a more recent development in Orthodox Christianity that is influenced by Protestant reading practices. This development mirrors the changing face of Orthodox Christianity in the 21st century and the growth of English-speaking North American Orthodox communities.

The St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology
With the backing of the publisher Thomas Nelson, the SAAOT spearheaded the development of the OSB. The SAAOT is a parachurch institution founded by Fr. Jack Sparks in Elk Grove, Calif. He served as dean of the academy from 1976 until his death in February 2010. The academy was originally a part of the Evangelical Orthodox Church (EOC), a community of evangelical Christians with a large contingent from the Campus Crusade for Christ, who adopted the structure and the practices of the Orthodox Church. Senior editor at Thomas Nelson and former leader in the Campus Crusade for Christ, Fr. Peter Gillquist (July 13, 1938–July 1, 2012) was also a leading figure in this movement. As a senior editor, Fr. Gillquist was instrumental in bringing the publishing house and the SAAOT together to produce the OSB. In 1987, most of the EOC churches were brought into the fold of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, along with the SAAOT.

Even after the SAAOT became an Antiochian entity, it continued to pursue the same goal: to create and to disseminate educational material for English-speaking Orthodox Christians as well as for those interested in learning more about Orthodoxy. This goal has given rise to a number of initiatives, including the publishing of Orthodox study literature, of correspondence courses on Orthodox topics, and of a prison inmate education ministry. The most significant of these initiatives is the OSB, which was initially offered as a New Testament and Psalms (1993), but is now released with a translation of the full Septuagint Old Testament (2008). Although the SAAOT is devoted to education, it makes no claim to be a rigorously academic institution. Rather, the academy strives to produce Orthodox Christian material to meet the interests of lay people, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike.

Objectives of the Orthodox Study Bible
The release of The Orthodox Study Bible: New Testament and Psalms aroused interest in a full English Bible with an Old Testament that reflects the Septuagint text. The Old Testament text used in Orthodox church services is the Septuagint, an ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. However, most English
Bibles translate the Old Testament from the Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text preserves a Hebrew text tradition that is somewhat different than the Hebrew text from which the Septuagint was translated. Some of these differences are quite pronounced. For example, Jeremiah has a different arrangement and is significantly shorter in the Septuagint. Until recently, most English-speaking Orthodox Christians have relied upon English translations of the Masoretic Text for personal reading rather than translations of the traditional Septuagint text.

Although some translations of the Septuagint into English were available before the OSB, they were largely inadequate for Orthodox devotions. Sir Lancelot Brenton’s 1851 translation uses language that is too outdated for easy use by most readers. Even the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS), released a year before the OSB, offers a translation that is not entirely suited for Orthodox readers. It uses language that is obscure or objectionable for devotional reading, particularly given the Orthodox interpretation of the Old Testament through a Christological lens. For example, the traditional interpretation of the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:2 is intentionally obscured by the translation “Yet the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was over the abyss, and a divine wind was being carried along over the water.” Even though this translation may have merits for the academic reader, it creates obstacles for the Orthodox devotional reader, who is primarily interested in the Church’s reception of the Old Testament traditions—not how earlier Jewish audiences may have understood the text.

It is in response to this lack of a readable text for English-speaking Orthodox Christians that Fr. Sparks and the SAAOT developed the St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint™ (SAAS™). By including the SAAS™ in the OSB, the Bible stands as one of the only readable translations of the Septuagint Old Testament that appeals to Orthodox Christians. However, making the SAAS™ part of the OSB was not just a matter of inserting the Old Testament translation. The first edition of the OSB had Orthodox notes for the New Testament and Psalms. So to maintain the consistency of the study Bible format, they had to produce a full commentary for the Old Testament as well.

A study Bible format was adopted to offer a Christian Bible that reflects Orthodox Christian biblical interpretation. Because there is such an enormous amount of interpretive tradition to draw upon, the SAAOT narrowed the commentary to four major foci: the Holy Trinity, the incarnation, the centrality of the Church, and the virtues. These foci are still exceedingly broad and readers looking for an exhaustive or even representative commentary will be disappointed. The

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primary value of the commentary is that it flags important passages, offers at least one Orthodox perspective, indicates where passages are read in the liturgical calendar and, in some cases, provides a reference to a church father who has written on the topic. Unfortunately, the references to the church fathers are sparing. Although this commentary is limited, it has the benefit of providing the reader with a starting point for understanding how certain passages of Scripture are used within church services and by some Orthodox interpreters. This running commentary is supplemented by the essays and the tools at the beginning and at the end of the study Bible, of which more will be said below.

**Intended Audience**

As an extension of the broader evangelical and educational mission of the SAAOT, the OSB is primarily designed for English-speaking Orthodox Christians from Protestant backgrounds. The study Bible format is native to Protestant Christianity and reflects its heavy emphasis on personal Bible study as a core Christian practice. In fact, the Geneva Bible, the 16th century forerunner of the modern study Bible, was developed in a Protestant context for home Bible study. The use of this format, a mainstay of Protestant-evangelical piety, is a deliberate attempt to appeal to Christians who were formerly Protestant and who wish to study the Bible in an Orthodox way.

The OSB is also meant to appeal to a number of other readers as well. Although many English-speaking Orthodox Christians are converts to Orthodoxy, there are also many Orthodox immigrants to English-speaking countries who now pray in English-speaking Orthodox churches. Now that many parishes are offering liturgies in English, these Orthodox Christians may have an interest in reading an English Bible that reflects the Septuagint and that contains Orthodox commentary. Finally, non-Orthodox readers may also be interested in Orthodox Christianity for a number of reasons. Although some might wish to convert, others may only want to pray with the Orthodox church without being received into it, and still others may want to appropriate Orthodox theology or practices for their own faith communities.

**Contents: Tools and Articles**

For this mixed audience, the OSB offers a number of essays that describe elements of the Orthodox Christian view of Scripture and an approach to Bible study. The best written and most useful essay is titled “How to Read the Bible” by Metro-

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3 A full description of all the essays is beyond the scope of this review, but they include an overview of the books of the Bible by Bishop Basil, an introduction to the Orthodox Church, and an essay on the Bible as divine revelation by Archbishop Joseph. Nelson, Orthodox, xv–xx, xxi–xxviii, 1753–1755.
Metropolitan Kallistos is widely-recognized and has authored a number of popular works on Orthodoxy, including *The Orthodox Church* and *The Orthodox Way*. His essay offers a faith-oriented and distinctly Orthodox strategy for reading the Bible. He encourages the reader to encounter Scripture with an open and receptive disposition while also engaging the intellect. In addition, he exhorts the receptive reader to seek moral exemplars from biblical figures as he or she reads. Metropolitan Kallistos also offers a basic framework for biblical theology. He identifies Christ as the unifying element in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, endorsing the reading of the Old Testament with a heavily Christological lens. Above all, Metropolitan Kallistos underscores the importance of not encountering the Bible in isolation but in concert with an active participation in the Church. In this regard, he ties the newer practice of personal Scripture reading to older expressions of piety within Orthodox communities.

To this end, the OSB also offers a number of tools that allow one to read Scripture in synchronization with the cycles of the church calendar and prayer. One such tool is the OSB’s calendar of church lectionary readings. These lectionary readings were not originally intended as a guide for personal Bible study, but they are also easily adapted for an Orthodox approach to such a practice. Also, in keeping with Metropolitan Kallistos’ call to read Scripture in conjunction with participation in the life of the church, the OSB also includes Orthodox daily prayers for the morning and evening. In these prayers, the OSB indicates the point in the prayers where the lectionary readings can be read, situating the reading of Scripture within the cycles of prayer in which the worldwide Orthodox church is participating. There are a number of additional tools, including a table of differences in the versification of the Septuagint and of the Hebrew Bible, a comparison chart of canon lists from various Christian traditions, a glossary of biblical and theological terms, an index of topics in the introduction, commentary, and appendices, another index for the study articles, a list of the seventy disciples that Jesus sent ahead of himself (Luke 10:1–17), and several maps of biblical events. Additionally, there are plates of Orthodox iconography interspersed throughout the Bible.

### Contents: The Running Text of the Bible

Each book of the Bible begins with a one page fact sheet that includes background details and an outline. These introductions reference historical-critical issues of

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4 Nelson, *Orthodox*, 1757–1766. The article gives the title of the author as a bishop, but even before the publication of this version of the OSB, he was elevated to a metropolitan.


authorship, but the traditional authorial claims about the books are the primary focus. Each fact sheet provides the book’s putative author and the day of his commemoration in the Orthodox calendar. In many cases, such as the Pentateuch, Ephesians, and Hebrews, authorship is qualified as being traditional, acknowledging historical problems of authorship without heavily engaging them. However, in some cases, such as Nehemiah, Proverbs, and several of the minor prophets, the putative author is stated to be the unqualified author of the composition. Additionally, the fact sheets assign a traditional date to each book, sometimes with a critical comment. The introductory page also offers major themes and background information to orient the reader to the genre and setting of each book.

The format of the running text is familiar from other Bibles. The paragraph headers in each book are frequent and bold. In most cases they facilitate reading. They often mark reasonable breaks in the text, but sometimes they are used too liberally. For example, in 1 Cor 1:13 a single verse is given a heading of its own when it clearly belongs to the previous paragraph. The verse numbering is conventional except in the Old Testament where its versification varies from other English translations due to differences in the Septuagint text. Superscript crosses in the running text refer to interpretive notes appearing at the bottom of each page.

The OSB also includes limited text-critical information in the running text of the Bible. In the New Testament, there are superscripted letters that correspond to critical notes. These are directly imported from the NKJV and reflect how some critical readings differ from the Received Text. They indicate cross references as well as differences in the Majority Text (M) and the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Society critical New Testament texts (NU). The abbreviations “M” and “NU” are not explained in the OSB introduction, although they are present in the front matter for the standard NKJV introduction. Regrettably, the editors omit the standard NKJV introduction from the OSB, so the reader has to refer to a NKJV Bible to learn what the textual abbreviations mean.

Outside of the New Testament, the reader is provided much less text-critical information. The editors offer no text-critical notes in the running text of the Old Testament. The lack of information is surprising given that the OSB project put forth such an effort to conform the NKJV translation to follow a Septuagint text in the SAAS™. It would have been simple for the editor to indicate where the SAAOT has changed the NKJV to reflect the Septuagint. Readers, particularly converts and non-Orthodox with an interest in the Orthodox faith, might be interested to know how and where the more familiar NKJV text is adjusted to match the Septuagint.

Translation Philosophy
As mentioned above, the OSB replicates the NKJV translation for the New Testa-
ment and for parts of the Old Testament as well. In the Old Testament, the OSB reproduces the NKJV text where the editors believe that it is essentially the same as would be an English translation of the Septuagint. Where the Septuagint offers a translatable difference, the contributors use the Alfred Rahlfs edition of the Septuagint (1935) and the English translation by Lancelot Brenton (1844) to offer their own translation. A sampling of passages by the reviewer indicates that the Old Testament translation is not just a NKJV translation with minor adjustments, but that there is a substantive and thoroughgoing difference. Even so, this translation does not easily fit on the translation philosophy scale—ranging from formal equivalence to dynamic equivalence—because it claims to be derived from other English translations. However, because its goal is to reflect the formal elements of the Septuagint, one might rate the SAAS™ as a translation that involves a moderate level of formal equivalence.

A significant amount of translation work has gone into the Old Testament. Unfortunately, the adjustment of the NKJV text to reflect the Septuagint is not satisfactory in every case. For example, in the OSB Ten Commandments (Exod 20:1–17), the commandment to avoid work on the Sabbath omits a translation of “ο βοῦς σου καὶ τὸ υποζυγίου σου,” “your ox or your donkey” (Exod 20:10). Although the Septuagint preserves this phrase, it is not present in the Masoretic Text. Accordingly, we should expect the SAAS™ to translate it. Instead, it is missing in the OSB, and, consequently, this translation reflects the Masoretic Text rather than the Septuagint. One can only conclude that the SAAOT translator fails to notice that the Septuagint version is longer and simply maintains the Masoretic edition present in the NKJV.

The implications of this omission for the translation philosophy are compounded by the translation of rest of the verse. The end of Exod 20:10, “καὶ ο προσήλυτος ὦ παροικὸν ἐν σοί,” is translated in the OSB as “nor your stranger who sojourns with you.” This peculiar wording is similar to Brenton’s Septuagint translation: “nor the stranger that sojourns with thee” (20:10). It is essentially the same translation with updated pronouns. It appears that the translator of the Ten Commandments is adjusting the NKJV text with Brenton’s translation as a primary reference. Unfortunately, the translator does not follow Brenton closely enough. Brenton’s English translation includes “thine ox nor thine ass,” the phrase missing in the SAAS™ and in the Masoretic Text. So the translator, who was paying close attention to Brenton’s English translation with the full Septuagint version of the verse, still opted to follow the Masoretic version of Exod 20:10. This

9 Nelson, Orthodox, xi.
presents a troubling case that calls into question the accuracy of the SAAS™ as a Septuagint translation.

An additional issue is the incongruity of the New Testament quotations of Old Testament passages. One might expect OSB to make the wording of the Old Testament and of its New Testament quotations match as closely as possible. The New Testament writers’ quotations align better with the Septuagint text than with the other Hebrew editions of the Old Testament. In fact, the New Testament authors’ reliance on the Septuagint is one of the justifications for the use of the Septuagint in the Orthodox Church. The Septuagint is the Old Testament used by the apostles and by most of the early church fathers. Furthermore, Orthodox Christian interpretation of the Old Testament requires reading through a New Testament/Christological lens. Accordingly, where the New Testament Greek quotations and the Old Testament Septuagint translation are parallel, one might expect a translation for Orthodox Christians to use similar if not identical wording. Doing so allows the reader to more easily follow how the New Testament writers are drawing upon Septuagint texts. Of course, in some cases the quotations are deployed in radically different syntactic and interpretive contexts. In these cases, a parallel English translation of Old Testament texts in New Testament quotations may not make for an accessible translation. Even so, in the majority of cases the OSB could retranslate the New Testament quotations so that they match the St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint translation. Unfortunately, these quotations do not always align.

An example can be found in Acts 13:34. The author quotes Isa 55:3: “υμῖν τὰ ὁσία Δαυίδ τὰ πιστά.” In Acts, the OSB maintains the NKJV translation: “I will give to you the sure mercies of David.” However, if one turns to the OSB translation of Isa 55:3, one finds “the holy and faithful things of David.” The New Testament quotation and the Old Testament source do not match. In fact, they appear to be completely different, despite the fact that it is the same Greek phrase. In this case, the context of the passage in the New Testament does not require a different translation and there is no reason for the quotation and for the source to be mismatched.

Even more problematic is the fact that the New Testament quotation and the Old Testament source wording matches in the NKJV. The OSB team offered a new translation for the Septuagint Old Testament while maintaining the NKJV wording for the New Testament. The result is that where the wording of Acts 13:34 was identical in the NKJV, it is now substantially different in the OSB. So rather than highlighting how the New Testament writers are using the wording of the Septuagint, the OSB does the very opposite and makes the Old Testament quotations less obvious than they were in the NKJV. Consequently, the reader of the NKJV is better equipped to read how the New Testament quotes the Old Testa-
ment than is the OSB reader in some cases. This example highlights how the wholesale adoption of the NKJV New Testament presents a serious problem, especially for Orthodox Christian readers who are trying to read the Old Testament with a New Testament lens.

Concluding Assessment
The OSB makes two key contributions: an English translation of the Septuagint Old Testament (SAASTM) and the Orthodox essays and study tools that accompany the biblical text. Despite the overwhelming weight of Orthodox Christianity’s interpretive traditions and of the relatively short history of personal Bible study as a popular Orthodox practice, the SAAOT and their contributors succeed in offering a distinctly Orthodox Christian commentary on Scripture and an outline of what personal Bible study looks like in an Orthodox context, all within a study Bible format. As for the English translation, the use of the NKJV for the New Testament serves its purpose well, except where the New Testament quotations of the Septuagint do not match the SAASTM translation. However, the Septuagint translation itself needs careful review. The lack of attention to the actual wording of the Septuagint in such an important text as the Ten Commandments could indicate that the overall translation is not as loyal to the Septuagint as advertised. Moreover, the practice of leaning heavily on Brenton’s 1844 English translation may have led the translation team to adopt wording that poorly reflects the Septuagint. Although the method used to produce the Septuagint translation is problematic, what makes the Bible stand apart from others are the Orthodox study tools and essays. The growing contingent of English-speaking Orthodox Christians can turn to the materials offered by this study Bible to find one distinctively Orthodox approach to personal Bible study. However, those opening the OSB to learn more about Orthodox views of Scripture need to recognize that it is not universally representative of how the worldwide Orthodox Church, both past and present, has approached Scripture. Rather, the OSB presents a novel approach that is a testimony to the developments in the English-speaking Orthodox Church in North America.

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In *Theology after Pragmatism*, Adonis Vidu, associate professor of theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, picks up where he left off in his previous work, *Postliberal Theological Method: A Critical Study* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005). Vidu’s interests lie in the writings of American philosopher Donald Davidson and in how they might fruitfully be brought to bear on contemporary Christian theology. In his earlier study, Vidu sought to employ Davidsonian semantics against postliberal narrative theology with the goal of uncovering the latter’s theological shortcomings, not least its attendant fideism. In the present work, he calls on Davidson again, but this time he has a different question in mind. What do evangelical theologians stand to gain from a neo-pragmatist (i.e., Davidsonian) approach to semantics?

After acknowledging that pragmatism is a variegated movement and commending Davidson’s thought as its most “fertile” representative (i.e., for doing Christian theology), Vidu situates Davidson in the broader context of developments in twentieth century analytic philosophy and American pragmatism. He begins by indicating the relevance of such figures as Carnap, Sellars, Quine, and Rorty for understanding Davidson’s contribution. Vidu insists that the differences separating Davidson from other pragmatists (e.g., Rorty, Putnam, and Goodman) are not only real but are also theologically significant, going so far as to speak more than once of “two different strands” of neo-pragmatist theology, one Davidsonian and another non-Davidsonian.

If Davidson is Vidu’s neo-pragmatist hero, he does not permit him to thematically steal the show. Other thinkers also play important roles, at least for the purpose of contrast with Davidson. The comparative discussions are welcome since, as Vidu admits, “it is notoriously difficult . . . to introduce Davidson’s philosophy” (116). Before outlining Davidson’s own ideas, Vidu examines previous attempts to utilize pragmatism for theological purposes. From Davaney and Dean to Robbins and Brown, each one, although presenting some legitimate observations here and there, is found wanting, especially on the topics of justification, experience, meaning, and truth. Indeed, the main reason for looking to pragmatism in the first place is the concession that “it is difficult not to accept the insight that meaning, behaviour and empirical engagement with reality are issues that cannot be treated in isolation from each other” (29). In each of these areas, Davidson is thought by Vidu to have made important theoretical advances. Yet Vidu does not shy away from correcting Davidson where needed, critically improving upon Davidson’s
ideas informed by ongoing debates in the secondary literature on both Davidson specifically and neo-pragmatism generally.

*Theology after Neo-Pragmatism* covers some difficult terrain. Fortunately, the author has widely read and his expositions are clearly written, making him an excellent guide to the subject. That said, in terms of theological payoff, it would be understandable if some evangelical readers wondered whether the results provided by the study are worth the sustained efforts required for comprehending it. This is no fault of the author’s, of course, with contemporary analytic philosophy having become a highly specialized discipline. In considerable detail, Vidu carefully shows what lasting impact Davidson’s work is sure to have, not only for philosophy but also for theology and for religious studies. One should keep in mind, however, that his ultimate aim is to see how Davidsonian semantics might be of service to evangelical theology. Here it seems to me, unfortunately, that pragmatism’s signature optimism will not easily transfer to Vidu’s project as a whole. If the limited space he devotes to actually engaging evangelical concerns is taken as an indication, the prospect of constructive dialogue between evangelicalism and neo-pragmatism is not going to be promising.

In a seminal article (“Truth and Meaning,” *Synthese* 17 [1967]: 304-323), Davidson suggested that “a theory [of meaning] that does no more than define truth for a language comes far closer to constituting a complete theory of meaning than superficial analysis might suggest.” In his prior work (*Postliberal Theological Method*), Vidu found this semantic construal useful for the purposes of dismantling postliberalism’s narrative approach to theology. He does this by showing how fundamental fideism aids in our understanding of what Christianity means whenever its meaning gets constructed without a regard for its truth. Over the long run, Vidu argued, such an epistemic arrangement will simply not do. It remains to be seen, however, how helpful this clever strategy will be for bolstering a theology that evangelical believers can adopt and that then would motivate them to become willing to identify as “evangelical.” One problem is that if one espouses a neo-pragmatist position that requires the “giving up on defending what the identity of Christianity means” (266), it would seem, by extension, to entail giving up on defending what the identity of evangelicalism means, since each of these is “much too ripe with sociological variables” (265). This raises a question, however, of whether Vidu overestimates the success of his earlier effort against narrativism, for if believers are no longer to be interested in defending what the identity of Christianity means, then by Davidson’s own strictures, they should no longer take an interest in the truth of the identity of Christianity. If a tradition’s meaning is connected to its truth claims, are not its truth claims connected to its meaning? A second problem is illustrated in how the author’s critical conversation with neo-pragmatism only makes mention of two evangelical authors (Work and Vanhooz-
er) over the span of a five page discussion throughout the course of a three hundred page study. By contrast, Vidu allots almost eighty pages to the work of Lutheran theologian Bruce Marshall (who has since converted to Catholicism). This highlights just how foreign to evangelical thought neo-pragmatism has been judged to be.

On the whole, Vidu is to be commended for offering consistently penetrating analyses of the neo-pragmatist writers he discusses. I suspect, though, that in spite of his best efforts to constrain its naturalist and historicist dimensions, for example, most evangelicals will find neo-pragmatism inherently antithetical to Christian faith. To take but one example, one of several distinguishing characteristics of evangelical theology is the central place it accords to Scripture for legitimating acceptable understandings of Christian faith. Yet when Vidu broaches the topic of Scripture, he must begin by stating that “the Bible is not central to any of the neo-pragmatic philosophers we have discussed. Neither are pragmatic and neo-pragmatic theologians particularly interested in it” (265). This forces Vidu to slip his discussion of Scripture in through the backdoor, as it were. Only as a two page afterword to the longest chapter of the book (the one engaging Marshall) does he find it convenient to mention Scripture as the “normative context” for evangelical theology. Seemingly out of nowhere, Vidu decides to introduce his evangelical proposal by appealing to the “given” normativity of Scripture.

At this juncture, the author appears to me to invoke a fideism of his own. For example, three assurances are provided that neo-pragmatists would certainly find contentious: (1) God is the author of Scripture; (2) there is a telos for Scripture; and (3) “our claim about the relation between truth and purpose must be supplemented by the notion that there are normative, originally intended purposes” (269). Each of these is contestable to say the least, even within evangelicalism—a tradition whose identity is also currently under dispute; a tradition, according to Vidu, that believers need not defend what its identity might mean anymore (which is not necessarily to say they should stop identifying with evangelicalism). From this standpoint, one might argue that Vidu’s belated appeal to Pauline “transformed dispositions” comes across as a theological contrivance at best. As far as I can see, Vidu is simply not as successful as he thinks in staving off the same threats of relativism, historicism, and subjectivism (and fideism)—positions he chastises other writers for ultimately succumbing to. If what’s “sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,” Vidu’s criticism of Davidson—to the effect that pressing questions will not simply disappear because one refuses to countenance them—applies to his own project as well. Are conclusions drawn by Brown—for example, that canons are historically contingent, subjectively constructed, and socially reified—circumvented simply by expressing that such conclusions are theologically unwanted? A hypothetical, evangelical version of Brown’s position would be ca-
pable of accepting that God exists, that God has revealed himself to humans, that God is “the rhetor of scripture,” and that God is creator of the universe. Yet the questions that Vidu poses to the real Brown would be just as pressing for an evangelical version of Brown. If that is the case, then these same questions would seem to equally apply to Vidu as well, with all the same historicizing and relativizing force.

On what basis can we ever distinguish between Christianity and non-Christianity? Evangelicalism and non-evangelicalism? Canonical and non-canonical? Scriptural and non-scriptural (or scripted and non-scripted, to adopt Vidu’s nomenclature)? Why should one be faithful to this Christianity, to this Christian tradition, to this Christian canon, to this Christian Scripture, to this Christian interpretation, to this Christian language or imagination or disposition? “Why should we strive to integrate new pieces of knowledge into the fabric of our inherited tradition?” “Why should theology be the caretaker of tradition, if traditions are so relative and distinctive?” According to Vidu, his interlocutors do not have compelling answers to these questions, but it seems to me that neither does Vidu. Would Vidu have evangelicals take it on faith in his confidence that “there are matters of fact as to whether at some point one group of ideas ceases to belong to a tradition” (92)? Interestingly enough, contemporary analytic philosophy and pragmatism have begun recently to focus on the topic of vagueness. According to Rorty (“How Many Grains Make a Heap?” London Review of Books 27/2 [20 January 2005], 12-13), “It is an underlying concern with the question of whether and how language gets in touch with the world that has made vagueness a hot topic.” It is not yet clear how replacing “reality” with “God” and incorporating Scripture into an account of “scripted” reality can fundamentally resolve the underlying tensions neo-pragmatism exposes, but this is work that Vidu reserves for the future.

Aside from an abrupt transition at the end of the book (to the last chapter treating evangelical theology, which reads more like an appendix), Theology after Neo-Pragmatism provides a thoughtful, well-executed, and fully informed account of neo-pragmatist philosophy and theology. Vidu’s book is suitable for readers already familiar with topics in philosophy such as the realism-antirealism debate, the philosophy of language, the history of twentieth century philosophy, and the emergence of neo-pragmatism.

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Paul Helm’s *Calvin at the Centre* contains a series of studies on John Calvin’s theology with an emphasis on Calvin’s place in the stream of Western philosophical thought. Helm focuses his analysis on Calvin’s writings, particularly his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, with recourse to thinkers who appear to have shaped Calvin’s thought or to have been influenced by it. Accordingly, this book is entitled *Calvin at the Centre*, as Calvin is portrayed in the middle of an exchange between his intellectual predecessors and heirs. Several Reformed thinkers appear prominently within the book, although thinkers from a variety of traditions are included as Helm searches for a coincidence of ideas rather than for purely historical influences. Given the independent nature of each chapter, the book contains a variety of theses instead of a unified, comprehensive thesis. However, Helm does suggest that his book demonstrates a “significant intellectual centre which Calvin occupies” (3).

The first chapter in *Calvin at the Centre* begins where Calvin’s *Institutes* began: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. This chapter also begins *Calvin at the Centre’s* section on epistemology, the first section in a book informally organized by philosophical loci. First, Helm argues that Calvin’s famous double knowledge, influenced by Augustine, figures prominently in much of Calvin’s work and links Calvin to Descartes, another disciple of Augustine. This connection is thoroughly examined, and despite Calvin giving epistemic primacy to the Spirit and regardless of Descartes’ interest in rational certainty, Helm concludes that their common Augustinian framework remains intact. In the subsequent chapter, this framework is further developed as the significance of Cartesian Reformed thinkers like Heereboord and Burman as well as a similar conception of the *sensus divinitatis* in Calvin and Descartes are noted. Helm concludes that “Cartesianism could form a significant element in a Reformed eclecticism, much more widespread than in fact it did” (63). While maintaining a focus on epistemology, the book transitions into a chapter on Holy Scripture. Calvin’s view of the Scriptures as self-authenticated by God’s gift of faith is believed to be “unstable” by Helm as it seems to lie in tension with Calvin’s use of rational proofs that Scripture can be trusted (69). However, in a comparative survey of the Huguenot philosopher Pierre Bayle and of the English Puritans Tuckney and Whichcote, Helm finds that those who disagreed with Calvin on this point also showed some instability.

In a change of focus, Calvin’s conception of God’s hiddenness is discussed, including an examination of Barth’s claim that Calvin allows God to be defined apart from Jesus Christ. Here, it is suggested that Barth misreads some of Calvin’s
remarks on Christology. Related to this discussion on the Godhead are the issues of providence and predestination, which were separated in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* with much scholarly speculation as to the reason for the redaction. Helm shares his own opinion on the issue and concludes by observing how English Calvinism focused on the practical purposes of these doctrines whereas the Continental Calvinists engaged with Cartesian distinctions.

The following two chapters address issues of ethics and redemption. First, Calvin’s commitment to the necessity of the atonement via Jesus Christ is given extensive treatment. It is found that Calvin differed from Anselm, often considered Calvin’s predecessor in atonement thought, as Calvin sometimes suggested that God could have saved humanity by a word rather than by Jesus Christ. As such, Helm believes Calvin is not Anselmian “to the letter” but is Anselmian “in spirit” (181). Flowing from this soteriological discussion, Helm explains Calvin’s understanding of the “double grace” of justification and sanctification (196). He argues that the manner in which Calvin believed justification resulted in sanctification is misunderstood if one associates Calvin’s theology with justification only. Helm examines how this came about, suggesting that the locus methodology of the Reformed scholastics, particularly Francis Turretin, led Reformed theologians to separate what Calvin had not.

Finally, Helm considers Calvin’s metaphysics by beginning with a connection between Calvin’s understanding of compatibilism and that of the Stoics. Despite obvious differences, Calvin clearly draws from the Stoics, an appropriation which Helm traces into later Reformed thinkers like Jonathan Edwards and John Gill. In the following chapter, Helm notes that Calvin maintained a mild Platonic dualism between mind and body. Such a dualism leads into a discussion of how Calvin understood Christ’s earthly and heavenly presences. In the final chapter, Helm argues that Kuyper and Bavinck’s application of Calvin’s “common grace” to the problem of human fallenness was, despite their claims, not the truest representation of Calvin’s thought (310). Helm illustrates this by discussing how Calvin’s distinction between things above and below largely cohered with Martin Luther’s nature-grace dichotomy, the very framework which some believed Calvin had worked around by postulating the notion of common grace.

The strengths of *Calvin at the Centre* are many. Perhaps the book’s greatest achievement is its ambitious attempt to understand the philosophical currents in which Calvin tread. The resulting perspective is likely to be unique in Calvin studies, and it gathers an impressive amount of evidence in its favour. Helm refrains from proof texting and provides ample analysis of Calvin’s thought, impressing upon the reader that Calvin is truly speaking to the issues under consideration. This demonstrates the author’s mastery of Calvin’s thought and also shows his adept theological mind, choosing topics related to Calvin’s thought that often
excited academic theologians like Barth who had a unique understanding of Christocentrism or the Platonic dualism of mind and body. Another praiseworthy aspect of Helm’s book is the manner in which he contextualizes Calvin within the Reformed tradition itself. As an enthusiastic reader of Calvin, particularly of his Institutes, and as an equally enthusiastic reader of American Neo-Calvinism, I was impressed by the breadth and the depth of Helm’s analysis of other Reformed thinkers. Helm skillfully paints a diverse picture of the Reformed tradition without sacrificing the many objective realities of the Reformed tradition—whether their theological emphases or otherwise.

I have noted that the philosophical lens in which Helm analyzes Calvin’s thought is a strength, but I believe it may also be a weakness. Calvin was immersed in the life of the Genevan church and was by all accounts a theologian shaped by Reformation thought and its reaction against late Medieval Catholic theology. Helm certainly discusses this, and, to be fair, his project is mostly concerned with philosophical questions rather than with how Calvin’s disapproval of the contemporaneous doctrines of the Catholic church impacted his thought. Nonetheless, it could be said that such an approach sometimes underemphasizes the significance of Calvin’s ecclesiastical context. In this way, Helm’s portrayal of Calvin is somewhat asymmetrical, focusing on Calvin as the academic theologian rather than as the Reformation pastor. Finally, Calvin at the Centre lacks a concluding chapter, which brings the book to an abrupt ending. Helm makes no claim to a general thesis for the book, which certainly reduces the need for a concluding chapter. However, his suggestion at the beginning of the book that his work indicates a particular intellectual centre which Calvin occupies remains fairly implicit rather than explicit as a result.

In terms of recommendation, the quality of the book and the varied topics it addresses lend themselves to a wide audience that includes those simply interested in gaining further competence in theology and those who are particularly interested in Calvin’s thought. Some parts of the book, particularly the chapter on the knowledge of God and of ourselves, are rich studies that may be worth the cost of the book alone.

Ben White
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The study of the Bible has always been at the center of evangelical traditions. For the greater part of the twentieth century, evangelical writers have not only been busy studying the Bible, but they have also been participating in and responding to what might be called “meta-studies” of Scripture, that is, critical studies that inquire into the historical and the cultural nature of the Old and New Testaments and that proceed to reflect upon what implications these findings have for evangelical, theological understandings of the Bible. In Inerrancy and Worldview, Vern Poythress, professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, reassures his readers that irrespective of what scholarly researchers have found, nothing they discover refutes biblical inerrancy. He argues, for example:

Given the assumptions contained in the historical-critical method, these reconstructions seem plausible. But they do not achieve more than plausibility. The critics do not really know. They have essentially no hard evidence in their favor. They do not have any actual documentary record on which to base their speculations about the many texts and oral traditions going back centuries before the texts that we have. They do not have documentary records that would demonstrate the presence of religious sleight of hand and the introduction of the claim of divine origin only at a late stage. They are guessing.

These statements read as if evidence is what matters to Poythress, but he consistently shows throughout the book that his notion of inerrancy is, in principle, not open to refutation and is indeed beyond the reaches of any scholarly criticism.

In the preface, Poythress begins by observing (without naming names) that inerrancy is being denied and/or redefined by new voices within evangelicalism. He proceeds in both the preface and the introduction to raise a number of hermeneutical questions: “How do we understand the Bible?” “What do we do [with the parts of the Bible that do not fit modern ideas]?” “What do we do with discrepancies [between the Bible and modern science]?” “Can [people who think the Bible is the Word of God] explain how to relate it intelligently to the swirl of modern questions and controversies?” Poythress raises these questions in order to illustrate

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1 Disclosure: The present reviewer was enrolled in a New Testament Interpretation course taught by Poythress while studying at Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001–2003.
how they operate at some critical distance away from hermeneutics, before hermeneutics takes place, as it were. Such prehermeneutical discourse I should like to call “meta-hermeneutical” and hence “meta-biblical.” From this standpoint, Poythress encourages his readers to draw upon their biblical “worldview” for help in navigating these questions in ways that ensure the doctrine of inerrancy can remain theologically intact.

*Inerrancy and Worldview* is comprised of thirty-six short chapters, in which Poythress seeks to address challenges from science and materialism, from history, about language, from sociology and anthropology, from psychology, from examples of biblical interpretation, from attitudes toward the Bible, as well as from corrupt spirituality. The first and last chapters are designed as bookends and serve to orient readers to the author’s presuppositionalist handling of hermeneutical questions. A seven page appendix rounds out the book discussing how an inerrant Word of God is compatible with human authorship.

Poythress takes special care to frame each of his cursory discussions in terms of worldview philosophy, with the bottom line being that most of the time when conflicts arise between “mainstream modern thinking” and what Poythress understands to be “biblical” thinking, the disagreement can be chalked up to “differences in worldview.” It must be noted at the outset, however, that the author is selectively and conveniently appropriating a far-reaching Calvinistic claim, one that relies on an aggressive, dichotomizing approach to harmatology and that allows for only two exclusive categories: biblical and unbiblical. (Harmatology is the part of theology that studies the concept of sin and that speculates on its effects on God’s creation.) Poythress explains: “people with corrupt hearts, in rebellion against God, corrupt their view of the world.” However, he does not develop his understanding or his application of this view here. Instead, he expects his readers to follow his examples and to accept what he says as “biblical.” The unsaid premise, of course, is that Poythress (and others who champion this approach) have escaped this harmatological effect. In other words, Poythress’s own presuppositions are not only rarely stated but also are never subjected to scrutiny much less rendered vulnerable to honest and searching criticism. In fact, the very suggestion that one might think to criticize him this way is identified as the *sine qua non* of sinful, rebellious “autonomy.” For an overview of presuppositional apologetics and its bearing on Reformed bibliology and hermeneutics, Poythress directs his readers to the writings of Cornelius van Til, a founding faculty member of Westminster Seminary.

For a more thorough exposure to Poythress’s own presuppositionalist method and to his application of it to the doctrine of Scripture and biblical hermeneutics, readers are directed to consult Poythress’s previous books (in this case, his *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* [Presbyterian and Reformed, 1999]—its opening
chapter is entitled, “The Challenge of Understanding the Bible”). Although drawing attention to material that an author treats elsewhere is a legitimate scholarly practice, it seemed to me that Poythress was doing so with uncommon frequency. Subjectively at least, it seemed to me as if in every other footnote, Poythress was either advising readers to consult some other of his writings or asking them to compare another section in *Inerrancy and Worldview*. He did this so often, in fact, that I decided to take a moment to count the number of times he did it.

As it turns out, Poythress is indeed the most frequently cited authority in the book. A quick count indicates that he cites himself 70 times in 56 different footnotes. If one adds in the cross-referencing footnotes (without overlapping any of them with the 70 just mentioned), the number of footnotes referring readers to works articulating Poythress’s worldview rises to 82. Now the total number of footnotes in the book is in the neighborhood of 148. My initial feeling that every other footnote seeks to substantiate Poythress’s claims by referring to, well, Poythress appears to be vindicated. The bibliography leaves a similar impression. The bibliography in *Inerrancy and Worldview* gives a list of 83 sources. Two of the sources are *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Merriam Webster’s Dictionary. Of the 81 that remain, I found at least 9 that were not explicitly mentioned in the text or in the footnotes. This leaves 72 bibliographic entries that Poythress interacts with in some way throughout the course of the book. Among these 72, a full 17 are either written or co-written by Poythress himself. In other words, almost 24 percent of the literature he interacts with is his own!

At first, I did not think it pertinent to draw attention to how overwhelmingly Poythress agrees with himself, that is, not until it occurred to me that it rather nicely illustrates an inherent pattern to worldview presuppositionalism. Consider in this context, John Frame’s (one of Poythress’s former colleagues) endorsement of another of Poythress’s books (*In the Beginning Was the Word: Language, a God-Centered Approach* [Crossway, 2009]): “Each of Vern Poythress’s books has been, in my judgment, the best book on its particular subject, whether science, hermeneutics, dispensationalism, theological method, gender-neutral Bible translation, or the Mosaic law. Not only are these books expertly researched and cogently argued, but they are explicitly Christian in their starting point, method, and conclusion (to use a phrase of Cornelius Van Til).” The pattern that arises in Poythress’s work is one where Poythress selects an academic topic of interest and proceeds to run it through his apologetic, presuppositionalist sieve, which entails, as Frame points out, beginning, conducting and concluding every phase of inquiry with his received understanding of Reformed theology deliberately in hand.

“Expert research,” then, for Poythress’s strand of presuppositionalism seems to consist of little more than the application of an apologetic and hermeneutical gambit against all scholarly results that are deemed unbiblical. The aim is to rhe-
torically stage their arguments in ways that focus on “ultimate” starting points and insofar as possible in terms of comparative frameworks. In this way, presuppositional worldview philosophy seeks to control every facet of the apologetic encounter. Poythress’s book on inerrancy illustrates this. In it, he plumbs worldview philosophy for its theoretical focus on what is happening at the most basic level of human thinking. He is singularly interested in what “background assumptions [are being made] about the nature of the world.” As human minds go about organizing these vague and loose assumptions about God and about the world when interpreting reality, they yield what Poythress identifies as the individual’s personal worldview. In Poythress’s mind, though, there is nothing haphazard about worldview selection since it can be theoretically subject to theological analysis on a meta-level of discourse once they are construed as theological constructs via worldview presuppositionalism. What’s more, these constructs are perceived by presuppositionalists as meta-biblical systems that facilitate the mind’s approach to both scripture and reality in general. Poythress further believes that these constructs indirectly reveal the spiritual condition of the mind in question. The trick is, however, that these worldviews, although practically operating at some critical (or better pre-critical) distance from the actual reading of Scripture, are theoretically conceptualized as always being either “biblical” or “unbiblical.” In presuppositional theory, there really is no “meta-biblical” level at all; their dichotomizing harmotology will simply not allow for it. For Poythress, then, one is either biblical or unbiblical—plain and simple—notwithstanding the prehermeneutical dimension involved when approaching Scripture in the first place to read and to understand what it says. Furthermore, according to Poythress, there is only one worldview believers should adopt, “the worldview presented in the Bible” (italics mine). Bolstered by his satisfaction with handling every issue presuppositionally, Poythress has grown confident enough to take on every scholarly challenge, irrespective of argument, evidence, or academic field of origin.

It is interesting that Crossway’s website should promote Poythress as “armed with six degrees.” This could suggest to readers that the main reason Poythress can confidently speak on so many topics spanning so many different disciplines is because he has had some advanced training in most, if not all, of them. Yet after reading his book, one wonders whether his confidence and his willingness to range so widely stems not from his education but rather from the presuppositionalist attitude that molds his scholarly outlook. From a presuppositionalist point of view, it does not matter what academic discipline is involved; one needs only look at presuppositions to see if they theologically agree with yours. If they do, then no ultimate challenge or disagreement will be possible. Sheer consistency appears to demand this. However, if they do not agree, then a presuppositionalist’s work is cut out for him, for the fight becomes exclusively presuppositional. Academic training
is almost beside the point. One need only be trained in the accepted school of presuppositions to be instantly qualified to critique any position, even entire disciplines if needed, for having the wrong presuppositions.

Take Poythress’s own journey, for example. He has undergraduate and doctoral degrees in mathematics, a master’s of divinity, a master’s of theology (with an emphasis in apologetics), a master’s of literature in New Testament, and a second doctorate (Th.D.) in New Testament. Now consider his presuppositionalist work. The last three books that I am aware of are: *Redeeming Sociology, In the Beginning Was the Word*, and *Redeeming Science*. Is there a match between his academic training and the subject matter of his books? I do not think so. Sociology, linguistics and science—these do not appear to me to naturally translate into mathematics, apologetics, and New Testament. Even if one grants (as I would be willing to do) that by virtue of his work in translation, he has earned a right to be taken seriously as an authority on linguistics, one is still left with a picture where the only commonality among such disparate fields as sociology, linguistics, science, mathematics, apologetics and New Testament is *apologetics*.

When seen in this light, rhetorical descriptions of competing positions can easily masquerade as scholarly engagement. Every researcher is surely guilty at some point of putting off academic engagement with opposing views, but it would appear that presuppositionalists are especially predisposed to make a virtue out of this common human failing. Scholarly literature can be ignored if all error is ultimately attributable to faulty presuppositions. Take an example from Poythress’s *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation*. One could be forgiven for thinking that Poythress is shirking his academic responsibility to engage others in his writing. In chapter three, which covers what the Bible is, he concedes that there are plenty of scholars who disagree with his viewpoints. Yet his subsequent comments reveal an underlying, programmatic tendency: “it would clutter the exposition to interact with all the various opinions, especially those in mainstream historical-critical scholarship. It should be apparent later in this book that the presuppositions of mainstream scholarship are seriously flawed.” In other words, the proposals and the arguments put forth by mainstream scholarship are practically irrelevant. It is ultimately the presuppositions that matter, and since mainstream scholarship does not agree with Poythress’s presuppositions, there is really no reason to actually engage it.

With respect to *Inerrancy and Worldview*, an important chapter for me personally would have been Poythress’s chapter on the Bible (chapter 31), where I expected him to argue on behalf of presupposing that the Bible is inerrant. Poythress explains what he intends to do in this part of the book: “In this chapter, I want to consider what the Bible says about itself.” Then the reader turns the page and finds the following disclaimer: “Setting out the evidence for the Bible as the word of
God could take a whole book. For that extended exposition I lean on others who have written the books. I will summarize here.” Then, in a scant three pages, he rushes through “Jesus’ testimony,” “Old Testament’s testimony,” “New Testament witness,” and “Jesus’ Commissioning of the Apostles.” There is only one footnote on these crucial three pages, and it refers readers to B. B. Warfield’s classic, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, to Carson and Woodbridge’s edited volume, *Scripture and Truth*, to John Frame’s *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, and lastly to ch. 3 of his *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation*. Familiar as I was with the first two works, I decided to look up what Poythress says in ch. 3 of his earlier work. There I found a one page discussion on how the Bible is the word of God, giving many of the same proof texts that *Inerrancy and Worldview* gives, this time with the aid of diagrams. In the main text of that third chapter of *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation*, Poythress tells readers that they should consult the classic evangelical works on inspiration for broader coverage. The corresponding footnote, however, reveals that the classics he has in mind are, once again, B. B. Warfield along with Carson and Woodbridge (although this time he does mention two additional works: Gaussen’s *Theopneustia* and a Westminster Symposium entitled, *The Infallible Word*). This is another example of presuppositionalism at work. If a reader contends with Warfield on his argument for inerrancy, Poythress goes through the motion of engaging the point. However, upon inspection, Poythress only presents exegeses that opponents find easily controverted. Knowing this, he refers readers to Warfield or Carson and Woodbridge or to an earlier work of his own. In that earlier work, Poythress, in turn, commences again to engage, but the brief presentation is of the same exegeses that have been called into question. Poythress realizes this and then defers his readers to Warfield and/or to Carson and Woodbridge.

It seems to me that only readers who are already committed to Reformed worldview philosophy and who have found such approaches fruitful for the study of biblical doctrine will find Poythress’s presentation satisfactory. Others, it seems, will have no choice but to engage him on the level of presuppositions. According to Poythress, writers who disagree with inerrancy are interested in finding a way “to make [the Bible] fit with what our modern society and our modern scientific results allegedly ‘know’ about the world.” He blithely states that such believers are remaking God and the Bible after their own conceptions. These tendencies can be boiled down to basic assumptions modernity makes regarding God (namely his absence) and how the human and natural worlds are governed by *impersonal* laws. Moderns mistakenly imagine them to be “run(ning) along more or less by themselves.” In Poythress’s view, any believer who tries to incorporate these assumptions into their thinking about the Bible will be accepting counterfeit notions for biblical truth. In *Inerrancy and Worldview*, Poythress gives plenty of lip service to
common grace and to natural revelation, but in his presuppositional practice, common grace is utterly eviscerated and natural revelation is expunged.

It does not seem to occur to Poythress just how easily all this can be turned on its head. For example, in ch. 31, he asserts: “The Bible says that it is the written word of God. That is, it is God’s speaking, in writing. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit speak in harmonious voice and in agreement with the eternal harmony that they enjoy in love. Because God is truthful and what he says is true, the Bible is true.” Poythress is free to assert this if he chooses and even is free to presuppose and to incorporate these beliefs into his own worldview. Other believers, though, might be motivated to ask: What makes these elements part of the “biblical” worldview? Are these assumptions based on Scripture or are they themselves products of inerrantist culture, whether modern or otherwise? Where is it said in the Bible, for example, that it is the written word of God, that it is God’s speaking in writing, that the Trinitarian God speaks in harmonious voice and in agreement throughout its pages, or that believers should construct and maintain “biblical” worldviews? My point is that the argument for Scripture’s inerrancy is not a straightforward one. By no means! It requires, among other things, sustained exegetical, historical, and conceptual development along with faithful yet self-critical theological imagination and speculation. Poythress is too willing to overlook these crucial facets of theological construction.

I regret that I could not devote space to places where most evangelicals would agree with what Poythress writes. However, since the book bears the title Inerrancy and Worldview and explores its topic in quintessentially presuppositional ways, it behooved me to harp on the point that there is an enormous amount of theological construction and speculation that goes into the very exegeses that putatively derive the doctrine of inerrancy in the first place. This cannot be rhetorically side-stepped with a presuppositional waving of the hand. The biblical materials can plausibly be read as exegetically leading to positions requiring the redefining or possibly even the abandoning of inerrancy. Such a conversation should not be declared out of court by authoritarian, presuppositional fiat. Poythress’s worldview philosophy as deployed in Inerrancy and Worldview seems specifically designed for that very purpose. His approach deliberately seeks to keep readers from admitting that genuine hermeneutical ambiguities lurk in key places of inerrantists’ exegeses—particularly in the exegeses of inerrancy’s “pillar” passages—and from questioning whether inerrantism’s status quo is in need of serious reform.

Poythress writes: “Jesus endorses the Old Testament as the word of God. We should trust him more than the modern analysts.” And again: “God provides good grounds for following Jesus, having fellowship with him, becoming his disciples, and listening submissively to his instruction and his claims . . . Taking the Bible’s own worldview, and not imposing ideas from modern worldviews, helps to dis-
solve many of the alleged difficulties.” Read in context, Poythress seems to con-
strue being a disciple of Christ with believing in inerrancy (because Jesus believed
the Bible is inerrant and we should believe what Jesus believed). This is all ques-
tion-begging, though Poythress understands the evangelists are presenting Jesus
to us and that the gospel presentations may not be that of the “real” Jesus. At this
point, Poythress surprises by stepping out of his presuppositional cul-de-sac to
make a testable claim: “I would urge you to read the Gospels for yourself, with an
inquiring mind, and with prayer to God that he will enable you to understand and
receive it as truth. God can change you as he changed me.” I hope every evangeli-
cal will follow him here and issue this same invitation! But thank God that it has
nothing to do with the doctrine of biblical inerrancy!

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Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature. Armin
Lange and Matthias Weigold. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011,

For scholars and students of the Dead Sea Scrolls, of the Pseudepigrapha, of the
other Second Temple Jewish writings, and indeed of the Scriptures, biblical quo-
tations and allusions form an alive and important issue. Because so many compo-
sitions of that period use or interpret earlier Scriptures, a reliable and comprehen-
sive listing of which works do so (and of which Scriptures they reference) is an
essential and welcomed reference tool in any scholar’s library. This need is met in
the book here under review. The title of this book, of course, raises several meth-
odological issues, which are most competently addressed by Lange and Weigold.

What Books are Referenced, and Which are
Included as Second Temple Literature?
For this volume, only biblical books (that is, the books of the Hebrew Bible) con-
stitute “the corpus for anterior texts” (35). Accordingly, other books that may have
been considered authoritative or inspired in some way by one or more Jewish
groups during the Second Temple period are not included. This limits the scope of
the texts that are referenced, an issue that is acknowledged by the authors. Should
more funds become available in the future, they hope “to identify non-biblical
quotations and allusions as well” (36).

In Part 1 of this volume (53–195), the biblical quotations and allusions are pre-
sented in the order of the Hebrew Bible (Torah, Nebi’im, Ketubim). This arrange-
ment will prove invaluable to scholars interested in whether and where a particular verse or passage of Scripture is referred to in Second Temple Jewish writings.

As to which texts constitute Second Temple Jewish Literature, Lange and Weigold have restricted their search to writings between 520 B.C. and 70 A.D. The works of Philo and the New Testament books written before the destruction of the Herodian Temple have not been included, both for practical reasons and because these texts’ extensive lists of quotations and allusions already exist. The works of Josephus are also excluded, because they were written after the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.

Part 2 (199–341) presents the biblical quotations and allusions in the sequence of the quoting or alluding texts. These are separated into three categories: (1) later books of the Hebrew Bible that reference earlier Scriptures, (2) Jewish Texts (Pseudepigrapha and apocryphal works) not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and (3) Dead Sea Scrolls. This tripartite grouping forms an important resource for scholars whose focus is on how specific Second Temple texts or groups of texts quote or allude to the passages in the Hebrew Scriptures.

### Defining and Distinguishing Between Quotations and Allusions

As most readers are aware, identifying explicit quotations, partial quotations, clear allusions, and possible allusions to Scripture can be problematic. The authors address this issue at great length, with discussion around intertextuality and contextualization that many readers will find too theoretical, but others will find helpful. In “The Typology of Citationality” (19–23), they deal with contextualizing intertextual references found in ancient Jewish texts that quote from, allude to, or are found within other ancient literatures. In “The Typology of Intertextual References in Second Temple Jewish Literature” (25–27), explicit and implicit uses of Jewish Scriptures are discussed and are presented in three groupings:

(a) “Explicit and Implicit Allusions” (25–26). Allusions are defined as using anterior texts that are “still linguistically recognizable” in the posterior text, “but not morphologically identical with it.” An implicit allusion is “any parallel of at least three words to another text,” whereas an explicit allusion refers to a given text or uses a quotation formula in addition to paraphrasing it or employing a keyword or a theme from it. A small point worth noting is that the authors depart from the logical flow of information by covering the implicit allusions before the explicit ones.

(b) “Explicit and Implicit Quotations” (26–27). This (which should have been the first of the three groupings) contrasts allusions and quotations. Allusions are characterized “by their morphological difference” to their anterior texts, while quotations are “morphologically identical” with them. An implicit quotation is an “uninterrupted verbal parallel of at least four words which does not alter the quot-
ed text” but is also “not introduced by a quotation formula or otherwise explicitly identified” (pg. 26). An explicit quotation is a “verbal parallel of at least two words which is identified by a quotation formula or other means.” (27). Thus more words (four) are required to identify implicit quotations, and less (two) are needed to identify explicit quotations.

(c) “Other Forms of Intertextual References” (27–29). Some types of intertextual references in ancient literature do not neatly fall into the categories of explicit and implicit allusions or of explicit and implicit quotations, and so Lange and Weigold wisely make room for a third grouping. This includes explicit references, implicit references, and reminiscences.

One feature lacking in the two main lists of references and in Appendix 1 is whether each entry is a quotation or an allusion (such as by using e or a), and even an explicit or implicit one (thus ee, ei, ae ai). Incorporating this feature in a subsequent edition should be considered.

How are Quotations and Allusions identified in the later Scriptures, Dead Sea Scrolls, Pseudepigrapha, and other Second Temple Jewish writings that use them?

Lange and Weigold emphasize the immense value of electronic databases, which make possible comparisons and structured searches of large amounts of text. In short, the possible quotations and allusions were identified using Accordance from Oaktree Software, notably the INFER feature. “For each verse of the Hebrew Bible we performed INFER searches in both the various Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek texts from the Second Temple period in the Accordance databases” (17). More specifically, the source texts used for the searches were BHS-W4, SAMART, DSSB-C, LXX1, LXX2, QUMRAN, BENSIRA-C, and PSEUD-T.

A noted limitation of this method is that the INFER command only searches between texts of the same language, so that, for example, possible allusions or quotations extant in Greek could not be compared with Hebrew or Aramaic “anterior texts.” After this list was compiled, every possible intertextual reference was carefully analyzed before being classified as a quotation or as an allusion.

References that could not be classified are given in Appendix 1 (“Uncertain Quotations and Allusions,” 345–378). This appendix is much appreciated, as it gathers into one list all possible disputed references; not a few scholars will pursue these with a view to establishing greater certainty. Appendix 2 (“Texts that do not include any certain Quotations and Allusions,” 379–384) is also a welcome addition; whether or not a later Jewish work quotes or alludes to Scripture says a great deal about its authorship and character.

Lange and Weigold are to be congratulated on this landmark volume, the fullest and the most comprehensive of its kind, and the culmination of many years’
work and research (13). It will prove an essential tool for scholars and for students of the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, and the other Second Temple Jewish writings. The methodology is sound, and the presentation (the quotations and the allusions are in the sequence of the Hebrew Bible, and then are in the sequence of the quoting or alluding texts) will be welcomed by students and by scholars alike.

Future editions will doubtless ensue, for which the suggestions given above should prove helpful (i.e., on the order of some material under Allusions and Quotations, 25–27, and that the lists signify a quotation or an allusion by using e or a, and even an explicit or implicit one by using ee, ei, ae ai). In addition, the authors encourage scholars who use the lists to alert them to any mistakes and to any missing quotations and allusions, and they state that full credit for any revisions will be given in future editions.

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