ST. BERNARD

THE

MASTER MAGNET

·BY·A·TRAPPIST·

SAINT BERNARD

THE

MASTER-MAGNET

OF EUROPE

IN THE

Twelfth Century

✠

BY

A TRAPPIST

NIHIL OBSTAT:

Fr. M. Alberic Wulf, O.C.S.O.
Fr. M. Maurice Malloy, O.C.S.O.

IMPRIMI POTEST:

✠ Fredericus M. Dunne, O.C.S.O.
Abbas, B. M. de Gethsemani

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ Joannes A. Floersh, D.D.
Archiepiscopus Ludovicopolitanus

•

Made and printed in U.S.A.

✠

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

FREDERIC M. DUNNE, O.C.S.O.

ABBOT

OF

OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI

✠

FOREWORD

"A magnet," says Webster, "is a loadstone: hence something which attracts. Any body having the property of attracting iron." Spill some iron filings on a sheet of paper and approach a small magnet to them. As soon as the magnet gets within range the filings seem to quiver, to vibrate, and then yield to the attractive force. That is love, which we may define as a free surrender of the will to the attractiveness exercised on it by some good or goodness perceived to be present in persons or things. Or, in other words, it is a yielding to a charm that radiates from another being and then a movement to seek union with what enshrines that charm. And why this surrender? Because the will perceives the person or thing as a good, as something which completes and perfects its own being. There is, then, an intimate relationship between good and love, for we can love only that which attracts, and it is good alone, real or apparent, which attracts.

To concretize and approach our subject — a leader is a magnetic good, and Saint Bernard was such a leader. A charm radiated from the monk which caused women to hide their husbands and mothers their sons lest he draw them in his wake to the cloister or inspire them to take up the cross against the infidel. In this giant of the Twelfth Century men recognized an ideal, they saw a good — an irresistible good — which drew them to him. They were helpless once they fell under the charm of his at the same time dominating and powerful though gently persuasive personality. He had the dash of the paladin which drew the knight and sol-

dier, the courtly graciousness which won the favor of princes. His heart softened at the sight of misery and sufferings. Tears called forth all the tenderness he had inherited from his lovely mother Aleth, while at the same time his native gallantry and Burgundian fierceness would thunder at the abuses creeping up in the ranks of the clergy or the political world. He was all to all — each one saw in him something he wanted, something he needed. Bernard was truly a magnet drawing all to himself — one could not help following such a leader.

✠

I. LIFE IN THE WORLD

Birth and Childhood

A little more than a mile to the northwest of Dijon, the ancient capital of Burgundy, in the picturesque town of Fontaines, was born the subject of this booklet, St. Bernard. Concerning the year of his birth authors do not agree. Some place it in 1090, and this seems more probable, whilst others place it in 1091. They are a unit, however, as regards the year of his death, August 20, 1153. Thus within the period of sixty-two or sixty-three years the life of the most prominent man, in fact the leader, of the Twelfth Century, ran its course. The purpose of this booklet is to sketch the highlights of his career.

Sanctity is not found in the cradle, nor is it an inheritance. It is something that has to be conquered; it is the fruit of labors and is realized only by a life of prayer, mortification, and correspondence with the grace of God. St. Bernard, like all the other servants of God, attained to sanctity by heroic efforts in controlling this fallen nature of ours and by bending his will to the good pleasure of God.

Nevertheless it is but just to recognize certain circumstances which favored his growth in holiness. Foremost among these was, undoubtedly, the influence of his home. St. Bernard had the inestimable happiness of having had for parents a saintly mother and a thoroughly Christian father. Both were of the highest nobility, his mother being related to the dukes of Burgundy.

Tescelin, his father, descended from the counts of Chatillon, was a brave soldier, good to his vassals, bounteous to the poor, and, like every true cavalier, passionately devoted to justice; a strong faith served as bedrock foundation for an enlightened piety. He loved his accomplished young wife and his children, and always found his greatest happiness at home with his family.

Aleth (Aleda or Alice), Bernard's mother, was a woman of superior qualities. At the age of

fifteen she wished to enter the cloister, but having been sought by the noble Tescelin, her father gave her in marriage to him. Accepting this decision as the will of God in her regard, she aimed at becoming a saint as a wife and mother.

Realizing that a mother begins the education of her children long before she brings them into the world, Aleth, in her manor of Fontaines, led the life of a truly Christian matron. Fasting, prayer, and watching were familiar to her. Modest in her tastes and fleeing from the vain attractions of the world, she not only gave alms to the poor, but visited them personally, cooked for them, and washed their dishes.

As might have been expected, she brought up her children with great tenderness, but tolerated nothing that savored of softness or effeminacy. She regarded her maternal duties as a charge entrusted to her by Divine Providence, and considered her children as sacred deposits committed to her keeping, for which she would be accountable before God. Consequently, though of a very delicate constitution, she would never leave to a stranger the care of nursing her seven children — Guy, Gerard, Bernard, Humbeline (the only girl), Andrew, Bartholomew, and Nivard. Bound by the cords of her heart to the Source of all love, she transmitted to her children, along with her mother's milk, the heavenly virtue which was her life. In all her actions, moreover, she strove to give them an example of Christian virtue.

Though all her children received careful individual attention, Bernard was the object of her special care. Shortly before his birth she had a remarkable dream in which it was revealed to her that the child she bore would be a great preacher and the "guardian of the house of God." Her attentions were not lost on him. As a flower unfolds beneath the warmth of the sun's rays, so Bernard unfolded under the love and care of his mother. Treasuring dearly her every word, he set himself, as far as his age permitted, to live as his mother lived, to pray and do things as she did them. In everything his mother was his model.

Early Education

The young Bernard was sent to the cathedral school of Chatillon-sur-Seine for his education. As his father possessed a house close to that city, his mother took up residence there in order the better to supervise his education. She had the joy of seeing him become the most brilliant scholar of the canons of Saint-Vorles. He gave particular attention to the study of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Lucan, and Statius, and mastered them so thoroughly that we find in his writings not only the fluency of style which can be acquired only by long familiarity with the classics, but from time to time we come across citations from the above authors, even whilst he is speaking of mysticism.

Having finished his studies, Bernard returned to the castle of Fontaines, where the cruelest trial of his life awaited him. He had scarcely returned when his mother died. She passed away whilst clerics who surrounded her bed chanted the litanies for the dying. In these she joined; and as they neared the end her voice grew more and more feeble. At the conclusion she made the sign of the cross, and quietly breathed forth her grand soul to God. For Bernard the sun of his life had gone out. She had been more than a mother to him. She had molded his soul on her own, and had stamped on it a combination of tenderness and strength which afterwards became characteristic of the Abbot of Clairvaux. Every day he recited the Seven Penitential Psalms for the repose of her soul.

Facing the World

Our saint had now to face the world by himself. From what we know of him we can draw a picture of what he was like at the age of twenty. From his mother he inherited blue eyes. His well-molded features were expressive of a marked degree of daring and strength. He had his father's tall stature and fearlessness of character. He possessed, moreover, a broad forehead, and his visage bespoke intelligence. All these gifts were set in a background of gravity, which commanded respect wherever he went. He was a typical young cavalier; one who would surely

win his way in the world, and one whom the world was sure to welcome.

It seemed that for a time the world did actually attract him. He soon learned, however, that, though attractive, it was also dangerous. Having allowed his eyes one day to rest with curiosity on a young woman, her beauty so impressed itself on his imagination that, in order to suppress the motions of concupiscence, he threw himself into a half-frozen pond, remaining submerged up to his neck until internal calm was restored. From that day on he, like Job, "made a pact with his eyes, that he would not so much as think on a virgin."

This resolution, taken without a moment's hesitation, showed him what ought to be the aim of his life. But the renunciation that it involved was compatible only with a life in the cloister. There, and there only, whilst sheltered from danger though not from temptation, would he be able to focus every power of his soul on the love and worship of the God who made him and who had a right to the very best that was in him. And there he decided to spend his young life, for God alone.

In those days young men of Bernard's age did not execute a project of that kind without asking advice; hence we find our saint opening himself to his Uncle Gaudry. Subsequently he broached the subject to his brothers. Without any attempt at disguise he told them bluntly that he had resolved to enter Citeaux. Had a bomb been thrown into the family circle it would not have surprised them more. They were filled with alarm. What had a young man of his rank to do in a hole like Citeaux? There the rule obliged the religious to live the life of serfs; they had to labor with their hands and devote themselves to most humiliating tasks. If a career of arms had no attraction for him, why not choose a literary one? Or if he wanted to become a monk, why not enter Cluny, where his high birth would be taken into consideratioon. But Bernard remained inflexible. Indeed, so eloquently did he defend himself that, instead of being turned aside from his design, he won over to his way of thinking the very ones who sought

to dissuade him. Soon he had thirty companions, among whom were his Uncle Gaudry and all but the youngest of his brothers. All were determined to follow him to Citeaux.

This, his first victory, marked him off as a leader of men. It was all the more remarkable as some of those he persuaded to enter religion were married men and the consent of wives had to be obtained. Moreover, these postulants were of the highest nobility of Burgundy; consequently in embracing the religious state they had to give up much in the way of ease and comfort, and had to relinquish all rights to a future inheritance. All this accomplished by a young man of twenty-three bespeaks great personal magnetism and irresistible eloquence.

Accordingly, in 1113, Bernard with a little band of thirty companions betook himself to Citeaux and begged the Abbot, St. Stephen Harding, to receive them all into the brotherhood. At first somewhat surprised at this request, Abbot Stephen wished to satisfy himself that the young men were in earnest. Having done this, he admitted them into the novitiate to be there proved, in accordance with the prescriptions of the Rule of St. Benedict, "in all patience." We shall leave them in the novitiate for the moment in order to take a snapshot of the period in which Bernard played so prominent a part.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Men who have played a prominent rôle in history cannot be understood apart from that history. Before attempting to outline St. Bernard's place in the Twelfth Century, we must state briefly the general character of that period. Viewed in the light of contemporary events, the mission of the illustrious monk is better understood. his acts receive from the circumstances surrounding them a commentary that enhances their merit, and we are permitted to measure more accurately the extent of his influence. But we must not judge St. Bernard, nor any historical figure, with our modern ideas. Rightly to appraise him we must uncentury ourselves many times before we are in a position to understand

either his work or his ideals. To detach him from the historical background against which his austere figure is silhouetted is to run the risk of misunderstanding him completely. Like those marble statues that top the entrance to many of Europe's cathedrals, the Abbot of Clairvaux by his genius and sanctity dominates the Twelfth Century.

This period was a time of strife and revolt. There were strife and revolt in the political world, strife and revolt in the ecclesiastical world, strife and revolt between the political and ecclesiastical worlds; in fact, strife and revolt were in the very air men breathed.

There were two contenders for the imperial crown in Germany. Italy was a land of anarchy and disorder; revolution after revolution drove the Vicar of Christ into exile. England and France also had disturbances to take care of.

Schism — two rival claimants to be the legitimate successor of St. Peter — disturbed the peace of the Church for more than half a century. The Emperor Henry IV set up (1080) a puppet of a pope, the so-called Clement III, against Gregory VII, the great Hildebrand. This deplorable state of affairs continued under Victor III (1085–1087), Urban II (1088–1099), Pascal II (1099–1118), and Gelasius II (1118–1119). It came to an end in the pontificate of Callistus II (1119–1124). Thus four antipopes had usurped the supreme authority in the Church. During this lamentable period the legitimate popes, in order to safeguard the rights and dignity of the Holy See, were constrained to betake themselves into exile.

In the midst of these vicissitudes the sovereign pontificate, as might have been expected, lost much of its prestige over souls and its influence over society. Princes and lords soon accustomed themselves to treat with scant respect an authority which had neither force nor power to support it. It was a favorable hour for imperial ambition to make the most of.

On the pretext that an estate was attached to an ecclesiastical benefice, the emperor or king arrogated to himself the right of selecting bishops for vacant sees and of conferring on them

canonical investiture. Thus the Church was forced to ratify a choice which often had no other motive than the caprice or favor of the sovereign; most frequently the benefice went to the highest bidder. Bishops so intruded into the Church naturally became sources of scandal.

This was reason enough, though there were others weightier still, for the Church's protesting against such a condition and exerting all her efforts to free hereslf from the degrading bondage. The monarch, to be sure, would not easily relinquish a privilege that meant so much to him in more ways than one. Hence eternal friction between Church and State.

When, however, the emperors did consent to give it up, they still kept their greedy eyes on the Holy See ready to seize by ruse or intimidation a prerogative they had been forced to surrender. Eight years after the Treaty of Worms, Lothair promised to reseat Innocent II on the chair of St. Peter if the pope would restore to him this privilege. Had not St. Bernard been on hand and boldly defended the apostolic position on this important matter, there is no telling what might have been the consequences.

The encroachments of the lay power on the ecclesiastical had their reverberation in the sanctuary itself. Bishops who had obtained their ring and crozier from the monarch no longer considered themselves bound to enhance the episcopal dignity by their learning and virtue. They in turn bartered away lesser dignities to the lower clergy on the same conditions on which they had received theirs. Self-denial, piety, and purity of morals deserted the sanctuary in proportion as simony got a foothold in it. This condition, invading all ranks of the clergy, contributed much to lessen the influence of the priesthood among the people.

Under the shadow of these irregularities, the sacredness of the faith itself was weakened. The spirit of discussion entered into the schools and declared itself even amongst the most respected doctors by a boldness of language that recalled the days of the ancient heresies. Roscelin, and especially Abelard, proclaiming the independence of reason, shattered the formulas in which

from time immemorial the teaching of the Church had been expressed.

Neither individuals nor the social units that go to make up the world are insulated one from another. A profound shock in one department is bound inevitably to have an effect on the others. The bold liberties that were taken with speculative belief produced a seizable perturbation in the life of the people. Contempt and disdain for matters religious soon brought on contempt for matters political.

Feudalism was the system by which Europe was ruled in the Middle Ages. In the period which we are studying it underwent, at least in France, a great modification. Many cities, chafing under the harsh treatment from their suzerains, who often paid no attention to them, appealed to the king for the settlement of their troubles. The king, as a general rule, took sides with the people against the overlord and freed them from his rule. Not content with this, the people succeeded in wrenching bit by bit a complete enfranchisement from the king himself. Thus came into being independent municipalities, such as Cambrai, Beauvais, and subsequently many others. All this was a consequence of the spirit of revolt that was in the air.

Such was the period we are concerned with in our present study. It was, to be sure, a period of strong passions, of license, of struggle, and of revolt. But we must not overlook the reverse side of the medal. This latter had many traits that counterbalanced to a great extent the ugly ones. The marvelous success of St. Bernard's mission itself proves that there were noble and strong convictions in the souls of the men and women of those days. Though they may have been guilty of great weaknesses, they repented and did penance for them.

Prominent among these redeeming traits was the ascendancy of faith in the life of the people at large, despite the dangers it was exposed to from the reckless inquiring spirit of the intelligentsia. What else but a lively faith could have inspired the Crusades? Again, the spirit of sacrifice and of surrender of self to God received a new impetus and flowered forth into a remark-

able development in the monastic life. New orders were founded and old ones braced themselves up for an era of reform.

So monastic-minded was the age that it attempted, and successfully too, a venture which had never been attempted before — the combination of the monastic and military life. There arose the Knights Templars and other military orders for which the Middle Ages were renowned. In fact, the spirit of religion was so genuine and widespread that it gathered into itself the passions of the age, and thereby maintained the people under the influence and teaching of the Church.

Monasticism, on the other hand, bestowed benefits on both extremes of medieval society. For the upper class it formed enlightened, pious, courageous prelates, who defended the faith by the arms of science and neutralized the scandals of the sanctuary by the holiness of their lives. At the other end of the social ladder it showed to the often impoverished laboring classes the beauty of sacrifice, and taught them how to support with resignation the burden of poverty, work, and suffering — all of which things the monks took upon themselves of their own free choice.

These favorable conditions — the empire of faith over the souls of men, the preponderating influence the Church still enjoyed over the civil power, the prestige of monastic orders — are elements we must not lose sight of if we wish to understand the extraordinary rôle the Abbot of Clairvaux played in the Twelfth Century.

More than any other, St. Bernard was the man of his age because he knew how to identify himself with its legitimate aspirations; more than any other, he became all-powerful because in taking possession of and directing the vital forces that were developing in Europe, he stood on a solid foundation of genius and holiness.

Yes, the Twelfth Century, which afforded our saint so vast a field for his zeal and which received from him such an undeniable direction, was neither a period of zenith greatness nor one of decadence. It was a period of struggle, or parturition; hence it was at one and the same

time full of ruins and of fertile hopes. Whilst it staved off the Protestant Reformation, it prepared the glory of the Thirteenth Century.

We shall now return to Saint Bernard, whom we left in the novitiate of Citeaux.

II. RELIGIOUS LIFE

Beginnings of the Cistercian Order

Citeaux, or the New Monastery, as it was called, was founded March 21, 1098, by Saint Robert. Having obtained ecclesiastical sanction from the then papal legate, he came with twenty-one companions from the Abbey of Molesmes, over which he had been abbot, to set up a monastery wherein he and his brethren could follow the Rule of St. Benedict as it was, without subtraction or addition of any kind.

When Bernard arrived at Citeaux it seemed as though its days were numbered. The very austerity of its observance was appalling, whilst its poverty was beyond human endurance — so public opinion had it. On the other hand, an epidemic picked off most of its members, yet no recruits came to fill up the vacant stalls. Therefore wise men asserted that such an absolute return to the literal observance of the Rule of St. Benedict as was practiced at Citeaux was impossible; it was only a matter of time that all the members would die out. To join a group of madmen of that type would be downright suicide. Yet this was the very place that young Bernard chose for himself and his thirty companions. He wanted to get away from the world, to forget the world and to be forgotten by it, and to give himself without reserve to God. This is the reason for his burying himself in the woods of Citeaux.

Saint Stephen Harding, who had succeeded Saints Robert and Alberic as Abbot, was sorely tried by this condition of things and his confidence for a moment was even shaken. Was the reform really pleasing to God? Were the critics of Citeaux right after all? Was the mortality a punishment for attempting to live more strictly than others? He would seek from God an answer to his doubts. It is related that he approached the bedside of a dying monk and com-

manded him in virtue of holy obedience to return and let him know, in whatever way God might determine, if their manner of life was pleasing to Him. A few days later the brother appeared to him whilst he was at work and assured him that his strict interpretation of the Rule was pleasing to God. He, moreover, predicted such an abundance of vocations that his children would spread over many lands. This prediction began to be verified by the arrival of St. Bernard and his companions.

Scarcely had the doors of Citeaux closed upon Bernard, when he gave himself with all the ardor of his generous nature to the pursuit of Christian perfection. In this undertaking he had the inestimable advantage of having a saint for his master, St. Stephen Harding. The latter soon discovered that his young disciple was made of the metal from which saints are forged, and he set himself in real earnest to make a saint of him. Having arrived at a complete detachment from all earthly things himself, master and disciple were on common terrain. For Bernard had, in entering Citeaux, renounced once and for all everything that could captivate the human heart; thus he raised a wall of separation between himself and the world.

With souls giving themselves to God there is one common mishap which has caused more than one potential saint to stop at mediocrity. It is a half-conscious or an unconscious or subconscious mixing of generosity and meanness in the service of God. There are grand and noble aspirations and generous resolutions followed by little seekings of self in various ways. These concessions to self become more frequent and more serious as time goes on. Lack of generosity with God diminishes the inflow of choice graces; so the would-be and could-be saint settles down to a placid mediocrity.

But Saint Bernard would tolerate no rapine in the holocaust; he gave himself up to God's service entirely and forever. From the first days of the novitiate he set himself to tame his senses perfectly, rigorously to discipline his imagination, and to make his will pliable by obedience; in fact, his whole character was molded by self-

abnegation. As for the heart, which plays the leading rôle in the making of a saint, although it retained its native tenderness, it was elevated by the purest motives to a supernatural plane.

Beginnings of Clairvaux

The entrance of St. Bernard and his companions marked for Citeaux an era of unexpected prosperity. Very soon accommodations were insufficient for the community. In the course of three years four groups were sent out to make foundations: La Ferte in 1113, Pontigny in 1114, Clairvaux and Morimond in 1115.

The superior whom St. Stephen Harding chose for the Clairvaux foundation was none other than St. Bernard. His choice was the more remarkable as our saint was then only twenty-five years old and was not yet ordained a priest. Moreover, he had been in religion not much more than two years. It seems that the venerable abbot received more than one remonstrance from members of his community in regard to his choice, for Bernard was hardly more than a youth. Nevertheless, St. Stephen, who knew men and especially Bernard, held to his man.

In the selection of Bernard's companions, he showed much delicacy and consideration. There was, first of all, Gaudry, St. Bernard's uncle. Then three of his own brothers and a cousin were given him; in all there were twelve religious and Bernard himself, their superior. They were provided with everything necessary for the celebration of Holy Mass and for the discharge of the divine office. A wooden cross was placed in the hands of the young abbot, directions were given him as to where he was to go, then he was bidden to depart. God would provide for the rest. Thus St. Bernard and his little band headed for the Valley of Wormwood to open a new house of penitents.

Growing Reputation for Sanctity

Regularly the young Abbot of Clairvaux should have received the abbatial blessing from the bishop of the diocese in which his monastery was situated, the Bishop of Langres. However, owing to the latter's absence, Bernard was constrained to look elsewhere. On asking the advice

of his brethren, he was persuaded to go to a prelate whose reputation for learning and holiness placed him in the first rank of his contemporaries; this was William of Champeaux, the illustrious doctor of Notre Dame of Paris and founder of the cloister of Saint Victor. At the time of which we speak he was Bishop of Chalons. It was he who gave the abbatial blessing to Saint Bernard, and most likely, at the same time ordained him priest. From this day till the death of William, six years later, his esteem for St. Bernard never wavered or diminished. On his part our saint reciprocated wholeheartedly, and numbered the bishop among his dearest friends.

About the end of the year 1116, Bishop William, yielding to his affection for St. Bernard, invited him to preach in his cathedral church. Having discovered, as he believed, a genius in the young abbot, the bishop wished his flock to benefit from the saint's learning and eloquence. St. Bernard, having preached a number of times in the cathedral, at once acquired a reputation as a preacher; for many and remarkable conversions were the results of these first sermons.

As a consequence of this reputation, the spotlight of public attention was turned upon Clairvaux, and postulants from every walk in life sought admittance into the monastery. So numerous were they that the saint had to send out colonies of monks to various quarters of France and other countries. As a matter of fact, the sermons at Chalons marked the starting point of the incredible increase of the monks at Clairvaux; a veritable exodus of select souls wended its way to this monastery.

To give an idea of St. Bernard's influence in attracting men to the service of God, we shall briefly summarize the monasteries he founded from 1118 till the year of his death. In a period of thirty-five years he made sixty-eight foundations. These, though made mostly in France, were scattered widely over Europe. Thus he sent sons to Switzerland, Germany, England, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Sicily, Ireland, Sweden, Sardinia, Denmark, and Poland. In some of these countries he made two, three, four,

five, or even six foundations. At the time of St. Bernard's death there were one hundred and sixty-four monasteries depending on Clairvaux, and in this, his own house, he left over seven hundred monks to mourn his loss.

One may be curious to know how ninety-six monasteries not founded by St. Bernard nevertheless came to be dependent on him. It must be noted that orders and congregations in the period of which we write did not exist as we have them today; and those that did, were not so closely knit together. Hence it could well happen, and as a matter of fact did happen, that a monastery and its dependencies put themselves under another monastery. Thus the monastery of Savigny in Normandy and all its dependencies were aggregated to the order of Citeaux and placed themselves under St. Bernard. In this one instance, twenty-eight monasteries not actually founded by the saint ranged themselves among his filiations. It was by accretions from outside sources that ninety-six monasteries came to be dependent upon Clairvaux.

Another factor contributed even more to the renown of Clairvaux and attracted attention to its young abbot. It was around the end of 1125 that Bernard wrought his first miracle. The person on whom he exercised this power was a relative of his, Josbert, Chevalier of La Ferte and Viscount of Dijon. This man was suddenly struck with paralysis and deprived of the use of speech. The members of his family were petrified with fear and alarmed for his salvation; for he had been anything but a good Christian. He had oppressed the poor and the neighboring churches. As this was well known to everybody, it was asked: "How can such a man appear before the Sovereign Judge?" Our saint was called in haste, but owing to absence from his monastery, he was unable to come for three days. When he did finally arrive, he was much distressed at the condition of the sick man and the uneasiness of his family. "You know as well as I," he said to those who surrounded him, "how this man has oppressed the poor and the churches. If you as his heirs promise to repair his injustices, he will recover the use of his speech, make his confession and receive the last

sacraments." The authority with which he spoke surprised everybody, yet at the same time inspired confidence. Josbert Junior promised to make good all the wrong done by his father. Thereupon our saint began to say Mass. When he was about finishing it, word came to him that Josbert had regained the use of speech and wished to speak to him. The dying man ratified the promises made by his son, made his confession with great compunction and received the last sacraments from the hands of Bernard. Two or three days later he died. This miracle was followed by many others on persons both within and without the monastery. So multiplied, in fact, did they become that in the year 1126 the Abbot of Clairvaux was universally regarded and spoken of as the "Man of God." The letters that he received at this period all give testimony of the esteem in which he was held. As for himself, his modesty was alarmed. He made every effort to destroy this opinion. Writing to a cardinal he discloses his own sentiments about himself: "I feel that people venerate and love in me, not that which I am, but that which they think is in me. In loving me in this manner it is not me whom they love, but something else in my place, something which surely is not me" (Lett. 18, No. 1). In spite of all these protestations, however repeated and sincere they may have been, public opinion persisted in bestowing upon him an ever-increasing respect and confidence, and considering him a saint.

III. APOSTOLIC LIFE

Reformer (monastic orders)

Citeaux broke with the Order of Cluny in order to follow the Rule of St. Benedict to the letter. By so doing the Cistercians at least tacitly reproached the older order with infidelity to the Rule. Hence the friendship between Cluniacs and Cistercians was not, from the beginning of the latter's institution, any too good. As time went on, Cistercian monasteries multiplied, and so did their inmates' reputation for sanctity; this made the situation still more tense. Moreover, the system of government whereby the Cistercians were ruled differed very much

from that of the monks of Cluny, which was the most powerful monastery of Benedictines in France at the time of which we speak. Added to all this, certain Cistercians had the indiscretion openly to censure the Benedictine mode of life. This brought matters to a head. The upshot of it all was that Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men of his time, composed and published an Apologia. In this, whilst administering some stiff reproofs to the Cistercians, he very ably defended the Cluniac observance of the Rule. As a result, feelings ran high on both sides.

In the midst of all this St. Bernard preserved his serenity of soul and never allowed his esteem for Abbot Peter to diminish in the slightest degree. However, it seemed to him that a reply to the latter's Apologia was demanded in justice to his brethren of Citeaux and to himself, whom the Cluniacs regarded, rightly or wrongly, as the chief protagonist of Cistercian ideals. Hence he also composed a work bearing the same title, in which, after giving a biting reproach to his indiscreet brethren, he proceeds to point out the many and glaring departures from the Rule of which the Benedictines were guilty.

The effect of Bernard's Apology was instantaneous and startling. "It resounded through the Church," says Abbe Sanvert, "like a clap of thunder." Particularly within the Cluniac Order it produced great excitement. Loud protests from every side came pouring in on the man who dared to be as bold as truth, and feared not to hold the mirror up before the eyes of the monasticism of the day.

Not all, however, allowed themselves to be carried away by their feelings. At least one member of that order — as eminent in it as Bernard was in the Order of Citeaux — fully acknowledged the justice of Bernard's strictures and turned his indignation, not against the author of the Apologia, but against the abuses that called it forth. This was Peter the Venerable himself. He set to work at once, in spite of strong opposition, to reform the numerous communities subject to his jurisdiction. Later on, in the year 1132, at Peter's summons, two hundred

priors and twelve hundred religious assembled at Cluny to consider, amongst other things, the question of abuses in the order. Many of these were the abuses St. Bernard had pointed out.

Another fruit of the Apologia was the conversion of the great Suger, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Denis, at Paris. The Abbot of Clairvaux mentioned in his work an abbot, without explicitly naming him, who traveled with upwards of sixty horsemen as an escort, to say nothing of other equipage that savored of anything but of the poverty becoming a religious. Suger, perhaps the ablest statesman of his time, was the confidential adviser of King Louis VI. At the same time he was highly esteemd at Rome, and had not Calixtus II died, he would have been made a cardinal.

The great talents of this remarkable man were employed generously for the welfare of the state, whereas his monastery and its regular discipline were left to take care of themselves; they were the least of his concerns. To say all in a few words, Abbot Suger was a courtly gentleman. Although none of the offices of the palace were confided to him officially, nevertheless he had a high hand on all the branches of government; his position was that of an all-powerful Prime Minister. As a consequence, St. Denis resembled less a monastery than an adjunct of the royal court.

Suddenly this brilliant minister of Louis the Fat broke with his former ways of living. He became a religious in the strictest sense of the word. He gave up his courtly ways, appeared at the court less frequently and kept at home in his monastery. So complete was his conversion that St. Bernard in writing to the Pope speaks of him in the highest terms.

Not content with reforming himself personally, Suger introduced reform into his monastery. With a strong hand he brought it back to the practice of the Rule of St. Benedict. He exercised his influence likewise over the other houses that were more or less subject to him.

We see St. Bernard encouraging another abbot who convoked a general chapter of all the Benedictine monasteries of the province of Rheims.

Having been prevented by sickness from attending in person, as he had been invited to do, he wrote a letter in which he traced the program of reform which the chapter should follow. The truth is, our saint's hand is discernible in all those tentatives of reform that mark the second quarter of the Twelfth Century. However zealous he was for reform, he never lost sight of the due measure of human strength. In his eighty-third letter he reveals his mode of procedure. "The weak," he said, "are to be invited to a more strict life, not to be forced thereto." Nevertheless, he could be very energetic when firmness was required. He went so far as to write to the Pope in order to interest him in arresting the decadence of certain monasteries; once — it is the only instance — he went so far as to call in the secular power for the same purpose.

The "barking" of the Abbot of Clairvaux, to use his own words, had a far-reaching echo, not only at Cluny and St. Denis, but likewise in the entire Benedictine Order. Reforms were introduced in many monasteries. Some monasteries became Cistercian. Entire congregations amalgamated with the Cistercian Order. Thus the Abbot Serlon, Abbot of Savigny in Normandy, begged to enter the Order with his congregation, which numbered twenty-eight houses, fifteen in England and thirteen in France. One of the latter was the famous Abbey of LaTrappe, which afterwards played an important role in the history of the Cistercians. These twenty-eight houses were attached to St. Bernard's monastery of Clairvaux. St. Stephen of Obazine, with seven houses, also asked and obtained the same privilege. The Hermits of Fontenay, Diocese of Autun, finally embraced the Cistercian mode of life.

But our saint's zeal for reform was not limited merely to those who professed the Rule of St. Benedict. As a matter of fact he was deeply interested in all religous orders. The Canons Regular of St. Augustine were objects of his particular esteem. Wherever feasible, he substituted them for the secular canons. In places, he succeeded in inducing the secular canons to embrace the Rule of St. Augustine and become Canons Regular. On the other hand, communi-

ties of these Canons Regular that were observant, received much encouragement from him to intensify their observance.

Another order that won his affection and esteem was the Premonstratensian. Their founder, St. Norbert, was one of his intimate friends, for whom he never lost an opportunity of showing esteem. Whenever the chance of aiding or propagating this order presented itself, he never let it pass. The fact is, he ceded to St. Norbert the title to Premontre, the place from which the order derived its name, Premonstratensian. He gave them another place in the diocese of Langres, and induced Melisende, Queen of Jerusalem, to introduce them into Palestine and richly to endow their monastery.

Reform (episcopal)

Fanned by the zeal of St. Bernard, the spirit of reform spread itself farther and farther in the West. Once it got started, it did not stop with the regular clergy; it took possession of the secular clergy as well. Bishops and also archbishops modeled their lives on ideals that were very different from what they had theretofore followed.

Notable among these was Henry of Sanglier, Archbishop of Sens, who at the time of which we write was Primate of France. Moved by the conversion of Abbot Suger and the reading of St. Bernard's Apologia, he asked our saint for some instructions on the duties of the episcopate. After some hesitation Bernard responded with his "Tractatus de Moribus et Officio Episcoporum — A Treatise on the Duties and Office of Bishops." In nine chapters the saint considers the duties of a bishop looked at from the double point of view of the difficulties inherent in the high dignity of a bishop and the virtues that ought to adorn his life and ministry. In adopting the program of reform outlined therein, Henry incurred the king's displeasure, the latter even going so for as to persecute the bishop. This unchristian conduct brought upon him the censure of the abbot, who did not hesitate to compare him to Herod, not that "he pursued Christ in His crib, but that he prevented Him from triumphing in the Church."

Another bishop, also a favorite of the king, became a disciple of St. Bernard, and, like the Bishop of Sens, he too felt the iron fist of his master; this was Stephen de Senlis, Bishop of Paris. Following the advice of our abbot, he set about reforming his life. This necessarily involved a less frequent appearance at court. Naturally this did not please the king. Stephen, after setting order in his private life, tried to introduce it into the lives of his clergy. By attempting to introduce the Canons Regular of St. Victor, probably at the suggestion of St. Bernard, into the cathedral, he provoked loud protest from his chapter. They carried their troubles to Louis. He, already aggrieved by Stephen's withdrawal from court, sided with the chapter and forbade any change to be made. But Stephen disregarded this prohibition. As a consequence, he was deprived of his revenues. The bishop then laid the entire diocese under interdict. Whereupon, confiscation of property as well as confiscation of the property of his intimate friends was what Stephen received. He soon had to flee for his life.

Cistercian Intervention

King Louis held the Cistercians in high esteem and had begged to be associated with them in spiritual matters, a favor that was readily granted. Aware of this, Stephen appealed to the General Chapter of the Cistercians to intervene in his behalf with the king. St. Bernard, in the name of the Chapter, wrote the king a letter in which he showed the injustice of his majesty's conduct and threatened to take the matter to Rome if the king did not come to terms and restore the property that he had taken from Stephen. Language of this kind was altogether new to Louis. No bishop or prince or nobleman had ever dared to address him in that fashion. The letter had no effect.

Then all the bishops of the Province of Sens with Bernard waited on Louis and begged him to be reconciled with Stephen. But he was inflexible. Not even the threat of extending the interdict to the entire Province could move him. But our saint had another inducement. Enlightened by the spirit of prophecy, he solemnly

predicted to the king that his eldest son, Prince Philip, who had already been crowned, would soon meet his death. Under the impression of this prophecy Louis promised to restore to the bishop his property and give him a chance to defend himself.

Unfortunately, King Louis did not keep his promise. Instead, he cunningly appealed to the Pope and by clever misrepresentation succeeded in having the interdict removed. When the bishops came and asked for the fulfillment of his promise, he dismissed them with scant consideration, showing them at the same time the papal documents.

Some might have regarded the case as settled; not so Bernard. At once, in words that bespoke humility and respect, yet with great firmness and directness, he protested against the Pope's interference.

"I cannot conceal from Your Holiness the tearful complaints of the French bishops, nay of the entire Church of France.... With sadness I have seen what with sadness I speak of: the honor of the Church seriously wounded in the reign of Honorius. Already the humility, or rather the constancy, of the bishops was prevailing over the wrath of the king, when lo! the Sovereign Pontiff interposed with his supreme authority to confound the champions of justice and give the victory to pride. I know that it was through misrepresentation you have been led to call off this just and necessary interdict.... I wonder, though, how you could have given judgment without hearing both sides, and that against the absent. But now when you know the truth, you should see that the lie does not benefit its author.... How long you ought to allow this bishop to suffer or how far you ought to sympathize with him, is not for me to say."

Honorius set about undoing the mischief his interference had caused, but he was spared any great trouble by an event which brought the king to his sense of justice. A pontifical decree might remove an interdict but it could not falsify a prophecy. Shortly after the king's final interview with the bishops, Crown Prince Philip, the hope of the nation, was killed by a fall from

his horse. This was a terrible shock to his father. Brought at last to his senses, he pardoned the grievances he had against the Bishop of Paris and restored him to favor.

The Pope sent his Legate, Cardinal Matthew, to France to convoke a council in order to settle the affair of the king with the Bishop of Paris and some other matters that demanded attention. It happened at this time that St. Bernard's health was so bad that there was reason to fear he would never be able to travel to the council; or should he get there, he might never return alive. Hence he declined the invitation the Legate sent him. "The affairs you have to treat are either easy or difficult. If easy, you can settle them yourself; if difficult, I cannot settle them, for I am incapable of anything great." But the Legate insisted. He believed the Abbot of Clairvaux's lights on the matters to be discussed were indispensable. As a matter of fact, once Bernard entered the council, he was the leading spirit there. It was to him that the council assigned the task of giving definitive form to the statutes of the Knights Templars. In the course of its sessions the council deposed a number of ecclesiastics for various misdemeanors and regulated many other affairs of the Church of France.

The council being ended, St. Bernard, more dead than alive, hastened to return to his beloved monastery, hoping to enjoy a little well-merited peace. But there was no peace for him. To say nothing of innumerable letters — he was in correspondence with bishops, nobles, and men of all classes — he soon became the victim of a severe persecution. The authority he exercised at the council made him responsible for all its enactments, especially for the severe measures taken with regard to the depositions mentioned above. "What right," it was said, "had a simple abbot to police the whole of France? Is it the business of an obscure monk to settle the differences that arise in the diocese? Can nothing good be done without him? His hand is in everything; he takes precedence over bishops, over councils, even over the legate himself. Very soon, if precautions are not taken, he will usurp the prerogatives of the cardinals and the Pope."

These recriminations were cleverly set up. On the face of them they seemed to be solicitous for the supremacy of the Holy See. At any rate, they made a strong appeal to the Pope and the cardinals. As a consequence Cardinal Haimeric was commissioned to remonstrate with Bernard and put him in his place, that is to say, the silence of the cloister. As Cardinal Haimeric was a true and dear friend of St. Bernard, we may presume that the letter he wrote, though undoubtedly severe, represented not so much his own personal views in regard to our saint as the sentiments of his brother cardinals. Undeniably harsh the letter was, and unjust. All the services that Bernard had rendered to the Church were forgotten; on the other hand, he was reproached with infractions of his Rule of which he was not guilty.

If ever he had need of humility not to revolt against rude handling it was in the present crisis. Modestly, indeed, yet with great liberty and with all respect, he replied. There was question, be it noted, not merely of vindicating himself in the eyes of superiors, but likewise of defending the acts of a provincial council presided over by a cardinal legate of the Holy See.

"What!" he exclaims, "must even the poor and the resourceless encounter opposition for truth's sake? Is there no refuge from envy even in misery itself? Ought I rather to grieve or to glory that I, even I, have made enemies by speaking the truth or acting according to the truth?" Having stated some of the offenses with which he is charged, he goes on to say: "If they are mine, I have deserved commendation; if they are not mine, I have deserved no blame. Unmerited reproof does not trouble me much, and praise not due to me I decline to accept.... Is the only charge against me that I was present, instead of remaining at home in my obscurity where I could be judge, accuser, and arbiter of none but myself? I do not deny that I was present at these councils. But I was present under compulsion, not by free choice. If this has displeased my friends, it has been equally distasteful to me. Would to God that I had not gone thither! Would to God I might never have to

go again! I hate to interfere in matters that do not concern me particularly. But in spite of this I am dragged into them. Now, my Lord Cardinal, there is no one from whom I may more reasonably expect emancipation from this tyranny than from yourself. You have the power, as I always knew; you have the good will, as I have lately discovered. I rejoice to know that you are displeased with my meddling in matters not belonging to monks.... See to it, therefore, that both your will and mine shall be satisfied. Forbid these noisy and unmannerly frogs to leave their marshes for the future. Let their croaking be no longer heard in the council rooms of bishops or in the palaces of kings.... Let no necessity, no authority, have power to compel their interference in disputes or public business of any kind. I am resolved never to quit my monastery again for affairs of this kind unless the Order, the legate of the Holy See, or my own bishop compels me to go out. These I cannot in conscience disobey unless I enjoy a privilege of a higher authority. If your eminence will be so kind as to obtain that privilege for me, I shall enjoy peace myself and leave others in peace. Nevertheless, even if I hide myself and keep silence, that will not cause the murmurs of the curches to cease, unless the Roman Curia ceases to injure the absent out of complaisance for those who haunt her doors."

A few months after this the schism of Anacletus II broke out. We shall see how St. Bernard was once more dragged into the melée in spite of himself.

The Roman Schism

The See of St. Peter is the center of unity and the visible rock on which the Church rests. It is of vital importance for the millions of Catholics scattered over the whole world to know, without any possible hesitation, who has the right to rule them; to see an uncontested head in full possession of the power he has a right to, in order to rule the souls that have been confided to him. During the last century and a half the children of the Church saw the Papacy a prey to many vicissitudes, saw it dragged into more than one exile. We have only to remember

Savona, Fontainebleau, Gaeta, and finally the Vatican. But the children of the Church were spared one trial. When Pius VI was laid to rest, he was succeeded by Pius VII. After him came Leo XII, Pius, VIII, Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII. All these were elevated to the Supreme Pontificate, and not even a shadow of a doubt was cast upon the legitimacy of their election. Just as soon as the newly elected pope presented himself to the Catholic world on the balcony or at the window of the Vatican to give his first blessing, all knew who was their new and rightful chief.

The age of St. Bernard passed through a crisis that ours is spared. In 1130, a faction in the college of cardinals met and, in spite of an election already made that put Innocent II on the Chair of Peter as Sovereign Pontiff, proceeded to elect a pope of their own. The one thus elected took the name of Anacletus II. The Church then witnessed a most disconcerting scene. There were two popes each claiming to be the legitimate successor of St. Peter, each hurling anathemas at the other. In such a dilemma, who shall pick out the true pope? Who shall be, in these critical circumstances, the grand elector of the Christian world? A monk, in his own eyes the most insignificant man in the world, is called upon by the bishops and princes to decide this most momentous question. That monk was St. Bernard.

All Europe, which at that time was Catholic, was sadly perplexed to know who was the legitimate pope. In France, Louis the Fat found himself in a very embarrassing situation. He was a loyal son of the Church and showed himself willing to defend the Papacy. But just now, who was the pope? As a matter of fact, what titles could Innocent show? Anacletus, on his part, had been shrewd enough to send legates to Louis before Innocent had sent his. In order not to do anything regrettable or make a mistake, Louis determined to convoke a council of the bishops and abbots of his kingdom to meet at Etampes to discuss the problem. The king wished to have St. Bernard at the assembly and summoned him to be present.

Anacletus was not idle or indifferent. He kept an eagle eye on what was taking place in France. As soon as he learned of the project of a council, he wrote the king a regular Machiavellian letter, in which he deplored his elevation to the Chair of St. Peter, something he had never dreamed of; declared that had he consulted only his own desires he would never have consented to accept the elevation, but had done so only because he was convinced that it was the will of God; that he entertained for the sovereign sentiments of affection, and presumed that the king's affection for him is the same. Had it not been for St. Bernard, the king might have been taken in by the wily Anacletus. But the saint was alert and keen enough to unmask all this chicanery. Just as soon as he learned what had happened at Rome, he lost no time in getting first-hand information from eye-witnesses. Armed with this data and having sought light in prayer, he was in a position to judge prudently the whole affair.

Council of Etampes

At the end of April the bishops and the abbots finally assembled in the city of Etampes. From the very opening of its sessions, all eyes were turned upon St. Bernard. By a spontaneous abdication of their rights — perhaps unique in the history of councils — the assembled bishops and abbots agreed to place the final decision in the hands of our saint. Though there were many venerable and learned bishops and abbots in France at that time, yet they all agreed to accept the decision of a young man of forty, Bernard's age when this council convened. This single fact shows in what esteem he was held by France.

When the time came for making a decision, our saint reduced the debate to the examination of three questions: 1. How had each of the two elections been made? 2. What were, in each case, the qualities of the electors? 3. Finally, what was the respective merit of each of the elected men? Having weighed these points with all his natural and supernatural prudence and sagacity, St. Bernard pronounced in favor of Innocent. Whereupon the entire assembly, without a dissenting voice, acclaimed Innocent as the legiti-

mate pope. The "Te Deum" was then solemnly intoned and the council adjourned.

In all truth it must be stated that even before the council the balance of public opinion inclined towards Innocent. Early in the month of March, Bishop Hugh of Grenoble, conspicuous for his learning and holiness, with some neighboring bishops had held a synod at Le Puy with a view to tracing a uniform line of conduct to be followed in regard to the claimants to the Papacy. All present pronounced in favor of Innocent. Coincident with this, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (at which Abbey Anacletus had been a monk) just as soon as he learned of the arrival of Innocent in France, sent him a magnificent cortege of horses to be at his service whilst traveling.

England Won to Innocent

Having won France to the side of Innocent, St. Bernard now set about getting England to do the same. However, England had declared for Anacletus, and to win her over to his rival was no easy task. Under Callistus II, Anacletus had been sent to England as Papal Legate and whilst there he had by his talents and generosity made some strong friends among the bishops. These prelates abetted his claims and used their influence with King Henry to favor the antipope. However, an occasion presented itself for a personal interview between that sovereign and the holy abbot. It happened that, in the year 1131, the king was in France. At Pope Innocent's request, Bernard visited the king with a view to detaching him from the cause of Anacletus. It proved anything but an easy undertaking; for in the king's suite there was a number of bishops, strong adherents of the antipope, who did their utmost to prevent Henry from going over to the side of Innocent. However, once Bernard had set about anything, he was not the man to stop at difficulties. As a rule, the more difficulties piled up, the more determined he became, the more he prayed, and the more he worked. Forced by the saint's arguments to abandon one position after another, Henry finally took refuge behind a scruple of conscience. He would be willing to acknowledge Innocent but he feared

thereby to offend God. "Take care of your other sins," said the saint to him, "let me answer for this one; I take it upon my soul." Thereupon the king surrendered. Accompanied by St. Bernard and a numerous retinue of bishops and nobles, he visited the Pope at Chartres, where Innocent awaited him. There he offered the Sovereign Pontiff his homage, his scepter, and his sword. Thus France and England gave their allegiance to Innocent mainly through the efforts of St. Bernard.

Germany for Innocent

The Church of Germany was not slow to inform itself in regard to the facts of the two elections. Whilst the Council of Etampes, 1130, by the voice of St. Bernard, recognized Innocent II, the Diet of Wurzburg, in which the ruling spirit was his friend St. Norbert, now Archbishop of Magdeburg, induced Lothair, who was present in person, to espouse the cause of Innocent II.

Early in the month of January an embassy from Lothair waited upon Innocent at Chartres to present to the Pope the allegiance of their sovereign. In felicitating the Holy Father, Lothair expressed the desire to see and have an interview with him in regard to the best means of reconquering Rome. As might have been expected, this was good news for Innocent. On the one hand, Lothair, though elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, had not as yet been crowned. The Pope alone could do that. On the other hand, Lothair, as protector of the Holy See, had the duty to defend the rights of the Holy See, and he alone could insure respect for its temporal prerogatives. The desired interview was fixed for March 24, 1131, and was to take place at Liege.

On the appointed day, Lothair, accompanied by twenty-five archbishops and bishops, fifty-three abbots and a large number of nobles, met the Pope at Liege and escorted him through the streets of the city holding the bridle of the Pope's white horse; this he did as a mark of homage and respect for the august exile. At the end of the procession he helped the Pope to dismount. The next Sunday the Holy Father officiated publicly in the presence of the entire court.

After the Mass the German Emperor publicly recognized Innocent as the legitimate successor of St. Peter and took an oath to accompany him to Rome and establish him on the Apostolic See.

Lothair was not by any means a disinterested prince. Quick to perceive the favorable dispositions of Innocent, without preliminary or warning, he demanded the restitution of the right of investiture. This meant that at the death of a bishop or an abbot the emperor could appoint a successor and bestow on him the ring and crozier with the formula: "Accipe ecclesiam." The manifold dangers to the Church from such a system will be evident on a little reflection. Rulers in want of money — the habitual condition of medieval kings — would be exposed to the temptation of simony; miters would be sold to the highest bidder; consequently the episcopate would be invaded by unworthy men to the dishonor of religion and the ruin of souls. The Pontiff could not accede to his demands. Lothair, on his side, was determined. He insisted, became irritated, stormed, raged, and even stooped to threats. There were several cardinals and bishops present, but none of them had the courage to stand up in defense of the Pope. However, there was one man there, a real man, who feared neither pope nor emperor, he was not a cardinal nor a bishop, just a simple monk — it was St. Bernard.

Taking in the importance of the situation at a glance, he came forward without any hesitation. The monarch's boldness had not intimidated him in the least. With unanswerable logic and no less eloquence, he set forth the sacred and inalienable rights of the Holy See and drew such a masterly picture of the evils that would result alike to the Church and the State, that the assembly grew enthusiastic. By its repeated acclamations it gave Lothair unmistakable signs of what it considered the right course to pursue. With much reluctance Lothair gave up his pretentions and publicly assured the Pope that he would abide by the terms of the Concordat of Worms. "Thanks to this courageous intervention," says the Abbe Vacandard, "the Church

escaped once more the yoke of the civil power and preserved her freedom of election."

End of the Schism

St. Bernard succeeded in detaching from the cause of Anacletus one of his outstanding supporters, Cardinal Peter of Pisa, a man noted for his knowledge of canon law and his ability as a dialectician. Our saint recognized this man's worth and rendered public testimony to the same in a conference at Salerno in 1137. Accompanied by St. Bernard, the Cardinal went to Rome and was there presented to the Pope, to whom he made his submission. The Holy Father was so gratified by his conduct that he confirmed the Cardinal in his dignities.

This conversion of one of the principal authors of the schism — a conversion that drew a number of others after it — left the Romans as a whole very irresolute. The truth is, for a long time their attachment to the cause of Anacletus had been weakened. For various reasons they held back from taking a decisive step; some from fidelity to a rash oath they had taken, some from interest, others from fear of losing their dignities. However, it was a comparatively easy matter for Bernard to iron out all these difficulties. In a few days his convincing eloquence won over to Innocent the greater part of these dissidents.

But as far as the antipope himself was concerned, he showed no signs of weakening, Lothair died in December, 1137; consequently he had nothing to fear from Germany. On the other hand, King Roger of Sicily, though much shaken in his allegiance, had not yet definitely abandoned him; besides, the Basilica of St. John Lateran and the upper part of the city of Rome were still in his possession. Humanly speaking, therefore, the schism might well be drawn out for many years. But God in His mercy saw fit to put an end to this abnormal condition of affairs. Anacletus died January 25, 1138.

A successor was elected to take his place in the month of March of the same year, who took the name Victor IV. But not long after, Victor himself came by night to St. Bernard, begging

him to reconcile him to Innocent. Stripped of the insignia of his usurped office, St. Bernard led him to the feet of the pontiff. On May 29, 1138, at the head of those who had held out against the legitimate pope, Victor made in St. Peter's a public retraction of his errors and swore allegiance to Innocent as his liege lord. The schism was ended.

St. Bernard's work was done. There was no further reason for his remaining at Rome; so he hastened to betake himself to his beloved Clairvaux. Whilst the Eternal City was filled with rejoicing, he quietly slipped away. In the hands of God he had been the principal instrument in bringing about this happy termination of events. Public gratitude proclaimed him the Father of his Country, Pater Patriae.

Heresy

St. Bernard's doctrinal role is one of the most outstanding features of the Twelfth Century. Sharp-eyed and indefatigable doctor and apostle as he was, he pointed out and mercilessly pursued every error of this period.

From the days when Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon His Church down through the ages, two powers have contended for the mastery of the world; two powers, nevertheless, that have lived side by side in perpetual conflict: human reason with its man-made systems, and the faith which Christ brought to the world and which the Church has jealously kept intact from century to century. The greatest temptation of any age is to make reason supreme, independent of the teaching of the Church; to prefer the systems that man's mind has fabricated to the eternal truths of God. In the Twelfth Century four men stood out prominently as champions of reason and set themselves, knowingly or not, as opponents of the Church. These were Abelard, Gilbert de la Porrée, Henry of Lausanne, and Arnold of Brescia.

The problem of problems for the philosophical mind of that period was that of the Universals. In fact, it has been the continual ferment of philosophers of all ages; from the days of Aristotle and Plato down to our own it has occupied

the minds of the most acute thinkers. Liberatore, an able Italian philosopher, does not hesitate to say that all philosophical errors are traceable, more or less closely, to it. Above all, Pantheism is an inevitable consequence of happening to fall into a mistake about it.

The problem is this: Do the universal concepts of our minds (man, virtue, cause) enjoy any objective reality, or are they only simple signs of things, consequently merely names without any foundation in the order of existing things? This same problem was taken up by Kant under the name of Categories, and later on by Comte with his Positivism. In fact, few questions in philosophy have had graver consequences; for in seeking to determine with precision and certainty the subjective and the objective — that which has existence only in the mind and that which really exists outside it — we can easily wind up by shaking the very bases of certitude. In St. Bernard's day this was the problem that whetted learned minds.

Peter Abelard

Peter Abelard was born in Brittany in 1079, and was therefore St. Bernard's senior by eleven years. According to the historians of his times, he was a man of prodigious mental activity, an untiring debater, who was ever on the lookout for a renowned master to uncrown in public debate. Besides being well posted on all the sciences of his day, he possessed a charming voice, loftiness of stature, and a grace of person which made him irresistible for the young men who met him. His fame having reached Germany, England, Denmark, Sweden, and Italy, crowds of enthusiastic disciples flocked to him from all these countries. Undoubtedly, Abelard was the greatest teacher of his day. Wherever he appeared, pupils left their old masters and ranged themselves under him.

Not content with the laurels that philosophy offered him, he ventured with his wonted recklessness into the field of theology. He did not hesitate to bring to the examination of the dogmas of faith the daring method he used in his philosophical studies. No dogma, not even the

dogma of the Most Holy Trinity, was too impenetrable for him to examine. The result was that in 1121 he was condemned by the Council of Soissons for several heretical propositions in regard to the Holy Trinity.

Forced by bad health to give up his teaching, he took to composing his "Introduction to Theology" and his "Christian Theology." The latter work was completed in 1138 and, having been copied by his disciples, was soon spread over Europe. One of these copies fell into the hands of William, Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Thierry, a former pupil of Abelard and also a friend of St. Bernard. Surprised at finding the book full of false doctrines and arbitrary systems, he called Bernard's attention to the work and sent him at the same time fourteen objectionable propositions taken from it. William begged him to oppose the new doctrines with all the vigor at his command.

"His books," he wrote, "cross the seas and pass over the Alps; his doctrines on faith and on our mysteries are spreading everywhere in the provinces and kingdoms; they are published with eclat, are defended with entire liberty, and things have come to such a pass that it is even rumored that they are received with favor at the court of Rome. This man fears you. If you keep silence, who will stop him? And after what he has said already, what will he not say?"

St. Bernard had a private conference with Abelard and tried to make him realize the danger to faith that his teachings and especially his method had given rise to. Abelard promised to abstain from teaching but failed to keep his promise.

Pressed by his former pupils to resume teaching; assured by them that his doctrines were couched in terms broad enough to admit of a favorable interpretation; in fact, reproached for having allowed himself to be hypnotized by the personality of the saint, he finally surrendered to their persuasions and began once more to teach. And he taught the selfsame doctrines that his attention had been called to.

Under these circumstances St. Bernard could not remain silent. Either he must stand by and

see the dogmas of faith undermined with great danger to souls, or Peter Abelard must be denounced. He did not hesitate a moment. He flung himself with all the ardor of his nature into the fray.

Council of Sens

Both men were active. St. Bernard warned all he could, raising his voice in the very schools where Abelard taught and thus detached from the master a number of his disciples. At the same time he wrote many letters to the Pope, the cardinals, and other dignitaries of the Church. But Abelard was not asleep. He too had his partisans — scholars of repute and high churchmen. The most outstanding among the latter was Guido del Castello, who was soon to ascend the chair of St. Peter under the name of Celestine II. All were aligned for the defense of their master. The master himself was agog for an encounter with Bernard. He did not have long to wait.

There was to be an assembly of bishops and nobles at the Cathedral of Sens on the first Sunday after Pentecost, 1140. King Louis was to be there. Abelard could not desire a more favorable occasion to defend himself and humble his adversary. He wrote, accordingly, to the Archbishop of Sens, demanding to be confronted with the Abbot of Clairvaux and to be given an opportunity to vindicate his teaching before the prelates about to meet. Everywhere he went he broadcast the debate as something agreed upon and so contrived things that, willy-nilly, St. Bernard had to consent. Past master in the art of dialectics, Abelard anticipated an easy victory.

Bernard had his misgivings as to the outcome of this affair. Realizing that he was no match for that Goliath, as he styled Abelard to the Pope, he tried to avoid the encounter. Besides, he felt it would be wrong to make the truths of faith, than which nothing can be more certain, depend upon the issue of human argumentation. Bishops, archbishops, and, of course, the Pope were the proper judges of such matters, not monks. But he realized that the encounter was

unavoidable. Failure to appear would compromise the truth; he had to accept the challenge.

The assembly met on the appointed day, and the entire day was taken up with preliminaries. The next day the primatial cathedral was packed to capacity with the most august gathering it had witnessed in a century. King Louis was present, surrounded by his nobles; Geoffrey of Chartres, the papal legate, presided; also present were the Archbishops of Sens and of Rheims with their suffragans and an immense number of bishops, abbots, priors, clerics and scholars. Many of these had come as keen partisans of one side or the other. Abelard had no reason to complain of the complexion of the court; for the president, Geoffrey, was a former pupil of his and had defended him in the Council of Soissons in 1121. Outside the bench of judges, he could count adherents by the score.

We shall let the eloquent Archbishop Vaughan, O.S.B., describe what took place at the council.

"It can be imagined how all eyes turned on St. Bernard, as he advanced in the white wool of Citeaux to take his place in the assembly. A searching scrutiny might have detected in the mild majesty of the careworn face lines of sufering and marks of tears. There was something sadly awful in that noble forehead, in the classic turn of those sensitive lips, in the glance of those piercing eyes, and in the movement of that slight frame wasted with long vigil, with terrific penance, with a burning love of the house of God, and with the ceaseless friction of a laborious life. This was he who, when a child, had seen Jesus, had been visited by angels, had multiplied bread and had lifted the dead to life.

"And now Abelard, with his black Benedictine robe, contrasting ominously with the white wool of the Cistercian, was making his way up to the church. Many at the lower end of the nave were personally known to him, amongst others, Gilbert de la Porrée, an old friend, a man of powerful mind and a thoroughgoing rationalist.... Abelard was preceded by Arnold of Brescia, and around him buzzed as usual a swarm of his gay disciples, who were looking forward with intense delight to the issue of the day, to the

victory which they took for granted their master would achieve.... As he advanced up the church, and fixed his eyes upon the king and carried them along the line of miters, they were distracted by a movement among the fathers. It was St. Bernard. He was making his way into the midst of the assembly. He held a scroll in his hand. It contained the heresies gathered out of Abelard's theology. He came forward, and with his clear voice deliberately read them out in order. He then fastened his calm eyes on his antagonist, and with a tone of authority informed him, in the name of the council, that he might choose out of three courses: to defend the propositions, to amend them, or to deny they were his. In an instant all eyes were turned on Abelard, and the pulses of that assembly quickened whilst waiting for the first sounds of that well-known voice, which had rung out the issues of many a victory in the arena of intellectual strife.

"Abelard spoke: 'I will not answer the Cistercian. I appeal from the council to the See of Rome.'

"The assembly was speechless with astonishment. The bishops looked at each other in blank surprise. And men had hardly recovered from the shock when they were conscious that Abelard had turned his back upon the king, legate, and bishops, and, followed by his wondering disciples, had left the church." (Life of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 105.)

This turn of events seemed to disconcert the Council. However, St. Bernard was not the man to be nonplussed by such a move. He insisted that the propositions be examined and condemned; for the scandal given to the body of the faithful was still existent, palpable, disseminated as widely as the reputation of its author. Multitudes had accepted his statements; the faith was menaced; it would be hazardous to defer a decision on questions that so directly concerned the sacred dogmas and had such consequences for souls. The judges might, if they wished, leave to the Holy Father the care of passing sentence on the person of the doctor; but they should proceed at once to the condem-

nation of his errors. The council condemned "not only as false but as heretical" some seventeen propositions extracted from the works of Abelard.

As for himself, Bernard at once opened up a rapid-fire correspondence with a large number of abbots, bishops, and cardinals, even with the Pope himself. To the latter he wrote a letter (rather we should call it a treatise owing to its length) in which he refuted one by one the errors of Abelard. Herein our saint shows remarkable acumen, notwithstanding the fact that he disclaims any dialectic abilities.

In the course of these letters it must be admitted that the great Abbot of Clairvaux expressed himself at times very forcefully, more than was his wont; so forcefully, in fact, that to some historians he seems to have forgotten his usual sweetness of character and shown no mercy to his adversary.

Be this as it may, it must be borne in mind, in the first place, that Abelard's doctrine on the Holy Trinity, to say nothing of his other errors, honeycombed the very basis of revealed religion. Furthermore, he handed out his tenets to the man in the street, as we say today, and also to the "higher-ups." More than twenty cardinals and one Pope, Pope Celestine II, looked up to him as their master. With the sole exception of St. Bernard, he was the most celebrated man in Europe in this day. Hence it is self-evident that the teachings of such a master would win a hearing for themselves anywhere; even at Rome they enjoyed great weight. For precisely these reasons it was imperative to prevent the evil from spreading. As a result of the energy with which St. Bernard pushed the case, Innocent II condemned Abelard on July 14, 1140. In writing to the Archbishop of Sens and Rheims he notified them that he declared Peter Abelard a heretic, ordered his books to be burned wherever they were found, and condemned him to perpetual silence. It is pleasant to note that, two years later, Abelard died a monk of Cluny, reconciled to Bernard and to the Church, having made an effort to purify his published works of their errors.

Gilbert de la Porree

Another light that slipped in its orbit was Gilbert de la Porrée, Bishop of Poitiers. For brilliance of mind he was almost the rival of Abelard, with whom he had studied theology under Anselm of Laon. Following in the footsteps of his fellow student, he too undertook to make an analysis of the faith and wound up, like him, on the side of heresy. Two of his own archdeacons denounced him to Pope Eugene III for departing from the teaching of the Church in regard to the simplicity of the divine nature, the application of the merits of Jesus Christ, and the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism. The Pope promised to take the matter of their complaint into consideration when he should visit France, and advised them to communicate in the meantime with the Abbot of Clairvaux.

Eugene, following the suggestion of St. Bernard, summoned a council to meet at Rheims in the latter part of March, 1148. On the appointed day eighteen cardinals, and more than four hundred archbishops, bishops, and abbots (from France, Germany, Italy and England) met at the above-mentioned city. In due course the subject of heresy was taken up.

Called upon to give an account of his doctrines, Gilbert amazed his audience by a bewildering array of citations from the Fathers of the Church and from Holy Scripture; for he was a great speaker and had a prodigious memory. Like the monster of Virgil which, under the cover of smoke, evaded all efforts to seize it, so Gilbert by his syllogistic subtleties could not be brought to bay. At last the Abbot of Clairvaux interrupted him:

"Hold; we have enough of that rhetoric. The point is this: you are charged with holding and teaching that the divine essence or nature is not God but the form by which God is God; that neither is the divine wisdom God, nor the divine goodness, nor the divine greatness. Tell us plainly whether or not this is your opinion."

"The divinity," answered Gilbert boldly, "is not God but the form by which God is God."

"Behold, now we have the avowal we were looking for," exclaimed St. Bernard. "Let the Bishop's confession of faith be written down."

"And let your own doctrine also be written down," retorted Gilbert evidently out of temper, "namely, that the divinity is God."

"Aye," answered the saint, "let it be written with a pen of iron on a slate of adamant."

The saint likewise questioned him on other points of doctrine, notably on the Holy Trinity, and constrained him to make some clean-cut statement in regard to these points. When the debate was over, the cardinals said they would withdraw to consult in private as to what sentence should be passed.

Many other members of the council, including ten archbishops, bishops, abbots, and professors, mostly French, held a meeting of their own to consider the situation. It was quite clear to all that the cardinals were partial to Gilbert. The bishops decided, at Bernard's suggestion, to write Gilbert's erroneous doctrines and to oppose to them their own profession of faith; the paper was then to be handed to the cardinals as a means of guiding their deliberations. Bernard himself was commissioned to draw up the articles of orthdox belief.

After reading the symbol composed by Bernard, Pope Eugene declared that it embodied the faith of the Roman Church. But the cardinals affected to see in it an invasion of their rights. "It is the inviolable prerogative of the Roman Church," they said, "to pronounce upon questions of faith, and the Pope must not sacrifice the interests of the Holy See to his affection for his former superior." (The Pope had been a monk at Clairvaux under St. Bernard.) However, Bernard explained that neither he nor the bishops had any thought of usurping the rights of Rome; it was not as dictating a verdict that they had presented the symbol, but simply as a confession of faith in opposition to the doctrines of Gilbert. This explanation appeased the cardinals, and they approved the propositions submitted by the abbot in the name of the bishops.

The Pope then called upon Gilbert to retract his erroneous statements one by one. The Bishop obeyed, reciting aloud the condemned propositions. By this act of humility he recovered the favor of the Holy See and was sent back to his diocese with honor.

Henry of Lausanne

The errors of Gilbert de la Porrée remained more or less within the walls of the schoolroom; but the pernicious preaching of Henry of Lausanne, an apostate monk, gangrened entire provinces in the south of France. Exploiting beyond measure certain isolated scandals of particular priests, he drew the sweeping conclusion that the sacraments and prayers of the Church were useless. He denied, moreover, that baptism was of any effect for infants, rejected the worship of the Cross, forbade prayers for the dead, condemned public ceremonies of the Church, and proscribed above all things the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. What helped to gain a hearing for all these errors was his attractive personality. He was young, insinuating, of distinguished manners, and eloquent. Furthermore, he was poor, of austere habits, walked barefooted even in winter: in a word, he had all the externals of sanctity. In reality, however, these were only a cloak for a dissolute life.

What made matters worse was the fact that the clergy which Henry attacked with such violence could not reduce him to silence either by its virtue or its science. For in spite of the regulations of councils and the efforts of popes, the many weaknesses and great ignorance of the priests of France at the time of which we are speaking furnished a ready background for the charges of the enemies of the Church.

City after city heard the wild diatribes of this renegade monk and fell victim to his eloquence. St. Bernard has left us a sad picture of the effects of his preaching. "What do we see? Churches without congregations, congregations without priests, priests without the reverence due to them, Christians without Christ. The churches are regarded as synagogues; the sanctuary of God is no longer considered holy; the sacraments have been robbed of their sacred character. Men are dying daily in their sins, and souls are being hurried to judgment. The life that comes from Christ is withheld, with the grace of baptism, from children of Christian parents; they are forbidden to approach the Savior."

It did not take St. Bernard long to deliberate as to the best way to act. Refutation and argument he saw, were out of place; another kind of polemic was needed. God's mercy was required here in superabundance. And he set himself to obtain it by prayer. Owing to a recent illness, he was the picture of death. Pale and emaciated, he could scarely drag one foot after the other. However, under this outward appearance his piercing eyes still burned bright and his voice was as vibrant as ever.

His first conquest was Bordeaux. In this city there was a domestic schism. For five years the clergy had been in open revolt against their archbishop, whom they forced to withdraw from the diocese. Our saint simply showed himself. Crowds gathered around him. Then raising his voice he pleaded the cause of right and justice with irresistible eloquence, showing how perilous to souls was the present difference between shepherd and flock. At once minds were set at peace. The canons themselves were the first to accord the concessions he asked of them, and thereupon the archbishop returned to his diocese.

Our saint went from place to place preaching the word of God and working miracles without number, almost recklessly. At Sarlat an apparent imprudence gave his companions a shock. After preaching to the multitudes against the errors of Henry, he was offered some bread to bless. Making the sign of the cross over the food he cried out:

"Here is a test by which you shall know whether or not I tell you the truth and the heretics teach falsehood. All amongst you who eat this bread shall have health restored to them."

"That is if they eat with true faith," interposed the Bishop of Chartres, fearful lest Bernard was going too far.

"No, no," replied the saint quickly, "I make no condition. I promise that whosoever eats this bread shall be cured."

The promise was verified to the letter. Countless cures were wrought in the town and district by the blessed bread. As a consequence the holy abbot found it difficult to travel about because of the multitudes that accompanied him.

Thus, one by one the cities and districts of Languedoc with but one exception, Verfeil, turned from error and came back to the bosom of Holy Church. Under God, the man who effected this was St. Bernard.

Arnold of Brescia

Arnold of Brescia, a disciple of Abelard, teaching a strange potpourri of philosophy and politics, sought to reestablish the Roman Republic, at the same time that he tried to propagate the rationalist doctrines of his master. He taught that the clergy should not have any temporal possessions, and should be content with alms, like the Apostles. He advocated an absolute separation between the temporal and the spiritual; for him only the prince or state had the right to possess. His preaching so excited the Roman people that they maltreated the bishops and cardinals in every possible way and seized their property. St. Bernard followed all the movements of this Twelfth Century Mazzini with untiring vigilance. By his letters he had the demagogue expelled from France, then from Switzerland, where he had taken refuge. He also wrote to the people of Rome, but apparently without much success. Troubles in the East would soon engage his attention, in fact, the attention of all Europe.

Councils

We have now to speak of another rôle that brought out the personality of our saint in a very conspicuous manner — the part he played in the councils of the Church. The Abbe Sanvert says very correctly: "Whenever he enters an episcopal council, he fills it. He stands alone there, representing the entire Church. His gestures are guideposts, his pronouncements almost articles of faith. Where others have to grope their way, his step is sure, and he goes straight on." In speaking of the Schism we have already noticed his preponderating influence in deciding the allegiance of the French Church to Innocent. Likewise we have seen the leading part he took in the councils that condemned Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée. A few more may be mentioned to emphasize the influence he wielded over his contemporaries.

For the purpose of making it evident that the world acknowledged him as the successor of St. Peter, Innocent summoned a great council to meet at Rheims in the month of October, 1131. Thirteen archbishops, two hundred and sixty-three bishops, and a large number of abbots of various orders from different nations of Europe answered the call. King Louis of France was present in person; the sovereigns of Germany, Spain and England were represented by their ambassadors. The council sat for fifteen days. It proclaimed Innocent the rightful successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Jesus Christ, anathematized Anacletus and his adherents, and defined the relations between Church and State in several matters of importance. Of this council, which embraced all the elite of Christian Europe, St. Bernard was the outstanding figure, the oracle.

Again Pope Innocent summoned a council to meet at Pisa on May 30, 1135. For some unknown reason, King Louis, being at variance with the Pope, forbade the bishops of his realm to leave the country. This act drew forth a vigorous protest from St. Bernard.

"Earthly crowns and royal prerogatives remain safe and secure to their owners," he wrote to the king, "so long as these latter remain faithful to God by not resisting His decrees and appointments. Why is Your Majesty's wrath enkindled against Innocent, the elect of God, whom you recently welcomed into your kingdom and chose as a father for yourself and as another Samuel for your son? Herein the royal indignation is turned, not against outsiders, but against your own house and your own best interests. . . . A council has been convoked. How does that injure your royal glory or the interests of your crown?... Now, although I am the very least of your subjects — in dignity, I mean, not in fidelity — I will make bold to tell you this: it is not expedient for Your Majesty to place obstacles in the way of so great and so necessary a good.... If anything has been done by the Supreme Pontiff that causes you displeasure, your loyal subjects will do their utmost to defend your honor, and I in particular promise to em-

ploy for the same purpose whatever influence I possess." The king heeded this advice and allowed his subjects to depart without further trouble. Although the Pope himself attended this council, Bernard was, as he had been in so many others, its unquestioned oracle. Indeed, his influence had grown since the Council of Rheims. "The holy abbot," writes one of his biographers, "had part in all the enactments, judgments, and decisions. His door was constantly besieged by a multitude of churchmen, each waiting his turn for audience; so that the man of God, who out of humility avoided every honor, seemed to possess not a part but the plenitude of the ecclesiastical patronage."

Political Influence

During the schism, the Emperor Lothair was the only sovereign in Europe who could oppose King Roger of Sicily with any hope of success. But the Emperor was just then engaged in a life and death struggle with Duke Conrad of Hohenstaufen, who for ten years had been trying to wrest the scepter from his hands. It looked very much as though Roger would extend his conquests without any serious opposition, for under the circumstances no help could be expected from Germany. The thought occurred to Innocent that the only hope of bringing peace to Germany lay in St. Bernard, whose powers of persuasion were almost irresistible. Accordingly, at the beginning of the year 1135 our saint received the command to go into Germany as papal legate and there work for the restoration of peace between the warring factions.

Though sadly in need of rest, Bernard obeyed without a word of remonstrance. The result was that Conrad and his brother Frederick gave up the hopeless struggle and were reconciled to the Emperor. Having obtained what he had gone into Germany for, Bernard now urged Lothair to march into Italy against Roger. The Emperor promised to do this the next year. Thus our saint left Lothair free to oppose Roger, and at the same time deprived Anacletus of a powerful ally. For it was but natural that Conrad had supported the antipope; antipope and antiem-

peror worked together. In this instance St. Bernard again weakened the Schism in a very material way.

Some time before the Council of Pisa opened (1135) a deputation of clerics and laymen from Milan waited on Bernard and invited him to their city. A revolution had taken place against the party of Conrad and the antipope, and their archbishops, who had sided with Anacletus, had been driven out. They wanted Bernard to set things in order. Another deputation from the same city waited on Pope Innocent whilst the council was sitting and begged him to approve the action of their fellow citizens, and to send them some person of eloquence and authority to complete what they had done. It was quite plain whom they wanted. The Pope promised to send them St. Bernard on the conclusion of the council. Accordingly when the council was over, our saint, accompanied by three papal legates, took his way to the city of St. Ambrose.

Reception at Milan

The reception he received from the Milanese surpassed any that had ever been given him. When news of his approach reached the city, the whole population, noble and peasant, rich and poor, streamed through the gates and advanced seven miles to meet him. For them he was the man of God, the miracle worker, an angel of peace, the powerful advocate who would protect them from the wrath of the Emperor and reconcile them to the Vicar of Christ. Milan owed allegiance to the Roman Emperor. But having sided with the antipope, who acknowledged the claims of Duke Conrad, they had hiterto refused to recognize Lothair and had supported his rival. Now that Lothair's right was established beyond dispute, they began to fear his vengeance. And they had good reason to fear it; for the cities of Suabia had suffered terrible chastisement for a like offense. The one hope of the Milanese was in Bernard's mediation. Through him also they hoped to be reinstated in the favor of Innocent, whose authority they had up till then repudiated.

No wonder they welcomed the Abbot of Clairvaux as an angel from heaven. Meeting him at

the seventh milestone, they showed their reverence for him in a way that embarrassed the saint quite a little. For a while the mighty multitude seemed determined either to crush or suffocate him. "Everyone wanted to see the man of God," says one of his biographers, "and those were accounted fortunate who heard the sound of his voice. All desired to kiss his feet — which greatly annoyed him. Nevertheless, try as much as he would, he could not prevent it. Some plucked threads from his habit, which they piously preserved and used as remedies against diseases; for they regarded as holy everything he touched." Thus he advanced in triumph towards the city, preceded and followed by a shouting multitude.

Milan was Bernard's, and his will was law. The people were, of course, as unanimous in favor of Innocent as if they had never heard of Anacletus. Just as readily did they acknowledge the authority of Lothair, and agreed to make due satisfaction for any injury they might have done to him. The anathema could now be lifted from them.

To make this act of reconciliation with the Pope and Emperor more impressive, our saint imparted to it all the solemnity possible. He assembled the people and their rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, in the venerable cathedral of St. Ambrose and there celebrated Mass in their presence. After publicly taking the oath of allegiance to Innocent and Lothair, all, clergy and laity alike, received Holy Communion from his hands.

When departing for Milan, Bernard had received instructions not to reconcile the Milanese to the Church until they had renounced their allegiance to Conrad. This our saint observed; but he went further. Presuming on the clemency of the Emperor, he promised the repentant people a full and free pardon in the Emperor's name, a thing which he had not been authorized to do. He realized that he was overstepping his orders, and wrote at once to have his act ratified: "It would be unworthy of Your Majesty," he wrote to Lothair, "to put to shame your loyal subjects, who never miss a chance

to promote the interests of your crown. But I shall be put to shame if (which God forbid) you show yourself inexorable to these good people, whom I, presuming on your goodness, have rejoiced with the promise of pardon." He was not put to shame; the Emperor approved all he had done.

What heightened the influence of St. Bernard over the Milanese was the power of miracles he exercised in favor of the sick of the city and neighboring country. At his request the rulers of the city released a number of prisoners of war, and consented to make peace with the cities of Pavia, Piacenza, and Cremona, with which they were at war. His word was law for them.

See of Milan Offered to Bernard

The day before Saint Bernard was to leave Milan, the clergy and people held a meeting to choose a successor to the schismatical Archbishop Anslem, who had been deposed. Suddenly someone cried out: "Bernard for archbishop!" With wild enthusiasm the cry was taken up and spread throughout the assembly. Soon the entire city was gathered under the saint's window, shouting with all their strength: "Bernard for archbishop!" He did not know what to do. To refuse them bluntly, he would not think of; for he did not want to offend them. However, as Milan was one of the most important cities of Italy and one it was imperative to keep loyal to the pope, it was quite possible that the latter could be prevailed upon to order Bernard to accept the dignity. Hence our saint had to proceed with caution. To free himself he resorted to an innocent ruse.

"Tomorrow," he said, "I will mount my horse at the gates of the city. If the animal turns round and re-enters the city, I will be your archbishop; but if it heads for the country, that will be a sign that I am not to be your archbishop." The proposal was accepted.

The next morning a great concourse of people gathered at the appointed place. Mounting into the saddle, our saint told the people to stand aside and leave ample room for the horse to go which way it would. Having obtained this, he

at once dug his heels into the animal's sides and off it sped on the road for Pavia. Too late did the Milanese realize that Bernard had eluded them. Never was he so near becoming a bishop.

The Crusade

On Christmas Day, 1144, the city of Edessa fell into the hands of the Emir Zenghi. It was feared, and with good reason, that Jerusalem, which was then ruled by Baldwin, a boy of twelve years, would soon succumb to the same fate unless help came from Europe. What made matters worse was the fact that at Jerusalem there were dissensions among the leaders themselves. Matters looked pretty dark for the East.

Not long after, Pope Eugene received a visit from the Bishop of Gabala in Syria, who earnestly begged the Holy Father to send help to the tottering kingdom of Baldwin. The Pope, who was then in exile at Viterbo, received them kindly and promised to do his utmost to enlist the interest of the sovereigns of Europe. About the same time envoys from the Orient arrived at the court of Louis VII, begging him for immediate help. They likewise received sympathetic consideration.

Louis, whose conscience continually tormented him for crimes committed in a war he had waged against one of his counts, especially for the burning of Vitry, gladly seized the idea of a crusade as a means of expiating his sins. During the ceremony of his coronation, which took place at Bourges, December 25, 1145, he publicly announced his intention of leading an expedition against the Saracens. However, his enthusiasm was not shared by his court. From the bishops and nobles, the king received only sterile tears. Abbot Suger, the regent — prime minister he would be called today — was formally opposed to the project. The king then referred the matter to Bernard to decide what course was to be pursued. But St. Bernard was too humble to decide such a question by himself; it was not for him but for the Sovereign Pontiff to decide that.

Pope Eugene, however, heartily approved the design of Louis. As a matter of fact, he had al-

ready issued a bull addressed to Louis in which he called upon the faithful of France to arm for the defense of the Holy Sepulcher, imparting to all who took the cross the same spiritual favors that had been granted by Urban II to the first crusaders. Though he earnestly desired to go in person to France to inaugurate this work, he was detained by troubles in Italy. He commissioned the Abbot of Clairvaux to do this for him and to preach the Holy War throughout Europe.

It must not be imagined for a moment that St. Bernard had an easy task before him. As a matter of fact the mentality of his age was dead against a crusade, and this made his success all the more remarkable. The most outstanding obstacle was the great church-building epoch, which had just begun. The religious sentiment of the times found an outlet for its devotion in rearing stately cathedrals to the glory of God, a work in which all engaged, rich and poor, young and old. The people were satisfied with this and felt no need for a distant war. Moreover, the principal European states — Germany, France, England, Italy — were torn asunder by civil wars. Then, too, the authority of the Holy See had been weakened by the eight years' schism; even a great many of the bishops discountenanced the project. Added to this was the rise of many municipalities which had just declared themselves independent, thereby causing tense friction between the clergy and the citizenry. Finally, heresy had caused widespread corruption.

But no degree of apathy could dampen the energy of St. Bernard; nothing could resist the fire and enthusiasm of his eloquence. The crowds listened to him as to one inspired; all their prejudices were soon forgotten, all their doubts cleared away. He spoke, they said, with the voice of an angel, he was the living oracle of heaven. He was irresistible.

Meeting at Vezelay

To open this great campaign with fitting eclat, a general assembly of all that was most noble in France was convoked to meet at Vezelay, in Burgundy, on Palm Sunday, March 31, 1146.

No church being large enough to contain the enormous gathering, the proceedings were conducted in the open air: Having invoked the Holy Ghost, St. Bernard, mounted on a wooden tribune, which had been erected for the occasion, with the king on one side of him and the queen on the other, opened the proceedings by reading the papal bull which authorized him to preach the new crusade. As people looked up at him on that memorable day, and saw his haggard appearance — his body broken by suffering and reduced almost to a skeleton by fasting and sickness — they must have thought within themselves that of all the men in France he was the most unfit for the task that was before him. However, no sooner had he opened his mouth and his clear vibrant voice rippled over that sea of upturned faces, then they realized the right man was in the right place. Within that frail frame throbbed the heart of a giant. Both faith and patriotism kindled within his soul an enthusiasm of which he was not always the master, and which soon fired the chivalric sons of France. So far as the mobilization of a huge army was concerned and hurling it like a catapult on the East, the success of the Second Crusade seemed assured.

The address opened with a graphic description of the critical situation in the Orient. After this the speaker, with all the eloquence at his command, urged and exhorted the chivalry of France and Europe to take the field against the enemies of Christ. The address is said to have been the saint's greatest oratorical achievement. Unfortunately, not a single authentic vestige of it has come down to us. Historians, however, tell of the effect it had on his audience. Carried away with enthusiasm, the people interrupted the speaker with: "The Cross, the Cross! God wills it! God wills it!" When at last he had finished, they pressed forward to receive the cross from his hands. Queen Eleanor was the first to kneel at his feet and to receive the sacred symbol. Next came the king's brother and uncle, afterwards the great nobles with their ladies, a number of bishops, finally the knights and men at arms without number. The huge pile of crosses that had been prepared for the occasion

was soon exhausted, and still the volunteers came pressing forward. Rather than disappoint them, the saint tore his cowl into shreds in order to make crosses. A number of miracles, which the saint performed, increased the general enthusiasm, and seemed to prove that the crusade was the work of God.

During the following weeks the saint preached the crusade in the principal towns of Burgundy and the neighboring provinces. Miracles everywhere confirmed his word and added to his reputation for sanctity. The whole kingdom of France was soon on fire. Two months after the assembly at Vezelay, St. Bernard wrote to Eugene: "You have commanded and I have obeyed; the command of authority has made my obedience fruitful, for with regard to the soldiers of the cross: 'I have announced and I have spoken; they are multiplied above number.' Towns and villages are emptied of their inhabitants; hardly will you find one man to seven women, whilst the country is full of widows whose husbands are still alive."

Letters to Distant Countries

Far from being content with preaching the crusade as eloquently as he was able, our saint endeavored to extend his influence and widen his activity by means of burning letters. These written exhortations were sent to Greece, Italy, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Moravia, Bohemia, Bavaria, Sicily, and England. Taken as a whole they vary very little; hence they may be regarded as copies of an encyclical. As none of his crusade speeches have come down to us, these letters are all that is left to indicate the molten words that flowed from his inspired lips.

The following extracts are taken from the one addressed to the Bavarians, who were then enduring the miseries of a civil war:

"Brethren, 'behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation. The earth hath shook and trembled!' because the Lord of heaven hath begun to lose the land that is peculiarly His own. Peculiarly His own, I say, because therein for more than thirty years the Father's invisible Word made Himself visible,

instructed the people, and as a man conversed among men. Peculiarly His own, I repeat, forasmuch as He hath glorified it with His miracles, consecrated it with His blood, adorned it with the first flowers of His glorious resurrection. And now, on account of our sins, the enemies of the Cross have uplifted their blasphemous standard and devastated with fire and sword the Holy Land, the Land of Promise. Soon, unless effectively opposed, they will burst into the city of the living God, to destroy the precious memorials of our redemption and defile the holy places, once empurpled with the blood of the immaculate Lamb.

"Ye gallant knights, what will you do? What will you do, ye Christian soldiers? Am I to think you will give to the dogs that which is holy, and pearls to the swine? Oh, what multitudes of sinners, confessing their offenses with sorrow, have in the Holy Land been reconciled to God, since the swords of Christians drove thence the foul pagans!... Were it announced that the enemy had entered your cities and violated your homes, had outraged your families and profaned your churches, which of you would not fly to arms? Will you do less for the honor of Jesus Christ? For all these evils, evils still worse, have befallen His family, of which you are members. The Savior's household have been scattered by the swords of the Saracens; the barbarians have thrown down the house of God and divided His inheritance amongst them. And will you hesitate to undo so much mischief, to avenge so much wrong? Will you suffer the infidels to contemplate in peace the widespread ruin they have wrought amongst us, the Christian people? Remember that their triumph will be the cause of inconsolable grief to generations yet unborn, and an everlasting disgrace to us who permitted it. And what is more, the living God has charged me to proclaim that He will take revenge upon such as refuse to defend Him against His foes. To arms, then! Let a holy indignation animate you to the combat."

The letter concludes with a reminder of what happened to the expedition commanded by Peter the Hermit, and an exhortation to the

Germans to act in unison and follow none but leaders of experience and skill.

In an assembly held at Chartres, the third Sunday after Easter, St. Bernard was unanimously chosen as commander-in-chief of the expeditition. He refused absolutely to think of the post, and begged Eugene III to support him in his refusal. This the Pope did. The choice, however, shows how highly St. Bernard was esteemed for his ability by his contemporaries.

Germany

Though our saint's success in France in enrolling soldiers for the crusade was stupendous, it seemed as though he was going to meet with failure in Germany. True indeed, the Emperor Conrad was indebted to Bernard for more than one favor and held the saint in the highest veneration, nevertheless he was far from being overly inclined toward the crusade. On being pressed by the holy abbot to take up the cross, he emphatically and firmly refused to do so. The reasons he alleged were the disrupted state of affairs in Germany; the Romans were then in revolt against the Pope, and as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, it was his duty to quell the disturbance; and finally there were troubles in Sicily. However, he would not in any way hamper the saint in preaching the crusade in Germany.

St. Bernard was not easily discouraged. There was a meeting, a general diet of the bishops and nobles of Germany, to meet on Christmas Day at Spires for the ceremony of Conrad's coronation and to concert measures for the peace of the empire. The chance of preaching the holy war to the flower of the Teutonic chivalry, which he esteemed so highly, Bernard would not miss. He accordingly betook himself to Spires.

Entrance into Spires

His entrance into Spires was an imposing event. The bishop, followed by his clergy and the people issued forth to meet the servant of God in processional order with crosses and banners. Then followed the various guilds, carrying distinctive banners adorned with particular badges of their trade or profession. He was con-

ducted through the streets to the door of the cathedral with the singing of hymns and the pealing of bells. Here the Emperor Conrad with the German princes magnificently attired awaited him and received him with royal honor. An immense multitude thronged the place, all eager to catch a glimpse of the wonder-worker, the glance of whose eye was supposed to cure the maladies of soul or body. The procession advanced from the great door of the cathedral to the choir, joyfully chanting the "Salve Regina." The holy abbot walked in the middle with the Emperor at his side. As the last echoes of the beautiful anthem died out, our saint, in a burst of love for his heavenly Mother, exclaimed: "O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Maria," genuflecting after each aspiration. Ever since, the triple invocation has formed part of the "Salve."

After the coronation ceremonies, our saint mounted the pulpit and eagerly pressed Conrad and cavaliers to arm themselves for the holy war. But his words evoked no response. Saddened but not discouraged by this check, his third, our saint in a private audience with the Emperor made one more attack. Conrad, having exhausted all his arguments, finally promised to submit the question to his council and would give a definite answer on the morrow. This did not satisfy the zealous preacher, though he did not say anything then. Later in the day he celebrated Mass in the presence of Conrad and his court. Suddenly, without any intimation of what he was doing, he faced the congregation and began to preach on his favorite topic, the holy war. Describing in graphic terms the woes of the Eastern Church, he begged them to fly to the help of Jerusalem. In a sublime peroration he summoned Conrad before the judgment-seat of Christ to give an account of his stewardship. Speaking in the name of the Sovereign Judge, he enumerated all the favors God had bestowed on him: wealth, a crown, strength of body and power of mind. He then went on: "O man, what else is there that I ought to have done for you that I have not done?" The Emperor's resistance broke. Casting himself on his knees he cried out with tears and sobs that he was willing to obey the call of his Savior. The people, with Frederic

Barbarossa at their head, the princes and the clergy applauded this declaration and, following Conrad's example, likewise enrolled themselves in the crusade.

The Emperor had one anxiety still. He feared lest his rival, Duke Henry of Bavaria, might take advantage of his prolonged absence to usurp the crown. Here again Bernard came to the rescue. He persuaded Henry and his supporters likewise to take up the cross. Thus Germany was solid for the crusade, and at the same time its intestine dissensions were healed to the satisfaction of Conrad. St. Bernard was now at liberty to return to France.

Pan-European Movement

Emboldened by the success that had thus far blessed his efforts, the Abbot of Clairvaux conceived the idea of extending to the whole of western Europe his preaching, and in this way might be enlisted in the army of the Cross England, Spain, Italy, Bohemia, Bavaria, later on also Moravia, Poland and Denmark. Limited as he was by the very necessity of the case to the place where he actually happened to be, he multiplied himself by his letters and envoys. As Cistercian monasteries were scattered all over Europe in those days, they furnished him with reliable men to execute his designs. For instance, the Cistercian Abbot, Adam of Ebrach, replaced Bernard at the Diet of Ratisbonne, reading to the assembly the saint's letter and the papal Bull. Thus it came about that from the Elbe in northern Germany to the Tagus in Spain, from the Thames in England to Mount Etna in Italy, all the peoples were armed, were animated by one common objective, and were conducted by one and the same idea — the conquest or at least the safety of the Holy Land. And this grandiose manifestation of faith was in great part the work of a single man, St. Bernard.

The Emperor departed for the East in the month of May, 1147; King Louis followed him in June of the same year. Naturally enough, the hopes of the crusades as well as the hopes of all Europe were in the highest degree optimistic. Unfortunately, these hopes were doomed to frightful disillusionment.

To make a long and sad story short: weakened by disease and famine, and betrayed by the Greeks, the troops of Conrad and Louis were soon cut to pieces by the Mussulmans. Although heroic feats of courage were performed by both German and French Crusaders, they were unable under the circumstances to hold their own. Only a few thousand men, the remnant of what had been the greatest army Europe had ever seen, finally succeeded in regaining their native land. The hour to ascend his Calvary had sounded for St. Bernard.

In July, 1149, after a short stay at Rome, King Louis landed on the coast of France. He returned with a few hundred knights. Twenty-eight months before he had left at the head of over a hundred thousand men.

The return of the King confirmed all fears and renewed all sorrows. There was scarcely a family that did not have some loss to deplore, and never before were there so many widows and orphans in France. The lamentations were general. Instead of considering the sins which might have caused the fatal issue of the Crusade, public opinion seized upon one man, upon him who had been the soul and prime mover of the great enterprise — St. Bernard. In the first moments of stupor, even his most devoted friends were at a loss to meet these accusations. They beheld the present evils; even his miracles, which had appeared to authorize the crusade, became a subject of scandal. As for St. Bernard, he silently endured all the humiliations that were heaped upon him, adoring the inscrutable judgments of God. He waited a whole year before he sent to the Pope a few words in his own defense.

But he had his apologists. Otto of Freising, for instance, half-brother of Conrad, who, although a monk and a bishop, commanded a division of the German crusaders, wrote: "If we say that the holy abbot was inspired by God to animate us to this war and that we, by our pride and licentiousness, always disregarded his salutary councils, and have therefore reaped the fruit of our own excesses in the loss of men and goods, we shall say nothing that is not con-

formable to reason and justified by examples from antiquity."

IV. LITERARY LIFE

St. Bernard's leadership over the century in which he lived was supreme in degree and universal in extent. There was no ecclesiastical matter of any importance, no difference to be composed, no religious enterprise upon which he was not consulted. In matters political his influence was almost as decisive. And when death withdrew him from this world, his writings perpetuated both his memory and the sway his personality and genius had exercised over his contemporaries. As a matter of fact the influence of his writings has never waned from his death till the present day. Judging from the number of translations and editions that have come out, the present generation seems to be as appreciative of his works as the ages that have preceded us. With the sole exception of St. Augustine, the works of no other father of the Church have been so often re-edited either in whole or in part as those of St. Bernard.

Before classifying his works, we may say that on everything which our saint wrote he impressed his own personality. Perhaps to no other ancient writer may Buffon's aphorism of style, "Style is the man himself," be more justly applied than to him. It is impossible to read a page of any of his treatises or of his sermons, particularly of those dealing with the Divine Person of Jesus Christ or with His Blessed Mother, without falling under the charm of his pure and noble soul. There is in his writings a sweetness that goes straight to the heart. We feel at once that he well deserves the title which has been given him, "Doctor Mellifluus," the doctor whose writings distill honey, or the honey-tongued doctor. From this one must not conclude that Bernard is sweet and nothing more; that he is ever and always sweet. On the contrary, his thought is at times fiery, full of imagery, captivating; his style is lively, concise, impetuous. With a strange vigor his phrase follows the movement of a mind that really seeks truth, struggles with it in order to grasp

it, and, having finally succeeded, anchors it down with some bold and noble stroke.

Moreover, though our saint produced honey, he, beelike, also had a sting, and a sting that was at times terrific. No one attacks error in any shape or form with more vigor than this honey-tongued doctor. When he pursues heresy, schism, corrupt morals, or injustice, his pen resembles one of those eighty-ton war tanks, which hammers until, making a breach, it ultimately destroys the obstacle before it.

One more characteristic of his style is his skill in the use of Holy Scripture. Not only do quotations from Scripture abound in his writings, and not only are they always cited with great appositeness, but he has the knack of so weaving the sacred text into his discourse that it expresses his very thoughts for him. According to Leo XIII, St. Bernard in the allegorical exposition of Scripture is pre-eminent.

We may truly say of him that he is so agreeable, so vigorous, so full of the Word of God, so varied in his treatment of his subjects, that his writings are most attractive. This is the verdict, not only of Catholic writers and critics, but likewise of non-Catholics.

Time has not lessened their attractiveness. Pope Pius XI, writing to the superiors general of religious orders and congregations of men, exhorts the masters of novices to offer their charges for careful reading and consideration the works of Saints Bernard and Bonaventure, and also those of Alphonsus Rodriguez. "The power and efficacy of these works," says the Holy Father, "far from becoming stale with time, seem to have even increased with it" (Act. Ap. Sedis, vol. 16, page 142).

1. Letters

The voluminous correspondence of St. Bernard, a notable part of which has been preserved (five hundred thirty-three letters) is perhaps the most precious historical and literary monument of the Middle Ages. These letters give us an idea of his prodigious and varied activity, and are at the same time an index of his unrivaled influence. He is ubiquitous. When

reading these letters, there seem to pass before us monks, abbots, bishops, cardinals, patriarchs, popes, princes, ministers, kings, emperors, the elite of the lay and of the ecclesiastical society of his times. This correspondence gives a graphic picture of the Abbot of Clairvaux and his century. Is there an important question inside or outside the Church to be treated of, a danger to be pointed out, a peril to be avoided, an error to be refuted, a holy war to be preached, a quarrel to be settled, a conversion or reconciliation to be effected, an affair to be conducted at the court of Rome or elsewhere? Bernard is always at hand and is prepared. He is the one to whom all appeal, whom all go out into the desert to find for the task. He must come, speak, and in the final analysis decide the question. For he is the great referee of things human and divine; he is the master of Christians and the guide of the Holy See.

By his words he contributes to the conversion of Abbot Suger and the Archbishop of Sens. He defends the interests of Bishop Stephen of Paris against King Louis le Gros. The Prior of St. Victor of Paris and the underdean of the Chapter of Orleans are assassinated, falling victims of hatred and envy. Our saint pursues the assassins and has no rest until they are brought to justice. He has a watchful eye on the usurpations of bishops; in his capacity of legate he removes from the See of Tours an unworthy archbishop. He gives counsel to the Archbishop of Rouen, supports the Bishop of Troyes in his efforts at reform, obtains the pallium for the Archbishop of Lyons, asks the same favor for the Archbishop of Rheims, who has been deprived of it, and recommends to the Pope a large number of prelates. He is, in a word, the very soul and life of the French clergy.

But his influence is not confined within the limits of France. He is in correspondence with the Archbishops of Cologne, Mayence, Treves, York, Winchester, and Canterbury; with the Bishops of Lausanne, Geneva, Constance, London, Lincoln, Rochester, and Salamanca; with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the cardinals of the court of Rome. A scandal is given at York.

The holy abbot is alarmed and writes at once to the college of cardinals: "We are burned up with sorrow, so much so that we are even tired of life. We see in the house of God abuses that fill us with horror, and since we cannot correct them, we address ourselves to you upon whom this charge devolves. If this matter is remedied, well and good; if not, at least our conscience will be free. As for you, you will have no excuse."

The truth is that there was no one man in Europe in his day that wielded such power. St. Bernard is the arbiter of peoples and princes. For proof of this statement, we have only to read his letters to the Genoese, the Pisans, the Milanese, and the citizens of Toulouse. We have only to consider his relations with the Counts of Champagne, the Dukes of Burgundy and Aquitaine, the Duchess of Lorraine and the Countess of Bretagne, the Queen of Jerusalem, the Kings of France and England, the Emperors Conrad and Lothair.

The higher the man to whom he addresses himself is by reason of his rank or dignity, the freer he is and the more severe in his language. Louis VI had a certain favorite, Stephen de Garlande, who was an archdeacon and at the same time seneschal (steward of the king's feasts). This combination was a source of scandal to the kingdom. St. Bernard was loud and unsparing in his denunciation of the man who "would unite the offices of cleric and cavalier, and wound up by being neither one nor the other." An archbishop renders himself hated by his hardness of heart. "I had resolved," writes St. Bernard, "not to write to you. But charity finally prevailed. You multiply the number of those who accuse you; you diminish the number of those who defend you; you provoke adversaries. Do you think for a moment that justice has been banished from the face of the earth because it is banished from your heart?" The majestic person of the Sovereign Pontiff himself did not intimidate our saint when there was anything serious or against truth or justice. Whenever or wherever questions arose that involved these two virtues, or where the salvation of souls or the honor of the Church of Christ

was involved, Bernard was swayed by no human consideration. He was absolutely fearless, cost what it might.

Putting aside his letters, which are in a class by themselves, the works of Saint Bernard may be classified under three heads, dogmatic, moral and oratorical.

2. Dogmatic Writings

There are three works in this class: the Treatise against Abelard, the one on Grace and Free Will, and the one on Baptism. In a booklet of this size it is out of question to give even an outline of them; let us say just a word about his treatise against Abelard.

Written originally as a letter (Letter 190) to Pope Innocent II, it has been classed among the treatises because of its length. Considered as a whole the work is unquestionably one of the most brilliant polemical essays in ecclesiastical literature. "Here," says Vacandard, one of the latest and perhaps the best of our saint's biographers, "Bernard displays all the suppleness of his intelligence. Notwithstanding his disdain for the subtleties of Plato and Aristotle, he shows marvelous skill in the use of dialectics." "It is to the Apostolic See we must turn," St. Bernard begins, "as often as any dangers or scandals arise in the kingdom of God, more particularly in matters which belong to the faith. For it seems to me that errors in faith can nowhere be so well corrected as there where the true faith can never be lost." He then takes up Abelard's errors, and refutes them, one by one.

3. Moral Writings

In the second class of our saint's works we have the following treatises: The degrees of Humility and Pride, Love of God, Apology, Manners and Obligations of Bishops, Conversion, Praise of the Knights Templars, Precept and Dispensation, The Life of St. Malachy, and Consideration, addressed to Pope Eugene III. The last of these will be considered here.

The Treatise of Consideration (a catechism for popes, as it was styled by one pope) whether judged by its intrinsic merits or the influence it has exerted on the history of the Church,

must unquestionably be ranked among the foremost books of the Middle Ages. It is the work by which St. Bernard is best known. Nowhere else is the astonishing versatility of his genius so strikingly displayed. To quote from Dom Mabillon, O.S.B.: "Amongst all the writings of St. Bernard there is nothing that appeared more worthy of him than the five Books of Consideration, composed for Pope Eugene III. If you look to the greatness of the subject treated, to the dignity of the person addressed, you can find nothing more noble; if you look to the manner of treatment, nothing more sublime; if to the majesty of style and the depth and vigor of thought, nothing more eloquent, nothing more powerful; if, finally, you consider the doctrine contained in these books, its conformity to the sacred canons, the propriety of the language in which it is expressed, there can be nothing more worthy of a Catholic doctor and a most holy Father of the Church. Yet what could be more difficult for one who had lived in solitude, a stranger to the pursuits and occupations of the world, than thus to lay down and, as it were, prescribe rules of conduct for the Sovereign Pontiff, yea, for the whole Church of God?... So great was the skill or charm, or rather the God-given authority of our saint, that ever since their first publication these Books of Consideration have been eagerly sought after, everybody reading them, and rereading them, even the popes who are here taken to task with such unsparing severity."

As a matter of fact, this work has been a special favorite with the Sovereign Pontiffs. St. Pius V (1566–72) and his successor Gregory XIII (1572–85) held it in such esteem that they had it read to them whilst they took their meals. It was equally prized by Nicholas V (1447–55), by Urban VII (September 15–27, 1590) and by Gregory XIV (1590–91). The last named wished it in the hands of all ecclesiastics, especially prelates; and for this purpose conceived the design of publishing it in a separate volume. The immense circulation of the work may be estimated from the fact that, at the close of the Nineteenth Century, it had run through five hundred editions.

As a matter of fact, it is a sublime work, which, placing the pope at the very center of Catholicism, shows us under every possible point of view the immense plan of the Church and its vast dimensions. The idea of the work is that of the reformation of the Church by the development of the internal and quickening power of the papacy. According to our saint, the healing of the Church was to begin and end with the pope. "Thy consideration," he says, "must begin with thyself and end with thyself. Thou must first consider thyself, then the things below thee, next the things around thee, and lastly the things above thee. These four great perspectives embrace the whole universe and indicate the principal divisions of the work.

4. Oratorical Writings

The extant sermons of St. Bernard number three hundred and forty, and may be divided into four classes:

1. Eighty-six deal with the seasons of the liturgical year;
2. Forty-three with the Blessed Virgin and the saints;
3. One hundred twenty-five deal with various subjects;
4. Eighty-six on the Canticle of Canticles.

We shall make a few remarks on the last class. Our saint began them in the year 1135. Instead of considering the Canticle of Canticles as the nuptial song that Solomon composed to celebrate his union with the daughter of Pharao, St. Bernard considers it as the nuptial song of the Word (Verbum) with the Sacred Humanity, of Christ with His Church, or of Christ with the individual soul. He treats these subjects not in a dry, didactic manner, as a commentator, but rather as a preacher; consequently he takes all the liberties of a preacher. He does not hold himself down to the literal meaning of the text. As a matter of fact, very often he uses the text merely as a starting point or suggestion for discoursing on all the phases of the spiritual life. Taking the soul from its initiation into the supernatural life by baptism, he traces its progress up to its transformation into the image of

the Word made Flesh. Whatever the holy doctor has written elsewhere concerning the virtues and vices and the spiritual life is contained in his sermons on the Canticle of Canticles. All this he repeats with greater solidity and elevation of style. Unfortunately, he never completed the entire song. As a matter of fact, his eighty-six sermons bring us up to only the first verse of the third chapter, not much more than one third of the entire Song.

Of these sermons the late Cardinal Gasparri says: "Amongst the many precious writings of St. Bernard, the first place must undoubtedly be given to his sublime and mystical exposition of the Canticle of Canticles. Herein, with a style of surpassing sweetness, he explains the hidden senses of Scripture, intermingling practical instructions appertaining to piety."

It is regrettable that St. Bernard's most eloquent sermons have not come down to us. The fiery words with which he stirred the lethargic peoples of France, Italy, and Germany at the time of the Schism and the mobilization of the Crusaders have all been lost; not a single sermon has been preserved for us. Yet so great was the power of his eloquence and so majestic the swing of his gestures that the people of Germany, though they did not understand the tongue in which he spoke, were nevertheless more moved by his words than by the capable interpreters who repeated after him the sense of his words. The people on hearing and seeing him, struck their breasts, burst into tears, and clamored for the cross. We are assured by one of St. Bernard's early biographers that so great was his eloquence that mothers hid their sons and wives their husbands, lest perhaps they be swept into the solitude of Clairvaux or into the ranks of the crusaders.

Death of St. Bernard

From the beginning of the summer of 1153 St. Bernard's sickness became worse. He found if difficult to breathe, his stomach rejected even a little water, pain had chiseled its lines on his expressive face. At this time the young Archbishop of Treves arrived in haste with the news

that civil war had broken out at Metz. Two thousand men had already been killed; all overtures for reconciliation had proved unavailing. Bernard was the only hope in the present circumstances. Would he come and reconcile the warring parties? On hearing the details of the fratricidal war, Bernard rose from his bed of agony and, turning a deaf ear to the remonstrance of his religious, took the road to Metz. When, more dead than alive, he arrived at that city, he found the two armies facing each other on the banks of the Moselle.

From the Count of Bar, the leader of the feudal lords, the saint received scant courtesy. But the bourgeois, as soon as he made his appearance, heaped all marks of honor and veneration upon him. As usual, God blessed the zeal of His servant with many miracles. The next time Bernard approached the Count, he found him and his colleagues in arms changed men. Bernard managed to settle difficulties to the satisfaction of both parties, and soon the armies clasped hands in peace. This was the last public act of our saint's life. Soon after, he returned to Clairvaux, there to crown by a martyrdom of suffering a life that had been spent in the service of Christ his King.

On re-entering Clairvaux he was livid; a cold sweat covered his body; his voice could scarcely be heard. The truth could no longer be disguised; his end was not far off. His condition being noised abroad, all France was moved. The king sent his own brother Robert, then courier after courier, to learn how the saint fared. Bishops, abbots, princes, clerics, and monks wanted to see him for the last time. The Abbot General of the Cistercians arrived and gave him the last sacraments. Rome itself was moved. The whole of Europe seemed menaced by a catastrophe.

As he lay on his deathbed and looked over the past, his mind could conjure up a record that was truly enviable. He had healed the greatest schism that had up to that time troubled the peace of the Church; he had been the oracle of several important councils; seven times he had extinguished the flames of civil war, in Italy,

Germany, and France; he had united the forces of Christendom as they were never united before or since, for the defense of the Holy Land; alone he had crushed the Henrician heresy; he had silenced the prophets of rationalism, Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée; he had stripped the demagoue Arnold of Brescia of his influence; he had written treatises, theological, ascetical, and mystical, to say nothing of incomparable sermons, that have placed him in the front rank of the Fathers of the Church; he had raised his own order, which he found in a moribund condition, to a position of unrivaled influence, and had also rendered signal services to other religious orders, such as the Premonstratensians, Canons Regular, and especially the Benedictines; he had founded directly at least sixty-eight monasteries in different parts of the world, whilst the total number of houses dependent on Clairvaux amounted to one hundred and sixty; he had seen one of his religious seated on the Chair of St. Peter, and at least seven of them clothed with the cardinal's red; he had (according to Bellarmine) more authentic miracles to his credit than any other saint whose acts have been written; he had led a life of one long martyrdom by reason of his continual sufferings; and, the greatest achievement of all, he had remained throughout, till the very last, a humble monk. Finally the end came. On August 20, 1153, St. Bernard surrendered his soul into the hands of his Creator in the sixty-third year of his age. His death was mourned throughout Europe as an irreparable loss.

On January 18, 1174, Pope Alexander III canonized him. Without giving him the title of Doctor, the Pope nevertheless assigned to him the Mass that is said for doctors. Although from the day of his death, even before his death, he was referred to as the Doctor Mellifluus, still it was not until the year 1830 that Pope Pius VIII conferred on him the title of Doctor of the Universal Church. Dom Mabillon, one of the most erudite Benedictines of his day, who has given us perhaps the best critical edition of his works, styles him the Last of the Fathers of the Church. Owing to the great services the saint rendered to

the Church by his writings and labors, posterity has ratified this title

Hidden Springs

We have rapidly reviewed the highlights of our saint's life and labors, recognizing as we went along, the unrivaled influence he exercised on the men and events of his time. Were we to stand here before the colossal figure of the greatest man of the Twelfth Century and not try to enter into his soul, we would never be able to take his true measure. Really to know a saint, especially Bernard, we must go down to the driving motives of his life. The motives of a saint's life spring from and are colored by his virtues, rather by his outstanding virtues. Canonization, be it noted, presupposes the possession of all virtues by the saint canonized, and possession of them in an eminent degree. Hence we may say at once that in Bernard we find all the virtues. However, if asked: "In which specifically did he excel?" we might be at a loss to answer. Yet it seems safe to assert that his most outstanding virtues were faith, humility, and charity.

1. Faith

Treating of faith, the Council of Trent says it is the root and the foundation of all justification; therefore it lies deep in the soul of every saint. In St. Bernard's soul it was the bedrock foundation of his entire sanctity. Though he possessed a powerful mind, which placed him among the geniuses of the Church, for him in every debate the deciding factor was revelation; what God Himself had said on the matter. His reason thus humbled before the authority of God became strong and unshakable; there were no more obscurities for him in things human or divine. From this arose, as a rigorous consequence, the constancy of his principles and the firmness of his will. Hence his utter fearlessness in attacking sin, error, injustice, above all, heresy. Precisely because Abelard's errors undermined the very foundations of the faith did the latter find such an untiring and uncompromising antagonist in St. Bernard, particularly in everything that touched the Holy Trinity

For the dogma of the Most Holy Trinity is the basis of our holy faith. Take that away and everything crumbles to the ground. Faith was the very atmosphere Bernard breathed. Persons, things, and events were never considered apart from God; they were ever tinged with a divine light. As nothing happens aside from God, so Bernard never looked at them apart from Him. Hence his reverence for even the meanest serf; hence his deep interest in everything that concerned the Church; hence that other-worldliness that was ever about him.

2. Humility

True humility is an offshoot of faith. Faith enables us to see things, as it were, with the eyes of God; we judge of persons, things and events as God judges of them. Thoroughly grasping in the white light of faith his own utter and absolute dependence upon God, humility was for St. Bernard the most rational and at the same time the most natural thing in the world. It enabled him to locate himself in regard to God, himself and his neighbor; it colored his entire life. His humility was so apparent in his relations with others that, no matter how sharp the rebuke he administered, it was quite evident that he was actuated by the purest of motives; his humility softened his rebukes.

Undoubtedly he was the greatest miracle-worker of his century. St. Robert Bellarmine, a Doctor of the Church, by the way, did not hesitate to say that Bernard had more miracles to his credit than any other saint whose life has been written. How the saint regarded this power is an index of his profound humility. "I can not understand," he said, "why God should work miracles through a man like me. As a rule, real miracles are wrought by saints, pretended miracles by impostors. But I am far from being a saint, and so far as I can judge I am not an impostor either. I see it now. Miracles have nothing to do with sanctity, they are but the means of gaining souls to God. He simply uses me as an instrument, not to glorify me, but for the edification of my neighbor." That satisfied him. He could claim as little credit for the wonders wrought through his instrumentality as could

the rod of Moses or the shadow of St. Peter for the miracles wrought by these holy men.

As a matter of fact, St. Bernard had need of great humility to keep his head clear in the midst of all the honors that were heaped upon him. He received ovations from the Emperor Conrad and his court; again, it was King Louis of France and the French court that went mad in the expression of their veneration for him. Cities turned out to meet and escort him with all possible marks of esteem and veneration. Bishoprics and archbishoprics aplenty were offered him, among which was the attractive Archbishopric of Rheims with a request from Louis VII to accept it. But judging himself unworthy, he invariably refused the dignity. Writing to the above king, he said: "The habit I wear makes it appear that I am capable of fulfilling these sublime functions. But this habit does not give sanctity; it gives only the appearance of it. Nobody knows me better than I know myself, and there is nobody whom I know better than I do myself" (Letter 449).

3. Love for Christ

The sufferings of the Man-God have always presented to the world, and they present especially to the modern world, an enigma which it has never been able to solve. As a matter of fact, it does not try to solve it; for it instinctively runs away from suffering; it cannot understand why an infinitely good God allows suffering in His world at all. But to understand a suffering God, a God, moreover, who suffers for such a creature as man — that it does not try to understand. Yet so it is. God, the God-Man, suffered and suffered terrific torments for poor, weak man, just as he is. The saints, gifted as they are with special lights from the Holy Ghost, regard suffering in a different manner. Suffering for them is either a means of keeping company with their suffering Master or of repairing His outraged rights. To be sure, suffering has no attraction in itself; nature abhors it; it is never accepted, still less provoked, for its own sake. But when it is envisaged as a part of the sufferings of Christ or as a chance to do something for Him, then it assumes an altogether different

color. Then suffering with and for Christ becomes the Folly of the Cross. If it be folly to suffer, Christ gave the example; it is most wise to follow Him.

Though St. Bernard is a many-sided genius, yet there is one thing that stands out prominently in his character. It is his deep love for the Divine Person of Jesus Christ. Love for Him, and it is only love that can mould a saint, led him to the excesses of the Cross. Christ suffering for mankind, for himself therefore, suffering and wishing to enlist valiant followers in the ranks of those who would be willing to suffer for others, was a loud challenge to a heart of Bernard's type. This love for Christ lies at the bottom of his entire contemplative and active life. Because he loved Christ, he fought for His Church; because he loved Christ, he preached the Crusade; because he loved Christ, he never spared himself when he could forward his Master's interests.

4. Love for Mary

After love for Christ came love for Mary. Father Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., has a beautiful poem in which he compares the Blessed Virgin to the air we breathe. Just as that ever-present element encircles us round and round in every position that we take, and we must unceasingly fill our lungs with it under pain of losing life, so Mary's care and love for us encircles us at every turn of the spiritual life. No comparison can better express St. Bernard's love and devotion to the Mother of God. In his writings he shows himself one of the greatest lovers and servants of the Blessed Virgin. So lofty are his conceptions of the dignity of the Mother of God, so tender are his expressions of filial affection for her, that amongst all the saints of the Middle Ages he stands out conspicuous. For Mary he has all the confidence of a child for its mother. After Jesus she is all to him. In writing of her, his pen becomes a pen of fire, which burns its words into our hearts. She is his mother.

Mary is the God-given mediatrix between man and his Redeemer. God came to us by Mary; by Mary we should return to Him. Have

we anything to offer God? By offering it through Mary we are sure of winning for our gift a gracious acceptance. In all our troubles and temptations we must call upon her, cry to her, never cease until we have been heard.

The boundless confidence which he had in Mary's intercession is fully expressed in the prayer that has been attributed to him the world over.

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy clemency hear and answer me. Amen.

(300 days Indulgence, each time)

We cannot conclude this paragraph on Mary without quoting the well-known words of Dante, the great medieval poet, in his immortal work "La Divina Commedia."

"For Bernard when I looked to see,
I saw instead a Senior at my side
Robed as the rest in glory. Joy benign
Glowed in his eyes and o'er his cheeks diffused,
With gestures such as speak a father's love.

And thus the Senior, holy and revered:
'That thou at length mayst happily conclude
Thy voyage (to which end I was dispatched,
By supplication moved and holy love)
Let thy upsoaring vision range at large
This garden through: for so, by ray divine
Kindled, thy ken a higher flight shall mount:
And from heaven's Queen, whom I adore,
All gracious aid defend us; for that I
Am her own faithful Bernard.' "

(Paradiso, Canto XXXI. Carey's translation)

5. Love for His Neighbor

Love for his neighbor was also an outstanding virtue of our saint. His lively faith enabled him to perceive the supernatural value of the soul in every man he met. However thick the layer of rusticity, bodily deformity, or moral depravity that covered the soul, St. Bernard always saw the image of God stamped upon it. With Christlike charity his heart went out to it. No sacrifice was too great to make for its salvation. Its woes were his. He was ever ready to do all he could for its salvation. Of himself he once said: "If kindness were a sin, I don't think I would be able to avoid committing it."

Active and Contemplative

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of St. Bernard's life is the manner in which he joined the active and the contemplative life. In this he was unique. He had a hand in all the events of his epoch; in reality he was the soul of them. He passes through cities, enters courts and councils, crosses the Alps three times (without, of course, modern means of travel), travels all over France, penetrates into Germany, has delicate negotiations entrusted to him, grapples with heresy and schism, thunders against the fiercest passions in the breast of man — yet he is ever calm and recollected, united to God. No matter how important the affair he had in hand, he never poured himself out on it. Though he could not take his cell with him, he took his interior solitude with him wherever he went. The truth is, though St. Bernard retained his own personality, Christ so lived in him, as in St. Paul, that Christ's thoughts, love, forbearance, and compassion were Bernard's. This, and this alone, is the secret of his leadership.

✠

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bernard, St., Opera

Chevallier, Histoire de Saint Bernard

Dumesnil, Saint Benard

Luddy, Life and Teaching of St. Bernard

Luddy, The Order of Citeaux

Miterre, Saint Bernard

Neander, Der heilige Bernard

Ratisbonne, Life and Times of St. Bernard

Sanvert, Saint Bernard

Vacandard, Vie de Saint Bernard

Vaughan, Life of St. Thomas of Aquin

Printed by
The Mission Press, S.V. D.
Techny, Ill.

BOOKS SUPPLIED BY THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI

The Man Who Got Even With God	$2.00
The Family That Overtook Christ	2.75
Life of Dom Edmond Obrecht	1.50
Father Joseph Cassant (Trappist Priest)	.75
Life of Brother Yvo Pouissin (Lay Brother)	.85
Sister Louis Tessier (Lay Sister)	1.00
Soul of the Apostolate, by Dom Chautard	
paper	1.00
cloth	1.25
full leather	2.50
Descriptive Booklet of Gethsemani Abbey	.25
Lieutenant Michael Carlier (Trappist Monk)	1.75
Spiritual Directory (Cistercian), 2 vols., each	1.75
The Cistercian Life	.50
Jesus King of Love, by Father Mateo	1.00

BOOKLETS

Are You?
Fiat and Remake Your World
Life Is a Divine Romance
The God-Man's Double
What's Wrong?
Set the World on Fire
Doubling for the Mother of God
What Are You Doing to Jesus Christ?
Do You Want Life and Love?
Have You Met God?
A Trappist Does a Startling Thing for You
Eventually: Why Not Now?
Apostolate of the Contemplatives
An Hour with Christ
Twenty-Four Hours a Catholic
Let's Build a Home

For copies of the above or for further copies of this pamphlet apply to

ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI
Trappist P.O.
Kentucky

•

Single copy 10c
Reduction on quantity orders