

puts the matter simply enough for an intelligent twelve-year-old. Incidentally, the author trains her young readers in precision of statement: 'Man is descended from monkeys: that is putting the matter badly'.

The second book, like the first, is well produced and imaginatively illustrated. The practical point, made near the beginning, that Palestine is the easiest country in the world to draw, has its uses: unfortunately, many readers will be irritated by the exclamation marks freely peppered over the pages, e.g. 'Peter was electrified!' This constant jogging of the reader's elbow *weakens* the effect of the narrative, and 'Well done, Peter!' as a comment on 'Tu es Christus' hardly adds to the impact of the Gospel words. It is in fact a little discouraging to find that notes intended for *English teachers* have a style which is less adult than that of Marie Fargues in her book addressed to French *children*. (Marie Fargues, in her own section for teachers, says that she aims less at instruction than at practice in religious thinking, and she makes many perceptive comments on the stages at which children are ready to receive a truth.)

The third book is a thoroughly practical one on bringing up children, illustrated by the author's own experience. She has a strong belief in discipline, and the keynote is zest. She gives eminently wise advice on helping children not to tell lies, and (this is not so often realized) provides hints to adults on how not to provoke lying. There is a sturdy page on teaching children how to explain their faith to other children in the (American) public school. This page might well be studied by those who ask always, 'Will they lose their faith?' and never 'Will they communicate their faith?'. The author has no illusions about the difficulty of her task, but has a robust faith and an infectious gaiety.

The underlying theme of her book is in fact contained in her own statement that a child's soul is not a 'child soul', and that the only variation between the spiritual life for a child and for a grown-up is in the means of communication.

M. A. WILEMAN

CHRISTIAN YOGA. By Dom J.-M. Dechanet. (Burns and Oates; 21s.)

This book has a very definite practical purpose. It is to show how the technique of Hatha Yoga can be used by a Christian as a method of preparation for contemplative prayer. As such it seems to be extremely good and useful. Fr Dechanet has tried out this method now over a long period and has proved in his own experience how effective it can be. He describes in detail the effect it has had both on his prayer and on his whole life. He has worked out a system of Yoga exercises, which are both described and illustrated, such as any normal person can practise without great difficulty, and he shows how these physical exercises can be linked up with the practice of prayer and meditation.

There can be no doubt of the need of a book of this kind. The physical and psychological basis of prayer has very little place in the ordinary Catholic training. Most people try to pray kneeling, which is probably the worst possible position for prolonged prayer. The early Christian used always to pray standing, and this has something to commend it, but there

is no doubt that the best possible position is sitting, provided one can find the right way to sit. What is required is a position which is at once restful and yet alert and attentive, and it is this which Yoga teaches. But more than this, these exercises have the power to bring about a state of psychological harmony and integration. Fr Dechanet, using William of St Thierry's division of the human soul into *anima*, *animus* and *spiritus*, insists that the real purpose of Yoga is to 'unite' these three elements of our being which are normally so disintegrated. It is here undoubtedly that the greatest practical value of Yoga is to be found.

Fr Dechanet is very careful to separate the practice of these exercises from their Hindu setting. He realizes the profoundly different spiritual basis of Yoga in the Hindu tradition and the danger which can arise from this to the uninitiated. In so doing he has undoubtedly done a great service to the Christian who wants to make use of them. There is no danger of any spiritual 'contamination' for anyone who makes use of the exercises in this book. Yet in performing this necessary service I think that it is a great pity that Fr Dechanet has shown himself so lacking in sympathy towards the Hindu spiritual tradition. To speak of it, as he does, as though it were a sort of system of auto-suggestion, is really inexcusable. We must face the fact that the real goal of Indian Yoga is a mystical experience of a very definite character. Maritain has shown its basic nature in his essay on the 'Natural Mystical Experience' in *Redeeming the Time*. But we have also to allow, as Maritain himself does, that this experience may well enter at times into the sphere of the supernatural, especially in the case of some forms of bhakti Yoga which are based on the experience of grace and the love of God. The confrontation of these forms of mystical experience with the Christian mystical experience is a task which has yet to be adequately undertaken. Fr Dechanet has expressly disclaimed this task, and one cannot blame him for not attempting it, though one can wish that a theologian of his character, with his knowledge of the doctrine of St Gregory of Nyssa, which is of such importance in this connection, might be tempted to undertake this work. But one thing is clear; this can only be seriously undertaken by one who is convinced of the inner depth of the Hindu experience and of its relevance to Christian prayer and contemplation. This is a form of Christian Yoga for which we have still to wait, but meanwhile one can be very grateful to Fr Dechanet for his much more modest but also most practical book.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

THE ANTECEDENTS OF MAN. By W. E. Le Gros Clark. (Edinburgh University Press; 21s.)

The author of this text-book (on the comparative anatomy of living and extinct members of the Order *Primata*) is a world authority in his subject, and the book is truly magisterial. In it Sir Wilfrid has modified and expanded the Munro Lectures which he gave in 1953 in the University of Edinburgh under the title *The Palaeontology of the Primates and the Problem of Human Ancestry*. After two general chapters, the first dealing with the nature of the evolutionary process with particular reference to primates,