

a word borrowed from Oliver Wendell Holmes, representing the process of enlarging the significance of a concept which has become unduly restricted in its interpretation. The concept in question is that of *inertia*, which the author seeks to detach from its restricted sense of resistance to mechanical change in order to trace its applicability to the whole of reality. Not only does he find it implicit in the rhythm of biological evolution, but he goes on to apply it to an analysis of habit and free-will in man, indeed to find it operating in the purely spiritual sphere of angelic activity. This seems to be carrying the process of 'depolarisation' rather too far. Inertia as a concept is essentially relative to movement and change, and will therefore be involved in the development and operations of all those things subject to change, whether mechanical, physical or biological; but inertia remains a property of mass, and its application to purely mental and moral activity must be in a very wide sense indeed. A state of inertia implies that the movement or lack of movement can be modified only from without; as the principle of the movement becomes more and more immanent, in the ascending scale of living things, so the applicability of the principle of inertia would seem to diminish. In purely spiritual activity, exercised independently of matter or mass, it is difficult to see how it applies at all.

No doubt Dr Newsholme would say that this was only further evidence of the 'polarisation' of the concept of inertia, but it remains true that the concept is limited, not only in its interpretation but in its objective content. One gets the impression that the author is so carried away by the excitement of his chase for 'inertial' phenomena that he sees his quarry at every turn and corner, popping out from behind every tree, yet never succeeds in running it down, so vague and indefinite in outline has it become. For all that, the chase is so obviously enjoyable to Dr Newsholme that the reader cannot help catching some of his excitement and enthusiasm at the vistas which are opened up in the discussions of the relation between matter and spirit, between disease, sin and evil, and between health, love and the creative power of God. These can be so absorbing that eventually one ceases to be distracted by the 'inertial' will o' the wisp, and is conscious only of a growing admiration for the author's power of throwing such original light on so many of the problems which must face any seeker after the 'right formula', whether he find it in the concept of inertia or not.

EGBERT COLE, O.P.

THE PILLAR OF FIRE. By Karl Stern. (Michael Joseph; 15s.)

The mystery of the Jewish rejection of Christ is more than a people's tragedy: it recapitulates the whole mystery of providence in a concrete and ever contemporary setting. And in our own time, which has seen

a hatred and holocaust of the Jews unequalled in history, the record of any Jew's conversion to Christ must have a special significance.

Dr Stern is a German Jew, a psychiatrist who is now living in America. His account of the Jewish fidelities of his childhood in Bavaria is written with an extraordinary innocence, a quality that shines with increasing power throughout this record of a brilliant and sophisticated scientist's search for Christ. His book is notable for many reasons, and not least for its inward integrity, evocative as it is of a peace of mind which marks that Jewish spirituality which Dr Stern sees as a true preparation for the fullness of Christ. Indeed, his book is the perfect commentary on the Pauline doctrine of the Jewish destiny: disaster as well as glory, and even the maniac persecutions of our time never deflect Dr Stern from his view of the Jewish mystery as soluble only in terms of eternity.

His book is 'written to help Christians to understand their brothers, the Jews', and it should be of the greatest value in evoking the positive value of orthodox Jewish piety and, too, in revealing the sadness of that Jewish racial and national consciousness, which, cut off from its roots, is at the mercy of the false gods of our time. There is a passage in Dr Stern's book which, above all others, shows his own story as a classic commentary on our Lord's warning that only the simple of heart can come into his kingdom. His Bavarian servant-girl, uneducated but at one with Christ and the Church, sees as it were connaturally what is true. And the 'wise' are so often the betrayers of truth. For 'intellect, without humility, is the most destructive force in the world'. Dr Stern's picture of 'scientific nihilism' is simply the expression of the literal truth of our Lord's words: 'without me you can do *nothing*'.

'In entering the Church one does not have to give up any single positive value one has ever believed in. . . . There is nothing which is good . . . which you do not find again in the Church. Now it is ordered and synthesised. It is molten in Christ.' *Pillar of Fire* is a very great book. More than the story of a conversion, it is the story of a people and their destiny: it is, too, intensely contemporary, adult, with every word close to the pulse of the generation for which it is written. A Dominican review, in welcoming it may find a special joy in the place that the Order of Preachers and the teaching of St Thomas have had in this testament of grace.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE ART OF GRAHAM GREENE. By Kenneth Allott and Miriam Farriss. (Hamish Hamilton; 15s.)

THE END OF THE AFFAIR. By Graham Greene. (Heinemann; 10s. 6d.)

Mr Graham Greene has already received much attention in France where critics arrive at important conclusions perhaps more readily

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