

always remain conjecture. Anyhow, Mr Butler has made a gallant effort in this unconventional

and largely original book.

E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD

THE GRAND DESIGN OF GOD, by C. A. Patrides. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, London, 1972. 17 + 157 pp. £2.50.

Dr Patrides is a prodigiously learned writer who can keep to the point. He aims, in little more than a hundred pages of text and about half as many of footnotes, to trace the importance of the traditional theme of God's providence in human affairs in a literary tradition starting with the Old Testament and finishing with the *Four Quartets*. This is not as strange a piece of overweening ambition as might appear. Dr Patrides is not by and large concerned with conventional literary criticism. He cannot resist an occasional aside. He has an important point to make about Marvell's Horation Ode: I cannot myself believe that George Herbert's poem *The Collar* 'compresses within its thirty-six lines the broad circumference of the traditional vision of history', nor does it seem plausible—to me at any rate—to think that the theological overtones in the poem are 'unwitting' and the narrator is only 'subconsciously cognisant of the real context of his blatant aspirations'. But basically he eschews directly critical comments. He writes lucidly and agreeably for the most part—there are occasional lapses into the cook-book style of the late Ambrose Heath: 'Ravished as we are by his seductive sentences, we do not always discern the underlying structures of the divers meditations comprising his *Religio Medici*'.

What the book sets out to do is to show how in fact the generally accepted Christian rejection of cyclical views of history and the presentation of an alternative view of providential interventions from time to time, was incorporated into the intellectual traditions of Western Europe and North America. Dr Patrides is concerned with low not high theory. He looks as the medieval chronicles, for instance, not for what historians have generally considered important but for the annals going back to the Creation or the abstracts of biblical history which often precede them. What we are shown is that the way he views certain events, sometimes from remote times, are as important to the author's view of life as the particular things he has to say. In the event Dr Patrides has succeeded, I think, in showing just how the small change of a convention such as this has entered into the consciousness of generations and shaped decisively an important sensibility.

There is one point, however, which provokes a thoughtful comment. Dr Patrides, with much authority on his side, signals out *Ecclesiastes* as the one book of the Bible out of step with the rest because it offers, or appears to offer, a cyclical view of experience at variance with the rest. But is not the point, and the point moreover which shows just how remarkable the replacement of a cyclical view by a providential one is, that experience of everyday matters for most people is easily and naturally interpreted as a formless flow with no significance except what is read into it? The point of *Ecclesiastes* is to remind us that the history of the Chosen People is not composed of Moses and Maccabees. I mean we naturally divide our experience into a realm of 'politics' and a realm of 'history'. 'Politics' is an everyday matter and the urge to treat it as a cynical game of limited point is difficult to resist—and often enough not to be resisted. Where the difference comes is that we sometimes—usually after the event—see that some everyday politics have an altogether different significance, we call them history not politics, and agree they have a significance wholly other and greater than the events we call politics. Yet it is not easy to distinguish them at the time. I suppose Easter 1916 is a case in point, and I came across a very acute comment made for the first time very recently that the real turning-point of the last war occurred when the British and French governments resisted the temptation offered by the Russian attack on Finland to get out of their commitment to oppose Nazism and seek to form a general anti-Bolshevik front—which they could probably have got. If this is right—and I think it is—an historic decision was taken though it seemed only a piece of the usual political squalor at the time.

It follows that the attempt to reduce the scope of the historical and absorb it into the realm of the squalor is a radical example of the de-christianization of our culture. It is obvious when one reflects on the sort of thing that goes on in academic historical studies that this attempt is being made on some scale. The sort of thesis that argues that the French Revolution went for very little since Napoleon restored a tarted-up *ancien régime*, or the ecumenical historiography that treats the Reformation as though all the issues could have been settled by a

sherry party in the Quirinal and some goodwill on all sides. Perhaps the classic example of this is A. J. P. Taylor's account of the origins of the Second World War and its reduction of the events of 1933-39 to a political realm not essentially different from that inhabited by a

Poincaré or a Marquess of Salisbury. It is at this point that we need to realize that this isn't just de-christianization but dehumanization. It is something to be afraid of.

ERIC JOHN

ST THOMAS AQUINAS: SUMMA THEOLOGIAE. Latin Text and English Translation, Introduction Text, Appendices and Glossaries. Vol. XXXV: Consequences of Charity (IIallae, xxxiv-xlvi, Thomas R. Heath, O.P., pp. xviii + 218. *Blackfriars*; London, *Eyre and Spottiswoode*; New York, *McGraw-Hill*, £2.75.

Fr Heath has entitled this volume 'Consequences of Charity' rather than 'Vices against Charity', since in addition to discussing hatred, spiritual apathy (*acedia*), envy, discord, contentiousness, schism, war, brawling, sedition, scandal and folly, it also deals with the commands to love and the gift of wisdom.

In his Introduction he notes the fact, which has puzzled many students of St Thomas, that the Angelic Doctor, while clearly basing himself upon St Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5, 20-22, recognized that that list was prompted by the circumstances of the primitive Galatian church and decided to expound a more systematic list 'according to the rules of art'. Fr Heath also remarks on the intriguing fact that, having given his own list, St Thomas modifies it when he develops his own arguments. 'This', Fr Heath writes, 'is intriguing. Yet it brings out rather clearly two aspects of Thomas's thought. The first is the vital, one might almost say the vivacious, quality of his thinking. His mind was ever flexible, ever open to better plans, clearer ways of setting out the material. It bespeaks life, a living struggle to grasp the whole truth and to say it as clearly as possible.' The second aspect was suggested by a casual remark of Fr Peter Gils that 'Thomas was a man in a hurry' and it is added that 'this principle would hold for his dictation as well as his script'. (St Thomas's handwriting was one of the worst on record, resulting, for example, in *nisi peccaverit* being read for years as *ubi sic canitur!*) 'He had immense work in front of him and so little time, so little time. He would leave the rearranging to those who would follow and who would see what he meant, anyhow. He had to get on with his work.'

Fr Heath's rendering of the text is both readable and accurate, though on page 111, line 14, 'placed by someone else' seems to have slipped out after 'obstacle' and the neuter has been oddly substituted for the masculine. The footnotes are very useful, especially in elucidating the Latin terminology. On page 92 there

is a valuable note on the *treuga Dei*, on page 116 a racy quotation from Abraham Lincoln on the scandal of slavery, on page 132 a pleasing remark on St Thomas's sensitivity to the ambiguities of life. The Appendices on Spiritual Apathy and War, while brief, show detailed acquaintance with the relevant literature both medieval and modern. In the former there is an extensive quotation from John Cassian, which would make edifying reading for those religious today who are tempted to abandon their vocation; there are also two quotations from Emily Dickinson, who, Fr Heath suggests, 'might well be called the poet of *acedia*'. On war, he tells us, St Thomas's writings reveal him as 'a man who had no enthusiasm for war, but great respect for the soldier; who could wish the world were otherwise, but who accepted things as they stood in actual reality before his eyes'. The Appendix on Sedition is brief but useful; that on the Gift of Wisdom is judicious and well documented: '*Sapientis est ordinare*. It is for the wise man to order. His business is to put first things first.' What an admirable description this is of St Thomas himself, of whom M. Gilson has written, 'Anyone who is at all familiar with his work knows full well that he simply could not help putting everything in its proper place', and has added that, whereas 'in everyday life, the problem of putting a thing in its proper place is a comparatively simple one' which 'seldom amounts to more than putting it always in the same place and remembering where it is', 'in philosophy . . . there is but one conceivable place for any given thing', so that 'unless you find it, that thing is lost, not in the usual sense that it is not to be found where you expected it to be, but in the much more radical sense that it is no longer to be found anywhere', since 'out of its proper place, the thing simply cannot exist at all' (*Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, pp. 70f).

Altogether, this is a very satisfactory volume in the series, which is now more than two-thirds of the way to completion. E. L. MASCALL