

and authority, in so far as they are *separated* from Catholic unity by human sin on both sides of the separation, nevertheless contain *vestigia* or elements of the Mystical Body, the true Church. These, in some sense at least, would seem to make them, as corporate institutions, *quasi* parts of the Church, in that, as such, they are instrumental in uniting men and women with Christ in his Mystical Body, by means of the *vestigia ecclesiae* they contain.

Cardinal Bea has said some striking words which touch upon this subject by implication, though unfortunately the talk in which he said them does not appear in this volume. They are worth recalling: 'Should we', he asked the bishops and priests at the Heythrop Conference 'leave Protestants to themselves, almost with the hope that they will dissolve and disappear? Such an attitude would be most un-Christian. Far from desiring this, our attitude ought to be one of joyful readiness to help them to make their own religious life effective, and to let them have every possible assistance from our pastoral experience.' (*Christian Unity: A Catholic View*, p. 188.)

There is a great deal that is implicit in this passage which, if made explicit in action, could have far-reaching effects. The separated 'Churches' are under God's providence; the Holy Spirit works in the lives of their members and to that extent influences them as corporate entities. While their members are in good faith and sincerely obeying conscience in belonging to them they have a necessary place in God's plan. These 'Churches' are the only means, because of the considerable *vestigia* of the true Church they contain, by which those members, in their present state of conscience, can become and remain united with Christ in his Mystical Body.

Anyone whose interest in unity work is genuine will do well to study this book with care, and work to draw out its many implications for the ecumenical progress of the future.

HENRY ST JOHN, O. P.

THE CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN UNITY, edited by R. J. W. Bevan; Oxford University Press; 25s.

Books descriptive of the ecumenical spirit are constantly appearing. This is a good one, and in some ways unlike any similar work of its type, in that it selects a Roman Catholic author for its introductory part. It is edited under Anglican auspices by R. J. W. Bevan, the editor of *Steps to Christian Understanding*, who writes the Preface. It opens with a prayer of the Abbé Couturier. Its Prologue, *World Wide Christianity at the mid-Twentieth Century*, is by Dr K. S. Latourette.

Part I, The Groundwork, is by Father Bernard Leeming, S.J.; as its name implies it deals with the General Problems of Ecumenism. Part II consists of nine essays by distinguished ecumenists on the position and attitude of their own Churches: The Roman Catholic Church by Father Bernard Leeming, S.J.; The Orthodox Church, by Archpriest Vladimir Rodzianko; The Church of

England, by Dr Geoffrey Allen, Bishop of Derby; The Baptists, by Dr E. A. Payne; Congregationalism, by John Huxtable; Methodism, by Dr Marcus Ward; The Presbyterian Churches, by J. M. Ross; The Ecumenical Movement in the British Isles, by Kenneth Slack; The Church of South India, by Rajarah D. Paul.

The names will tell those who are knowledgeable in things ecumenical that the contents of this book are of high quality. Those who are not must take my word for it that this is so; that it is better than most for its purpose, and is well worth possessing, or recommending to others, especially those who are looking for an up to date introduction to Ecumenism.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

SECULAR RELIGIONS IN FRANCE 1815-1870, by D. G. Charlton; published for the University of Hull by the Oxford University Press; 35s.

In 1822, Stendhal said that the Catholic Church in France had only twenty-five years of survival before it. This belief was quite widespread, and was encouraged by the reactionary political and social policies with which Catholics to a large extent allied themselves. Many religious men, for political or intellectual reasons, felt estranged from Christianity in the forms in which they found it. German thinkers of the time were concerned to adapt and emend Protestantism. But Catholicism was a great deal less flexible and ambiguous. Its doctrines had to be either accepted or replaced. Many could not accept them; this book is an account of some of the more interesting efforts to replace them.

Some of the ideas have an oddly contemporary ring. Renan's assertion 'that he wished to abandon no more of Christianity than was demanded by his rejection of the idea of the supernatural' (p. 107) no doubt seemed as illuminating to some, and as vacuous to others, as the rather similar theological ideas which have achieved a certain notoriety in the last few months. Taine's judgment that religion was 'une sorte de poème tenu pour vrai' (p. 63) is reminiscent of a recent broadcast on the Third Programme, which maintained that philosophical considerations drove us to the conclusion that Christianity is a picturesque fable, of great worth to some as a picture of human life, but with no exclusive claim to validity. Many of the *philologues*, with their efforts to extract the kernel of truth from the old religious stories, were pioneers in 'demythologizing' before that monstrously ugly word became fashionable. At the opposite pole from the vague respect for 'the religious sentiment' shown by men like Taine and Renan were the elaborate religious systems of Comte and Fourier. It is interesting that Newman's hymn 'Lead, kindly Light' was found suitable to be taken over, without alteration, by the Comtist religion of Humanity (p. 92). Many people found a compromise between theism and atheism in Pantheism (p. 120f.), and as a result Spinoza, whom the eighteenth century had regarded either with horror or with indifference, came into his own. Apart from