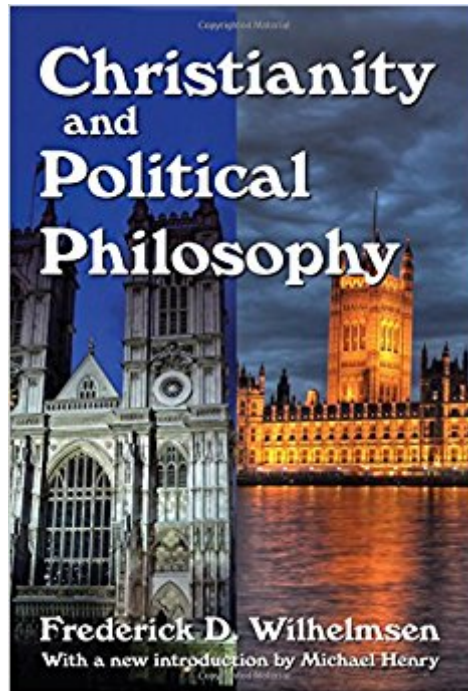


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Christianity And Political Philosophy (Library Of Conservative Thought)



Synopsis

Each chapter in *Christianity and Political Philosophy* addresses a philosophical problem generated by history. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen discusses the limits of natural law; Cicero and the politics of the public orthodoxy; the problem of political power and the forces of darkness; Sir John Fortescue and the English tradition; Donoso Cortes and the meaning of political power; the natural law tradition and the American political experience; Eric Voegelin and the Christian tradition; and Jaffa, the School of Strauss, and the Christian tradition. Wilhelmsen is convinced that mainstream philosophy's suppression of the Christian experience, or its reduction of Christianity to myths, deprives both Christianity and philosophy. He argues that Christianity opened up an entirely new range of philosophical questions and speculation that today are part and parcel of the intellectual tradition of the West. Wilhelmsen remains relevant because political philosophy in America today is following the historic cycle of political philosophy's importance: as things get worse for the nation because it is internally riven by ideological and spiritual conflicts, there is a greater need for the political philosopher to raise and explore profound questions and reassert forgotten truths about man and society, the soul and God, and good and evil, as well as the ground of political order. This is the latest book in Transaction's esteemed Library of Conservative Thought series.

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“Christianity and Political Philosophy is a restatement of the main lines of Christian

philosophy with its roots in Greek and Roman thought, together with its own uniqueness. The failure to understand the Christian medieval contribution as precisely a metaphysical task has been at the roots of contemporary cultural and political crises. The main problem of Christian thought is precisely thought itself. The ease with which Catholic intellectuals in particular, lay and especially cleric, have abandoned profound reflection on precisely the uniqueness of the Christian creedal tradition in its direct relation to political philosophy has probably been the most damaging blow to the Church and to the state in modern times. Voegelin was right, as W. noted, to call our modern temper "Gnostic." What W.'s book suggests is not only how Voegelin missed the import of Christian thought, but how many Christian intellectuals themselves have become rather "gnostic," as any reading of the garden varieties of political and liberation theologies will note, following the perceptive guidance of either Strauss or Voegelin in describing them. W.'s book serves to remind us where the real political battles lie: in the metaphysics of gift and existence.

• James V. Schall, S.J., Theological Studies

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen (1923–1996) was a prominent Catholic philosopher, lecturer, and professor. Michael Henry is professor of philosophy at St. John's University, New York. He is also the series editor of Transaction's Library of Conservative Thought series. His work has appeared in Modern Age, The Hillsdale Review, and The Political Science Reviewer.

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