

the absence of the clichés and spiritual vamping that one sometimes hears in retreat.

A starting point for a tradition in sermon criticism, but I think the end of a tradition in preaching, for there is something substantially wrong in these sermons. This is not a criticism that we would make lightly of such a master, but we are entitled to ask: Why is there so precious little scripture in these sermons? And why does he feel that children are out of their depth in theology? What theology? And why does he have to flounder into popular philosophy? One wonders how many of these girls have by now stumbled on that mother-in-law of apologetics, a solipsist—they are always good for a laugh. Gradually one comes to see the direction of this preaching. He is starting from the basic experience of catholic life and dogma that pupils in these boarding schools may be presumed to have. What Knox is doing with these intriguing trivial examples is using them as brilliant lighting for a room that he suspects has become dull and drab. He is making the tradition sparkle. What he is not doing is bringing these children face to face with the living God in scripture. He is depending on the hold of their Catholic tradition; he is not confronting them with the freshness of the Word of God, which is, in the end, the only way to make the tradition illuminating. One's final despair is the thought: 'And how well he could have done it'.

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CHRISTIAN YOGA, by Dom J.-M. Déchanet; translated by Roland Hindmarsh; Burns and Oates; 21s.

In a short paper reprinted in *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, Jung drew attention some years ago with remarkable insight, wisdom and common sense to the dangers of yoga for the Western mind; his observations are even more relevant today than they were in 1936, at least in England, where a volume on yoga has recently appeared even in the 'Teach Yourself' series. His warnings have repeatedly been renewed by all serious students, notably by Mircea Eliade. It is true that most popular presentations treat yoga merely as a sort of P.T. with a difference; but the historic postures and practices tend of their very nature to the ends for which they were devised, and seem inseparable from a whole way of life which is alien and hostile to the European mind, conscious and unconscious.

What then are we to say of the present work, originally published anonymously under the title *La Voie du Silence*, and now appearing with a rather unfortunate English title (though excellently translated) and with the name of a distinguished medievalist and Benedictine monk as author? Certainly the French title represents more exactly the scope of the work and also the very remarkable success which, in spite of all the attendant dangers, has been achieved in this *expérience chrétienne de yoga*. The measure of the success may easily be estimated by comparing this book with the paper-back on *Hatha Yoga*

by Theos Bernard, where some sense of the original tradition may be gained from the plentiful quotations from source-texts. Dom Déchanet, by what must have been a most strenuous and perilous personal exploration, has succeeded in presenting here a technique for unifying and reconciling the various levels of our human existence, a technique which not only in the author's explicit claims but also in his whole treatment, has been animated by a Christian sense of the gratuitousness of divine grace. This is a point worth insisting on for any prospective Christian practitioner: that the techniques he employs will only profit him if they are practised in humility and surrender to the life of grace in him. Dom Déchanet himself once or twice writes a little carelessly about this.

Clearly it is professional religious who will benefit most from the practices recommended by the author; but it should be noted that they are likely to encounter the most serious resistances too. For the Western religious at least, the body tends to belong to the sphere of the unconscious (one has only to listen to the off-duty conversation of religious professionals, with its tedious multiplication of 'jokes', to be convinced of this); certainly a patience, the depth and permanence of which can only come from abandonment in loving faith to divine providence, would seem to be the presupposition of any serious achievement. It is unlikely, in consequence, that practices of this kind will provide a general answer to what has become a critical question for religious in the atomic age: how, by the embodied assistance of what techniques, am I to pray? At the same time, the revived awareness of the liturgy will remain only cerebral if the life of the body does not find in it a foretaste of the Christian promise of the resurrection.

The photograph of the author on the back flap should not be missed: it is a satisfying token of the integration of powers.

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