

The author modestly describes his book as an essay in biography. He has given us a real portrait which has all the charm of a perfect miniature. B.D.

MACHIAVELLISM. By Friedrich Meinecke. Translated by Douglas Scott. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 50s.)

Though Bodinus and Benevent are odd forms in English, this is a workmanlike translation of *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, and it comes with a full and valuable introduction to the author by Dr W. Stark, the general editor of the series, 'Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science'. It was written under the Weimar Republic, after Meinecke had lost some of his optimism about the dignity of State policies and had reached closer sympathy with the pessimism about secular power inherited by Burckhardt from St Augustine and the Stoa. He had suffered from the aftermath of Bismarck, but not yet from the Nazi iniquity.

He was formed by a generation which had no doubts which side it took when it looked back to the struggle of Germany against the 'Catholic bigot courts of the Counter-Reformation'. His Germany, of course, was nearer to Berlin than to Frankfurt or Vienna, and we, instructed by Miss Wedgwood about the Thirty Years War, cannot enjoy such a simple judgment. His generation, too, could hail Campanella for boldly shattering the authority of Aristotle and the Scholastics and for 'demanding that the essence of things should no longer be investigated by means of the sophistical deductions of individual reason, but rather of the faithful observation of nature'. Moreover, it seems to have felt that political expedience was nobler when pursued and rationalized by the high-minded Teuton than by the cynical and slippery Latin.

Yet he was a liberal in his way, and a courageous one at that. He wrote also not as an academic but as an historian with a real feel for men and events. His is a standard work on the doctrine of *raison d'état* and its place in modern history. It begins with the fifteenth century—in fact the doctrine was recognized before Machiavelli gave it such ruthless expression—and ends with Treitschke in the nineteenth, when the essence of the State was said to be power and its rule a public morality superior to personal honour.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

EVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF. By David Lack. (Methuens; 10s. 6d.)

This is a slight book, yet well documented both for historically important and for good modern works. Thus it provides a useful

popular account of the present situation in evolutionary studies, and can be especially recommended to Catholics, whose knowledge in this matter tends to be out of date. As Mr Lack says, 'the evidence for the occurrence of animal evolution is overwhelming and all serious students accept it'; interest is now centred on the mechanism of evolution, and evidence is here given to show that 'the last thirty years has been . . . the vindication of the theory of natural selection'. Natural selection does not imply, as has sometimes been feared, a random process, but rather a process that is governed by determinate laws. There would here seem to be no more difficulty than for other branches of science in asserting that such natural laws act in virtue of a first cause, so long as this cause is genuinely thought of as transcending the natural order, and not as attempting to ape the secondary causes which are its creation. That was the error of Paley's argument from design, and of the various theories of 'creative evolution' which are rightly dismissed by Mr Lack as useless to the biologist.

The subtitle of the book, 'The Unresolved Conflict', suggests a theme that is less happily treated. It refers of course to the question of human evolution. The history of the matter is well put, and it is particularly useful to be reminded of the enlightened attitude shown by Catholics such as Newman and Hedley, within a few years of Darwin. The discussion of the difficulties themselves is less satisfactory. The main question treated is that of the evolution of our moral nature. But as Mr Lack keeps on pointing out himself, this is a question outside the scope of his book; it is philosophical, and no modern philosopher would contemplate an evolutionary ethics. There is on the other hand little discussion of the much more real problem of how the human body could have evolved to a point where it might receive a rational soul. This is not easy to understand on any but the crudest theory of body-mind relation, which is no doubt the reason for the caution demanded by *Humani Generis* on just this point. The weakness of the book is in fact that it raises philosophical problems which it protests itself incompetent to resolve.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

DYNAMICS OF WORLD HISTORY. Selections from Christopher Dawson.

Edited by John J. Mulloy. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

Mr Mulloy has attempted to construct an anthology which will illustrate 'how Christopher Dawson's view of history is built upon his conception of sociological factors that are the dynamics for historical events and movements'. Both Mr Dawson's thought and his prose are too close-knit to be anthologized easily. While, since an anthology must always be personal, the reviewer was not surprised to find how much that he would have included has been omitted or that one extract