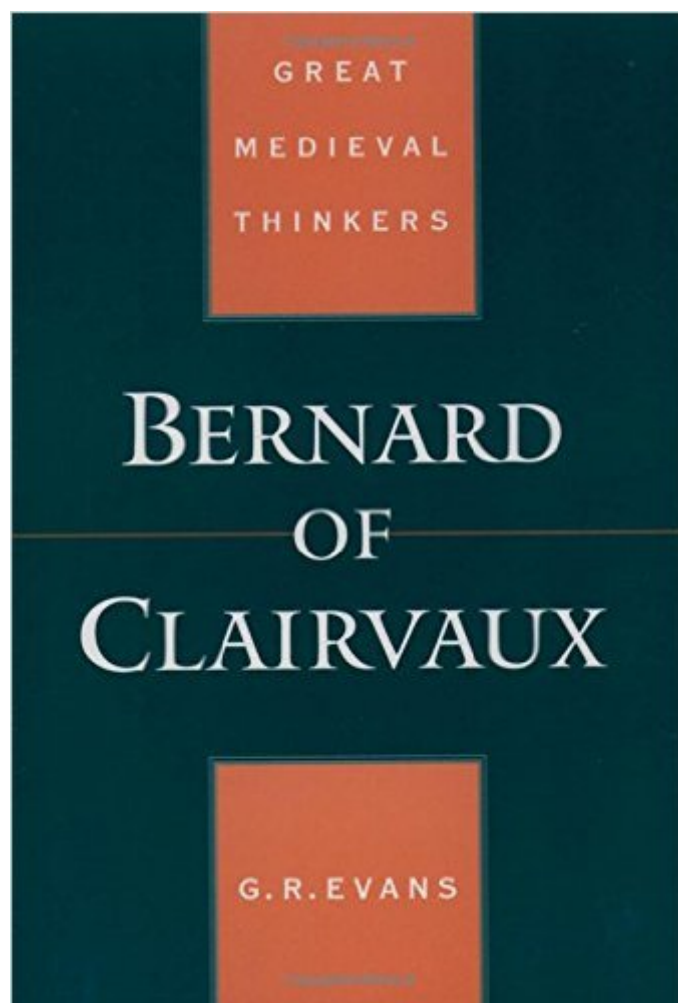


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Bernard Of Clairvaux (Great Medieval Thinkers)



Synopsis

In this book the renowned medievalist G.R. Evans provides a concise introduction to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), a figure of towering importance on the twelfth-century monastic and theological scene. After a brief overview of Bernard's life, Evans focuses on a few major themes in his work, including his theology of spirituality and his theology of the political life of the Church. The only available introduction to Bernard's life and thought, this latest addition to the Great Medieval Thinkers series will appeal to a wide audience of students and scholars of history and theology.

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Customer Reviews

Anyone, I mean anyone searching for a greater understanding on such things as Loving God, Humility and Pride, or conversion of Heart, or many other Topic, should Consider this book as a treasury of Wisdom. St. Bernard takes complicated ideas and concepts and makes them clear for those of us without the Saintly Mind. I would certainly say that his writings are some of the best in All of Christian history. This translation is concise and leaves nothing of importance out, I commend the translator on this edition. My hopes are that many will find this book a great help in your own Spiritual Journey.

It is hard to quantify the enormous value I have gleaned from studying from the classic spiritual writings. The Christian community has such a wealth of wisdom in her history and I am so very

grateful and fortunate to draw from this wonderfully rich and deep well .The HarperCollins Spiritual Classics series is edited by Emilie Griffin and includes a number of writings from the Christian tradition. Some of the titles in the series follow: John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, John and Charles Wesley, William Law, and the subject of this review, Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was a Cistercian (Trappist) monk and founding abbot of Clairvaux Abbey in Burgundy. He was a very distinguished and influential leader during the course of his life and left a vast collection of writings that have significant impact upon the shaping of Western monasticism and Christian mystical traditions. It is said that his writings had a profound effect on the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin. This volume in the HarperCollins Spiritual Classics series, bearing his name, is an accessible introduction to some of Bernard's foundational writings that shaped Western religious thought and culture. This small book introduces the reader to four primary works of Bernard; they are On Conversion, On Loving God, Sermons on the Song of Songs, and Selections from His Letters. It is hard for me to choose a favorite chapter as each of these writings has influenced me in uniquely specific ways at different points of my spiritual journey. If I were pressed to choose one writing however, I would On Loving God as it is a teaching that continues to circulate in my memory and affect my daily living more than some of the others. In describing the journey of loving God, Bernard details four stages or degrees of love. He identifies the stages as follows: First degree--love of self for self's sake, Second degree--love of God for self's sake, Third degree--love of God for God's sake, and Fourth degree--love of self for God's sake. "What are the four degrees of love? First, we love ourselves for our own sake; since we are unspiritual and of the flesh, we cannot have an interest in anything that does not relate to ourselves. When we begin to see that we cannot subsist by ourselves, we begin to seek God for our own sakes. This is the second degree of love; we love God, but only for our own interests. But if we begin to worship and come to God again and again by meditating, by reading, by prayer, and by obedience, little by little God becomes known to us through experience. We enter into a sweet familiarity with God, and by tasting how sweet the Lord is we pass into the third degree of love so that now we love God, not for our own sake, but for himself. It should be noted that in this third degree we will stand still for a very long time." -Bernard of Clairvaux; The Love of God It is my opinion there is no substitute for learning from these spiritual classics. I am reminded of the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews who said, "Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith" (Hebrews 13:7 NLT). There is much we can learn from those who have traveled the journey that is the Christian life. Some of the original writings from these great spiritual masters can be hard to obtain and very difficult to read. I am thankful for those who have

brought these ancient writings to us in a package that is accessible and affordable.

While Bernard is often known for his association with early church politics this book presents a clear description of his theology and spirituality. The chosen excerpts from his own writings are translated in a easy to read, enjoyable format.

academic. clear exposition of a peculiar medieval thinkerthe series is in itself an amazing opportunity to go beyond a first contact with the author without being extremely hard to swallowI find it useful although I usually regret the minimal attention to the biography and circumstances behind the theological and poetic production of an authorA nice chance to get in touch with Bernard's theology

Bernard of Clairvaux was very much a mystic who gave all of us ways to celebrate Christ and His Church in our lives." When God grants us the grace of a sweet familiarity with him, so that we can live better lives in accordance with the relationship, we lift our heads from the dust with greater confidence so as to kiss the hand of our benefactor as people do---"p.111 Much of the book is filled with the spirit and joy of contemplation.

All medieval scholars AND all Christian thinkers who are not all scholars at all should read these writings. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote beautiful prose, and while most medieval Christian writings feel puritanical or superstitious these days, Bernard's work reads like it was written last week by someone who knows The Lord.

An excellent book for anyone seeking to use the Early Church Fathers as mentors in learnig to know God better. The book includes writings of St. Bernard that focus on a deeper intimate relationship with God. G.R. Evans provides a brief introduction of the writings as well as a short biography on St. Bernard. Well edited and easy to understand.

This book featured a wonderful, informative, and highly useful biography of Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the best I've come across. The biography listed many, if not all, of Bernard's most important writings. The rest of the book, however, did not contain any of them. Still, the biography alone was worth the effort of reading the book.

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