

least, a schismatic. I am clearer about this than I used to be and the later chapters of this book—which are much the best, I think—have greatly helped me here. In particular I think that the chief stress is rightly laid on Savonarola's disobedience in the matter of the establishment of the new Tuscan-Roman Congregation by the Brief of November 7th, 1496. This was indeed 'the real test-case', as the author says. One might wish for a little more sympathy for the Friar's reforming zeal, more admiration for his terrific (and pathetic) courage, but on the moral issue as a whole the author seems to me right and I find it hard to see how a Catholic could conclude differently. Of course this conclusion is not new; Count de la Bedoyere's judgment echoes Ludwig Pastor's—on the Savonarola affair. On Alexander's sins of simony and sensuality Pastor was far more severe; nor will Count de la Bedoyere's defence of the Pope on these issues much affect the usual verdict of historians. But he deserves praise at least for the second half of his book.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

STONES OR BREAD? A Study of Christ's Temptations. By Gerald Vann, O.P., and P. K. Meagher, O.P. (Collins; 12s. 6d.)

Father Kevin Meagher belongs to the Californian Province, and as a young Dominican he did a part of his theological studies at Blackfriars, Oxford, during the years 1930-1933. It was during those years that he became a close friend of Father Gerald Vann, who was also at Blackfriars during a part of that time. And now, during a prolonged recent visit of Father Vann to America, the two friends have written this exciting book together.

The story of Christ's temptation by the devil as told in the Gospel gets too easily passed over as we go on to the more well-known facts of the life of Christ, and that serious period of forty days gets forgotten, except on the first Sunday of Lent, when we read of it in the Gospel at Mass. Moreover we tend nowadays to discount the devil as a personal tempter, and although officially we of course believe in the devil (and all his works and all his poms), for practical purposes we either dismiss him together with the medieval demons (whose tails and horns we cannot take seriously), or else identify him vaguely with a kind of evil inclination in humanity or some supreme evil spirit in everlasting conflict with the supreme spirit of God. Another approach of today is to suppose that Satan is in fact no more than a symbol of human psychological disorders: after all, 'we know so much more nowadays about our own urges and impulses and motivations' (p. 8), and according to this view Christ's temptations are no more than symbols of native human behaviour. Whichever way one takes it, then, Satan has become discredited, and the authors quote a remark that 'Satan's

greatest triumph in modern times consists precisely in having caused mankind to disbelieve in him' (p. 7).

It is all the more timely therefore to have a book which opens with the sentence: 'Do you believe in the Devil?' Well, of course we do, but do we for practical purposes? And do we act as if we did? And it is by a study of Satan's temptation of Christ that we can be warned: if we can analyse Satan's approach to Christ, we can be on guard against his approach to us. He was insidious in his approach to Christ—to Christ on the level of a mountain: to us maybe on the level of a mole-hill (p. 120), but so insidious that we may fail to recognize him, and glibly talk in psycho-analytical terms, which may not be the complete answer.

'In the case of our own temptations we should certainly be ill-advised to try to distinguish between those which are of immediate satanic origin and those which are not. The important thing is that they are all of satanic origin in the sense that ultimately they all spring from the evil which has twisted and warped the soul of humanity, from that Mystery of Iniquity which is not to be explained in terms of humanity itself. When then we think of the story of our Lord's temptations we can for practical purposes, when applying it to our own experience, think of Satan simply in terms of those evil suggestions and impulses, rising up within us, with which we are so familiar; but we are wise to remind ourselves of the mighty power of evil from which they ultimately spring' (p. 12).

The book therefore sets out to examine in detail the circumstances and the precise nature of Satan's temptation of Christ: Was Christ really tempted? ('To take the story simply as a symbol is to rob it of a great deal of its depth'—p. 7). Next follows a great chapter entitled *Dramatis Personae*. The text of the Gospels is minutely studied, with many scriptural cross-references and the guidance of leading commentators, especially Lagrange. The three phases of temptation are called 'Stones or Bread?' 'The Perils of the Pinnacle' (the main danger being what you can see from a pinnacle, and still more, the fact that you can be seen (p. 87), and hence the temptation to vainglory) and lastly 'Pride or Freedom' ('the service of God is freedom, the service of Satan a slavery', p. 119).

The analysis throughout is fascinating, and all the time it is linked with our own experience. There are little pictures of pharisaic clergy and proudly devout parishioners, and we may permit ourselves to smile as long as we also oblige ourselves to examine our consciences at the same time, or else Screwtape (discreetly mentioned on p. 11) will have one more little victory.

The argument is plain and the book makes easy reading, and is well

referenced. The production is pleasant, though it is a pity the printer mislaid his sigma (twice) when he reached page 33, and thought of the moon at midday in Psalm 90 (p. 99): the printer's devil, no doubt.

'Do you believe in the devil?' comes again at the end (p. 125): and when we have read this book, our official answer will have more meaning, for in saying 'Begone, Satan' we are but following Christ.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

ST BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX. By Bruno S. James. (Hodder and Stoughton; 12s. 6d.)

The publishers compare Father James's *Saint Bernard* with Chesterton's *Saint Francis*. The comparison does less than justice to both authors, each excellent in very different ways. G.K.C., concerned with 'a poet whose whole life was a poem', upholds the romantic legend of the saint. A critic complained that Chesterton's *St Francis* contained only one date—and that was wrong. Fr James is exact and precise, careful and even meticulous about dates and anxious to disentangle his hero from legendary and romantic overgrowths and to soft-pedal the marvellous in the accepted convention of the modern fashion of hagiography. He does not undertake to give a history of St Bernard's time, but rather a portrait of the man. His deep study of the saint's correspondence has given him an insight into Bernard's character and enabled him to reveal and portray a great man and a very great saint whose colossal will triumphed over the limitations of life-long chronic bad health and whose immense achievement and ceaseless labours were combined with the contemplative calm of a sweet and loveable personality.

The historian who tackles some of the problems of Bernard's life—such as his clash with the Cluniacs, his controversy with Abelard and the mysterious affair of St William of York—will constantly need to temper his judgments by referring to the personal character such a biography reveals.

The author sometimes falls into colloquialisms: 'Bernard is flabbergasted' . . . 'Bernard does not pull his punches' . . . 'Bernard is the nigger in the woodpile'.

If we were to criticize the author as cynical about modern monasteries when he asks: would even Bernard be accepted today in some monasteries, one can imagine him saying it is conceivable that Bernard might write a very pointed and even caustic letter about monastic liqueurs, tonic wine and commercialized perfumery. But of course the retort could be made that Bernard would be open to charitable persuasion by a modern Peter the Venerable: and there are many such in our monasteries still.