moral beliefs and for a natural aristocracy of virtuous men to rule. (p. 117)

Chapter Five immediately follows with an analysis of the same great issue but focuses, instead, on the contributions of two ancients, Aristotle and Cicero, and four Englishmen of the modern era: John Milton, James Harrington, William Blackstone, and Edmund Burke. Krason ends this chapter with an important conclusion: "there had been a continuity of thought about Republicanism, from ancient times at least up to the time of Tocqueville, fifty-odd years after the adoption of the American Constitution. In a phrase, the highest principles making up that tradition might be summarized as this: Republicanism involves restrained liberty, based heavily on virtue, on the right ordering of the soul" (p. 134).

Krason devised a quite interesting and useful way to end his volume. He provides the "negative" to the first five chapters by offering an analysis of the decline and fall of political orders and civilizations as understood by both early and modern commentators noted for their expertise on the issue: Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Vico, Gibbon, Brownson, Brooks Adams, Spengler, Belloc, Toynbee, Dawson, Muggeridge, Joad, Parkinson, Quigley, and Kirk. Among many other important points, the author notes that "the most frequently mentioned cause of decline among the eighteen was a nation's turning away from God . . . ." (p. 171)

In his short conclusion, Krason summarizes what the profound thinkers discussed in this volume "mostly agree is needed for a good political order and a viable democratic republic." (p. 173) He cautions, however, not to cavalierly dismiss any of their views that stand outside of this consensus: "after all, they are put forth by eminent, reflective thinkers or represent sound philosophical conclusions." (p. 174)

Stephen M. Krason is to be congratulated on his magnificent accomplishment, an accomplishment addressing the central intellectual and moral issue of the day. Preserving A Good Political Order and A Democratic Republic belongs on the shelves of all college and public libraries as well as in the private collections of scholars. His findings should be reflected on, debated, and further perfected; they should serve as a crucial contribution to any sound reconstruction of the contemporary social order.

-Joseph A. Varacalli
Nassau Community College - S.U.N.Y.


Anyone who has spent time in the contemporary academic environment can tell a story about the strange biases that plague the supposedly open-minded intellectuals who inhabit the nation's institutions of higher education.
America's professors are open-minded only in relation to each other: those who fall outside the conventional wisdom of their field, or faculty club, are regarded as crackpots or just unwashed. The tenure and promotion process may not always weed out cranks and eccentrics, but it often takes care of dissenters from authorized ideologies.

Perhaps the most peculiar of contemporary academic biases concerns religion. In many scholarly circles, religion is generally regarded as one of two things: a matter of personal preference, like one's taste in clothes; or else, embarrassing evidence of a mind not quite trained in what one of my graduate students haughtily called "twentieth-century modes of thought." As far as many faculty are concerned, religious convictions are well and good, so long as the believer understands that they are on the same level as a desire to eat chocolate. Three recent incidents will illustrate my point.

The first involves an eminent political scientist, who was part of a team of scholars working on related studies of the presidency of Jimmy Carter. This well-known scholar, who had observed Mr. Carter in office and conducted research on his life and work, confessed to a professional gathering that he never appreciated the role of religion in the former president's life until he met the ex-chief executive, in the mid-1980s! Apparently, up to that point, he had assumed that all of Carter's talk about his Baptist faith was so much hogwash for the Bible Belt voters of the South, rather than the sincere statements of a well-educated person who managed to maintain religious sensibilities despite having learned a thing or two about the world.

The second episode took place in a meeting of my academic department, when we were discussing a proposal before the university senate to provide a means of insuring that students could be protected when taking days off from class for religious observances. (Our public institution's policy is that the university excuses no one from classes for any reason--that decision is up to each instructor.) A special committee had investigated the need for such a policy and found evidence that various faculty across campus forced Jewish students to take exams on holy days, while others disparaged Christianity in class and refused to recognize its holy days. Most of my colleagues expressed no visible distress at these findings, although I would never suggest that any of them were guilty of such bigotry. What raised their ire was the story of one instructor who led his class in prayer at the beginning of each session. Blatant anti-Christian and anti-Semitic activities did not move them, but prayer literally caused several of my colleagues to call for the offender's summary dismissal.

The final incident involves this same proposal to protect religious holidays. The most common objection to it took the form that religion is strictly a private matter. As I have been told more than once in recent weeks, one would not want to "privilege" religion in the academic community: that would somehow suggest that religion is more important than fraternity and sorority activities, the big game, or even (somebody--not Heaven--forbid!)
recreational sex. One would think that allowing protecting a Jewish kid's ability to observe Yom Kippur or a Catholic's attending church rather than class on Good Friday were tantamount to creating an Established Church on campus. In the end, enough people supported the measure for it to pass, although to make it more palatable the rule had to be justified in terms of the voguish concept of diversity: if we recruit more Muslim, Buddhist, or Ba'hai students, we will have to accommodate their religious practices.

It is into such a morass that George Marsden has waded in this book. In a previous work, *The Soul of the American University*, Marsden traced the evolution of several pillars of America's academic community, from their origins as training grounds for young Protestant gentlemen—including many of the nation's Founders—to their ultimate fate as Petri dishes for the elite secular culture. At the end of that book, he suggested that the rise of an explicitly "Christian scholarship" was in order to help offset the radically secular outlook of contemporary academic culture. *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* is his attempt to sketch out what he meant by that suggestion.

The book is brief and mostly to the point. Some of the ground he covers is certainly not new to readers of this journal or those who have been around academic scholarship for long. He notes that Christian perspectives are generally unwelcome among scholars in many disciplines, while Marxist, feminist, gay, and racial approaches are not. He then argues that religious convictions are relevant to one's scholarship, that incorporating a Christian perspective does not necessarily mean proselytizing, and that integrating theological insights into other scholarship could enrich both the work performed and the academic communities in which that work takes place. In general, none of these arguments is likely to shock most members of SCSS.

Marsden's arguments, however, are unlikely to change many minds. As my examples above illustrate, Marsden—as well as others who agree that religion ought not to be relegated to the "dustbin of history"--is arguing against more than merely a mild prejudice. He is up against an entire mindset among the intelligentsia that holds religion to be irrelevant to scholarship. Those who consider religion and scholarship to be antonyms will probably be unpersuaded by Marsden's analysis. At the same time, those who come to his book predisposed to appreciate the value of religiously-informed scholarship will find little here that they probably haven't already thought of themselves.

The only audience who might be swayed are those on the fence, like a colleague of mine who is personally religious but who has been conditioned by years in academia to thinking that his faith is irrelevant to his professional work. If Marsden can move people like this fellow, and I suspect that there may be a substantial number out there, then he will have performed an important service to his faith and to his scholarly calling.

It will be, however, a service of limited value. For Marsden's vision of Christian scholarship is too limited. The "outrageous idea of Christian
scholarship" he describes is "Christian" in the sense that many evangelicals use the term: "Christian" means only those who have accepted some version of the Protestant evangelical tradition. In other words, there really is no room at this inn for Catholics. One passage near the end of the book says a lot about Marsden's vision:

At the same time interest in explicitly relating faith to scholarship among mainline Protestants has declined. Catholic scholars remain among the important contributors, although since the opening up of the Catholic Church after Vatican II and the end of the dominance of the neo-Thomas [sic] synthesis, many Catholics who are scholars have reacted against the idea of developing specifically Catholic (or Christian) scholarship. Even among Protestant evangelicals . . . interest in serious Christian scholarship is found only among a minority of the many groups to whom the term "evangelical" may refer. (p. 114)

Marsden is open to those "post-Vatican II" Catholics who don't want to insist on being right about Catholicism as the most authentic Christianity, but he is clearly suspicious of those antiquated kinds of Catholics who actually buy all that stuff left over from the Middle Ages (one can only guess that anyone who takes papal authority seriously is suspect.)

More than just betraying an evangelical's misunderstanding of the Catholic Church, Marsden articulates a concept of Christianity that ultimately leaves no room for Catholicism. When discussing the implications of a Christian perspective, he makes the rather blunt assertion that "there is no one Christian view on any subject."(p. 69) This point begs a question: what is Christianity, then, if no two Christians can be expected to agree on something? The answer is inherently a Protestant one: Christianity means what each believer wants it to mean; there is no way that anyone or any institution can define what Chrishitianity means, at any level. The idea of "no one Christian view on any subject" certainly rules out a Magisterium, a body of Sacred Tradition, not to mention a Pope.

To be fair to Marsden, he is probably engaging in a rhetorical flourish to reassure his secular audience that Christian scholars are no threat to them. Perhaps that is the fundamental problem of the book: if Christianity is purely personal, and no threat to the closed minds of the secular Establishment, then it is not very Christ-like. Christianity's Founder and namesake stands as a sign of contradiction and a threat to secularism. His Church must be the same, not merely a matter of individualized preferences. As Catholic scholars, we need an authentically Catholic scholarship.

-Ryan J. Barilleaux
Miami University, Ohio

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