

on page 23: “The Danielic apocalypses of chs. 8-12 and the final form of ch. 7 respond from the midst of one of the most traumatic events in Jewish history, the violent persecutions of Jews by Antiochus IV and the beginning of the revolt against Antiochus by Judah the Maccabee” (23).

Finally in regard to the challenging texts from Daniel 11, the conclusion reached in this commentary is that they “purport to be prophecies but are clearly written after the occurrence of most of the events they prophesy. But they use an account of history to attempt to make real predictions” (336). When reading this statement one cannot help but wonder if this approach to Daniel can still be of any use to the reader of today. While this commentary offers some useful material for the study of Daniel (as mentioned above), it also serves as an example of how *not* to approach Daniel—with speculative views that are not in line with the claims found in the sacred texts.

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Plantinga, Alvin. *Knowledge and Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. 129 pp. Paperback. \$16.00.

Alvin Plantinga has taught philosophy for over fifty years, first at Wayne State University, then at Calvin College, and finally at Notre Dame. He holds honorary degrees from different universities in Europe and the United States, and he is widely regarded as the most influential Christian Philosopher alive. His works include *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*, *Warranted Christian Belief*, *The Analytic Theist*, and *God, Freedom, and Evil*.

Knowledge and Christian Belief is intended as a shorter and more user-friendly version of *Warranted Christian Belief* but it is also distinguished from it by different emphases. The main thesis of the book revolves around the development and defense of a model, called the Aquinas/Calvin Model (or A/C Model). According to this model, the divinely inspired Scripture and the internal instigation of the Spirit produce faith in human beings (63). This includes belief in the great truths of Christianity. Faith then is here not contrasted with knowledge, but it is identified as a special kind of knowledge. Plantinga defines knowledge as a belief produced by properly working cognitive faculties in the right environment that are designed to successfully aim at truth (26–28). The agency of the Spirit is thus likened to other knowledge-producing faculties, such as memory or sensory perception. The only difference is that the faith-producing faculties are provided by the Holy Spirit and are not naturally found in humans (63).

Knowledge and Christian Belief starts out by describing a number of positions set forth by different influential philosophers that have the potential to defeat Christian faith. In Chapter 1 “Can We Speak and Think About God?,” Plantinga deals with Immanuel Kant and his followers, who claimed that we cannot say anything about God because we are incapable of thinking in the categories of ultimate reality. If God exists, he is among those “things

in themselves” that we can neither experience nor comprehend. Plantinga identifies this line of thought as self-defeating, because if it were true, we could not think about God in order to come to the conclusion that we are not able to think about him. Furthermore, he points out that Kant’s theory fails to account for *a priori* knowledge, for example in the realm of mathematics.

Chapter 2 “What is the Question?” confronts the allegation that Christian belief is in some way irrational, and childish, and somehow connected to cognitive malfunction. The crucial point here is a distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* objections. *De facto* objections against the Christian faith are such that aim at proving the factual beliefs of Christianity to be wrong or incoherent. *De jure* objections, on the other hand, would claim that it is not justified to hold Christian beliefs because it is in some way either unethical or irrational. Plantinga keeps to *de jure* objections in this chapter (his main antagonists are Freud and Marx) and addresses them in different ways. The main point here is that belief is not something that is subject to our voluntary control and is therefore ethically neutral. An objection to this based on an alleged responsibility to believe only that for which we have abundant evidence remains unconvincing. Plantinga recognizes however that this does not give Christian belief any warrant and therefore defines the terms “knowledge” and “warrant” in preparation for further chapters.

In chapters 3–6, Plantinga develops his A/C Model, leaning on texts from Scripture, Calvin and, Aquinas. His main point here is that Christian faith is basic belief. It is not derived from argument, but is delivered to man via his *sensus divinitatis*. This is not to say that the *sensus divinitatis* does not use natural phenomena to awaken faith in God, but the vastness of the sky or the beauty of nature, which often are quoted in experiences of faith, are not very strong as arguments. Thus, an inbuilt cognitive faculty that may be called *sensus divinitatis* best explains the fact that many people begin to believe while witnessing these phenomena. Such a faculty is only to be expected, however, if the Christian faith is also factually true. In short, if it is true, it likely has warrant. If it is not true, it does not. Mere epistemological considerations, as Plantinga correctly recognizes, will not solve this issue. The *de jure* question is therefore dependent on the *de facto* question. The extended A/C model that is developed in chapters 5 and 6 claims that the belief infused into humans by means of the *sensus divinitatis* is not just about the existence of God, but also about basic Christian teachings about God’s character, the nature of sin, and personal salvation. Also of special interest is chapter 6, “Sealed upon Our Hearts,” in which Plantinga challenges the Greek idea of the impassibility of God.

Chapters 7–10 address different objections and defeaters to the A/C model. The main objection comes from J. L. Mackie, who claimed that Christian belief can get and needs to get warrant from experience, and that this experience must be of such a nature that it implies the truth of Christian belief. Based on the A/C model, Plantinga rejects this claim, because the *sensus divinitatis*, like normal sensory perception, is a direct way to gain knowledge and does not need any form of external evidence. He admits however that

there may be experiences that exclude the possibility of Christian belief being true. Some such phenomena, called defeaters, are addressed in the last few chapters.

Knowledge and Christian Belief presents its reader with a fulminant and very convincing philosophical defense of Christian belief in the face of its modern and postmodern opponents. This book is not only thought provoking and informative, but also relaxing to a certain degree. Platinga confidently and calmly puts citations by Richard Dawkins next to Scripture and shows the philosophical shallowness of the young angry atheists and some of their predecessors. Platinga does not need to raise his voice and he does not take refuge in spurious arguments taken from fields in which he has no expertise.

There is one issue however, that makes his main thesis, the Aquinas/Calvin model, somewhat difficult for the non-Calvinist portion of Christianity. Platinga claims that belief is not subject to our voluntary decision and can therefore not be subject to moral categories (16–17). Thus, we believe what we believe and there is nothing we can do about it. This fits perfectly of course with his emphasis on the *sensus divinitatis* and the working of the Holy Spirit that cause faith in us. In good Calvinist tradition, this causation of faith is sufficient to make us believe and is not dependent on any decision of ours. If this is the case, there is no real reason to search for external arguments to convince others of my beliefs. Platinga does not spell it out, but by implication (and by association with the Calvinist tradition) the reader is led to assume that the *sensus divinitatis* is not a universal phenomenon but is found only in that portion of the populace that accepts the basic teachings of Christianity. Nevertheless, even though man is not capable of rejecting or choosing God, but is chosen passively, blame is put on those who do not believe.

The idea that beliefs are formed involuntarily is central to the A/C model, and thus, the model will not easily pass in Arminian circles. However, the concept of a *sensus divinitatis* as a cognitive function that produces faith in God is not foreign to Arminians, even though we would insist that it is possible to shake it off. In addition, the subsequent argument that our beliefs may have warrant after all remains in place and may prove useful. Other arguments are not mentioned in this review, but are nevertheless deserving of careful consideration.

Therefore, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* is a good read, especially for those who identify as Calvinist, but also for everyone else. It is creative, thought provoking, and not too difficult to read.

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Seevers, Boyd. *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2013. 328 pp. Hardcover, \$34.99.

The need for a comprehensive, up-to-date volume in English covering warfare in the context of ancient Israel has been felt for some time. Yet recently published works on this topic have generally confined their treatment to