

Robert Johnson, on May 28, 1582:

"Sheriff — Dost thou acknowledge the Queen for lawful Queen? Repent thee, and notwithstanding thy traitorous practices, we have authority from the Queen to carry thee back.

"Johnson — I do acknowledge her as lawful as Queen Mary was. I can say no more; but pray to God to give her grace, and that she may now stay her hand from shedding of innocent blood.

"Sheriff — Dost thou acknowledge her supreme head of the Church in ecclesiastical matters?

"Johnson — I acknowledge her to have as full and great authority as ever Queen Mary had; and more with safety and conscience I cannot give her.

"Sheriff — Thou art a traitor most obstinate.

"Johnson — If I be a traitor for maintaining this faith, then all the kings and queens of this realm heretofore, and all our ancestors, were traitors, for they maintained the same.

"Sheriff — What! You will preach treason also, if we suffer you?

"Johnson — I teach but the Catholic religion."

Then Johnson's execution began. In this passage we see what the state demanded and what Catholics refused to the point of shedding their blood: It was nothing less than to put the English monarch in the place of the pope and to abandon the faith of their fathers.

The 16th-century English Catholics did not "construct" their martyrs. Rather, it is this book that attempts to "construct" them anew as rhetorical ploys, mere shadows without substance or reality. But it won't work. Nothing is more real and solid than the immortal victory and unfading glory of these martyrs. ■

THOMAS STORCK

THE STALE GOOD GUY/BAD GUY FORMULA

Catholic Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democracy. By Jay P. Corrin. *University of Notre Dame Press.* 571 pages. \$55.

This book, whose author teaches at Boston University, covers an extremely interesting era in the history of the Church, from roughly the beginning of the 19th century to the period of World War II. It is concerned with the re-

sponse of Catholic thinkers and writers, and of the official Church herself, to the many political, economic, and social changes that occurred during that time, with the coming of liberalism, capitalism, socialism, the labor movement, fascism, the Spanish Civil War, and such. Corrin devotes much space to Hilaire Belloc and distributism, but also to G.K. Chesterton and his brother, Cecil, to Jacques Maritain, Dorothy Day, and many lesser-known Catholic intellectuals, editors, and public figures.

Unfortunately, the book suffers from a major flaw that vitiates whatever else of value it may have. This flaw is the author's insistence on dividing up the diverse histori-

cal figures into good guys and bad guys. The good guys are those Catholic intellectuals "who tried to accommodate their faith with political and social democracy" and social justice and modernity in general. The bad guys are "reactionary, 'integralist' Catholics, who, rather than finding common ground with political and social revolution, sought a return to a hierarchical age of paternalistic authoritarianism." But it is unhistorical to read our current liberal/conservative dichotomy backward into history.

The author's weaknesses are typified in his treatment of Belloc. Corrin praises Belloc for promoting distributism. He says, for example, "The more radical, demo-

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cratic dimensions of Catholic social teaching were illustrated by the response of the Chesterton brothers, Belloc, and their followers to the labor unrest that beset England in the turbulent decade before World War I." Here Belloc is a good guy. But later he writes that Belloc had "a deep-seated revulsion against liberalism, cultural secularization, and parliamentary democracy. As an alternative, [he] essentially called for a return to medieval cultural values and found much to [his] liking in the syndicalist, authoritarian offerings of fascist-style political movements." Now Belloc is a bad guy. Without excusing Belloc's misjudgments and downright errors — for example, his failure to see that Mussolini was no friend of Christian civilization or the Church long after the Duce's actions had made this more than clear — was it not precisely his opposition to the manifestations of modernity that led Belloc toward distributism and made him a champion of the working man? In his historical works Belloc speaks of what he calls "popular monarchy," the role of the king as the protector of the poor against the rich. Belloc excoriates "liberalism, cultural secularization, and parliamentary democracy" specifically because all of these had little care for the working man and chiefly served the interests of the wealthy. If this is reaction, then perhaps reaction is akin to social justice!

These kinds of statements could be multiplied. Corrin, for example, speaks very highly of Cardinal Manning, the great Archbishop of Westminster in England in the latter half of the 19th century. Manning did much to promote so-

cial justice and workers' rights and is one of Corrin's chief good guys. Corrin refers at one point to the "democratic traditions set down" by Manning. But later on he makes it clear that Manning's contempt for parliament was almost as great as that of Belloc and the Chesterton brothers and that the Cardinal had never (quoting Belloc) "admitted the possibility of compromise between Catholics and non-Catholic society. He perceived the necessary conflict and gloried in it." Again, it was precisely Manning's uncompromising Catholicism that made him a champion of workers. Such facts do not fit well into our current superficial left/right spectrum, nor do our current socio-political analyses know what to do with orthodox Catholicism.

This is especially clear in the author's discussion of the Spanish Civil War. Franco is definitely one of the bad guys. Yet Franco, and even more the Falange, which Corrin describes as "the Spanish fascist party," supported attempts to construct an economic alternative to both capitalism and socialism, the very attempt which Corrin elsewhere lauds. This is not to excuse all of Franco's conduct, but to point out that history is a good deal messier, and both men and movements more mixed, than Corrin wants to admit.

Corrin, critical of continental liberalism, is a friend of Anglo-Saxon liberalism. He blames Leo XIII for not distinguishing between the two types and for not supporting the latter. But here Corrin is confused again, for it was Anglo-Saxon Lockean liberalism that during the 19th century was an opponent of labor unions,

social legislation, and all the other things that Cardinal Manning fought for and that Corrin rightly praises. And today it is in the name of this kind of liberalism that the neo-conservatives are waging their war on authentic Catholic social teaching — a war that Corrin himself probably opposes. And Corrin criticizes Christopher Dawson for believing that "liberal individualism, which found its political expression in parliamentary democracy, was entirely inconsistent with Catholic principles." But surely there is much truth in this statement. Though democracy is an acceptable form of government to a Catholic, is it not the case that the atomization of society so characteristic of modern times *does* find an expression in contemporary democracy?

This book, then, cannot be recommended. The author's analyses are muddled and it is too much a brief for a kind of contemporary liberal Catholicism that understands neither what liberalism really is nor how radical traditional Catholicism was and still can be. ■

BRIEFLY REVIEWED

The Teachings of the Church Fathers. Edited by John R. Willis, S.J. *Ignatius*. 496 pages. \$19.95.

Imagine: When this book was first published in 1966, most English-speaking Catho-

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