

to examine the origins of the anti-clerical-traditionalist conflict of the following century, which are undoubtedly to be found in the eighteenth, to discriminate more clearly than M. Sarrailh does between atheist or deist rationalism and the profoundly religious and orthodox desire for reform of, for example, a Jovellanos, to penetrate deeper into the question of Olavide's religious evolution, to consider with more sympathy the perennial and not easily soluble religious problems (not peculiar to Catholicism) of, for example, the accumulation of wealth in religious institutions, or the concentration on exterior forms (such as the processions and holy images, in Spain, alluded to by M. Sarrailh, comparable to the stress on biblical texts, preaching or manifestations of good fellowship in other milieux). Unfortunately, the distinguished lecturer is content to gather a few examples of criticism and suggest parallels with the Erasmian and Jansenist movements which do not strike one as closely applicable to the situation in the eighteenth century.

EDWARD SARMIENTO

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. By Kenneth Clark; with 219 illustrations. (Phaidon Press; 42s.)

Piero della Francesca, now accessible as never before with the aid of this superb new Phaidon volume and Sir Kenneth Clark's luminous and subtle essay, 'the great master of perspective', disciple and friend of the theorist and innovator Leon Battista Alberti, 'starts his exploration from the high bright plateau of Gothic painting' (p. 12). His great frescoes at Arezzo look serenely from under their Gothic arches. How close is their kinship with Giotto, with the mood of frozen epic which he started! For paradoxically enough, experiment in three-dimensional portrayal tended from the outset to petrify movement; the adoption of perspective completed the process, so that in Piero's and Uccello's frescoes steeds prance, banners unfurl, plumes wave movelessly in the enchantment of a perennial instant, space triumphing over time.

Phaidon's exhaustive series of detail reproductions reveal as nothing else could how organic is Piero's spatial counterpoint, carried out 'in a scheme of muted complementaries' (p. 29). Yet it were at least as important to convey the greater unity of the whole. This excess of analysis over synthesis, especially in the seven exquisite colour plates, together with a certain, perhaps inevitable, dimming of the peculiar radiance of the original tone-values, is the only blemish in a splendid book.

The author claims that 'no painter has shown more clearly the common foundations, in Mediterranean culture, of Christianity and paganism. His Madonna is the great mother, his risen Christ the slain God', and so on. But then Sir Kenneth Clark, too, belongs to the guild

of the Golden Bough, convergent myth being interpreted as undermining rather than as adumbrating Christian mysteries. Thus, while seeing Piero's *Madonnas* and his *Risen Christ* as worshipful images (p. 10), he yet takes the subject of his iconography to be 'the country God . . . worshipped ever since man first knew that seed is not dead in the Winter earth' (p. 40), and so must needs be content with the despairing trust that 'this unquestioning sense . . . of the returning seasons and of the miraculous . . . may yet save Western man from the consequences of materialism' (pp. 54-55).

DESMOND CHUTE

WINGED CHARIOT. By Walter de la Mare. (Faber and Faber; 10s. 6d.)

Time, said the philosopher, does not exist in itself: it is supplied by the mind from its own inward resources. Time, said the poet, bears all its sons away and they are forgotten; it is a dream that dies with waking: but these are similes, not definitions. Time is a more impossible concept than either Space of Matter: these two can be partially defined in relation to one another, and no one has ever personified either of them. We do not say *Mother Space* or *Sister Matter*, only *Father Time*. Eternity, which has no end and no beginning, can be thought of, its graph is the circle, but Time—?

Walter de la Mare, who has never shown cowardice in facing mystery, has in one long, intricate, elaborately annotated poem, ransacked those inward resources and, from them, spun webs of memory and distilled an ichor sometimes bitter, sometimes of a searching sweetness that has been for him and maybe for some of us a dew that can clear the eyes till almost we see—

*Now—with its whole penumbra clear to him,
Abject with misery or with bliss a brim.*

Throughout the poem the pendulum of the clock that ticks a varying rhythm in the verse, swings between misery and bliss through a cloud-rift of insight with its reiterated admissions that—

*Time has enigma been since time began
The subtlest of confusions known to man.*

The riddle, though it may not be answered, offers its strange facets to annotation:

*Time real, time rare; time wildfire fleet, time tame;
Time telepathic, out of space and aim;
Time starry; lunatic; ice-head; of flame
Dew transient, yet immortally the same.*

Though the writer makes no direct reference to it, the fable of the bird which came through open windows from the night to pass over a hall of feasting, haunts the poem with birds: