
Given the scope of Postell's narrative, he has focused primarily on the legal and constitutional debates over administrative power rather than the policy context that generated the administrative state itself. (Indeed, Postell's account skips over every major US war, although these are precisely the periods where policy historians have seen the greatest growth and innovation in federal administrative action.) That omission makes sense for Postell's goals as a historian (one can never write about everything), but it does complicate his own concluding hope that the early nineteenth-century approach to regulation (detailed legislation with extensive judicial review) offers a viable alternative to our present system. For of course Postell's "Progressives" insisted that the scale and complexity of the intervention needed to govern a radically new economy (technologically innovative, dependent on high concentrations of capital and economic power, and linked to integrated national and international markets) necessitated granting limited law-making ability to administrative agencies. One can only challenge that claim by looking in detail at the context that produced those agencies and the details of their work.

Such limitations, however, cannot undercut the value of what Postell has achieved. To craft a narrative spanning more than two hundred years of American intellectual history is no mean feat; to do so with care and attention to the complexities of the periods and the nuances of the central protagonists is even more impressive. *Bureaucracy in America* will not end the debate about the modern administrative state, but it should become an essential part of that conversation.

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Daniel L. Dreisbach: *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 344.)

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Pascal began his famous poem *Memorial*, "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob / not of the philosophers and of the learned." Many modern scholars of the American founding would readily follow Pascal's dichotomy, and count the founders among the learned deists who followed the God of the philosophers and *not* the God of the Bible. Daniel Dreisbach's *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers* is framed against the arguments of prominent scholars who claim a version of this thesis, and he successfully demonstrates that

the founders read, meditated on, alluded to, and quoted the Bible regularly—and not just, or even primarily, in private.

Why have modern scholars downplayed the impact of the Bible on the public lives of the American founders? Part of the answer, according to Dreisbach, is that our own biblical illiteracy leads us to miss many of the biblical allusions in the documents of the founding era. As he notes, “The founders often quoted the Bible without the use of quotation marks or citations, which were not necessary for a biblically literate society but the absence of which fail to alert a biblically illiterate modern audience to the Bible’s invocation” (4). Another reason, he suggests, is that our own modern prejudices and concerns about secularism often lead us to downplay the extent to which the Bible was a generative source of political ideas for the American founders (4).

Dreisbach’s thesis, contrary to much of the conventional scholarly wisdom, is that the “Bible, more than any other written word, informed the world of the founding fathers and the society around them” (5). For this reason, any “well-rounded understanding of the ideas that informed the American founding” requires studying the Bible “alongside republican, Enlightenment, British constitutional, and other intellectual influences” on the founders (17). Dreisbach’s argument is a version of the multiple-traditions thesis, but with the Bible taking a clear lead as the dominant cultural and political influence on the world of the founders.

Scholars often take a cue from a famous letter in which Thomas Jefferson describes the “American mind” as a blend of “Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, &c” —the ancients and moderns in an odd amalgamation (Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825). But Dreisbach reminds us that Donald S. Lutz’s survey of the political literature of the founding era (with a sample that *excluded* most political sermons) showed that the founders cited the book of Deuteronomy more often than Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws* and nearly twice as often as all of Locke’s writings combined (2, 66). The founders appealed to the Bible over and over again in political tracts and speeches, and Dreisbach devotes sections of the book to exploring the specific Bible verses and themes that the founders frequently invoked.

American Protestantism is an essential part of the story. According to Dreisbach, building on the work of Alister McGrath, “Protestantism’s dangerous idea was that the common man could think for himself and know the will and mind of God, as revealed in the Bible, without the mediation of the Church and its priests” (29). This “dangerous idea” provided a powerful argument for breaking up old ecclesiastical-political structures, emphasizing the claims of individual conscience and religious liberty, and promoting literacy and public education. Regarding the latter, for example, Dreisbach notes that the first public education law in North America was Massachusetts’s “Old Deluder Satan Act” of 1647, which “instructed every township of requisite size to hire a schoolmaster or establish a grammar school financed by the parents and/or community to thwart the ‘one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures’” (36).

Protestantism in America, according to Dreisbach, “proved liberating, unleashing a spirit of inquiry, independence, individualism, creativity, robust debate, and self-government” (29). Yet he does not just claim that Protestantism was culturally influential; Dreisbach also insists that most of the founders actually were religious believers of one sort or another. “Almost all agreed,” he notes,

that there was a Supreme Being who intervened in the affairs of men and nations. They believed God was the author of the rights of men; and the rights God had granted to humankind, no man should take away. Most believed that man was a fallen creature and, therefore, should not be entrusted with unrestrained power over other human beings. Accordingly, they devised a system defined by the separation of powers, and checks and balances (between the national and state governments and among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of civil government). (12)

There is substantial evidence that nearly all of the founders did indeed profess to believe these things, but, to play the devil’s advocate, this broad agreement might point away from biblical religion to a kind of theistic rationalism. This, at least, is Gregg Frazer’s claim in *The Religious Beliefs of America’s Founders* (University Press of Kansas, 2014), which argues that the founders syncretized natural religion, Protestant Christianity, and an Enlightenment conception of reason—but that reason rather than revelation was the leading influence. Dreisbach includes a few footnotes referencing Frazer’s work, but he does not directly engage other prominent scholars, such as Thomas Pangle, Michael Zuckert, and Matthew Stewart, who similarly argue that the American founders were subtly subversive of Christianity even (or especially) when they were invoking the Bible.

While it is true that a belief in divine providence and natural rights coupled with a grim view of human nature might be held on grounds independent of any belief in biblical revelation, it is very difficult for the intellectual historian to untangle these strands as they are woven together in the historical record. The American founders were classically educated and biblically literate, and they were comfortable appealing to Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, and Sydney and Moses, Micah, Jesus, and Paul. Alongside Montesquieu and Blackstone, the founders read and cited works of English and Scottish resistance theology such as the pseudonymously authored *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579) and Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex* (1644).

One of the major contributions of *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers* is that it demonstrates just how ubiquitous the founders’ appeals to the Bible, and to biblically informed theology, were. As Dreisbach shows, the English Bible profoundly shaped American public culture—something scholars as diverse as Russell Kirk, Robert Bellah, and Joyce Appleby also recognized (34). It provided the impetus and foundation for public education and for the early legal codes of Britain’s North American colonies. Individually,

many of the founders were also devoted Bible readers. “It was,” Dreisbach notes, “integral to their education—both formal and informal—and it shaped their world-views, values and habits of mind in diverse ways” (49). It is of course true that some were quite skeptical about the Bible’s claimed veracity. Yet even Thomas Jefferson, to give one example of a less-than-pious founder, devoted countless hours to reading and studying the Bible closely, often in the original languages, even as he considered the task rather like looking for “diamonds in a dunghill” (54).

Dreisbach successfully shows that the founders were immersed in a society and culture shaped by Bible reading, and as a result the Bible was a pervasive part of political discourse in the founding era. As is always the case with academic books, there are more scholars who could be brought into the conversation and more objections that could directly be addressed. Putting that aside, this is an erudite book and a welcome addition to the scholarship on the intellectual world of the American founders. It deserves a wide hearing, and scholars working in this area should all be able to agree, at least, that “the student of the American founding is well advised to be attentive to how the founders read the Bible and its place in the political culture of the founding” (231).

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Aurelian Craiutu: *Faces of Moderation: The Art of Balance in an Age of Extremes*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. 295.)

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Aurelian Craiutu begins his new book on political moderation by observing that it remains an understudied and underappreciated virtue. Craiutu has already explored the richness and complexity of political moderation in earlier books, and the current book represents a further installment in that ongoing project. His focus here is on the articulation of political moderation by a group of post-World War II writers whose thought developed in response to the rise of the extremist ideologies of communism and fascism. He devotes a chapter each to Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin, Norberto Bobbio, and Michael Oakeshott and concludes with a chapter on the contemporary Polish intellectual Adam Michnik. For Craiutu, these writers reflect the different faces political moderation has assumed in the twentieth century, and one of his main points in the book is to show that “moderation