

all Catholics, since there is no time for verbiage, for 'minor historical problems' or for 'past events requiring a more or less debatable justification.' On the other hand, the problem is not peculiarly German, though for German Catholics obviously acute. Our own problem is chronic. The high ascendancy of Trade in our national life, the easy sentimentality of a patriotism often reduced to flag-waving and an absorbing preoccupation with the armed forces, have very seriously weakened the sense of the national community. For a nation is a *human* community; hence the product of intelligence and will. What blood and geography are to race, intelligence and will are to the nation. Ideas hold the primacy of place in the formation of the national community.

So even more potent than the quasi-dictatorship of tradesmen and imperialist versifiers are the ideas that are commonly held by the people. There are ideas current which of their nature are destructive of the nation as a community; through these ideas the nation is slowly becoming a mere collectivity out of which contending coteries are attempting to fashion new forms of social life. This disintegration is justified by ideas and affected by ideas. The ladies who conduct contraceptive services among the poor are principally concerned with ideas, not information. Hermann Franke's book will steady and orientate Catholic thinking, if it is read as widely as it should be. It should be read at least by all who are devoted to Catholic Action. Has not Pius XI explicitly declared that Catholic Action is social action and concerns itself with the welfare of the nation? The early chapters are illuminating on the public nature of Christ's redeeming work, on the Christian idea that every nation's history is fundamentally the history of its redemption. Particularly valuable and fascinating is the study of *Salus Publica* in the thought of St. Ambrose. And the conclusion summarised by Karl Adam: the nation 'can achieve its own specific perfection only so far as it weds its natural capabilities and powers to the Fulness of Christ. Hence true and complete nationhood can be attained only within the framework of the Christian life.'

CEOLFRID HERON, O.P.

POLITICS AND MORALITY. By Luigi Sturzo. Translated by Barbara Barclay Carter. (Burns, Oates; 7s. 6d.)

'God prepares the future. If He has permitted that the Church should no longer have any civil authority, that her historical safeguards, or those so reputed like the Austrian empire and the Spanish monarchy, should have fallen, that Rome herself should

have become politically detached from the Vatican, it cannot and should not be without a providential reason.' These essays in Christian democracy bring us back once again to the pressing problem of the morality of means; to the primacy of the moral absolute over the political and the utilitarian. It is very easy to think of political, and even of politico-religious, problems in terms of expediency; but it is un-Christian. The withdrawal of the temporal bulwarks of the Church may be intended as a sign that there must be a purification of means. Christianity is surrounded by politico-religious enemies; it must meet them, not with their weapons, but with its own, with charity and with fidelity to absolutes, not with violence and opportunism. If we try to justify or condone immorality because it will lead as we think to the advantage of the Church, we are guilty of immorality ourselves, and we do a disservice, not a service, to the Church. There may be an immediate temporal advantage—religious establishment, or what not; but the ultimate effect will be disastrous to Christianity, and it is the ultimate effect we have to think of. The Church thinks in centuries, not in months or years.

Don Sturzo's studies are the fruit of practical experience (in the *Partito Popolare*) as well as of theory. The present book lacks unity and cogency from being a collection of papers; but there is none the less a very definite unity in them, for they all deal from one aspect or another with the essentials of Christian democracy. They will be found most useful if taken in conjunction with, and as applications of, some such statement of principle as Maritain's *Action catholique et action politique*; they deal with totalitarianism, with minority problems, colonies, the right to rebel, the rights of the citizen in time of war, and so on; sometimes they would be the better for a more complete survey of the scope of the problem under discussion; Christian democracy is not distinguished sufficiently from a parliamentary form of government; but they are all illuminating and stimulating. For the catholic, totalitarianism is not primarily a political, but a religious, problem; but it cannot be adequately understood, still less decided, without a real understanding of the relationship in general between morality and politics. That is why such a book as this is of value at the present time.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

LE VRAI CHRETIEN EN FACE DU MONDE REEL, Par Chanoine Michel Pfliegler. Traduit par l'Abbé Roblin. (Editions Salvator, Mulhouse; 15 frs.)

The Abbé Roblin, translator of this book, says in his Preface