

Though far removed from actual application, in principle, goods and services may be categorized and distributed according to their functionality: Goods can be *constitutive* for survival, *regulative* of life prospects, or simply *life-enhancing*. Claims for more equal participation in sharing of the goods and services are stronger for constitutive goods than life-enhancing goods. These distinctions are helpful in the abstract, though little is said about how to implement these guidelines.

In Part 5 (the final part) Barrera presents a framework for understanding modern Catholic social principles. It is here that one finds a well-organized discussion of important foundational principles such as the creation in the image of God, redemption, human flourishing, integral human development, subsidiarity, the primacy of labor, solidarity, the common good in its various aspects, and others. These chapters will prove invaluable to any student of Catholic Social Thought, looking for an organizing hermenutic for the tradition. On the other hand, Barrera himself might have been more in touch with empirical issues and with “the signs of the times.” This would apply to contemporary issues outside of the Church such as NAFTA, the meltdown of the dot coms, the ethical role of a CFO (I am thinking of Enron), tax cuts, and other concrete issues. The application of the teaching *within the Church* is also important for issues of accountability, checks and balances, and so forth. Can anyone talk about Catholic Social Thought in these times without addressing its behavior in the largest and most jarring crisis in *centuries*? I predict that application of the social teachings of the tradition to the Church itself will and should occupy much more space in future works that want serious credibility.

Overall, Barrera has written a very helpful book, especially on a theoretical level, as it provides an organizing hermenutic of the many social ethical principles contained within the tradition.

—Richard C. Bayer
The Five O’Clock Club, New York

The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion, and Morality in Crisis

Robert P. George

Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2001 (387 pages)

Over the past three decades, we have witnessed something of a renaissance of natural-law thinking among Christian scholars. Certainly, many Christians continue to be skeptical of any significant appeal to sources of moral truth beyond Scripture. It remains, however, that the most interesting challenges to secularist assertions about questions as profound as the nature of the person have not come from divine command theorists or strict biblicists. Rather, they have been articulated by Protestants and Catholics attempting to present their case on the very territory that post-Enlightenment thinkers have long proclaimed to be their own—human reason.

Perhaps the two most prominent contributors to this natural-law revival have been the moral theologian, Germain Grisez, and the legal philosopher, John Finnis. It was no coincidence that Grisez and Finnis were the first two laymen appointed to the pope's International Theological Commission. In many respects, they have (almost single-handedly) forced Christians and non-Christians alike to reassess the case for natural law, just when many liberal Protestants and heterodox Catholics thought they had managed to relegate it to the dust-bin of history.

The first generation of students of what is often called the "new natural law" school are now beginning to exert their influence in a range of areas. Perhaps the most well-known is Princeton University's McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence, Robert P. George. Nowhere in his many writings does George claim to have modified new natural-law theory. His particular contribution has been to apply new natural-law thought to a range of public policy questions in ways that directly challenge the assumptions of what George calls the "secular orthodoxy" that dominates the public square. These are the questions addressed by George in the collection of essays contained in his latest book, *The Clash of Orthodoxies*.

Written in language accessible to nonspecialists in jurisprudence, natural law, and theology, the common thread of *The Clash of Orthodoxies* is George's conviction that the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world is more *reasonable* than its secular alternatives. By "secular," George does not have in mind the ecclesiastical-temporal distinction. Rather, he means secularist philosophical commitments, as personified by John Rawls and Robert Nozick and, at the outer extremity of unreason, George's Princeton colleague, Peter Singer. Though these scholars differ among themselves about questions such as the limits of private property, George maintains that all secularists (whether they realize it or not) share the same concept of man. It is this anthropology, especially its concept of the precise relationship between human reason, free will, and the passions that George finds so wanting.

The essence of George's position may be found in his first essay, which carefully compares the respective claims that Judeo-Christianity and orthodox secularists make about the nature of man. Here George raises, among other things, grave questions about whether secularists can believe, on the basis of their own Humean-utilitarian anthropology, that free choice is real.

Many of the other essays reflect George's rigorous application of this analysis to debates within the public square, the law, and the church. In each instance, George demonstrates that secular liberals like Rawls, as well as homosexual polemicists such as Andrew Sullivan, are essentially seeking to rationalize positions that can only ultimately be justified on the basis of emotivist (i.e., unreasonable) understandings of man.

Particularly important is George's elucidation of the sheer narrowness of Rawls' portrait of public reason. Believing Jews and Christians, George maintains, *should* be willing to debate public policy questions on the basis of reason. But, as George illustrates, Rawls' concept of public reason effectively skews the discussion in favor of

unreasonable secularist assumptions. Highlighting this problem is important, not least because of the hegemony exerted by Rawlsian thought throughout much of the academy. This ascendancy includes a number of Christian scholars (some of whom were once regularly consulted by Protestant and Catholic leaders on public policy questions) who are, more or less, in thrall to the Rawlsian concept of justice.

Given the fixation of many secularists with lifestyle “liberationist” issues, the reader will not be surprised that several of George’s essays focus on questions such as abortion, homosexual “marriage,” and euthanasia, but these essays also raise important questions about the coherence and effectiveness of approaches to public policy by Christian leaders over the past twenty years. In this respect, many will be struck by the strength of George’s critique of the American Catholic Bishops Conference and some of their staff bureaucrats during the period in which Cardinal Joseph Bernardin wielded great influence within the Conference. One suspects that this essay may encourage scholars to engage in a longer—and, some might say, long overdue—critique of what various commentators have labeled “the Bernardin project.”

Yet, for all his criticisms of secular orthodoxy and those Christians who (as Cardinal Francis George once famously remarked) apparently regard the *New York Times* as their primary source of Revelation, George is not a Christian who wants to reside in a ghetto and pretend that modernity never happened. He is very comfortable with many modern institutions that many liberals claim as their own. Nor is George opposed to pluralism. Much of this book is directed to showing how Christians may speak coherently of a “reasonable pluralism” in ways that Rawls (who, ironically enough, coined the term) and other secularists cannot.

But given the tendency of some to label George as a “conservative,” many will be surprised to learn that there is, in fact, a type of “liberalism” that George believes *can* be integrated into orthodox Christian belief. It is, in fact, a liberalism that rebuffs the culture of death and embraces a “liberal” range of practices and institutions in the name of a freedom directed to truth. In George’s words:

This is not the liberalism of abortion, euthanasia, and the sexual revolution. It is the liberalism, rather, of the rule of law, democratic self-governance, subsidiarity, social solidarity, private property, limited government, equal protection, and basic human freedoms, such as those of speech, press, assembly, and, above all, religion.... It is the liberalism of Lincoln and the American founders, of Newman and Chesterton, of the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II: A liberalism of life (56).

Much work is, however, needed to deepen understanding of the full implications of this liberalism. *The Clash of Orthodoxies* only sketches an outline. One especially important question requiring reflection is the extent to which institutions such as democratic self-government and private property depend upon secularist premises for their coherence in the modern world. The answer to this question will effectively determine whether the liberalism of which George speaks is possible.

Leaving aside this issue, the enduring strength of George's book is that it shows Christians how to engage in discussion of complex policy issues by taking our capacity to reason seriously without reducing reason to mere rationalization, ideology, or sophistry. In the end, this requires not just great faith in man but also profound trust in the God who created us. It involves believing that human reason is ultimately oriented, despite its limitations, to knowledge of the Divine and his creation. Though daunting, the pursuit of knowledge through reason is not a task that Christians should ever shirk, because as George remarks, "Whoever sincerely seeks truth, existentially as well as in the scholarly disciplines, seeks—and thereby honors—the God who is Truth" (316).

—Samuel Gregg
Acton Institute

The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880–1925

Gary Scott Smith

Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2000 (545 pages)

At a time when the President of the United States is arguing that federal funding for faith-based initiatives should be made available for alleviation of the nation's social ills, *The Search for Social Salvation* might well serve as a reference for the advocates and the opponents of such a policy.

Smith argues that the social Christianity movement of the period from 1880 to 1925 involved a broad base of individuals and denominations, that the achievements of social Christianity were constructive, and that the impact of social Christianity upon American society was widespread, long-lasting, and influential.

This study offers compelling accounts of individuals and organizations motivated by biblical convictions and personal faith to help remove the causes of social evil and ameliorate the suffering of those who were caught in the grips of a host of social ills that plagued the United States during a time of industrialization, increasing immigration, and prejudice. In describing the breadth of the Social Gospel movement, the author carefully and thoroughly incorporates the role of women, blacks, business and political leaders, novelists, evangelicals, and mainline denominations.

During the late nineteenth century and up until the 1910s, the author contends, Protestants put aside theological differences as they engaged in what amounted to the "moral equivalent of war." This diverse group of combatants believed that biblical principles and the real potential for establishing the kingdom of God on this earth would transform culture. Business leaders such as John Wanamaker and Arthur Nash tried to demonstrate that the golden rule could be adapted in commerce and industry.

Inasmuch as some leaders, including Walter Rauschenbusch and Vida Scudder, espoused Christian socialism, and others, including the more conservative, evangelical leaders of the Men and Religion Forward Movement, were seemingly poles apart, their