uses to make his points. One also has to have some acquaintance with the historical conditions and personalities he alludes to in order to sufficiently appreciate his arguments. (To this end, the brief explanatory footnotes added by IHS Press are helpful.) Chesterton's wit and rhetorical jousts more than make up for such inconveniences, however. IHS Press is to be congratulated on its founding and its achievement in bringing a masterpiece of Catholic social literature back into print.

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This book consists of sixteen essays by Princeton Professor Robert P. George, addressing the most pressing public issues of our time, including: marriage, euthanasia, public morality, the nature of the state, abortion, embryo destruction, and the relevance of natural law. It is the author's expressed intent that each essay be able to function alone and also be accessible to the generally educated, non-specialist reader. Scholars will benefit from the forty pages of notes at the end of the book which refer the reader to detailed philosophical defenses of the propositions set forth in the text. The inclusion of an index helps to integrate and interrelate the essays to each other and increases the value of the book as a whole.

Professor George's goal in this volume is to "show that Christians and other believers are right to defend their positions on key moral issues as rationally superior to the alternatives presented by secular liberals." George's criticism of "secular liberal views is not that they are contrary to faith; it is that they fail the test of reason" (xiv). The secular orthodoxy, of course, holds just the opposite in promoting the "myth that there is only one basis for disbelieving its tenets: namely, the claim that God has specifically revealed propositions contrary to these tenets" (6). In subjecting the conclusions of the secularist academy to rational scrutiny on a variety of subjects including same sex marriage, abortion, and human rights George outlines the rationally indefensible assumptions that underlie these propositions and subjects them to devastating critique. Those assumptions include the notion that bodily life is
merely instrumentally valuable; a metaphysical person-body dualism; a denial of free choice; and a moral relativism that makes implausible any attempt to ground human rights or answer the question, "why should I respect the rights of others?"

Not content to debate against straw men and constructed arguments, George includes exchanges with his critics. One, with James E. Fleming, Professor of Law at Fordham University, on the nature of natural law and the role it should play in American jurisprudence, illustrates the contemporary state of the question. There is also a debate with Josh Dever, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, a self-described "atheist, liberal and a philosopher" who admits to being "as likely as anyone to qualify as a proponent of Robert P. George's secular orthodoxy" (21).

Secular liberals are not the only ones to trade on the alleged irrationality of traditional morality. The putative conflict between faith and reason is often cited by Catholics and other Christians to justify their dissent from traditional Church teaching. This error plays out in at least two different ways. Some claim that their conscience, informed by the secular arguments for, say, same-sex marriage, requires that they dissent from the Church's teaching. George persuasively argues for the rational superiority of the traditional Judeo-Christian concept of marriage as a union between a man and one woman and against the rationally indefensible assumptions that underlie the same-sex marriage project. Given a level playing field, reason and rational argumentation are on the side of traditional morality.

Others, such as Mario Cuomo, are "personally opposed" to abortion but argue that they cannot impose their religious and moral beliefs on others (245). The assumption is that the only reason anyone could oppose abortion is based on (irrational) religious faith. Inherent in the "Cuomo position" is the supposition that the traditional moral teachings of Christianity are incompatible with reasoned public discourse. One may accept them on faith because the Church teaches it or the bible says so but the possibility of accepting the church's teaching as, all things considered, the most rational and reasonable position is ignored.

In addition, I might add that, if the Church is what she claims to be, then the fact that she teaches X (a given moral or theological proposition), is an inherently strong argument for believing that X is true. Those who deny X, in the face of the Church's teaching, are also implicitly denying that the Church is what she claims to be. In this way the conclusion of an argument from authority (you should accept X as true because the Church teaches it) can be a requirement of logic and reason, not blind faith.

The modern prejudice that faith and reason are inherently contradictory categories survives in spite of the work of John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*. This book can be viewed as an extended application and implementation of that encyclical. Robert George is one of the most prominent and important
Catholic public intellectuals of our time. If you are looking for one volume to inform and arm you to engage intelligently the crucial public debates of our day, read this book. Professors looking for graduate or undergraduate syllabus material will find a treasure trove in this volume.

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Over the past several years, a number of biotechnologies have inspired serious ethical and political debates: the human genome project, stem-cells, general embryonic research, and human cloning, to name a few. While other political matters such as the threat of terrorism currently dominate our political discourse, there can be little doubt that these biotechnological issues will have an enormous long-term impact.

As a result, vast amounts of human thought, energy, and resources are put into navigating a political course for such technologies. Think-tanks hire scholars solely to research these issues. All the major news organizations cover the technologies almost weekly. Large numbers of scientists and professionally trained "bioethicists" are asked to comment for magazines, newspapers, and radio programs. Corporations and states hire consultants to consider the costs and benefits of research into and use of new technologies. Even President Bush himself spoke about the ethics of stem-cell research in a televised address to the nation. Biotechnology is here to stay, and will most likely continue to force an ongoing political dialogue for years to come.

Enter Leon Kass. A longtime professor at the University of Chicago and co-founder of the Hastings Center, Kass was asked in 2001 to advise President Bush on the ethics of stem-cell technology, and thereafter was named chair of the President's Council on Bioethics. Kass was trained as a physician and biochemist, and has written extensively on bioethics for over thirty years, covering a wide range of culturally significant medical technologies, from in-vitro fertilization, abortion, and organ transplantation to stem-cell technology...