

TOCQUEVILLE, RELIGION, AND DEMOCRACY: CHECKS AND BALANCES FOR DEMOCRATIC SOULS

Alan S. Kahan Oxford University Press ISBN 978-0199681150 256 pages 40€

[Présentation]

The relationship between democracy and religion is as important today as it was in Alexis de Tocqueville's time. Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion is a ground-breaking study of the views of the greatest theorist of democracy writing about one of today's most crucial problems. Alan S. Kahan, one of today's foremost Tocqueville scholars, shows how Tocqueville's analysis of religion is simultaneously deeply rooted in his thoughts on nineteenth-century France and America and pertinent to us today.

Tocqueville thought that the role of religion was to provide checks and balances for democracy in the spiritual realm, just as secular forces should provide them in the

political realm. He believed that in the long run secular checks and balances were dependent on the success of spiritual ones. Kahan examines how Tocqueville thought religion had succeeded in checking and balancing democracy in America, and failed in France, as well as observing Tocqueville's less well-known analyses of religion in Ireland and England, and his perspective on Islam and Hinduism. He shows how Tocqueville's 'post-secular' account of religion can help us come to terms with religion today.

More than a study of Tocqueville on religion in democratic society, this volume offers us a re-interpretation of Tocqueville as a moralist and a student of human nature in democratic society; a thinker whose new political science was in the service of a new moral science aimed at encouraging democratic people to attain greatness as human beings. Tocqueville, Democracy, and Religion gives us a new Tocqueville for the twenty-first century.

INFORMATIONS COMPLÉMENTAIRES

> En savoir plus