

Hollis's being a Catholic; and what at first sight seems a loose-knit patchwork of memoirs becomes part of that seamless garment that is the Communion of Saints. 'If thy eye be single thy whole body shall be lightsome.' It is not stretching a point to suggest that this kind of 'ease in Sion' sharpens a man's vision, so that he spots the imperturbable Lord Attlee's hand trembling with emotion as he reads the news that Australia had lost eight wickets for thirty-six, as easily as he spots the truth that 'What is important about Ireland is its religion'. Such a man sits easily to the truth, and when he says harsh things his voice is not strident. Mr Hollis's attitude to Parliament, or rather to the experience of being a member of Parliament, has much in common with Belloc's but he is neither contentious nor fretful. He is convinced of the action of divine grace outside the visible Church, but he can state coolly that it 'makes me always very angry when, from time to time, I hear from Catholic lips sweeping and uncharitable denials of the existence of true Christian feeling or of the love of truth among Anglicans.'

It must be emphasized, though, that Mr Hollis is not a flat or dull writer; he is immensely lively, not only in his anecdotes but in his thought and discussion because all his senses are alert. We must not be lulled by his charm and urbanity into overlooking the hard core of this book or blinded to the faith that shines through it all.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

EARLY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES. By J. N. D. Kelly. (A. & C. Black; 30s.)

A study of the early development of Christian doctrine forms a part—sometimes an important part—of all theological curricula. Dr Kelly has now written a book which will certainly supersede the only English text-book which has been available for such a course, the late J. F. Bethune-Baker's *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*. His aim has been to cover much the same ground as Bethune-Baker's. His treatment reflects a gulf between the two scholars which goes deeper than the half-century or so which separates the two books. The earlier book arose in a theological climate in which it was fashionable to interpret the thought of the Fathers in terms of concepts and distinctions invented for the purposes of scholarly—and sometimes not-so-scholarly—debate. Labels such as 'modalist', 'economic trinitarian', 'binitarian'—to take what is no more than a random sample—were often almost unquestioningly accepted, and lengthy discussions devoted to answering questions about which category a particular theologian's work fell in. In Dr Kelly's book such concepts and distinctions hardly figure at all; and when they do it is very often in order that their inadequacy may appear. His discussion is always very much closer to the language and the intellectual world of the Fathers themselves; and much of his book consists of well-chosen quotations to illustrate their teaching.

The precision imported by later distinctions and qualifications is never anticipated. Dr Kelly's sensitiveness to the qualities of a theological language in the course of growth rarely deserts him. His presentation of often diverging views is, in consequence, almost invariably deeply sympathetic and catholic in its approach. Settled doctrine is portrayed as growing out of more or less inarticulate approaches, groping and mutual misunderstandings. Outstandingly successful in this respect are his chapters (the bulk of the book) devoted to the development of trinitarian theology and of Christology. His treatment of the complexities of the trinitarian debates between Nicaea and Constantinople will be a valuable guide to supplement his earlier discussion of the same theme in *Early Christian Creeds*.

There are, inevitably, in a book of this scope, a number of points at which Dr Kelly's judgment will be questioned from one side or another. While his sympathetic treatment of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius are very welcome, his account of Athanasius's christological teaching seems to make this almost indistinguishable from that of Apollinarius. In Chapter VIII some mention of the importance of the Bishop in the thought of Ignatius would seem to be required. The only inadequate parts of the book are some of the notes on books appended to each chapter. While not claiming completeness, these sometimes fail to mention works of central importance for the topic in question. Even with such very minor blemishes, Dr Kelly has written a book which theological students will require as an essential tool, their teachers as a valuable guide and the general lay reader will welcome as a clear and useful summary. For once the reviewer may confidently omit the usual qualification 'in English' when recommending the book as 'the best in its field'.

R. A. MARKUS

THE GNOSTIC PROBLEM. By R. McL. Wilson. (Mowbrays; 35s.)

Few questions in the field of early Christian doctrine have been more controversial than that concerning the nature and origins of the religious movement culminating in the multifarious sects of the second century which we nowadays group together under the heading of gnosticism. The lack of sufficient first-hand evidence has made the hope of well-grounded but nevertheless confident judgment remote, until the discovery in 1946 of a large quantity of gnostic texts.¹ Dr Wilson's study is not, however, intended to solve 'the gnostic problem'. His concern is limited to the study of antecedents to gnostic types of speculation in Judaism.

Much recent work has suggested that even before achieving the

1. Cf. 'New Evidence on Gnosticism', in *BLACKFRIARS*, vol. xxxvi, 1955, pp. 209-216.