
The Origins of Modern Science, 1300-1800. *H. Butterfield.* The Macmillan Company. New York. 1951. x+187 pp. \$3.00.

The author has previously published books dealing with political affairs during the Napoleonic era, with George III during the American Revolution, and with Machiavelli. He organized the teaching of the history of science at Cambridge University, and there delivered the first series of lectures on the subject. This series is reproduced in the present volume.

He begins with the early significant scientific work done in Paris in the fourteenth century and its challenge to Aristotelian authoritarianism. He comes down to Buffon, Bonnet, Cuvier, and Lamarck, who laid the basis for Darwinism and the revolution in scientific thought in the nineteenth century.

We find that Copernicus had a lot of old and inadequate ideas in his system; Galileo was not much of an experimenter and did not drop the weights off the leaning tower of Pisa; Harvey got his inspiration and much of his training at the great University of Padua, which was inspired by the early Moslem thinker, Averroes; and the ground-work of Newton's synthesis was laid by many earlier scientists. Butterfield shows how hard it was for science to feel its way toward modern conceptions.

The author should have been clearer on the general significance of it all. He does not have enough summarizing sentences and paragraphs. However, he is thorough, careful and reliable.

Butterfield feels that the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century has had a more profound influence upon civilization than the Renaissance or the Reformation or anything that has happened since the rise of Christianity. This revolution, he states, has been producing a brave new civilization that can "cut itself away from the Graeco-Roman heritage in general, away from Christianity itself"

GARDNER WILLIAMS