

It seems a pity that those who have the goodwill to keep on going to mass out of a sense of obligation should not find their duty becoming a pleasure, and something to be looked forward to during the working week.

This book should be of real service to all of us in helping us to get more out of our principal religious duty by putting more into it—an idea that is completely in the spirit of the late Pope's encyclical, *Mediator Dei*. There, it is urged that the laity should have 'the mind of Christ', and being conformed to the spirit of his sacrifice learn to 'offer it together with Him, and through Him, and with Him to surrender themselves'.

I would have liked a distinction between oblation and sacrifice, but perhaps there is no place for it in so small and tightly packed a book. Page 24 is splendid, with its description of Sunday as 'a kind of earth-tremor following the seismic eruption of God into this world's history'. It deserves to be a popular little book, and if it induces those who have time to read Fr Jungmann's larger books on liturgy so much the better.

CLARE DAWSON

STATIONS OF WISDOM, by Frithjof Schuon; John Murray, 21s.

THE ASCENT TO HEAVEN, by Ulrich Simon; Barrie and Rockliff, 21s.

Frithjof's Schuon's standing as an authority on religions should not frighten one from protesting, not so much against the religious syncretism which he offers, though that is bad enough, as against the disgust with ordinary living which drives him to produce it. In this he is typical of many of the most celebrated exponents of a return to traditional wisdom. They seem to have no idea that the vast majority of people are now living far more human lives than ever before—lives, therefore, of far greater moral and spiritual potentiality. Instead of realizing the immense challenge this presents, they turn away into a largely literary religion which can be only the nostrum of spiritual mandarins. For those, however, who feel the need to enliven their faith with a mixed dose of oriental religion and the kind of metaphysics which involves a 'supra-mental intuition', this may be just the book. *The Ascent to Heaven* is quite different. Ulrich Simon is a priest of the Church of England and a professional theologian who has already written an important monograph on the idea of heaven in Christian history. Here, at a more popular level, he sets out the case for some transcendent reality, drawing on all the manifold indications of it that human experience affords. He is not likely to convert anybody who is set against the idea, but, writing, as he does, out of a deep, compassionate and eloquent culture (he cites Henry James as appositely as the scriptures), he will be a great help to people who may be wondering what foothold the idea of heaven can still have in the modern world.

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