The crown jewel of Fallin's book is the fifth and last part, titled "The Civil Rights Movement and Beyond, 1954–2000." He begins by quoting Charles Morgan's description of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the foremost institution fighting for blacks' rights: "SCLC is not an organization, it's a church" (221). This comment dovetails well with Fallin's thesis and provides a basis for this section. He details the events of the civil rights movement as it played out in Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma, and as founded and substantiated in the black churches. Fallin himself was a player in this chess game when he ran for state legislature in 1970 (he lost the election). He ends his book with a conclusion that notes challenges ahead for the black Baptists of Alabama.

Fallin very aptly demonstrates his thesis of the underpinning that Christianity, particularly that of black Baptists, provided for the African American community. While Fallin does not attempt to present a revision of Afro-Baptist life, he does provide an absorbing account of how it developed in Alabama and, by extension, throughout America.

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Christianity and American Democracy. By **Hugh Heclo**. The Alexis de Tocqueville Lectures on American Politics. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007. xii + 300 pp. $25.95 cloth.

Hugh Heclo's book reminds us that Alexis de Tocqueville still speaks, even after 175 years. Using de Tocqueville as a foundation, Heclo argues that it is the particular nature of Protestant Christianity that helped to make American democracy successful, for the Christian faith and the political order established a mutually supportive relationship. According to Heclo, however, that relationship is now imperiled. Heclo's cogent argument deserves careful consideration. His forty pages of endnotes and ten pages of index show that he has done his homework well.

According to de Tocqueville, Protestant Christianity exercised a great deal of influence in America by shaping personal morality and public reason, which helped to check and retard the natural proclivity of people to exploit their political freedom. It thus "ordered liberty" by making people subject first and foremost to God and to a clear, authoritative, and unchanging moral code. Its value was not in its political usefulness but in its universal authority.

But Protestant Christianity did something more. In what Heclo calls "the great denouement," it united the "twin tolerations" of commitment to political freedom and to religious freedom, an idea that Europeans, who accepted the official establishment of religion, did not take seriously. Christianity in America made universal claims that threatened the prescribed boundaries of political society and thus eschewed the official establishment of religion. If anything, any kind of establishment was believed to violate the very nature of the Christian faith. Practical considerations played a role, too. The diversity of Christian sects made persecution of dissident groups difficult if not impossible, which engendered increasing sympathy for tolerance and made religious coercion seem contrary to the nature of Christianity. Religious and political liberty required mutual support.

Thus Christianity and democracy developed a symbiotic relationship in America. On the one hand, Christianity provided the idea of the millennial hope to explain America's mission and destiny in the world (which Heclo considers heretical). It also buttressed the value and equality of the individual person. Revivalism turned the powers of Christianity toward re-moralizing American politics and inspiring ordinary citizens to form voluntary societies to serve the common good. On the other hand, democracy called into question the very undemocratic notion of election and bleached doctrines that seemed too elitist, complex, and unfair. The relationship was mutually beneficial, though not entirely equal. According to Heclo, "Christianity has probably been better for American democracy than American democracy has been for Christianity" (79).

Heclo argues that this symbiotic relationship began to deteriorate in the 1960s, though earlier conflicts, like the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy, and massive cultural changes, like the rise of consumer culture, set the stage. Thus "a distinctive public doctrine was already at work to undermine Christianity's cultural authority for American democracy" (95). The idea of historical progress promised liberation from all authority, emphasized the goodness of personal autonomy, and stressed the value of inclusiveness. "Traditional Christianity represented a culture of constraint. Democracy required a culture of choice" (96). In the "secular awakening" of the 1960s, mainline churches accommodated by emphasizing inclusiveness and unity over biblical authority and doctrinal clarity. Neo-evangelicals organized to resist and reverse this drift toward "secular humanism" by opposing such social evils as abortion. The result has been a major culture war among elites on the religious left and right. This war has had a deleterious impact on Christianity by undermining its ability to shape America's "habits of the heart," as de Tocqueville said.

At this point the options for Christians seem limited. Heclo suggests that Christians can attempt to *subvert* the social order; they can try to *engage* the

culture, though this option runs the risk of accommodation; or they can *separate* from the culture. Ironically, the present situation reflects conditions that existed in the eighteenth century, though not in America but in France. "It is a condition of devout, serious Christians alienated from the quest for democracy, and of devout, serious democrats hostile to Christianity" (143–144).

The book includes three scholarly responses to Heclo's thesis. Mary Jo Bane questions why Heclo ignores Catholics, who have excelled at applying their values to the political arena without losing their distinct identity as a religious group. Michael Kazin believes that pluralism has always predominated in America, which raises questions about the monolithic nature of American Protestantism. And Alan Wolfe suggests that it is almost impossible to generalize about Christianity, especially considering some of the major conflicts and divisions that have occurred over the decades within American Protestantism.

Heclo's rebuttal underscores his original argument: a certain kind of Protestant Christianity did in fact exist in America. Moreover, it exercised a formidable influence, which is now waning. It is this last assumption, however, that needs to be questioned. Protestant Christianity has always swung back and forth between two extremes. Sometimes it seems to accommodate to culture and at other times to transform culture. Thus Charles G. Finney turned revivalism into a science, but he also turned thousands of his converts into foot soldiers for abolitionism. Christianity in America has proven itself to have a tremendous capacity for renewal and creativity. Just when it seems hopelessly divided and compromised, as it was during the Civil War, it undergoes a transformation that leads to a new surge of cultural influence. Heclo's argument is convincing. But in the end he underestimates the generative power of the very faith that has done so much to help democracy succeed in America, whether 200 years ago, or today.

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