

## II.

### ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

**M**ORAL greatness is the leading feature in the life and career of Bernard of Clairvaux. He was the model monk of the Middle Ages, the most lofty personality of his time, and one of the best men of the Christian centuries. He possessed a lively imagination, a rich culture and a heart glowing with love for God and man. Although not free from what now might be called ecclesiastical rigor, he was probably not equaled by any of his contemporaries in services for the Church and man. His impassioned eloquence has seldom, if ever, been excelled in the annals of the pulpit. "In his countenance," according to the contemporary biographer who knew him well, "there shone forth a pureness not of earth but of heaven, and his eyes had the clearness of an angel's and the mildness of a dove's eyes."\* There is no spotless saint in this world and Bernard was furthest from claiming perfection, but he came as near the mediæval ideal of ascetic holiness as any man of his century.

In the twelfth century there were at least two other ecclesiastics of the first order of genius, Anselm and Innocent III. The former passed away a few years after it opened. Innocent began his papal reign two years before the century went out. Anselm has preëminence as a profound theological thinker and dialectician. Innocent ruled the world, as pope never ruled it before or since. Between the two falls the activity of Bernard, combining some of the qualities of Anselm and Innocent. He is allied to Anselm, whose *Meditations* give him a high place in the annals of devotional literature. And Bernard was also a statesman, although he did not attain the eminence of Innocent and shrank from the participation in public affairs which were so much to the taste of the great pope. Contemporary with himself was Peter Abaelard, whose brilliant mind won for him enviable fame as a teacher and thinker. But he never won the confidence of his own age, and cannot be compared with Bernard in moral dignity.

With almost equal prominence, Bernard figures in the annals of

\* *Vita prima*, Migne's ed. of Bernard's works, Vol. 185, 303.

the papacy, the Crusades, monasticism and mysticism. In the history of mysticism and monasticism, the pulpit and devotional literature, he is easily in the front rank. Twenty years after his death, he was canonized by Alexander III as "shining preëminently in his own person by virtue of sanctity and religion, and in the whole Church by the light of his doctrine and faith."\* Pius VII, in 1830, admitted him to the select company of the *Doctors* of the Church. Luther, who ridiculed the Schoolmen as a body, studied Bernard's works, directed thereto by John of Staupitz, and frequently appealed to his words. And Calvin twice in his *Institutes* quotes him with commendation.

Bernard was descended from a noble Burgundian family, and was born 1090. He was one of seven children, six of whom were sons. His mother, Aletha, like Nonna and Monica in the early Church, was a deeply pious woman. At her death, the abbot of St. Benignus, at Dijon, begged her body for his convent. Carried away for a time with enthusiasm for scholastic learning, the young man was overwhelmed, while on a journey, with religious impressions, and entering a chapel, dedicated himself wholly to God. He entered the convent of Citeaux. Two of his brothers followed him at once into the monastic life and the rest some years later. This was in 1113 that Bernard cast in his lot with the Cistercians, and the event proved to be an epoch in the history of that new community. Bernard devoted himself to the severest asceticism, till he was reduced almost to a shadow and his feet so swollen from standing as almost to refuse to sustain his body. In after years he reproached himself for this intemperate self-mortification which, as he thought, unfitted his body for the proper service of the Lord. His spirit triumphed over physical infirmities. He studied the Scriptures and the Fathers. His writings also betray acquaintance with the classics. He quotes from Ovid, Horace and other poets. The works of nature were not beneath his contemplation but furnished him with lessons as well as did books, and he seems to have approached the modern estimate of nature as an aid to spiritual attainment. "You will find," he wrote, "something greater in the woods than in books. Trees and rocks will teach thee what thou canst not hear from human teachers. And dost thou not think thou canst suck honey from the rocks and oil from the hardest stones?"† It is true that one of his biographers says he traveled the whole day alongside the Lake of Geneva, from Geneva to Lausanne, and was so oblivious to his surroundings as to be obliged to inquire in the evening

\* The document is given in Migne, Vol. 185, 622 sq.

† *Ep.* 106, Migne, Vol. 182, 242.

what they had seen on the journey. We are probably justified in this case in ascribing an ascetic purpose to the monkish writer.

Citeaux was not to be his permanent monastic home, and in 1115, in company with twelve companions, Bernard founded Clairvaux (Clear Valley) in a locality which before had been called Wormwood, and had been the seat of robbers. William of St. Thierry, Bernard's warm friend and biographer, is in doubt whether *vallis absinthialis* came from the amount of wormwood which grew there or from the bitter sufferings sustained by the victims of the robbers. But he does not fail to draw the contrast between the acts of violence for which the place was once notorious and the peace which reigned in it after Bernard and his companions set up their simple house. "Then the hills began to distill sweetness and fields, before sterile, blossomed and became fat under the divine benediction." There is no mediæval description of locality, so far as I know, which suggests so attractive a picture of abode as the descriptions given by visitors on Bernard at Clairvaux. Here is a paragraph from the description of William, abbot of St. Thierry: "I tarried with him a few days, unworthy as I was, and whichever way I turned my eyes, I marvelled and thought I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and also the old pathways of the Egyptian monks, our fathers, marked with the recent footsteps of the men of our time left in them. The golden ages seemed to have returned and revisited the world there at Clairvaux. At the first glance, as you entered, after descending the hill, you could feel that God was in the place; and the silent valley bespoke in the simplicity of its buildings the genuine humility of the poor of Christ dwelling there. The silence of the noon was as the silence of the midnight, broken only by the chants of the choral service and the sound of implements. No one was idle. In the hours not devoted to sleep or prayer, the brethren kept busy with hoe and scythe and axe, tending the wild land and clearing the forest. And although there was such a number in the valley, yet each seemed to be a solitary." The novice, Peter de Roya, the genuineness of whose letter, however, is uncertain, wrote from Clairvaux that "its monks had found a Jacob's ladder. Their song seemed to be little less than angelic and much more than human. It seems to me that I am hardly looking on men when I see them in the gardens with hoe, in the field with forks, rakes and sickles, in the woods with axe, and clad in disordered garments, but that I am looking on a race of fools, without speech and sense, the reproach of mankind. However my reason assures me that their life is with Christ in the heavens."

The monastic ideals of the Middle Ages were wrong. Perhaps it would be better to say the monastic methods were wrong. They involved permanent errors, but we must remember that the best men of the Middle Ages came from the monastery. Anselm, after his elevation to the See of Canterbury, longed to get back to the seclusion of Bec. Otto of Freising was in line with the bishops as a body when he passed upon the monkish life what seems to us to be the most exaggerated eulogy and says, "the monks, like angels, spent their lives in heavenly purity and holiness."\* Did not emperors and kings put on the habit of one of the orders when they were dying? Even Frederick II, that great antagonist of the papacy, is said to have died clad in the dress of the Cistercians. If we choose to transfer ourselves back into mediæval times, we should find that then the highest ideal of life in this world was the monastic. There is scarcely a letter of Anselm's extant in which he does not recommend it. Bernard pronounced a renunciation of the vow a returning to the company of the lost and to the realm of blackness and death.† Did he not refuse to see his sister Humblina who was knocking at the convent door? He had insisted upon her taking the veil, and now he refused to see her until she finally sent up the pathetic appeal that she too had a soul for which Christ died. The brother again called upon her to renounce the world and lay aside the luxuries of dress and ornament. What were her household, husband and children compared to the holy life of the convent! Much as our sense of the sacred is shocked by such advice, it is proof of Bernard's reputation for godliness that the sister accepted his counsel and gave herself up to ascetic exercises and in two years, with the consent of her husband, retired to a convent, where she spent the remainder of her days: I do not know that from our standpoint this was quite as reprehensible as the conduct of Francis d'Assisi, who went to the length of stealing from his father to help the priest of St. Damian, and who assisted St. Clara to steal away from her parents' home and against their will take the veil. The monastic ideal was wrong, but in Bernard's day it ruled the religious mind. And to him the convent, with its vigils and mortifications, was only a means to develop the two cardinal virtues of love and humility.‡

Under Bernard, Clairvaux quickly gained a wide fame as one of the best regulated of the houses following the Benedictine rule. Princes, popes and ecclesiastics from far and near visited

\* In his *Chronicle*, VII, 35.

† *Ep.* 112, Migne, Vol. 182, 255.

‡ *Ep.* 142, Migne, Vol. 182, 297.

him. There he preached and wrote letters and treatises. From there he went forth on errands of high import to his age. At the time of his death the convent numbered one hundred and sixty offshoots.

His attack upon the conventual establishment of Clugny was born of mistaken zeal and was not to Bernard's credit. Peter the Venerable, one of the attractive religious characters of his time, was abbot of Clugny at the time, and Bernard's friend. Clugny had stood for monastic reform in Europe, but it had grown rich and with riches came modifications of its ascetic rules. Bernard compared the simple life at Citeaux with the laxity and extravagance prevailing at the older house. Not that the brethren of Citeaux had anything to boast of, "with their bellies full of beans and their minds of pride," but the Clugniacs were guilty of self-indulgence in diet, small talk and jocularities. At meals dish was added to dish and eggs were served in many forms and more than one kind of wine was drunk at a sitting. The monks preferred to look on marble rather than to read the Scriptures. Candelabra and altar cloths were elaborate. Bernard had seen one of their number followed by a retinue of sixty horsemen, and having none of the appearance of a pastor of souls. He charged them with taking gifts of castles and villas. And so the complaints go on. Robert, a young kinsman of Bernard, had transferred his allegiance from Citeaux to Clugny, the transition from one convent to another being not a rare thing. Pontius, the abbot of Clugny at the time, refused to give Robert up. Peter the Venerable, on becoming abbot, did so, but the remembrance of the thing, it is suggested, burned in Bernard's memory. However that may be, Peter, in his reply, has no words of recrimination. He tries to explain, as when he declares the castles and villas were doing better service in the hands of the monks than they would do in the hands of rude barons. But he makes no countercharge. He has no lance-point to thrust at Bernard. On the contrary, he called him the shining pillar of the Church. A modification of the rule of St. Benedict, when it was prompted by love, he pronounced proper. He and Bernard, he wrote, belonged to one Master, were soldiers of one King, confessors of one faith. As different paths led to the same land, so different customs and costumes, with one inspiring love, led to the same Jerusalem above the mother of us all. Clugniacs and Cistercians should admonish one another if they discerned errors, for they were heirs of one inheritance and following one command. Let both Bernard and himself remember the words of Augustine—" *habe charitatem et fac quicquid vis*"—"have love and do what you will." What

could be more admirable? Where shall we go for a finer example of Christian polemics?

Over another question these two men met, and there Bernard took a position far above Peter's and showed himself to be far in advance of his age. It was the treatment of the Jews. Innocent III, in his letters to Alfonzo of Castile, 1205, and the Count of Nevers, affirmed that God intended the Jews should be kept like Cain, the murderer of his brother, to wander about on the earth, designed by their guilt for slavery till the time had come in the last days for their conversion. But those views had been affirmed by theologians before Innocent's day. Peter the Venerable presented the case in the same aspects, and launched a fearful denunciation against the children of Abraham, whom the canon law and councils included in one and the same canon with the Saracens. Writing to the king of France, Louis VII, he said: "What would it profit to fight against enemies of the cross in remote lands, while the wicked Jews who blaspheme Christ and who are much worse than the Saracens go free and unpunished? Much more are the Jews to be hated and execrated than the Saracens, for the latter accept the birth from the Virgin, but the Jews deny it and blaspheme all the Christian mysteries. God does not want them to be exterminated, but intends to keep them like the fratricide Cain, for still more severe torment and disgrace. So the most just severity of God has dealt with the Jews from the time of Christ's passion, and so it will deal with them to the end of the world, for they are accursed and deserve to be."\* He counseled that they be spoiled of their ill-gotten gains and the sums be used to resist and overcome the Saracens. The Crusaders were only too quick to act upon this principle in England and on the Continent, on the eve of the first three Crusades. Little would we have expected such sentiments from Peter the Venerable.

Of a very different spirit was Bernard. When the preparations were being made for the second Crusade, and the monk Radulf was inflaming the people along the Rhine into a fever of passion against the Jews, the abbot of Clairvaux set himself with all his might against "the demagogue," as Neander calls him, and the massacres which followed his harangue. Otto of Freising reports that "very many were killed at Mainz, Worms, Spires and other cities." Bernard sent messages to different communities condemning the fiery monk. To the Archbishop of Mainz he wrote, reminding him that the Lord is gracious toward him who returns good for evil. Radulf's doctrine was like that of his master the devil, who had been a murderer from the beginning. "Does not

\* *Sic de damnatis damnandisque Judæis, Ep. IV, 36, Migne, Vol. 189, 365-367.*

the Church," he exclaimed, "triumph more fully over the Jews by convincing and converting them from day to day than if she once for all should slay them with the edge of the sword?" Bernard met Radulf face to face, but it required all the reputation he had won for sanctity to allay the turbulence at Mainz. In his humane and Christian sentiments, Bernard was far in advance of his time. It is no wonder that the eminent Jewish historian, Graetz, should call him "a truly holy man, a man of apostolic simplicity of heart and overwhelming eloquence."\* In England Grosseteste and his predecessor in the see of Lincoln, Hugh, opposed the bloody violence of the populace against the Jews, but neither of them went as far as Bernard in offering them the protection of justice and Christian charity.

Among the advocates of the Crusades, Bernard takes high rank. They had his full support. As early as 1128 he wrote his famous tract commending the new Order of the Knights of the Temple, "the new soldiery," as he called them, and contributed very largely to their rapid growth in fame and wealth. In regard to the destruction of the Saracens in war, he says: "Christ's soldiers may securely kill, can more securely die. When he dies, it is to his own profit. When he kills, it is to the profit of Christ. When he kills a malefactor, he is not the slayer of men but of evil, and an avenger of Christ." But the slaying of the pagans is only a last measure to prevent the great evil of the wicked ruling over the lot of the righteous. "Not that they should be slain, if they could by any other means be prevented from molesting and lording it over the faithful." Considering the age in which Bernard lived, it would be no more just to condemn him for such sentiments, especially as he had parts of the Old Testament behind him, than it would be to condemn the Puritans because, in 1629, the vessels coming to Salem carried as part of their freight "rundlets of Spanish wine, casks of Malaga and Canary and military accoutrements." It was the second Crusade with which Bernard's name became indissolubly connected. When Edessa, that outer citadel of the Crusaders' possessions in Syria, fell in 1145, the news produced dismay in Europe. It was felt the loss must be retrieved at all hazards. The loss proved to be the beginning of that series of disasters which ended in 1292 with the loss of St. Jean d'Acre, the last spot of Crusading territory beyond the Mediterranean. Bernard became the flaming preacher of the second Crusade, and regarded his success in inducing the Emperor Konrad to take the cross the chief of his miracles. The disastrous failure of the expedition was enough to

\* *Geschichte der Juden*, VI, 148, 151.

overwhelm its prophet and preacher with obloquy. Bernard has given us a glimpse into the keen pangs he felt over the sharp detractions that unfortunate undertaking called forth against himself. In his *de consideratione* he pointed to the sins of the Crusaders as the cause of the disaster, and represents God as listening patiently to the sacrilegious charges of the complainants, as He had once listened to the Egyptians, who said "for evil did he bring them forth to slay them in the mountains." He himself was like Moses, who led the people toward the Holy Land and not into it. The Hebrews were stiffnecked. Were not the Crusaders stiffnecked also and unbelieving, who in their hearts looked back and hankered after Europe? Is it any wonder that those who were equally guilty should suffer a like punishment with the Israelites? To the taunt that he had falsely represented himself as having delivered a message from God in preaching the Crusade, he declared the testimony of his conscience was his best reply. Eugenius, too, could answer that taunt by what he had seen and heard. But after all said, it was a great honor to have the same lot with Christ and suffer being unjustly condemned.

Bernard's reputation was coëxtensive with Europe long before the second Crusade. He had done more than any other single individual to secure the general recognition of Innocent II as the rightful pope over his rival, Anacletus II. He met the king of France at Etampes and induced him to pronounce in favor of Innocent. Bent on the same mission, he had interviews with the king of England at Chartres, and the German emperor at Liège. He entertained Innocent at Clairvaux, and accompanied him to Italy. It was on this journey, at Milan, that so profound were the impressions of his personality and miracles that the people fell at his feet and would fain have compelled him to ascend the chair of St. Ambrose. On his third journey to Rome, in 1138, he witnessed the termination of the papal schism. In a famous debate with Peter of Pisa, the representative of Anacletus, he used with skill the figure of the ark for the Church, in which Innocent, all the religious orders and all Europe were found except Anacletus and Roger of Sicily and Peter of Pisa, his two supporters. These three had an ark of their own making, and was it not preposterous to suppose they of all mankind were to be saved and they alone?

But it was in the reign of Eugenius III that Bernard enjoyed his greatest influence in papal affairs. Eugenius had been an inmate of Clairvaux and one of Bernard's special wards. The tract *de consideratione*, which at this pope's request Bernard prepared on the papal office and functions, is unique in literature, and,

upon the whole, one of the most interesting treatises of the Middle Ages. Vacandard calls it "an examination, as it were, of the pope's conscience."\* Here Bernard exhorts his spiritual son, whom he must address as "most holy father," and pours out his concern for the welfare of Eugenius' soul and the welfare of the Church under his administration. At the first he sets forth the distractions of the papal court, its endless din of business and legal arbitrament, and calls upon Eugenius to remember that prayer, meditation and the edification of the Church are the important matters for him to devote himself to. Was not Gregory the Great engaged in writing upon Ezekiel at the very moment that Rome was exposed to siege from the barbarians? The supreme pontiff is then called upon to reflect in four directions—upon himself, upon that which is beneath him, upon that which is round about him and upon that which is above him. The things which are beneath the pope are the Church and all men to whom the Gospel must be preached. The things around about him are the cardinals and the entire papal household. The Romans are a bad set, Bernard says, flattering the pontiff for what they can make out of his administration. A man who strives after godliness they look upon as a hypocrite. Under the fourth head, the things above the pope, the author treats the doctrines of God, the incarnation, the two natures of Christ and the doctrine of the angels.

The moral force betrayed on every page of the treatise, which fills eighty compact columns of Migne's edition, gives it a high place. Its chief historical importance lies in its theory of the papacy. Ultramontane and Gallican alike claim it. The late Dr. Reinkens, the esteemed first bishop of the Old Catholics, issued a German translation of the *de consideratione* with copious notes, which interpret Bernard's utterances in favor of the episcopal theory as opposed to the papal autocracy. The notes were written under the feeling engendered by the Vatican Council, 1870, which promulgated the dogma of papal infallibility and sent off Döllinger and the other dissenting Old Catholics. Nowhere in a careful statement does Bernard define what the papacy is. In spite of Bishop Reinkens, the treatise easily makes the impression that Bernard's declarations, taken as a whole, justify the papacy in its most exalted claims of authority. The excerpts which Mirbt† gives in his recent edition of documents bearing on the history of the papacy make for this view. The supreme pontiff, Bernard says, meditating upon himself, should always be mindful that he

\* *Vie de St. Bernard*, II, 454.

† Carl Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papstthums*, second edition, 1901.

is greatest only as he chooses to be as a servant. He is a brother of all-loving God, a pattern of righteousness, a defender of the truth, the advocate of the poor, the shelter of the oppressed. But he is also heir of the apostles, the prince of bishops. He is in the line of the primacy of Abel, Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses, Aaron, Samuel and Peter. To him belong the keys. Others are entrusted with single flocks; he is pastor of all the sheep and the pastor of pastors. Even bishops he may exclude from the kingdom and depose. And yet he says, the pope is one of the bishops, not their lord. He is the priest of the Highest, the vicar of Christ, the anointed of the Lord, the God of Pharaoh. Who neglects to hearken unto him may well dread, for he neglects as one who hears the voice of God. The expression "God of Pharaoh" refers to the pope's authority over disobedient princes. In a note upon this passage Bishop Reinkens admits that the ideal presented would demand "qualities well-nigh divine." Bernard distinctly grants the two swords to the pope, who himself draws the spiritual sword and by his wink commands the worldly sword to be unsheathed. No dissent is expressed from the theory of Gregory VII and the bull, *Unam sanctam*, issued a century and a half later by Boniface VIII in his controversy with Philip the Fair. It is true that Bernard says that Eugenius, even after he had become pope, remained a man, vile as the vilest ashes. Change of position effected no change of person. Even David, the king, became a fool. It is true he lays stress upon Peter's apostolic simplicity and poverty. Peter wore no gems and was attended by no bodyguard. Such circumstance he did not regard as necessary to his fulfilling the command to feed Christ's sheep. And in adopting these adornments of outward circumstance "the popes had followed Constantine, not the apostle." Commenting on these statements, Bishop Reinkens affirms that the conception of the worldly power of the pope stands in glaring contrast to the teaching of the curia and many bishops regarding the "Cesaro-pope." But the purpose of the passage and others like it does not seem to be to combat the imperial function of the papacy over the episcopate and temporal sovereigns, but to guard it against abandoning its spiritual obligations.

The predominant feeling of the age was in favor of the assumption of Gregory VII, which was soon to be fought out again between Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa. The decision which Frederick secured at Roncaglia from the jurists of Bologna, that the emperor held his authority by independent divine right, was a decision of an unofficial body of canonists, and the emperor was obliged at last to submit to the pope. The painters of the

doge's palace knew what they were about when they represented Alexander with his foot on Barbarossa's prostrate form. The scene of Barbarossa's submission at Venice did not include that detail. But the artist in his realistic representation embodied the principle on which Alexander and the hierarchy insisted. It was Bernard's concern in the *de consideratione* to exhort Eugenius to administer his office in the spirit of righteousness and humility, conscious of the exalted function of his office and yet considerate of the just rights of all the bishops, and mindful that as a man, in his individual capacity, he needed the same grace which all Christian people need. Like Nathan and the prophets reminding kings of the divine commands, so Bernard lifted up his voice in the way of exhortation for the promotion of all godly living and administration on the part of the supreme officer of mediæval Christendom.

As a mystical theologian, Bernard likewise occupies a place of assured preëminence. Ritschl and Harnack refuse to give a distinct place to mystic theology in Protestantism. The former called it dilettantism and Harnack\* says a mystic who does not become a Roman Catholic is a dilettante. We still hold on to the distinction as indicating a type of theology which lays stress upon the immediate communion of the soul with God, as opposed to a severely intellectual treatment of religion. Some men reach God predominantly through the heart, others through the head. It was because of the mystical element in Bernard that Neander felt so closely in sympathy with him, and it was Neander, the greatest of Bernard's interpreters to the last century, who had for his motto, "It is the heart that makes the theologian"—*pectus facit theologum*.† Anselm combined with the philosophical or scholastic element in his theology the mystical element. It appears in the prayers with which he opens his arguments for the existence of God and in the pious exclamations repeatedly interjected into his theological discussions, as also in the extended devotional matter given in his *Meditations*. Augustine also combined both elements. With Bernard the mystical was the predominant element. He was not a dialectical theologian. He does not belong to the list of the schoolmen. He was a mystic, and his writings are practical, not theoretical; devotional, not metaphysical; homiletic, not argumentative. The theology of Bernard sought by an unquestioning faith to rise to an immediate communion of the soul with God.

\* *Dogmengeschichte*, II, 381; Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, II, 12.

† The Germans, in disparaging the mystical element, often speak of the *Pektoraltheologie*—"The cardiac theology."

In this tendency Clairvaux was allied with the contemporary Paris school of St. Victor. Walter of St. Victor, distinctly opposing scholasticism, called Peter the Lombard, Abaelard, and Gilbert and Peter of Poitiers the four labyrinths of France, and protested that under the inspiration of Aristotle they had treated the ineffable mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation with scholastic levity. He declared it would have been far more sensible for him to have asked why the Lombard did not appear on earth as an ass than to ask, as the great Summist did, whether God could have become incarnate in female form. With Hugo of St. Victor contemplation is the highest attainment of the Christian soul. His favorite passage is, "The pure in heart shall see God." Bernard says: "God is known so far as He is loved." With him the centre of theology is love, and mysticism is the spontaneous theology of the soul. With the Victorines, Hugo and Richard, it is brought within the limits of exact definition and becomes a scientific system. In Bernard it bursts forth in song. In the monks of St. Victor the warm feeling of the soul is in danger of being chilled by the dialectic statement.

In contrast to the mysticism of Meister Eckart, who died 1327, the theology of Bernard is simple devotion to the person of Christ. Eckart's statements are forever exposing him to the charge of pantheism, though he was no pantheist. Bernard is always looking at the cross. Eckart seeks the loss of self in the ocean of the God's fullness. That "holy teacher," as Tauler and Suso used to call him, defined with metaphysical refinement the pure being of God. Bernard never got beyond the glory of God as it shines in the person of Christ. With him union with God was not reached by a "confusion of natures, but by a concurrence of will."\*

Bernard's mystical works are the *Degrees of Humility and Pride*, his treatise on *Loving God*, his sermon on *Conversion* addressed to the clergy and his *Sermons on the Canticles*. He is thoroughly familiar with the Scriptures and almost every other sentence in the *Sermons on the Canticles* is a Scripture text. Prayer and sanctification and not disputation and intellectual analysis are the ways to a knowledge of God. The controlling thought in his treatise on *Loving God* is that God will be known in the measure in which He is loved. Writing to Chancellor Haimerich, who wished to know how God is to be known, he says: "The exciting cause of love to God is God Himself." The gifts of nature are adapted to awaken love. The gifts of the mind are still more

\* *Unitas, quam facit non confusio naturarum, sed voluntatum consensio: Serm. on Cant., LXXI, 7, Migne, 183, 1124.*

adapted to that end. But the gifts involved in the revelation of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are infinitely more adapted to awaken love, for God is infinite, measureless.

In the eighty-six homilies on the Song of Solomon, Bernard revels in the tropical imagery of this favorite book of the Middle Ages. Everything is spiritualized. The very words are exuberant allegories. And yet there is not a single low or sensual suggestion in Bernard's treatment. The fancies are extravagant, but always chaste. As for historical and critical comment, he rejects all suggestion of it as unworthy of Holy Scripture and worthy of the Jews. The love of the Shunnamite and her spouse is a figure of Christ and His love for the Church. The book is an epithalamian song which no one can hear who does not love, for the language of love is a barbarous tongue to him who does not love, as Greek is to the barbarian. Christ is the pure lily of the valley, whose perfume permeates faith and whose fairness illuminates the intellect. As the yellow pollen shines through the white petals, even so the gold of His divinity shines through His humanity. Commenting on Cant. I, 6, Bernard says: "I need not ask where makest thou thy flock to rest at noon, when I see my Saviour on the cross. The name of Jesus is like oil which enlightens, nourishes, soothes. It is light, food and medicine. It restores the tried energies, fortifies the virtues, develops good habits and warms chaste affections. Dry is all the food if it is not anointed with this oil, insipid if it is not seasoned with this salt. Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and in the heart joy." Thus he goes on with affluence of figure and language, revolving the same theme over and over, and yet ever fresh and stimulating. The sum of the theology of these famous homilies is expressed in the words, "This is my philosophy, to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified."\* Such expressions as those given above, with which the homilies abound, make it very easy to understand how Bernard was the author of the hymns ascribed to him—

Jesus, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see  
And in thy bosom rest.

As the mystical and scholastic elements, which blended in Anselm, separated in Bernard, so also they parted in Bernard's brilliant contemporary, Abaelard. The difference was this: The mystical element went to the monk of Clairvaux; the scholastic

\* *Serm.*, XLIII, 4, Migne, 183, 995.

element to the lecturer of Ste. Genevieve. The practical instinct excluded the scholastic element from Bernard; worldly ambition excluded the mystical element from Abaelard. These two men met face to face, and no meeting of two ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages, so far as I now recall, could have been more suggestive and full of promise for interesting results. For Europe had no living schoolman so keen and famous as Abaelard and no religious personality so imposing as Bernard, and no two men before the public whose fundamental religious instincts and methods were so antagonistic. The famous meeting at Sens, when Abaelard was arraigned for doctrinal errors by Bernard, has often been interpreted greatly to the disparagement of the abbot of Clairvaux, and treated in a way to intensify the sympathy felt for Abaelard. It cannot be regarded as an historical misfortune that these two men met on the open field of controversy and on the floor of ecclesiastical synods. History is most true to herself when she represents men just as they were. She is a poor teacher when she does not take opportunity to reveal their infirmities as well as their virtues.

Abaelard was perhaps endowed as no other man in the Middle Ages with the qualities of an inspiring teacher. But the content of his teaching aroused suspicion. He was a free-lance. He delighted in showing his superiority to other teachers, and one cannot help but feel, in reading his autobiographical work, the *History of My Calamities*, that he is governed more by conceit than by love of the truth. He and Bernard met for the first time at the instance of Innocent II, 1131. Abaelard's first letter to Bernard burned with self-conceit. On a visit to the Paraclete, Bernard had criticised the use of the expression "supersubstantial bread." Abaelard heard of the criticism from Heloise, and was at once ready to break a lance. He wrote to Bernard, pointing out how the version of St. Matthew was to be preferred, and then became sarcastic over certain practices at Clairvaux. It was some years after this that William of St. Thierry brought to Bernard's attention thirteen errors in Abaelard's theology on the Trinity and the person and redemptive work of Christ, and called upon him to proceed against the offender. Bernard visited Abaelard at Paris and sought to secure from him a promise to retract his errors. Abaelard declined, or, to follow other authorities, made a promise and did not keep it. The difference then came to open conflict. It was, of course, to be expected that Abaelard with his fiery temper would resent the interference of another. He requested the Archbishop of Sens for permission to meet Bernard on a festival occasion, which the archbishop had

appointed for the display of relics, and to argue the case. The request amounted to a challenge. The Synod met 1141. Louis VII was present, and probably also Arnold of Brescia, whom Bernard regarded as the legitimate fruit of Abaelard's teaching.

Bernard had been indefatigable in preparing the way for a decision against Abaelard. He summoned the bishops as friends of Christ, whose bride was calling out of the thicket of heresies. He wrote to the cardinals and Innocent II, characterizing Abaelard as a ravenous lion, one of those terms which had been inherited from the early Church as proper designations of heretics. He was like another Goliath crying out defiance against the hosts of Israel, and Arnold of Brescia was standing at his side as his armor-bearer. Before such an antagonist as Abaelard he declared he felt himself like a young stripling, unskilled as he was in dialectics. Nevertheless, he presented the case at the public session. It seems that, before the open meeting of the synod, Bernard met the bishops, presented the case and practically secured their assent to condemnation. This appears from the account given by Abaelard's pupil, Berengar, and from a statement of John of Salisbury in his *Historia Pontificalis*, to the effect that when Gilbert of Poitiers was to be tried, 1148, Bernard attempted to secure a judgment against him in advance of the public sitting, as he had done in the case of Abaelard. Berengar's account of the private sitting represents the discussion as taking place amidst the drinking of wine, but he writes as an extreme partisan, and his shameless charges against Bernard's character are contradicted by every other witness. He had learned well in the school of irreverence from his master.\* Deutsch, in his thorough investigation, *Abaelard's Verurtheilung in Sens*, has apparently established beyond question the proceedings of this private sitting. Even Vacandard accepts the evidence, but exonerates Bernard from all guilt. Such private conferences were usual. In his notes to Neander's *Life of Bernard*, Deutsch agrees to the propriety of such conferences, but finds it difficult to excuse Bernard, because in this case he was the accuser and as accuser he appeared among the bishops. The method of trial, it must be remembered, on the Continent even before the time of Innocent III, was largely the inquisitorial, and while, from the standpoint of fair play, an offense seems to have been committed, yet it must not be forgotten that error of doctrine was a new thing in western Europe, and the appearance of heresy filled the minds of churchmen with great alarm. There is no sufficient reason to believe that Bernard

\* In the second edition of Hefele's *Hist. of the Councils* is a good characterization of Berengar, Vol. V, 476, sqq.

was actuated by feelings of personal rivalry or animosity, but, on the contrary, that he was moved by a high purpose to conserve the interests of Christendom.

The next day Abaelard appeared before the assembled prelates and other ecclesiastics. Perhaps he felt the case was determined against him beyond the power of change. Perhaps he feared an uprising of the populace, as Otto of Freising says, and Otto had no reason for making anything but a fair statement. It may be possible, as Gaufrid, Bernard's friend and biographer, says, that Abaelard lost his head after Bernard had made his statement. Poole\* represents this view, and says that Abaelard was the creature of impulse and his self-confidence swiftly deserted him. However this may be, Abaelard, without attempting to make a defense, appealed his case to Rome. From that moment he was safe until the case had received papal decision. Abaelard had been of service to Innocent, and some of the cardinals were his pupils. He started for Rome, but before he got well on his journey the news came that the decision had gone against him, and in accordance with the recommendation of the synod. Bernard, too, had followed up the case with communications to the pope and cardinals. His letter to Innocent occupies forty columns of Migne's edition. He declared that Abaelard and Arnold were in collusion to perpetrate on the churches of Europe the errors of Arius, Pelagius and Nestorius. He called upon one of the cardinals to defend the womb which had born him and the paps which he had sucked. The zeal of these letters is intemperate and the references to Abaelard's sinuosity are such as we would not tolerate to-day in fair controversy. The only word Abaelard did not know was the word *nescio*, "I do not know." He pretended by reason to understand all truth.

Innocent condemned fourteen articles from Abaelard's writings, and bade him keep silence. It was a death-blow to the unfortunate teacher whose talents had been the talk of Europe. His last hope was gone. Peter the Venerable received him to the shelter of Clugny. He arranged a meeting between the broken man and Bernard. And when Abaelard's earthly days were over, he wrote to Heloise of his penitent bearing and his attention to the exercises of spiritual devotion. And then, in the finest spirit of chivalry, the good abbot sent all that remained of the schoolman to the woman who remained true to him through all his cold indifference to her and all the hard treatment of the world to him.

The judgment upon Bernard for his arraignment of Abaelard will differ according to the theological standpoint of the student,

\* Lane-Poole, *Illustrations of the Hist. of Med. Thought*, p. 165.

and not a little according to our readiness to put ourselves back into the Middle Ages, and to breathe its atmosphere. Hausrath, in his vigorous essays, represents Bernard as the shrewd, politic abbot of Clairvaux, skilled in the arts of the world and bent upon the condemnation of Abaelard.\* McCabe, in his recent *Life of Abaelard*, also passes a severe judgment. But the other side of the question has strong advocates. Morison, in his *Life of St. Bernard*, speaks of the horror of great darkness which fell upon Bernard when he seemed to see a new era with its dangers and doctrinal perversions. Deutsch, while he cannot speak him free from all personal hostility to Abaelard, yet does not hesitate to pronounce Bernard a man of the highest religious character. Abaelard has been chosen as an apostle of religious honesty and independent thought. But did he not retract again and again? What principles of honor moved him in his relations to Heloise after she had become a mother? No one can read a half-dozen paragraphs of his *History of My Calamities*, and then turn to Bernard's treatise on *Loving God*, without discerning the radical difference between the two men. Abaelard has not a word of repentance, not a regret to offer, for anything he had done. He was the child of misfortune, and he adds recrimination to recrimination. For his teachers he has no good word. Of Anselm of Laon, whose pupil he was, he said that his teaching was of that sort that if any one went to him in uncertainty he returned more uncertain still. He kindled a fire, not to give light, but to fill the house with smoke. As for William of Champeaux, he seems to gloat over having defeated him in the lecture chair and won from him his hearers. Of a restless disposition, he attracted by the brilliance and flash of his words, but did not draw men by the qualities of his heart.

Bernard's sermons are not pieces of logical acumen nor do they give keen analyses of the conscience, but they appeal to the highest motives of the religious nature. Our own brilliant pulpit orator, Richard S. Storrs, said :† " The constant shadow of things eternal is over all his sermons." Bernard's friend and biographer spoke of his discourses as being congruous to the conditions of his hearers. To the rustic people he preached as though he had been brought up in the country, and to all other classes as though he were most carefully studying their occupations. To the erudite he was scholarly, to the plain he was simple. He adapted himself to all, wishing to bring to all the light of Christ. Luther, in his *Table Talk*, pronounced Bernard " superior in his sermons to

\* A. Hausrath, *Peter Abaelard*, etc., Leip., 1893, p. 248 seq.

† *Life of St. Bernard*, p. 333.

all the doctors, even to Augustine, because he preaches Christ most excellently.”

The miraculous power of Bernard is so well attested by contemporary accounts that it is difficult to deny it, except on the presumption that all miracles outside of the Scripture are to be discarded as fancies of the imagination. Miracles were frequent in the Middle Ages. The biographer of Boniface, the apostle of Germany, finds it necessary to apologize for not having any miracles to relate of him. But the miracles of St. Bernard are attested as no other mediæval works of power are. The cases given are very numerous. They occurred on Bernard's journeys in Toulouse, and nearer home in France, in Milan and along the Rhine from Basel northward. His friends, William of Thierry, Gaufrid and other contemporaries, relate them in detail. His brothers, the monks Gerard and Guido, agree that he had more than human power. Walter Mapes, the Englishman, not, however, free from credulity, who flourished in the latter years of Bernard's life and later, speaks in the same breath with great admiration of his miracles and his eloquence.\* But what is, to say the least, equally important, Bernard himself makes reference to them, and marveled at his miraculous power. Miracles, he said, had been wrought of old by saintly men, and also by deceivers, but he was conscious neither of saintliness nor of fraud. In a letter to the Toulousans, after his visit in their city, he reminded them that the truth had been made manifest in their midst through him, not only in speech but in power. And in writing about the failure of the second Crusade, he appealed to the signs which had accompanied his preaching of that expedition, and which his own shrinking reverence† forbade him to describe. The word he uses is *signa*, the common mediæval term for miracles, and the most obvious interpretation of Bernard's words is that he was alluding to the miracles along the Rhine which we have related in the writings of others. Abaelard and his pupil, Berengar, were exceptions to their age in expressing doubts about the genuineness of contemporary miracles, but they do not charge Bernard by name with being self-deceived or deceiving others. The testimony is certainly remarkable. Morison, a writer of little enthusiasm, no credulity and a large amount of cool, critical common sense, says that “Bernard's miracles are neither to be accepted with credulity nor denied with fury.” Neander recognizes the superior excellence of the testimony, refuses to deny their genuineness, and seeks to explain them

\* Wright's edition, I, 24, p. 40.

† *Verecundia*. *De consideratione*, Migne, Vol. 185, 744.

by the conditions of the age and the imposing personality of Bernard. Were it not for the precedent strong presumption against miracles, there are few men whom they would befit so well as Bernard. If the testimony which ascribes miraculous power to Francis d'Assisi is examined, it is found how mean it is compared with the testimony for Bernard's miracles. It was given, for the most part, a number of years after Francis' death; it emphasizes the element of portent and prodigy, an element which is represented in small measure in Bernard's miracles, if it can be said to be represented at all. A legend had grown up around the career of Francis, but in the case of Bernard there are no signs, leaving the question of miracles aside, of anything of that kind.

It is pleasant, in bringing to an end a sketch of this eminent man, to conclude with a further reference to his religious character. He may not have been free from the spirit of rivalry when he made his criticisms upon Clugny. He may not have exhibited all the forbearance in his treatment of Abaelard which the law of the Gospel inculcates, but these things being said, the testimonies of his exalted moral eminence are too weighty to be set aside. Bernard's own writings give the final and abundant proof of his ethical quality.

William of St. Thierry, himself no mean theological writer, retired from his first visit to Clairvaux, feeling that in visiting Bernard's cell he had been at the very altar of God. Joachim of Floris, the monastic prophet of Calabria, praised him in enthusiastic language. The impression upon Hildegard, the prophetess of the Rhine, was the same. In his own memoir of St. Malachy, Bernard put, as has been said, "an image of his own beautiful and ardent soul." No one but a deeply religious character could have written such a life. Malachy, the Irish archbishop, visited Clairvaux twice. Interrupted on a journey to Rome, he stopped the second time at the convent and spent there the last days of his life. "Though he came from the West, he was truly the dayspring on high to us," says Bernard. "With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs we followed our friend on his heavenward journey. He was taken by angels out of our hands. Truly he fell asleep. All eyes were fixed upon him, yet none could say when the spirit took its flight. When he was dead we thought him to be alive; while yet alive we thought him to be dead. The same brightness and serenity were ever visible. Sorrow was changed into joy, faith had triumphed. He has entered into the joy of the Lord, and who am I to make lamentation over him? We pray, O Lord, that he who was our guest may be our leader, that we may reign with Thee and him forever more. Amen."

His sense of personal unworthiness was a controlling element in his religious experience. He relied with confident trust upon the divine grace. In one of his very last letters he begged his friend the abbot of Bonneval to be solicitous in prayer to the Saviour of sinners in his behalf. His last days were not without sorrow. His trusted secretary was found to have betrayed his confidence. And so he passed away in 1153. Deutsch, perhaps the chief living authority on Bernard, says: "Religious warmth (*Genialität*) is the chief thing in his character and among his gifts." Harnack pays this tribute to him, that "he was the religious genius of the twelfth century, the leader of his age in religion."\* "Bernard," said Luther, and he was not easily deceived by monkish pretension, "Bernard loved Jesus as much as any one can."† The encomium of the old biographer Alanus is high praise, but probably no man since the apostles has deserved it more: "The majesty of his name was surpassed by his lowliness of heart"‡—

*vincebat tamen sublimitatem nominis humilitas cordis.*

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\* *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 301.

† Bindseil, *Colloquia*, III, 152.

‡ *Vita secundo*, Migne, 185, 498.