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235-26

Professor Shields has written an unusual book. It is notable as one written by a non-Catholic which attempts seriously to state Catholic positions in political theory. While it is not a direct reply to the works of bigotry, it is, nevertheless, such an answer because it recognizes that a Catholic position is entitled to scholarly treatment in political science. But this work is to be remarked on a second ground because of its vigorous re-examination of the nature of liberalism and democracy. These three objectives of inquiry—the political theory of Catholics, liberals, and democrats—march forward through the book side by side, or by irregular jumps.

The author's position may be stated as follows. The political theory of Catholicism, which he says was shaped on a mediaeval foundation, is contradicted by liberalism, which has been in its roots anti-religious in theme and temper. However, democracy is defined in the Greek and historic sense as a means by which a group reaches decisions through an accepted political equality, majority rule, and popular sovereignty. There is no conflict between democracy and Catholic social and political theory, but liberalism stands in opposition both to democracy and to Catholic ideas. In one moment of the book Shields says that the democrat rejects "the liberal belief that authority should be exercised by a few [an elite] for the benefit of a middle class" (p. 159). To this reviewer, the author seems to imply that liberals have a vested interest in being confused with democrats, while democrats must be conscious that they are not liberals in order to witness to their integrity. Catholics may or may not be democrats, but like the democrats they are not able to be liberals.

Still, the reasons are different. The Catholic is not a liberal because liberals would destroy the Church if they could. Democrats see no reason for the separation of citizens from a governing elite and in this they opposed liberalism, e.g., the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian struggle against the Federalists. Both democrats and Catholics are likely to be more concerned than the liberal with a social program for general welfare and the common good. Others more concerned with saving the good name of liberalism will no doubt go to its defense, saying it is the matrix, the system of pre-conditions, that makes the democratic decision-making process possible.

In this REVIEW, however, further comments on the treatment of the Catholic Church are in order. It is the nuance and the all-too-often presence of the burning issue that the Catholic will miss, the nuance that may arise both from living around the parish pump and from some knowledge of the vast and complicated history of the Roman Church. One misses in Shields' book St. Thomas' doctrine of participation and his theory of the mixed constitution, which includes by right a democratically controlled segment of power; the firm development of the doctrine of consent and popular sovereignty in Catholic thought, say in Suárez and Bellarmine; and a lucid recognition that the government of the Church, being divinely ordained for the Church, is not a model for the civil polity (p. 171), the form of which arises from the consent of men.

One may forgive some evasiveness by the author on the Catholic Church's assertion of its continuity from the first foundations of the Christian order of life. Shields at times identifies the Church with the Middle Ages, and sometimes with the centuries before (pp. 1, 4, 73, 88, 135, 140, 253, 255). The Catholic will appreciate especially his treatment of Catholic social principles, of Catholic corporativism, social action, and Christian democratic parties in Europe (pp. 83 ff.). Perhaps, the author might have noted with Maritain that much of the liberty of the Christian, who is also a citizen, arises from the creative search for means to attain rational ends, and that this is often Catholic wisdom and prudence.

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