

there is this important difference in approach; the emphasis is laid, not so much on Mary as she is in herself, as on her perfections and privileges as they are a road to God for us. To take an example. In the fact of her being the Mother of God, the emphasis is laid not so much on her active share in giving her substance to form his humanity, as on the passive side in being overshadowed by the power of the Most High. Whereas in speaking of the Immaculate Conception the emphasis is placed not so much on the unique privilege as on her active response to grace. Having read the book, one is left with the impression, as was intended, not so much of an increase of devotion to Mary, as with a desire to attain greater love of God through her.

As a personal matter I found the variations in type somewhat distracting, and the blank spaces which introduced each section, through which the reverse of the type on the next page could be faintly seen, left me with an uneasy feeling that I was facing the writing on the walls of Nineveh. But with so much, including the illustrations, which is very good, this is a small matter.

S.M. CATHERINE, O.P.

THE MEANING OF SUNDAY, by J. A. Jungmann, S.J.; Challoner Publications, 2s. 6d.

When I began to read this essay I found myself murmuring 'a nice little book', and so it is, but it is considerably more than that. Half a crown is a modest price for so simple a book that has yet the weight of much learning behind it, but it is a good thing it is cheap since half-crowns are scarcer than they used to be, and it says things most of us need to hear, and in a way that almost all can read.

I am sure we do take Sunday too much for granted. Only when we have had to work straight through a week-end ourselves do we fully realize the human value of a break; and perhaps it is only when we have been cut off from Sunday mass for a time that we realize how very incomplete life is without it.

I do not think Fr Jungmann's reference to those who go to mass because it is 'the done thing' applies to this country. It might, in a place where Catholics happen to be fairly thick on the ground, and live, so to speak, in their own enclosed circle of society. But the normal reaction of the secular society in which most of us live is one of surprise, tinged with amusement or contempt for our antediluvian ideas, or with a trace of envy because we 'have something' vaguely perceived as valuable. For a Catholic to go to mass, or any other Christian to go to church of a Sunday, is to stand out against the customs of present day society where absence of religious observance is often taken for granted. I think others besides myself must have found that it is precisely this feeling that it is *not* done to go to mass that sometimes keeps the young away.

It seems more universally true that many people go from habit, since happily good habits as well as bad die hard, but as Fr Jungmann says, habit is not enough.

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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