

the spiritual reintegration of the masses, their return to Christendom, is a first condition of the salvation of civilization, then it is clear that these multitudes must be approached not with menaces and violence, but with love Nothing is more serious, more scandalous, than to see, as we have seen for some years in these countries, the employment of wicked and barbarous means by men who invoke Christian order, Christian civilization It is a truth inscribed in the very nature of things that Christendom will re-establish itself by Christian means or it will come to its compete undoing.'

GERALD VANN, O.P.

THE SALVATION OF THE NATIONS. By Hermann Franke. (Coldwell; 4s.)

'Our present age insisently demands a theology of nationhood.' This little book, a translation from the German by Canon George Smith, with a preface by Karl Adam, is a distinguished contribution to such a theology. 'The writer is well aware of the difficulties of his task: but he considers that by having recourse to the sources of Scripture, Liturgy and patristic writings, by dint of emphasising statements which have already been explicitly made and synthesising available items of knowledge, it may be possible to formulate the principles on which such a theology must rest' (p. 12). This is the spirit of Maria Laach which has already found a deep response in this country. The atmosphere round this subject is undeniably tense. In England we are liable to serious distractions from politics. Yet nationhood is not primarily a political matter: it is metaphysical and religious. There is little to read from a Christian standpoint on this urgent contemporary issue. Yet the recent crisis has released a vast amount of desultory thinking on the problem of nationhood and related problems such as pacificism and national regeneration. This book supplies a real need. It may, however, lose many readers who think that they are not concerned with 'the problematical juxtaposition: Germanism and Christianity.' On the other hand, many who read it may be led by a merely benevolent interest in what the unfortunate German Christians are thinking about the political situation. In the first place 'it is perhaps appropriate that this (German) nation, which has been called "the source of perpetual unrest" in the Church, should seem destined to call attention to the fact that a liberalistic individualism is not a Catholic outlook; that the Church of Christ is a Church of the Nations' (p. 12). The words of a Catholic German theologian to-day are likely to be valuable for

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