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 knowledgable 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

all this, the France of the period found room for new forms of Christianity, other types of Messianism, and an 'astonishing resurgence of occultism, illuminism, theosophy, freemasonry, and even diabolism' (p. 126).

Either because of the vigorous critical reaction at the end of the last century, or because of their own inherent weakness, none of these movements has survived except as a vestige. The author ends his balanced and well-documented survey of this fascinating period by remarking that most of the criticisms directed against Christianity in the last century, which made people feel the need for a new religious synthesis, no longer apply to contemporary Christianity, at least in most of its Protestant forms. This is not the place to suggest what atheists and Catholics might find to say about that. There is a large and useful bibliography.

HUGO MEYNELL

TWENTIETH-CENTURY RELIGIOUS THOUGHT, by John Macquarrie; SCM Press; 40s.

Contemporary religious thought is a jungle, of which this book provides a very useful and detailed map. The quotations from the authors dealt with are invariably apt, and the comments on their works uniformly fair.

The period under consideration is divided by the author into three phases. The first, which derived directly from modes of thought fashionable in the nineteenth century, is that of positivism and naturalism on the one side, and idealism on the other. The section of the book dealing with this phase is the dullest, for all its historical importance; but this dullness is due rather to the subject-matter than to the author. The second phase, whose beginning coincided roughly with the outbreak of the First World War, is characterised by a retreat from the optimism which had previously prevailed; philosophy became more limited in its scope, repudiating metaphysics and other more comprehensive and pretentious aims. The third phase, in which we are living at present, is one of logical empiricism and existentialism in philosophy, and of the 'theology of the Word of God'. More fruitful discussion between these parties is much to be desired.

'I deny the divinity of Christ: I do not deny the divinity of any man.' This remark, attributed to Sir Henry Jones (p. 27), may be treasured as a little classic of conceptual inflation. The two quotations from C. S. Peirce (p. 175f.) on what it is to believe in God, and on the Eucharistic controversy between Catholics and Protestants, suggest that Peirce should be taken as seriously in the philosophy of religion as he is in logic and the philosophy of science. Leuba's recommendation of 'a blending of Comte's religion of humanity with Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution' as the religion of the future (p. 106) seems to anticipate in an interesting way the evolutionary humanism of Sir Julian Huxley and his disciples. In spite of the interesting summary on pp. 159-62, I think it is a pity that the author