

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 re-definition 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

interdenominational groups in England.

The common elements leading to change were the forces of religious pluralism and the radical politicians who demanded the end of State protection of religious institutions in the name of political justice. Although it was originally expected that the State would continue to profess a non-sectarian Christianity, the privileges or safeguards of established religions were modified and consequently disappeared or became anomalous. These factors, the increasing strength of dissenters, the consciousness of legal injustice, and the demand for constitutional rights were common to all three countries—the American Revolution provided the opportunity.

Yet even in America, the federal separation of Church and State was not intended to, and did not, encourage ecclesiastical disestablishment in the various states. Many survivals of religious confessionalism endured during the nineteenth century and some remain even today. Most American citizens continue to identify their nation as corporately religious and in the nineteenth century this identification was distinctly Christian. The nativist anti-Catholicism was part cause and part effect of the belief that the American nation was inherently Protestant.

State collectivism or State welfare also contributed to the redefinition of the relations between institutional religion and the government by 'disestablishing' the Churches from many of their traditional, social and administrative functions. Although ecclesiastical activity did not diminish, the competence of the State vastly increased. Having failed to produce a significant or corporate response to the social problems of the new industrial age, the Church remained basically irrelevant to them. The Church had not so much 'lost contact' with the needs or problems of modern society, contact had never been established during a crucial phase in the development of the modern State.

The schools question provides an important illustration of the fact that there were no striking divergences in the redefinition of Church/State relations in the three countries. Religious pluralism led to conflicts between the denomina-

tions especially over primary education. Ultimately the solutions adopted in Britain and North America differed in crucial points but the problems and conflicts had many features in common, the arguments of the contending parties were echoed everywhere and most of the variations were only of degree. All three countries underwent a series of stages which were recognizably similar and turned on a common factor—State intervention in the field of education. It is interesting, for instance, that the Irish and American Catholic bishops both attempted to persuade their governments to adopt the English system of State-aided denominational schools.

There seem to be three main stages in the development of Church/State relations. The establishment of a confessional Church gave way to the recognition of Christianity which was in turn extended, to include Judaism for example, before resulting in a strict neutrality, protecting without preferring belief or unbelief. While Britain still retains strong vestiges of an original confessional establishment, the more advanced neutrality of the United States is frequently a technicality because public opinion so subscribed to the religious character of the nation that the prevailing belief in the discriminating religious conscience of the State will only be altered by a real decline in religious conscientiousness. From this point of view, the chance survival of religious establishments in Britain is but a minor feature of the larger development.

It has seemed worthwhile to outline some of the points in Dr Norman's argument because one of the greatest difficulties in all research is simply that of securing a hearing for views which are so contrary to established opinions that they are in danger of being ignored or even dismissed out of hand. Although it is impossible for another to do justice to Norman's views in a few paragraphs, one might hope that readers of the review will be encouraged to read the work itself. The book should be of interest not only to the professional historian but to the general reader, and the present reviewer, at least, found the argument convincing.

J. DEREK HOLMES

ON NOT LEAVING IT TO THE SNAKE, by Harvey G. Gox, *SCM Press*, London, 1968. 174 pp. 30s.

Professor Cox of the Harvard Divinity School has made an exciting attempt to describe what holiness may be like in our new-style world: 'deference and passivity no longer provide the

quintessence of sainthood', and we ought to recognize that 'protest, scepticism, anger and even insubordination can also be expressions of obedience to the gospel' while 'obedience,