

As will be seen, this literary and historical study of a specialist is of great general interest—if only to make us appreciate more thankfully those great Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XI, whose directives have created a specifically Catholic modern science of politics; and to make us ever more deeply realize that our Faith, and our Faith alone, can save not only our soul, but also our country.

H. C. E. ZACHARIAS.

DIE FLUCHT VOR GOTT. By Max Picard.

This is a difficult book; yet it would be a pity if those to whom it could be of great help were to be deterred from reading it. For it treats of so many important matters and has a great mission to fulfil. *Flucht vor Gott* is written in symbolic language and is a study of the irreligiousness of our time in all its individual and collective manifestations. It is, as it were, an examination of conscience, or rather it brings into relief the needs, emptiness and loneliness of the modern man. At the same time it helps to overcome them by discovering their one, common rest.

Picard finds that the factor which dominates the spiritual outlook of the modern world is the deliberate flight from God. Man's objective faith has been destroyed; he only wants to be independent and rely on himself alone. But this denial of God causes something which those who desire to be their own end will never replace: everything is tottering; nothing remains in its place; all concepts (notions), values, standards are shifted, distorted or emptied; everything is caught in a maddening and self-destructive whirl. If we could bring these thoughts to their logical conclusion, the result would resemble the physical universe which has lost its centre of gravity. But what is impossible with regard to the physical universe, man has tried to bring about in the spiritual and ethical order: the result is a world without centre of gravity, flung about in the void in which everything is thrown into disorder. Those who are caught in it cannot even know what is taking place, and only those that have received the grace to remain outside can investigate and realize what is really happening. This is one part of the book. The other part explains the order of things which will ever remain and which, by reason of its simplicity, is accessible to any one. This order remains whether man acknowledges it or not, whether he adjusts himself to it or not.

In this book speaks one who is a believer in the full sense of the word and who reminds the age, which will perhaps not hear him, that the hierarchy of values remains as it is, even if man, as so often happens nowadays, subordinates everything to a false value; that now as for all times God is the eternal and unchange-

able centre of the world, whether man flies from Him or not, whether man recognizes Him as the centre of his life or tries to make for himself another world-centre or a world without a centre at all.

To those who have still ears to hear, Picard's symbolic language will ring more clearly than any other psychological analysis, however profound.

From what has been said one might think that the *Flucht vor Gott* is a severe book which judges and condemns. No doubt decisions of the utmost gravity are at stake. Yet there is much tenderness in the book: that tenderness which helps by sympathy and points out the road to salvation—not to self-obtained salvation, which does not exist, but to that salvation which God gives to them that trust in Him. May we not say that it is the tenderness of an *anima naturaliter christiana*? Even if the name of Christ is not mentioned in the book, we find it everywhere unexpressed and unnamed, as is shown by the beautiful quotation of St. Augustine which serves as the motto of the book.

A. VAN ZWANENDYK.

DAS GEHEIMNIS DER ZEITEN. By Oskar Bauhofer. (Kösel & Pustet, Munich; RM. 3.)

Dr. Bauhofer has here collected and unified a series of lectures which together attempt to present an outline of a Christian interpretation of history, in the tradition of St. Augustine and Bossuet. In method, however, he is nearer to the former, though since he writes primarily as a theologian and not at all, as in part St. Augustine wrote, with the intentions of an apologist, he is even less concerned with the possibilities of empirical investigation, and so presents an appearance of *a priori* reasoning which by itself is likely to appeal only to the already converted. His own declaration, therefore, needs emphasizing, that he is a theologian first and foremost, and a philosopher only secondarily, so that no quarrel can be fixed on him for assuming without comment the divinely revealed truths of Christianity, while the nature of the ultimate ground of history (the providence of God) removes the possibility of any attempt at deducing the rationality and necessity of what must have been, regardless of what has in fact happened. Indeed, the author expressly says that the theory of history must "proceed from the givenness and unity of the object." But if the meaning of history is thus found to be ultimately "ein tiefes Mysterium," we may wonder what line will be taken in pursuing an understanding of it. The thesis is briefly as follows: The status of mankind in history is a status of bondage to death. As fallen from the state of innocence man is in that bondage; even as redeemed by Jesus Christ he is still liable to relapse into