

In order to shed as much light as possible on the issue of contraception the author distinguishes three levels of the Church's responsibility for what is to be taught. The highest is an infallible definition. The lowest is the responsibility for leaving erroneous views held by Catholics uncorrected, as e.g. the view that all pagans are damned. The moment teaching on this point was given, the Church taught differently. 'At this first level of responsibility the Church has always taught that artificial contraception was gravely sinful' (p. 55). The second level involves more active engagement, as e.g. the law of celibacy or the declaration of bigamy, calumny, adultery as gravely sinful. Here situations may not have been fully explored, and Dr Sheed quotes several interesting repeals of previous legislation. However, it seems right to conclude that a constant repetition of a command or prohibition without contrary legislation points to a high level of Church commitment. Here the Church has always insisted on the integrity of the marriage act. Already a new view of marriage is emerging as not primarily—as is sex—concerned with child-bearing. 'Within Marriage the Church teaches . . . that sex need not "intend" procreation' (p. 64). This is evident in Pius XII's approval of the rhythm method. Dr Sheed is only too well aware that a crisis of faith or a crisis of obedience must in the present circumstances follow any infallible pronouncement on contraception, both being exacerbated by

the ignorance of most Catholics about the meaning of Infallibility and the process by which an infallible pronouncement is arrived at. This ignorance of the scriptures, of the nature of the Mass and Eucharist, of the position of Our Lady, even of Christ himself is not only an impediment to fuller understanding of the *aggiornamento* but also a stumbling block to Ecumenism. Everyone should heed the words of warning: 'My present concern is with the view that Ecumenism is best served by postponing the evil day when the differences must be brought out into the open. At present, they say, it is "inopportune". That, to me, is *the* temptation which the splendid upsurge of Ecumenism has brought with it' (p. 137). Even more serious is the author's warning to teachers: 'Christ's presence in the Eucharist is cast in doubt by his absence from the classroom' (p. 203).

In the final chapter the layman is called upon to take his new importance seriously, not to expect from the clergy who give us the revelation and the sacraments, any advice on the running of the social order, to soak himself in the scriptures, to avoid the mental habit of saying either/or when we should say both, and, finally to live as his messengers the message Christ has entrusted to his Church. This is a book that clarifies, stimulates and instructs, thus proving an invaluable guide through the maze of contemporary un- and re-thinking.

IRENE MARINOFF

SECULARIZATION THEOLOGY, by Robert L. Richard, *S.J. Burns and Oates*, London, 1967. 189 pp. 30s.

Father Richard, of Boston College in the United States, means by 'secularization theology' Paul van Buren, Bishop Robinson, and Harvey Cox—all seen as heirs of Bonhoeffer. He groups these three together as representatives of a theology which gives the cultural phenomenon of secularization a positive value.

As Martin Marty says in a foreword, the book can be read either as an introduction to the theologians discussed, or as an example of one way in which Roman Catholic theology might appropriate the theme of secularization. Read in the first way, it should function well. If I am to annotate, I will say that the analysis of Van Buren is very helpful indeed; that of Bishop Robinson gives him perhaps more credit for original reflection than he deserves; and the analysis of Cox is very good except for one vital point to which I will come in a minute.

There is a section on the historical background; it is a bit superficial and is inferior to the rest of the book.

I wish, however, to spend most of this review considering Fr Richard's analysis in Marty's second way. 'Secularization' theology is, he says, the necessary attempt to deal with a fundamental, and basically religious but heretofore theologically neglected, cultural movement. Negatively, it is a relatively justified protest against a false 'other-worldliness' of Christianity. Positively, it has two great insights; the need to begin theological reflection with the man Jesus as 'the man for others' (Robinson); and the correspondence of the movement of human history, as a movement toward human responsibility and freedom from intervening deities, with the movement of the gospel revelation (Cox).

Since it is just this Comtean scheme of cultural stages which is usually most attacked in Cox, it is interesting that it is the item most enthusiastically approved by Fr Richard. One must read slightly between the lines to see why he does this: he wishes to assimilate the concerns of secularization theology to that insistence on the free reality of the creature which has for some time been prominent in Roman Catholic discussion with Protestant theology (see, for example, the books on Karl Barth by von Balthasar or Bouillard). In this Catholic thinking, the independence of the creature is balanced by the idea of a sort of pre-established harmony of nature and grace; and this too Richard finds—with joy—in Cox.

The possibility of this appropriation is extremely interesting. Does it offer new ways of creative conversation? Does it discover a 'Romanizing' tendency in the secularizers? And would that be good or bad? To ask whether the appropriation is legitimate would be gratuitous: if Fr Richard can take over these themes in this way, then he can.

Yet it does seem that Fr Richard is compelled to blunt the thought of the secularizers. To accommodate the concern for secularity within the traditional scheme of nature, pre-nature, supernature and God, Fr Richard must interpret their polemics against the 'other-worldly' as 'really' aimed only at the other-

worldly 'wrongly understood', as involving an unfortunate and unnecessary 'reductionism' which, failing to distinguish the preternatural from the supernatural, strikes at the first and hits the second. Now surely there are passages, especially in Robinson, which could support this judgment. But Fr Richard sees Bonhoeffer as the spirit behind the movement; and Bonhoeffer's achievement was exactly to recognize theologially that the transcendence which is defined as that which is 'beyond' *our* knowledge and power is just therefore a 'prolongation of the world', so that the distinctions between super- and preternature is illusory, and a God identified for us by the supernatural remains hiddenly a 'God in the gaps', however resolutely he may refrain from preternatural interventions.

These observations are hardly, of course, a criticism of Fr Richard. How we would make theological affirmations if the negative impact of secularization were taken fully seriously remains anybody's guess. Cox himself, and this reviewer, look to the transcendence of the future—a point already hinted at in *The Secular City* and significantly ignored by Fr Richard. If we should, as Fr Richard hopes, be able to save supernaturalism 'rightly understood' from the acids of secularization, then his is undoubtedly the way we will appropriate a relativized secularity.

ROBERT M. JENSON

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE STATE IN NORTH AMERICA, by R. E. Norman. *Cambridge University Press*, Cambridge, 1968. 200 pp. 37s. 6d.

This book strongly challenges the generally accepted view that the relations between Church and State, religious belief and public life, differed fundamentally in the histories of Britain, Canada and the United States. The idea that the separation of Church and State in the new American Republic was either unique or the example for the rest of the world must be qualified when compared with the histories of Britain or Canada. The situation in America should be seen as a development in favourable circumstances of forces which were British in origin and conception, while the leading differences between the United States and Canada in the separation of Church and State were chronological rather than social, political or even constitutional.

There were, of course, constitutional variations and differences of political experience, but the same causes resulted in similar effects. There was a common ideological basis for the

transition from state confessionality to something approaching State neutrality—a practical neutrality in practical questions. The redefinition of the relations between Church and State followed an essentially similar, though parallel or independent course with chronological or regional variations in all three countries. Militant dissent eventually secured the separation of Church and State in half the British Isles, and even in England most of their demands were granted.

These timely and expedient concessions were often made in order to remove threats to the whole established system, but the fears of the 'ultras' were not unjustified because eventually the reality of the English ecclesiastical establishment was limited. In practice, the British State acts as a neutral arbiter between competing elements of a religious pluralism, while religious pressure groups are as strong in North America as the Anglican Church or