

commended to them 'the generous encouragement of these holy vocations', calling on them to lend assistance not only to the religious orders and societies but also to these truly providential secular institutes', and Fr Perrin reminds the priest that he must understand the form and requirements of this vocation so that he will not make of them (secular institutes) what *he* would like, but receive them from the hand of God. Secular institutes need encouragement, not for their achievement, but for the rich promise they give of future harvest.

Fr Perrin is served better than he has previously been by his new translator, Roger Capel. One word I query—*conscience* which in French can mean 'awareness' or 'conscience'. On page 85, it would seem more intelligible to say 'at the level of consciousness' rather than 'of conscience'. The prose is on the whole concise, though at times it is lumbering and not crystal clear. The book is well printed and attractively produced.

It is to be hoped that the author's wish will be fulfilled—that the thought of the Church in all the simplicity of its truth will 'clear away the prejudices which prevent the secular institutes being seen in their true light'.

TERESA MELIA

RETREAT IN SLOW MOTION, by Ronald Knox; Sheed and Ward, 16s.

It is sometimes difficult for people to realise that Mgr Knox was faced with the same problems in trying to preach as the ordinary priest in the pulpit. The simplicity of his examples, the carefree humour of their extension, and the resolution of the argument all pass with such ease that we miss the effort which went into the construction of style and the analysis of a problem which lies behind each sermon. This collection of sermons preached to children in retreat are, like the children, of different ages. One can detect the development of Knox's art; from the rather artificial, somewhat prosy earlier sermons to the quick direct perfection of his later style. How can we measure his art? One looks around at recent developments in communication, the modern novel for instance, and these sermons seem dated, somehow concerned with a world these children are not going to enter. But, on the other hand, on the basis of our sermon tradition, we can confidently inform our readers that they are the best sermons that they are likely to read or hear for a long time.

This is one reason why it is so important that somebody should make a detailed study of Knox's sermons, now that they are all available. We desperately need some starting point for a tradition of sermon criticism. Knox would be the ideal starting point because he raises so many questions. One is amazed by the power of his communication. He shines through these sermons as a person—so much of Evelyn Waugh's biography springs to mind—his spiritual struggles, his anxieties, his remarkable courage: all this comes through in the best of these sermons with a strange tenderness. One is constantly made aware of the presence of a sound penetrating common sense in the spiritual life, and

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'.

CHARLES BOXER, O.P.

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*