The Romans Commentaries of William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard: A Theological and Methodological Comparison

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THE ROMANS COMMENTARIES OF WILLIAM OF ST. THIERRY AND PETER ABELARD: A THEOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL COMPARISON

by

Steven R. Cartwright

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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In 1140, William of St. Thierry, a Cistercian monk and former Benedictine abbot, accused Peter Abelard, the well-known philosopher and theologian, of propagating grave errors concerning Christian doctrine in his theological teachings. William’s accusations resulted in Peter’s condemnation at the Council of Sens in 1140.

This study compares the commentaries on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans written by William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard in the mid-1130s, only a few years before William’s accusations. While this conflict has been much studied, no one has previously examined it via these commentaries, which are the only literary genre William and Peter had in common, and which deal directly with many of the Christian doctrines disputed by the two scholars. The study examines their exegetical methods, specifically their citations of Scripture and the Fathers of the Christian church, and their use of spiritual exposition, rhetoric, and dialectic. It also analyzes their statements on key doctrines, including grace, original sin, and the Trinity. It points out both their significant methodological and doctrinal differences and similarities, and shows how their differences may have contributed to their conflict. The study proposes that the conflict can be understood as an argument between a monk committed to the Augustinian program of rhetorical exposition outlined in *De doctrina Christiana* and a scholar committed to the dialectical methodology of Boethius.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a large debt of gratitude to many people: first, to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. E. Rozanne Elder, Dr. Larry Simon, Dr. Otto Gründler, and Dr. David N. Bell, for their many suggestions and constructive criticisms. I especially thank Dr. Elder for her patient advice in our many meetings and consultations on the dissertation. I deeply appreciate their help and encouragement during this long process.

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Finally, and most importantly, my thanks to my wife, Barb, and our daughter, Katie, for their infinite patience and perpetual support these many years of graduate study. Their love and encouragement were the most important factors in finishing this work.

Steven R. Cartwright
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This study contributes to the understanding of both men, their conflict, and their commentaries, as well as to the understanding of medieval theology, spirituality, and biblical exposition.
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ABBREVIATIONS

Modern series and editions

CCCM: Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnholt: Brepols, 1971-).

CCSL: Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954-).


CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866-).

DS: Dictionnaire de Spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1932-).


RB: Regula Sancti benedicti.

Works of St. Augustine

From Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia, ed. Allan Fitzgerald, xxxv-xlii.

cat. rud.: De catechizandis rudibus. CCSL 46.
conf.: Confessiones. CCSL 27.
div. qu.: De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus. CCSL 40A.
doc. Chr.: De doctrina Christiana. CCSL 32.
ench.: Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide spe et caritate. CCL 46.
ep.: Epistolae. CSEL 34, 44, 57, 58, 88.
ex. Gal.: Expositio epistolae ad Galatas. CSEL 84.
c. Faust.: Contra Faustum Manicheum. CSEL 25.1.
f. et symb.: de fide et symbolo. CSEL 41.
gest. Pel.: De gestis Pelagii. CSEL 42.
Gn. litt.: De Genesi ad litteram. CSEL 28.1.
gr. et lib. arb.: De gratia et libero arbitrio. PL 44.
gr. et pecc. or.: De gratia Christi et de peccato originali. CSEL 42.
Jo. ev. tr.: In Johannis evangelium tractatus. CCSL 36.
lib. arb.: De libero arbitrio. CCSL 29.
mor.: De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum. CSEL 90.
nat. et gr.: De natura et gratia. CSEL 60.
nupt. et conc.: De nuptiis et coniugiscentia. CSEL 42.
pecc. mer.: De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum. CSEL 60.
persev.: De dono perseverantiae. PL 45.

praed. sanct.: De praedestinatione sanctorum. PL 44.

s.: sermones. PL 38, 39.

Simpl.: Ad Simplicianum. CCSL 44.

spir. et litt.: De spiritu et littera. CSEL 60.

Trin.: De Trinitate. CCSL 50-50A.

vera rel.: De vera religione. CCSL 32.
INTRODUCTION

The theological controversy of 1140 involving Peter Abelard (ca. 1079-ca. 1142) and William of St. Thierry (ca. 1070-ca. 1147), and after William Bernard of Clairvaux, has attracted as much attention from twentieth-century scholars as it did from the scholars of the twelfth century. Involving some of the twelfth century's most prominent intellectual figures, the controversy has been regarded by moderns not only as a contest between intellectual giants, or perhaps between strong personalities, but also as a contest between traditional monastic thought, with its emphasis on tradition and authority, and nascent scholasticism, with its emphasis on logic and the exploration and clarification of language.2

The dispute began in Lent of 1140,3 when William, then a monk at the Cistercian abbey of Signy, read two of Peter's works,4 and having been disturbed by a

---


2 See note 19 below for references to the major scholarly opinions.

3 The date of William's raising the alarm about Peter's errors has been much debated, with scholars supporting dates of anywhere from 1138 to 1140. On this issue I follow Ceglar, *Chronology*, 171-184.

4 There are differences among scholars as to what works of Peter's William read, and the uncertainty is compounded by the different names given to his various works. William says that he read a "Theologia Petri Abaelardi," and that there were two works in the volume which he read (Ep. 326). E. M. Buytaert and C. J. Mews point out that Peter's
number of statements he found within them, wrote a lengthy treatise, the *Disputatio*

*Theology* went through three versions, the *Theologia "Summi boni"*, the *Theologia christiana*, and the *Theologia "Scholarium"*, this latter also being known as the *Introductio ad theologiam*. Each of these versions went through several editions (E. B. Buytaert and C. J. Mews, eds., *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica III: Theologica "Summi boni", Theologia "Scholarium"*, CCCM 13 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1987], 16-18). Some scholars (Jean Jolivet, “Sur quelques critiques de la théologie d’Abélard, *AHDLMA* 38 [1963], 24; Ceglar, *Chronology*, 170) simply mention that William read Peter’s “Theology” without elaboration (though Jolivet, in a footnote, states that William had read the *Introduction*, the *Commentary on Romans*, the *Ethics*, the *Epitome*, and some texts from Peter’s school).

adversus Petrum Abaelardum,\(^5\) outlining some of the more questionable assertions and responding to each. He then sent the treatise with an accompanying letter\(^6\) to Bernard of Clairvaux and Geoffrey, Bishop of Chartres and papal legate, whom William believed in a better position to defend the faith against errors of doctrine. Bernard was persuaded to take up the challenge, and was able to have the matter put on the agenda of a Church council convened at Sens shortly after Pentecost of the same year. There Peter’s ideas were condemned. Bernard also wrote to the pope,\(^7\) asking for his confirmation of the Council’s decision. Peter likewise appealed to Rome, and began to journey in that direction. He was at Cluny when the papal condemnation came, and, at the invitation of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, remained there as part of his penance. He died there in 1142. After Sens, William turned to writing treatises dealing with the relationship of faith and reason.\(^8\)

In 1140, the issues in dispute were both doctrinal and methodological. William indicted Peter in his *Disputatio* for his definition of faith as an opinion subject to debate and speculation,\(^9\) his diminishing of the persons of the Trinity,\(^10\) the language with which he describes the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit,\(^11\) and his doctrines of grace,\(^12\) redemption,\(^13\) and sin,\(^14\) to name the most

---

William had certainly read the *Introduction/Theologia Scholarium*, though what else is debated.
\(^5\)PL 180:249-282.
\(^7\)Ep. 337, PL 182.540-42 (not in SBO).
\(^8\)Specifically, his *Mirror of faith* (*Speculum fidei*, PL 180.365-98), and the *Enigma of faith* (*Enigma fidei*, PL 180.397-440).
\(^9\)*Disp.* 1, PL 180.249.*
significant charges. Bernard of Clairvaux, influenced by the Disputatio, echoed many of these charges in his Tractatus adversus Petrum Abaelardum. Peter would defend himself against these charges, but not entirely to the satisfaction of his accusers.

In modern times, the issues have been similar. Scholars have analyzed at length the accusations of William and Bernard as well as Peter’s works to determine the accuracy of the charges and sometimes to defend either William and Bernard on the one hand or Peter on the other. They have argued over whether William’s and Bernard’s sources accurately conveyed Peter’s thought and how well William and Bernard understood that thought and why they objected to what they read in Peter’s works. Much of this latter discussion has centered around Peter’s methods and language, his use of dialectic, and the differences between his mode of thought and that of his monastic critics.

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10Disp. 2, PL 180.250-54.
11Disp. 3-4, PL 180.254-64.
12Disp. 6, PL 180.266-69.
13Disp. 7, PL 180.269-76.
14Disp. 11-12, PL 180.281-82.
18See note 4 above for the scholarship on which of Peter’s works William read. D. E. Luscombe, for example, has evaluated at length Bernard’s Tractatus against Peter, based in part on William’s treatise, and determined that while some of the accusations of William and Bernard are accurate, much “was thwarted by being founded upon statements taken from the Liber Sententiarum even when they contradicted Abelard’s own thought as it is found in his writings” (School, 141-142). If Luscombe is right that William read this work, then the Disputatio is not an entirely accurate statement of Peter’s thought.
19For example, Déchanet states that William does not attack Peter’s philosophical
In arguing these points, modern scholars have largely overlooked that they each wrote a commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. William’s treatises on monastic life and Peter’s explanations of Christian doctrine led to two independent explanations of the same work of Scripture, written perhaps simultaneously, and before their conflict. This one point of overlap is important for understanding the conflict.

method, though William does object to applying it to Scripture and dialectic alike. Rather, Déchanet focuses on Peter’s terminology, which he regards as “perilous,” “ambiguous,” and “misleading,” and says that Peter was not careful about working out his theories (Déchanet, William, 54, 58-60). Jean Châtillon sees the conflict in terms of a cultural gap: William and Peter attended different schools, and represented two generations: William the first generation of schoolmen who were careful about their methodology and terminology, and Peter the second generation that introduced dialectic and philosophy into theology with no fear of the possible consequences (Jean Châtillon, “William of St. Thierry, Monasticism, and the Schools: Rupert of Deutz, Abelard, and William of Conches,” in William, Abbot of St. Thierry, 172). Martin Grabmann, on the other hand, sees William as an anti-dialectician (Martin Grabmann, Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode, 2 vols. [Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1957], 2:118). Similarly to Châtillon, Luscombe regards the dispute as “the effects of the realization of structural differences between two traditions of theological analysis and reflection,” and describes the monastic tradition as “a prolongation of patristic theology, meditative, conservative, rich in psychological and moral experience, able to detect acutely real weaknesses in the work of schoolmen . . .” (Luscombe, School, 111.) J. G. Sikes states that Peter “had no real appreciation of the historic experience of the church. . . [and] no full conception of Christian theology as a whole.” The use of dialectic would lead to theological bankruptcy unless balanced by experience and tradition. “[T]he sentence delivered at Sens was as much due to a dispute over the proper character of scholastic method as to the consequences of Abailard’s dialectic—the unorthodoxy of his views.” (Abailard, 239-241.) Jean Jolivet sees the conflict in terms of different mental climates and philosophical standpoints: William was a realist, whereas Peter was a nominalist; Peter used the tools of the trivium, which were of less importance to William and his other opponents. In addition, the language William objected to from the Theologia was intended to combat pseudo-dialecticians, unbelievers, and heretics. William was devoted to the mystical life, which was the basis of his theology; Peter was first of all a professor of logic, which he applied to theology. The conflict was thus based on this divergence of principle and incompatibility of method (Jolivet, “Critiques,” 27-31, 49; Arts du langage et théologie chez Abélard [Paris: J. Vrin, 1969], 344-348, 360).
because the two commentaries discuss many of the doctrines at issue: the Trinity, redemption, grace, original sin, and intention and consent to actual sin. They also prominently display their authors’ theological methodologies: their use of Scripture and the writings of the Church fathers to make their points, their use of dialectic to interpret difficult passages and answer difficult questions, and the rhetorical styles with which they conveyed their exposition.

In this dissertation I shall undertake a comparison of the respective exegetical methodologies and theologies of the commentaries of William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, for the purposes of advancing scholarly understanding of the conflict between the two men, and of these particular works. I shall examine the circumstances of the composition of these works, insofar as they can be known: the place and date of composition, their intended audiences, and their evolution and subsequent versions. I shall describe their structure and organization, which differ considerably, and which in the case of William’s commentary are significant for conveying its message. I shall analyze the exegetical methods of the two works, from the way in which they cite the text of Romans to their use of rhetoric and dialectic, giving special attention to their use of patristic sources. Finally, I shall compare their theologies, specifically their discussions of the doctrines later in dispute, and give special attention to their spiritual and ethical teachings.

In making these comparisons and pointing out the differences between the methodologies of William and Peter, I shall argue a particular point about the teachers who influenced their methodologies, contending that the conflict between William and Peter is based in part on their loyalties to the methods of these teachers. While the influence of these teachers on William and Peter has been noted before, it has not been
made the basis of an analysis of their conflict. Additionally, the analyses of William’s and Peter’s exegetical methodologies have not before been made, and here contribute to the understanding of the two scholars, of these two commentaries, and of twelfth-century exegesis in general.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{20}}\text{See below, pp. 9-10, 26-27, for discussions of the date of each commentary.}\]
CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMENTARIES

A. The Place of the Romans Commentary in Twelfth-Century Exegesis

The commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans by William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard are just two among many written during the Middle Ages,¹ and among several written during the early twelfth century, when interest in biblical commentary in general and in the epistles of St. Paul in particular revived.² Composed about the same time in different circumstances, they exercised varying degrees of influence in their authors’ lifetimes and subsequently, and occupy different places in the authors’ bodies of works. A description of these circumstances is necessary to understand the methodologies and theologies that distinguished these commentaries from each other and the other Romans commentaries of the time, and that underlay the conflict between William and Peter.

¹For lists of these commentaries, see Heinrich Denifle, Die abendländischen Schriftausleger bis Luther über Justitia Dei (Rom. 1,17) und Justificatio (Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1905); P. C. Spicq, Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au moyen age. Bibliothèque Thomiste (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944), 399-400; Werner Affeldt, Die weltliche Gewalt in der Paulus-Exegese (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969); idem., "Verzeichnis der Römerbriefkommentare der lateinische Kirche bis zu Nikolaus von Lyra." Traditio 13 (1957): 369-406. Denifle lists over sixty commentaries from Ambrosiaster’s to Luther’s; Spicq lists over forty commentators on Romans and the other Pauline epistles; and Affeldt lists sixty commentaries in his two works (Gewalt, 256-85).

²On the general revival, see Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages. 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952; reprint ed., Notre Dame, In.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 44-46. Among the other commentators on Romans in this revival were Lanfranc (d. 1089), Bruno the Carthusian (d. 1106), Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), Radulfus
B. William of St. Thierry’s Commentary on Romans

1. Date and Place of Composition

Paul Verdeyen, editor of the critical edition of William’s commentary, has argued on the basis of manuscript evidence that William began the commentary while still at St. Thierry and completed it at Signy. If correct, this would mean that William started work on it before 1135 and completed it before he encountered Peter Abelard’s *Theology* in 1140. Other scholars have dated its composition to one place or the other. Jean-Marie Déchanet assigns it to William’s abbacy at St. Thierry. André Wilmart, John Anderson, and Stanley Ceglar, on the other hand, have all assigned it to William’s time at Signy.

Within the commentary itself there is no evidence to suggest a date or a place. One must therefore rely on the manuscript evidence and infer the dating from that and from what is known of William’s life and scholarship and of the abbeys of St. Thierry and Signy. Anderson bases his hypothesis on the fact that it is one of several works of William’s that rely on Latin translations of Greek patristic sources, and on the fact that the only manuscript of the commentary of which he was aware came from Signy. He

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also notes, however, that St. Thierry—but not, apparently Signy—owned two copies of Florus Diaconus’ compilation of excerpts from the works of Augustine on St. Paul, which William used heavily in his commentary. This supports Verdeyen’s argument, and convinces me that William must have begun the work while at St. Thierry, writing at least the incomplete version found in Paris BN Latin 4286, and compiled substantial notes sufficient to finish the work at Signy.

2. Purpose of Composition

William states at the outset that his purpose in commenting on Romans is to contemplate the grace of God. He does this not solely for his own benefit, but to instruct younger monks needing instruction in Scripture, Christian doctrine, and the life of ascent toward God. His commentary is not like a personal prayer journal, intended to be read only by himself, but is a treatise written to lead others to contemplate God’s grace. Here, as in his other works, William outlines distinct stages of progress in this ascent, and relates them to the experience of grace.

That William wrote this commentary as a response to Bernard of Clairvaux’s De

---

6 On the first point, see Anderson, “Romans,” 137; he in turn cites Jean-Marie Déchanet, Aux sources de la spiritualité de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, 57, n.1. Bruges, 1940. On the second point, see the discussion of manuscripts below, pp. 21-22, for information on a second manuscript, Paris BN Latin 4286, which contains an incomplete text of the commentary.


9 Prologue, CMW 3.20-21, CF 16.

gratia et libero arbitrio has been posited. Whether this is true, William does not say; he mentions neither Bernard nor Bernard’s work, whereas Bernard dedicated his treatise to William. William’s audience is not Bernard, but the monks in his own community. Bernard’s treatise may certainly have influenced and inspired William, but William neither challenges nor echoes it. Free choice, additionally, is only a minor consideration in William’s commentary, and grace was a popular subject among twelfth-century theologians. The question is thus unanswerable, and of little relevance to the question of the conflict between William and Peter.

3. Structure and Organization

William structures his commentary into a prologue and seven books, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>William’s Divisions</th>
<th>Modern Chapters and Verses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Prologue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book I:</td>
<td>1:1-2:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book II:</td>
<td>2:11-4:25</td>
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<td>Book III:</td>
<td>5:1-6:23</td>
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<td>Book V:</td>
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<td>Book VI:</td>
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<td>Book VII:</td>
<td>12:1-16:27</td>
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monk from animal man to rational man to spiritual man.


13See Artur Landgraf, Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik, i.i, which treats twelfth-century views of grace at considerable length. See also below, pp. 175-77.
a. Prologue

Though medieval commentators on Romans frequently began their expositions with a prologue, William's prologue differs from others written during the patristic and medieval periods in that it does not follow the standard pattern. William describes his sources, disclaiming originality, and then tells why he has undertaken this commentary: "the joy of contemplating the grace of God and the glory of God" have brought him to this task. He outlines the achievements of grace, and then offers a prayer to Christ that continues to sing its praises.14 Most prologues follow Origen in discussing such historical topics as why Paul changed his name from Saul; why he wrote fourteen epistles; why, since it was not written first, Romans is placed first among them; the meanings of the term *epistola*; and the situation in Rome that Paul was addressing.15

According to A. J. Minnis, of the three kinds of literary prologue used in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, only two were used in prologues to scriptural commentaries, and of these the one used most in the twelfth century, his "type C," described the title of the work; the name of the author; the author's intention; the subject matter of the work; its *modus agendi* or *scribendi* or *tractandi*, or stylistic and rhetorical qualities; the *ordo libri*, or arrangement of materials; and its utility.16

That William's prologue does none of these things does not mean that William ignores the topics listed by Minnis. Instead, as we shall see, he wove them, especially the *ordo libri*, into the commentary.

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15See, for example, the prologues of Origen (PG 14.833-838), Haymo of Auxerre (PL 117.361C-364C), Atto of Vercelli (PL 134.125A-128D), and Herveus of Bourg-Dieu (PL 180.591D-596C), all of which are very similar.
b. Structure and Leitmotif

The structure William followed is unusual in a medieval commentary on Romans. While many ancient and medieval writers divided their works, secular or religious, into separate books and chapters, few commentators on the epistle to the Romans did so. Most divided the text not at all, but commented continuously on it from beginning to end.\textsuperscript{17}

From this structure above, we see that William begins Books I, III, IV, and VII where the modern chapters of Romans begin, at distinct transitions in the Apostle’s text. Since as yet there were no modern chapter or verse divisions of Scripture,\textsuperscript{18} William had no sense of the divisions in the text that these later innovations create in modern minds. In Books I-II and IV-VI, William ends one book and begins another in the middle of what moderns perceive as one of Paul’s discourses or arguments. He obviously had a different perception of the development of Paul’s argument than modern readers—or even the scholars of the late twelfth century.

William structures his commentary in part on four stages of man’s progress towards God which he describes at 2:17. There he quotes a section from Augustine’s House, 1988), 18-29.

\textsuperscript{17} Of the major Latin commentaries on Romans written up to William’s time, only those written by Origen (PG 14:831-1294; translated by Rufinus), Atto of Vercelli (PL 134:127-288), and Peter Abelard (CCCM 11) contain book or chapter divisions. Origen’s divisions are as follows: I: 1:1-2:1; II: 2:2-3:4; III: 3:5-31; IV: 4:1-5:11; V: 5:12-6:11; VI: 6:12-8:13; VII: 8:14-9:33; VIII: 10:1-11:36; IX: 12:1-14:15; X: 14:16-16:27. The footnotes of the PL text of Atto’s commentary list fifty-one chapter divisions taken from the margins of one of the manuscripts of the commentary, which chapters vary greatly in length, from half a column in the PL to fifteen columns. Peter Abelard’s are as follows: I: 1:1-3:18; II: 3:19-6:18; III: 6:19-9:5; IV: 9:6-16:27.

\textsuperscript{18} Chapter divisions would not be established until the end of the twelfth century, and verse divisions were created only in the middle of the sixteenth. On these divisions see Smalley, Study, 221-22; George Arthur Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible.
Enchiridion in which the bishop of Hippo describes the four steps (gradus) a man takes towards God: before the law, under the law, under grace, and in peace. 19 “The whole body of this Epistle uses these four distinctions,” William comments, “speaking sometimes of the man of God individually, and sometimes of the people of God in general.” 20 These stages provide the key to understanding the structure of William’s commentary, forming as they do the basis of his view of St. Paul’s ordo libri. These stages, as William understood them, can be briefly summarized: First, before the law, man “lives according to the flesh, in the deepest darkness of ignorance, with his reason making no resistance.” 21 Second, under the law, man acquires “knowledge of sin . . . through the law,” and without the help of the divine spirit, “the man wishing to live according to the law is conquered and knowingly sins.” 22 Third, under grace, “man begins to be moved by the spirit of God with the greater strength of charity when the lusts of the flesh are aroused.” He continues to fight and he is not healed, but he “lives by faith, as long as he does not yield evilly to concupiscence.” 23 Finally, if he

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19 Augustine, Enchiridion 118, CCSL 46.112-13. Both CF and CMW attribute this to Augustine’s Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos, XIII-XVIII (Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Edited and translated by Paula Fredriksen Landes. Early Christian Literature Series, Vol. 6 [Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982], 4-7), and add that it is a direct quotation from the gloss on St. Paul’s epistles contained in MS 49. While it may indeed be a quotation from the gloss, it is also a verbatim quotation from the Enchiridion.


22CMW 35:88-94: “Deinde cum per legem cognitio fuerit facta peccati, si nondum divinus adiuvat spiritus, secundum legem volens vivere, vincitur, et sciens peccat, id agente scientia mandati [PL: peccati], ut peccatum operetur in homine omnem con-
perseveres, there will be peace in this life that will be fulfilled in the afterlife, “in the repose of the spirit, and then in the resurrection of the flesh.”24 This design does not neatly fit into William’s seven-book structure, however; nor does the epistle itself, with its digression on God’s plan for the Jews, lend itself easily to Augustine’s four-stage scheme. William himself seemed to have realized this and, as we shall see, consequently did not take the four-stage scheme to any extremes. In fact, after a certain point he no longer refers to these stages, though the readers who keep them in mind will find William expounding themes of the fourth stage in the later books of the commentary.

Despite the imperfect fit of four stages of ascent within a structure of seven books, William uses that structure to expound his leitmotif of progress. On occasion, he shows how this outline conveys his scheme and Paul’s ordo. In his prologue to Book III, one of only two books in the commentary to have an introduction,25 William articulates this fourfold leitmotif:

We have already devoted two books to various aspects of the states mentioned above, that is, those things which concern the first and second states of the man of God, and as we commence with the third state, we salute the grace of God and his wonderful light from which he has begun to rise over us.26

25 The other is Book IV, where William again refers to the stages; see below.
26 CMW 61:1-6: “Tamen supra scriptos differentiarum status circa ea quae prima

William then expands the description of these stages that he gave at 2:17: In the first, man is shown to himself as lawless and senseless. In the second, man is given an eye to see what he should see, but what he sees does not please him. In the third, grace gives vision to the eyes of reason, and the seer is attracted to what he sees and is conformed and adapted to it, though not without strife and contradiction. Moreover, William now describes these stages in terms of man under the natural law, under the written law, and under grace. Finally, referring again to Paul’s ordo libri, William marks this point in the Apostle’s discourse (5:1) as his entry into the realm of grace—that is, the third stage.

At the same time, early in Book III, William points to the fourth stage. In his comment on Romans 5:1, “Justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” William elaborates on this peace with God [ad Deum]. Peace must be in harmony with truth, it is virtually synonymous with charity—William quotes 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 as a description of it—and its reward is peace in God [in Deo], that is, the willing of all things in a good way and to have all that one wills. For William,

this is the definition of true blessedness, whose first fruits the sons of God receive in this world and whose fullness they receive in the next. This pertains to the fourth stage of the man of God or the people of God.

William designed his first book as a discussion of the first state, man’s sinfulness under the natural law. The second book is a discussion of the second state, the witness

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vel secunda sunt hominis Dei vel populi Dei, duos utcumque libellos digessimus, ad ea quae tertia ejus sunt ingredientes, gratiam Dei lumenque eius mirificum salutamus, et adoramus in ipso lumine, unde nobis oriri incipit.” CF 91.
28CMW 61:26-37, CF 92.
29William borrows this last condition from Augustine, Ep. 130.5.11, CSEL 44:52:3-4.
30CMW 62:54-69, esp. 65-69: “Pacis vero huius praemium est pax in Deo; id est bene
of the written law to man’s sinfulness. The third book primarily deals with the third state, that of grace, with some reference to the fourth and final state, which is treated explicitly first in Book V, in the exposition of Romans 8. In his prologue to Book III William acknowledges, with Paul’s ordo libri in mind, that, prior to this point Paul has also shown man’s need of grace, and that “the progression of these different steps does not follow the order of the text exactly; rather, they are indicated in different ways and places throughout the text.”

In the prologue to Book IV William again relates his commentary’s structure to his leitmotif, but not to announce the beginning of the fourth stage. Rather, he sums up the content of the first three books: the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith, the primacy of grace, and Paul’s incitement of his readers to sinlessness and works of faith. “These things pertain to the third stage of the individual man or the people of God,” William says. But instead of proceeding immediately to the fourth stage, William says that he will discuss Paul’s “moral doctrine,” the teaching of Romans seven, on sin, consent, the law, and grace.

This extensive (apparent) digression makes it difficult to identify the beginning of William’s fourth stage, since he never explicitly points it out himself. It is not until his comments on Romans 8:14-16, in Book V, that one can say with certainty that

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velle omnia, et quae vult, habere omnia, quae est verae beatitudinis definitio: cuius primitias accipiunt filii Dei in hoc saeculo, plenitudinem in futuro. Et haec sunt quarta hominis vel populi Dei.” CF 93.

31CMW 61:6-10, 32-37: “Non quod omnino quasi per ordinem lectionis differentiarum harum fiat processus; sed sic designantur in ordine scribentis diversis modis et locis, sicut diversis temporibus fieri solent in corde hominis proficientis. . . Ad hoc videtur pervenisse apostolicae disputationis sensus, tam de homine Dei quam de populo Dei, et ex hoc iam regnum gratiae disputando ingreditur, licet saepius adhuc ad commendationem gratiae legentis oculis referat et depingat statum illum hominis vel hominum, qui ante legem et sub lege sunt, vel fuerunt.” CF 91-92.
William is discussing it. It is with Paul's words that those led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God that William leaves behind the struggle against sin described in Romans 7:1-8:13 and enters the continual peace of the fourth stage. William's exposition of 8:14-39 describes this stage perfectly, with its references to life in the Spirit, the internal development of love and charity and the experience of the love of God, the contemplation of spiritual things, the vision of God and the possession of his glory, the sacrifice of our spirits, the life of prayer, and the renewal of the image of God in us.

The remainder of Book V (covering Romans 9:1-21), and the whole of Book VI (9:22-11:36), have ostensibly little to do with the fourth stage, but deal with Paul's concerns about the status of the Jews, foreknowledge, and predestination. Book VII, containing extensive paranetic material, seems ideally suited for monks seeking peace. In it William mentions peace eight times, sometimes in the context of peace between human beings, sometimes in the context of inner, spiritual peace. Its numerous

32 CMW 90:2-17, CF 129-30.
33 See 8:16 (CMW 115.182-116.199, CF 163); 8:26 (CMW 121.412-124.512, CF 170-73); 8:27 (CM 124.513-522, CF 173).
34 8:16 (CMW 115.182-116.199, CF 163), 8:19 (CMW 117.261-67, CF 165); 8:23 (CMW 120.351-53, CF 168), 8:24 (CMW 121.385-86, CF 169); 8:26 (CMW 121.424-122.426, 123.482-89, CF 171-72), 8:35-37 (CMW 129.710-130.722, 130.738-752, CF 180-81).
37 8:23 (CMW 119.346-120.371, CF 168-69).
38 8:26 (CMW 121.412-124.512, CF 170-73).
39 8:20 (CMW 118.301-305, CF 166-67); 8:24-25 (CMW 121.402-404, CF 170); 8:29-30 (CMW 126.579-603, CF 176).
40 See 12:18 (CMW 171.229-33, CF 236), 14:1 (CMW 177.480-82, CF 245), 14:13 (CMW 182.668-70, CF 251), 14:17 (CMW 184.710-22, CF 253), 14:18-19 (CMW 184.723-30, CF 253), 14:22 (CMW 185.749-53, CF 254), 15:13 (CMW 188.887-90, CF 259), and
admonitions, however, make it clear that William intends it for those still struggling; and so it cannot be seen as a description of the fourth stage.

c. Thematic Structure.

With the four stages in mind, we can outline the thematic structure of William’s commentary on Romans:

General Prologue: The glory of God’s grace.

Book I: Stage one: Man under the natural law, living in ignorance of the will of God.

Book II: Stage two: Man under the written law, with the knowledge of sin, and conquered by it.

Book III: Stage three: Man under grace, struggling against sin; hints of Stage four, living in peace.

Book IV: Stage three continued; begin elaboration of “moral doctrine,” looking forward to Stage four.

Book V: Stages three and four: struggles leading to peace in this life, with the hope of even greater peace in the next; a necessary digression on the themes of Romans 9-11, God’s foreknowledge, predestination, and the fulfillment of his purpose for history.

Book VI: Continue digression begun in Book V.

Book VII: Moral and spiritual teachings for those in Stages three and four.

William’s commentary on Romans describes the four stages of man’s progress toward God, with special attention to the third stage, as befits his audience of men who have “converted” from the world to serve God, and somewhat less to the fourth, even though this is the goal he and his monks seek. Should they reach the peace of the fourth stage, additional instruction could be provided by other means, by other writings or by unwritten conversation.

4. Place of the Romans Commentary among William’s Works

Whether placing the commentary at St. Thierry or Signy, all the chronologies of

William’s works place his Romans commentary somewhere in the middle of his writing career, after his early works of spiritual guidance and before his polemical works against Peter Abelard. They agree it is one of the first of his works taking up questions of Christian doctrine, and one of the first he finished after leaving St. Thierry for Signy. It is also the longest of his surviving works. Concepts of his that would find full expression in his more celebrated, later works are first found in this work, as we shall see in the section on William’s theology. The Romans commentary thus represents a major turning point in his thought, and marks a major transition in his life. It allowed him to develop teachings about interior experience begun in On contemplating God and The nature and dignity of love, and to establish concepts that he was to expound at length in his Exposition on the Song of Songs, Mirror of faith, Enigma of faith, and Golden epistle. This significance has not previously been recognized. Additionally, we will see that it demonstrates the doctrinal foundation with which he opposed Peter Abelard in his Disputation.

William’s Romans commentary provides a counterbalance to his four other Scriptural commentaries, all on the Song of Songs. This commentary represents his desire to develop his doctrinal thought more fully, in direct relationship to the affective thought expressed in his works on the Song of Songs. In a sense, one should not be surprised that he decided to comment on Romans, apart from the fact that it was popular among exegetes at the time. His early works, especially The nature and dignity of love, cite many passages of St. Paul.

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41By all accounts, De sacramento altaris is the first: Wilmart, “Série,” 166; Verdeyen, CMW xxvi; and Déchanet, William, 33.
5. Manuscripts, Printed Editions, Subsequent Influence, Translations, and Scholarship

a. Manuscripts

A brief summary of the manuscript evidence may tell us where William began and completed this work. The only two extant manuscript versions of William’s commentary and an early printed edition of it are described in the Corpus Christianorum critical edition42 and to some extent in the Cistercian Publications English translation.43

The single surviving complete manuscript is Charleville Bibliothèque Municipale Ms. 49. The anonymous twelfth-century commentary on Romans is bound with an eleventh-century text of the epistles of St. Paul from Romans to Hebrews, containing numerous marginal glosses from Origen, Augustine, John Cassian, Basil of Caesarea, Leo, and Gregory the Great. The commentary, first attributed to William of St. Thierry by Tissier, the first editor of the commentary, in the seventeenth century, was at one time the property of the Abbey of Signy, to which William retired around 1135.44 Déchanet identified some of the handwriting of the commentary as William’s by comparisons with handwriting in other manuscripts.45

A second, incomplete version is found in Paris BN Latin 4286, also designated as Codex Tellerianus Remensis 234, Regius 4483. It contains only the comments from 1:1 to part way through 5:11, and Verheyen believes, 1) that it was taken from an incomplete work, and 2) that this much had been written before William left the abbey

42 CMW lii-lx.
43 CF 4-7, 9.
44 On the inside front cover of the manuscript there are the words Sancte marie signiaci in a twelfth-century hand. On the last folio there are found the words, Liber sancte marie signiacensis signatus littera b, numero XII, written in a sixteenth-century hand.
of St. Thierry. Verdeyen also cites evidence that there may have once been two other manuscript copies of the commentary, one at the Carthusian monastery of Mont-Dieu, and one at the monastery of Saint-Lambert de Liessies.

The first printed edition of the commentary, that of Bertrand Tissier as part of the Bibliotheca patrum cisterciensium in 1662, omits many lines and contains many variants from the Charleville text. This variance raises the question: Does it represent a missing manuscript? Verdeyen points out that Tissier does not cite his source, though the Cistercian abbey of Bonne-Fontaine, of which Tissier was prior, was a daughter-house of Signy, and likely used the library of Signy as his source of William’s works. He therefore argues, in spite of the many variants, that Tissier’s edition, and the Patrologia Latina edition that reprinted it, is based solely on Charleville Ms. 49. Anderson, more convincingly, allows the possibility that Tissier is based on another manuscript.

b. Later Editions

Jean-Paul Migne reprinted Tissier’s edition in 1855 in the Patrologia Latina, with all Tissier’s errors and a few more as well, mostly typographical. Verdeyen’s 1989 Corpus Christianorum edition, on the other hand, vastly improves on both Tissier and the PL. It describes and uses both Charleville Ms. 49 and BN Lat. 4286, as well as both previous printed editions, lists all variant readings, and provides Scriptural and patristic references. In concentrating on textual variants, however, Verdeyen overlooked a

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46CMW, xxvii-xxviii, liv-lv.
47CMW, lv-lvi.
49CMW lvi.
50PL 180.547-694.
number of patristic resonances, especially those of William's two major patristic sources, Augustine and Origen, and therefore the text sometimes gives the impression that William is speaking on his own when in fact he is quoting his sources verbatim.\textsuperscript{53}

c. Subsequent Influence

Manuscript evidence suggests that William's commentary did not have the widespread and long-lasting influence that other medieval Romans commentaries, such as those of Haymo of Auxerre (over seventy manuscript copies) and Peter Lombard (over 100 manuscript copies) did.\textsuperscript{54} No quotations of or references to it have been identified in subsequent medieval literature, apart from William's own reference in \textit{The Golden Epistle}.\textsuperscript{55} Even if Verdeyen is right about two lost manuscripts, influence of the complete work did not extend beyond three monasteries; four if one adds the incomplete manuscript. Nevertheless, it was read, at least at Signy; the Signy manuscript has several corrections and alterations of later date than the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{56} One can only speculate as to why the commentary did not achieve wider readership. William was always an obscure figure; he avoided the spotlight during his life, and consequently in death was little known or read, and few outside his community maintained his memory.

\textsuperscript{51}CF, 127, n. 3.
\textsuperscript{52}CMW lx.
\textsuperscript{53}For example, William's comments on 5:14-21 are taken completely from Augustine, but Verdeyen does not note this. See below, pp. 93-117, for my discussion of William's patristic sources.
\textsuperscript{54}See Friedrich Stegmüller, \textit{Repertorium Bibliicum Medii Aevi} (Madrid, 1940-), III.16-18, nos. 3101-3114, and IV.336-38, nos. 6654-68.
\textsuperscript{56}CF, 6.
d. Translations

Two translations have been made of William’s commentary, both in the 1980s, and both before Verdeyen’s critical edition. An English translation by John Baptist Hasbrouck, introduced and annotated by John D. Anderson, is useful as an introduction to the work. In some places, however, the translation is problematic; in other places text is missing. Additionally, like Verdeyen’s edition, it sometimes overlooks William’s citations of Augustine and Origen.

The French translation by Antoine Bru contains a short introduction, less complete than that of the English version, some notes, and only one index. Generally it is not as useful as the English translation as an introduction to William’s commentary.

e. Scholarship

Until now, no thorough study of William’s commentary has been made. Even

57For example, at 5:12, CF 101, CMW 69.304, “And sin is death” for “Et per peccatum mors”); 7:14, CF 141, CMW 99.339-340, “You made so much of us,” for “quos tanti facere dignatus es”; and 15:30-32, CF 263, CMW 192.1009-1010, “and of wicked spirits” for “et spiritualium etiam nequitiarum”. In some cases the faulty translations are due to the use of the inferior PL text, though the translator did check the PL against Ms. 49 (CF 11): 6:19, CF 124, CMW 88.1015-16: “So should we love the lover of justice; so should we love the lover of invisible beauty” for “Sic armandus [PL amandus] est amator iustitiae; sic armandus [PL amandus] est amator inuisibilis pulchritudinis”; 8:35-39, CF 181, CMW 130.741, “the love of God is an effect of God’s grace” for “amor Dei gratiae effectus [PL affectus] est’; and 13:1, CF 238, CMW 172.263-64: “This subjection [of the lover] originates in love” for “Subiectio ista dilectionis est dilecti [PL dilectione est]”.

58For example at 6:21-22, CF 124, CMW 89.1040-41: “He called them ‘free from justice, and not freed, lest . . .’” for “Liberos dixit iustitiae, non liberatos; a peccato autem non liberos, ne . . .”; and 10:8-9, CF 202, CMW 145.318-20: “. . . but in order to live with the life of God by doing his works through love,” for “. . . sed uiat hic in iustitia Dei, in aeternum cum eo victurus. Viuat hic uita Dei operando per dilectionem . . .”

references to it in the numerous articles and books on William are rare. Only two articles have been written dealing exclusively with the commentary: John D. Anderson’s “William of Saint Thierry’s Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans,”60 and Thomas Renna’s "The Jewish Law According to William of St. Thierry."61 Anderson’s article briefly introduces the work and then focusses on William’s use of Origen. Renna’s article places the commentary in a wider medieval as well as monastic context, and focusses on William’s views on the relationship between grace and the Mosaic law as found in the commentary. Both articles are useful, but neither is a thorough study.

A few scholars have referred to it extensively in articles on various aspects of William’s thought. Most significantly, W. Zwingmann cites it frequently in his study of affectus in William,62 and E. Rozanne Elder cites the passages in it dealing with redemption in her study of William’s Christology.63 Additionally, others have referred to it in passing in discussing William’s life and work; Jean-Marie Déchanet mentions it several times in his introduction to William,64 and Louis Bouyer refers to it in his overview of the Cistercian heritage.65 Surveys of medieval exegesis have largely overlooked it, mentioning it only in passing but never in detail.66

60 Anderson, "Romans," cited above.
64 William, 35-38, 74, 100, 102, 116, 138, 140-41, 149.
65 Bouyer, Heritage, 83-85.
C. Peter Abelard's Commentary on Romans

1. Date and Place of Composition

The date of Peter's commentary must be inferred through careful scholarship. The commentary itself provides no direct clues or references to place or time; no original manuscripts survive which might also provide decisive codicological evidence; and Peter does not mention the work in any of his other writings. Peter's autobiographical Historia Calamitatum takes the reader only up to 1132, while he was abbot of St. Gildas, and gives no indication of any interest in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. On the other hand, the commentary's schoolbook style of question, debate, and answer suggest that he wrote it while teaching, and its numerous references to other, datable works such as his Theologia Scholarium, and his Ethica, or Scito te ipsum, help date it. Additionally, there are numerous parallels with other works, such as Peter's sermons and letters. Finally, the events of Peter's own life, not least the accusations by William of St. Thierry and Bernard of Clairvaux, which were based on works they had read which they believed to be Peter's, and which made use of his Romans commentary, suggest that the commentary was written prior to 1140.

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67 Eligius Buytaert, editor of the modern critical edition of the commentary, notes that some of Peter's references to his Theologia cite specific books, and others do not, indicating in the latter case parts that had not yet been written, specifically the third book. The Ethica refers to some of these passages as already written, thus placing the commentary before these parts of the Theologia and the Ethica. See Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica I: Commentaria in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos, Apologia contra Bernardum. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 11 (Turnholt, Belgium: Brepols, 1969), 27-33. Hereafter this work will be designated as CMP.

68 Buytaert considers the relationship between certain passages of the commentary and three sermons and a letter containing similar material, which can all be dated. Based on
All these factors have led scholars to place the composition of Peter’s Romans commentary in the timeframe 1134-1138, while Peter was in Paris teaching in his old school on Mont-Ste.-Geneviève.\(^6^9\) If true, both commentaries were written at almost exactly the same time, shortly before the two men found themselves in adversarial theological positions.

2. Purpose of Composition

Peter is less explicit than William about his reasons for commenting on Romans. In his Prologue, he mentions that St. Paul’s purpose in writing the epistle was to amplify the gift of divine grace and to diminish the merits of our own works, thereby abolishing pride.\(^7^0\) Additionally, Peter says, the purpose of this epistle, like all the epistles, is to encourage obedience to the Gospels and evangelical doctrine, to enlarge upon them, and to defend salvation.\(^7^1\) The Gospels are adequate for salvation, but the epistles ornament the Church, and establish the authority of the Apostles.\(^7^2\)

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\(^6^9\) For example, Buytaert argues for no later than 1137 (CMP 37); Jean Cottiaux dates it to 1134 (“La conception de théologie chez Abélard,” *Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique* 28 [1932], 247-95 at 268); D. E. Luscombe assigns it to “the middle to late 1130’s” (*Peter Abélard* [London: The Historical Association, 1979], 29); Betty Radice dates it between 1132 and 1138 (*The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* [London: Penguin, 1974], 38); John Marenbon places it “early in his last period of teaching at Paris” (*The Philosophy of Peter Abélard* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997], 65); and Constant J. Mews places it between 1133 and 1137 (“On Dating the Works of Peter Abélard,” *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 52 [1985], 73-134 at 132). Peter himself says little about this time; the evidence for it comes from sources such as John of Salisbury, who reported learning from Peter at Mont. Ste.-Geneviève in 1136 (*Metalogicon* 2:10, cited by numerous modern scholars, e.g. M. T. Clanchy, *Abélard: A Medieval Life* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1997], 25; Luscombe, *Abelard*, 29; and Radice, *Letters*, 25-26).

\(^7^0\) CMP 43.89-44.111.

\(^7^1\) CMP 43.79-84.
Like Paul, therefore, and like William, Peter Abelard set out to proclaim the supremacy of divine grace and exhort obedience to the Gospel. In the context of teaching young clerics at Mont-Ste.-Geneviève, he also sought to enlarge upon received doctrine by clarifying the teachings of the Church on key points. While Peter was a monk, his students were not; they had not, like William’s readers, fled the schools, the cities, and the world. Peter’s students were preparing for careers in the Church as priests and possibly bishops or other high positions, and required instruction in Scripture, doctrine, and morals. His commentary on Romans is at once doctrinal and moral, concerned with providing a knowledge of the biblical text, its meaning, and its application in matters of faith and practice. It is the manner and substance of his teaching that would that would make his commentary controversial.

3. Structure and Organization

Peter structures his commentary with a Prologue and four books, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter’s Divisions</th>
<th>Modern chapters and verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Prologue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book I: 1:1-3:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book II: 3:19-6:18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book III: 6:19-9:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book IV: 9:6-16:27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peter’s commentary is divided into a prologue and four (or five) books; this structure differs from that of most other medieval expositions of Romans, which were undivided, and from that of William, which has seven books. As we shall see, the

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72 CMP 42.36-43.78.
73 See above, p. 13, n. 17.
divisions are not themselves significant for Peter’s argument.

Minnis classifies Peter’s prologue as a Type C prologue, but it discusses only three of the topics commonly found in this type: intention or purpose, subject matter, and the modus tractandi. It does treat several of the themes commonly found in medieval Romans prologues: the place of this epistle, and the epistles in general, in the canon of Scripture, and the situation Paul was addressing in Rome. These commonplace themes he treats in an Abelardian way, though, using distinctions and questions to put the epistle in its proper historical and canonical context and to resolve apparent difficulties in understanding that context.

In contrast to Minnis, Rolf Peppermüller subdivides the prologue into a general and special prologue. In the general prologue, which Peppermüller believes is patterned after Pelagius’s prologue to his Pauline commentaries, Peter summarizes the three-fold teaching of Scripture: the Law and the Gospels teach commandments of righteousness, the Prophets and the Epistles admonish and encourage obedience, and the histories and the Acts of the Apostles provide object lessons. Though the Gospel is the perfect teaching, one should not consider the Epistles superfluous; they teach lessons not found in the Gospels—for example, that the carnal observances of the Law should cease, or concerning ecclesiastical hierarchies. Using an example from Cicero, Peter compares the Gospels to those things necessary for the safety and health of the state, and the Epistles to those things beyond what is necessary, such as beautiful

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74See above, pp. 11-18.
76A. Abelard, Auslegung der Römerbrief (Münster: Verlag Aschendorf, 1972), 16-22.
77CMP 41.5-43.78.
78Auslegung, 16-17. See also his summary of this prologue, ibid., 16-18.
79De inventione II.56 (ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell, LCL [Cambridge: Harvard University

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buildings and abundance of treasure.

In the special prologue, Peter then turns to the epistle to the Romans itself. He describes Paul's *modus tractandi*: to diminish works and exalt grace, by rebuking first Gentiles and then Jews, and through this to recall the two Christian factions at Rome to humility and peace. Peter also takes up the classic exegetical question of who converted the Romans, examining the opinions of Eusebius of Caesarea, Pseudo-Jerome, Gregory of Tours, and Haymo of Auxerre dialectically analyzing them to show that there is no contradiction among the authorities. He then discusses another question commonly found in medieval Romans commentaries: why Romans was placed first among Paul's epistles. Peter's answer differs from those commonly found in the other commentaries: it was placed first not because it was written first, but because it addresses the first of the vices, pride. Finally, he notes that Paul is believed to have written the epistle at Corinth and sent it through Phoebe, and cites the opinions of Origen and "Jerome" on this.

b. Structure and Leitmotif

Unlike William, Peter does not elaborate a theme for each book. Nor does he proceed according to stages of spiritual progress. His divisions, in fact, seem to be

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80CMP 43.79-46.183. See also Peppermuller's summary of this prologue, *Auslegung*, 18-22.

81CMP 44.119-25; cp. *Historia ecclesiastica* II.14-15, ed. T. Mommsen (GCS 9.1), 139-40 (cited by Buytaert in the critical apparatus); see also PG 20.171B, which has the Latin text.

82CMP 44.125-30; cp. *Epistolam ad Romanos*, PL 30.648C, which Peter and many others considered to be the work of Jerome. In fact, it was an interpolation of Pelagius's commentary on Romans. See the discussion of this work below, p. 121, n. 258.
arbitrary. Often he ends a book in the middle of Paul’s arguments, and none of his sections entirely encompasses any of the subjects raised in the epistle. The major subjects of each book are as follows:

Prologue: Functions of the Old and New Testament, the purpose of the epistle, modus tractandi, question on the conversion of the Romans, the epistle’s place in the Pauline corpus.

Book I: Human and divine natures of Christ, the Trinity, circumcision, intention, reason, natural law, philosophy, Jews and Gentiles.

Book II: Righteousness, redemption, necessity of baptism, grace, circumcision, original sin, the death of Christ and his immunity from sin.

Book III: Love and charity, the nature of the law, grace, redemption, consent, concupiscence, the Holy Spirit, predestination, Christ’s incarnation and death.

Book IV: Predestination, election, grace, mercy, righteousness, faith, conscience, Jews and Gentiles, prayer, love, scripture, women in the Church.

The early printed edition of the commentary, m, also has a Book V, beginning at 13:8. None of the other surviving manuscripts has this division, and Buytaert argues that a scribe must have made it. The rest of the divisions are unquestionably Peter’s. At 7:8, he speaks of a discussion in “the previous book,” referring to Book II. Apart from this, though, one could remove the book divisions and read the commentary continuously, and not ever know it had been divided.

The theme of Peter’s commentary is grace, as it is of William’s, but (also like William) in the process he discusses many other themes as well. Paul himself was not systematic, and Peter neither discerns a system within the epistle nor imposes one on it. Nor does Peter discuss an overall ordo libri, though he constantly refers back and forth to earlier and later passages, connecting them thematically and showing how Paul develops his argument.
Peter's structure has no bearing on his argument or the organization of his material. This is unusual, and marks the commentary off from his other works. Most likely the commentary is a compilation of his own lecture notes on Romans. Peter may well have lectured on Romans over a long period of time, and may never have finished the lectures. The sketchy nature of his comments on Romans 16, which are drawn almost entirely from patristic sources, suggest that he wanted to move on to other writings rather than refine his lectures on Romans into a literary work with distinct themes and a carefully wrought structure.

4. Place among Peter's Works

All chronologies of Peter's works place his Romans commentary toward the end of his life and writing career, though not at its very end. By the time he wrote it, he had already composed numerous commentaries on logic, and had, while studying at Laon, some twenty years before turning to Romans, begun his career as a theologian by composing a brief exposition of Ezekiel, now lost. His subsequent theological works only occasionally expounded Scripture: his sermons and his commentary on the Hexameron, both written before the Romans commentary, and the Problemata Heloisae, written after it. Other, mostly earlier works, such as his Sic et Non and his various

\[87\] CMP 198.363.

\[88\] For example, at 5:18-19, Peter refers back to 5:12-14 (CMP 161.251-54, 261-63); at 7:18-21, he refers back to 7:15-17 (CMP 208.708, 724, 726-27; at 9:13-20, he refers back and forth to 8:30, 9:20, 9:11, 9:16, and 9:14 (CMP 235.115-16, 126, 137, 236.153, 238.220); at 11:11, he refers forward to 11:14 (CMP 260.145-46); at 11:30 he refers back to 11:25 (CMP 270.484-85); and at 12:17 he refers back to 12:14 (CMP 282.301-302).

\[89\] See the discussion below on Peter's sources, pp. 114-126, especially 117.

\[90\] Buytaert suggests that "[p]robably this section was only a marginal gloss in Abelard's copy of the Epistle to the Romans." CMP, 25.

\[91\] See the discussion of the commentary's date above, especially n. 69; see also Sikes,
theologies, while not ignoring Scripture, were more thematic treatises on doctrine. Whether expository or thematic, many of these works treat the same themes: the nature of God and the Trinity, charity, faith, morality, and the relationship of the Christian faith to Judaism and paganism.

By the time Peter set himself to expound Romans, therefore, he was experienced in expounding both Scripture and doctrine. His Romans commentary presents little new or original when compared against his earlier works; nor are its ideas fully developed when compared against his later works. Nevertheless it stands out both from his other works and from other medieval Romans commentaries by the doctrinal positions it espouses and by its manner of exposition. It does not reflect a turning point in his career, as William’s Romans commentary does, but because of its methodology and teaching it is an important work in his own corpus and the corpus of twelfth-century theology.

5. Manuscripts, Subsequent Influence, Modern Editions, Translations, and Scholarship

a. Manuscripts and Early Editions

There are three surviving manuscripts of the commentary and three early printed editions. Of the printed editions, the first prints a now-lost manuscript, and the other two reproduce the first.

Eligius Buytaert, editor of the Corpus Christianorum edition of the Commentaria in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos, describes these manuscripts and editions at some length.

Abailard, 258-71. Clanchy also provides chronologies of the major events Peter’s life throughout his biography of Peter (Life), but gives no date for the Romans commentary.


As Rolf Peppermüller has argued, against other scholars; see his "Exegetische
and draws his conclusions about their origins and interrelationships. These we here follow and summarize. The three manuscripts are:

1. Angers Bibliothèque Publique Ms. 68, f. 1va-26ra, designated as \( A \);
2. Oxford Balliol College Ms. 296, f. 80r-160v, designated as \( O \);
3. Vaticanus Reginensis latinus Ms.242, f. 1r-74v, designated as \( R \).

The first printed edition, edited by Andrew Duchesne in 1616, is based on a manuscript of Mont-Saint-Michel, and so is designated as \( m \). Buytaert cleverly refers to these witnesses collectively as \( AmOR \).

\( A \), a twelfth-century manuscript with a text slightly shorter than those in the other manuscripts, Buytaert considers a first draft. Like the other manuscripts, it contains numerous errors, homoioteleuta, and omissions. Up to 11:28 it follows Peter's standard practice in citing only the first few words of the biblical text under consideration; after that point the biblical text is given in full. The lost manuscript \( m \), known through the Duchesne edition, contained the longest version of the commentary, with additional brief revisions by Peter, "lectiones Abaelardi," scattered throughout the work. It likewise contains many errors, whether Duchesne's or the printer's or the manuscript copyists', and lengthens the biblical text beginning at 15:27. It also divides the commentary into five books, rather than the four of the manuscripts. \( O \) is a fourteenth-century manuscript. Its text is longer than \( A \)'s, but...
shorter than $m$'s, and frequently gives better readings than those two witnesses. $R$ is twelfth-century, and contains numerous corrections and many of the additions of $m$. It seems to have been based on two models, and Buytaert regards its text as better than $A m O$. As a result of the many additions and corrections, Buytaert distinguishes between the not-annotated and annotated $R$ in discussing the history of the text.

The numerous differences between the extant manuscripts and printed edition lead Buytaert to consider the question of separate redactions of the commentary. Buytaert lists numerous passages in the commentary with readings found in some manuscripts but not in the others. There were, he concludes, five different forms of the commentary, though only three ($A$, with unannotated $R$, $O$ with annotated $R$; and $m$) go back to Peter himself. Buytaert sees only one redaction twice enlarged, not three, and argues that there is no evidence to suggest that Peter did not write the commentary at once, without interruptions.

Buytaert's work allows us to conclude the following: first, that no autograph manuscripts of Peter's commentary exist; and second, that numerous copies must have been made and circulated over the years. Many may have perished as a result of Peter's condemnation, but the fact that copies were being made as late as the fourteenth century speaks to the work's enduring popularity.

96 CMP 3-5.
97 CMP 6-7.
98 CMP 7-12.
99 CMP 12-14.
100 The question was first raised by Heinrich Ostlender, "Die Theologia 'Scholarium' Des Peter Abaelard." In Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Supplementband III.1 (Münster i. W.: 1935), 279, n. 79, cited by Buytaert, CMP 20, n. 27.
101 CMP 20-25.
102 Buytaert cites André Wilmart's research on $R$ to the effect that this work was written.
b. Subsequent Influence

Peter's commentary was read widely. Manuscripts survive in France, England, and Rome, and it was copied as late as the fourteenth century. In its own century it influenced a generation of students, including one who abbreviated it and another who produced his own short set of commentaries on St. Paul's epistles based on notes of Peter's lectures on those epistles. Another anonymous expositor used Peter's commentary in producing his own commentaries on Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. Robert of Melun's own *Quaestiones de epistolis Pauli* are dependent on them. In fact, as D. E. Luscombe has demonstrated, Peter's commentary was widely read in the twelfth century and the implications of its teachings on such topics as redemption were continually discussed. It thus had a wider and longer influence than William's commentary.

by the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu (*Codices Reginenses latini*, T. 1, Codices 1-250 [Vatican City: 1937], 578-85; CMP 12). If this is true, and if Verdeyen's speculation that William sent these same Carthusians a copy of his Romans commentary is also true, then both works existed almost side-by-side in that monastery. Even if Verdeyen is wrong, it is still interesting that Mont-Dieu can be favorably connected with both William and Peter, especially since William had warned the Carthusians against Peter in his *Golden epistle* (Prefatory letter, para. 10, ET: p. 6).


106 As noted by Peppermüller, ibid., 558; these *Quaestiones* are found in R.M. Martin, ed., *Oeuvres de Robert de Melun*, vol. 2 (Louvain: 1938).
This continuing influence is in part demonstrated by the editio princeps of Peter’s commentary, published fifty years before Tissier’s edition of William’s commentary, and its two reprints in the nineteenth century. The modern critical edition edited by Buytaert was also published twenty years before that of William’s in the same series.

c. Modern Editions

The Buytaert edition is a major advance over previous printed editions. It makes use of all the available manuscripts and editions, and sifts through myriad variant readings to produce a text approximating Peter’s final version of the commentary. Nevertheless, it is not without problems. Rolf Peppermüller, working on the commentary and its manuscripts at the same time as Buytaert, produced a long list, nearly twelve pages, of corrections to Buytaert’s text, and most of his readings make better sense than Buytaert’s. Additionally, many of Buytaert’s scriptural and patristic references are inaccurate, and seem to have been taken over from the Patrologia Latina edition uncritically. In these respects, Buytaert’s edition is little better than the PL reprint, and must be used with care.

d. Translations

In spite of the importance of Peter’s commentary, no complete English translation of it has ever been published. Various portions of it, the Prologue\(^\text{109}\) and the question on redemption,\(^\text{110}\) have been translated in their entirety, and John Marenbon\(^\text{111}\)

\(^{107}\text{School, passim.}\)


\(^{109}\text{See Minnis and Scott, Criticism, 100-105.}\)

\(^{110}\text{E. R. Fairweather, ed. and trans., A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham. The Library}\)
and Richard Weingart\textsuperscript{112} both give important translations of parts of the redemption question and other passages as well.

\textbf{e. Modern Scholarship}

In addition to his list of suggested emendations, Peppermüller has produced several other works on Peter’s Romans commentary. The longest and most important of these is his \textit{Abaelards Auslegung des Römerbriefes},\textsuperscript{113} in which he analyzes various theological topics raised by Peter, including his teaching on Scripture, the Trinity, Christology, divine omnipotence and the problem of evil, faith, hope, and charity, the work of Christ, divine righteousness, ethics, and the Law and the Gospel. While here and elsewhere\textsuperscript{114} Peppermüller is very thorough on these topics, he gives little attention to Peter’s exegetical method or to the context of the commentary within Peter’s life and within the twelfth century, to the place and date of composition, or to his sources.

Numerous other scholars have referred to Peter’s Romans commentary in various articles and books, some only briefly, some at greater length. Most significant among modern authors are the recent study of Peter’s philosophy and theology by John Marenbon\textsuperscript{115} and the lengthy biography by M. T. Clanchy,\textsuperscript{116} both of whom will be referred to extensively throughout this work. Additionally, Richard Weingart’s \textit{The Logic of Divine Love}\textsuperscript{117} makes great use of the commentary, and offers important arguments

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Philosophy}, 301-302 (7:13); 322 (3:26); 325 (5:19); and 326 (9:21).
\textsuperscript{112}\textit{The Logic of Divine Love: A Critical Analysis of the Soteriology of Peter Abelard} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 69 (7:13); 71-72 (8:15); 79-81, 88, 92, and 94 (3:26); 140-41 (5:19); and 148 (8:34). These are the longer and more significant passages translated; Weingart translates other, shorter passages as well.
\textsuperscript{113}Cited in full above, p. 29, n.76.
\textsuperscript{114}“Traditionen” and “Fortwirken,” cited above.
\textsuperscript{115}\textit{Philosophy}, cited above, p. 27, n. 69.
and insights into it. Overall, however, Peppermüller’s Auslegung is the most important study of Peter’s exposition of Romans.

D. Summary

By the time William and Peter began to write their Romans commentaries, they were well-established scholars in their respective genres: William as a writer of the monastic life, and Peter as a philosopher and systematic theologian. Each had written a number of works, though Peter, always controversial, was better known to contemporary intellectuals than was William, who preferred the obscurity of the cloister. Each brought a wealth of acquired knowledge to the task of expounding Romans, as well as very different perspectives, shaped either by life in the cloister, with its love of tradition, or by life in the schools, with their love of inquiry. William and Peter shared much of the same knowledge of Scripture, of the Fathers of the Church, and of the liberal arts necessary to interpret those authorities. Nevertheless, they would write two very different commentaries on the same book of Scripture, using different methodologies to expound the text and reaching conclusions on the Apostle’s teaching that were sometimes very similar and other times very different. As dissimilar as they were, these expositions were also the two best to be written during the Middle Ages, coming as they did from two of the finest minds of the time.

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116 *Life*, cited above, p. 27, n. 69.
117 *Logic*, cited above, p. 38, n. 112.
CHAPTER THREE

EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY

More different than their Prologues and structures are the exegetical methods
that Peter and William use to expound Romans. While they use some of the same
theological terminology, discuss some of the same topics, and proclaim some of the
same ideas, they diverge in many other significant ways. Their writing styles differ
greatly and they take very distinct
approaches to the same tasks necessary for explaining the Scriptural text, using
some of the same techniques but in greater or lesser degrees and with greater or lesser
skill. These peculiarities of exegetical method cause the two commentaries to read very
differently and are at least as important for understanding the conflict between William
and Peter as their theological differences.

William's exegesis of Romans is distinguished primarily by eloquent, strong
prose, which, when read aloud, as it likely was, could not have failed to catch his
reader's notice. William's Romans commentary is a rhetorical gem, rooted both in the
classical tradition of composition and the approach to exposition described by
Augustine in *De doctrina Christiana*. He vividly expounds Paul's words, using imagery
drawn from scripture and the allegorical interpretation of it, as well as from traditional
Christian doctrine, contemporary thought, school learning, the world, and his own
experience as a monk and abbot.

By contrast, Peter's exegesis is simultaneously distinguished by a skillful use of
dialectic and by an often difficult prose, the result, no doubt, of compiling school
lectures on Romans into a written commentary with less concern for eloquence,
sometimes even clarity of sentence structure or pronoun reference, than for logic. Peter, established in the methods of Boethius, prefers dialectic to rhetoric as his means of expounding the Apostle’s words. Through his insightful use of logic, Peter demonstrates reverence for both scripture and the patristic tradition that lies between him and St. Paul, even as he judges between apparently conflicting authorities. Like William, Peter has in mind the edification of his readers, and he chooses his method to instruct them in morals and devotion.

To demonstrate the similarities and differences of their exegetical method, we will examine how William and Peter cite the text of Romans under consideration, how they use scripture to interpret scripture, how they conceive of and use the senses of scripture, how they use patristic sources, and how they use rhetoric and dialectic as tools either of exposition or of analysis. Our analysis will show how greatly the skill levels of William and Peter differ in the areas of rhetoric and dialectic.

A. The Citation of the Romans Text

1. Introduction

The first thing medieval exegetes did to expound scripture was to cite the passage under consideration, whether long or short. They then expounded it, word by word, with special attention to key terms and concepts, before moving on to the next passage. Exegetes cited these passages in several different ways, indicating sometimes significantly different approaches to the text. These methods of citation have been little studied in spite of their importance for understanding exegetical differences between scholars and schools.¹ Eileen Sweeney has addressed these differences in her study of

¹ For a description of basic forms of expounding the text (with only brief reference to
the theologies of Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard. She has defined these theologies respectively as narrative and dialectical. In the monks’ narrative theology, the reader of scripture was assimilated and submitted to “the narrative order, language, and authority of Scripture. It is an order that preserves the unity of the text as a whole and, hence produces understanding.”

Peter’s dialectical theology, by contrast, “stops Scripture’s own narrative order to ask questions from another order, e.g., about consistency with other parts of the ‘story’ or with other interpretations and conclusions,” and engages in “an analysis of [a text] built up of atomic parts.”

Sweeney’s model will help us examine the citation methods of William and Peter.

2. William of St. Thierry

William cites the text of Romans in a variety of ways. He prefers long citations of text, complete sentences, sometimes several together, to give a full sense of Paul’s argument, as at 5:7-11, where he introduces his comments by citing the first four verses of the passage. Sometimes, though, he will cite a passage phrase by phrase or word by word, as at 1:1.

Often William will cite a passage, introduce it, and then repeat certain phrases of the passage as he expounds it line by line. For example, William cites 2:17, “But if you are called a Jew,” four times in the space of just over sixty lines of the modern critical edition, either to introduce his comment on the passage or to give it fuller attention and emphasize its importance. The same type of repetition occurs twenty-two more times citing it), see Dahan, _L’exégèse_, 121-59.


3 Ibid., 3, 9.

4 5:7-11, CMW 64.141-65.148, CF 96.
in the Romans commentary, in both short and long comments. It is a useful rhetorical device that allows William both to meditate on the words through repetition and to emphasize key passages where he expounds several points.

William also weaves his comments into the words of the text. Often these comments are very brief, no more than one or two words, a gloss or paraphrase of the text. William uses this method fifteen times, most extensively and effectively in his commentary on Romans 1:19-23:

Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. It is manifest not only to them but in them, that is, through the natural intelligence which is in them. The text continues: For God has manifested it to them. How has he manifested it? From the creation of the world the invisible things of God have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made; this includes his eternal power and divinity. Why has he manifested them? So that they may be without excuse. Why are they guilty then? Because when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks. But what did they do? They became vain and futile in their thoughts. Not without punishment: Their foolish heart was darkened and they lost through pride what they had perceived through curiosity. . . . And they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of a corruptible image, first of a man, then of birds, then of four footed beasts, and last of all, of creeping things. Again, idolatry has become the cause of subsequent uncleanness.

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5 1:1, CMW 6.2-7.45, CF 19-20.
6 CMW 35.80-36.142, CF 56-58. William will come back to this a fifth time in his recapitulation at 3:1-2, CMW 40.273-78, CF 62.
8 3:29 (CMW 49, CF 74), 4:16 (CMW 57, CF 83-84), 7:21 (CMW 102, CF 145), 8:23 (CMW 119-20, CF 168-69), 8:35-39 (CMW 130, CF 180), 9:2-5 (CMW 132-33, CF 183-84), 9:20-21 (CMW 136, CF 188), 10:17 (CMW 147, CF 205), 10:19 (CMW 147-48, CF 205-206), 12:7-16 (CMW 169-70, CF 235-36), 14:2 (CMW 178, CF 245-46), 14:6 (CMW 180, CF 248), 14:17 and 14:18 (CMW 184, CF 253), as well as the following long example.
9 CMW 18.439-452, 18.462-19.65: "Quia quod notum est Dei, manifestum est in illis. Non solum illis, sed et in illis manifestum est, hoc est per naturalem intelligentiam..."
This interrogation and interpolation of the text is a useful way of clarifying particular words and phrases. It offers a good stylistic respite from simply citing the text as a whole and then expounding it separately. It is less useful for texts that require more extensive explanation and frequent repetition, as noted above.

The source of William's text of Romans is uncertain; there may well have been several sources. There was no standard Vulgate text in general use within Latin Christendom in the early twelfth century, and renderings of biblical texts could vary widely, from those texts used in liturgy to those cited by Fathers such as Augustine to versions such as the glossed text of St. Paul's epistles found in Charleville Ms. 49. A comparison of William's citations of Romans with this glossed text, to which William had access, shows numerous differences, indicating that it was by no means his only, or even his primary, source. William may have been quoting the text of Romans from memory; he may also used any or all of the renderings mentioned above.

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11 John Anderson (CF, 6) claims that William used the glosses from this text over a dozen times in his commentary, for example, at 1:18-19 (CMW 21.550-53; CF, 37), 1:20-21 (CMW 24.656-68; CF, 40), and 12:20-21 (CMW 171.248-50; CF, 237).
3. Peter Abelard

Unlike William, Peter rarely cites a large block of the epistle’s text. Typically he cites no more than a sentence of Romans at a time, assuming that his reader is already so familiar with the Apostle’s words that he does not need to have the text quoted at length. Occasionally he cites the text phrase by phrase or word by word, commenting on one small part before citing the next. For example, Peter breaks down Romans 1:1, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,” into five component words and phrases and comments on each of the first two words (Paulus servus) at length. The effect of this throughout his commentary is to atomize the text and focus analysis on each word or phrase, potentially distracting an inattentive reader from the larger text by forcing him to look at the individual trees and ignore the forest as a whole.

Peter recognized the danger of this approach. Though, unlike William, he rarely pauses to summarize what he has commented on, or to point out what is yet to come, he unquestionably has a sense of the message of the whole epistle, and he frequently tries to connect the words and phrases he has separated and show how an earlier passage is linked to a later one. For example, he makes extensive use of the terms continuare and continuatio to join concepts and terms from one passage to those of another and show how Paul makes a continuous argument.¹²

¹² 1:20, CMP 68.735; 2:24, CMP 92.544; 3:19, CMP 110.9; 3:20, 111.44; 4:16, CMP 145.750; 5:12, CMP 157.113; 6:12, CMP 181.172; 6:23, CMP 187.75; 7:1, CMP 187.20; 7:7, CMP 196.302; 8:9, CMP 213.101; 9:14, CMP 235.128; 9:22, CMP 243.375; 10:14, CMP 253.174; 11:1, CMP 256.9; 11:12, 260.161; 11:16, CMP 262.331; 15:9, 316.144; and 16:25-27, CMP 338.314. Peppermüller also refers to this and other commonly used terms (Auslegung, 9-10), and Buytaert says that it is a grammatical term meaning “construction of a phrase” or “concatenation of the ideas of a paragraph,” and that Peter uses it to say, “the context of saint Paul is grammatically or ideologically connected as follows” (CMP 24-25).
As Peter proceeds with his commentary, he shortens his citations to the point of omitting portions of the text and sometimes giving only the first word or two from the passage under consideration, assuming the reader's familiarity with the text. Rather infrequent in Book One, by Book Four this truncation has almost become the rule.\(^{13}\) Often Peter comments on omitted text. For example, at 16:9, Peter simply gives the word *Nostrum* and proceeds to comment on Urbanus’s unmentioned relationship to Paul: “*[Greet Urbanus,] our [helper in Christ], namely of myself and the others.*”\(^{14}\) A more extensive omission occurs at 15:3, where Peter gives a theological explanation of the text he leaves out: “And this is what he says, *For [Christ did not please himself],* that is, that human nature received by the Word, who is especially called Christ according to his special anointing, strove to fulfill the resolution not so much of the human will as of the divine.”\(^{15}\) In his commentary William may omit entire verses, but he does not comment on text which he omits. Peter, by contrast, omits far more text than William does, although he invariably uses single words to stand for a phrase or a sentence as a way of calling the missing words to the reader’s mind.

Like William, Peter paraphrases the text, changing words and word order as he weaves his comments into the text, as at 14:9 (paraphrased passages in bold italics):

*For to this end, as if he should say, to this end, because he died, namely for us and on account of our sins, and rose again, likewise for us and on account of our justification*

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\(^{13}\) The extant manuscripts of the commentary cite the text of Romans differently in Book Four. Manuscript “A,” Angers ms. 68, supplies the whole biblical text beginning at 11:28. See Buytaert’s description of this manuscript, CMP 3-5. Edition “m” begins to supply missing text from 15:27; see CMP 6-7.

\(^{14}\)“*[Salutate Urbanum adiutorem] nostrum [in Christo], mei scilicet et aliorum.*” CMP 330.116, missing text added. Both manuscripts A and m supply the whole text of 16:8-9, which is missing in mss. O and R. This is the largest omission in the commentary.

\(^{15}\)“*Et hoc est, Etenim [Christus non sibi placuit], id est homo ille assumptus a Verbo, qui secundum specialem eius unctionem specialiter Christus dicitur, non tam humanae quam divinae voluntatis placitum implere studuit.*” CMP 312.11, missing text added. Manuscript A supplies more of the biblical text than I have. Peter does give the
(Rom. 4:25), just as the same Apostle said above; he merited to rule over our death as much as our life, so that just as he did each for us, so by dying as much as by living we may seek only to obey him and to fulfill his will. For otherwise he is not Lord of the dead, but, as it were, an enemy by punishing, unless we persist to death in his obedience, having prepared our soul not only for its confession, but also to lay it down for the brothers.16

If Peter regards the words of the text as mutable, then so also does he regard the order of these words. For example, compare the order in which he discusses the words of Romans 5:6 and 5:13 with the order of the text found in most Latin versions of Romans:

5:6: Peter: Ut quid enim ... Christus mortuus est ... secundum tempus ... pro impiis mortuus est ... cum adhuc infirmi essemus.

Versions: Ut quid enim Christus, cum adhuc infirmi essemus, secundum tempus pro impiis mortuus est?

5:13: Peter: Usque ad legem enim ... peccatum erat in mundo ... cum lex [nondum] esset ... peccatum ... non imputabatur.

Versions: Usque ad legem enim peccatum erat in mundo: peccatum autem non imputatur, cum lex non est.

Peter both paraphrases and changes word order frequently. These alterations, combined with his textual omissions, make it virtually impossible to determine Peter’s text of Romans.

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16 "In hoc enim, ac si diceret: In hoc quoq mortuus est, pro nobis scilicet et propter justificationem nostram, sicut idem supradixit Apóstolus, meruit tam morti nostrae quam vitae dominari, ut sicut utrumque fecit pro nobis, ita tam moriendo quam vivendo nonnisi ei obedire et eius voluntatem implere quaeramus. Aliter enim mortuorum Dominus non est, sed quasi hostis puniendo, nisi etiam usque ad mortem in eius obedientia persistamus, parati animam non solum propter eius confessionem, sed etiam pro fratribus ponere." CMP 300.137-301.146. Compare with the Vulgate text: “In hoc enim Christus et mortuus est, et resurrexit: ut et mortuorum et vivorum dominetur.”
4. Conclusion

The two methods of citing Romans used by William and Peter represent subtle yet significant differences in their respective approaches to the text. William's preference for longer citations is rooted in his love of rhetoric and his desire to give an overview of the whole passage before explaining it. The very words of Scripture were important to him and his monastic reader, and William believed it important to present the entire text and let it fully enter the reader's consciousness before expounding it, a key part of the method of *lectio divina*. Peter's preference for shorter citations, or no citation at all, reflects his primary concern with the meanings of words; words, even those of Scripture, have no power apart from what they signify. Consequently, it was less important to Peter to cite the text than to explain it; less important to give it in its grammatical wholeness than to examine each term in its component part and show its meaning. To be sure, William can explain individual words, and Peter knows well the meaning of the full text, but their preferences in citing the Apostle's words betray other common tendencies in their exegetical methodologies.

B. The Use of Scripture to Comment on Scripture

1. Introduction

Most medieval exegetes, up to the time when dialectic became the dominant means of expounding Scripture, considered Scripture its own best commentary. They believed that the best way to explain obscure passages or to expound clear ones was by other passages of Scripture that used the same key words or concepts. Both William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard, who were steeped in Scripture and the expository
tradition, followed this technique, almost continually citing Scripture to make an exegetical point.

Medieval exegetes were able to cite Scripture as frequently as they did because they committed vast amounts of it to memory. In her *Book of Memory*, Mary Carruthers describes the memory techniques taught and used by many educated people during the Middle Ages. These techniques would have enabled well-educated men like William or Peter to recall at will any passage they needed, either on the basis of verbal links or topical, conceptual links. Similarly, Jean Leclercq describes the monastic mentality that produced this effusiveness. In his *Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, he speaks of “the extremely important phenomenon of reminiscence, whereby the verbal echoes so excite the memory that a mere allusion will spontaneously evoke whole quotations,” of a biblical imagination, of a memory fashioned wholly by the Bible leading to spontaneous expression in a biblical vocabulary, of how the words of Scripture become those of the person using them, and of “exegesis by reminiscence,” which aptly describes the monk’s ability to cite scripture by “spontaneously [supplying] a text or word which corresponds to the situation described in each text, and which explains each separate word.” William exemplifies superbly this mentality, and uses his rhetorical skill to cite the passages he recalls in very compelling ways. Though less experienced in monastic life than William, Peter is equally skilled in recalling Scripture, but what he recalls he uses dialectically, to argue and dispute.

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2. William of St. Thierry

Most of William's works, expository and non-expository, are rife with biblical quotations and allusions. In the *Golden Epistle* he advocates the memorization of Scripture, and compares the process to digesting food and bringing it up again for frequent ruminatin.\(^{19}\) Following the example set by St. Paul for the Doctors of the Church, that they should strengthen and fortify their own words with Scripture,\(^{20}\) William cites almost 600 passages of Scripture in his Romans commentary.\(^{21}\) He quotes from forty-six books of the Bible, passing over the lesser historical books and prophets of the Old Testament and the shorter epistles of the New.\(^{22}\) He cites Romans most frequently, of course, 133 times, with the Psalms next at eighty-seven citations, the four Gospels almost 120 times, and I Corinthians forty-five times. Interestingly, he cites the Song of Songs only five times.\(^{23}\)

William has favorite verses of Scripture as well as favorite books, and they influence strongly his exposition. From Romans itself he cites 5:5, "the charity of God

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\(^{19}\) *Epistola aurea* 122, PL 184.327D: "Sed et de quotidiana letione aliquid quotidie in ventrem memoriae demittendum est, quod fidelius digeratur, et sursum revocatum crebris ruminetur..." Eng. trans. 52.

\(^{20}\) *Expos. in Rom.*, 3:9-11, CMW 43.381-83: "Quod etiam more suo scripturis confirmat, ut et in hoc det exemplum ecclesiae doctoribus, ut de scripturarum testimoniiis astruant quae dicunt, et muniunt." CF 66.

\(^{21}\) CF 273-285, with special attention to the tabulation on 285. CMW also has a scriptural index, 199-205, though it has no totals and disagrees with CF on what passages are cited where. Each lists citations that the other does not, and I have found some citations that both have missed.

\(^{22}\) Specifically, he passes over Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Judith, Esther, Lamentations, Baruch, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, I & II Maccabees, II Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, II Peter, II & III John, and Jude.

\(^{23}\) CF 285. Since the CF listing is not complete (see note 19 above), these numbers should be considered as minimum figures. CF lists only four Songs citations, but one of these contains two separate passages combined into one, and I count it as two citations (Songs 2:16 and 1:12 at Romans 1:8, CF 26, CMW 12.214-15. See below for a
is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,” eight times apart from his comment on this verse. All the citations occur after his comment, and in situations where he discusses love, the Holy Spirit, or the righteousness of the law.24 He cites Romans 7:7, “You shall not covet,” seven times, to indicate that concupiscence is man’s fundamental sin.25 He cites Romans 5:20, “The law came in, that sin might abound; where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more,” six times, to describe the relationship between sin and the law.26 He cites Romans 1:9, “Whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son,” five times, either as an example to be imitated or in comparison to some spiritual condition.27 By commenting on Romans with other passages of Romans, some

discussion of these verses.

24 5:11 (CMW 66.204-205, CF 98; love, Holy Spirit), 5:19-20 (CMW 76.580-82, CF 110; grace, fullness of the law; from Augustine, ep. 157.3.15-17, CSEL 462.19-466.1), 7:7 (CMW 94.164-65, CF 135; the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s help to fulfill the law), 8:3-4 (CMW 108.697-98, CF 152; the righteousness of the law); 8:35-39 (CMW 130.744, CF 181; love by which we overcome), 9:25-26 (CMW 140.140-41, CF 196; with 8:16, the Holy Spirit’s testimony to the sons of God through charity), 9:30-33 (CMW 142.208, CF 198; the righteousness of the law; love as the fulfillment of that law), and 12:1-3 (CMW 166.69-71, CF 231; the soul’s reformation brought about by the love of God poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit).

25 3:27 (CMW 48.573, CF 72; concupiscence equally prohibited by the laws of works and of faith), 7:8-9 (CMW 176-78, CF 135; sin works concupiscence through the commandment), 7:13 (CMW 96.251-52, CF 138; man did not know concupiscence until the law), 7:15 (CMW 99.372, CF 142; Paul’s struggle against concupiscence), 7:16 (CMW 100.400, CF 143; the goodness of the law), 12:1-3 (CMW 166.63, CF 231; the general prohibition necessary for the soul’s reformation), and 16:20 (CMW 194.1100, CF 266; crushing Satan is the victory over concupiscence). Romans 7:7 is, of course, Paul’s quotation of Exodus 20:17; because of this quotation and its importance to Paul’s argument, we cite it as the text of Romans.

26 2:17 (CMW 35.93, CF 56; the second stage of man, knowledge of sin), 5:13 (CMW 70.349-50, CF 102; sin remained in the world until the law, because the law entered the world so that sin might abound), 6:2 (twice, CMW 77.614, 618-19, CF 111; man must be shown his fowlness, which made the good commandment useless, before he can be healed), 6:3-4 (CMW 80.740-41, CF 115; in summary of 5:15-6:3), and 6:5 (CMW 82.793-94, CF 116; from Origen; Paul did not give us permission to sin in these words).

27 1:1 (CMW 6.30, CF 20; amplifies Paul’s claim to be servant of Christ), 1:8 (CMW 12.211-12, CF 26; Paul’s example of servanthood for the man of God who possesses God), Book IV, preface (CMW 90.10-11, CF 129; Paul’s imitation of Christ in service of him), 8:23 (CMW 120, CF 168; comparison to offering firstfruits of the Spirit to God),
of them cited repeatedly, William expounds Paul's message more persuasively; his readers encounter the same words and phrases continuously and absorb their meaning and the meaning of the whole epistle.

Equally enlightening are the passages he quotes from outside Romans. His favorites are Matthew 22:37-40, in which Jesus gives the two great commandments, and Galatians 5:6, "Faith works by love." He cites the former in part or in whole four times, sometimes in very obvious connections, sometimes in connections that completely baffle. In the case of the latter, William always cites it in connection with a passage mentioning either faith or works or both. William uses 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, "Christ the power (virtus) of God and wisdom of God," three times, always in reference to Paul's mentions of God's power early in the epistle. He also cites Psalm 13:1, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God,'" three times, always in the context of Paul's

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and 9:2 (CMW 132.829, CF 184; comparison to Paul's grieving in his heart for the Jews).

28 2:11-12 (CMW 33.32, CF 54; from Augustine [ex. Gal. 19, CSEL 84.76.15-77.21], the foundations of truth and good morals, rooted in the sacraments and morals of the written law), 9:28 (CMW 141.157-59, CF 196; the equity [aequitat] spoken of in the gospel, in which the Lord cuts short his reckoning [verbam]), 12:1-3 (CMW 166.60-71, CF 231; referred to above, note 32), and 13:10 (CMW 175.395-96, CF 242; the charity by which God and neighbor are loved fulfills the law). This last citation is obvious; the first and third are not obvious, but reflect Augustine's and William's expository creativity; and the second is completely obscure, taken from Origen, PG 14:1153D-1154A.

29 2:13 (CMW 34.61-62, CF 55; faith works by charity in the one who has the law of God written on his heart), 3:28 (CMW 49.601-602, CF 73; in contrast to Paul's statement that a man is justified without the works of the law), 10:4 (CMW 144.270, CF 200; whether faith can be distinguished from works), and 12:1-3 (CMW 168.113, CF 233; a chain of passages describing faith, responding to, "God has apportioned a measure of faith to each one").

30 1:4 (CMW 8.73-74, CF 21; Christ predestined Son of God in power), 1:16 (CMW 16.365-68, CF 31; the gospel is the power of God for salvation), and the second comment on 1:18-19 (CMW 22.590-93, CF 38; actually a comment on 1:20, "God's eternal power and divinity"). William does not use this verse to comment on the other uses of virtus in Romans, at 15:13 ("That you may abound in the power of the Holy Spirit") and 15:19 ("... in the power of signs and wonders, and in the power of the Holy Spirit").
description of man's foolishness or the darkness of man's heart.\footnote{1:24 (CMW 19.477-78, CF 34; God gave sinful man up to the desires of his heart, blinded, not enlightened by grace), second comment on 1:20-21 (CMW 23.632, CF 39; their foolish heart was darkened), and 3:17-18 (CMW 44.425-26, CF 67; description of the Gentiles).} In these last two cases, the connections are almost always verbal—the words of Romans recall other passages with an identical key word. Some of these repeated citations take on an almost mechanical quality after a while; they may illuminate a passage under consideration, but one senses that at times William may be citing a passage simply because of the related key word or concept, as in the case of 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, or of James 4:6, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble," which William quotes three times in a short span of Book Six.\footnote{10:8-9 (CMW 145.313, CF 202; confession of Christ as Lord is an act of humility), 11:20-21 (CMW 155.691, CF 215; here the citation makes up William's entire comment), and 11:33-36 (CMW 160.874, CF 221; God is not unjust when he resists the proud and gives grace to the humble). None of these citations has a verbal connection with the verse under discussion; William sees a theological or moral connection in each case.} Some passages may have come to mind too easily.

Perhaps in anticipation of his \textit{Mirror of Faith}, which deals extensively with faith, hope, and charity, William alludes to 1 Corinthians 13:13 nine times.\footnote{4:10-12 (CMW 54.781-84, CF 79), 4:18-19 (CMW 58.943-59.948, CF 85; partially from Origen), 5:2-3 (CMW 63.80, CF 94), 8:24-25 (CMW 121.385-86, CF 169); 8:26 (twice: CMW 121.424-122.426, CF 171, from Augustine \cite{ep.194.4.16-18, CSEL 57.188.7-190.11}; and CMW 123.485-89, CF 172-73); 10:4 (CMW 144.274-75, CF 200); 15:4 (CMW 186.798-800, CF 256); and 15:13 (CMW 188.887-90, CF 259). In addition, one might consider 10:8-9 as an allusion to 1 Corinthians 13:13; William does not link the three virtues as closely together as in the other passages, but the attentive reader will note the relationship there (CMW 145 319-24, CF 202; note that CF is here missing.} This linkage of the three theological virtues becomes an underlying theme of William's Romans commentary, not one upon which William expounds at length, but one to which he returns often when discussing one or more of these virtues. The interrelationship between these three virtues is important to William, and he misses few opportunities to inject this relationship into his exposition of the epistle to the Romans.
William makes conceptual links between passages of Scripture, based on related theological ideas, as well as verbal links. For example, in response to 1:8, "First I give thanks to my God," William cites together Song 2:16 and 1:12: "My beloved is mine and I am his; he shall abide between my breasts." The link, both verbal and theological, is the word "my," referring to the possession of God by the one who loves Him, and is the basis for William's combining the two verses from the Song.34 Along the same line of spiritual intimacy, William cites Luke 11:7, "My children are in bed with me," in his discussion of intimate prayer at 8:26, "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought."35 Here there is no verbal link, only a spiritual one that depends on a figurative application of Luke 11:7. William interprets 8:3-4, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh has condemned sin by means of sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us," by citing Hebrews 9:13-14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Spirit offered himself unspotted to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" and noting the parallelisms: "What in one place is called the 'condemnation of sin' is called the 'cleansing of dead works' in another, and the service of a clean conscience toward God.

34 CMW 214-15, CF 26. Compare the use of these verses here with William's comments on them in his own Song commentary: On 2:16, see paras. 171-73, PL 180.534C-535D; English translation, *Exposition on the Song of Songs*, trans. Mother Columba Hart, Cistercian Fathers Series no. 6 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, n.d.), 139-40; on 1:12, see para. 83, PL 180.501D-502B, Eng. trans. 68-69. His later comments do not seem to have been influenced by these citations in the Romans commentary. The same is true for the other two passages from the Song which William cites in both commentaries (5:8, of course, William did not get to in the Song commentary): compare the context of William's citation of Song 1:1 at Romans 8:3-4 (CMW 108.720, CF 153) with his comment on the verse in its own commentary (paras. 30-36, PL 180.483B-485B), and of 1:2-3 at the Preface to Romans (CMW 4.50-51, CF 17) with the comment in the Song commentary (paras. 41-43, PL 180.487AD). Neither of these latter two citations, nor the citation of 5:8 at 9:1-5, is directly related to the passage under consideration; William brings them in as part of his expository creativity.
is the same as the perfect fulfillment of righteousness.” This is perhaps the most explicit example of Scripture commenting on Scripture in the Romans commentary, and shows well how William links ideas in one passage with ideas in another.

William also adeptly links passages together to present contrasting and complementary lessons. At 1:16, “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,” he cites not only 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, but also Psalm 58:12, “Destroy them in your power,” the point being that God’s power can damn those who disbelieve as well as save those who believe. At 2:3, “Do you think that you shall escape the judgment of God?”, William cites Psalm 67:2, “Let them who hate him flee before his face,” in order to make a contrasting point: “Those who love God do not flee his judgments but seek them, because they are confident that they will be justified by them.” At 11:28-29, William clarifies the concepts of calling and election by citing Matthew 20:16 to contrast the general calling of the gospel and the specific calling of the elect: “They were not called with the call spoken of in the words, ‘Many are called, but few are chosen’, but with the call by which the elect are called.” These contrasts have a strong rhetorical quality; they persuade by showing different but equally valid and important sides of divine truths.

William also demonstrates his rhetorical skill in citing Scripture by creating

35 CMW 122.451-54, CF 171.
37 CMW 16.370-75, CF 31. William distinguishes between these powers by noting that the right and left hands of God take their names from the different functions.
whole chains of Scripture passages, based on verbal or thematic similarity, in order to expound another passage or concept.\textsuperscript{40} An analysis of William's choice of citations reveals the movement of his thought. For example, in order to expound 5:1, "Let us have peace toward God," William cites John 16:33, "In the world you shall have distress; but have peace in me," then, feeling the need to relate peace to something even greater, he adds Zechariah 8:19, "Love truth and peace," and finishes with 1 Corinthians 13:4-6, applying the characteristics of charity to the peace pertaining to truth; this last citation ends, "but rejoices with the truth."\textsuperscript{41} William thus links the experience of peace to knowledge of truth, making the former dependent on the latter.

At 6:4, "So that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life," William cites in order Galatians 5:24, "Those who are Jesus Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences," repeats Romans 6:4, then adds Colossians 3:1-3, "If you are risen with Christ, seek the things that are above. . . . For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," Psalm 21:1, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", applying it to the death of the soul in the interior man, Romans 6:6, "Knowing that our old man is crucified that the body of sin may be voided so that we may serve sin no longer," Romans 6:13, "Do not yield your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin," Colossians 3:9, "Strip yourself of the old man with his deeds," Ephesians 4:25, "Putting away lying, speak the truth," and Psalm 14:2-3, "He who speaks truth in his heart may dwell on the holy mountain of God."\textsuperscript{42} Such chains, with intervening commentary, show the progression of William's

\textsuperscript{40} William of St. Thierry, of course, was not the only monk who could do this; Jean Leclercq describes this ability to produce chains, using Bernard of Clairvaux as an example (\textit{Love of Learning}, 73-75). My reaction to Leclercq's discussion is that William wanders less than Bernard does, and, as we shall see, not too far from where he began.
\textsuperscript{41} CMW 62.54-65, CF 93.
\textsuperscript{42} CMW 79.702-80.726, CF 114. For other chains of scripture citations, see 1:1 (CMW
thought: from peace to truth, and from rising with Christ in newness of life to speaking the truth and dwelling on God's holy mountain. Persistent and compelling, they must have stirred his receptive audience, and made his exhortation that much easier.

All of William's citations of Scripture reveal an enormous ability to recall scripture passages as well as the ability to use them rhetorically to comment on other passages. Verbal links and chains such as William establishes are the result of long years of reading and praying Scripture, of memory training, and also of rhetorical education. These citations teach, argue, and persuade by their verbal and theological connections to each other and by their insistence when combined into chains. By means of them William shows how one passage of Scripture can illuminate another. Many of these citations have clear verbal links; others have clear theological links; others have connections known only to William and perhaps to his original audience. Some links are quite brilliant; others are mechanical and uninspired. Many citations expand the discussion beyond the immediate bounds of the passage at hand, and demonstrate William's creativity and inspiration.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter's technique is similar to William's, though he has his own preferences of passage and style of usage. Peter's commentary contains over 1,000 quotations, references, and allusions. He quotes from or alludes to fifty-two books of the Bible, passing over mostly Old Testament histories and minor prophets, as well as the shorter letters of the New. His favorite books are, of course, Romans, which he quotes almost

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6.6-11, CF 19), 5:2-3, CMW 63.81-84, CF 94; 5:12, CMW 69.304-13, CF 101; 5:19-21 (CMW 76.574-582, CF 110), 8:15 (CMW 115.176-81, CF 163), 8:23 (CMW 120.355-63, CF 168-69), 12:1-3 (CMW 168.112-17, CF 233), and 15:8-9 (CMW 187.851-188.862, CF 258).
300 times, usually to tie earlier passages of Romans together with later ones; the gospels, which together approach the total of Romans; Genesis, ninety-one times; and the Psalms, eighty-six times. These are quite similar to William’s figures, though proportionately the Psalms are less important to Peter than to William; Peter’s non-monastic education may account for this.

His favorite passages of scripture differ significantly from William’s. The passage Peter quotes or alludes to most often is Deuteronomy 7:6/14:2/26:18, which refers to the Jews as “the peculiar people” of God. He cites this passage seven times, to denote the special relationship of the Jews to God. Perhaps reflecting his interest in ethics, he quotes Tobit 4:16, “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you,” six times; he quotes the converse passage from Matthew 7:12, “Do to others,” only five times, each time in parallel with the passage from Tobit, omitting it the last time he quotes Tobit. Peter cites Genesis 21:12, “In Isaac shall your seed be named,” five times, to distinguish Israel from the Gentiles. He quotes John 15:13, “Greater love has no man,” five times, in the context of redemption and the death of Christ. He refers to Matthew 6:10, “Your will be done,” 1 Timothy 2:5, “Christ the mediator between God and men,” and 1 Timothy 2:7, “the teacher of the Gentiles,” four

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43 CMP 371-79.
times each.

Peter also has favorite passages from Romans. They include 5:12, “in whom all sinned,”51 8:28, “all things work together for good,”52 and 13:10, “love is the fulfillment of the law,” each of which he uses four times.53 Quite often when he quotes from Romans, he does so only briefly, and in the context of an adjacent passage. His quotations from outside Romans are usually more substantial and more significant.

Like William, Peter quotes Scriptures with the same or similar keywords to reinforce and expand his exposition. For example, to expound 2:7, “To those who according to patience in good works seek glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life,” he quotes Psalm 20:5 and 3, “He asked life from you, and you gave it to him . . . You gave him the desire of his soul,” finding the obvious link of life (vita), but also the similar terms seek, ask, and desire (quarant, petiti, and desiderium).54 At 3:11, “There is no one who understands (intelligens) God,” he adds 1 Corinthians 2:14, “The natural man does not perceive (percipit) the things which are of the Spirit of God,” and Psalm 31:9, “just like a horse and mule which have no understanding (intellectus).”55 At 3:17, “And the way of peace they have not known,” Peter cites a chain of passages linked to the terms “way” and “peace”:

And the way of peace, that is, they are utterly destroyed by condemnation in their ways because they have not known the way of God, that is Christ, the mediator, so to speak, between God and men, through whom we have made peace and been

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49 3:12, CMP 105.315-316; 3:17, CMP 109.431; 5:1, 153.6; and 8:34, CMP 226.551.
51 4:11, CMP 135.424-426 (from Augustine, nupt. et conc. II.11.24, CSEL 42.276); 5:16, CMP 159.202; 5:19, CMP 171.597-98 (allusion); and 5:19, CMP 174.700.
54 CMP 79.111-80.127.
55 3:11, CMP 104.266-270.

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reconciled to God, who “is our peace,” so that, as the same Apostle says, “he made both into one.” [Christ] also said about himself: “I am the way;” “I am the door, if anyone enters through me, he shall be saved.”

Such multiple references are common; sometimes Peter even cites the same chains at different passages of Romans to expound the same theme. For example, Peter takes up the theme of the will twice, first at 7:16, “I do not what I wish,” adding Matthew 23:37, “How often have I wished to gather your sons and you did not wish it,” 1 Timothy 2:4, “who wishes that all should be saved,” Psalm 113:3, “Whatever he wished, he did,” and Romans 9:19, “who resists his will?” He cites the same passages again at Romans 9:19.

Peter links passages of scripture by similar concepts more frequently than by these verbal links. A passage of Scripture may bring to mind another, not with an identical word, but a related concept. For example, a reference to grace, charity, or the Holy Spirit may bring up references to passages containing any of the other two concepts. At 1:7, “Grace to you, and peace,” causes Peter to think of the seven gifts of the Spirit of Isaiah 11:2-3, because grace is the Holy Spirit; it also a gift, and he argues from the passage of Isaiah that there are seven gifts of grace. Paul’s words at 3:24 that we are justified by God’s grace cause Peter to think of 1 John 4:10, “who first loved us.” At 9:1, “I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I do not lie, my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit,” he alludes to Ephesians 3:17, “rooted and grounded in charity,” from which charity a lie cannot come forth; “Therefore [the Holy Spirit] is

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57 7:16, CMP 207.682-687; 9:19, CMP 238.209-212.
58 1:7, CMP 60.454-463.
59 3:24, CMP 112.82-86, especially the following: “... sed gratiam ipsius, id est Dei, qui prior dilexit nos.”
rightly called 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17, et al)." The Holy Spirit causes Peter to think of charity, which leads him back to the truth Paul speaks of earlier in 9:1. 60

Obviously Peter makes not only conceptual links but conceptual leaps in some of his scriptural citations, as does William. He is just as creative as William in linking verse to verse, not only verbally, but theologically, and jumping from the verse at hand to another, less-obvious passage that arises from his long study and thought.

Most significantly, and differently than William, Peter uses Scripture as a tool of dialectic in his questions. Peter cites Scripture sometimes to argue one position and contradict another, and other times to demonstrate opposing points of view, pro and contra, in a balanced manner. Scripture is an authority to be cited, but because it can support contradictory positions, dialectic may still be required to resolve the question under consideration.

The best example of Peter's use of Scripture to support one position against another is his question on redemption at 3:26. 61 Here Peter incorporates two scriptural references in his lengthy critique of the theory of the devil's rights. He first cites the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) to demonstrate that the devil possessed power over neither the poor man in Abraham's bosom, nor the other elect. Later, he cites the devil's promise of immortality to Eve (Genesis 3:5) as one he could not keep, thereby indicating the devil's inability to detain man by right. Peter continues to critique the theory of the devil's rights by arguing that the devil torments human beings only by the Lord's permission; humans sinned only against God, who retains possession of them, reserving the right to forgive their sins as he pleases. To demonstrate this right, Peter cites the examples of Mary Magdalene (Luke 7:48) and a

60 9:1, CMP 228.1-229.20.
61 3:26, CMP 113.124-118.270.
paralytic whom Jesus healed through forgiving his sins (Matthew 9:2). Later, reaching his own conclusion that redemption is a demonstration of divine love (in keeping with the text under consideration: “to demonstrate his righteousness”) and liberation from slavery to sin, he alludes to or directly quotes several passages: Romans 8:21 (“creation itself . . . will obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God”), John 15:13 (“No one has greater love than this”), Luke 12:49 (“I have come to send fire on the earth”), Romans 5:5-6 (“The charity of God is poured out in our hearts . . . For why did Christ die for the ungodly?”), and Romans 5:8 (“But God commends his charity in us . . . ”).

Peter very capably proof-texts his arguments against one position and in favor of another. The whole question of 3:26 sets out to expound the belief in Christ’s death as a demonstration, though Peter focuses less on the righteousness mentioned by Paul and more on the love that he proof-texts, equating being made righteous with loving God more.

Peter best shows how Scripture can support two different positions in the question on the imperfection of the law of Moses at 7:6. There he first cites Scripture to support the question of why the law did not deliver the promise of eternal life. It delivered imperfect precepts, he argues, citing Hebrews 7:19 (“the law brought nothing to perfection”), and Matthew 5:21 and 20 (“You have heard that it was said to the men of old . . . But I say . . . ,” and “Unless your righteousness abounds more than that of the scribes and Pharisees”). Peter notes that solving this difficulty may lead into a greater one. He cites the commandments from the same law to love God and neighbor, and then refers to Christ’s statement that these two are enough for life (Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-20) and to Paul’s statement that love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). He has thus set up conflicting points of view, each based on
Scripture. He sets about resolving the conflict dialectically by analyzing the term “neighbor,” noting that the original text of the commandment to love one’s neighbor actually reads “friend” (Leviticus 19:18). It was Christ who used “neighbor” instead of “friend” (Matthew 19:19), and who defined that term in terms of mercy (Luke 19:29-37). He then immediately sets Scripture against Scripture again, first quoting Christ’s words to the rich man concerning the two great commandments, “Do this and you shall live” (Luke 10:28), then his other teaching, “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?” (Matthew 5:46). Peter resolves this conflict by noting that no one is better understood as neighbor or friend than Christ himself; if the rich man loved every neighbor and friend, and especially Christ, he deserved eternal life.63

4. Conclusion

William’s and Peter’s quotations of Scripture again demonstrate their rootedness in either rhetoric or dialectic. William’s methods of citation reflect a strongly rhetorical mindset; convinced of Scripture’s authority, he connects one passage to another, convincing his reader by repeated citations on the same theme or of the same verse. He is also more sophisticated than Peter in his manner of quoting scripture, finding more profound links between the passage of Romans under consideration and those passages he uses to comment on the passage, and creating longer and more varied chains of quotations than Peter does.

Peter’s proof-texting and setting of one verse against another demonstrates a more dialectical approach to quoting Scripture and sets him apart from William. These

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63 Christ actually said “do this and you shall live” to the lawyer to whom he then immediately told the parable of the Good Samaritan, rather than to the rich man of the other story, to whom Jesus mentioned several of the Ten Commandments and the
techniques are almost entirely unique to his commentary, relative to William, whose intention is to edify his readers and bring out the truths of scripture, not to settle its conflicts. Additionally, Peter’s links between the passage of Romans being expounded and the passage of Scripture cited in support of it are often more conceptual than verbal, indicating a stronger preference for linking doctrinal ideas together than William has, at least in this work.

C. The Senses of Scripture

1. Introduction

For William and Peter, as for all patristic and medieval exegetes, the words of scripture were divinely inspired. They pointed to divine truths, and described and interpreted the events of salvation history. Some events—most importantly, Christ’s passion and resurrection—were salvific in themselves; others pointed to later events, as the events of the Old Testament prefigured those of the New. Scripture recorded these unrepeatable events, and declared their divine significance to future generations; consequently, its very words were salvific.

Yet these same words were also obscure and enigmatic, difficult for even the wisest of interpreters to understand. Early Christian expositors of the Bible regarded its obscurity as a sign of its divine origin; behind its mysterious words must lie deep commandment to love one’s neighbor—but not the commandment to love God. Peter has confused the two stories.

William only sets scripture against scripture once, in a question he asks at 6:4, where he notes that one may infer from that verse baptism in the name of Christ only, whereas scripture elsewhere says that baptism is in the name of the Trinity (Matthew 28:19). He resolves this by arguing that the Romans passage concerns not baptism but the death of Christ, in whose likeness we die to sin and be buried with him; Paul had no need to mention the Father or the Holy Spirit (6:4, CF 116, CMP 81:774-782). Otherwise, William has no need to proof-text or compare verse against verse, as he is not ordinarily
Skilled exegetes spared no effort in exploring, discovering, and elaborating these symbolic meanings in figurative interpretations.

Very soon Christian exegetes classified and defined the various meanings, or senses, that they found in scripture. Since allegory had already been in general use for several centuries in the Greek world, and then among Jewish interpreters of the Bible, it was only natural that the earliest Christian writers, those of the New Testament, and after them the early Fathers, should adapt this as a method of reading the Bible. St. Paul, for example, used both allegory (Galatians 4:24) and typology (Romans 5:14, 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11) to interpret the Old Testament.

Origen in the third century outlined a three-fold scheme for the senses of scripture: the literal sense, the moral, and the mystical. This scheme, in common use throughout the Middle Ages, was used by both William and Peter. It stood alongside a second scheme, outlined by John Cassian in the fifth century, the four-fold scheme of the literal, allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses, also widely used throughout this time period. Quite frequently, the non-literal senses were referred to as the "spiritual" senses, or sometimes simply as allegory. In addition the mystical sense of the

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69 Conference 14.8, in Conlationes XXIII, CSEL 13, 404-407.
first scheme was usually, but not always, equivalent to the allegorical and anagogical
senses of the four-sense scheme.  

Modern scholars have debated the significance and function of these schemes
and of the senses themselves. For Henri de Lubac, the senses so defined medieval
exegesis that one cannot understand exegesis apart from them. More recently,
Karlfried Froehlich has argued that for patristic and medieval exegetes, exegesis was a
quest for existential meaning. This quest was facilitated by rules and principles. The senses
of scripture, Froehlich argues, are the rules or methodology by which scripture was
analyzed. They were not the essence of exegesis, but tools which served the principles,
which he defines as “the theological framework in which the biblical writings were
interpreted by different groups and individuals at various times”. These rules are like
school exercises; when not needed to establish this framework, they can be
abandoned. This explains why exegetes like William and Peter rarely speak of the
senses of scripture. Medieval exegesis, according to Froehlich, was much more
complex and dynamic than exposition according to these rules. Froehlich’s model for
interpreting medieval exegesis and understanding the place and use of the senses of
scripture enables us to understand how William and Peter use the senses of scripture,
and how their use of these senses express their particular expository horizon, which for
both is the elaboration and praise of the grace of God.

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70 See de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 75-159 of the English translation.
72 *Biblical Interpretation*, 1.
73 Karlfried Froehlich, “Response,” paper presented at the 33rd International Congress
on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 7-10,
1998.
paper presented at The 29th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western
Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 5-8, 1994.
The epistle to the Romans, with its straightforward, non-narrative, non-poetic language, does not easily lend itself to the use of the spiritual senses. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Paul himself could interpret the Hebrew scriptures by means of allegory and typology, and many of his own discourses point to spiritual realities; his epistles are, as Kevin Hughes has pointed out, "literally spiritual." Medieval writers such as William and Peter found in these epistles many profound discussions of the deeper mysteries of Christ and the Church. Both our exegetes made spiritual interpretations within their commentaries, though these were often based on Paul's Old Testament references or on the scriptures they cited to interpret Paul's text.

2. William of St. Thierry

William says very little about the senses of Scripture in his Romans commentary. All his works are full of scriptural citations and allusions, but he rarely speaks of the senses themselves. William uses the terms "tropology," "allegory," and "anagogy," only once in his works, and the first two are in direct quotations from Jerome and Gregory the Great, respectively. To refer to different senses or meanings of scripture, particularly the spiritual senses, he primarily uses the three-fold scheme commonly in use in the twelfth century, which speaks of literal, moral and mystical meanings.

William elaborates the three-fold scheme in two of his works. In the earlier, the Brevis Commentatio on the Song of Songs, William compared the bridegroom's garden (5:1), storeroom (2:4), and house (3:4) to the historical sense, the moral sense, and the

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75 As noted by both Smalley, Study, 18, and Evans, Language, 70.
77 Tropology: De sacramento altaris, PL 180:363A; allegory, Commentarius in Cantica canticorum ex libris S. Gregori, PL 180:470C; anagogy, Brevis commentatio, PL 180.418C.
mystical sense respectively. The same scheme is also found in William’s later *Mirror of Faith*, written between 1142 and 1144. Early in the work, William discusses the difficulties of believing and living according to the received Christian faith, even when one accepts the divine authority of that faith. “So it happens,” he says, “that when matters of faith in Scripture are heard in their historical dimension or interpreted in a moral context by the holy doctors or are touched upon in certain mysteries or sacraments, some persons’ perception is at variance and still others is wrong.”

Though in this passage from the *Mirror* he speaks of mysteries rather than of a mystical understanding, these two ways may be taken to mean the same thing; the mystical sense of scripture speaks of divine mysteries. As he speaks of it in these two works, the mystical sense refers not to the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, but to the anagogical sense.

Though William does not elaborate on the senses of Scripture in the Romans commentary, he clearly uses them. While William nowhere in this commentary speaks directly of a historical sense, he frequently contrasts the letter with the spirit, a

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79 Wilmart, “Ouvrages,” 166; Ceglar, “Chronology,” 192, 239; and Verdeyen, introduction to CMW, xxix.

distinction taken directly from the epistle itself (2:26-29, 7:6, 8:2-4). William appears
to speak directly of a literal sense only once, at 7:4, though he seems to have it in mind
at 8:33-34, where he comments on Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God:

In regard to what is said about Christ sitting at the right hand of God, the divine
power is shown through a human comparison. It is not that a throne is set up
and God the Father sits on it and has his Son sitting with him, but that we cannot
understand the Son judging and ruling, except by using our own language.

Why William felt obliged to say this is uncertain, unless he at sometime encountered
some overly-literal interpretations of this or other biblical metaphors. He recognizes
that human beings cannot understand God apart from inadequate descriptions which
use human images, and warns readers to look for the spiritual meaning behind the letter.
William also demonstrates here his view of the literal sense of scripture: that apart from
the intention of the author, it can be inadequate for teaching truth.

William’s numerous references to the letter and the spirit, however vaguely letter
and spirit are defined, accord well with traditional contrasts between the literal
understanding of scripture as a whole and its spiritual interpretation. These references
and contrasts establish the foundation for the discussion of the moral and mystical
understandings of certain passages.

William uses the terms “moral” and “mystical” relatively infrequently in the

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81 The letter refers to the law of Moses, which by itself, without the spirit that gives life,
kills: 2 Cor. 3:6, cited at 7:6, CMW 93.131, CF 134.
82 “... The brother in this case seems to be the more fertile spiritual understanding of
the letter”, CMW 92.106-107: “Frater enim videtur litterae fecundior spiritualis
litterae secundum spiritum lex, ut de ipso magis mulier afferat fructum.”
83 CMW 129.703-708: “Quod autem dicitur Christus sedere in dextera Dei, per
humanam similitudinem Dei potestia demonstretur. Non quod solium ponatur et Deus
Pater in eo sedeat secunque Filium habeat residentem, sed quod nos aliter iudicantem
et regnantem nisi per nostra verba nequimus intelligere.” CF 179.
84 William refers to “the letter” more than thirty times in the Romans commentary, most

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Romans commentary: five times for the former, eight times for the latter. In each case, William uses the terms to describe types of teaching or doctrine, including teaching derived from Scripture. A good case in point is William's comment on 1:11-12, the only passage in this commentary where William uses both terms together. He is talking about the spiritual grace that Paul wishes to bestow on the Romans, and between two near-literal quotations from Origen's commentary on Romans, he says the following: "But the most spiritual of graces are the charisms of spiritual understanding, either about moral or mystical matters, and they should be compared spiritually with spiritual things." William does not directly refer to these matters as senses or understandings of scripture, but, with William as with the patristic writers we have mentioned, Scripture is the primary source of spiritual understanding.

In his other uses of "moral," William speaks of the "moral discipline" of the Jewish law, which he equates with that law's righteousness, of "the form of moral doctrine," or the demonstration of the effects of law, grace, faith, the letter, and freedom of choice on humanity, of Paul's "gentle moral instruction," and of his


87 PG 14.857C-858A.
89 2:26-27, CMW 38.204-208: "Non autem, ait, ipsam legem, id est legem operum custodiant, vel sacramentorum, sed iustitias legis; id est moralem eius disciplinam, quam custodiendo praeputium intantum praeferetur circumcisioni praefaturi legem, ut iudicet eam." CF 60.
“moral teaching.” In all these cases, “moral” represents a special sense of Scripture to William.

William uses “mystical” in his Romans commentary to refer primarily to particular understandings of Christ’s passion and resurrection. He speaks of the medicine mystically demonstrated in the passion and resurrection of Christ, of how the life of the Christian is molded to the events of Christ’s passion and resurrection not only as they are spoken of mystically but also as they were lived, and of the mystical order of the Christian’s death to sin and rising to new life. None of these three uses of “mystical” explicitly refers to a particular sense of scripture, in particular not to the allegorical sense it is usually equated with, but rather to a deeper level of spiritual knowledge and experience—the experience of grace and mercy that leads to conformity to Christ’s passion and resurrection. This is identical with the usage of the term as found in earlier writers using the three-fold scheme, such as Origen, for whom the

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94 6:3-4, CMW 79.692-96: “Quidquid igitur gestum est in cruce Christi, in sepultura, in resurrectione tertia die, in ascensione in caelum, et sessione ad dexteram Patris, ita gestum est, ut his rebus non mystice tantum dictis, sed etiam gestis, configuraretur vita christiana, quae hic geritur.” CF 113.

mystical sense of scripture was intended to lead those persons ready for it to just such an experience and knowledge.

William's uses of "moral" and "mystical," though widely disparate and occurring together only once, clearly signal particular understandings of Scripture, when this use is placed in the context of the larger tradition of the senses of scripture and of William's own earlier writings. This is borne out in three other passages in the Romans commentary in which William speaks of sacramenta and mores together. If we take sacramentum as synonymous with mysterium,96 and mos as synonymous with moralis,97 then we have additional instances pointing to this three-fold understanding.

The first of these passages occurs at William's comment on 2:11-12. There, drawing from Augustine's commentary on Galatians, William speaks of the two-fold works of the written law: the sacraments, which pertain to ritual observances and refer to the contemplation of truth or to good morals; and morals, which are founded on the love of God and of neighbor.98 At 3:2-4, William defines "the words of God . . . committed to [the Jews]" as the law and the prophets, which showed them mysteries, taught them morals, and prepared them for Christ's coming.99 In both these passages, William is discussing the kinds of teaching found within scripture—moral teaching, for the love of neighbor; and mysteries, to lead people to the contemplation and love of God. Finally, at 6:17, mysteries and morals are the content of rational doctrine, which is suitable for those who can receive Christ's parables of the kingdom, and the first of

96 As de Lubac asserts, Exégèse, I.i, 397.
98 CMW 33.17-34.43; CF 54; cp. Augustine, ex. Gal. 19, CSEL 84, 76.15-77.21.
99 CMW 40.294-97: "Primum, inquit, quia credita sunt illis eloquia Dei, in lege scilicet et prophetis, ad formam sacramentorum, ad eruditionem morum, ad praeparationes ob
three forms of doctrine. Togetherness, these passages confirm the three-fold formula of the historical, moral, and mystical senses.

William also uses other terminology to describe the mystical and moral meanings of Scripture. He refers twice to the spiritual understanding or exposition of Scripture; once to its inner sense; and once to a higher sense. He speaks as well of how the Gospel was partly revealed to the patriarchs and prophets in an enigmatic and figurative way, and of how the New Testament is prefigured in the Old. Finally, he speaks several times of how biblical events or teachings signify or symbolize (significare) something else, either in a moral or mystical way.

William’s language for describing Scripture’s hidden meanings is varied, and shows a distinct preference for the vocabulary of the moral and mystical senses rather than that of allegory, tropology, and anagogy. Though the latter terminology is more specific—it divides the mystical sense into allegory and anagogy, allowing them to develop distinct emphases—the former better suits William’s vision of the spiritual life, directly applying the mystical meaning of scripture to the ultimate union of the soul with Christ. While allegory, understood as the New Testament mysteries figuratively portrayed in the events and persons of the Old, has its place in William’s thought, it has little direct application to the soul’s progress. William’s mystical sense focusses on the

susceptiendum Christi adventum.” CF 63.

100 CMW 87.969-972: “Rationalis est in sacramentis et moribus, apta illis hominibus, quibus Dominus dicit in parabolis annuntiandum regnum Dei.” CF 122.
102 2:6-7, CMW 31.894-903, CF 48; William takes this from Origen, Rom., PG 14.880AB, 882A.
103 8:20, CMW 118.301, CF 167.
104 16:21-27, CMW 196.1172-1177, CF 268.
105 9:4-9, CMW 133.838-839, CF 184.
mystery of Christ, with particular emphasis on the soul’s assimilation into that mystery, and consequently corresponds to anagogy.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter, like William, never refers to his particular view of the senses of Scripture in his Romans commentary. One must look instead to his commentary on the Hexaemeron and to his Sermon XIV. In these works he simply lists three senses: the historical (or literal), the moral, and the mystical; only once, in another passage in the Hexaemeron, does Peter go into any depth on these senses, focussing on the moral and the mystical:

Since we have followed those things which were said before according to the root of history and the truth of the things that were done as far as we were able, it serves us to examine carefully the same things in the moral exposition also and later the mystical. Therefore it is called the moral exposition as often as those things which are said are thus directed to the edification of morals, just as those good things which are necessary for salvation must be done among us and by us, for example, when we instruct the reader with our exposition on faith, hope, and charity or good works. It is called a mystical exposition when we teach that those things are prefigured which were to be completed by Christ by the time of grace, or whatever future history is shown to be signified beforehand.

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236; and 14:14, CMW 183.684-686, CF 252.

107 Exp. in Hex., PL 178.731A: “Immensam igitur abyssum profunditatis Geneseos tripli perscrutantes expositione, historica scilicet, morali et mystica, ipsum invocemus Spiritum, quo dictante, haec scripta sunt . . .”

108 Sermo XIV, PL 178.494B: “Divisio autem ungulae qua incedimus, discretio est quam in verbis divinis habemus; cum videlicet diligentemente attendimus, quid juxta litteram sit accipiendum, quid adsensum mysticum vel moralem sit applicandum.” For much of the following, I am indebted to Eileen Kearney’s discussion in her doctoral dissertation: “Master Peter Abelard, Expositor of Sacred Scripture: An Analysis of Abelard’s Approach to Biblical Exposition in Selected Writings on Scripture” (Marquette University, 1980), 36-148.

109 PL 178.770BC: “Quoniam ea quae praedicta sunt juxta radicem historiae ac veritatem dei gestae quantum valuiimus prosecuti sumus, juvat morali quoque ac postmodum mystica expositione nos eadem perquirere. Moralis itaque dicitur expositio quotes ea quae dicuntur ad aedificationem morum sic appellantur, sicut in nobis vel a nobis fieri habent quae ad salutem necessaria sunt bona, veluti cum de fide, spe et charitate vel
Peter's definition of the moral sense is standard; his definition of the mystical sense includes both the traditional allegorical and anagogical senses of the four-fold scheme.110

Peter says little about the literal sense, either in the passage quoted above or in his Romans commentary. His few references to it in the commentary are usually in contrast to the spiritual or mystical understandings of Scripture.111 There are several other similar references, all negative,112 that refer to the Jews' understanding of the Old Testament, which Peter regards as insufficient. Peter makes other references to "the letter," but these almost all refer to the biblical text and not to the literal sense of the epistle.113 At 1:1, he speaks ambiguously of "the difficulty of the letter" by which the epistle to the Romans is entangled,114 referring either to the literal sense or to the text of the epistle itself.115 Peter apparently believed it was not necessary to refer often to the literal sense of the text when the text's meaning was so largely and so plainly literal. As we have noted, the epistles of Paul do not lend themselves to a figural exposition, and Peter's commentary is predominantly literal.116

Peter refers to the mystical sense in his writings far more often than he does to...
the moral or literal senses. This is especially true in the Romans commentary, where he only once comes close to referring to the moral sense. He refers to the mystical sense eight times, drawing twice from other writers or traditions. Some of these references have a clear allegorical meaning, while others convey either the anagogical sense of future fulfillment or even a moral sense of expected conduct, in keeping with his concern for ethics. In the allegorical sense, Peter speaks of how the mystical and obscure meanings of the Law of Moses contrast with the literal meanings. These mystical meanings would only be explained with the coming and ascension of Christ.

The Jews are ensnared by the literal sense and understand nothing in the Law mystically, that is, they fail to find in their own sacred writings the deeper meanings which will point to the Christ. The secret and hidden mystery of the Gospel is a mystical discourse, figurative, not plain; it concerns Christ, and is especially contained in the prophets. Finally, borrowing from Origen, Peter speaks of circumcision as a mystical

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116 As noted by Buytaert in his introduction, CMP 16.
117 2:26: “Read it in this way: If the uncircumcised one, that is, the uncircumcised pagans whom you, namely the Jews, call a foreskin as if it were a dishonor, keeps the righteousness of the law more than you figure, that is, they fulfill the moral precepts of charity that justify each person, is not his foreskin, that is the pagans who have their own foreskins, namely the fleshly ones with which they were born, reckoned by God as a worthy prerogative?” CMP 94.619-95.625: “Sic lege: Si praeputium, id est ipsa praeputiata gentilitas, quam vos scilicet Judaei quasi ad ignominiam praeputium vocatis. Custodiat legis justitia potius quam figuras, id est impleat moralia charitatis praecepta, quae unumquemque justificant, nonne praeputium illius, hoc est ipsa gentilitas proprium habens praeputium, carnale videlicet cum quo ipsa nascitur, reputabitur a Deo digna praemio?” See also Peppermüller, Auslegung, 24-25. Peter uses the moral sense fairly often, as we shall see, even if he does not refer to it.
119 11:9, CMP 258.89-93: “In laqueum et in captionem, hoc est in laqueum quo ipsi non alios capiant sed capiantur et detineantur, ne via Veritatis incedant quae ait: Ego sum via, veritas, et vita, dum scilicet nihil ibi mystice accipiunt sed ad litteram quae occidit, cuncta exponunt.”
120 16:25-26, CMP 339.337-340: “... secundum revelationem mysterii, vel confirmari secundum revelationem meas. Mysterium dicitur 'secretum' et 'occultum.' Unde mystica locutio dicitur significativa, quae non est aperta.”
event, an allegory that reveals divine truths in the figures of the law.  

Using “mystical” in the anagogical or moral senses, Peter also speaks of circumcision not as an Old Testament allegory but as occurring in the spirit and not the letter, as a moral act and a repeatable event with continuing consequences that identifies the true Jew. The person who follows that letter in exterior observances is not justified by the mystical understanding of faith in Christ, which faith edifies and makes righteous. The mystical beauty of the Apostles’ feet cannot be hidden in shoes; it is a beauty beyond what is plain, representing an *affectus* made clean from earthly desire. Borrowing from Bede, Abelard speaks of the mystical meanings of the occupations of Sts. Peter and Paul: Peter draws us from the waves of the world by fishing, while Paul defends us from the harsh elements of sin, temptation, and traps by building shelters of protection. In this last case, “mystical” does not refer to an Old Testament allegory, but rather to allegory in the broader sense, of a story with symbolic, and in this case, salvific, meanings.

Peter refers to the mystical understanding almost exclusively in his discussions of Romans 2 and 9-11, which deal extensively with the Jews, circumcision, and the law. He never mentions it in his comments on chapters 5-6, 8, or 12-15. These passages of Romans do not discuss these topics, and sparingly quote the Old Testament. Peter uses

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121 4:11, CMP 139.539-545: “Stoici aiunt: Indicet aliquid mysticum circumcisiio et figuram teneat allegoriae. Itane oportuit, ut cum poena et periculo parvulorum, cum cruciatibus teneae et innocents infantiae, figurarum species et legis ænigmata crederentur? Sic non habebat legislator ubi firmas justitias poneret nisi in deculcatione verecundorum locorum, et Dei signaculum nisi in obscenis partibus?” CMP has substituted *conderentur* for *crederentur* and *dedecoratione* for *deculcatione*, in spite of the fact that all mss give the latter readings; the former are from Origen: *Rom.*, PG 14.910BC.

122 2:29, CMP 95.639-96.662, especially 96.656-658: “*Circumcision, dico, in spiritu, non littera, id est juxta spiritualem et mysticam, non litteralem sensum facta.*”


124 10:15, CMP 254.193-196.
the mystical sense primarily for interpreting the Old Testament.

Parallel to "mystical" is the term "spiritual," which Peter sometimes uses together with "mystical." He also uses it separately, six times, mostly in the same way as the former term: to refer to the deeper meanings of circumcision and the law. Another time Peter speaks of the spiritual and true temple, referring to Christ, in contrast to the material and figurative one, both of which the Jews profaned.

The terms "figure," "figural," or "figurative" play a similar role. They refer primarily to the Old Testament law, but also to Isaac as well as to the temple, these latter two being figures of Christ. What is figured in the Old points to and signifies a reality to come in the New. At 4:13, "That they might be the heirs of the world," Peter interprets the inheritance as meaning the perpetual possession of all good things, "figured by the fertility of the promised earth."

Peter uses the related term and concept of signification with some frequency in the Romans commentary, both as a dialectical term and as a traditional term of exegesis used to explain the meanings of words or numbers. One person or thing in the text can signify, that is, point to, mean, symbolize, morally or mystically, someone or something else. Signification is an important term for understanding the work of

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126 2:29 and 9:32.
129 See also Peppermüller, *Auszüge*, 25.
131 4:24, CMP 152.976-978.
132 CMP 144.707-709.
133 See also Peppermüller, *Auszüge*, 26, n. 159.
134 See the discussion below on dialectic.
spiritual interpretation in Peter's commentary. For example, at 2:27 Peter makes the important distinction between sign and signified, relating signification to the literal sense and figures, claiming that the Jews trust in the literal sense and in what signifies, in the figures and likenesses, rather than in the truth that is signified. At 4:11, "And he accepted the sign," Peter shows how the sign of circumcision distinguished the sons of Abraham from other peoples; exterior circumcision also is a sign of the soul's interior circumcision, and points out to the Jews, begotten through the circumcised male member, that the cure of circumcision was necessary for expiation from the contamination of the old man. At 6:3, "We were baptized into [Christ's] death," he adds, "into the likeness and signification of his bodily death." That signification is a moral one: "We should strive to die to sin once and not wish to sin again, even if we can rise again through penitence."

Peter also incorporates typology into his exposition. In his comment on 1:1, he twice discusses Benjamin as a type of St. Paul, seeing in the events and prophecies of Benjamin's life prefigurations of Paul's life: in Benjamin's rapaciousness, Paul's zeal to persecute the Church; in Benjamin's birth as Jacob's last child, Paul's selection as the last of the Apostles; in Benjamin's favorite status with his father Jacob, Paul's primacy in merits with God; in the death of Benjamin's mother at his birth, the death of Paul's

\[136\] CMP 95.633-638: "... te, dico, Judaee, qui praevicior es legis, id est trangressor per litteram occidentem, id est litteralem sensum et carnale signum quibus confidis, significatibus maxime, non significatis adhaerens, id est figuris potius quam rebus ipsis et similitudini potius quam veritati."

\[137\] CMP 128.191-196; 130.264-281.


\[139\] See also Peppermüller, Auslegung, 25.
Jewish mother at his rebirth. At 4:11, Peter finds a type of Christ in one of the spiritual meanings of circumcision; Christ was conceived without concupiscence, and lacked the foreskin of uncleanness. The type is in the story of Abraham's servant, who placed his hand under Abraham's "thigh" (Genesis 24:2-9), which was first circumcised, as if swearing an oath to the one first promised to be born to him from his seed, namely Christ.

4. Conclusion

While Peter uses the same three-sense scheme as William, he does so in different ways. Like William, he devotes little attention to the literal sense. He says less than William, though, on the moral sense, and his mystical sense wavers between allegorical and moral interpretations. William ascribes no function of Old Testament allegory to his mystical understanding. Peter uses other common expository terms with equal or greater proficiency than William: figure, signification, and type, the latter of which William uses not at all in his commentary. William likes a variety of terms to refer in general to the spiritual senses, to higher or deeper meanings; Peter prefers terms that show the relation of the Old Testament to the New, a lesser concern for William. Neither exegete devotes considerable space to talking about the senses; they apparently assumed that their readers had adequate knowledge of them, and could refer to them as necessary without extensive explanation.

140 CMP 49.81-82; 51.132-52.175.
141 CMP 131.284-290.
D. Spiritual Exposition: The Senses in Practice

1. Introduction

William and Peter put these senses into practice more than they theorized about them. Both exegetes found meanings hidden in the text of Romans and other passages of Scripture that they used to expound the epistle. They borrow some interpretations from earlier Fathers, but they also show remarkable ability to create their own spiritual expositions through figurative and allegorical language.

2. William of St. Thierry

While William does not make extensive use of figurative language, he uses it enough—some twenty times—for us to consider it as one of his major exegetical, as well as rhetorical, practices.\(^ {142} \) Like most patristic and medieval exegetes, he does not usually label his spiritual interpretations as moral or mystical. In many cases, it would have been obvious to medieval readers that William was interpreting a passage according to the moral sense: his figures have a moral point, they are intended to edify his readers and strengthen their conduct. Other passages William seems to expound according to the mystical sense, that is, he sees in them figures of the mysteries of faith, events from the Old or New Testaments that lead those who understand them to a deeper experience and knowledge of God and Christ.

William draws some of his spiritual interpretations from patristic sources, adapting them either from the ancient treasury of images commonly used by many

\(^ {142} \textit{Rhetorica ad Herennium IV.xxxiv.46 (ed. and trans. Harry Caplan, LCL [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954], 344-47) mentions allegory \textit{(permutatio) as a figure of speech, though clearly William uses figurative language not because of the classical rhetorical tradition but because of the Christian hermeneutical tradition, which, as we}
writers over the centuries or borrowing them directly from either Augustine or Origen.

As an example of an interpretation adapted from the general tradition, at 6:5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection," William uses the ancient image of Christ's death as the tree of life planted in paradise. Basing his interpretation on Isaiah 37:31, "And he shall send that which was saved from the House of Judah, and what remained, the root downward, and it shall bear fruit," he speaks of how those dying with Christ send their roots downward and bear fruit upward, fruit of the renewal of both flesh and spirit.\textsuperscript{143} Here William combines elements of moral and mystical interpretation.

Augustine provides other spiritual interpretations to William. At 8:23, "We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit," William cites verbatim Augustine's spiritual interpretation of these words, "Those whose spirits are offered to God as a sacrifice, and who are seized by the divine fire of charity."\textsuperscript{144} William borrows from Augustine's sermons on the Psalms at 15:8-9, where he speaks of the two walls, one of the Jews, pertaining to truth, the other of the Gentiles, pertaining to mercy, together creating a

\textsuperscript{143} CMW 82.790-802, CF 116-17. The image of the tree of life has its origin in the Bible, Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 2:2. I have not yet been able to find a previous reference to the death of Christ as the tree of life, though some early writers come close. For example, Chromatius Aquileiensis (fourth century) compares those who remain in the Church of the Lord to the tree of life planted in paradise (\textit{Tractatus in Matheum} 50, CCSL 9A.447.72-75); Primasius speaks of the tree of life as Christ, the wisdom of God, who hung on the cross and now distributes heavenly food in the church and the spiritual paradise (\textit{Commentarius in Apocalypsin} I.2, CCSL 92.25.67-26.71); Bede compares the tree of life in the middle of paradise to Christ, the wisdom of God, through whom the Church is made alive and receives the pledge of the sacrament of his flesh and blood (\textit{In proverbia Salomonis} I.3, CCSL 119B.42.155-58); and Paschasius Radbertus says that Christ is now the tree of life in the Church, whose image was that tree in paradise (\textit{De corpore et sanguine Domini} 7, CCCM 16.39.35-37). Bernard of Clairvaux also uses similar language, without referring to Christ's death (\textit{Sententiae} 3.78, SBO 6.2, 117.3).

\textsuperscript{144} CMW 120.351-33, "Primittias habentes spiritus, id est quorum iam spiritus tamquam sacrificium oblati sunt Deo, et diuino caritatis igne comprehensi," from \textit{div. qu.} 67.125,
corner;\textsuperscript{145} and at 16:20, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet,” where he advises his readers to “Watch for his first suggestion, that is, his head.”\textsuperscript{146} The first two William might call mystical; the last moral.

Of course, William also borrows some of his spiritual interpretations from Origen, the father of such interpretations in the Christian tradition. At 6:3-4, recapitulating Paul’s argument from 5:15 through 6:3, William borrows from Origen’s mystical interpretation of 6:3: “Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ, buried in a new sepulchre and wound in a clean winding sheet, points to the newness of life and cleanliness of conscience in the one buried with him.”\textsuperscript{147} At 9:6-9, William uses Origen’s mystical interpretation of Isaac as the Son of God: “He is rightly called the Son of God, and not of the flesh, because he was born by the visit of God and by the Word of God.”\textsuperscript{148} Finally, at 15:10-12, he borrows Origen’s interpretation and application of Jesse’s name: “Jesse is interpreted as ‘he is for me’. In Christ’s coming, the man who believes says ‘he is for me,’ because he who says to Moses ‘I am who am’ is present to the one who

\textsuperscript{146} See \textit{en. Ps.} 48.1.6, CCSL 38.556.33; 103.4.6-7, 10, CCSL 40.1525.32-33, 1527.50-52, 1530.34-36. The image became popular with other writers such as Quodvultdeus, Gregory the Great, and Isisdore of Seville.
\textsuperscript{147} CMW 81.759-65: “Intuere diligentius mystici ordinis consequiam. Mori prius oportet peccato, ut possis sepeliri cum Christo. Mortuo enim sepultura debetur. Sepultus vero peccato, nequaquam ulterius vivere debet in eo. Quin etiam in sepulcro novo sepultus, et sindone munda obvolutos dominus noster Jesus Christus, in consepolto suo designat novitatem vitae et munditiam conscientiae.” CF 115. Cp. Origen, PG 14.1038C-1039A. See above, p. 73, for a discussion of this passage in the context of the senses of scripture. We should note that this is a rare example of an identification of a figurative interpretation according to a sense of scripture, though it is Origen’s identification, not William’s.
believes in God.” Origen’s spiritual interpretations are all according to the mystical sense.

Other spiritual interpretations seem to be original to William, and they are predominantly of Old Testament passages quoted by St. Paul, or of other passages of Scripture that William uses to interpret the text of Romans. Two of these interpretations, found at 4:10-12 and 4:18-19, have to do with Abraham. In the first, based not on the text of Romans but Genesis 21:3-6 and 22:16-17, he has been describing how Abraham’s faith is reputed as righteousness and serves as an example to all who come after him. He then shows how Sarah’s laughter and the faith of Abraham, perfected in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, form the basis of the monastic life:

> Whoever has Abraham’s faith and offers God the laughter of his heart, that is, his carnal pleasures and the desires of his soul, on the altar of a holy profession, will hear from the Lord these words, “By my own self have I sworn, because you have done this thing and have not spared your soul for my sake, I will surely bless you,” and his faith will be reputed to him as righteousness.

William’s interpretation, according to the moral sense, is quite ingenious, and shows that he knows that “Isaac” means “laughter.” Just as Abraham offered up Isaac, his own

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149 CMW 188.878-81: “Iesse interpretatur: Est mihi. In adventu enim Christi dicit qui credit: Est mihi, quia qui dicit ad Moysen: Ego sum qui sum, credenti adest in Deum.” CF 258. William has paraphrased and slightly altered Origen’s text (PG 14.1265A): “Et in praesenti tamen loco dicetur, quoniam Jesse interpretatur in nostra lingua, est mihi. In adventu ergo Christi omnis qui credit ei, convenienter dixit: Est mihi. Ille enim, de quo Moyses dixit, qui est misit me ad vos, ipse est mihi, hoc est, in ipsum credo qui est...”


151 CMW 54.802-55.807: “Sed et cuicumque fidem Abrahae habuerit, risumque cordis sui, id est carnis voluptates et animae voluntates in ara sanctae professionis Deo oblulerit, audiet a Domino: Per memetipsum iuravi, quia fecisti rem hanc et non pepercisti animae tuae propter me, benedicens benedicam tibi, et reputabitur et ipsi fides eius ad justitiam.” CF 80 (translation altered). On the laughter of the heart, see Genesis 18:12 and 21:3-6, as well as RB 4.53-54 and 6.8; on the altar of a holy
laughter, so must the monk offer up his laughter, or carnal pleasures. It is also interesting that William introduces the story of the sacrifice of Isaac here, since Paul does not refer to it in Romans 4. Apparently Paul's reference to Abraham's faith in this chapter brought to William's mind the specific example of Isaac's sacrifice cited in Hebrews 11:17. We again see how William's mind works, thinking of parallel passages almost subconsciously, and creating spiritual interpretations of them.

At 4:18-19, William considers Genesis 22:17, "Thus shall your seed be, as the stars of heaven and as the sands of the sea," quoted by Paul. He sees here in the stars and sand, in the plainest sense a figure of Abraham's uncountable descendants, figures of contrasting persons: "By the stars of heaven here are to be understood the spiritual sons of Abraham who are conspicuous for the light of virtues; by the sand of the sea is to be understood the infinite multitude of a carnal and sterile generation." 152 William returns to this same imagery at 9:27, where Paul refers to the sand of the sea, though not the stars of heaven. Here William again sees sand as referring to the "sterile justice, . . . hardness of heart, and . . . inordinate and diffused number" of very many in Israel, and adds the contrast with the stars that refer to the remnant who participate in heavenly glory. 153 This figure is according to the mystical sense of scripture because of its prediction of the division to come between Abraham's sons.

At 7:12, "Therefore the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," William exhorts his reader to "accept the commandment. Know that it is your weapon, not meant to kill you, but to kill your enemy, provided you are humble

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profession, see RB 58.17-23. William apparently has all these passages of scripture and of the RB in mind in this exposition.

152 CMW 59.962-64: "Ubi per stellas spirituales filii Abrahae intelligendi sunt, luce virtutum conspicui; per arenam vero maris carnalis et infuctuosae generationis infinita multitudo." CP 86.

153 CMW 140.144-53, especially the following: "... ob iusatitiae sterilitatem et duritiam

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like little David. If you are a great and proud Goliath, you will be killed by your own arms.”\footnote{CMW 95.227-96.231: “Recipe ergo mandatum; scito esse arma tua, non quibus te occidat, sed quibus a te occidatur inimicus, si humilis fueris, sicut parvus David. Si autem magnus Goliath et superbus fuesis, armis tuis occideris.” CF 137.} Here, William introduces an unrelated biblical story and applies it morally to his readers, asking them to identify with either the hero or villain. It is an extremely vivid and concrete application, and again points out William’s inspiration and creativity.

Shortly after, at 7:14, Paul’s words “I am sold under sin” lead William to think, in turn, of redemption and then of the blood of Christ, which he describes spiritually as a fountain in which sinners wash themselves:

Your blood is the price of all these goods. It is the fountain of David lying open for the washing of the menstruous woman (Zech. 13:1). . . . Afterwards we bring the stink of our filthiness to you to be washed in the fountain of your precious blood, which is not tainted however much it washes. Indeed the more it washes the more salubrious it becomes, just as he loves more to whom more is forgiven (Lk. 7:43).\footnote{CMW 98.337-99.339, 343-46: “Omnium bonorum horum pretium sanguis tuus est. Ipse est fons David patens in ablutionem menstruatae. . . . deinde vero sordium ipsarum fetores afferimus tibi abluendos in fonte sanguinis tui pretiosi. Qui tamen lavans omnia non inquinatur; immo quanto plura abluit, tanto efficitur salubrior, dum plus diligit, cui plus dimittitur.” CF 141.}

William combines two separate images here, each with its own exegetical history: The fountain of David and the fountain of blood. Neither was frequently used up to William’s time, and they are only rarely combined.\footnote{Patristic and medieval citations of Zechariah 13:1 are rare, but not so much so that we cannot perhaps trace William’s source. Jerome, of course, comments on it in his exposition of the minor Prophets (\textit{Commentarii in prophetas minores, In Zachariam III [13:1]}, CCSL 871.1-30). In fact, he is the only patristic source I have found to connect the fountain of David with the blood of Christ, though he does not speak of a fountain of blood. Among early authors, see also Gregory the Great, \textit{Homiliae in Hierosolymam prophetae II.8.19-20}, CCSL 142.351.553-352.580; Isidore of Seville, \textit{Sententiarum I}, PL 83.587-88; and Ambrosius Autpertus, \textit{Expositio in Apocalypsin 2 [3:4]}, CCCM 27.164.46. In this last work, Ambrosius, commenting on Revelation 3:4, speaks of how the Christians of Sardis were worthy because they had run to and been baptized in the blood of the Lamb. Among William’s contemporaries, see Gilbert of Hoyland, \textit{Sermones}.

\textit{cordis et multitudinem inordinatam et confusam . . .}” CF 196.
the text of Romans spiritually, nor even another passage that he brings in; he is interpreting a concept, the blood of Christ, in the mystical sense, because of the implicit encouragement to the reader to wash himself in this way and the direct address to Christ.

Certainly William’s most unusual and striking spiritual exposition is that of Christ’s judgment seat, located in his comment on Paul’s own words at 14:10-11, “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to the Lord’”:

“The judgment seat of Christ is the divine power of his wisdom, by which Christ, seated on himself, arranges and judges all things.”

William’s equation of the judgment seat with wisdom is unusual, but his point is that Christ is himself wisdom, as we have seen from his scriptural citations, and he will judge the world by that wisdom. Here again we have the mystical sense.

All these examples taken together, William shows great imagination and originality in his ability to expound spiritually on a major work of scripture that offers little picturesque imagery. Responding primarily to concrete images suggested by the text, he introduces spiritual expositions of great vividness that leave indelible

in Canticum Salomonis 35.4, PL 184.186; Scriptores ordinis Grandimontensis, Explanatio super Librum Sententiarum beati Stephani, CCCM 8.437.448-438.452; and especially Rupert of Deutz, who cites this passage extensively: *Commentaria in evangelium sancti Johannis* 3, CCCM 9.152.1319; *De gloria et bonore filii hominis super Matheum* 11, CCCM 29.329.31-330.41; *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius* 32, CCCM 23.1775.1454; 36, CCCM 24.1922.686; and *Liber de divinis officiis* 6, CCCM 7. 218.1212 and 224.1441. The Matthew commentary speaks of a *fontem sanguinis*, but this refers to the wound in Christ’s side. Other references to a fountain of blood are even rarer, and a search in CLCLT3 shows only broad similarities with William’s language; see Quodvultdeus, *Sermo* 6: De ultima quarta feria, cap. 5, CCSL 60.400.1; Bede, *De tabernaculo*, lib. 3, CCSL 119A.132.1521-28; *Idem., In cantica canticorum*, lib. 3, cap. 4, CCSL 119B.264.792-97; Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, lib. 8, CCCM 56A.909.3618-910.3623.

impressions upon the reader. They are all the more striking for their small number. William would, of course, expand his spiritual interpretation in his own Songs commentary, where such expositions abound. One can see, though, that the spiritual interpretations of the Romans commentary prepared William for the task of the spiritual exposition of the Song of Songs.

3. Peter Abelard

Although Peter's commentary is predominantly literal in its interpretation of Romans, it is not exclusively so. I have identified over thirty spiritual expositions in Peter's Romans commentary, and we have already encountered some in discussing Peter's references to mystical interpretation. Let us look at some additional examples of Peter's spiritual exposition, some of which are clearly moral, others of which are mystical, though Peter does not usually describe his exposition as moral or mystical. They spiritually expound the text of Romans, Old Testament passages cited by Paul, or other passages cited by Peter to expound Paul's words.

At 4:11, Peter discusses how circumcision was performed on the eighth day; this day both prefigures and signifies "the future brightness of the saints on the day of resurrection," following the seven days that describe the present life, clearly a mystical interpretation. Like William, Peter interprets 4:18 spiritually, though his reading differs considerably from William's. In the first of two alternate interpretations of "the stars and the sand," he compares the Jews to the stars because of their celestial hope,

158 Contrast this with G. R. Evans' comment that "Peter Abelard's commentary on Romans is on the whole notably free from figurative interpretation . . . He prefers to concentrate upon the letter" (Language, 70).

159 As noted by Peppermüller, Auslegung, 26, who cites a few, but by no means all of Peter's spiritual interpretations.

160 CMP 131.291-310.
and the Gentiles to the sand, because of their earthly desires, a mystical interpretation of
God’s words to Abraham as quoted by Paul. In the second, likewise mystical, the stars
represent the two lofty orders of continent men: contemplatives, burning ardently with
the fire of divine love, and preachers, who illuminate others with their teaching. The
sand represents married people, indulging in luxuries and fluctuating like the sands of
the sea.\footnote{CMP 148.833-851.}

Also like William, Peter parallels this spiritual interpretation with another at
9:27. Rather than offering yet another allegory on “sand,” however, he interprets
“remnant,” which means “the simple and ignorant among the people who were cast
away, just as the Apostles and many adhering to Christ from the masses were.”\footnote{CMP
245.449-51: “Vel ‘reliquas’ dicit populi simplices et idiotas qui abiecti sunt inter
eos, sicut apostoli fuerunt et multi de turba Christo adhaerentes . . .”}

At 8:13, Peter gives a good moral interpretation of Psalm 136:9, “Blessed is he
who grasps and dashes his children against a stone,” which he cites alongside “put to
death the deeds of the flesh.” “He will put to death and kill sins conceived with the
mind through some suggestion, while they are as yet children, by dashing them against a
stone, that is, by crushing and destroying them on that stable foundation of all good
things which is Christ.”\footnote{CMP 216.213-217: “ . . . hoc est concepta per aliquam suggestionem mente peccata,
dum adhuc quasi parvula sunt, mortificabit atque interficiet allidendo ad petram, id est
confringendo ea et dissipando ad illud omnium bonorum stabile fundamentum, quod
Christus est . . .”}

At 11:18, where Paul urges Gentiles not to boast against the
Jews, because the Jewish root supports the ingrafted Gentile branches, Peter changes
metaphors and refers to the Jewish people as a faithful ass and the mother of a foal, a
woman giving birth to the Gentiles in faith.\footnote{CMP 263.254-56.}

At 12:14, Peter morally explains Paul’s
repetition of “bless” to mean that we should have a blessing in our mouth as much as in
our heart.\footnote{CMP 148.833-851.}

\footnote{CMP 245.449-51: “Vel ‘reliquas’ dicit populi simplices et idiotas qui abiecti sunt inter
eos, sicut apostoli fuerunt et multi de turba Christo adhaerentes . . .”}

\footnote{CMP 216.213-217: “ . . . hoc est concepta per aliquam suggestionem mente peccata,
dum adhuc quasi parvula sunt, mortificabit atque interficiet allidendo ad petram, id est
confringendo ea et dissipando ad illud omnium bonorum stabile fundamentum, quod
Christus est . . .”}

\footnote{CMP 263.254-56.}
At 12:20, he gives a moral interpretation of Paul's words, "You will heap on his head coals of fire." The head is the principal part of the body, and signifies our mind and soul; the coals of fire are fires of charity or laments of penitence.166

Peter also gives a mystical interpretation of Romans 15:12, though unlike William, he offers his own, rather than one borrowed from Origen. Noting how roots of a tree continue to issue shoots of little branches after the tree has been cut down, Peter says that after Jesse died, he had Christ as a root and remainder of his own, concealed in the earth and buried in his own flesh. Peter also applies to this passage of Romans the parable of Luke 13:8, in which the gardener offers to lay manure on the unproductive fig tree. He mystically interprets the manure applied to this root as the filth of our sins which Christ bore, so that many fruits would spring forth in the church from himself.167

Peter obtains only two of his spiritual interpretations from other sources. We have already seen above the one he obtained from Bede. He obtains the other from Jerome's commentary on Isaiah 11:14, "They will fly in the ships of foreigners," which Peter applies to Romans 15:28, where Paul describes his plan to visit Spain. Jerome applies this verse to Paul's travels, and Peter in turn cites the interpretation.168

Peter's spiritual interpretations are usually short, never lengthy, like Origen's, but they are thoughtful and clear, and almost never off the point of the text of Romans.

165 CMP 279.197-99.
167 CMP 317.160-80.
168 15:28, CMP 325.405-410; Jerome, Commentarii in Isaiah IV, CCSL 73.155.
They are original, yet in the best tradition of Christian allegory, and show that Peter could not only analyze the human meanings of the words of Scripture according to logic, but find divine meanings hidden in them according to the traditional methods of spiritual interpretation. Logic and allegory are not exclusive, of course, though even Peter does not usually try to combine them. His spiritual interpretations rarely occur in any of his questions, and his application of dialectical terms (to be described below) to these interpretations is infrequent.\(^{169}\) He thus uses both tools independently and competently, applying them as necessary to make his point.

4. Conclusion

A comparison of Peter’s spiritual interpretations with William’s shows both exegetes to be highly skilled at this art, especially considering they were both expounding a notoriously difficult text. They expound Scripture spiritually, in some of the same passages, for the same reasons, and with equal proficiency. Peter’s spiritual exposition of Romans does not suffer from his otherwise inferior rhetoric nor from his work as a dialectician; William is no better for his many years as a monk. They were both sufficiently familiar with this tradition that they were able to create their own moral and mystical expositions as needed, to find opportunity to interpret Paul’s straightforward words in a spiritual way.

\(^{169}\) See, for example, 4:18, cited above (p. 88-89), where Peter “distinguishes” three orders of the church in interpreting the stars and sand mentioned in that verse.
E. Patristic and Classical Sources

1. Introduction

In addition to interpreting Scripture with Scripture, medieval Bible commentators also interpreted Scripture by citing those who had commented on it long before them, and to whose wisdom they willingly deferred. The Fathers of the Church, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great and others, had themselves at length pondered Scripture's mysteries and offered their own opinions on its meaning. Their writings formed a continuous tradition with Scripture, and succeeding generations of interpreters looked to them to greater or lesser degrees for guidance and instruction. Some interpreters looked to them exclusively, forming commentaries consisting of nothing but excerpts from patristic writings. William of St. Thierry himself did this twice, compiling commentaries on the Song of Songs from the writings of Ambrose and Gregory. Others quoted less, while still demonstrating the direct influence of the Fathers in making their own comments. No medieval expositor could ignore them and be completely original without running the risk of being called an innovator.

The question of patristic sources is important for understanding both William’s and Peter’s commentaries on Romans, and for understanding their conflict. Any one studying either work, by themselves or in comparison to each other, must address the issue. The question is controversial enough with regard to William’s commentary, which has been seen by some scholars as being little more than a compilation, and heavily Origenistic at that. It is less controversial with regard to Peter, though still important because of the degree to which and the way in which he uses his sources. William and Peter differ significantly in their use of sources, and these differences affected their conflict.
2. William of St. Thierry

There are several questions to consider in discussing William’s use of sources in his Romans commentary. First, to what extent is this commentary a compilation of patristic sources, as some scholars have claimed, and to what extent does it contain William’s own thought? Second, what are William’s major sources? Whom does he cite, and from where did he obtain these sources? To what extent does William use Origen in comparison to Augustine? Is William primarily an Origenist, as some scholars have claimed, or an Augustinian, as others have argued? Third, how does William use these sources? Does he faithfully reproduce them, or does he considerably alter them? Under what circumstances does he cite a patristic writer?

a. William’s Commentary as a Compilation

Much of what little has been said by modern scholars about William’s Romans commentary concerns his patristic sources. It has been standard even in the most recent discussions of this work to note William’s heavy reliance on earlier writers such as Augustine and Origen. Many modern writers consider this reliance so great that they simply refer to the commentary as a compilation, virtually, and sometimes even actually, denying that there is any original material within it. Others have ascribed a greater role to William’s own contributions to the work.170

170 For example, P. C. Spicq stated that this commentary, like William’s other works on the Song of Songs, was only “une suite d’extraits patristiques ou d’auteurs ecclésiastiques” (Esquisse, 122-23). Jean-Marie Déchanet referred to the commentary variously as “a mosaic,” a “compilation,” and even a “vast compilation” (William, 36, 149; idem, "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," DS 6.1243-44), though he would also admit “a certain originality” in it (Aux sources, 74-75, n.1). Étienne Gilson (The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard. Translated by A. H. C. Downes. [New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940; reprint ed., Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990], 199) and Werner Affeldt
In spite of these discussions, no complete picture has yet been given of the extent to which William cites other authors and the extent to which William presents original thought. While both the Corpus Christianorum critical edition and the English translation each list William’s sources by author and work,\textsuperscript{171} it is far more revealing to list those passages where William cites patristic authors and the authors he cites, as well as the compilations from which he draws them, and to note all the passages where William does not cite anyone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passages</th>
<th>Authors\textsuperscript{172}</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>Augustine (3x*), Origen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>Augustine (5x******)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>Origen (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>Gloss of MS 49, Origen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>Origen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:10</td>
<td>Origen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:11-12</td>
<td>Origen (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>Origen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:16</td>
<td>Origen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:18</td>
<td>Augustine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:18-19 (after 1:24)</td>
<td>Augustine (3x*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20-21</td>
<td>Origen (2x), Augustine (2x*), John Cassian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:29</td>
<td>Augustine*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:4</td>
<td>Augustine (2x**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:5</td>
<td>Origen</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:6-7</td>
<td>Origen (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:8-9</td>
<td>Origen (3x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:11-12</td>
<td>Augustine*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{171} CMW 206-208, CF 286-89.

\textsuperscript{172} The number followed by an “x” denotes the number of citations of that author in that comment. Each asterisk denotes a use by William of Florus Diaconus’ florilegia of quotations from Augustine on the epistles of St. Paul. Each pound sign (#) denotes a use by William of Rabanus Maurus’ florilegia of quotations from various Fathers on the same.

\textit{(Die Weltliche Gewalt in der Paulus-Exegese} [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969], 137) likewise call the commentary a compilation. Louis Bouyer, on the other hand, while noting the “veritable mosaic of quotations,” also notes “the singular originality of a system of thought” of William’s commentary (\textit{Heritage}, 84). John Anderson ("Romans," 136-51) and Thomas Renna ("Law," 49-67) likewise note William’s extensive use of Augustine and Origen in the commentary, but also give significant attention to his own thought.

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We can make several observations about this list and about William's use of sources in general. First, William tends to group his citations from an author together, that is, he prefers to cite Augustine several passages in a row and then to cite Origen several passages in a row. On several occasions, though, he cites one and then the other, switching back and forth between them. Second, William also seems to group his
extractions from different compilations together, using many passages from the
compilation of Florus Diaconus and then from the compilation of Rabanus Maurus, but
almost never alternating between them.

Third, William’s citations vary in length, as do his comments. A comment may
contain a very brief citation, as at 13:11 and 12-13, where William paraphrases briefly a
passage of Augustine’s Sermon on Psalm 76, or consist almost entirely of a patristic
citation, as at 13:14, where William quotes from Augustine’s Confessions X.31. A
citation may itself run for several verses: William’s comments on 5:14-21 are three long
citations from Augustine’s Epistle 157 and De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo
pannlorum.

Fourth, William almost never says when he is using a patristic source. He
incorporates his citations seamlessly into his text, and only once specifically points one
out. Not mentioning one’s sources, of course, was standard practice for early
medieval writers. William violated no contemporary standards by omitting specific
references, though in doing so he unwittingly made the modern task of determining his
sources more difficult.

Fifth, while William does make extensive use of both Augustine and Origen in
his Romans commentary, the commentary is by no means a complete compilation.

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173 CMW 175.409-177.475, CF 243-44; cp. Augustine, en. Ps. LXXVI.4, CCSL
174 5:14, CMW 71.404-418: pecc. mer. I.xi.13, CSEL 60.13.22-14.10; CMW 72.419-448:
Ep. 157.3.19-20, CSEL 44.467.8-468.9, 469.1-11; 5:15-16, CMW 73.449-72: pecc. mer.
I.xi.14-xii.15, CSEL 60.15.1-24; 5:16-17, CMW 73.472-74.500: pecc. mer. I.xii.15-xiii.17,
CSEL 60.16.5-17.5; 5:17-18, CMW 74.500-75.531: pecc. mer. I.xiii.17-xv.19, CSEL
60.17.17-18.24; 5:18, CMW 75.531-48, pecc. mer. I.xv.19, CSEL 60.19.8-24; 5:19-21,
CMW 75.549-76.595: Ep. 157.3.15-17, CSEL 44.462.19-463.3; 463.13-23; 464.14-21;
465.5-11; and 465.23-466.12.
175 In the PL edition of William’s comment on 1:20-21, he introduces a quotation from
Augustine’s De gratia et libero arbitrio with the words, “Augustinus in libro de gratia et
libero arbitrio” (PL 180.562C). CMW does not have these words, however (23.636).
There are several extensive parts of the work that contain few or no patristic citations, or in which the citations are brief, and in which William for the most part is speaking his own mind. For example, he quotes Augustine very heavily in his comments on chapter five and Origen very heavily from 6:3-4 through 6:17. From the beginning of chapter seven through the end of chapter eight, he speaks primarily on his own, citing Augustine briefly several times, and Origen only twice. Considering that this is the heart of William's teaching on the third and fourth stages, this is quite important. His most important spiritual teaching comes mostly from his own pen, and it is influenced primarily by Augustine. In the same way, William's teaching on the Jews in chapters 9-11 is mostly his own, as is the ethical teaching of chapters 12-15. It is the earlier chapters that are more heavily patristic, and it is probably these which led some scholars to think of the commentary as a compilation. In fact, no more than one-fourth of this work is drawn from patristic sources. Most of it presents William's own thought.

If William's commentary is primarily his own material, how did it come to be considered a compilation? The most important reason is that William himself says that it is in his Prologue. His goal in writing his commentary was to weave a continuous commentary that is not original, but which combines certain opinions and statements of the holy fathers, especially blessed Augustine. These have been gathered from their books and tracts for our modest work by omitting the troublesome questions in them. The resulting commentary should be much more acceptable to the readers since it is not founded on novelty or vain presumption but is recommended by the profound authority of outstanding teachers such as blessed Augustine, as I have said, and also Ambrose, Origen, and some other learned men, even some masters of our own day, who, we are

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176 There are 7,024 lines in the critical edition of William's commentary; and I calculate 1032 lines from the works of Augustine and 465 from Origen's works. Citations from other writers account for no more than another hundred. If one generously allows 2,000 lines for the citation of all the different passages of Scripture (the text of Romans given on pp. lxv-lxxxiii of CMW is 770 lines), then approximately half the commentary consists of William's own words.
William immediately seeks to place himself in a tradition of interpretation and to avoid the reputation of an innovator. He wants, he says, nothing more than to simplify this tradition for his readers and remove all the difficulties that one might find in it. Additionally, he will rely primarily on Augustine, though not to the exclusion of other ancient fathers, namely Ambrose and Origen.

Early William scholars such as Déchanet took these words far too seriously, and did not bother to do a thorough inquiry into the nature and extent of William’s sources. Concerned more with William’s other works and with finding Greek sources for his thought, they first skimmed through the Romans commentary, and finding numerous patristic citations in the first few chapters, assumed that it was in fact largely, if not entirely, a compilation; and second, they assumed that this compilation was largely Origenistic, ignoring William’s own words that the work is primarily Augustinian.

b. William’s Major Sources

The list above shows that William draws his patristic material overwhelmingly from Augustine and Origen, primarily from the former. He quotes more than twice as

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177 CMW 3.4-15: "... sed ut aliquia sanctorum Patrum, et maxime beati Augustini, sensa in eam, vel scripta ex libris eorum et opusculis hinc inde collecta in unum hoc opusculum compingentes, suppressis quae in ea sunt quaestionum molestiis, unam continuam non nostram, sed ipsorum texamus explanationem. Quae tanto debebit gratior esse lectoribus, quanto eam non novitatis vel vanitatis praesumptio adinvenit, sed magnorum doctorum magna commendat auctoritas, praecipue, sicut dictum est, beati Augustini, deinde vero Ambrosii, Origenis et nonnullorum aliorum doctorum; aliquorum etiam magistrorum nostri temporis, de quibus certum habemus non praeterisse eos in aliquo terminos quos posuerunt Patres nostri.” CF 15.

178 See Déchanet, William, 35-36, who, even though he admits an Augustinian contribution, still concentrates on William’s use of Origen. Bouyer, on the other hand, recognizes William’s statement as a “deception,” and sees an originality in the commentary, though it lies for him in William’s synthesis of Augustine and Origen.
much material from Augustine as from Origen.\textsuperscript{179} Augustine is William's primary patristic source and doctrinal influence, and any consideration of William's sources must focus on him.

\textit{i. Augustine.} One of the primary characteristics of William's use of Augustine, especially in contrast to his use of Origen, is the large number of works from which William draws, over twenty according to the Corpus Christianorum index.\textsuperscript{180} These works range from Augustine's better known works, such as \textit{De ciuitate Dei}, \textit{Confessiones}, and \textit{De Trinitate} to lesser known works such as \textit{Ad Orosium}, \textit{Contra Faustum}, and his two books of \textit{Soliloquies}.\textsuperscript{181} William did not obtain all of his citations by reading these individual works, however. Many of them he found by reading one of the standard florilegia of the Middle Ages, that of Florus Diaconus, which contains hundreds of quotations from the works of Augustine on the epistles of St. Paul, as well as some material apparently original to Florus. As can be seen from the list above, William made extensive, though not exclusive, use of Florus' compilation on Romans\textsuperscript{182} in preparing his own commentary; approximately half of his citations of Augustine come from Florus.\textsuperscript{183} Anderson points out that Cistercians made great use of Florus' work, and

\textsuperscript{179} See note 176 above.
\textsuperscript{180} The CMW index, 206-208, omits a few citations and miscites others, as does the CF index. Where possible I have tried to point out the errors and make necessary corrections. For the purposes of counting, I consider each epistle and sermon to be a separate work.
\textsuperscript{181} This latter is found at 1:20-21, CMW 22.609-612.
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Expositio in epistolam ad Romanos}, PL 119.279-318.
\textsuperscript{183} Déchanet claims to have found few passages in William's commentary taken from Florus (\textit{William}, 36, n. 94), and he is correct when he says that there are numerous passages of Augustine in the commentary not found in Florus. On the other hand Raymond Martin is also correct when he says that William took whole pages from Florus (\textit{Oeuvres de Robert de Melun} [Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1938],
that the abbey of St. Thierry had two copies of it\textsuperscript{184}—evidence that William perhaps began his work on the Romans commentary while still abbot there.

On the other hand, William obtained numerous passages of Augustine from other sources, either from other florilegia or from more or less complete copies of Augustine’s works. For example, a comparison of William’s citations of Augustine with those used by Bede in his compilation raises the possibility that William consulted this work.\textsuperscript{185} Additionally, a comparison of William’s commentary with Rabanus Maurus’ compilation on Romans\textsuperscript{186} turns up additional passages of Augustine cited by both Rabanus and William at the same passages of Romans, suggesting that William had access to Rabanus as well.\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{184} CF 8.

\textsuperscript{185} Both William and Bede use the same passages from Augustine’s \textit{Ep. 157} in their comments on 5:14 and 5:19-21 and edit out the exact same portions of this lengthy piece. See William, CMW 72.419-48, 75.551-76.595 CF 105, 109-10; Bede, \textit{Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul}, trans. David Hurst, Cistercian Studies Series, no. 183 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 45-46, 48-50 (no critical edition available), and Augustine, \textit{Ep. 157.3.15-17, 19-20, CSEL 44.462.19-466.1, 467.8-469.15}. There are other passages of Augustine that William and Bede have in common, but they can also be found in Florus’ compilation.

\textsuperscript{186} PL 11.1273-1616.

\textsuperscript{187} I have found seventeen passages, mostly brief, and mostly in William’s comments on chapters six through eight. For example, compare CMW 89.1040-44 with PL 111.1404C; CMW 89.1050-55 with PL 111.1405C; CMW 92.110-12 with PL 111.1411B; CMW 93.145-94.153 with PL 111.1414A; CMW 94.183 with PL 111.1419A; CMW 95.193-97 with PL 111.1419BC; CMW 95.219-23 with PL 111.1420BC; CMW 96.245-58 with PL 111.1421BD; CMW 97.270-74 with PL 111.1426B; CMW 111.22-31 with PL 111.1442C; CMW 111.39-112.44 with PL 111.1443C; CMW 112.52-55 with PL 111.1444A; CMW 112.62-71 with PL 111.1445B; CMW 114.136-37 with PL 111.1447D; CMW 119.315-26 with PL 111.1459D; CMW 119.346-120.371 with PL 111.1462A; and CMW 146.370-79 with PL 111.1513A. It is difficult to say with certainty whether William actually used Rabanus, since Rabanus cites not only Augustine, but Ambrose, Origen, Jerome, and John Cassian as well, and William appears to take only selected passages of Augustine from Rabanus. Additionally, in some of those passages he cites Augustinian text not found in the PL edition of...
Finally, William must have drawn many of his citations from Augustine from his own reading. There are many passages of Augustine in William’s Romans commentary that cannot be ascribed to any other compilation, including the *Glossa Ordinaria*. The libraries of St. Thierry and Sigtry must have furnished William with many of Augustine’s works in their entirety.

From wherever William obtained these selections from Augustine, he made great use of them, on a wide variety of subjects. The most significant subject is original sin; William’s comments on Romans 5:14–21, the scriptural foundation of the western teaching on this topic, are taken entirely from two of Augustine’s works, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* and *Epistola* 157. Also prominent are Augustinian passages on the Trinity, the sacraments, predestination and foreknowledge, concupiscence and sin, and prayer and life in the Holy Spirit, all topics commonly associated both with the epistle to the Romans and with Augustine. William draws heavily on Augustine to interpret Romans, and it is reasonable to call his Romans commentary Augustinian, even when he is not directly quoting him. He weaves his own comments in with Augustine’s, and a reader unfamiliar with Augustine might not be able to tell when William begins and ends a citation from him. For example, in his comment on 11:33-36, he uses six different passages of Augustine on the Trinity, alternating them with his

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Rabanus, but this may be explained by the non-critical text of the PL. If he used Rabanus, he did so very selectively, just as he did with Florus.

188 John Anderson has argued, convincingly, that William did not use the *Glossa*, CF 9. On the other hand, Renna says that “Certainly William was familiar with the *Glossa Ordinaria*,” though he cites no evidence from the Romans commentary (“Law,” 52).

189 See the discussion and note above (p. 101, n. 185) on William’s possible use of Bede’s compilation in citing *Ep*. 157.

190 1:18-19, 5:5-6, and 11:33-36.

191 3:27, 6:3-4.


own thoughts, which in content and style are so Augustinian that an unknowing reader
would be unaware of any movement between the two authors.195

Of course, William does not only quote Augustine directly. He uses the material
he takes from him in a variety of ways, editing long passages into shorter, adding his
own comments, changing words and phrases, paraphrasing, and inserting key terms into
his own passages. William is quite skillful at adapting his mentor's thought when he
chooses to do so while remaining faithful to it. He prefers to quote Augustine as
literally as possible, and there are numerous passages of Augustine which William
quotes nearly verbatim, with few, if any, alterations.196

More frequently, William edits the passages of Augustine that he uses,
eliminating phrases or sentences he finds unnecessary and sometimes substituting his
own words.197 Other times he simply eliminates extraneous text without any
substitutions.198

194 7:14-15, 8:9, 8:26, 8:27, and 12:1-3.
195 CMW 159.841-164.1031, CF 220-26. William quotes from Trin. VII.1.2-3, CCSL
50.248.144-249.2; Ep. 170.5, CSEL 44.625.13-626.2; Trin. VI.10.11, CCSL 50.241.9-242.36; s. 158.2-3, PL 38.863-64; vera rel. 113, CCSL 32.259.122-260.141; and doc. Chr.
I.5, CCSL 32.9.1-18.
196 Most notably the passages on original sin from pec. mer. which William quotes almost
continuously from 5:14-18, editing out only a few passages dealing either with textual
matters or with humanity's imitation of Adam. Cp. CMW 71.404-75.548 with CSEL
60.13.22-19.24. Additionally, at 8:29-30, William quotes six passages of Augustine's, all
taken from Florus, and they show only the slightest of alterations; one passage taken
from prae. sanct. does eliminate some material, but otherwise faithfully reproduces
Augustine's words. Cp. CMW 125.569-626 with gr. et lib. arb. 17.33, PL 44.901; prae. sanct.
t. 10.19, PL 44. 974-75; persen. 14.35, PL 45.1014; civ. Dei XXII.16, CCSL 48.835.1-8;
Trin. XIV.18.24, CCSL 50A.456.11-15; and en. Ps. 5.17, CCSL 26.2-18.
197 For example, compare William's comments at 7:7 (CMW 93.143-94.153) with
Augustine's Simpl. I.2-3, CCSL 44.8.29-9.50 (quoted by Rabanus at PL 111.1414AB).
William eliminated one of Augustine's explanations and replaced it with a statement of
his own that guilt was not implanted in man through the law, but rather recognized.
Rather than repeat the obvious, he clarified and made a significant point, while still
preserving the essential Augustinian text.
198 For example, compare William's comments on 1:4 (CMW 7.65-8.70) with prae. sanct.
Occasionally William paraphrases or alters passages from Augustine. Sometimes he does so when quoting, imperfectly, from memory; he does so deliberately, to make the original text more intense. He even tries to improve on Augustine’s words by adding comments to them that suggest his position is better than Augustine’s. William does not consider Augustine’s words so sacrosanct that he cannot reshape them while retaining their meaning.

After Scripture, Augustine is William’s primary teacher. It is from him first and foremost that he draws his interpretation of Romans and Christian doctrine, and it is him first and foremost that he presents to his own readers as the Christian tradition’s great teacher, even without directly referring to him more than three times in the commentary. Augustine is almost omnipresent, but not oppressive. He speaks through William, though without dominating him. William feels free to adapt him as necessary, and this is perhaps his greatest compliment to his teacher: to use his thought as an important foundation of his own, but not to parrot him unthinkingly or to quote him at every opportunity. The fact that William does not use every passage of Augustine that he found in Florus, Rabanus, or his own reading shows that he had a discerning mind with regard to Augustine, and that he believed he could stand on his teacher’s shoulders and see farther than him, speaking out of his own experience.

15.31, PL 44.982-83 (William found this passage in Florus, PL 119.280). Here William eliminated anything not having to do with Christ being predestined as Son of God, even though what he left out is important for understanding Christ’s divine and human natures, a topic important to William.

See 1:18-19 (CMW 21.550-55), where he draws on a passage from civ. Dei (IX.xvii, CCSL 47.265.1-266.9), attributing a quotation to Plato rather than to Plotinus. This passage is not found in Florus.

See 5:5-6 (CMW 63.103-119), where he changes a third-person discourse on the Trinity (s. 71.12.18, PL 38.454) into a prayer. William obtained the passage from Florus, PL 119.289.

ii. Origen. Earlier, and sometimes even more recent, scholars assumed a heavy influence of Origen and other Greek Fathers on William both in this work and in others, almost to the point of ignoring Augustine’s influence. I have shown above, however, that in this commentary William quotes twice as much material from Augustine as from Origen, and that he cites Augustine, rather than Origen, on most of the important doctrinal points commonly discussed by medieval commentators on Romans. Origen takes a distinct second place to Augustine on sheer volume and doctrinal influence.

If Origen is distinctly second, though, he is still distinctly present, and his influence must be analyzed carefully, by examining the passages in which William uses Origen, and the way in which William cites him. For what reasons does William cite Origen? How carefully does he do so?

John Anderson has redirected modern scholarship on this topic by pointing out the nature of William’s source of Origenist quotations, Origen’s own commentary on Romans. This work, as received in the Latin West, was so modified from the original Greek text by Rufinus, the fifth-century translator, that Anderson calls it “bowdlerized.” One must therefore use caution in discussing Origen’s influence on William, or for that matter Greek influence in general, because it cannot be called direct.

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202 See p. 99, n. 178 above.
203 P. 98, n. 176.
204 FG 14.831-1292. Verdeyen has also cited a passage of Origen’s commentary on the Song of Songs as an additional source: see 7:12, CMW 96.232-39, where he cites PG 13.113AB as the source of William’s comments. My own comparison of the two passages shows only the faintest similarities, and I do not consider this passage of Origen as even a remote influence on William.
205 CF 8; “Romans,” 140.
Additionally, Anderson argues, William does not synthesize Augustine and Origen in his commentary, as Bouyer maintains, but simply uses traditional monastic sources for the exegesis of Romans. Origen was well-known among monastic readers and writers throughout the early Middle Ages and was especially popular in the early twelfth century. Although William made good use of Origen, one should not necessarily take this as a sign of special interest on his part in Origen or other Greek writers.

A careful analysis of William's use of Origen leads to several observations. The first concerns the source of William's citations of Origen. Anderson argues that William used the texts of Origen that were present at Signy. A comparison of William's citations of Origen with those found in Rabanus's compilation, though, shows a number in common. Considering, however, that by no means all of the material that William cites from Origen's Romans commentary can be found in Rabanus, it is most unlikely that Rabanus was his source for Origen. While he may have read some of these passages in Rabanus, he ultimately found everything he needed in the copies of the commentary available to him.

Second, William's pattern of citations from Origen's Romans commentary is significant. The list above shows that he frequently cited Origen, to the near-total exclusion of Augustine, in his comments on 1:5-21, 2:5-9, 4:6-25, 6:3-17, and 14:13-19. The topics covered by these citations include grace, justification and faith, and the

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206 Heritage, 84.
208 "Romans," 140.
209 See, for example, CMW 85.897-918 and PL 111.1398C; CMW 85.928-86.936 and PL 111.1400-1401; and CMW 86.963-87.967 and PL 111.1402. Some of these commonalities are also noted by Anderson, "Romans," 142, who attributes them to a tradition of commentary followed not only by William and Rabanus, but also by other noted scholars, such as Peter Lombard.
new life of dying to sin and conformity to Christ, all key to the episode to the Romans and to subsequent Christian doctrine. William’s use of Origen on grace and justification does not mean, though, that he is not Augustinian on these topics. He cites many passages of Augustine dealing with grace or justification in chapters three, five, seven and eight. At any rate, Origen and Augustine do not differ greatly on grace and justification, at least not in the passages cited. On these subjects, William uses Origen without being “Origenist.” On the other hand, William uses almost no passages of Origen dealing with original sin, the Trinity, the sacraments, and predestination—topics for which, as we have seen, William relies on Augustine. Additionally, William uses passages of Origen dealing with textual matters, including the Greek text, and he obtains some of his slight knowledge of the Greek from him.\[213\]


Third, William is somewhat freer with Origen than he is with Augustine. That is, he tends to paraphrase and alter Origen more often and more seriously than he does Augustine. This does not mean that he never quotes Origen verbatim. In fact, he quotes him with a minimum of editing ten times, mostly on short passages. More often, however, William edits the text, leaving out words and phrases, or even altering the original words, sometimes in ways that significantly changed Origen’s meaning. For example, in the second of two passages of Origen that he cites in his own comment on 2:6-7 (the first was a verbatim quotation), William alters his source in the following way:

Origen:
Quaerit ergo illum honorem quem habebat antequam compararetur iumentis insipientibus, id est illum quem habebat in paradiso, antequam peccaret, honorem quo Dei vocem merebatur audire, honorem quo paradisi fructibus et ligno vitae fruebatur.

William:
Honor autem ipse erit, quem habuit homo, priusquam compararetur iumentis insipientibus, et similis eis efficeretur, cum scilicet deliciis paradisi Dei affluens, visione Dei et collocutione assidue fruebatur.

Here William changes Origen’s emphasis on Adam’s hearing the voice of God to a vision of God, leaves out his reference to the tree of life, and finishes his quotation of Psalm 48:13 with a reference to Adam’s likeness to the animals. This is not a matter of William quoting from memory, but rather one of him consciously altering his source to include his own emphasis on the vision of God. Even more significant is William’s

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215 PG 14.882A.
216 CMW 31.899-902.
alteration of a passage of Origen that he uses in his comment on 5:12, the beginning of
his discussion of original sin:

Origen:
Si ergo Levi, qui generatione quarta post Abraham nascitur, in lumbis Abrahae fuisse
perhibetur, multo magis omnes homines qui in hoc mundo nascentur, et nati sunt, in
lumbis erant Adae, cum adhuc esset in paradiso: et omnes homines cum ipso vel in ipso
expulsi sunt de paradiso, cum ipse inde depulsus est; et per ipsum mors, quae ei ex
praevaticione venerat, consequenter et in eos pertransiit qui in lumbis ejus habebantur
. . . 217

William:
Si ergo Levi, qui generatione quarta post Abraham nascitur, in lumbis Abrahae fuisse
perhibetur, multo magis omnes homines erant in lumbis Adae, cum peccaret; et in ipso
peccaverunt, et cum ipso a paradiso expulsi sunt, et per ipsum mors in omnes
pertransiit, qui in lumbis ejus habebantur.218

Here William’s alteration is most important: he has changed Origen’s emphasis on the
presence of all humanity in Adam to a more Augustinian emphasis on humanity sinning
in Adam when he sinned.219 Origen’s position was not strong enough for William. It
provided phraseology sufficiently useful to quote, but did not sufficiently convey the
notion of inherited guilt.

Sometimes William uses Origen more as a source of ideas and phrases than as a
source of text, as he uses Augustine.220 And, as with Augustine, William occasionally
adds his own comments to Origen’s, improving on his teacher’s words.221

217 PG 14.1009C-1010A.
218 CMW 70.340-44.
219 Anderson also discusses this alteration, and argues that it “separates William’s reading
of Romans from anything that can be called Eastern or Greek. . . Consequently it is
simply not true to suggest that in William we can hope to find a blend of Augustinian
theology and eastern Orthodox theology” (“Romans,” 144-45).
220 For example, at 3:21-22 (CMW 45.457-68), William heavily summarizes Origen’s
distinction between the mosaic law and law broadly considered, whether natural or
written (Origen, Rom., PG 14.944AC). See also 4:6, where William condenses a passage
from Origen on the order of events in conversion: CMW 52.698-711, CF77; cp. Origen,
Rom., PG 14.965C-966A.
William treats Origen differently than he does Augustine. When William paraphrases Augustine—much less frequently than he does Origen—he does not alter the essential wording as he does when he paraphrases Origen. Augustine’s actual words carry much more weight with William than do Origen’s. William alters only Augustine’s voice (active to passive) and person (third to second), but alters whole sentences and paragraphs of Origen, sometimes even changing key concepts. This shows that for William, Augustine’s words are more authoritative than Origen’s, though Origen is still influential as a moral teacher and interpreter of Scripture.

Occasionally William sets these two teachers almost side by side, citing one and then the other. These are instructive for demonstrating their respective influences on William. For example, at 1:4, “He was predestined the Son of God,” he alternates between quotations from Augustine’s *De praedestinatione Sanctorum* and his own comments: what was predestined in Christ was his elevation of human nature to its highest point, and through this predestination brought the light of grace. He then paraphrases a passage of Origen concerning the Greek text: he was not predestined, but destined, since he was always God and came in that which he was: as the power and wisdom of God, and it is toward that power that he is predestined, or destined. William then returns to Augustine: that predestination toward power is without any hindrance of sin, original or committed. Then, William states that predestination is the glory he had with the Father before creation. Finally, quoting Augustine one more time, William points out that Christ is predestined to be our head, and we are predestined to be his members.222 The contrasts are quite interesting: he quotes from Augustine but

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222 CMW 7.61-8.80. William quotes twice from Augustine’s *praed. sanct.*, 15.30 and 31, PL 44.982-983 and once from *persev.* 24.67, PL 45.1034. He paraphrases from Origen,
paraphrases Origen; he acknowledges the validity of Origen’s distinction, but nevertheless continues to use Augustine’s language. Though Origen is technically correct and raises a significant theological point, his overall effect on William’s exposition is less than Augustine’s.²²³

Origen is important to William in his Romans commentary, but not as important as Augustine is. William obtains significant moral teaching and hermeneutical guidance from him. He scrupulously avoids anything from Origen that might be controversial, however. Apparently aware of Origen’s tainted reputation, he chooses only those passages of greatest benefit to his readers, and even then he alters them to ensure an Augustinian-based orthodoxy. And given the already-altered nature of Rufinus’s translation of Origen, it is hard to call William an Origenist or to speak of Greek influences on him in this work.

iii. Other sources. William uses other writers, patristic and classical, besides Augustine and Origen, but they pale by comparison to them in terms of amount of material quoted and overall influence. Still, a discussion of them is warranted to give a full picture of William’s influences and learning.

After Augustine and Origen, Pope Gregory the Great is William’s next greatest influence. William borrows five passages from his works, three from his homilies on Ezekiel, these latter all cited at 8:26. These include a lengthy discussion of apophatic prayer and its effects, and a brief reference to the “uncircumscribed light” that the soul experiences.²²⁴ William also quotes Gregory’s Moralia in Iob,²²⁵ and alludes to his Life of

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With regard to Benedict, William makes apparent reference to his Rule four times, paraphrasing it once and alluding to it three other times. William's other patristic borrowings are minimal. He makes two apparent references to John Cassian's *Conferences*, the first time referring to what "the ancient canons" say in regard to those possessed by the Devil, and the second time using the word *anaterton* to refer to the state of sinless that Paul is inciting in the Romans. In both cases, William is drawing on his memory of these texts. He quotes once from Bede's commentary on Luke on the subject of judging one's brother, possibly draws the word *chacenfaton* from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and draws two otherwise unidentified

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224 Cp. CMW 122.458-123.482 with Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hierusalem* II.5.8-9, CCSL 142.281.220-282.241; II.5.11, CCSL 142.284.305-308; and II.2.12, CCSL 142.232.275. CF points out that *lumen incircumscriptum* is also found in Gregory's Homily 37 on the Gospels, PL 76.1275 (CF 189, n. 7). These quotations are all near-verbatim.

225 11:33-36. Cp. CMW 159.851-54 with *Moralia* 28.4.13, CCSL 143B.11.47-48. CMW does not recognize this citation, and CF says that it comes from the gloss found in MS 49, in which it is attributed to Gregory, exact reference undetermined (CF 227, n. 5). I was able to identify it using CLCLT3.


227 Cp. 2:5, CMW 30.865-66, 874-75: "Sed miseri homines cum audiant hic ignem aeternum, promittunt sibi ibi purgatorium... Ubi si non anteponitur Christus, non illi est fundamentum" with RB 72.11-12: "Christo omnino nihil praeponat, qui nos pariter ad uitam aeternam perducat" (*Benedicti Regula*, ed. Rudolph Hanslik, CSEL 75, 163)

228 Cp. 4:10-12, CMW 54.802-55.807 with RB 4.53-54, CSEL 75.32; 6.8, CSEL 75.39; and 58.17-23, CSEL 75.136-37 (Laughter and vows); 12:7-16, CMW 170.207-208 with RB 53, CSEL 75.123-126 (hospitality); and 13:10, CMW 175.390-93 with RB 2:28-29, CSEL 75.24; 28:1-3, CSEL 75.84; 30:3, CSEL 86; and 70:1-2, CSEL 75.160 (corporal punishment).


230 14:10, CMW 181.608-619, 623-27, CF 249-50; cp. with *Expositio in Lucam* 2.6, PL 92.408.

231 1:20-21, CMW 24.668, CF 41; cp. *Etymologiae* I.34.5, PL 82.108B. CF 51, n. 33 gives
citations of Basil of Caesarea from the gloss contained in MS 49, one concerning love for one's persecutors, and the other concerning those who please themselves.\textsuperscript{232}

William also draws some vivid images from classical writers. He cites the works of Horace three times. In his preface, he uses Horace's image of the crow dressed in the bright plumage of other birds to refer to his use of patristic authors in his own commentary.\textsuperscript{233} At 5:5-6, William uses Horace's image of adding oil to a fire to describe the effect of God speaking to his lover: it increases the lover's love for God.\textsuperscript{234} And at 10:5, he uses Horace's image of feeding crows on the cross to describe what would have been the futility of those who performed the works of the law, had they not actually lived in those works.\textsuperscript{235} In all these cases, William is likely citing from memory; the images are too vivid and too short for him to have required the text in front of him. William also uses Cicero's definition of philosophy as the knowledge of human and divine affairs, though as Anderson points out, it was a commonplace among late patristic and medieval writers; William may not have obtained it from his own reading of De officiis, but from Augustine, Boethius, or another source.\textsuperscript{236}

\textsuperscript{232} 12:20-21, CMW 171.248-50, CF 237; 15:1, CMW 185.783-186.786, CF 255.
c. Conclusion

In the light of William's own claim that this commentary is a compilation of earlier writings, it is interesting to see how much of the work is truly his. He makes heavy use of the words of Augustine, and his own theology is clearly and predominantly Augustinian, particularly with regard to the Trinity, predestination, and original sin. Origen is also obviously present, but his influence does not equal the amount of material quoted; the content cited is sometimes so generic and indistinct that it is hard to speak of a truly Origenist influence on William. William learns much from Augustine, but he does not simply copy him; he is able to go beyond him to speak with his own voice. His Romans commentary is, in a sense, a respectful dialogue between himself and his teachers, an attempt to restate the received tradition of Romans interpretation in the light of his own experience. He builds on the foundation laid by the Fathers, but ultimately constructs his own distinct edifice.

3. Peter Abelard

The question of Peter Abelard's Romans commentary as a compilation of patristic and classical sources is less difficult than the question of William's commentary as a compilation. That is because Peter is far more explicit about his use of sources. William freely admitted at the beginning of his commentary that he made heavy use of the Fathers, but almost never explicitly identified any of his citations. Peter almost always notes the author and sometimes the work and even the book or chapter, though not always accurately. This reflects a rather different attitude on Peter's part towards his non-scriptural sources than what one finds with William. As respectful of them as William is, Peter nevertheless treats them differently than William does.
We will here examine Peter’s sources asking the same questions we asked concerning William’s sources: How much of Peter’s commentary consists of patristic and classical sources? What are his sources, whom does he quote, and from where did he obtain them? How does he use them, and for what reasons? Does he quote precisely, heavily edit, or paraphrase?

### a. Peter’s Commentary as a Compilation

Peter’s commentary is considerably longer than William’s, but the total amount of patristic and classical material that he quotes or cites is slightly less than what William does. When one adds this material to an estimate of Scriptural quotations, then approximately two-thirds of Peter’s Romans commentary is his original thought, more than William’s.

A list similar to the one given above for William will show the distribution of Peter’s citations, as well as the variety of his sources:

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237 CMP contains 9,710 lines, compared with CMW’s 7,024.
238 I calculate a total of 1,270 lines drawn from or referring to patristic and classical authors.
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239 I estimate the same 2,000 lines of Scriptural quotations for Peter as for William.
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From this list we can make the following observations about Peter's use of patristic and classical writers. First, Peter does not usually use any one writer for an extended period, as William does with Augustine and Origen. The exceptions are Peter's lengthy and sometimes repetitious quotations from Origen at 2:16 and 4:11, and on several occasions some shorter passages from Augustine and from the Penitentials of Theodore of Canterbury. Peter normally moves from one writer to another, quoting the most appropriate ones, sometimes several writers in a row. Second, Peter's citations are largely evenly spaced throughout the commentary, and not concentrated in one place. The exception is in his exposition of Romans 16, which is heavily drawn from patristic sources, especially from Ambrosiaster and Origen. Third, Peter uses a much wider variety of sources than William does. Not only does he cite Augustine, Origen, and Gregory the Great, he also cites Jerome, Ambrosiaster, Haymo of Auxerre, and several other writers not found in William, including several classical authors.

Some things are not apparent from the list, but are important. First, as with William, the length of the citations varies considerably, from one line to many lines. Second, Peter and William have almost no quotations in common: only Augustine's definition of predestination as the preparation of grace from De praedestinatione Sanctorum, a phrase appearing at the same place in the two commentaries. This is remarkable, since they both use Origen's Romans commentary and many of the same works of Augustine. This is one of the reasons the two commentaries sound so different: they quote entirely different passages from the same Fathers. To a certain extent, this also accounts for their theological differences. Peter does not quote Augustine at all on the

240 At 8:29-30, as well at 1:4 in Peter's commentary. Both of these passages deal with predestination.
Trinity or on grace, and only briefly on predestination, subjects on which William uses Augustine extensively.

b. Peter’s Major Sources

i. Origen. Though Peter is less of a compiler than William is, and though he uses a wider variety of sources than William does, he still prefers some writers over others. In terms of amount of text quoted, Origen, with his Romans commentary, is by far Peter’s favorite. He cites more than half again as much material from it as he does from all the works of Augustine, though Peter does not cite Origen as much as William does.241 Peter cites over half of his material from Origen in two passages, however, on the single topic of circumcision. In the first passage, 2:16, Peter quotes him to demonstrate that circumcision was enjoined solely on the Jews, and was not a universal precept that bound the Gentiles as well.242 He repeats this theme at 4:11, adding also Origen’s discussion of circumcision as an allegory of the cutting away of sin and entrance into the world to come, and as a necessary sacrifice for the many until the one sacrifice of Christ.243 Apart from this, Peter largely uses him for information about the context of Romans and the people whom Paul mentions in chapter 16.244 He also uses him to discuss newness of life,245 the tradition of Christ as one’s neighbor,246 and Christ

241 Peter cites some 379 lines of Origen’s Romans commentary as compared to some 234 lines from Augustine’s works. For another discussion of Peter’s use of Origen, see Eligius M. Buytaert, “The Greek Fathers in Abelard’s ‘Theologies,’” Antonianum 39 (1964): 408-36 at 421-29. Buytaert argues, correctly, that Peter “was in possession of the translation of Rufinus, most likely not in ‘excerpted’ form.”
242 CMP 88.392-90.458; cp. Origen, PG 902B-907A.
243 CMP 136.467-141.617; cp. Origen, PG 14.902B-912C. Obviously there is some overlap with the citations from 2:16, and some material is repeated at 4:11.
244 Prologue, CMP 46.177 (cp. PG 14.835B), and 16:2-27, CMP 327.20-337.311, passim (cp. PG 14.1278A-1290B).
245 6:5, CMP 177.50-178.55; cp. PG 14.1041D-1042A.
as a sacrifice for sin.\footnote{247}{Origen's overall influence on Peter, with regard to his doctrinal teaching, is thus quite limited, and it would be no more accurate to call Peter an Origenist than it would be to use that term of William.}

\textit{ii. Augustine.} Although Peter quotes much less of Augustine than William does, one may speak of a distinct Augustinian influence on him. He has clearly read Augustine, and apparently not just in florilegia, because his Romans commentary shows few signs of borrowing from Florus, Bede, or Rabanus. Peter cites him on original sin, though he uses different passages than William does, and even cites a passage in which Augustine speaks of the sins of parents binding children with guilt, a concept which he himself denies in his own definition of original sin.\footnote{248}{He also cites him on Christ's sonship, to the effect that Christ is not the son of the Holy Spirit, even though the Holy Spirit is God and Christ is the Son of God.}

He does not use him on other traditional topics, however, such as grace or the Trinity. He does use him on the topics of feeling, the soul, and the body;\footnote{250}{of thoughts condemning or justifying a person;} on God's permission of evil for a good purpose;\footnote{252}{on circumcision, baptism, and the covenant;} on whether angels should be loved along with our other neighbors;\footnote{254}{and on the}
selfless love for God. That is, Peter uses Augustine less for doctrinal purposes than for moral ones, and fairly often in his questions. If one adds passages which Peter believes to be from Augustine but which modern scholars have determined to be from other writers, this changes only slightly towards doctrinal purposes. Augustine holds a certain weight with Peter, though Peter depends on him far less than William does.

iii. Other sources. After Origen and Augustine, Peter’s favorite patristic and medieval sources are Haymo of Auxerre, Jerome/Pelagius, and Ambrose/Ambrosiaster. Rather than using them to make doctrinal or moral points, however, Peter uses them primarily to explain obscure names and terms. He cites a number of other patristic writers as well, though only Boethius, whom he cites five times.
times, contributes anything of significance. The most important of these citations
concern free choice, and occur in Peter's discussion of original sin, where Peter uses
them to buttress his view that original sin refers only to inherited punishment and not to
inherited guilt; where there is no free choice, there can be no sin, and therefore children
without free choice are not guilty of any sin.260

Of the other patristic writers, Peter cites historians such as Eusebius of Caesarea
and Gregory of Tours, lexicographers such as Isidore of Seville, and canonists such as
Theodore of Canterbury. He cites several passages from Theodore's *Penitential Book* on
the subject of eating dead animals in the context of his exposition of Romans 14:23,
concerning the eating of meat sacrificed to idols,261 as well as the Council of Gangra.262

Peter also cites a number of classical writers, though few more than once or at
any length. His favorite is Cicero, whom he cites four times, twice at some length, on
political life, the role of providence in the world, and vice.263 He also cites Calcidius'
translation of Plato's *Timaeus* three times,264 and a passage from Aristotle's *Categories*.265

In general, Peter uses his brief quotations from classical authors to express moral
opinions.266

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260 5:19, CMP 165.398-166.424; cp. *In Periermenias*, PL 64.492B-493A.
261 CMP 309.397-419; cp. *Cap.* 15-19, PL 99.943C-944B, and also Burchardus of
Worms' *Decret.*, lib. XIX.85-92, PL 140.1002B-1003A.
262 Canon 2, in P. P. Joannou, Fonti IX, *Discipline générale antique* (Grotaferrata, 1962),
90.
263 Prologue, CMP 42.50-60 (cp. *De inventione* II.56 [ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell. LCL
Scipionis* 13); 1:20, CMP 69.781-70.789 (cp. *De inventione rhetorica* I.34 [ed. and trans.
Medii Aeui [London: Warburg Institute, 1962], IV.22), on the creation of the world; 3:8,
CMP 102.211-12 and 9:21, CMP 239.260-61 (cp. *Timaeus* 28a, ed. Waszink, IV.20.21-
22), on cause and effect.
265 3:4, CMP 99.110; cp. * Categoriae* 13a30, from the edition of Boethius, ed. Minio-
In addition to using these writers to make occasional moral points and to explain obscure names and terms, Peter also uses them to buttress his arguments on controversial points, and this is why he regularly identifies his sources: to show that his positions have support from traditional, respected authorities. For example, his question on redemption cites Gratian’s *Decretum*, in his argument against the devil’s rights. Sometimes he seeks to resolve apparent contradictions between sources, as he does in his Prologue, when he cites several authorities on the question of who converted the Romans. Other times he sets sources against each other, even sources from what he believes to be the same writer, as in the question on original sin, where he cites Augustine (actually Ambrosiaster) and Jerome against another passage from Augustine, and finishes with a reference to Gregory the Great. Peter regards his patristic sources as useful, though not absolutely authoritative, a position he had already taken in the prologue to *Sic et Non*. He must therefore analyze and balance them with


270 PL 178.1339A-1349C.
logic in his attempt to arrive at the fullest meaning of the ultimate and only infallible authority, Scripture.

Peter uses his patristic and classical sources sparingly and for limited purposes. He also thinks of his sources differently than William does. Whereas William does not cite his sources and incorporates them into his own thought, making their words his and inserting himself into a traditional line of thought, Peter sets these sources apart by specifically identifying them and using them as explicit authorities to support his argument or to clarify the text under consideration. William assimilates; Peter distinguishes. William sees his sources as a foundation for his ascent toward God; Peter sees them as dialectical points in his desire to arrive at truth.

c. Peter’s Methods of Citation

Peter treats his sources all very much the same. Unlike William, he does not quote Augustine but paraphrase Origen. Occasionally he quotes entire passages nearly verbatim, with only minor changes, as with Boethius. More frequently, though, Peter edits his texts, especially the longer passages, using no more of the original than he must and eliminating extraneous material. Sometimes the portions omitted are substantial, as at 2:17, where he reduces a passage from Augustine’s sermon on Psalm 75 by over three-fourths, keeping only the most essential material on the origin of the word “Jews,” and the definition of true Jews.

Peter’s question at 7:6 offers several examples of his editing skill. He edits a passage from Ambrosiaster, leaving out several sentences dealing with Paul’s intention and with love for one’s enemy. What he quotes from Ambrosiaster, he quotes

271 See 5:19, CMP 165.396-166.424; cp. In Periermenias, PL 64.492B-493A.
272 CMP 90.476-91.490; cp. en. Ps. 75.1, CCSL 39.1036.20-1037.88.
verbatim, but he omits what he considers unnecessary and beside his larger point, that in the Law of Moses, the neighbor is not understood as every man.  

Peter immediately follows this with a passage from *De doctrina Christiana* which he reduces by about half, citing it piece by piece, as though it were several different passages and not just one.  

Shortly thereafter, Peter summarizes a wordy passage from Origen, eliminating phrases and words that are repetitive or not entirely necessary for his point about Christ as the neighbor of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Sometimes Peter omits significant concepts in the process of editing his sources. At 6:23, "The wages of sin are death," Peter omits from a passage of Haymo what might have been a useful distinction about the kinds of sins that receive the reward of eternal death, something he barely touches on in his comment on this verse. At 11:26, Peter dissects an entire sentence of Haymo, stringing together pieces of widely separated phrases to create a more concise sentence. He eliminates most of Haymo's references to God's efforts to save Gentiles and Jews equally, concentrating on the ultimate salvation of the Jews, the major focus of his own comments on Romans 11:26. Haymo's larger point is omitted, leaving mostly a Scripture reference.

Peter, like William, is generally faithful to the original meaning of his sources. He edits them with no malicious intent, only the desire to make his point more concisely, while still giving his sources credit. Perhaps his specific citations of sources is why he paraphrases so little in comparison to William; to identify a source while changing its wording would have been an injustice to Peter's way of thinking, whereas

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William felt free to reshape sources that he did not identify. Peter may also have tended toward literal, albeit edited, citations because of the argumentative and dialectical nature of his commentary; paraphrases would have been inadequate as authorities to answer a school question, whereas, for the moral instruction of William’s monks, alongside literal quotations of course, they sufficed, and even more than sufficed.

There is nothing unusual, of course, about William and Peter editing or paraphrasing their sources. They were simply following a long tradition of excerpting and editing that went back at least as far as Bede, who compressed lengthy passages of Augustine for his own compilation.278

4. Conclusion

The overall effect of patristic and classical writers on Peter is less than it is on William. Whereas William is thoroughly Augustinian, it is difficult to ascribe a specific patristic label to Peter. Though he willingly quotes Augustine, Origen, or Boethius when necessary, he does not find it as necessary to do so as William does. He relies more heavily on his own interpretive skills, on dialectic and reasoning, to explain Romans. William is equally skilled in interpreting on his own, but his loyalty to tradition leads him to quote the Fathers as often as he does. Perhaps this different attitude toward the Fathers underlies William’s criticisms of Peter; in his Disputatio he clearly cites the Fathers on several—but not all—occasions to refute Peter’s errors.279 He

278 See David Hurst’s introduction to his translation of Bede’s compilation on St. Paul, Excerpta, 7-11. Hurst traces the tradition back to Eugippius, a sixth-century abbot and scholar, whose own compilations of Augustine influenced Bede and many other readers.

279 E.g., Disp. 2, PL 180.253D (Ambrose); 4, 260BC (Gregory, Augustine), 263C (Augustine); 5, 265C-267B; 6, 267D-269B; 7, 271B (Augustine), 275C-276A (Augustine); 8, 277A (Gregory), 277D (Augustine), 278B (Augustine), 278C-279A (Leo), 279C (Augustine); and 9, 280C-281A (Augustine).
regards Peter as straying from the teaching of the Fathers on key doctrines and not being sufficiently grounded in them, as not having made their teaching sufficiently his, as William had done.

F. The Liberal Arts and Exegesis

1. General Introduction

The liberal arts also play significant roles in the expositions of William and Peter. Each commentator consciously founded his work upon either rhetoric or dialectic, and consequently the two commentaries are quite different in style and methodology.

Together with grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, or logic, formed the *trivium*, or the three verbal arts of the classic seven-art curriculum that served as the basis of western education for two thousand years. Within Christendom, the arts were important for the interpretation of Scripture, though they were frequently taught for the purposes of general education, with no direct relation to exegesis.\(^{280}\)

The history of these arts, especially that of the *trivium*, is long, and extends back to ancient Greece and Rome.\(^{281}\) Concerning the *trivium*, it has been argued that the dominance of one art over the others in teaching and usage shifted twice from antiquity to the High Middle Ages: rhetoric dominated in the ancient world, then grammar in the early Middle Ages, and finally logic in the High Middle Ages.\(^{282}\)


persuasive oratory, so important for the civic life of Greece and Rome, became almost useless when that life began to collapse after the third century A.D.\textsuperscript{283} and survived largely because of Augustine’s encouragement of it in *De doctrina Christiana* for use in preaching and Scriptural exposition.\textsuperscript{284} While rhetoric would be used for that purpose, it became important in the High Middle Ages primarily as the science of letter writing, the *ars dictaminis*. It would become an oral skill again in the thirteenth century with the development of the *ars praedicandi*:\textsuperscript{285}

With the fall of Rome and of rhetoric, grammar, the study of literature and language, became the dominant liberal art. Christian scholars such as Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville, and pagans such as Macrobius and Martianus Capella, would discuss all the liberal arts in their encyclopedias and handbooks, but grammar would be central in an age unconcerned with philosophy or Roman political discourse. The grammar handbooks of Chalcidius, Priscian, and Donatus would become influential textbooks,\textsuperscript{286} though in the eighth century Alcuin would write his own elementary texts, on rhetoric and logic as well as grammar.\textsuperscript{287}

Dialectic, or the art of discerning true reasoning from false,\textsuperscript{288} became prominent in the liberal arts curriculum, especially in the cathedral schools, in the late


\textsuperscript{284} Camargo, “Rhetoric,” 111-13; Augustine especially emphasizes rhetoric’s importance in *De doctrina*, Book IV.

\textsuperscript{285} Abelson, *Liberal Arts*, 54-71; and Camargo, “Rhetoric,” 97-110, 113-14. Laistner also refers to its survival and transmission among the important Christian scholars of the early Middle Ages: Cassiodorus, Isidore, Bede, and Alcuin (*Thought*, passim).

\textsuperscript{286} Wagner, *Liberal Arts*, 17-22; Abelson, *Liberal Arts*, 36-42.


\textsuperscript{288} A commonplace definition, going back at least to Boethius (*Arist. de interp.*, I, PL.
tenth century. Though the works of Boethius had made the logical thought of
Aristotle and Porphyry available to the Latin West, they were largely unstudied until this
time. With Gerbert, they became important textbooks again, and logic grew in
importance throughout the eleventh century, playing prominent roles in the works of
such scholars as Anselm of Bec and Roscelin.

According to this sketch, by the time of William and Peter dialectic was the
*trivium* art of most importance among most scholars, and rhetoric the art of least
importance. We can also express this movement from rhetoric to dialectic in terms of
two schools of thought on these arts extant during the Middle Ages: those of Augustine
and Boethius, which were rooted in both classical and Christian thought, and were
influential up into the twelfth century.

A short description of these schools will help us understand the differences
between William and Peter. Christian writers of late antiquity and the Middle Ages
inherited the Roman tradition of grammar and rhetoric, exemplified best by the works
of Cicero. These works contain numerous rules and descriptions of figures of speech,

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64.396D), and used repeatedly throughout the Middle Ages by scholars such as Isidore
(Etym. II, PL 82.73), Rabanus (Cler. inst. III.xx, PL 107.397-98) and Peter Abelard
(Dialectica IV, ed. L. M. De Rijk [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970], 470.4-5). See Abelson,
*Liberal Arts*, 72-89. Abelson also stresses throughout his chapter on logic that almost
every early medieval teacher distinguished logic from metaphysics.

289 R. W. Southern dates this transition to 972, when Gerbert arrived in Rheims to learn
logic, eventually surpassing his master and establishing his own reputation: *Making*, 175.

290 Abelson, *Liberal Arts*, 82-83.

291 The opposition of Augustine to Boethius among medieval rhetoricians and
dialecticians was first proposed by Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages,"
*Speculum* 17.1 (1942), 1-32, and taken up again by Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the
whose works my argument depends.

292 For a discussion of Cicero's influence on medieval rhetoric, see James J. Murphy,
*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance*
several times in *doc. Chr.*: IV.3.4, 5.7, 6.10, 7.11, 10.24, 12.27, 17.34.

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diction, and thought useful for any orator, and William of St. Thierry uses many of them.

Augustine advocated the use of this classical rhetoric by the Christian teacher for preaching and Scriptural exposition in his *De doctrina Christiana.* In the same work, Augustine had also spoken of the usefulness of dialectic for understanding Scripture, ranking it among several forms of knowledge suitable for the preliminary work of Scriptural study prior to the work of proclamation. He thus subordinated dialectic to rhetoric.

The opposite was true for Boethius, who a century later described the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic, and who was rooted in the works of Aristotle. He distinguished between rhetoric and dialectic, making rhetoric a species of dialectic, since the topics, or maxims, of dialectic are universal, while those of rhetoric are particular to circumstances. Thomas Conley describes his concept of argumentation as "centripetal," emphasizing a kernel unit explicated by the argument, an "underlying enthymeme, 'a sort of syllogism.'" The Ciceronian/Augustinian concept is "centrifugal," emphasizing eloquence, "wisdom speaking copiously," with the argument found in the development of the speech.

During the Middle Ages, these two approaches to rhetoric coexisted, with the Ciceronian/Augustinian approach dominating up to the end of the eleventh and

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293 See especially IV.5.7-7.21, 10.24-13.29, 17.34, and 19.38-26.57 (CCSL 32.120-31, 132-37, 141, 144-63).
beginning of the twelfth centuries, and promoted by monks such as Otloh of St. Emmeram297 and Manegold of Lautenbach,298 and schoolmen such as Anselm of Besate,299 who emphasized the usefulness of rhetoric. Around that time, however, Boethius began to return in the works of schoolmen such as Thierry of Chartres, William of Champeaux, William of Conches, Peter Abelard, John of Salisbury, and Hugh of St. Victor, all of whom emphasized dialectic over rhetoric.300

Conley's analysis is confirmed by other modern scholars. For example, Richard Southern has described the waning of rhetoric and the ascent of logic during these centuries: rhetoric came to be regarded as a backward-looking art, static, conservative, incapable of solving the chaos of the tenth and eleventh centuries; rhetoric appealed primarily to the monasteries, with their maintenance of liturgical and theological traditions.301 By contrast, logic was seen as dynamic, orderly, and able to resolve this chaos; it appealed to the growing numbers of intellectually restless scholars who preferred to gather, at first, around free-lance scholars and then at cathedral schools.302 Similarly, Gillian Evans has described the training in rhetoric in the twelfth century as predominantly theoretical rather than practical; students read manuals of rhetoric rather than examples such as Cicero, and did not learn to perform as rhetoricians. Rhetoric was, she says, "the most neglected of the trivium studies.”303

(Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1986), 239-74, especially 257-68. Anderson describes an anthymene as an "imperfect syllogism" (258).
297 1013-1066; See his Dialogus de tribus quaestionibus, PL 146.59-134.
298 1030-1103, author of a commentary on Cicero's Ad Herennium (Durham Ms. C.IV.29).
299 FI. 1048-56, author of Rhetorimachia.
300 Conley, Rhetoric, 91-92.
301 Southern, Making, 170-76, 185-93.
302 Ibid., 175-80, 193-203.

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If Conley’s analysis is accurate, it can give us a good model for understanding the rhetorical differences between William and Peter: William, like many other monks of his time, was committed to the program of Augustine as outlined in *De doctrina*, and made eloquence a means of exposition; Peter, though certainly familiar with both Augustine and Cicero, preferred the method of Boethius and made rhetoric a tool of analysis subordinate to dialectic.

An analysis of the use of rhetoric and dialectic in the commentaries of William and Peter will allow us to test this model. We will look closely at how each expositor uses language and logic to explain the text of Romans, and determine to what extent William followed Augustine and Peter, Boethius.

2. Rhetoric

a. Introduction

The Latin texts of these two exegetes reveal the dissimilarities of their compositional styles. Throughout his commentary William demonstrates a very polished, eloquent manner of expression, writing vivid, often rhythmic, prose that holds the reader’s attention and convincingly argues, teaches, and exhorts. By contrast, Peter’s commentary shows little concern with eloquence. Though Peter was certainly familiar with rhetorical theory as a tool of analysis, he instead used dialectic, rather than rhetoric, as his primary means of arguing.

The two different styles reflect two different approaches to scriptural exposition, as well as two different audiences and two different schools of rhetorical nature of rhetorical training in the leventh and twelfth centuries, compare Conley, *Rhetoric*, 91, who notes that this was typical of schools in France; by contrast, schools in Italy, Germany, and England were more practical.
thought. William seeks primarily the edification of his monastic readers and hearers and their advancement toward the fourth stage of ascent. For him, as for Augustine, eloquence is important for proclamation. Peter’s audience consisted of the students of the school at Mont-Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, for whom edification and eloquence were less important than the clarity of the text of Romans and learning their master’s doctrine and methods. For them, truth came less through reflection than through analysis. This does not mean that Peter Abelard did not know the rhetorical rules of his day; he was an acclaimed hymn-writer and poet, and Eileen Kearney twice speaks of the eloquence of his Hexaemeron commentary, which he wrote for Heloise and the Paraclete community. He could be eloquent when it suited his purpose; in expounding Romans to secular clerks he was not.

Some scholars have seen stylistic differences between individuals such as William and Peter as representative of the differences between monastic and scholastic writers in general. Jean Leclercq has especially distinguished between the writing styles of monks and schoolmen: monastic writers had a strong sense of beauty developed through their contact with classical and patristic writers and their participation in the liturgy, and monastic culture “is more literary than speculative;” scholastic writers preferred dialectic to grammar and rhetoric, and clarity of thought and specificity to artistry in expression. Leclercq also contrasts this monastic rhetoric with scholastic preaching, which he characterizes as “rigidly logical,” resembling the disputed questions of the schools more than homilies. He attributes this monastic style to a “simplicity of the soul.” The monks who used it “feel no real conflict between the pursuit of the art and the search for God, between rhetoric and the transcendence which is the essence of

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304 doc. Chr. IV.5-7.
305 “Master Peter,” 94, 102.
their vocation, between grammar and the desire for practice. Rhetoric has become a part of them . . .”306 Additionally, Luke Anderson has written of the “‘rhetorical’ theology of the cloister”, and shown how monks preferred rhetoric to dialectic as a means of moral instruction.307

Other scholars, while not contrasting the style of monks with that of schoolmen, comment on the eloquence of the former group. Both Southern and Evans are quick to note the rhetorical skill of the monk Bernard of Clairvaux, William’s close friend. According to Southern, “St. Bernard was the first writer for several centuries to write Latin which was both distinctive and capable of influencing the taste and practice of his own and succeeding generations.”He also speaks of the love that Bernard’s generation had for “an ornate and flowery diction.”308 Evans, describing the conflict between Bernard and Peter Abelard, says that “Bernard’s account [of the conflict] gains a good deal of its forcefulness from the persuasiveness of his language.”309 Additionally, Leclercq speaks of the elegant style of monastic preaching in general, and not only of Bernard’s, and notes Bernard’s “artistic, rhythmical prose.”310 Étienne Gilson likewise praises the style of Bernard, William, and Aelred of Rievaulx: “These Cistercians have renounced everything save the art of good writing; each and all of these hardy ascetics carried in his bosom a humanist who by no means wanted to die.”311

b. William of St. Thierry

William’s rhetorical skill was noted posthumously by his biographer,312 and

306 Love, 133-34, 140-43, 173-76.
308 Old Arts, 215, 229.
309 Old Arts, 79.
310 Love, 173-76
reflects his training in the liberal arts and also his absorption of the classical rhetorical tradition as well as the Augustinian rhetorical program. One need not search any farther than the very first clause of the commentary, in the Prologue, to find an example of William's reliance on Cicero's rhetorical rules: "Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos multis et variis et difficillimis quaestionibus inuolutam suscepimus..." According to the rules of the Pseudo-Ciceronian handbook Ad Herennium, which William possibly read, this is homoeoptoton, or similiter cadens, in which two or more words appear in the same case with like terminations (multis, variis, and difficillimis). The entire prologue to the commentary, by Ciceronian standards, is a rhetorical gem.

One need only read on to find examples of several other rhetorical conventions: epanaphora, or repetitio, in which the same word forms the beginning of successive phrases or sentences: "Hac uirgo... Hac de uirgine... Haec ipsi Paulo apostolo..." William's continual mention of grace in the prologue is an example of transplacement, or traductio, the frequent reintroduction of the same word, rendering the style more elegant:

Et exinde si quid meremur, gratia est; quod autem meremur, gratia pro gratia est. Acceptae quippe gratiae reddere fructus, gratiae augmentatio est; sicut accepisse primum gratiam, gratia est.

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311 Bernard, 63.
312 The anonymous author of William's life describes his Disputatio adversus Petrum Abelardum as "graceful in its eloquence" (David N. Bell, "The Vita Antiqua of William of St. Thierry," Cistercian Studies 11 (1976), 246-55 at 251.
313 Ibid., 248.
314 See above, p. 130-31.
315 CMW 3.2-3.
316 See above, p. 81, n. 142, for full citation of the Loeb edition, ed. Caplan.
317 IV.xx.28, ed. Caplan, 298-301.
318 CMW 4.42-45; Ad Herennium IV.xiii.19, pp. 274-77.
319 CMW 4.38-41; Ad Herennium IV.xiv.20, pp. 278-81. This is also an example of antistrophe, or conversio, in which successive phrases end with the same word, IV.xiii.19, 276-79.
William prefers rhetorical figures involving some kind of repetition, usually of words or suffixes. These, of course, are relatively easy figures to use, they are easy for readers or hearers to detect, and they effectively convey William’s point.

William also uses alliteration and rhythm to make his point. For example, one finds William using the *iust-* stem ten times in a short passage from his comment on 3:24-26:

> Quem, ut omnia gratiae responderent, ante saecula praedestinavit; in hoc vero tempore palam posuit propitiatorum in sanguine ipsius, cum in conspectu gentium revelavit iustitiam suam; qua et iustus apparet seccata non relinquendo impunita; et in iustum iusti iustificaret, ea remittens, spontanea propitiatoris sanguinis effusione expiata. Cui cum per fidem peccator adhaeret, in eius iustitia in gloriam iustificantis iustificatus evaderet, sanguine, ut dictum est, propitiatoris expiante, caritate sanante, iustitia iustificante.320

At 5:5, William uses a rhythmical alliteration, playing on the indicative and subjunctive forms of *amo* and *ardeo*: “Dicis enim ei, quasi oleum camino addens, ut qui amat, plus amet; qui ardet, plus ardeat . . .”321 At 8:16, William very effectively plays on *amo* and *clamo, amor* and *clamor*: “Inspirat tibi amorem Patris Spiritus adoptionis, in quo in tantum clamas, in quantum amas, quia ipse amor est et clamor, in quo clamas, Abba Pater.” At 8:35-39, he once more plays on *amo*: “Qui ergo habet sensum amoris, intelligat verba amantis.”322 In the same passage, he plays on *affectus* and *effectus*: “Amor noster mentis humanae affectus est; amor Dei gratiae effectus est.”323

William’s rhetoric may best be appreciated if we read samples of the figures described above in quick succession. For example, of *epanaphora:

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320 CMW 46.502-511.
321 CMW 64.135-136.
322 CMW 129.715-716.
323 CMW 130.740-741. PL, and the Tissier edition on which PL is based, reads *affectus* instead of *effectus* (PL 180.643C; Tissier, Bibilotheca, IV.216a). CF follows this reading (181). CMW makes no mention of this divergent reading in the critical apparatus. The
"Stamus autem in gratia, cum pro ea constanter laboramus; stamus in ea, cum, quod credimus, speramus et amamus. . . . Sta et obsequere mihi . . . Sta mecum, dicit tibi Deus . . ."

"Sufficiens tamen est pretium tuum omnes redimere; sufficiens fons tuus omnia ablueres."

"Aperi, Domine, Scripturas, quae de te sunt . . . Aperi ergo nobis . . ."

"Quid est sapientia, nisi sapor boni? Quid malitia, nisi sapor mali?"

"Qui enim in carne sunt, Deo placere non possunt. Qui in carne confidunt, qui concupiscentias suas sequuntur, qui in eis habitant, qui earum voluptatibus oblectantur, qui in earum delectationibus beatam felicemque vitam constituunt—ipsi enim in carne sunt—, Deo placere non possunt."

"Sed quid de carne illa mortali? Quid de lege repugnante legi mentis? Quid de illo gemitu, miser ego homo?"


CMW reading is obviously to be preferred, for theological reasons.

5:2-3, CMW 63.79-80, 86, 89. This is also a good example of homoeoptoton, with six words ending in -mus.

7:14, CMW 99.348-349; ending each phrase with second conjugation infinitives of four syllables each is also effective.

8:3-4, CMW 107.657-658, 663.

111.4-5.

8:8, CMW 111.38-112.42. William takes this from Augustine’s S. CLV.12, PL 38.847, which he found in Rabanus’s compilation, PL 111.1443C.

8:9, CMW 112.69-70. William takes this again from Augustine’s S. CLV, chapter 14, PL 38.848, which he found in Rabanus, PL 111.1445B.


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"Fides Christi est: credere in eum qui justificat impium; credere in mediatorem, sine quo nullus reconciliatur Deo; credere in eum qui dicit: Sine me nihil potestis facere."\textsuperscript{331}

Less common, but still present and effective, is antistrophe, or the repetition of the last word in successive phrases:\textsuperscript{332}

"Misit autem Deus Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati, in carne vera, sed non in carne peccati. Primus homo nullius parentis praecedente peccato creatus est, non in carne peccati; nos illius praecedente peccato nati sumus in carne peccati."\textsuperscript{333}

"Ad hoc ergo ut legem impleamus, dilectionem nostram discernamus a caeteris, qui non ad hoc se diligunt, quia nec diligunt. Qui autem se propter habendum Deum diligunt, ipsi se diligunt. Ergo ut se diligant, Deum diligunt."\textsuperscript{334}

Also present is interlacement, or complexio, which is the combined use of antistrophe and epanaphora:\textsuperscript{335}

"Aliud est imitari Adam in peccato, aliud nasci de Adam originaliter cum peccato."\textsuperscript{336}

"Ac si diceret: Deus pro nobis, ut praedestinaret nos; Deus pro nobis, ut vocaret nos; Deus pro nobis, ut justificaret nos; Deus pro nobis, ut glorificaret nos."\textsuperscript{337}

\textsuperscript{331} 9:30-33, CMW 141.182-185.
\textsuperscript{332} Ad Herennium IV.xiii.19, pp. 277-79.
\textsuperscript{333} 8:3-4, CMW 109.729-733.
\textsuperscript{334} 13:10, CMW 175.402-406. PL/Tissier reads diligat at the last diligunt.
\textsuperscript{335} Ad Herennium IV.xiv.20, pp. 278-79.
\textsuperscript{336} 5:12, CMW 68.267-268.
\textsuperscript{337} 8:33, 31-32, CMW 128.651-653.
“Respondeat martyri suo Christus: Si moreris propter me, invenies me. Respondeat aurum avaro: Si moreris pro me, et te perdis, et me.”338

Homoœoptoton is common:

“Sustinet et sustentat peccantem; inspirat et praeparat conversionem; infert etiam nonnumquam necessitatem; sanat voluntatem; adiuvat infirmitatem . . .”339

“Da ergo eum nobis, et in nobis habitans, o Deus, ama te de nobis, movendo nos et accendendo ad amorem tuum, illuminando et excitando.”340

“Ideo pro impiis, pro infirmis et pro peccatoribus mortuus est.”341

“Peccatores justificantur, inimici reconciliantur; reconciliantur per mortem, per vitam salvantur.”342 Two examples are derived from Augustine, and show his rhetorical influence on William: “Habet autem lex fidei instituta quaedam in sacramentis ecclesiae, legis factorum sacramentis actu ficióra, utilitate meliora, virtute maióra, numero pauciora . . .”343 “Qui veniens in nos donante te, docet nos omnem veritatem, insinuans nobis in te, o Pater, summae divinitatis auctorem; in te, o Fili, aeternam aeternae consubstantialitatis nativitatem; in te, o sancte Spiritus, Patris Filiique sanctam communitatem, in tribus sanctae OMOUCION unam et simplicem aequalitatem.”344

William does not, of course, use such ornate figures of speech everywhere; he is generally content to use the more “subdued” and “temperate” styles recommended by

338 8:35-39, CMW 130.735-737.
339 3:24-26, CMW 46.518-520.
340 5:5, CMW 64.126-128.
341 5:7-11, CMW 65.174-175. William is loosely paraphrasing Origen here (cp. PG 14.999BC), though the words are William’s. This is also an example of epanaphora, which, when a preposition becomes the term repeated at the beginning of each phrase or sentence, can also be homoœoptoton.
Augustine and Cicero. These ornate figures are common enough, however, to show his skill in composing prose that explains and exhorts almost by rhythm alone. Their use marks William as a first-rate rhetorician. Rhetoric assists the ascent toward God; in capable hands, such as those of William of St. Thierry, it expresses the beauty and power of divine truths, to the point that the hearer or reader, affected by the beauty and power of the expositor’s words, is led into the experience described in those words.

William worked within a long tradition of eloquence that flourished in spite of the general decline of rhetoric outside of the monasteries. Mostly isolated from the cathedral schools, monasteries preserved what the cathedrals passed over, having different needs and goals. William absorbed this monastic tradition and used it to its fullest.

c. Peter Abelard

Peter’s Romans commentary, in contrast to William’s, is an arduous and sometimes tedious read. One encounters in it either continual explanations of words and phrases or a constant stream of questions. The modern reader follows with difficulty the biblical text that Peter is explaining because of his insistence on analyzing each term in that text without first citing the text in its entirety. Peter frequently cites only a word or two of a phrase or sentence of the text he is considering, assuming either that his students already know the text and require only a key word of the phrase to know the passage the master is explaining, or that they also have a text to hand to which they can refer and thereby supply the missing words.

Once Peter takes up a particular text, whether a word, phrase, or sentence, he

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345 doc. Chr. IV.17.34-20.44; Augustine quotes Cicero’s de Oratore 29 at 17.34. See also Ad Herennium IV.viii.11-xi.16, pp. 252-69, for another discussion of the three styles.
normally explains it through paraphrase or definition. He rarely first cites a text at length, with the intention of later returning to consider its parts. He usually takes up the meaning of the first important word or phrase, frequently introducing his explanation with *id est* or *hoc est*, sometimes using these terms several times in a short passage, at the beginning of each explanatory clause. Peter is also fond of the terms *scilicet* and *videlicet* ("namely") to introduce explanatory clauses. In addition, Peter frequently paraphrases larger sections of text, introducing these passages with *ac si diceret*, a term used by exegetes throughout the Middle Ages. The effect on Peter’s rhetoric is obvious: rather than reading a continuous, flowing exposition, such as one finds in William’s commentary, the reader lurches from explanation to explanation, constantly pausing to learn the meaning of each term, gaining the sense of the whole with some difficulty.

A few examples will demonstrate the choppy nature of Peter’s expository rhetoric (explanatory terms in italics):

* Cum itaque ait iustitiae eius, *id est* suae, in hoc tempore, per hoc quod subditur in hoc tempore, *videlicet* gratiae, aperite insinuat quam iustitiam primo intelleserit, *id est* caritatem quae hominibus nostri temporis, *id est* temporis gratiae, tamquam propria convenit. Potest etiam quod dicitur in sustentatione Dei ad consequens referri, *id est* ad hoc quod subiungitur, ad ostensionem iustitiae eius in hoc tempore, ut sit *videlicet* sensus, Dominum ad hoc sustinuisse vel distulisse in

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*346* See above, p. 131.

*347* All together, Peter uses these terms some 2,000 times in the Romans commentary. I determined this figure by using Nota Bene Orbis to locate each instance of use of these terms. The breakdown of usage for each term is as follows: *id est*, 1,084; *hoc est*, 282; *scilicet*, 419; *videlicet*, 347. The first two numbers are rough estimates due to the vagaries of searching for phrases from PLD texts downloaded into Orbis; they include a few references in which the words of the term are separated. Peter also uses *hoc est* to introduce passages of the text of Romans; it is often shorthand for *hoc est quod ait*. Nevertheless, the sheer numbers are staggering, especially when compared with William’s usage of the same terms: *id est*, 140; *hoc est*, 109; *scilicet*, 41; *videlicet*, 2 (!). Even taking into account that Peter’s commentary is half again as long as William’s, these are astounding numbers.

*348* Peter uses it 96 times, in contrast to William’s twelve.
praecedenti tempore ut manifestaret iustitiam suam quam diximus, id est caritatem, in hoc tempore ut sit ipse iustus voluntate, et justificans operatione, hoc est ut et velit implere per Christum quod promiserat, de redemptione scilicet vel iustificatione nostra, et sicut voluerit operae adimpleat. Eum qui ex fide est Iesu Christi, hoc est credit qui eum Iesum, id est salvatorum, per hoc quod Christus est, id est Deus et homo. 349

Sicut enim ille semel mortuus corpore, semel resurrexit a morte, non ultra scilicet moriturus, ita et vos a morte animae, id est peccato, per gratiam baptismi Christi, non Ioannis, liberati, redire ad peccatum non debitis. Et hoc est: Numquid vos qui ita opponitis, ignoratis sacramentum, id est sanctificationem baptismi Christi? hoc scilicet ignoratis quod quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Jesu, id est baptizate ejus potius quam Ioannis, sumus baptizati in mortem ipsius, hoc est in similitudinem et significationem corporalis mortis eius? Sicut dictum est, ut videlicet sicut ille semel mortuus est corpore, et resurrexit, ita et nos semel mori peccato nitamur et non ultra velle peccare, etiamsi per paenitentiam valeamus resurgere. 350

Peter is capable of an occasional rhetorical nicety such as homoeoptoton:

...quid, inquam, opus fuit propter redemptionem nostram Filium Dei, carne suscepta, tot et tantas inedias, opprobria, flagella, sputa, denique ipsam crucis asperrimam et ignominiosam mortem sustinere ut etiam cum iniquis patibulum sustinuerit? 351

Quandoquidem Deus ita de nostra sollicitus est salute, ut praescierit, praedestinet, praedestinatos vocet, vocatos iustificet, iustificatos magnificet. 352

This use of homoeoptoton is the exception, rather than the rule. While clearly Peter is capable of writing in a high rhetorical style for the purpose of exhortation and edification, he prefers the more ordinary style for simple explanation. Peter’s best writing occurs most frequently in his questions, where the explanatory terms mentioned above are rarely used. There he most closely approaches an expository style, with less

349 3:26, CMW 113.108-123.
351 3:26, CMW 116.205-209.
352 8:31, CMW 225.510-512. For other examples, see 5:20, CMW; and 12:14, CMW.
concern for grammar or explaining a text. Though their rhetorical quality does not
approach William's, the questions allow Peter to expound at length on a topic and
develop an argument. Sometimes these questions are just that—a long series of
questions posed, occasionally with little or no resolution. This, of course, is a
rhetorical style in itself, that causes the reader to think seriously about the issues raised.
Many of these questions appeared to challenge accepted doctrine, and formed the basis
of some of the accusations against Peter.

In spite of this difficult rhetoric, Peter demonstrates knowledge of rhetorical
theory in several places in his commentary, beginning in his prologue where he writes of
how Scripture uses rhetoric to dissuade, persuade, and admonish. He twice refers to
Paul's adherence to "the custom of writing an epistle," though he does not mention
the *ars dictaminis*. He mentions both Cicero's *Ad Herennium* and one of its figures of
speech, repetition. Peter also refers four times to the figure of contraries, sometimes

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280.222-225.

353 See, for example, 1:32, CMP 75.992-76.1015 (Why does God punish sin with sin?); 3:4, CMP 98.60-99.118 (Could the human Christ lie or sin?); 3:26, CMP 113.124-
118.274 (Questions about the necessity of Christ's death for redemption); 8:10, CMP 214.136-215.157 (Why is there still punishment when sin has been forgiven?); 8:11,
CMP 215.176-183 (Why was only the Son made incarnate?); 9:21, CMP 240.278-
242.362 (Why are the wicked responsible for their deeds if God denies them grace?); 12:15, CMP 280.235-282.276 (Why do the elect weep?); 14:23, CMP 306.326-307.348
(Did those who killed the saints sin?); and 15:3, 312.26-313.63 (Why did Christ not
please himself, if he pleased the Father?).

354 Of the questions cited in the previous note, those on redemption (3:26), grace (9:21),
and the murderers of the saints (14:23) were cited by Bernard and William against Peter.
See the discussions of these topics below for specific references.

355 CMP 41.5-10.

356 1:1, CMP 47.2-3: "More scribentium epistolas, salutationem praemittit qui ad veram
eos salutem adhortatur"; and 1:8, CMP 61.476-478: "Ne praemissa epistolae salutatio
magis ex occasione et consuetudine scribendi epistolae quam ex affectu charitatis

357 2:21-23, CMP 92.534-537: "Colorem in hoc loco rhetoricum facit qui repetitio
dicitur, habens in diversis clausulis orationis idem principium, sicut est 'qui', 'quod'
quanton est repetitum." Peter refers to it at 2:24, CMP 92.547-548.
seeing it as a device used by Paul, sometimes as a way of expounding Paul’s meaning.\textsuperscript{358}

Peter’s theoretical grounding in rhetoric did not lead to practical application, however. His own rhetoric does not compare favorably with William’s. He uses few of the techniques that William does to expound the text of Romans. His exposition is less concerned with a contemplative understanding than with clarifying each term and phrase, both for the edification of the student and for the plain, objective comprehension of the text. Peter’s method does not require the “grand style” of rhetoric described in the \textit{Ad Herennium}. To explain the text as he sees fit requires a thorough knowledge of grammar and dialectic, the ability to analyze words, phrases, and sentences and to clarify them with analogies and syllogisms. For this, a less ornate rhetoric suffices, one that does not ring in the ears of the reader with eloquent choices of words, but which illuminates clearly the Apostle’s meaning, even at the cost of eloquence.

\textbf{d. Conclusion}

The distinct rhetorical styles of William and Peter constitute one of the major differences between them. William’s rhetoric inspires and moves the reader in a way that Peter’s does not. Occasionally passionate and forceful, Peter more often plods through the text, concerned more with explaining its parts than with expounding the whole or with moving his readers emotionally. Rhetoric is not his primary means of expression or exposition, whereas William’s commentary depends on it. Peter’s commentary depends more on its use of dialectic, and it was on this basis that William would criticize Peter.

These rhetorical differences again point to the different schools from which William and Peter came, respectively those of Augustine and Boethius, and, as other scholars have argued, to the differences between the pedagogy of monastic and cathedral schools.\(^{359}\) Southern’s and Evans’s assertions about the declining status of rhetoric in the eleventh and twelfth centuries apply to the cathedral schools, where Peter Abelard first learned and then taught; they do not apply to the monasteries, to which William of St. Thierry came after some time in the cathedral schools. The monasteries, firmly bound to tradition, preserved the program of *De doctrina* and the rhetorical art that was languishing in the schools, and William applied that art to his exposition of the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.

3. Dialectic

a. Introduction

The use of philosophy in explaining Christian doctrine provoked controversy from the earliest days of the faith\(^{360}\) up into the twelfth century, when Peter Abelard, among others, used dialectic, an important tool of philosophy, to analyze the language of scripture and the Fathers and clarify the sometimes conflicting statements found within those authorities. As we have seen, in *De doctrina* Augustine approved dialectic’s use within limits, and elsewhere referred to it as “the discipline of disciplines,” the basis of all teaching and learning, something Peter was fond of quoting.\(^{361}\) Anselm of

\(^{359}\) See above, pp. 133-34.


Canterbury had used dialectic to great effect in his Monologion and Proslogion, though Roscelin incurred the wrath of many, Anselm and Peter included, for his application of nominalism to the Trinity. Peter himself would be criticized by William and Bernard for his own use of analogies and dialectic in explaining Christian doctrine. By Peter's time it had come to be used as a tool of exegesis.

Monks as well as schoolmen knew dialectic. It was taught in the monasteries as a complement to grammar, and used as a traditional means of reflection on the content of faith. Bernard used logic in refuting Peter. Monks objected not to dialectic per se, but to its excessive use, to disputation, especially in questions of doctrine.

The tools and rules of dialectic, as understood in the West up to the middle of the twelfth century, were many and could fill hundreds of pages in standard textbooks.

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by Clanchy, Abélard, 95. The passage of Augustine comes from ord. 2.13.38, CCSL 29.128.
364 Nominalism is a linguistic theory which states that universal concepts such as "humanity" are mere names imposed by human beings, and have no reality in and of themselves. As a means of analyzing language and determining the truth or falsity of statements, it can be considered as a form of dialectic. Roscelin was said to have been the first person of his time to introduce nominalism to logic (Otto of Freising, Gesta Frederici, ed. F. J. Schmale (1965), p. 224.28-29, cited by Clanchy, Abélard, 68, 355, n.16).
365 See Bernard's Ep. 190.II.4, SBO 8.20.14-21.21; III.6-7, SBO 8.22.20-24.7, where he criticizes Peter's analogy (similitudo) of the Trinity, and William's criticism of the same in Disp. 3 (PL 180.255-57).
366 Bernard criticized Peter for "distinguishing with Arius degrees and inequalities in the Trinity" (cum Ario gradus et scalas in Trinitate disponit) in several letters: 190.I.2, SBO 8.18.19; 330, 8.268.7-8; 331, 8.270.4-5; 332, 8.272.4-5; 336, 8.276.1-2; and 338.2, 8.278.12-13. See also Ep. 335, 8.275.1-2, where Bernard accuses Peter of "disputing and defining as he chooses" (disputat, dividens singulis prout vult). See also William's critique of Peter's conclusions in Disp. 3-4, PL 180. 254-65, especially his use of genus and species.
367 Smalley, Study, 68-75. She rightly states that Peter neither originated nor revived the use of the question in a biblical commentary, and cites the works of Gilbert the Universal and Bruno the Carthusian as evidence, 73.
369 See, for example, Clanchy's discussion, Abélard, 110, 114-18.
such as Peter Abelard's own *Dialectica*. These rules have the object of discerning true statements from false, and cover everything from the signification of words in and of themselves to their meanings in the context of a proposition; the kinds of propositions and syllogisms (Peter recognizes 128 hypothetical syllogisms), and the kinds of topics, or maximal propositions, that can be used to establish arguments from propositions. Syllogisms were the foundation of arguments, and topics provided the third term that linked together two other terms and created the syllogism. These topics became central to dialectic. Cicero and later Boethius wrote major works on them, and Peter devotes one-third of his *Dialectica* to the discussion of topics, listing over sixty of them, though they are less important to him than to Cicero and Boethius.

With so many rules of dialectic, it is understandable that some persons would be more proficient in this art than others. Prior to taking up theology, Peter had studied and taught it for many years, writing several textbooks and commentaries of his own. William, on the other hand, had devoted himself to teaching the monastic life, and likely had given little direct attention to dialectic since his own school days, some thirty years before he wrote his Romans commentary. These differences in training and experience will become quite evident as we examine how they apply dialectic to exegesis.

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371 *Dialectica*, lxxii-lxxviii.  
373 Stump, “Dialectic,” 133.  
374 *Dialectica* III, ed. De Rijk, 256-263; see also De Rijk’s introduction, lxxix-lxxxix.  
375 These include works on Boethius, Porphyry, the *Predicamenta* and *Periermeneias* of Aristotle, his own *Logica “Ingridentibus,”* and his *Dialectica*. For a list of these works and their dates, see Mews, “Dating,” 73-134. Peter admitted in his *Dialectica* that he was summarizing Aristotle, Porphyry, and Boethius (II.1, ed. De Rijk, 146.10-20, cited by Clanchy, *Abelard*, 98).
b. William of St. Thierry

One finds William's uses of dialectic hidden in his exposition. They are infrequent, brief, and not always immediately apparent; William does not make a show of them, as Peter does. He forms syllogisms and questions, makes distinctions and divisions, and uses some basic dialectical terms.

At five places in the commentary, William constructs simple conditional statements. They take the simple form, If A, then B; A, therefore B; or not A, therefore not B. This is the most elementary form of logical statement, called *sillogismus ipoteticus simplex* by Peter Abelard,376 and William uses it to make very basic comments, few of them profound logically or theologically; they are not prominent in William’s exposition.

We find the first syllogism at 4:2, “If Abraham was justified by works, he has glory, but not before God.” William sees in Paul’s words a simple proposition:

A: Abraham was justified by works.

B: He has no glory before God.

William denies B, and therefore A: “But he has glory before God. Therefore he was not justified by works. By what then?” He quickly proceeds to explain by moving to the next verse, leaving this proposition behind with no discussion of how Abraham obtained his glory; he simply assumes it.377

The same thing occurs at 7:16, where the Apostle’s words again take the form of a syllogism: “If then I do that which I do not will, I consent to the law because it is

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376 Dialectica IV.ii.2, ed. de Rijk, 501.31-502.5. See also de Rijk’s introduction, in which he outlines the kinds of logical statements described by Peter, especially xxxiv-xxxix, on syllogisms.

377 CMW 50.654-656: “At si ex operibus iustificatus est; habet gloriam, sed non ad Deum. Ad Deum autem habet gloriam. Non ergo ex operibus iustificatus est.” CF 75.
good.” William paraphrases Paul as following, with a fuller proposition:

“Transgressions of the law would not be bad unless the law itself were not good. If it were not good, it would not be bad to transgress it. Because it is bad to transgress it, therefore, the law is good.”378 The terms of the proposition are as follows:

A: It is good to transgress the law.

B: The law is good.

William argues as follows: If A, not B; if not B, then A; not A, therefore B. Clearly he wishes to demonstrate Not A and the truth of B, though he gives no reason why A is not true; for William its falsity is self-evident.

At 7:25, “Therefore, I myself serve the law of God with the mind, but with the flesh the law of sin,” William creates a chain of syllogisms to summarize the structure of the meaning of the preceding verses: “Because grace liberates, I myself serve the law of God with the mind, and the law of the sin with the flesh. But if I serve the law of God with the mind, and if I also serve the law of sin in my flesh unwillingly, already I am in Christ. If I am in Christ, ‘there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”379 The structure is as follows:

A: Grace liberates.

B: I serve the law of God with the mind, and the law of sin with the flesh.

C: I am in Christ.

D. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

378 CMW 100.396-400: “Si autem quod nolo, illud facio, consentio legi, quoniam bona est. Non esset legis praevaricatio mala, nisi ipsa lex esset bona. Si enim non bona esset, non esset malum praevaricari malam. Quia vero malum est eam praevaricari: ergo bona est.” CF 142-43.

379 CMW 105.589-595: “Quia gratia liberat, igitur ego ipse mente servio legi Dei, carne autem legi peccati. Quod si mente servio legi Dei, et si carne etam servio nolens legi peccati, iam tamen in Christo sum. Si in Christo sum, nulla mihi damnatio, quia nihil damnationis est his qui sunt in Christo Iesu.” CF 149.
The argument is as follows: A, therefore B; if B, then C; if C, then D. William does not state the obvious consequence: A, therefore D. The syllogism here consists of a progression of statements summing up Paul’s thesis in logical form.

At 10:13, there is a brief syllogism that is extremely rudimentary, so much so that it barely qualifies as one. Commenting on Paul’s words, “For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” William says, “Therefore, if salvation is promised to all who call upon him, and there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, then all should call upon him.” The structure is as follows:

A. Salvation is promised to all who call upon him.
B. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek.
C. Therefore all should call upon him.

The first two terms seem very similar, almost redundant, distinguished only by the condition of the promise of salvation, and the conclusion states the obvious moral consequence implied in the first term.

William’s syllogism at 10:20 takes him into questions of existence. His point is that God foreknows us and his mercy anticipates us, so that we cannot merit the mercy of God. His introduction of the question of how we came to exist seems strange, but it simply points out that we are completely dependent on God:

But what did you do in order that you might exist? What activity did you engage in so that you might be and call upon God? If you did anything in order to exist, you existed before you existed. But if you were nothing at all before you existed, you did not merit existence.

The terms of the argument are as follows:

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380 CMW 146.367-369: “Si ergo omni invocanti salus promittitur, nec est distinctio Iudaei et Graeci, omnibus invocandum est.” CF 204.
381 CMW 148.452-149.455: “Sed ut esses, quid fecisti? Ut esses qui Deum invocares, quid egisti? Si enim egisti aliquid ut esses, eras ergo priusquam esses. Porro si nihil
A: You did something in order to exist.
B: You pre-existed.

The structure runs: If A, then B; if not B, then not A, a tautology. The conclusion is outside the terms: “But God made you exist,” denying both terms. The terms are interchangeable and virtually equivalent: pre-existence, logically absurd as it is anyway, assumes action to make oneself exist. William goes on to argue that we could not even bring ourselves into existence, much less make ourselves exist as good; it is God who makes us exist and makes us good, who gives the power to become sons of God.

William is not a master logician, judging by these few examples. He does not go beyond simple syllogisms, some of which are of questionable quality. One might well wonder whether they are in fact enthymemes, the “imperfect syllogisms” of the rhetorician that argue and persuade, but which do not produce proper demonstrations.382

If his syllogisms are questionable, William does know how to ask a question about certain passages where there is something that could be misunderstood. There are six clear questions in William’s commentary, none of which come from patristic sources. This is surprising, in the light of his statement in the Preface that he had omitted “the troublesome questions” from the passages he had drawn from the Fathers in composing his commentary.383 They begin quite similarly to the questions of contemporary scholars, such as Anselm of Laon, William of Champeaux, and Peter Abelard, using the same terms: quaeritur, quaeri, etc.384 They are not as long as Peter’s, omnino eras, priusquam esses, non promeruisti ut esses.” CF 207.

382 Anderson, “Enthymemes,” 257-259; see also the extensive examples Anderson gives in the same article from Bernard of Clairvaux’s Sermon 28 on the Song of Songs, 259-68.

383 CMW 3.7, “. . . suppressis, quae in ea sunt quaestionum molestias . . . ” CF15.

384 For examples of Anselm’s and William’s questions, see Odo Lottin, Psychologie et
however, neither do they go to the extent that Peter’s questions do.

The first is at 8:3-4: “We should ask therefore, ‘What is the righteousness of the law?’” William answers by giving a functional definition of *iustitia* as fulfillment of the law, followed by another question, what that fulfillment is, which he defines as satisfaction and precaution. 385

At 8:29-30, William inquires about Paul’s words, “all things work together for good,” and asks, “But how is it that all things work like this, since even those which are reckoned adverse are included?” His answer includes no definitions or distinctions, only a theological explanation of how the enemies of the Church simply exercise her patience, wisdom, and good will. 386

At 11:28-29, he asks the following question: “But what is the meaning of the following sentence, ‘But as regards election, they are most dear for the sake of their fathers? Can the same people be enemies and also most dear?” He answers first by distinguishing enemies from most dear, then by showing that both terms can apply to the Jews, though not to the same individuals. 387

At 11:33-36, William introduces a quotation from Augustine on the relation of the Father and the Son in question form: “Since God is wise and begets wisdom from himself, it is asked whether he is wise by himself for himself, or through that wisdom which he begets from himself; and also, whether he is wise in the same way as he speaks, for he speaks through the Word which he begot.” Augustine himself writes in a

385 CMW 207.687-689: “Quaerendum ergo est quae sit ipsa legis iustitia. Scilicet ipsa est, quae ideo iustitia legis dicitur, quia ad hoc data est, ut lex impleatur. Quae, nisi satisfactio de praeterito, cautio de futuro?” CF 152.
dialectical form, with distinctions, conditions, and logical conclusions. William’s introduction turns the passage into a disputed question.

At 13:9, he introduces his comment with a question: “One can ask why the Apostle mentioned only love of neighbor, by which he said the law is fulfilled. Why, unless because men can lie about love of God, since they are more rarely tried in regard to it?” William’s answer uses no distinctions or syllogisms, but is morally logical and reaches a moral conclusion.

Finally, at 14:5, William asks a question to clarify the text, and answers with a distinction: “The Apostle says, ‘Who are you to judge the servant of another?’ Does he mean man or God? There is one, man, who judges the day placed between yesterday and tomorrow . . . There is another, God, who judges every day . . .”

It is apparent that William is comfortable with the *quaestio* as a reasonable way to resolve problems naturally rising in the Biblical text. He does not press it to the extent that Peter does; he does not examine every aspect of the question, or take the question beyond the immediate text to pursue other issues. William’s questions do not intrude into the exegesis, and some of his answers use no dialectic at all.

William knows and uses other dialectical terms and techniques as well. He speaks twice of genus and species, using the terms proficiently, even making a distinction between the two in one case, noting how the forms of Adam and Christ

388 CMW 160.883-886: “Cum autem ipse sit sapiens et generans de se sapientiam, quaeritur utrum per se ipse sibi sit sapiens, an per eam quam de se gignit sapientiam; an ita sit sapiens quemadmodum dicens; uerbo enim quod genuit dicens est.” CF 221. The quotation is from Augustine, *Trin.* 7.1.2, CC 50.248.144-249.2.


390 CMW 179.562-180.566: “Tu, inquit, quis es, qui judicas alienum servum? Homo an Deus? Alius enim est, id est homo, qui iudicat diem posinum inter diem praeteritum et diem futurum; hoc est de praesenti tantum iudicare habet facultatem. Alius est, Deus scilicet,
were similar in genus but contrary in species. He analyzes Paul’s choice of terms to show why he uses *liberos* rather than *liberatos* at 6:20-22, and *ut appareat* rather than *ut sit* at 7:13. He discusses distinctions of various types: between the powers of the right and left hands of God, of salvation and damnation; between the four degrees of progress in the law; between the letter and the spirit. He also makes his own distinctions or divisions: the three forms of doctrine: rational, spiritual, and intellectual; the three things in the parable of 7:1-3 (wife, husband, and law) and the three things in the reality portrayed by the parable (the soul, sin, and the law of sin); three kinds of law: of the spirit of life, of sin and death, and the law which cannot justify; and the three wills of God: the good, the acceptable, and the perfect.

William’s use of dialectic consists of a small number of syllogisms and conditional statements, some questions, some distinctions and definitions, and terms such as *genus* and *species*. At no point does he show any sophistication comparable to that of Peter; rather, he seems to be recalling what he learned during his long-past school days. For him dialectic was one of several tools, to be used alongside others as needed, as prescribed by Augustine. In fact, dialectic was hardly the discipline of disciplines for William; his skill level in this art barely rises to the level Augustine recommended. His use of dialectic is so elementary that one thinks he would have been better off to have avoided it altogether, if his goal was to show the superiority of the

*qui iudicat omnem diem . . . “* CF 248.
391 2:1, CMW 27.770-771, CF 44; 6:3-4, CMW 80.727-737, CF 114.
395 7:1-3, CMW 92.77-78: “. . . quid distet inter litteram and spiritum . . . ” CF 132.
396 6:17, CMW 87.969-970. CF 122.
397 CMW 91.51-54, CF 131.
398 8:2-3, CMW 106.634-638. CF 150.
monastic method over the method of the philosophers he criticizes.  

**c. Peter Abelard**

Peter quite literally wrote the book on dialectic and makes a much more extensive and sophisticated use of it in his Romans commentary than William does in his. Dialectic serves two functions in his exegesis: it clarifies the meaning of Scripture through the use of distinctions, definitions, analogies, and syllogisms; and it demonstrates the truth or falseness of propositions. Peter takes it as a given that Paul's words are true and do not need verification. Instead, he uses dialectic to demonstrate the truth or falseness of certain statements of received doctrine, such as the doctrine of redemption. Both these uses, of clarification and verification, would get Peter into trouble with William and Bernard; they criticized him both for tearing down received doctrine and for probing the mysteries of the faith by his methods. We will get a strong indication of how Peter could be accused of such things as we examine his use of dialectic in this commentary.

Although Peter makes great use of dialectic in his commentary, it is not exclusively dialectical; he does not submit every word of St. Paul to dialectical analysis. In this respect the commentary is different from his non-exegetical theological treatises, which are overwhelmingly dialectical. Neither is it a dialectical textbook like his *Dialectica*. Peter occasionally refers in his Romans commentary to rules and principles of dialectic, but he is much more concerned with applying dialectic, assuming that his

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401 See p. 146, nn. 365 and 366 above for specific references.
402 See Jolivet, *Arts du langage*, 263-335, for a discussion of how thoroughly dialectical these works are.
readers already have a grasp of its fundamentals.

His most prominent, but not exclusive, means of practicing dialectical exegesis is in the numerous *quaestiones* of the commentary. These questions are, as Evans has noted, little treatises within and integral to the commentary, and there is little uniformity in their form or treatment of material. They do not all use dialectic to resolve the matter under consideration, but enough of them do, and some of them have become quite famous because of their content.

The question on redemption, at 3:26, provides the primary example in Peter’s Romans commentary of dialectic used to demonstrate the falsehood of a proposition. Peter’s intention is to demonstrate that two then-current theories of redemption were fatally flawed in their logic and should not be considered as accurate descriptions of the atonement. These theories are the devil’s rights, or “dramatic” theory, and the satisfaction, or ransom, theory.

Peter rejects the first by questioning the premise: that the devil possesses humanity by right as a result of Adam’s sin. He attacks this position by arguing from the authority of scripture—that is, by proof-texting—and by asserting an alternate position, that God has an even stronger right to man, and simply hands him to the devil for torment. Additionally, he offers an analogy of one servant leading another astray from their common lord; the one leading astray has no advantage or authority over the other, in fact the one led astray has a right of vengeance over his seducer. Ultimate right lies with Christ, who may forgive as he sees fit, in any way; he was not under

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necessity to suffer and die, but is free to choose whatever method of forgiveness he
wills.405

Peter then rejects the ransom theory through moral argument in the form of
continuous questions: which was the greater wrong, Adam’s eating of the apple, or the
murder of Christ? Could God be pleased by Christ’s murder so much as to achieve
reconciliation? He then asks to whom the ransom was paid. Certainly not to the devil,
whom Peter had already established as a mere torturer; it must go to God. But then, it
would be cruel for someone to demand an innocent person’s blood, or to be pleased
with that person’s death.406

Richard Weingart argues that necessity is the underlying principle of Peter’s
rejection of these two theories; God is under no extrinsic necessity to atone in any
particular way. For Peter, Weingart asserts,

there was no prior necessity that God reveal himself in Christ’s incarnation or
death; God’s only necessity was his intrinsic need to fulfill his essence by acting out of
love to save humanity.407 The particular arguments Peter advances point to what he
regards as either logical or ethical inadequacies: forgetting that God has ultimate right
over human beings; ignoring God’s freedom from necessity; and overlooking the moral
dilemmas of the old theories. In these arguments, morality has as much force as logic.
Peter’s dialectic is not entirely dispassionate; its function is to demonstrate the truth of
the Christian faith, and this faith underlies his dialectical method.

This combination of logic and faith can also be seen in his question on original
sin at 5:19,408 which resembles the disputation method of Sic et Non. Peter questions the

405 CMP 114.135-116.209; see also Weingart, Logic, 90-91.
406 CMP 116.210-117.238.
407 Weingart, Logic, 92-93.
408 CMP 163.336-173.680. See also the discussions of Peppermüller, Auslegung, 105-106
rationale for God's punishment of innocent children who lack free choice and the ability to consent to sin, but who are condemned for the sin of their first father, Adam. “This may be cruel,” Peter, or perhaps one of his students, proposes, “and contrary to the most high goodness of God.”

Peter then proceeds to make the case against original sin. To begin his dialectical analysis he defines sin, noting that it can be defined as guilt, and also as punishment; Peter then notes that Christ is called sin by scripture, that is, a sacrifice for sin. In his own definition of original sin Peter emphasizes punishment over guilt, which he bases on free choice and merit. A child, he states, lacks free choice and reason, and cannot transgress or merit reward or punishment. In support of this, he cites Augustine, Fulgentius of Ruspé (whom he takes for Augustine), Boethius, and Jerome, defining free choice as a faculty of the soul for deliberation, and establishing that children cannot possess this faculty. He distinguishes between punishment and guilt, eliminating the latter, and buttressing his distinction with a string of authorities. He allows a brief opposition, which takes one of the passages from Augustine and reads it differently: “The righteous God who governs all things permits no punishment to be inflicted on anyone without cause, no reward to be given undeservedly.” The opposition seems to be based on the notion that the punishment is somehow deserved, whereas the first reading asserted that children have no cause at all to be punished. Peter finds this second reading “reprehensible.”

Having allowed this case to be made, with opposition, the master then responds. Peter first notes that all that we receive from God comes through grace, and not through merits. He then returns to the passage from Augustine, focusing on one word:

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"righteous." God may not allow children to be condemned by righteousness, Peter argues—righteousness renders to each what is his own. It is by some other provision that he allows this punishment—perhaps the abundance of charity, or even grace.

Peter then cites authority in support of the traditional view of original sin—again Augustine/Fulgentius: "[children] acquire the damnation of original sin by their conception and birth." Next, he makes a key distinction between human and divine actions: while it would be unjust for a human father to punish his innocent son for his own sins, it is not unjust for God to punish children for those sins; proof-texting with scripture, Peter shows that God owns vengeance and has the power to do whatever he wishes. God causes no injury to his creature, however he treats him, either by punishing or saving him.

He buttresses this argument with a discussion of God's will: Whatever happens according to God's will cannot be called evil, and humans can only distinguish good from evil in accordance with that will. Therefore, whatever way God chooses to treat his creatures is for their best. Peter further justifies this by arguing, again from Augustine, that the punishment of such children happens according to grace and is very lenient, and that God uses this punishment for the benefit of the living, to warn and correct them.

Peter finishes by affirming the truth of original sin as "the debt of damnation," derived from the first parents, and that children who have not sinned are condemned. He again asserts the distinction between God and human beings, and offers scriptural examples and secular analogies to show that according to both human and divine

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410 Fulgentius of Ruspe, De fide, CCSL 91A.753.
412 enth. 93, CCSL 46.99.
standards, it is acceptable to injure a few innocents to bring about the welfare of the many.

This question well demonstrates Peter's dialectical method, and especially the method of the early classroom. A question is posed for discussion, arguments pro and con are made from authority, and the master's response is delivered, in which he analyzes the key authority to find the solution in one word and offer additional understanding. More authorities are cited, and the underlying doctrinal and dialectical principles expounded: divine standards cannot be judged by human standards, and God works no injury, whatever he does.

These first two examples demonstrate Peter applying dialectic to topics raised in the process of discussing the Romans text, though in them he does not apply it to the text itself. There are several questions in which he does apply dialectic directly to the Apostle's words, not to challenge the Apostle's words or engage in disputation, but purely to clarify Paul's meaning. An examination of some of these questions will show how, for Peter, dialectic affects exegesis.

At 3:4,413 Paul's words, "God is true, and every man a liar," cause Peter, or one of his students, to wonder whether Christ's humanity was capable of lying or sinning. Do Paul's words exclude the God-man? Was Christ capable of sin? To answer this question, Peter makes full use of dialectic as linguistic analysis and the construction of arguments. He addresses the following problems in making his response: How could Christ assume Adam's humanity, since the will and inclination to sin always existed in Adam? Did Christ have free choice, by which he was capable of sinning? Was Christ fully human and self-subsistent? In resolving these issues, Peter first argues from the authority of Boethius414 and Scripture415 to establish Christ's sinlessness as well as his
possession of the free choice by which he could sin. He also asserts Christ's full humanity and his possession of a soul and flesh by arguing that he had a nature of substance and not of accident. But arguing for Christ's self-subsistent humanity leads back to the question of ability to sin. Peter finds himself in a dilemma: to affirm Christ's inability to sin appears to deny his humanity; to affirm his humanity is to affirm his ability to sin. He resolves the difficulty by considering the strengths (vires) of the propositions, and the determinations, or conditions, by which they are made. Are these determinations possible or necessary? Or is the statement made simply, without a proper determination? In the case of the man united to God, this determination is the point at which he was united to God: He is able to sin, but not after or while he is so united. Christ could not sin because that very name describes the union of God and man; consequently, "every man is a liar" is a true proposition.

At 6:9, Peter asks why Paul says, "Christ dies no more, death will no longer rule over him." Paul speaks as though it did rule over him and oppressed him, Peter argues, citing Christ's agony at Gethsemane. Did Christ dread death to such an extent that he did not wish to die, but rather allowed it? Contrasting Christ's divinity and his humanity, Peter asserts Christ's oneness with the Father and his willingness to die on the one hand, and on the other his desire for humanity's salvation, even at the cost of his own death. Then, by means of analogy, he argues that both compulsion and suffering are contrary to the will. Consequently, Christ's soul did not so much desire the afflictions of the passion as it tolerated them; Christ came not to do his own will,
but that of the Father. Thus, Peter argues, death did rule over Christ's humanity, which
shrank from death but endured it out of obedience. He then makes another distinction,
within Paul's words: the first phrase refers to the death of the body, which Christ will
not incur; the second phrase refers to the death of the soul, which will rule the
disobedient after the general resurrection. Peter explains Paul's words by distinguishing
between the desires of Christ's humanity and divinity, while recognizing the endurance
and obedience that united them.

These questions give Peter full opportunity to argue his points dialectically by
constructing complete arguments on the topic or passage being expounded. He does
not restrict his use of dialectic to the questions, of course, and one can find numerous
other distinctions and technical terms throughout the commentary, in both glosses and
questions. For example, at 13:9, expounding "You shall love your neighbor as
yourself," he distinguishes between "as yourself" and "as much as yourself," regarding
the first as demonstrating similarity, and the second as demonstrating equality, and he
shows dialectically how anyone should be loved the more, the dearer he is held by God
and the better he is.\footnote{CMP 179.91-180.141. See also Peppermüller, Auslegung, 44.}
In the question on the love of God and neighbor at 13:10, Peter
distinguishes the love of God according to the subjective and objective genitives, and
then distinguishes between the two forms of loving one's neighbor: by avoiding injuries
and granting benefits. Finally, he distinguishes between love of God and neighbor,
noting that the former is superior, and thus does not inevitably include the latter.\footnote{CMP 290.163-292.213. See also 1:20, where Peter makes his famous distinction
between the persons of the Trinity according to power, wisdom, and goodness (CMP
68.717-734), and 15:24, where Peter distinguishes between enjoying God wholly and
enjoying our neighbor in part; we love God for his sake, and our neighbor for the sake
of his benefit, placing the end of the enjoyment in the final and supreme cause, which is
God (CMP 322.312-326).}
Some of these distinctions are directly applied to the text, some are not, but rather are
applied to related themes. They are all intended to clarify the text as opposed to
demonstrating the truth of a statement.

Similar in use to distinction is subdivision, a term Peter uses three times, usually
to describe Paul's enumeration of large numbers of items within a category, such as
vices or spiritual gifts.\textsuperscript{420} He speaks of inferring four times, in the sense of deducing or
drawing logical consequences.\textsuperscript{421} He mentions the rhetorical or dialectical figure of
contraries four times, once referring to a "topic," or dialectical maxim, drawn from
contraries.\textsuperscript{422} He bases all these contraries on the passage under consideration, and
usually draws a moral lesson from them.

Peter refers to species and genus in the Romans commentary, but only twice,
both times applying the terminology to the scriptural text: Considering the
commandments against adultery and killing, he notes that adultery is a species of the
genus fornication, and killing is the genus containing the species of murder;\textsuperscript{423}
expounding Paul's words that the fullness of the law is love, he states that love of
neighbor (\textit{proximi dilectio}) is derived from its genus, love (\textit{dilectio}) in its fullness.\textsuperscript{424} Peter
mentions cause at least four times in the commentary, demonstrating familiarity with

\textsuperscript{420} 1:29-31, CMP 73.919-74.944; 12:6, CMP 275.60-277.122; 15:19, CMP 319.248-
320.258. Note that Peter sees Paul always subdividing \textit{statim}.
\textsuperscript{421} As a means of learning the skill of a thing's maker from the quality of the work,
alogous to learning of the Trinity from their works (1:20, CMP 68.721 [\textit{coniicimus}]);
from contraries (2:26, CMP 94.605); inferring divine purposes from frequent events
(3:19, CMP 170.577 [\textit{coniicere}]); and an incorrect inference from a particular wording of a
statement (8:30, CMP 225.507).
\textsuperscript{422} 1:17, CMP 65.632; 2:26, CMP 94.605; 6:20, CMP 186.39 ("topic," or \textit{locus}); 9:17,
CMP 236.166.
\textsuperscript{423} 13:9, CMP 288.96-102.
\textsuperscript{424} 13:10, CMP 290.155-157: "Quandoquidem scilicet proximi etiam dilectio legem
implet, ut dictum est, ergo multo magis de genere ipsius, quod est dilectio, id recipi
constat."
Aristotle’s different kinds of causation: divine providence is the necessary cause of all evil things,\textsuperscript{425} we must direct the intention of our love toward God, lest we make ourselves, rather than God, the final and supreme cause of our love;\textsuperscript{426} we enjoy God wholly but our neighbor in part, to make God the final and supreme cause of this enjoyment;\textsuperscript{427} and peace is the final cause, or intention, of the epistle to the Romans.\textsuperscript{428}

One also finds some of Peter’s linguistic theory in the Romans commentary. At 1:20, he speaks of how different divine attributes could be assigned to the different persons of the Trinity. At 6:4, he returns to this theme, where, discussing Paul’s words “By the glory of the Father,” he explains, “that is, by the power of divinity which is especially expressed in the name ‘Father.”\textsuperscript{429} The names and titles of Jesus also express particular attributes: “Christ,” “anointed one,” expresses his royal power, and “Lord” expresses the right he has over us, to draw us out of the dominion of sin.\textsuperscript{430} Since these terms are ordinarily applied to human beings, Peter regards the divine expressions as being specially imposed through revelation; God has revealed himself as Father, Christ, and Lord, and used these terms to describe his nature and activity to humanity.

Related to the ability of terms to express divine realities is their ability to signify. We have seen that Peter uses “signification” to refer to the spiritual understanding of scripture. He also uses it in its related dialectical sense, to analyze the meanings of words in their contexts and determine their precise referents. For example, at 2:17-20, noting Paul’s words, “guide . . . light . . . teacher . . . master,” Peter interprets these

\textsuperscript{425} 8:30, CMP 225.499.
\textsuperscript{426} 13:10, CMP 290.168-70. Note the closeness of this discussion to that of love of neighbor as derived from the genus of love.
\textsuperscript{427} 15:24, CMP 322.316-321.
\textsuperscript{428} 15:33, CMP 326.440-443.
\textsuperscript{429} CMP 177.33-34: “
Per gloriam Dei Patris, id est per potentiam divinitatis quae specialiter nomine Patris exprimitur.”
terms as an inculcation of words, and “not a diverse signification.” That is, each succeeding term reinforces the previous one by having a similar meaning to it, rather than a different one. At 7:16, arguing against the idea that the killing of a man through the throwing of a stone is voluntary, he states that terms frequently change their significations from their essential attributes; while every sin is voluntary, not every act of killing is voluntary, if it lacks the will to murder. Killing is not always voluntary; it has different significations according to the will attached to it.

None of Peter's uses of signification is as complex as what one finds in his *Dialectica*. He has largely avoided complex discussions of signification in favor of more basic usage, though one may assume that his students were capable of understanding such a discussion.

Peter occasionally mentions dialectical terms and techniques, as though he were giving lessons in application to his students. These have included determinations, topics, distinctions, and subdivisions, not to mention the other terms and techniques we have discussed. At 4:18, Peter, discussing Abraham's “hope against hope,” speaks of how Abraham believed God's promise “according to that rule of dialectic: 'If what seems to belong to a greater degree does not belong, what seems to belong to a lesser degree will not.'” This is the converse of a topic from his *Dialectica*: “If what seems to belong to a lesser degree belongs, then also what seems to belong to a greater degree will belong.” Since Peter applies this rule obscurely at best, it is hard to know if he

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431 CMP 91.512-515: “... ut sit quaedam uerborum inculcatio ad confusionem eorum, non diversa significatio.”
433 I.3, ed. de Rijk, 111-115.
434 CMP 148.824-827: “Si enim quod magis uidetur inesse non inest, nec quod minus uidetur inesse inerit.” Compare *Dialectica* III.1, ed. de Rijk, 275.32-33: “Si id quod
was deliberately citing the converse or if he had forgotten the original form; at any rate, it is evident that he cites it didactically, to teach his students.

Peter uses the major tool of dialectic, the syllogism, only three times. At 8:15, he offers the following syllogism on the spirit of adoption:

A. You yourselves received the spirit of adoption in which the sons of God are made.
B. The charity of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
C. Therefore the spirit of adoption is a gift of charity through which we are adopted by God as sons.

The conclusion is made from linking the two premises and equating the Holy Spirit with the spirit of adoption, a justifiable equation, and the syllogism answers the question of whether God has many sons—yes, Peter responds, many, but through adoption, at which point he offers the syllogism.435

At 8:30, Peter answers another question with a syllogism: Do divine providence and predestination take away free choice? He responds with the following argument:

A. Since God foresees that a man who will commit adultery may commit adultery, it is necessary that he commit adultery.
B. If it is necessary that he commit adultery, it is inevitable, and he does not have the free choice to avoid this sin.
C. Therefore he should not be judged guilty of this sin which he could in no way avoid.

Peter goes on to overturn this argument, distinguishing between “inevitably” and

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\text{minus inesse uidetur inest, et quod magis inesse uidetur inerit.} \]

435 CMP 217.231-238.
“unavoidably,” for the statement does not infer unavoidability simply, with a determination.\textsuperscript{436}

Finally, at 9:21, Peter speaks of the “horned syllogism” with which a person is wounded (\textit{cornuto vulneratur syllogismo}) when he responds to the question asked by Paul, whether the potter has a right to do as he pleases with his clay? The “horns” represent contrary opinions: deny the potter this power and condemn his duty and the public welfare (by denying the public vessels for waste), or “choose what is evident,” admit that the potter has this power and may exercise it without injury to the “vessels of disgrace”—that is, God may treat his creation as he chooses, without accusation of mistreatment.\textsuperscript{437}

Peter also uses a number of analogies to explain some difficult points that might otherwise be obscure, though only rarely does he directly apply them to the text. The best known of them is the analogy of the bronze and the image made in the bronze, which he offers to explain the relationship of the persons of the Trinity: As the bronze and the image in the bronze have the same substance but different characteristics, and just as the image comes from the bronze but not vice-versa, so it is with the persons of the Trinity: They share the same substance yet different characteristics, and the Son comes from the Father, not vice-versa.\textsuperscript{438} Also well-known is his string of analogies at 9:21, which include his analogy of the physician who offers medicine to a sick person,

\textsuperscript{436} CMP 225.486-509.
\textsuperscript{437} CMP 239.240-249.
\textsuperscript{438} 1:20, CMP 70.790-71.817. Peter also uses this analogy, of course, in other of his works: The \textit{Theologia Scholarium} II.112-116, and the \textit{Theologia Christiana} IV.86-87 (CCCM 12.306-307), and it was one of William of St. Thierry’s major points of criticism in his \textit{Disputatio}, III, PL 180.254D-255C, which cites the passage from the \textit{Scholarium}. See also Evans’ discussion of this analogy in \textit{Language}, 104-105, which is based on the passage from the \textit{Theologia Christiana}, and of analogies and similitudes in general, \textit{ibid.}, 101-105.
who could not receive the medicine if the physician did not help him; and the analogy of the rich man who offers his wealth to the poor if they will work for him.\textsuperscript{439}

Peter's analogies, especially when they are strung together as at 9:21, offset the difficulty of his rhetoric and make his exposition clearer and more vivid. Dialectically, they clarify the meanings of arguments or statements by means of comparison, though they do not prove them; Peter never intended to demonstrate the Trinity by means of the analogy mentioned above, but to explain and represent it.\textsuperscript{440}

This, in fact, is the purpose of most of Peter's (as well as William's) dialectic: to clarify and explain. Though Peter attacks some cherished doctrinal positions and affirms positions of his own, he largely affirms traditional doctrine with his dialectic—original sin, God's sovereignty, the humanity and divinity of Christ. The authority of tradition, especially Scripture, is a given with Peter, and dialectic serves to establish it more firmly. His difference with William is not only the amount of dialectic he uses, and its sophistication, but the extent to which he takes it, as in his analogy of the Trinity and his criticisms of older theories of redemption.

d. Conclusion

The differences one finds between William and Peter in the application of dialectic are as profound as in their application of rhetoric, and can be accounted for by their respective adherence to the two schools of Augustine and Boethius. For William, as for Augustine, dialectic was a useful tool for the analysis of Scripture, but it was secondary in importance to the use of rhetoric in the exposition of Scripture. For Peter,


\textsuperscript{440} Cottiaux, "Conception," 819.
dialectic was capable of clarifying divine truth to a degree that made eloquent rhetoric incidental. This dialectic he learned from Boethius, the ancient teacher of dialectic most readily available in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and the philosopher whom Peter considered the greatest among Latins. 441

William was only partly aware of the extent to which Peter used dialectic in his Romans commentary. In his Disputatio William refers briefly to some of Peter’s best-known conclusions resulting from that commentary’s use of dialectic: his statements on redemption and original sin. 442 Had he read Peter’s entire commentary, what might he have thought of his other uses of dialectic? Many of Peter’s other dialectical conclusions are sound according to contemporary doctrinal standards, but given the more controversial conclusions of which William was aware and William’s tendency to focus on Peter’s perceived errors rather than his positive contributions, he likely would have found much more to criticize: the analogy of the brass to explain the Trinity, and his explanation of intent and consent in the act of adultery, to mention the most obvious. 443 Peter’s language could easily give rise to misunderstanding, and William was not inclined to give Peter the benefit of the doubt when his wording was unclear. William’s misreadings of Peter’s ambiguities, as well as his own uses of dialectic in exegesis, indicate completely different intellectual skills and priorities from Peter’s.

G. Other Considerations and Conclusion

William and Peter display differences in exegetical methodology that are so obvious that they eclipse the similarities between them. William’s eloquence in

441 Peter referred to him in his Introductio ad theologiam as “maximus ille latinorum philosophorum Boethius,” PL 178.1034, cited by Martin Grabmann, Geschichte der scholastischen Methode (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1957), II.188.
expounding the text stands in marked contrast to Peter’s plain and sometimes awkward style. Peter’s use of dialectic to demonstrate or clarify divine truths far surpasses William’s in its frequency and sophistication. In addition, they use Scripture and the Fathers in different ways and for different purposes. Peter cites them as separate authorities to proof-text his positions; William incorporates them almost inseparably into his own thought, making their words his and submitting himself to them as a student to a master. While they start from the same tradition of exegesis, William and Peter each quickly take their expositions in different directions according to their skills and interests, and produce two very different commentaries on the same piece of Scripture.

We have argued above that their different skills in the trivium are due to their immersions in the two different schools of Augustine and Boethius. William is thoroughly Augustinian in his eloquence and thought. He has absorbed Augustine’s doctrine and methodology, and he faithfully represents the program of De doctrina Christiana. Peter, on the other hand, began in the school of Boethius, absorbing and then passing on his dialectical teaching early in his career and later applying it to the task of teaching Christian doctrine.

We have also pointed out that this Augustinian program of eloquence flourished in the monasteries, while the cathedral schools revived Boethius. In part, we can see the difference between these two Romans commentaries—and the differences between William and Peter—as the difference between two programs of teaching and two approaches to education.

There is more to the exegesis of William and Peter than the topics we have outlined above: the citation and use of Scripture, spiritual exposition, patristic
authorities, and the liberal arts. Each of our expositors, William especially, uses special imagery to expound the text and exhort his readers. For example, William includes eight prayers,\textsuperscript{444} twelve analogies using medical imagery,\textsuperscript{445} several other analogies or metaphors using imagery drawn from such diverse occupations as agriculture, commerce, and sailing,\textsuperscript{446} and a number of apparently personal reflections.\textsuperscript{447} Additionally, there is a pervasive anthropology underlying William’s exposition, alongside his theology, and alongside an almost continuous moral and spiritual exhortation. Apart from the analogies cited above, one finds few comparable techniques in Peter’s commentary. His is by no means so vivid or so hortatory, though it is quite profound in its dialectic and its conclusions. It does not appeal to or describe experience as much as William’s does, but nevertheless one senses a genuine experience of divine love on Peter’s part, that he is not speaking of what he has not felt himself, even if he does not express it as well as William does. He does not exhort or prod as much as William; his intent is more to explain, allowing the text to urge his readers to greater devotion, deeper experience, or, more basically, a moral life. Methodologically,

\textsuperscript{443} See the discussions of these in the section on theology \textit{infra}.


both commentaries are complex, rich, and profound, though in different ways; they complement each other well, even as near-opposites, or as works written by scholars who found themselves at loggerheads.
CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGY

Grace is ostensibly the major topic of the Romans commentaries of William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard, yet both works cover many other topics as well: those raised by St. Paul in the epistle and those introduced into its interpretation by William and Peter. In this they both are typical of medieval Romans commentators, who tended to write their commentaries almost as encyclopedias or compendia of doctrine and moral teaching. It is also fortunate for those seeking to understand the subsequent conflict between William and Peter over matters of doctrine and methodology. Many of the matters over which they argued they also discuss in their commentaries, which they wrote prior to William's accusation. A comparison of their commentaries on the doctrinal matters can provide additional understanding of why William reacted so strongly to what he found in the works of Peter he had available to him.

The topics of later controversy which they discuss in their Romans commentaries include grace, redemption, original sin, intention and consent, and the Trinity—topics that for the most part deal with man's relationship with God.¹ We will compare Peter's and William's views on these topics in the light of early twelfth-century theology and especially in the light of the teachings of St. Augustine, whose thought heavily influenced discussions on most matters of doctrine throughout the Middle Ages.²

¹ I discuss them in this order because of their importance in the commentaries, because of their importance in the conflict between William and Peter, and because of their relationship to each other. Grace is the major topic of both commentaries, and makes redemption possible; redemption is necessary because of sin, both original and actual, and was a major point of contention. The Trinity is less closely related to these topics than they are to each other, but was important in the conflict, and is important in both commentaries, for doctrinal, spiritual, and ethical reasons, hence its position after the
Additionally, we will consider their spiritual and moral teachings, which, while not subjects of their dispute, are inextricably tied to their teachings on doctrine, and which underlay the conflict.

A. Grace

1. Introduction

William and Peter both dedicate their respective commentaries to elaborating the grace of God as it works for salvation in individuals and human history. A comparison of their opinions on this topic is important, because in his *Disputatio* against Peter Abelard, written three to five years after the Romans commentary, William would accuse Peter of being a Pelagian, of teaching that a person could receive and cling to grace through free choice and reason, and that God gives grace to all people to excite them to will the good.\(^3\)

My analysis will show whether William’s accusation is accurate with regard to what Peter taught in his Romans commentary. I have performed this analysis by extracting the numerous brief references to grace in their commentaries and examining them thematically. Neither William nor Peter felt obliged to engage in lengthy

other topics and before spirituality.

\(^2\) As David N. Bell puts it, “Medieval western theology is firmly rooted in the doctrines of Augustine, but not always in the doctrines of Augustine as he himself explained them.” David N. Bell, *Many Mansions: An Introduction to the Development and Diversity of Medieval Theology West and East*. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 146 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1996), 22. See also the numerous references to Augustine and his thought in Pelikan, *Growth*.

\(^3\) *Disputatio* 6, PL 180.266D-269B. William quotes two passages that he attributes to Peter, but they have never been identified as coming from any of Peter’s surviving works. Peppermüller discusses this, citing Landgraf’s belief that Peter’s discussion of grace in his comment on 5:19 (to be discussed below) are as close to what William criticizes as can be found in his works (Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte* 1.1.70, cited by...
explanations of grace. Rather, they both prefer to define and discuss grace as they see fit in their expositions, whether St. Paul's text mentions it or not, but hardly ever do they linger on grace and describe it systematically.

2. Grace in the Twelfth Century

Peter and William expounded on grace within the context of discussions both ancient and contemporary. Originating in the epistles of St. Paul, the Christian teaching on grace was developed and championed in the Latin west by Augustine, whose thought on it evolved over some thirty years and was authoritative up to and beyond the time of Peter and William. Augustine's teaching on grace is vast, but its major points can be summarized briefly. Grace is God's action for salvation among human beings; it is his initiative to have mercy on those he chooses for salvation and to work in these elect that they may choose the good. Those whom he chooses by grace, he justifies by the same grace. No one can will or do good apart from grace; human free choice, unassisted by grace, is inadequate to do good. God gives grace through the Holy Spirit, who works charity in the hearts of the elect. This grace can take different forms: Among others, prevenient grace, by which God initiates his work; cooperating


grace, by which God works with our will; sufficient grace, which Adam had in Paradise before the Fall; and efficient grace, by which the elect do God's will.⁵

Over the centuries, disputes arose concerning aspects of Augustine's teaching, such as predestination and free choice,⁶ and discussion expanded in the twelfth century. Modern scholars have examined the theological writings of Peter's and William's contemporaries and identified in them numerous categories and kinds of grace. Artur Landgraf, for example, provides a long list of terms, taken from a single manuscript, that all designate justifying grace in the twelfth century: gratia operans, cooperans, adiutrix, adiuvans, auxiliatrix, praeveniens, praeventrix, subsequens, aspirans, suscitans, comitans, consummans, conservatrix, incipiens, perseverans, and sublevans.⁷ Additionally, he identifies many questions of this time concerning grace: its necessity, the possibility of good works before justification, the problem of free will, Adam's need of grace even in his condition of innocence, the powerlessness of the will after the Fall, its restoration through grace, the relationship between nature and grace, whether a person may prepare himself for justification with works, relationship between faith and works, and between merit and grace.⁸

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Paper presented at Western Michigan University, 2 April 1996.

⁵ Kelly, *Doctrine*, 367.


⁷ Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte*, I.1:51. Apart from this list, Landgraf does not mention any one writer of the twelfth century who uses all these terms, and one wonders whether this list was anything more than a compilation of terms used by a variety of theologians. See also the complete list of the types of grace in the index, I.2: 301. As we shall see, William uses only a few of the terms from either list; as Dominic Monti points out, he used a number of other terms besides these, and they did not have to do only with justification ("The Way Within: Grace in the Mystical Theology of William of Saint Thierry." *Citeaux* 26.1-2 [1975]: 31-47).

Grace was a major topic of discussion, and its debaters, even those most thoroughly rooted in Augustine, for example William of St. Thierry and Peter Lombard, developed distinct teachings on grace that sometimes departed from the strict Augustinian teaching. Sometimes, as in the case of William and Peter Abelard, differences led to accusations of heresy, including Pelagianism.

3. Peter Abelard

No comprehensive study exists of Peter's doctrine of grace. A few scholars have summarized it or touched on particular aspects of it, and they vary in their assessment of Peter's Augustinianism, though they all regard Peter's thought on grace as distinct from that of his contemporaries.

Peter displays a definite Augustinian influence in his discussions of grace in his Romans commentary. For example, he teaches salvation by grace apart from works or merits. In fact, Peter defines grace as redemption. He frequently links grace with

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*The Beginnings to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 101-03. McGrath notes other questions and trends in the discussion: the growing distinction at that time between *naturalia*, or *datum*, and *gratuita*, or *donum*, that is, the gifts of God given to all through nature, and the gifts of God given selectively through grace. He states that "theologians of the earlier twelfth century tended to define grace in terms of merit," and that "The earlier medieval period was characterised by confusion concerning the various manners in which grace could be understood." As an example of this confusion, he cites Peter Lombard's distinction between *gratia gratis dans*, with God, and *gratia gratis data*, defined as the grace of justification. For additional, similar discussions see G. Philips, "La théologie de la grâce chez les préscolastiques," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 48 (1972): 479-508, and A. Vanneste, "Nature et grâce dans la théologie du douzième siècle," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 50 (1974): 181-214.

As discussed by Rydstrøm-Poulsen in the papers mentioned above.

10 The most complete is Weingart, *Logic*, 176-83; see also Marenbon, *Philosophy*, 325-30; Luscombe, *School*, 128-30; Peppermüller, *Auslegung*, 53-59; and Murray, *Abelard*, 131-34. All of these deal with the Romans commentary to greater or lesser degrees.

11 Weingart, for example, notes how Peter develops an idea of Augustine, and says that he is faithful to Augustine's position (*Logic*, 180-81). Murray, on the other hand, says
redemption, salvation, or liberation from punishment or the dominion of sin. He affirms the remission of sins by grace several times, and likewise justification by grace. And, importantly, he notes that grace seeks us out, and not we it. As for Augustine, grace for Peter represents the divine initiative, distinct from human efforts.

Additionally, Peter mentions several kinds of grace also cited by Augustine: He speaks of *gratia praevertiens*, or prevenient grace, of the grace that calls or chooses, of that Peter “believes neither in grace in the Augustinian sense nor in merits in the Pelagian” (*Abelard, 133*).

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1 1:7, CMP 59.428-430, 60.454-455; 3:24, CMP 112.82-84; 5:2, CMP 154.17-19; 5:4, CMP 154.32-34; 5:11, CMP 156.107-110; 5:17, CMP 160.227-234; 5:19, CMP 167.453-458; 5:20, CMP 175.744-748; 6:11, CMP 181.165-167; 7:25, CMP 210.779-781; 8:18, CMP 219.308-310; 8:22-23, CMP 222.392-395; 8:28, CMP 223.445-448; 11:5, CMP 257.30-33; 11:6, CMP 257.34-40; 11:7, CMP 257.54-56. He does not deny the existence or even importance of merits, good or bad, however. See especially 11:6, CMP 257.36-40, where Peter notes that St. Paul does not say “through merits” (*per merita*) but “by merits” (*ex meritis*), and goes on to say that grace does not exclude the merits of Paul and others. At 13:10, Peter says that “the entire essence of our merits consists in the love of God and neighbor” (CMP 290.157-159: *Cum vero tota meritorum nostrorum summa in dilectione Dei consistat et proximi*). And, at 8:18, Peter notes that grace was “superadded” (*superadditam*) to our merits, obtaining for us what we were not adequate by our own merits (CMP 219.308-310). He is not clear, however, about the nature of these merits, though they have to do with the reward for works subsequent to salvation. Cp. Augustine, *Jo. ev. tr.* III.8, CCSL 36.24; ibid., CXV.4, CCSL 36.646; *ex. prop. Rm.* XX, ed. Landes, 6-7; *en. Ps.* XXXI.i, CCSL 38.222; and ibid., LXVII.12, CCSL 39.876.


16 13:12, CMP 294.265-269.


18 1:7, CMP 59.430-432; 9:12, CMP 234.85-88; 11:7, CMP 257.54-62; and 11:28, CMP...
the grace that adopts,²⁰ of gratia adjuvans, the grace that helps,²¹ and of gratia operans, the
grace that works.²² He also speaks of the time of grace, that is, human history from the
time of Christ on.²³

Peter follows Augustine on the matter of God granting grace to whom he
chooses, without being accused of iniquity or injury; God can both give grace and
withdraw it.²⁴ In the same vein, God’s grace works in children who die before baptism,
and who are therefore condemned, because their punishment is lenient, and their
parents are moved to self-examination and penance; Peter attributes this punishment to
grace and not to righteousness, because God uses such punishment for the benefit of
others.²⁵ In all this, Peter argues for divine purposes hidden from human beings; grace
is ultimately beyond our understanding, but it is apparent that to Peter it is not
universal, and it does not save every person from punishment.²⁶

One of Peter’s most distinctive teachings concerning grace is his equation of
grace with the Holy Spirit, which he makes some thirteen times in the commentary.²⁷
This is also Augustinian, though Augustine's own equation of grace with the Spirit is somewhat rare, and Peter thus places more emphasis on this than does Augustine. Also distinctive and only slightly less frequent are Peter's identifications of grace with charity or love. He links these eight times, again following Augustine. This latter identification would not have been controversial, but in identifying grace with the Holy Spirit, Peter made two statements that might have drawn William's fire had he read Peter's commentary. At 4:23-24, he states that the goodness of divine grace belongs especially to the Holy Spirit; at 5:5, he equates the Holy Spirit not just with grace, but with the operation of grace. These passages both assign either divine characteristics or operations to specific persons of the Trinity; William would accuse Peter of the heresy of modalism, or Sabellianism, for similar statements.

Also distinctive and even more controversial was Peter's statement that no others.

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28 Cp. ep. Rm. inch. I.11, PL 35.2093; Jo. ev. tr. XVII.6, CCSL 36.173; ibid., XCIII, 2, CCSL 36.558-59; and en. Ps. LXX, 1.20, CCSL 39.958.

29 Peter does not seem to distinguish clearly between caritas, amor, and dilectio. In fact, at two places in his Romans commentary he seems to equate the first two terms: 7:6, CMP 195.278-79, and 8:2, CMP 211.17-19, and at 5:5, CMP 154.42-43, he equates caritas with dilectio.

30 3:26, CMP 117.242-248; 5:7-8, CMP 156.81-83; 5:19, CMP 162.310-313; 6:14, CMP 183.231-234; 8:2, CMP 211.19-20; 11:22, CMP 264.272; 13:10, CMP 290.170-171; and 16:24, CMP 337.298-301. This latter reference is taken from Haymo's commentary on Romans, PL 117.507B. Peter also links the Holy Spirit with charity and love; see the discussion of his teaching on the Trinity, pp. 242-49.

31 ex. Gal. 24, PL 35.2122; ex. prop. Rm. XIII-XVIII, ed. Landes, 4-7; ibid., XLV-XLVI, 16-19; and en. Ps. LXX, I.20, CCSL 39.958. This last reference, cited above for Augustine's identification of grace with the Holy Spirit, makes a three-way identification between charity, grace, and the Holy Spirit: "Illi non habentres charitatem, id est, non habentes Spiritum gratiae . . ."

32 CMP 152.983-88.

33 CMP 155.48-50.
additional grace beyond what God already gives is necessary to do good works. He arrives at this conclusion in the question he poses at 9:21 on whether a wicked person to whom God has never given grace in order to accept grace can be held guilty. How can God condemn such a person? Can a sick man incapable of receiving medicine on his own be blamed if the doctor giving him that medicine does not help him? It is on this basis that Peter argues against the necessity of additional grace for each good work; the general gift of grace that is given each day equally to all people through the teaching of the Gospels and the gift of faith is sufficient to inflame desire for the Kingdom of God and its rewards, but not all respond equally to it. Grace goes before each of the elect, enabling him to desire well and then to persevere; additional grace is not necessary to do good. Peter thus seems to deny helping grace, and for this reason William would accuse Peter of Pelagianism, though as we have seen, Peter does have a concept of gratia adjuvans. Others, such as the author of the Capitula Haeresum XIV, would criticize his view that the wicked man seems blameless, and that God does no more for the saved before they receive grace than for the wicked; and Bernard would simply charge that Peter asserted the sufficiency of free choice for good works.

On the one hand, strictly speaking, Peter's view of the grace needed for doing good is not outside the realm of Augustine's thought on the matter. Augustine affirmed that grace was necessary for all good works, but he did not elaborate on whether the grace to do these works was "additional."

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34 Disputatio 3, PL 180.257.
35 CMP 240.287-242.362. This is the point that Peppermüller, Marenbon, and Luscombe all concentrate on.
36 Disp. 6, PL 180.267; see note 3 above, as well as Ep. 326 in the collection of Bernard's letters, PL 182.532B, cited by Luscombe, School, 129.
37 See p. 179 above.
38 Capitula Haeresum XIV, 6, CCCM 12.476-77.
desire for reward inflamed by the gracious offer of the Kingdom, his analogy of the industrious who labor hard for the reward, and his statement that “the will is enough to obtain [the reward], and it can be reached by all with much less expense or labor or danger than in the acquisition of earthly kingdoms,” could certainly be regarded as Pelagian. On this basis one can understand the various accusations. What his accusers seem not to have realized was Peter’s point: to relieve God of the accusation of arbitrariness by placing responsibility on human beings for responding to the offer of grace made to all. This simplified grace, but also seemed to overlook predestination, vocation, justification, and remission of sins and make grace only an inspiration to do good. On this point William and the other critics certainly seemed to have valid arguments.

This is not the whole picture of Peter’s theology of grace, as we have seen. Peter here, as he did so often elsewhere, went to an extreme to make a particular point in defense of his ethical view of God, and it was easy for critics to pick on the obvious flaws in this bolder statement without looking at the shorter, plainer, and more orthodox statements on grace found elsewhere in his commentary. Taken together, Peter’s statements on grace are consonant with traditional Augustinian positions. In contrast with the more elaborate twelfth century thought on grace, which specified different kinds of grace given at different stages of human need, Peter presented a simpler, more unified view. He does not address many of the questions on grace raised

40 See gr. et lib. arb. VI.14, VIII.20, PL 44.890, 892-93.
41 CMP 241.339-242.342: “... praesertim cum ad ipsum obtinendum sola sufficiat voluntas, multoque minori impensa uel sudore seu discrimine ab omnibus perueniri possit quam ad acquisitionem terrarum regnorum.”
43 William pointed out the absence of the first two of these in Disputatio 6, PL 180.267.
by other scholars of his time, questions he could easily have raised in a Romans commentary, but pursues his own agenda, to present a morally consistent view of grace, in which God saves by grace, but human beings are responsible for receiving and making use of it. This simplification, combined with the bold language of 9:21, led to the accusations against him.

4. William of St. Thierry

William's views on grace have been studied, though not comprehensively. Thomas Renna, in his article on William's Romans commentary, notes both William's dependence on, as well as his independence of, Augustine and Origen in his doctrine of grace. Dominic Monti, writing on the Songs commentary, says little about William's dependence on any source for his ideas. Rydstrom-Poulsen notes both William's Augustinianism and his departures from it.

We have already noted that William's views on grace in his Romans commentary are predominantly Augustinian, as opposed to Origenist. Some elaboration will make this clearer. He defines grace four times in the work: twice as the remission of sins, once as God's healing of the human will and doing everything for the sinner, and once as God's justice through the blood of Christ. All of these definitions are quite Augustinian. William says much more about grace than this, however. In his Preface, alluding to Romans 8:30, he speaks of how grace predestines,
calls, justifies, and glorifies.\textsuperscript{52} These are Augustinian themes as well, and he would expand on almost all of these in the course of his commentary.\textsuperscript{53} Also in his Preface, he says that grace accomplishes good in us and cooperates with us in willing; that merits come from grace; and that grace enables prayer, again all Augustinian concepts.\textsuperscript{54} The organizational concept that William uses to structure his commentary, the four stages of ascent from life according to the flesh before the coming of the law to life in perfect peace is also Augustinian; the third stage is life under grace, and it dominates William’s exposition.\textsuperscript{55}

Like Peter, and like other contemporaries, William writes of certain kinds of grace also described by Augustine: \textit{praeveniens},\textsuperscript{56} \textit{adjuvans},\textsuperscript{57} \textit{operans},\textsuperscript{58} and \textit{sanans}.\textsuperscript{59} He also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} 3:24-25, CMW 46.518-47.523, CF 70-71.
\item \textsuperscript{51} 3:1-2, CMW 40.262-64, CF 62.
\item \textsuperscript{52} CMW 3:31-4:34, CF 16.
\item \textsuperscript{54} CMW 4.34-42, CF 16. Prayer: Augustine, \textit{ep.} 194.4.16-17, CSEL 57.188.11-189.20, cited by William at 8:26, CMW 121.413-20, CF 170-71.
\end{itemize}
speaks frequently of the time of grace, that is, from Christ’s coming onward. Grace 
regenerates or brings about new birth, and enables the fulfilment of the Law of 
Moses.

Like Peter, and also like Augustine, William links grace with charity (caritas) or 
love (amor or dilectio) on several occasions. William explicates these links in describing 
man’s ascent toward peace, at the moment of justification and in the ongoing life of 

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55 See the discussion on structure and organization above.
56 Prologue, CMW 4.54-56, CF 17; 1:20-21, CMW 23.618-619, CF 39; 7:24-25, CMW 
104.560-561, CF 148; 9:22-24, CMW 139.94-95, CF 194 (this is from Augustine, ep. 
190.3.9-12, CSEL 57.144.6-147.11); 9:30-33, CMW 141.185-190, CF 197; 10:20, CMW 
149.458-460, CF 207; 11:22-24, CMW 155.704-709, CF 215; 11:28-29, CMW 158.803-
807, CF 218-19. For passages from Augustine on prevenient grace, see above in the 
discussion of Peter Abelard’s teaching on grace.
57 1:32, CMW 26.749-752, CF 43; 5:14, CMW 72.410-414, CF 104; 5:19-21, CMW 
76.569-572, CF 109 (taken verbatim from Augustine, ep. 157.3.15-17, CSEL 44.464.15-
17); 6:12, CMW 84.879-880, CF 119; 6:14, CMW 85.924-927, CF 121; 7:18, CMW 
100.417-101.419, CF 143; and 7:18, CMW 100.417-101.419, CF 143. For other passages 
of Augustine referring to helping grace, see the section above on Peter Abelard’s 
teaching on grace.
58 1:4, CMW 7.61-65, CF 21; 1:8, CMW 11.184-186, CF 11; and 8:3-4, CMW 110.766-
767, CF 154.
50.640-46, CF 75. For healing grace in Augustine, see nat. et gr. LIX.69, CSEL 60.285; 
gr. et pecc. or. II.29, CSEL 42.188; and spir. et lit. XXX.52, CSEL 60.208.
60 3:1-2, CMW 40.289-292, CF 63; 3:9-11, CMW 43.376-379, CF 66; 3:24-25, CMW 
46.512-514, CF 70; 7:1-3, CMW 91.67-70, CF 131-32; 8:10-11, CMW 113.93-104, CF 
160; 12:6, CMW 169.152-156, CF 234; 13:1-11, CMW 176.422-434, CF 243; and 16:21-
27, CMW 196.1167-1183, CF 268. For Augustine’s references to tempus gratiae see the 
discussion above in the section on Peter Abelard’s teaching on grace.
61 5:12, CMW 67.225-228, CF 98 (cp. Augustine, Trin., XIII.16.21, CCSL 50A, 411.81-
412.90); 5:14, CMW 72.432-438, CF 105 (taken from Augustine, ep. 157.3.19-20, CSEL 44, 
468.3-9); and 5:18, CMW 75.531-538, CF 108 (taken from Augustine, pecc. mer. I.15.19, 
CSEL 60.19.10).
62 2:13, CMW 34.49-52, CF 55; 2:17, CMW 35.94-101, CF 56-57; 3:21-22, CMW 45.472-
478, CF 69; 6:14, CMW 85.919-927, CF 120-21; 7:1-3, CMW 92.77-97, CF 132; and 
7:12, CMW 95.220-96.242, CF 137. Cp. Augustine, gr. et lib. arb. XIV.27, PL 44.1897; 
spir. et lit. 34, XXX.52, CSEL 60.208.
63 William neither defines nor strongly distinguishes between caritas, amor, and dilectio 
in his Romans commentary, at least not to the extent that he does so in De natura et dignitate 
amoris 3, 12, or 13, or Epistola aurea 49, 235, or 257. In fact, in some passages of the 
Romans commentary they seem almost interchangeable, e.g., 8:16, CMW 115.182-
prayer and sacraments, assigning this equation a much greater role than Augustine does. On the other hand, unlike Peter and Augustine, William rarely links, and never equates, grace with the Holy Spirit in his Romans commentary. He speaks of the Holy Spirit as "the author of grace" and of "the spirit of grace," and describes how the Holy Spirit, "the finger of God," writes grace in our minds. Thus, for William, while the Holy Spirit is an active agent of grace, he is not grace itself.

Thus far, with few exceptions, William has appeared quite Augustinian in his view of grace. His teachings on God's gift of grace to a select few, giving it to whom he chooses and withholding it from others, is likewise in keeping with Augustine. On the other hand, he also makes several statements implying the availability of grace to all people, hardly Augustinian, though at 5:18 he qualifies "all" in a very Augustinian way, by arguing that "in some situations 'all' can be a few."

What is distinctive about William's teaching on grace is the explicit role he assigns to it in man's ascent towards peace, a greater role than Augustine had conceived. To be sure, William's spirituality is largely Augustinian, especially in its

116.199, CF 163.


65 See above, pp. 179-80.

66 8:16, CMW 116.197, CF 163. Additionally, William speaks of how the law sends sinners "to grace and the life-giving Spirit, where all sins are destroyed and the charity to act well is breathed into man" ("Mittit autem ad gratiam et uiuificantem Spiritum, ubi et peccata omnia delentur, et bene agendi caritas inspiratur," 3:21-22, CMW 45.476-78, CF 69), but this is hardly an equation of grace and the Holy Spirit.

67 4:14-15, CMW 56.873, CF 83.

68 4:17, CMW 58.922-24, CF 84. This is adapted from Origen, Rom., PG 14.975D-976A.

69 See 1:20-21, CMW 24.656-58, CF 40, taken from Augustine, Jo. ev. tr. XXVI.2, CCSL 36.260.7-9; and 9:22-24, CMW 137.1-139.118, CF 191-95, part of which is taken from Augustine, Ep. 190.3.9-12, CSEL 57.144.6-147.11.

70 1:17, CMW 17.397-400, CF 32; 3:24-25, CMW 46.502-505, CF 70; and Book III, Prologue, CMW 61.29-30, CF 92.
emphasis on image and likeness. Augustine made little explicit connection between grace and the recovery of the divine image, however. Additionally, William places greater emphasis on the direct, ecstatic experience of God than Augustine does, and he addresses more themes than Augustine does in discussing it, and consequently says more about the relationship between experience and grace.

The role of grace in William’s spirituality could be said to begin as helping grace, referred to above. But even more than aiding in the struggle against sin, grace is the foundation of individual spiritual experience and common monastic life. It “goes before us so we can pray, it helps us while we pray, and it gives us what we pray for.” Prayer itself is a grace; with its help, we know what to pray for. One can only become spiritual, that is, rising to a spiritual affection in order to fulfill the law, by grace. Those who call on the name of the Lord and experience in themselves his dominion

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71 “Possunt quippe in aliqua re omnes esse, qui pauci sunt.” CMW 75.543, CF 109; William takes this from Augustine, pecc. mer. I.15.19, CSEL 60.19.17-19.
72 Renna makes a similar argument when he says that the major difference between the notions of grace found in William and those found in Augustine and Origen is that William emphasizes “the function of grace in each step of the soul’s climb up the ladder of perfection.” "Law," 59.
73 As argued by David N. Bell, The Image and Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of St. Thierry, Cistercian Studies Series No. 78 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984). Rydstrom-Poulsen has noted some differences, however, especially with regard to the role of grace, specifically in William’s Epistola aurea, where William affirms that man becomes what God is by grace, "absolutely the opposite position to that of Augustine" ("Augustine," 13).
74 Bell’s description of Augustine’s mystical theology makes only occasional reference to the role of grace in mystical and ecstatic experience (Image, 21-88), and my own survey of the works of Augustine cited by Bell confirms that he rarely mentions grace in these contexts.
75 P. 184.
76 Prologue, CMW 4.41-42: “Gratia praevenit nos ut oremus; adiuvat cum oramus; exaudit quod oramus.” CF 16.
77 8:26, CMW 121.413-420, CF 170. Cp. Augustine, ep. 194.4.16-18, CSEL 188.7-190.11.
78 7:14, CMW 97.270-273, CF 138. William here seems to foreshadow his division of human beings into three kinds, animal, rational, and spiritual, discussed above, p. 10. n.
recognize [cognoscunt] in themselves the grace of God.\textsuperscript{79} Through the reasonable service of bodily asceticism, one receives the grace of the spirit of understanding, that is, of knowing the will of God through a new spiritual perception, and comes closer to God's likeness.\textsuperscript{80} Grace secretly communicates and inspires spiritual union between the Lord and whoever clings to him.\textsuperscript{81} Monks must be grateful for the grace they receive from God, exciting themselves with greater devotion and humility, and learn to receive grace from each other. No sin is greater in God's sight than ingratitude for grace.\textsuperscript{82} Finally, William speaks of continuing to experience grace after death. He notes how in this life, those dwelling within the bounds of God's grace are troubled by the evils and uncertainty they continue to experience. They delight to see the outgoing of this life, described as "this morning and evening," because then they shall belong to God's grace and no longer fear failure nor desire progress; they shall then be perfect.\textsuperscript{83}

In the areas of love and spirituality, William sees grace actively moving and guiding people back towards the image and likeness of God, to union with him, to an ever-deepening experience of God's love and charity. It not only justifies, but leads people into the full experience of peace. While at times seemingly irresistible, grace also

\textsuperscript{10, and below, p. 269-70. He also mentions rational man, 1:20-21, CMW 23.616-623, CF 39.}

\textsuperscript{79} 10:13, CMW 146.359-364, CF 203.

\textsuperscript{80} 12:1-3, CMW 166.51-55, CF 231.

\textsuperscript{81} 5:12, CMW 68.270-272, CF 100.

\textsuperscript{82} 1:8, CMW 11.178-188, CF 25. William mentions the necessity of this gratitude several times; in addition to this passage, see also the Prologue, CMW 3.28-29, CF 16; 1:20-21, CMW 23.622-623, CF 39; 3:27, CMW 47.547-548, CF 71 (from Augustine, \textit{spir. et litt.} 11.18, PL 44.211); 5:1, CMW 62.46-48, CF 92; 6:2, CMW 77.604-605, CF 111; 10:13, CMW 146.362-363, CF 203; and 11:36, CMW 163.992-993, CF 225 (from Augustine, \textit{s.} 158.2-3, PL 38.863-864).

\textsuperscript{83} 7:24-25, CMW 104.571-105.588, especially the following: "Ideo gratiae tuae terminos inhabitantes turbantur a signis tuis, multumque eos delectat exitus matutini hujus et vesperae, ubi de eo quod de gratia tua futuri sunt, nequaquam ulterior timeant defectum, ultra quod ulterior non desiderent profectum, tenentes illud perfectum, quo
cooperates with us in willing what is good.\textsuperscript{84}

William presents a broad view of grace that covers everything from the individual experience of grace to the role of grace in human history. Though he refers to grace frequently, he rarely goes into depth or dwells long on the subject, and he is certainly not systematic in his treatment of grace. Neither does he address many of the questions raised in the twelfth century about grace. He does not speak of the possibility of a good work before justification, for example, or of faith as the first grace. He does not speculate on Adam's need for or state of grace prior to the Fall, though he certainly could have done so in his exposition of Romans 5. He does not consider the problem of free choice and grace in any depth, though again he had the opportunity to do so. William mostly holds to the Augustinian view of grace, emphasizing, as Renna has noted, the practice of grace and how one may make use of it after justification, as opposed to dogmatic statements.\textsuperscript{85} As such, he is within the mainstream of twelfth-century thought on grace, even though he does not discuss many of the issues raised by other theologians; but he also stands out from many of these others by his emphasis on grace in the ascent toward God.

5. Conclusion

While both Peter and William are thoroughly rooted in the Augustinian tradition of grace that they received, they differ from each other—and from that tradition—on key points. Peter's discussion of a single offer of grace to all persons, with no special helping grace, seemed too Pelagian to some, including William. William's difference

\textit{tu eris eis omnia in omnibus.}“ CF 148-49.
\textsuperscript{84} Prologue, CMW 4.3-35, CF 16: “Ipsa bonum operatur in nobis cum uelimus, cooperatur cum uolumus, sine qua nil boni uel uelle uel perficere valemus.”
from the tradition was not so much a departure as an expansion on it: he built on what he had received, and did not try to correct views that seemed ethically and logically problematic to him. William's goal is practical: to show his readers how grace could assist them at every step of their ascent. Peter is less concerned with practical questions of grace. He rarely relates grace to conduct or to life after justification: he seems more dogmatic, more concerned with making God appear fair in his gift of grace, while still justly withholding it from some. Both could be said to be innovating, though William might have been seen as innovating within the tradition, while Peter certainly was seen as innovating against it.

B. Redemption

1. Introduction

Redemption likewise forms an important theme in the two commentaries; St. Paul raises the topic in chapter three of Romans, and William and Peter, like all medieval commentators on the epistle, refer to it in several places in their works. These references are significant for understanding both these commentaries and the conflict between William and Peter. Peter's views on redemption, or at least William's and Bernard's perceptions of these views, were a central issue in their accusations against him. William accused Peter of teaching that Christ died for nothing, and that his coming into the world was unnecessary; he also argued that Peter emphasized the death of Christ as a provocation of charity, to the near exclusion of his death as the sacrament of redemption and an example of humility. Bernard made similar accusations.

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86 E.g., Haymo of Auxerre, PL 117.391-92. 413, 420, 434, 488-89; Atto of Vercelli, PL
Again, the question of what Peter actually taught and what William believed Peter taught is key, and should be considered against William’s own thought on atonement, as well as against twelfth-century atonement theology as a whole.

2. Redemption Theology in the Twelfth Century

Twelfth-century theologians inherited a number of different theories on the atonement from their patristic and early medieval predecessors, and, seeing no conflict between them, they willingly combined them when they themselves discussed redemption. Modern scholars have attempted to separate and describe these theories and their development, though they differ in their assessments of these theories and their importance for teachers such as William and Peter.

Gustaf Aulen, for example, describes the “classic” theory, which he believes to be the earliest theory of redemption, as well as “the ruling idea of the Atonement for the first thousand years of Christian history.” In this view, Christ, through his incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection defeated the powers of evil and death which held humanity in bondage and suffering, and reconciled the world to God. The powers of evil and death are personified by the Devil; some early Fathers asserted that the Devil acquired rights over man as a result of Adam’s Fall, and that these rights were only taken away through a ransom paid by Christ in his death. These “Devil’s rights” would become prominent in redemption theology. Additionally, a “Latin doctrine” arose early on, which interpreted the effects of Christ’s death in legal terms of

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87 Disp. 7, PL 180.269C-270B, 274A-76D.
88 Ep. 190, SBO 8.33-36.
89 Aulen, Christus Victor, 4-6, 16-35.
satisfaction and merit. This doctrine would appear fully developed only with Anselm of Canterbury’s *Cur Deus homo?*, which emphasizes satisfaction, and makes no organic connection between Christ’s incarnation and atonement.91

Jean Rivière emphasizes various theories or themes prominent in the early Middle Ages, some related to the “classic” theory of atonement, and some not. He notes the development between the fifth and eleventh centuries of concepts of expiatory sacrifice, necessary to cleanse the world of sin;92 of the different views of the devil’s rights;93 of redemptive justice, according to which Christ redeemed humanity not by overpowering the devil, but by justice, that is, by claiming a greater right to humanity than the devil;94 and of ransom.95 Rivière also shows how these different concepts could be combined by authors, who might speak of Christ’s sacrifice subverting the power of the devil.96

Jaroslav Pelikan in his history of medieval theology discusses these doctrines only briefly. He refers to them in his discussion of redemption theology in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which he describes as the time when “scientific theology [caught up] with Benedictine piety,”97 but emphasizes that whatever theory one propounded, Christ’s death had to be central to it.98 He gives special attention to Christ’s death as

90 Ibid., 47-55.
91 Ibid., 81-92.
93 Ibid., 7-13. Rivière describes the belief that by Adam’s sin, the devil justly acquired power and right over humanity; he also notes dissenting opinions, to the effect that the devil’s rule was illegitimate and tyrannical.
94 Ibid., 14-29. Related to this is the view that the devil abused his power in killing the innocent Christ, which furnished a means of discussing how justice was applied, 34-36.
95 Ibid., 30-34.
96 Ibid., 49-51.
victory over the devil, as a sacrifice, and as satisfaction and restoration of
grightness. Neither does Pelikan ignore the concept of Christ’s death as an example,
citing not only Peter Abelard but also Peter Damian and Anselm.

This latter concept is important to the dispute between Peter and William,
though it has its origins not in eleventh- and twelfth-century theology, but in the New
Testament and in patristic teaching, in particular in the teaching of Augustine. While
Augustine certainly affirmed that Christ’s death was a sacrifice, he also emphasized its
subjective aspect “in a way that is without precedent.” He writes of how Christ
demonstrated God’s wisdom and love in his words and actions, and having seen this
demonstration, humanity is incited to love God in return, and to adore the humility
of God shown in Christ’s birth and death. Only by following the way of Christ’s
humility can humanity return to its original state. Additionally, Pelagius speaks of
Christ’s death as a demonstration of divine love, as a commendation of grace, as
instruction in how much we ought to love Christ, and as a call to imitation. In the
eleventh and twelfth centuries, besides Peter Abelard, Peter Damian, and Anselm,
several other writers, including William of St. Thierry, likewise spoke of the subjective

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98 Ibid., 131.
99 Ibid., 134-36.
100 as expressed in Disp. 7, 138. This is one of the few discussions of William’s views on
redemption that I have as yet found. See below, nn. 151-52.
101 Ibid., 139-44.
102 Ibid., 127-29.
103 1 Peter 2:21: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.”
104 For example, at ench. 41, CCSL 46.72-73; Trin. 4.17, CCSL 50.189-90; and en. Ps. 64.6,
CCSL 39.827-29.
105 Kelly, Doctrines, 393. The examples are taken from ibid., 393-94.
106 Jo. ev. tr. 110.6, CCSL 36.626-27.
108 f. et symb. 6, CSEL 41.9-11.
109 Pelagius’s Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Trans. Theodore de Bruyn.

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nature of Christ’s death, though they also strongly affirmed the objective effects as well.\textsuperscript{110}

By the time William and Peter wrote their commentaries on Romans, there were many concepts of redemption circulating and intermingling with each other, sometimes to the point that within a single author’s thought the various doctrinal developments cannot be separated from each other. This is certainly the case with William, but less so with Peter, who, with his dialectical mind, easily keeps them distinct for the purposes of criticizing them.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter Abelard’s views on redemption as presented in his Romans commentary were controversial both in his own and in modern times. He understood the traditional theories quite well, and was able to use or criticize them according to the strengths and weaknesses he found in them through his dialectical analysis. It was his criticism of some current theories that caused him trouble in the twelfth century, and his apparently strong advocacy of another theory that sparked almost endless scholarly debate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This modern debate largely centered around whether Peter supported the “exemplarist” or “subjective” view of redemption at the expense of the traditional “objective” view: that is, rather than expounding the view that


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Christ's death on the cross achieved human salvation through a vicarious, expiatory sacrifice, rather than seeing his death as a ransom that purchased and liberated humanity from the power of the devil, Peter put forward the view that Christ's entire life, including his death, was a demonstration of God's love for humanity that in turn inspired humanity's love for God. Scholars are divided over the question of whether his statements about Christ dying for humanity and bearing its sins can be taken seriously and reconciled with those statements that seem to be clearly subjectivist.

Many modern scholars, especially those of the early twentieth century, have adopted the view that Peter was primarily, if not exclusively, an exemplarist. These include Hastings Rashdall, C. de Rémusat, J. G. Sikes, Jean Rivière, and A. Victor Murray. Others, mostly of the late twentieth century, either deny this exemplarism or see a balance between it and Peter's more objective statements. These include R. O. P. Taylor, D. E. Luscombe, Richard Weingart, Rolf

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111 Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, Bampton Lectures, 1915 (London: 1919), 357-62. Rashdall asserts that for the first time, in Peter's theology of redemption, "the doctrine of the atonement was stated in a way which had nothing unintelligible, arbitrary, illogical, or immoral about it."


114 Rivière, *Dogme*, 106-125. He does not regard Peter's statements concerning Christ's death as a sacrifice to be convincing, and argues that Peter's exemplarism take redemption to the level of simple psychology.

115 Murray, *Abelard*, 126-34. Murray argues that Peter's references to the price of Christ's blood and his sacrifice were intended to demonstrate his orthodoxy, and that Peter believes neither in grace in the Augustinian sense or in merits in the Pelagian sense.
Peppermüller,\textsuperscript{119} John Marenbon,\textsuperscript{120} and M. T. Clanchy.\textsuperscript{121} There is general consensus among this latter group that Peter made statements supporting the view that Christ died on behalf of humanity, though there is little agreement about his motives for doing so and about how important they are for understanding his redemption theology as a whole.

Our own examination of these passages will hope to resolve some of these issues. We will give attention first to the question on redemption at 3:26, because of its length and importance for understanding Peter's views; though in many ways radical and out of step with most other twelfth-century discussions of redemption, one must consider it before his more conventional views.

One may make five general observations concerning this question. First, Peter considers Christ's entire life and death to be a demonstration of God's justice.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{116}Taylor, R. O. P. "Was Abelard an Exemplarist?" \textit{Theology} 31 (1935): 207-13. Taylor argues against both Rashdall and Sikes, presenting Peter's Passion hymn and re-examining the question on redemption from the Romans commentary.

\textsuperscript{117}Luscombe, \textit{School}, 137-38. Luscombe sees a greater balance in Peter's thought between the exemplarist and objective positions than previous scholars did, and attributes the apparent imbalance to Peter's style of argument, in which he seemingly denies one point to make another.

\textsuperscript{118}Weingart, \textit{Logic}, 125-46. Weingart does not regard the question on redemption as a fully developed theory of subjective atonement, or even as subjective at all, and shows how in all of his teaching, Peter uses traditional language and concepts to create a theocentric theology of redemption.

\textsuperscript{119}Peppermüller, \textit{Auslegung}, 96-104, 119-21. In many ways Peppermüller concurs with Rivière, regarding Peter's teaching as very psychological and subjective. At the same time, he gives full attention to the other passages in the Romans commentary that speak of Christ's intercessory work, regarding them as necessary to complete Peter's teaching on redemption.

\textsuperscript{120}Marenbon, \textit{Philosophy}, 322-23, 330-31. Marenbon does not regard the question on redemption as "pure exemplarism," though it is a prime example of his ethical teaching, and it does overshadow the teachings on Christ's redemptive death, which can be read as inconsistencies or attempts to fend off charges of heresy.

\textsuperscript{121}Clanchy, \textit{Abelard}, 278, 283-87. Clanchy does not deal extensively with questions of exemplarism or objectivism, though he does assert that Peter's theology was based on love, and that it was rooted in his concern for Heloise and her questions.
Second, Peter several times equates that justice with charity. Christ’s life and death are, thus, demonstrations of divine charity. Third, Peter also considers this demonstration to be a redemptive act of grace, begun and finished by God in Christ. Fourth, this demonstration actually achieves the remission of sin through the human response of love. Redemption is thus a divinely initiated act that kindles human love. Fifth, Peter criticizes only two objective theories of redemption, not all of them. He does not deny objective redemption entirely. Obviously, the concept of God’s demonstration through Christ is central to Peter’s argument.

We have already seen how Peter assailed two current theories of objective redemption in this question by means of dialectic. While his position that these theories were fatally flawed was controversial enough, he made some additional statements in his criticisms that only inflamed the controversy further. First, he argues that Christ’s death was not essential for conveying forgiveness to humanity; Christ could and did forgive simply by speaking a word. Then, in vivid terms, he asks what need there was for Christ to suffer for the sake of human redemption. This would lead William and Bernard to state that Peter taught that Christ died for nothing. Peter’s emphasis here, however, is not so much on whether Christ’s death was redemptively efficacious, but on whether God had no other means by which he could redeem humanity. He argues that God is under no compulsion to choose any particular means of redemption.

In the same vein, Peter argues against the morality of asserting that Christ’s

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124 CMP 118.256-65.
125 CMP 112.96-113.101.
126 CMP 115.179-91.
127 CMP 116.192-209.
death achieved justification and reconciliation, since his murder was far more serious a
crime against God than Adam’s eating of an apple. In so doing, Peter seems to
challenge the Apostle’s own words: “How does the Apostle say that we are justified and
reconciled to God through the death of his Son, who should have been angrier with
man for the transgression of crucifying his Son than for transgressing his
commandment in paradise with the taste of one apple?”

Finally, the style and tone of his attack on the morality of the ransom theory likely contributed to the ensuing controversy. In this attack he asks whether Christ’s
death could indeed make us more righteous than we were before his death, and to
whom the ransom must have been paid: certainly not to the devil, who was a mere
torturer; it must have been to God, and Peter quickly demonstrates the immorality of
God’s demanding innocent blood as a means of atonement. Though logical in the light
of his just-finished criticism of the devil’s rights, it challenges traditional views of
redemption, not to mention Scripture. The concept of ransom was too fully
ingrained in western theology for Peter to attack it in the way that he did and avoid the
criticism of William and Bernard. While a simple criticism of the devil’s rights might
have passed the test of these two critics, an all-out assault on ransom could not.

Peter’s own subsequent positive statement on redemption might not have been
quite so controversial had he not attacked these two other positions so vehemently.
Critical readers read his subsequent declaration in the light of these criticisms, and came
to the conclusion that Peter in fact did not believe in any kind of objective action by

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129 Weingart, Logic, 90-93.
130 CMP 116.210-117.225: “Quomodo etiam nos iustificari vel reconciliari Deo per
mortem Filii sui dicit Apostolus, qui tanto amplius adversus hominem irasci debuit
quanto amplius homines in crucificendo Filium suum deliquerunt, quam in
transgrediendo primum eius in paradiso praeceptum unius pomi gustu?”
131 CM 117.226-38.
Christ that achieved salvation. Had Peter presented this statement by itself without any
criticism of the devil’s rights or ransom, it might have passed with little notice either in
its own time or ours. It is those criticisms, however, that have made Peter’s words
about Christ’s life and death being a demonstration of grace and love so famous,
because they have led to the belief that Peter was an exemplarist and only an
exemplarist.

In the latter part of the question at 3:26,\(^{133}\) having disposed of the theories of
the devil’s rights and ransom, and wanting to show just how Christ’s death achieves
redemption, Peter returns to the Apostle’s statement that Christ’s death was a
demonstration of grace and righteousness:

Nevertheless it seems to us in this that we are justified in the blood of Christ and
reconciled to God, because it was through this matchless grace shown to us that
his Son received our nature, and, by teaching us in that nature by word as much
as by example persevered to the death, and bound us to himself even more
through love, so that when we have been kindled by so great a benefit of the
divine grace, true charity might fear to endure nothing for his sake. . . . Each one
is also made more righteous after the Passion of Christ than before, that is, he
loves God more, because the benefit kindles the perfected person in love more
than the one who hoped.

Therefore our redemption is that supreme love in us through the Passion of
Christ which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but gains for us the true liberty
of the sons of God, so that we may complete all things by his love rather than by
fear. He showed us such great grace, than which a greater cannot be found, by
his own word. “No one,” he says, “has greater love than this, that he lays down
his life for his friends.” Concerning this love the same person says elsewhere, “I
have come to send fire on the earth, and what do I desire except that it burn?”
He witnesses, therefore, that he has come to increase this true liberty of charity
among men.\(^{134}\)

\(^{132}\) For example, Mark 10:45.
\(^{133}\) CMP 117.242-118.269.
\(^{134}\) CMP 117.242-118.269: “Nobis autem videtur quod in hoc justificati sumus in
sanguine Christi et Deo reconciliati, quod per hanc singularem gratiam nobis exhibitam
quod Filius suus nostram susceperit naturam et in ipsa nos tam verbo quam exemplo

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Peter places Christ’s death in the context of his entire life, which was a demonstration of grace that kindled love in the hearts of humanity. Christ’s sufferings kindle love, or charity, which, as we have seen, Peter equates with justice/righteousness, and therefore Christ’s death can legitimately be said to justify a person and reconcile him to God—not on the basis of having satisfied legal necessities, but on the basis of love.

If one read this question only from among Peter’s statements on redemption, it would be hard to regard Peter as anything other than an exemplarist. He sharply criticizes two objective theories and speaks of redemption in terms that clearly suggest an exemplarist stance; there is no mention of Christ dying for sin or other language commonly associated with objective redemption. Peter’s language is similar to that which Augustine used in describing the exemplary nature of Christ’s work, and to that of some of his contemporaries, William included, but unlike them, Peter does not affirm the objective effects, at least not here, and for this reason this question on redemption stands apart from the mainstream of twelfth-century thought on redemption.

Instituendo usque ad mortem persuitori, nos sibi amplius per amorem adstrxit, ut tanto divinae gratiae accensi beneficio, nil iam tolerare ipsum vera reformidet caritas. . . . Iustior quoque, id est amplius Deum diligens, quisque fit post passionem Christi quam ante, quia amplius in amorem accendit completum beneficium quam speratam. Redemptio itaque nostra est illa summa in nobis per passionem Christi dilectio quae nos non solum a servitute peccati liberat, sed veram nobis filiorum Dei libertatem acquirit, ut amore eius potius quam timore cuncta impleamus, qui nobis tantam exhibuit gratiam qua maior inveniri ipso attestante non potest. Maiorem hoc, inquit, dilectionem nemo habet, quam ut animam suam ponat pro amicis suis. De hoc quidem amore idem alibi dicit: Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut ardeat? Ad hanc itaque veram caritatis libertatem in hominibus propagandam se venisse testatur."

135 Weingart lists several things missing from Peter’s declaration: “we have no mention of the scriptural ideas of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and justification” (Logic, 95. Peter does mention justification, however, at the very beginning of the solution). Weingart does allow that the entire question is “a summary statement of Abailard’s soteriology”, but quickly adds that “it is not a complete elaboration of Abailard’s teaching on redemption, since it suffers from self-evident and unaccountable omissions, such as the lack of any attention to the person of the Redeemer and the means of his work, to forgiveness and justification as benefits of that work, and to man’s appropriation in faith, hope, and love of the gifts offered by Christ” (Ibid., 95-96).
redemption; and for this reason that William accused Peter of ignoring Christ's death as the sacrament of redemption.138

Peter does speak in objective terms elsewhere in the Romans commentary, almost in support of the theories he had previously rejected. For example, at 4:25, he speaks of how Christ "swept away the penalty for sins by the price [pretium] of his death," not long after he had denied the concept of ransom (pretium). In the same passage, he also speaks of Christ bearing the penalty of human sin,139 a concept he uses again elsewhere to describe the means by which sins are forgiven.140 He also describes Christ's death as a sacrifice for us that achieves remission of sins,141 of Christ dying for our sins,142 of Christ's blood being given for us,143 and of that blood cleansing the stain of our sins.144

Peter would again use exemplarist language in the commentary, sometimes combining it with the objective language. At 5:6, he says that Christ "died for us, not for the sake of something else, unless it was on account of that freedom of charity to be enlarged in us, through which he showed us the highest love, just as he says, 'No one has greater love than this,' etc."145 At 5:9, Peter speaks of how we are "now justified in his

136 See above, p. 193.
137 See above, p. 194, n. 110.
138 See above, p. 190, n. 87.
139 CMP 153.992-1000: "Duobus modis propter delicta nostra mortuus dicitur, tum quia nos deliquimus propter quod ille moreretur et peccatum commisimus cuius ille poenam sustinuit, tum etiam ut peccata nostra moriendo tolleret, id est poenam peccatorum introducens nos in paradisum, pretio suae mortis auferret et per exhibitionem tantiae gratiae, quia ut ipse ait majorem dilectionem nemo habet, animos nostros a voluntate peccandi retraheret, et in summam suam dilectionem intenderet."
140 5:19, CMP 164.359-362.
141 5:21, CMP 176.761-763; 8:3-4, CMP 212.50-57.
142 6:9, CMP 180.138-41; 14:9, CMP 300.137-40.
143 7:14, CMP 205.607-609.
144 8:32, CMP 225.517-226.523.
145 CMP 155.64-68: "... cum videlicet eum pro nobis non ob aliud mortuum dicit nisi
blood, that is through the love which we have in him, by this highest grace which he showed to us, in dying for us while we were yet sinners.”

Peter uses the objective language in a convincing way that, if it were not for the question of 3:26, would lead a reader to think of Peter as a staunch traditionalist. How does one reconcile these apparent contradictions? Should one ignore them and create a unified, carefully categorized soteriology, as Weingart does? Should one see Peter’s objective statements as attempts to demonstrate his orthodoxy, as Murray does? Should one see his passionate arguments of 3:26 as rhetorical statements, as Luscombe implies? Or, should one accept these contradictions as such, common to all the theological writers of his time, the result of trying to explain complex questions rationally, as Clanchy argues? The latter two options are by far the best. Peter was a vigorous debater, and not always as logically consistent as one might think. In the heat of argument over redemption, he could forcefully reject concepts and language that he might later return to use. He either denies or affirms ransom and a legalistic conception of the God-man relationship, depending on the situation. They are logically and ethically untenable on the one hand, but useful expressions of the work of Christ on the other.

As with grace, Peter stands both within and outside of the mainstream of twelfth-century thought on redemption. It was easy for William, and Bernard as well, to criticize his blatant divergence from that mainstream, though he barely acknowledged

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propter veram illam charitatis libertatem in nobis propagandam, per hanc videlicet quam nobis exhibuit summam diliectionem, sicut ipse ait: Majorem hac diliectionem nemo habet etc.”

146 CMP 156.89-92: “... iam iustificatos in sanguine suo, id est iam per diliectionem quam in eo habemus, ex hac summa gratia quam nobis exhibuit, pro nobis scilicet adhuc peccatoribus moriendo.”

147 See note 118 above.

148 See note 115 above.
his convergence with it. Fairly considered, though, contradictions and all, Peter offered his contemporaries both reasoned and passionate statements on redemption, sometimes traditional, sometimes progressive beyond the point of tolerance by other traditionalists.

4. William of St. Thierry

There was no controversy in William's time concerning his views of redemption, and there has been none in modern times either. This is in spite of the fact that William, in his Romans commentary, is as passionate on redemption as Peter is in his. He does not set out to criticize theories he found logically inconsistent or morally troubling, however. Rather, William faithfully expounds traditional objective teachings on redemption, while also discussing the subjective effects of Christ's life and death in terms remarkably similar to those used by Peter. Carefully considered, though, William's views stand apart from Peter's.

Modern scholars have paid little attention to William's teachings on redemption, perhaps because they occur mostly in his less studied works, the Romans commentary and the Disputatio. Among the few who have, Jaroslav Pelikan emphasizes William's references to Christ's death as a sacrifice, while Rozanne Elder surveys his statements with an eye to Peter Abelard's views.

William uses several of the traditional theories of redemption in his Romans commentary, including one criticized by Peter: the ransom theory, or the literal redemption or buying back of sinful human beings who freely sold themselves into sin. He refers several times to the price [pretium] that Christ paid with his blood to redeem

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149 See note 117 above.
150 Abelard, 274.
151 Growth, 138; see note 100 above.
152 Elder, "Christology," 94-102. Elder also cites Rivière, The Doctrine of the Atonement,
humanity and pay its debt. He does not say to whom the debt was owed or to whom the price was paid, however; these are beside the point of what Christ accomplished. Additionally, Christ’s blood washes the penitent sinner of the filth of his sin and justifies him. Christ’s sacrificial death punished sin by undertaking the punishment owed to humanity. William does not assert that the devil held humanity by right, but does state that it is just [iustum] that the devil relinquish humanity on account of Christ’s payment of the debt owed. He also blames the devil for Christ’s death, stating that the devil unjustly shed his blood. William readily mixes these different theories in the passages where he discusses redemption, combining elements of each to present as vivid and full a picture of Christ’s work as he can.

The passages in which William discusses the subjective effects of Christ’s life and death on a believer deserve fuller attention than those presenting the objective views, because they are very similar in language to the passage of Peter Abelard examined above. The most important passage, and the one most similar to Peter’s passage, is found at 5:7-11, where William discusses the death of Christ as the necessary means of freeing humanity from sin. At one point in this passage, William, like Peter, regards Christ’s death as a demonstration of God’s love:

God continually calls this [reconciliation and union with Christ] to remembrance in the heart and conscience of the son of grace commending his charity toward

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153 3:24-25, CMW 46.492-511, CF 70; 5:12, CMW 67.223-28, CF 98 (taken from Augustine, Trin. XIII.16.21, CCSL 50A, 411.85-412.90); 7:14, CMW 98.335-99.349, CF 140-41; and 14:9, CMW 180.597-600, CF 249.

154 7:14, CMW 98.335-99.349, CF 140-41.

155 3:24-25, CMW 46.492-511, CF 70, 7:14, CMW 98.314-21; and 8:3-4, CMW 109.754-63.

156 3:24-26, CMW 46.492-511, CF 70; 5:12, CMW 69.295-97; 8:3-4, CMW 109.754-63, CF 154.

157 5:12, CMW 67.223-28, CF 98.
us. With due respect to the other sacraments of our salvation and faith, God-made-man had this purpose in being born and in suffering and in doing whatever else he did on earth, that he should commend his charity toward us and so provoke our charity toward him, for love responds most strongly to love.\textsuperscript{159}

Shortly after this, William again takes up the theme of Christ’s death as a demonstration of love:

[God] commended his charity toward us by loving first. We were loved first in order that we might be made worthy to love and to be loved even more. God did not begin to love us at the moment when we were reconciled through the death of his Son, but before the foundation of the world he loved us so that before we were anything at all we might be his sons together with his Only-begotten Son. Thus, we had to be shown how much he loved us, so that we would not despair, and of what quality we were, lest we become haughty.\textsuperscript{160}

William’s language is very similar to Peter’s. Both men speak of being kindled by or provoked to charity, and of loving God in response to the love demonstrated by God in Christ’s life and death. There is a significant difference between these two passages, however. William does not regard this provocation of charity as redemptive, not in so many words. He does not say that a person is saved or redeemed by responding to God’s love with their own love, or by seeing how much God loves them. He seems to come close, however; this provocation of charity is critical to a person’s realizing what God has done and accepting that redemption. In a sense, it is prevenient grace. It begins with God’s objective work in Christ, and continues with God’s seeking a mutual

\textsuperscript{158} 7:14, CMW 98.314-21, CF 140.


\textsuperscript{160} CMW 66.205-212: “Commendatur ergo caritatem suam in nobis prius amando. Amati quippe sumus prius, ut digni fieremus qui amaremus et amaremur amplius. Non cepit nos diligere, ex quo per mortem Filii eius reconciliati sumus; sed ante mundi constitutionem dilexit nos, ut cum eius unigenito etiam nos filii eius esseremus, priusquam omnino aliquid esseremus. Sic, sic ostendendum nobis erat quantum nos amaret, ne
relationship of charity with humanity to complement the redemption achieved through Christ's death. The person's subjective response is important, but secondary; he does not initiate his own movement of charity toward God.161

William speaks of the subjective effects of Christ's death in other passages as well, though not always as a provocation of love. At 6:5-6, he speaks of his death as an experience to which the believer should conform himself through the mortification of desires and the production of the fruits of virtues. There is no discussion of how Christ's death destroyed sin; rather, the believer puts sin to death through his conformity to Christ. The interior consideration of Christ's death, for William, thus provokes both love for Christ and imitation of him in his death to sin.162 At 8:3-4, after emphasizing Christ's death as a work of justice, as the destruction of sin, and as a sacrifice, William notes how Christ “put his faith and charity into [the believer’s] heart, the saving confession of himself into his mouth, and his body and blood into his hand.”163 Redemption becomes, again, a subjective experience. The penitent's sin is destroyed and he is restored to a part in the sacrifice of Christ's justice; Christ's work is

desperaremus; et quales, ne superbiremus.” CF 98.

161 See also Elder's comments on these passages from Peter and William (“Christology,” 93-95). She sees the differences in terms of two different conceptions of love—Peter’s “cozy warm feeling of gratitude” versus William’s Augustinian concept of love as “a vehement will” (but see Peter's definition of our love for God later in the commentary as "that best will toward God" [optima illa erga Deum voluntas, CMP 290.163-64]). Additionally, she outlines the three meanings that William and Bernard identified in Christ's death: Redemption and reconciliation; an example of humility; and the stimulation of love for God. The two Cistercians, Elder points out, argued that Peter had neglected the first two in favor of the latter.

162 CMW 82.796-802, CF 116-17. Cp. Origen, Rom., PG 14.1043AB. The image of the cross as the tree of life is a common one among patristic and medieval writers, though I was not able to find any precedents for William's imagery of the cross in the Church as a tree of life planted in the midst of paradise. Compare this passage of William with his comments on 4:22-25, CMW 60.990-999, where he uses much the same language to expound Paul's words, “He was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification”: mortification of the old man and conformity to Christ's death and resurrection. CF 87.
made true and personal in the sacrifice of the Mass, where, again, faith, hope, and
charity combine in an interior experience of union of the soul with the Lord. At 8:17,
he speaks of the inheritance prepared by Christ with his own mortal passion, which
creates the necessity of those wishing to be fellow heirs with him becoming heirs of his
passion; again, Christ’s sufferings and death become a subjective matter, the subject of
meditation leading to strength and endurance. “What will these things not effect in us?”
William asks.

William’s redemption theology is thus diverse, in keeping with both patristic and
twelfth-century thought, borrowing from and combining the different theories into a
not always logically coherent whole. Like the theologies of William’s contemporaries,
his is at once objective, concerned with what Christ accomplished, and subjective,
concerned with how human beings should consider and respond to the cross. The
objective work is what actually achieves salvation; faith must have an object and grace
must have a source, and that, for William, is Christ’s death. Without that death, there is
no redemption, and nothing to provoke charity or inspire imitation or mortification. It
is not provoked charity that redeems, in contrast to Peter Abelard; it responds to what
has already been accomplished. William’s theology is also closely linked to the biblical
texts he is expounding; he rarely raises the topic of redemption or Christ’s death apart
from the biblical text under consideration, even if the specific views on redemption do
not closely match those of the Apostle. Unlike grace, a broad topic to be taken up
whenever possible, redemption is a more specialized subject to be considered only as
appropriate, but in some detail when it is raised.

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163 CMW 108.705-706: “... fidem suam et caritatem posuit ei in corde, confessionem ad
saultem in ore, corpus suum et sanguinem in manu ...” CF 153.
164 CMW 108.705-723, CF 153.
165 CMW 117.239-248, CF 165; see also E. Rozanne Elder, “William of St. Thierry: The
5. Conclusion

William and Peter are not as far apart on redemption as the former thought. They use much of the same language to describe it, and they both affirm that Christ’s death achieved forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation through the sacrifice of his own life. They both speak of Christ’s life and death commending and inspiring charity. They even use the same passages of scripture to discuss redemption. The major differences are, first, the vehemence with which Peter affirmed the exemplary nature of Christ’s death, to the point of attacking, via dialectically-founded arguments, long-accepted theories of how Christ achieved redemption through that death, and even appearing to say that Christ died for nothing. Peter’s motive in attacking them was to affirm, as Marenbon argues, God’s morality in redemption; God cuts no deals with the devil and pays no ransom to liberate humanity from sin. Rather, and this is the second difference, Christ’s exemplary love alone redeems humanity, apart from any sacrificial aspects, at least in Peter’s question of 3:26. William’s intent was not to argue and dispute before students, but to reinforce accepted truths and amplify his readers’ devotion. For him there was no question of one theory being moral or not; God’s redemptive morality lay in the end, not the means, and William does not examine the moral implications of the theories he uses.

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C. Original Sin

1. Introduction

Redemption is necessary because of original sin. Because of the guilt acquired by humanity in the sin of Adam and Eve, humanity is separated from God and enroute to eternal punishment. The redemption described above was the divine response to this guilt and punishment. The doctrine of original sin as developed by Augustine in the fifth century became one of the defining doctrines of medieval Christendom, shaping views of both God and man. William of St. Thierry was profoundly influenced by this doctrine, as was Peter Abelard. They responded to it in different ways, however, either accepting it fully as William did, or denying parts of it as Peter did.

It was Peter's alteration of the Augustinian teaching on original sin, by denying the guilt but affirming the punishment, that led to one of William's criticisms of Peter in his Disputatio. It is a brief criticism, far shorter than William's denunciation of Peter's views on redemption in the same work, and it is placed near the end of the work, but William still considers it important to point out Peter's error. And since the doctrine is rooted in the Latin text of the epistle to the Romans, the interpretations of it presented in the two Romans commentaries are important for understanding the conflict between William and Peter.

2. The Theology of Original Sin in the Twelfth Century

Twelfth century discussions of original sin originated in the teaching of Augustine. Augustine presented his views in several works, largely responding to the views of Pelagius on sin and grace. Modern scholars have synthesized his views as
follows: original sin is the moral imperfection of human nature, which imperfection consists of concupiscence and ignorance. Human beings are responsible for this evil, in the sense that the divine commandment was violated in the person of Adam, in whom his posterity was virtually and materially continued through generation. Original sin is propagated through generation, the act of which cannot be separated from concupiscence, because of the corruption of the nature that we inherited from our parents. The presence of concupiscence in man causes him to produce children in whom the same disorder is found, and who inherit Adam's guilt and punishment. The guilt is removed through baptism, but the evil remains.

Many twelfth-century theologians, both monastic and secular, repeated this teaching with a minimum of deviation, though they often discussed it in ways particular to their time and specific context. Secular theologians especially expounded the received teaching in question form, asking what the original sin was, how it was transmitted (whether through the soul or through the body), why it was transmitted to Adam's descendants, and why children of baptized parents are born with it. Other scholars deviated from the received teaching in ways either subtle or more obvious; these include Anselm of Canterbury, who emphasized original sin as the loss of original righteousness; the followers of Gilbert of Poitiers, who brought a nominalist

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167 Disp. 11, PL 180.281D-282A.
168 See, for example, the summaries of J.-B. Kors, La justice primitive et le péché originel d'après S. Thomas, Bibliothèque Thomiste, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1930), 3-22, and Kelly, Doctrines, 361-66, from whom the following is taken.
169 Scholars of this time closely following Augustine include Anselm of Laon, William of Champeaux, Honorius of Autun, Hugh of St. Victor and the anonymous author of the Summa Sententiarum, Peter Lombard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of Amiens. For discussions of their thought, see Odo Lottin, "Les théories du péché originel au XIIe Siècle." Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale 11-12 (1939-40): 17-32, 78-103, 236-74; Kors, Justice, 40-60; and A. Gaugel, "Péché Originel," DTC, XII.1.441-58. Additionally, we may add William of St. Thierry to this list, though he is not discussed in these works.
perspective to the discussion in their questions concerning the reality of original sin;\(^{172}\) and Peter Abelard. For the most part, there was wide agreement about this subject, but certain persons added views that caused them to stand out distinctly from the others.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter's views on original sin have been much discussed by modern scholars, who largely agree about what Peter taught concerning it, in contrast to the ongoing difference over his doctrine of redemption. The general consensus is that Peter, while trying to appear Augustinian in terminology, deviated significantly on key points.\(^{173}\) Some have noted inconsistencies in his thought on this subject, and they are in fact significant; by trying to create a more moral doctrine of original sin, Peter, I will argue, created a doctrine more immoral and illogical than that of Augustine.

Indeed, Peter's teaching on original sin in his Romans commentary, found mostly in his exposition of chapters four and five, does follow Augustine on many points. Peter speaks of original sin as something which human beings are born with, and which they contract from the first parent, that is, Adam.\(^{174}\) Through Adam's sin,


\(^{172}\) Lottin, "Théories," 81-90.

\(^{173}\) See Kors, _Justice_, 36-39, who argues that while Peter was under Augustine's influence, and while trying in vain to appear in accord with him, he could only give a skillful transposition of his views; Weingart, _Logic_, 42-50, who argues that Peter accepted Augustine on his own terms, but yet gave a new meaning of original sin; Sikes, _Abelard_, 200-204, who argues that while Peter rejected the traditional doctrine of original sin, he was not Pelagian; Paul C. Kemeny, "Peter Abelard: An Examination of His Doctrine of Original Sin," _Journal of Religious History_ 16.4 (1991), 374-386, who argues that Peter appeared to be Augustinian in some respects, departed from him in many ways, and redefined the nature of original sin in a Pelagian direction; Julius Gross, "Abalards Umdeutung des Erbsündendogmas," _Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte_, 15.1 (1963), 14-33, who argues that Peter deviated significantly from Augustine, and that for Peter, there was in fact no original sin, but rather a collective punishment; and Peppermüller, _Auslegung_, 105-106, 112-14, 119-20, who follows Gross on the question of collective punishment, and who argues that Peter ultimately failed to integrate his
death and original sin passed into all humanity, and human beings were made sinners and handed over to eternal punishment. Original sin is propagated through concupiscence; parents introduce concupiscence to their children, who are conceived in the sin of carnal concupiscence, which itself conveys sin, and so children already have severe judgment against them. Original sin is pardoned through the sacraments of the Church, particularly baptism; children require the absolution of baptism; those who die without it are condemned. Peter even quotes Augustine on original sin twice, and Fulgentius of Ruspé, whose work he thinks to be Augustine's, once.

On the other hand, Peter does depart significantly from Augustine's teaching when he defines original sin in his question at 5:19. We have already noted this definition in our examination of the dialectical methodology of this question, but some restatement will point out the importance of Peter's teaching and his departure from Augustine. He defines sin in order to determine the original nature of it; after noting that sin can be defined both as guilt and as punishment, he makes his famous definition of original sin:

"Since therefore we say that men are begotten and born with original sin and also contract this same original sin from the first parent, it seems rather that it should refer by this to the punishment of sin, to which punishment they are held liable, than to the guilt of the soul and the contempt of God. For the one who cannot..."
yet use free choice nor yet has any exercise of reason, may almost recognize the
author or deserve the precept of obedience; there is for him no transgression, no
negligence should be imputed nor any merit at all by which he might be more
worthy of reward or punishment than those beasts, when they seem either to do
harm or to help in something.\footnote{\textsuperscript{183}}

Here Peter makes fine distinctions between inherited liability to punishment and
inherited guilt.\footnote{\textsuperscript{184}} Original sin is not about guilt, since, to Peter's mind, guilt can only
come from a person's own free actions. As we have seen above, Peter cites numerous
patristic authorities to buttress his argument: there is no sin without freedom of choice,
which children do not have; therefore they cannot sin, and do not have guilt, inherited
or earned.

At the end of the question, Peter restates his definition of original sin:

It is therefore original sin with which we are born, that debt of damnation with
which we are bound, since we are made liable to eternal punishment on account
of the guilt of our origin, that is, our first parents from whom our origin derived.
For in him, as the Apostle mentioned above, we sinned, that is, we are committed
to eternal damnation on account of his sin, so that, unless the medicines of the
divine sacraments should come to our aid, we would be eternally damned.\footnote{\textsuperscript{185}}

The language is again largely legal in tone: debt, binding, liability, commitment. The use
of \textit{debitum} is especially interesting, since it can mean guilt as well as debt or obligation.\footnote{\textsuperscript{186}}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{182}} Pp. 157-60.
\footnote{\textsuperscript{183}} CMP 164.368-78: “Cum itaque dicimus homines cum originali peccato procreari et
nasci atque hoc ipsum originale peccatum ex primo parente contrahere, magis hoc ad
poenam peccati, cui velificet poenae obnoxii tenentur, quam ad culpam animi et
contemptum Dei referendum videtur. Qui enim nondum libero uti arbitrio potest nec
ullum adhuc rationis exercitum habet, quasi eum recognoscat auctorem, vel obedientiae
meretur praecptum, nulla est ei transgressio, nulla negligentia imputanda, nec ullam
omnino meritum quo praemio vel poena dignus sit magis quam bestiis ipsis, quando in
aliquo vel nocere vel iuvare videntur.”
\footnote{\textsuperscript{184}} I translate \textit{obnoxii} as “liable” rather than as “subject.” Peter uses the term some ten	imes in the commentary, mostly in the first sense, as the context here clearly demands.
\footnote{\textsuperscript{185}} CMP 171.594-601: “Est ergo originale peccatum cum quo nascimur, ipsum
damnationis debitem quo obligamur, cum obnoxii aeternae poenae efficiamur propter
culpam nostrae originis, id est primorum parentum a quibus nostra cepit origo. In illo
enim, ut supra meminit Apostolus, peccavimus, id est peccati eius causa aeternae
Peter thus talks around original sin as guilt, denying it on the one hand but using similar terms to define it on the other. He also again speaks of the inherited nature of original sin and of the presence of humanity in Adam at the time of his sin. Even though he clearly denies that this disobedience transmitted *culpa*, in these two passages he affirms the significance of Adam's disobedience.

It is not so elsewhere, where Peter, unlike Augustine, seems to make Adam's sin of little consequence. We have already seen that he considers it morally less serious than the murder of Christ. At 5:16, he says that Christ's actions did far more good than Adam's "great offence" did harm,\(^{187}\) and in the question at 5:19 he calls the sin of Adam and Eve a "perhaps ordinary transgression."\(^{188}\) Still, Peter for the most part asserts its ongoing effect of transmitting sin and punishment to humanity. Adam incurred guilt through the act of his own free choice, and passed down the punishment to his descendants.

As one reads Peter's statements on original sin in his Romans commentary, one cannot help but think that he is trying to have it both ways: that he is trying to deny the portions of the traditional doctrine that conflict with his views of what sin really is, while retaining the portions that do not, in fact, affirming them as strongly as William does, arguing for punishment even of unbaptized children and justifying this not with logic but with the faith position that God only does what is best. In spite of the careful dialectic of the question at 5:19 which we have described above, this leads Peter into the illogic of affirming the punishment of original sin without the guilt. How, one might ask, could someone be punished for something of which one is not guilty? This

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damnationi ita deputamus, ut, nisi divinorum sacramentorum nobis remedia subveniant, aeternaliter damnumur.”

\(^{186}\) Niermeyer, *Lexicon*, "debitum.”

question did not occur to Peter or any of his contemporaries, but it begs to be asked. From our perspective, Peter's theory is both illogical and immoral, in both cases far moreso than the theory he attempted to replace.

4. William of St. Thierry

William's views on original sin have been little studied, probably because they are so orthodox and uncontroversial. They are almost completely Augustinian, with some influence of Origen. In fact, William borrows significant portions of his discussion of the doctrine directly from Augustine, and even when he does not quote him, his statements on original sin are strongly Augustinian in tone and content.

He discusses original sin primarily in his comments on chapters five and seven. In the first of these two chapters, beginning at 5:12, he draws heavily from Augustine's theology of original sin, using either his basic ideas or his very words. In 5:12-13, he quotes Augustine little, but uses his concepts of concupiscence, inherited corruption, and the tendency to sin. His comments on 5:14-21, dealing with the inherited nature of original sin, its ability in and of itself to condemn, its function as punishment, and its

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188 "... prima et fortasse modica priorum parentum transgressione", CMP 170.562-63.
189 Gross and Peppermüller ask similar questions, though they do not directly address this one. The former finds Peter's theory simpler and more lucid than Augustine's, though he notes that it has its contradictions, namely that of a God who willingly condemns unbaptized children (Gross, "Umdeutung," 32). The latter argues that Peter did not successfully integrate his teaching on the sacraments into his new conception of soteriology via his teaching on original sin. Salvation is an individual affair for Peter, while original sin involves a "collective punishment," which no one can control, and so a person must look to Christ as an objective intercessor through his sacrifice. Peppermüller also argues that the collective punishment theory is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of original sin, because he must defend God against the charge of injustice for condemning children who have no guilt of their own. Individual salvation clashes with collective punishment, and if Peter had been able to pursue his soteriology farther, he would have had to reject original sin as inherited punishment (Ausb burger, 113-14, 119-20).
190 See CMW 66.217-71.403, CF 98-104. He does quote Trin. XIII.16.21, CCSL 50A,
grasp even of children, who are born with both the guilt and the penalty, are taken verbatim from two of Augustine’s works. His statements on original sin in chapter seven are concerned with concupiscence, and while he does not quote Augustine, he draws from his theology, speaking of how even though the guilt of original sin is forgiven in baptism, the weakness of concupiscence remains. That very same sin continues to be transmitted from generation to generation, and is the basis of all human troubles. Elsewhere, William, still occasionally quoting Augustine, asserts the guilt and death attending newborns. They are, of course, born with the guilt of original sin, and those who die unbaptized, without grace, are condemned.192

William also derives some of his views from Origen, drawing from him at 5:12 to show that sin entered the world through Adam, and not through the serpent or Eve; and to show that all men were in Adam’s loins when he sinned.193

William’s theology of original sin is entirely derivative, and typical of twelfth-century views on the subject. He does not deviate from the teachings of Augustine, first and foremost, and Origen, secondarily. He saw no need to expand on this topic the way he did on grace and redemption, and as he would on spirituality. It was an important topic to William; it defined humanity’s fundamental situation, man’s starting
point, and his need for grace and redemption. It did not, however, define the goal that William saw waiting for those persons willing to receive grace and discipline themselves over a lifetime: that goal of peace that William devoted himself to expounding in his commentary. This goal was far more important to him than the starting point; grace and redemption than original sin. Consequently, speaking out of his experience as well as the theological tradition, William in his commentary expanded more on the salvific work of God than on original sin. He chose to allow Augustine to define original sin, and to go no farther, though he would go farther than him in speaking of the ascent toward God.

5. Conclusion

William and Peter are not far apart on some points of original sin. They agree it exists; they agree it leads to condemnation, even of infants, if not remedied by baptism; and they agree it is tied to concupiscence in origin, consequences, and transmission. They disagree on one of the most important aspects, however: whether or not original sin is transmitted guilt. We have seen that on the one hand Peter denies that it is, but on the other that he uses other legal terms to define it. To deny the guilt of original sin was, to people like William and Bernard, to deny the reality of sin, not to mention the authority of scripture and the Fathers, and to move toward Pelagianism. For Peter, it was to make each individual responsible for their situation before God, because actual sin and guilt can only be the result of intention and consent.¹⁹⁵ This was to lead to the illogic we have noted, however, as well as to Peter's second condemnation.

¹⁹⁵ See Kemeny's discussion, "Examination," 379-82.
D. Intention and Consent

1. Introduction

Peter Abelard denies the guilt of original sin because he held that guilt is incurred only through actual sin; and actual sin is the result of intention and consent.

William would summarize the problems he saw with Peter’s position as follows:

He says that there is no sin except in the sole consent to evil, and in the contempt of God, which man has in the consent to sin. He says that sin is not a desire, not an evil pleasure, not an evil will, but a nature. “To desire someone else’s wife,” he says, “or to lie with someone else’s wife is not a sin, but is only a sin in this consent and contempt of God.” And just as he says that in the desire and pleasure no sin has been perpetrated, thus he says that the sin of consent is enlarged by no act of sin.\(^{196}\)

That is, William believes, Peter says that the act or the desire is not a sin, but only the giving in to desire, which reflects contempt for God and his commandments. Similar to a passage in Peter’s Romans commentary,\(^{197}\) this summary of Peter’s position does not reflect the more complex reality of his teaching, which contains both careful logical thought and psychological insight. Yet Peter’s position was not in itself controversial or new, as we shall see, but it was the extent to which Peter would take it that would incur his condemnation.

That is not to say that William’s own views on intention and consent are simplistic or show no insight. As we shall see, they indicate William’s own thought and

\(^{196}\) *Disp.* 12, PL 180.282: “Dicit nullum esse peccatum, nisi in solo consensu mali, et in contemptu Dei, quem habet homo in consensu peccati. Etenim nullam concupiscientiam, nullam delectionem malam, nullam voluntatem malam dicit esse peccatum, sed naturam. ‘Concupiscere,’ inquit, ‘alienam uxorem, sive concumbere cum alterius uxore, non est peccatum, sed solus in hoc consensus et contemptus Dei peccatum est.’ Et sicut in concupiscentia et delectione nullum peccatum committi, sic peccatum consensus nullo actu peccati dicit augmentari.”

\(^{197}\) It cannot be identified exactly, but it is quite similar to what Peter says at 7:16; most likely it is a conflation of two passages from the *Ethica*, ed. Luscombe, 24.14-16, and
pastoral experience, as well as his grounding in the Augustinian tradition. They also indicate his belief that acts, as well as the thoughts behind those acts, are sinful.

2. Intention and Consent in the Twelfth Century

The twelfth-century concern with intention and consent has its roots in patristic thought, of course, specifically in the thought of Augustine, who dealt with the topic in his arguments against the Manichees on the one hand and the Pelagians on the other. He discusses consent occasionally, but only rarely uses the term "intention" in the sense of our discussion, as the motivation behind a person's actions. Augustine usually speaks of consent as part of four stages of sin: suggestion, delectation, consent, and act, and modern scholars debate whether he believed the first two, or only consent and action, to be sinful; one may cite passages from his works indicating the sinfulness of entertaining illicit thoughts, and others indicating that consent alone is sinful, and that desires, passions, and emotions are not culpable acts. He considers the topic of 16.6-8. Possibly a student adapted those passages for the Liber sententiarum, which may have been William's source.

198 Modern scholarly discussions of Augustine's thought on sin give little attention to intention, and discussions of the history of intention give little attention to Augustine or to the twelfth century, focusing more on Thomas Aquinas. See James Wetzel, "Sin" in Augustine through the Ages, 800-802; Marianne Djuth, "Will," ibid., 881-85; A. Thouvenin, "Intention," in DTC, 7.2.2267-80; and H. J. Fischer, DS, 7.2.1838-58.

199 For a list of passages in which Augustine describes them, see Robert Blomme, La doctrine du péché dans les écoles théologiques de la première moitié du XIIe siècle (Gembloux, Belgium: Éditions J. Duculot, 1958), 24, n.1. Risto Saarinen also notes that in one passage Augustine holds that culpability already exists in the first two stages, but sin is fully committed only in consent (Weakness of the Will in Medieval Thought: from Augustine to Buridan, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 44 [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 32, n.43. See his larger description of Augustine's thought on consent in this work, 31-43).

200 Marenbon (Philosophy, 260, n.31), William E. Mann ("Inner-Life Ethics," The Augustinian Tradition, edited by Gareth B. Matthews [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999], 149-52), and Simo Knuuttila ("The Emergence of the Logic of Will in Medieval Thought," The Augustinian Tradition, 211) argue that suggestion and pleasure are sinful, citing passages such as De continentia 2.3-5 and De sermone Domini in monte.
compulsion, asking whether a person can be said to have consented to an action he performed unwillingly. On the one hand, evil actions performed reluctantly, under compulsion, do not count as sins;\textsuperscript{201} on the other, unrealized acts are sinful if there was consent to an evil desire, as are good acts done with the wrong motive, for example, to avoid punishment. In the internal conflict between desire and consent, there can be numerous desires involved, but final consent is the result of a single choice of the will. Additionally, Augustine defined sin as contempt of God.\textsuperscript{202} This latter definition is, of course, usually associated with Peter, but seven hundred years before Peter, Augustine himself once defined sin as contempt, linking it especially with pride.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries gave rise to several opinions on the nature of sin, some more Augustinian than others. Anselm of Canterbury, for example, proposed a "defect of justice" theory: a person sins by failing to act in accord with justice; sin is a failure of the will, the result of a lack of justice; the theory "was designed to show that evil is not an existing thing and so not a creation of God's."\textsuperscript{203} As such, this theory certainly shows an Augustinian influence. Anselm was also Augustinian in holding that all sin was voluntary, though, contrary to Augustine, he believed that human beings cannot will unwillingly, that is, by compulsion.\textsuperscript{204} Anselm of Laon also showed Augustine's influence in his "stages" theory of sin, and took a broad Augustinian view of when sin begins. For this Anselm, sin begins at suggestion, when the mind begins to consider sinful actions, and continues in the pleasure that the mind

\begin{itemize}
\item I.12.33, while Saarinen (\textit{Weakness}, 33-37) argues that only consent is a sin, citing passages such as \textit{ex. prop. Rm.} 13-18.
\item Saarinen points out that Augustine believed these acts still involved willing: they are done reluctantly, though still by will; the person consents to reluctant actions. See \textit{Weakness}, 33-37.
\item \textit{nat. et gr.} 29.33, CSEL 60.257.9-11: "Omne, inquit, peccatum, nisi fallor, Dei contemptus est: et omnis Dei contemptus superbia est."
\item Marenbon, \textit{Philosophy}, 253; see Anselm's \textit{De conceptu virginali}, ed. Schmitt, II.142-46.
\end{itemize}
takes in the suggestions, in the consent to carry them out, and in the action itself. This stages theory was popular throughout the first half of the twelfth century, especially from the 1130s to the 1150s, and apparently was the position held by Peter's critics. William criticized Peter for speaking of sin only as consent, and so did the author of the *Capitula Haeresum* (possibly Thomas of Morigny). These persons also took the broader Augustinian concept of sin, extending it from suggestion all the way through the act itself. On the other hand, Anselm, who had taught Peter, is credited with teaching that God judges the magnitude of a sin by the intention and not by the deed. And William of Champeaux, another of Peter's teachers and a member of the school of Laon, taught that only the intention and the will coming from it are evil.

Others gave more or less importance to intention and consent. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, while certainly including consent in his discussions of the process of sin, did not assign it the role that Peter Abelard did. Neither did intention play a significant part for him in determining whether an action was sinful. The

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204 Saarinen, *Weakness*, 50.
205 See Marenbon, *Philosophy*, 253-55, from whom this is summarized; see also Lottin, *Psychologie*, I.11-28, and V.9-142 (Anselm of Laon's writings, also cited by Marenbon); Blomme, *Doctrine*, 1-87; and Saarinen, *Weakness*, 43-51.
209 See, for example, *Sermo LXI in Cantica Canticorum*, where consent is the second in a five-step path to sin, including concupiscence, consent, act, habit, and contempt (6, *SBO* II.117-18), though Bernard does not state at what point sin begins. For Bernard, sin could not happen without consent ("Et peccavit ergo, et non absque consensu propriae voluntatis," *De gratia et libero arbitrio* XII.38, *SBO* III.193), though a person can consent to good as well as evil, to salvation as well as to damnation ("Consentire enim salvari est," ibid., I.2. *SBO* III.167). He defined consent as a "habit of the soul" ("habitus animi," ibid., I.2, *SBO* III.167) and as a "spontaneous inclination of the will" ("nutus est voluntatis spontaneus," ibid., II.3, *SBO* III.167).
author of the *Summa sententiarum*, apparently responding to Peter Abelard, gave a greater role to consent and directly addressed the question of whether intention can determine the sinfulness of an act. Consent, for example, can kill just as surely as the hand or the tongue, though the *Summa*’s author did not explicitly equate consent with sin; not consenting was equated with loving good. The author also considered the origin of consent to evil, and described how reason can be conquered and consent to sin.

Concerning intention, the author argued on the authority of Augustine that sin consists of the act occurring in the work, and of the guilt occurring in the will; evil acts can therefore be considered sin. Hugh of St. Victor, however, took a position very close to that of Peter Abelard: he equated consent with sin, wrote of how the act of iniquity arose from consent, of how vice becomes guilt through consent, of how the act is completed by consent alone, and of how the work is judged by consent alone.

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210 In *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, intention refers primarily to the desire to live a good life (XIV.49, SBO III.201-202). Elsewhere it does refer to the motivation behind a person’s actions, for which they will be held accountable (*De praecepto et dispensatione XI.26, SBO III.272*), or as that which turns reason toward sin (*Sermones de diversis XXXII.3, SBO VI.1.220*).

211 *Summa sententiarum* IV.iv, PL 176.122B: “Homicidium fit istis modis: manu, lingua, consensu... Consensu quoque voluntatis multi homicidia sunt, unde: Qui odit fratrem suum homicidia est.”

212 Ibid, III.vii, PL 176:99B: “Ad quod dicimus quod ipsum non consentire malo non est meritum, sed hoc quod malo non consentiendo dignetur bonum.”

213 III.vi, PL 176.97A.

214 III.viii, PL 176.101D.


216 *De sacramentis Christianae fidei* XIII.i, PL 176.525AC: “Quando autem tentanti vitio consensus adhibetur actus injustitiae est quod peccatum dicitur. Itaque vitium est inimicitas spiritualis corruptionis, peccatum autem ex corruptione oriens per consensum actus iniquitatis. Itaque vitium absque consensu inimicitas est, cui in quantum inimicitias est misericordia debitur, praemium autem et corona in quantum ab actu iniquitatis cohibetur. Cum consensu vero vitium culpa fit, ubi in quantum vitium est malum est, in quantum voluntarium est poena dignum est. Vitium ergo est in corruptione, peccatum
There was thus no clear consensus about the nature of sin at this time, though those holding to the general Augustinian view also held the most power when the differing views came into conflict; this is nowhere more apparent than in the conflict between William and Peter.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter's teaching on consent and intention is well-known and well-studied, precisely because it broke with the stricter contemporary teaching on some points, and because it was one of the bases of the accusations against him. Several scholars have discussed this teaching, and they largely agree on its major points: that Peter defines sin in terms of consent and intention, that is, sin is an interior decision, rather than an exterior act; consequently, actions are morally indifferent. They also generally note Peter's ambiguous vocabulary and equivocal arguments, and agree that his *Ethica* presents this teaching in its final and most comprehensive fashion.\(^\text{217}\)

Though it is only an early statement on the topic, Peter's teaching on consent and intention in his Romans commentary is significant both for its dependence on and its bold independence of contemporary teaching. He borrows from the theories of sin then current, particularly the stages theory described above, though it is hard to know to

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autem in actione. Actus vero peccati solo consensus perficitur, etiamsi foris opus non fuerit, quia quod iniquitatis est per consensus pravum in sola voluntate compleitur, etiam tunc cum ab eo quod vult perficiendo foris invita restringitur. Facit enim quod suum est totum et quod amplius non facit suum non est; nec ab ipsa est quod amplius non facit sed contra ipsam. Ita in solo consensus opus judicatur; cui quidem id quod foris est opus tantum in malitia adjicat quantum ipsum qui intus operatur, motum voluntatis ad malitiam accendit. Sic ergo vitia origo peccatorum sunt, ex quibus nascuntur opera iniquitatis. Quae quidem, sicut dictum est, absque consensus poenam habent, quia corruptio sunt, cum consensus autem culpam, quia voluntaria sunt." See also Blomme, *Doctrine*, 306-314.

\(^{217}\) See Blomme, *Doctrine*, 103-294 (Blomme devotes over half the book to studying the thought of Peter Abelard and his school on this doctrine); Weingart, *Logic*, 50-65;
what extent he was drawing on the general Augustinian theory or on what he learned while studying in Laon. Sin begins, Peter argues, by making carnal suggestions to the mind; if unrestrained by reason, the incitements of carnal pleasure follow. Suggestion and pleasure are followed by consent to the concupiscence and the sin. Two passages from the commentary summarize these stages neatly. At 7:24, Peter asks, "Who will free me...from the body of this death? that is, from [a body] thus inclined and prepared for killing the soul, lest carnal suggestions prevail over me and the spirit yield to the flesh, that is, lest conquered reason succumb and consent to pleasure." Shortly thereafter, at 8:2, he says that "The law of the spirit of life...in Christ Jesus...has freed me from the law of sin and therefore of death, that is, from the commandments or suggestions of carnal concupiscence, lest I obey them by consenting."

Peter concentrates his discussion of consent, which may be either to the law or to sin, in his comments on Romans seven and eight. In most cases he seems quite Augustinian in his language, but in one case he speaks of consent in terms similar to that which his opponents would throw back at him a few years later. At 7:16, "If I do what I do not wish," he notes that a person can consent to the law in his mind and still do what is evil; it is the inner conflict between the law and sin. Peter uses dialectic to

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218 See 6:12, CMP 181.185-86; 7:24, CMP 210.775-78; 7:25, CMP 210.792-94; 8:2, CMP 210.10-211.15; and 8:13, CMP 216.204-217.222.

219 See 7:24 and 7:25, passages cited in the previous note. Peter usually regards these incitement negatively, although he is famous for his statement that no guilt belongs to the pleasure of a sin, in particular that of adultery (7:16, CMP 207.665-76; we will consider this passage more fully below). See also 7:7, CMP 197.329-31; 7:14, CMP 205.599-600; 7:16, CMP 206.632-34; 8:8, CMP 213.99-100; and 12:3, CMP 274.34-37.

220 7:24, passage cited above, and 8:2, passage cited above.

221 In addition to 7:24, 8:2, and 7:16, see 5:19, CMP 163.341-164.353; 7:15, CMP 205.619-23; 7:17, CMP 207.694-208.707; 7:21, CMP 208.726-209.739; and 8:13, CMP 216.200-217.224.

222 CMP 206.635-207.671. On this passage, see Marenbon, *Philosophy*, 259;
determine what a willing act of sin is. First noting the old dictums “Every sin is voluntary” and “No one sins unwillingly,” he distinguishes between an act of sin, and concupiscence. His primary assumption is that sin involves will, an assumption he was to drop in the Eichch. if there is no will in the action, there is no sin. Peter gives the example of one person who kills another accidentally and unknowingly by throwing a stone recklessly. The will lies in the throwing of the stone, not the killing. He then gives a thornier example, that of one person who kills another in self-defense. He does so under compulsion, unwillingly, from the desire to escape death rather than to kill. From this, Peter argues that while every act of sin proceeds from the will, not every killing is voluntary. What was voluntary in the man’s throwing the stone that killed the other man was the throwing, not the killing. Peter then moves to the controversial part of his argument. The man who kills another in self-defense wills to avoid death, but does not will to kill; he sins through compulsion, and is a perfect example of the Apostle’s words. Augustine did not consider this a sin; Peter did.

On the subject of adultery he is less harsh, perhaps not surprisingly. A man who sleeps with another’s wife takes pleasure on the one hand, but incurs a crime and guilt on the other. Intercourse is pleasing; the guilt brings the torment to the

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Peppermüller, Auslegung, 128, n. 696; 136, n. 758; Blomme, Doctrine, 177-79, 185; and Weingart, Logic, 54, n. 1.

223 The first is certainly Augustinian in origin; the second could come either from Augustine or Anselm of Canterbury, depending on the context. See the passages of Saarinen, Weakness, cited above for the discussion of whether a person can sin unwillingly, according to Augustine and Anselm.

224 For Peter, the will (voluntas) is that function or disposition of the soul that judges and chooses prior to an action. God judges these decisions of the will rather than a person’s actions. Free choice (liberum arbitrium) belongs to the will, and Peter defines sin as a deformed will. See 1:18, CMP 66.670-78; 2:6, CMP 78.55-76; 2:9, CMP 80.144-82.191; 2:13, CMP 84.265-84; 2:15, CMP 85.299-302; 3:15, CMP 108.420-21; 3:27, CMP 120.317-21; 4:5, CMP 124.57-58; 4:8, CMP 126.124-41; 5:19, CMP 164.354-57, CMP 165.405-166.436; 7:16, CMP 206.635-60; 7:18, CMP 208.708-21; 9:21, CMP 242.343-62; and 13:9, CMP 290.163-291.175.
conscience.226

Did Peter not consider adultery sinful? William thought he did not.227 Yet Peter did not here say what William paraphrases him as saying in his Disputatio. He says not that the act of adultery is not a sin; while the adultery does lie in the consent, he also speaks of committing fornication, that is, the actual act and crime, the accomplishment of the desire; here, at least, the act is not morally insignificant.228 What is insignificant for determining sin is the pleasure of the intercourse. He distinguishes this pleasure from the guilt that the act of adultery brings to the conscience; one may physically, and legitimately, enjoy the intercourse of adultery while simultaneously suffering the moral and psychological consequences of intercourse with another's wife. This pleasure also seems different from the pleasure that a person takes in a carnal suggestion prior to consenting to sin.

Regarding this discussion of adultery as a work of scriptural exposition, it is apparent that Peter has addressed the Apostle's words concerning doing what we do not will, and not doing what we do will; we do not wish to commit adultery; we do will pleasure. It is on this basis that Peter distinguishes between willing and not willing, between guilt and pleasure, and it is there that a person's interior conflict lies. By using dialectic to analyze the entire act of consent, he clarifies Paul's meaning, though not to

225 See *lib. arb.* I.4.
226 CMP 205.624-207.671, especially 667-71: “Coitu itaque tantum, non adulterio delectamur, quia nihil ad voluptatem adulterii reatus pertinet sed magis ad conscientiae tormentum, et quominus peccaremus atque adulterium vitaremus, eam cum qua fornicamur nequaquam coniugatum esse vellemus” (“Nothing of the guilt belongs to the pleasure of adultery, but more to the torment of conscience, and, that we might not sin and avoid adultery, we in no way wish to be joined to her with whom we commit fornication”).
227 See above, p. 218.
228 Contrast this with the passage of the Ethica cited above as the possible source of William's quotation: “Non est itaque peccatum uxorem alterius concupiscere uel cum ea concumbere sed magis huic concupiscentiae uel actioni consentire” (ed. Luscombe,
the liking of his opponents. Strictly speaking, however, in his emphasis on consent, he does not depart from Augustine, though certainly he pushes Augustine's meaning to its limits, and differs subtly, yet significantly, from his contemporaries. As Marenbon has argued, his contemporaries taught that one could consent to desire, temptation, or appetites; Peter, by contrast, defined consent in terms of readiness to perform an action.²²⁹

In this entire argument, Peter nowhere mentions intention, but given his conviction that intention is what makes a work good or evil, that certainly underlies his discussion. One consents to an act with a particular intention; the intention to have intercourse with someone else's wife and violate the commandment against adultery constitutes contempt of God, and makes adultery sinful.

Peter uses the term *intentio* throughout his commentary, and in several passages in particular we find his distinct emphasis on intention apart from the work itself. In his exposition of 1:16-17, where Paul speaks of the Gospel as the power of God for salvation, Peter criticizes the Old Testament as inadequate for salvation, since it corrected works rather than intention.²³⁰ Shortly after this, Peter considers the righteousness of God that is revealed in the Gospel; he defines righteousness, *iustitia*, as God's just recompense, *iusta remuneratio*, both punishment and reward. God determines this by considering

all the things which happen according to the root of intention ... And this indeed is the weighing of true righteousness, where all the things which happen are examined according to the intention rather than according to the quality of the works. The Jews paid more attention to these works than to the intention ...²³¹

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²²⁹ Marenbon *Philosophy*, 260-61.
²³⁰ 1:16, CMP 64.609-65.615.
²³¹ 1:17, CMP 65.623-43, especially 636-38, and 640-43: “Maxime autem haec in
By equating the Gospel with *iustitia* and then defining *iustitia* as reward, Peter introduces to the exposition of the text his doctrine of intention to show by what means God judges people.

At 2:6, “who renders to each one according to his works,” Peter clarifies what Paul means by works: “that is, according to the nature of the works that consists in the intention rather than in the action.” He says that “with God the will itself is reckoned as a work performed,” and that “he regards a work by the inner disposition of the work.” That is because “the works are indifferent in themselves, that is, neither good nor evil, . . . except according to the root of the intention that is the tree, producing good or evil fruit.”

Here Peter balances his exposition of the catalog of vices of 1:21-32, in which he described many sinful actions, with another proclamation that what is truly important are the intentions. He could not say any more clearly that actions by themselves are morally neutral, apart from any intention. The action and the intention here are completely separate.

Certainly Peter’s exposition of 2:6 is bold; it is a big leap from works to the nature of the works, and a large assumption that that is what Paul really means. Peter would continue to expound the Apostle in this way, however, at 2:15 and 16, where Paul speaks of peoples’ thoughts accusing or defending them, of conscience giving a good testimony, and of God judging the secrets of men. Peter defines this testimony as

Evangelio revelari et distingui arbitror, ubi Dominus cuncta quae fiunt secundum radicem intentionis examinat . . . Et hoc quidem est examen verae iustitiae, ubi cuncta quae fiunt secundum intentionem pensantur magis quam secundum operum qualitatem. Quae quidem opera Iudaei magis quam intentionem attendebant . . .”

232 CMP 78.55-68, particularly the following: “Secundum opera, id est qualitatem operum, quae magis in intentione quam in actione consistit . . . cum apud Deum voluntas ipsa pro operae facti reputetur . . . Opus hoc loco pro affectu operis ponit, ab effectu videlicet ad causam vocabulo translato. Alioquin non ostenderetur aequum esse iudicium Dei, cum opera indifferentia sint in se, scilicet nec bona nec mala, sive remuneratione digna videantur, nisi secundum radicum intentionis, quae est arbor
“good conscience and right intention” making these people “secure in the righteousness of their works . . . It is according to this intention that God considers the works.”

This same conscience “does not stray in the discretion of works, examining them according to the very thoughts, that is, the intentions, of the rational soul; these thoughts, rather than exterior works, shall accuse or defend with God.” At 2:16, Peter would largely repeat these statements: God judges and rewards intentions, which are thoughts, rather than works.

Also significant is Peter’s comment on 14:23, “But everything which is not of faith,” where he considers the intention of those who killed the saints, believing completely that they are doing good, whereas in fact they do wrong. He gives the specific example of those who, acting on conscience, persecuted the saints, believing them to be heretics. Does good intention and ignorance excuse these persecutors from sin? No, since sin can come from ignorance; Christ forgave those who killed him in their ignorance. Thus, intention cannot always be separated from action, and even good intention, the intention to do God’s will, can be sinful. Peter interprets the Scriptures dialectically, showing how they do not always excuse evil acts done with good intention.
Peter obviously takes intention much farther than Augustine or Peter’s contemporaries did or would have allowed. For him it is the basis of sin, and so he felt compelled to analyze it in careful detail and clarify its nuances. In so doing, he rejects the idea that acts are sinful in themselves on the one hand, while on the other apparently continuing to support that idea in other passages. Again, Peter seems inconsistent when analyzed closely; here, one must accept, as modern scholars have argued, that the doctrine of sin in the Romans commentary is a transitional one, not complete, and consequently contains incompatible statements.

On consent, Peter is certainly Augustinian, in the narrow sense, though his language at 7:16, where his Augustinianism is most evident, could easily give false impressions of teaching moral laxity. It is another case of Peter’s occasional carelessness when making a strong point.

4. William of St. Thierry

In his own Romans commentary, William discusses sin, consent, and intent in terms that are Augustinian, but which show the clear influence of Anselm of Laon. Like Augustine and Anselm, William would speak, albeit not systematically, of the various stages of sin, and in his emphasis on suggestion and pleasure demonstrates his

seductores animarum, et ideo dignos morte, quomodo contra conscientiam suam eis parcere debebant? Quippe si parcerent, contra conscientiam suam agerent, et ita peccarent. Sed rursus cum interficiunt innocentes, immo electos Dei, quod iniquum est, dicemus eos non peccare aut eos in hoc bonam intentionem habere quae maxime errat, ideoque bona aestimatur potius esse quam sit? Quomodo etiam ignorantia excusat eos a peccato, cum constet nonnulla etiam peccata ignorantiae dici? Alioquin quomodo psalmista diceret ad Deum: Effunde iram tuam in gentes, quae te non noverunt? et Veritas de persecutoribus suis: Pater, ignoscet eis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt? Ubi enim culpa non praecessit, quid est opus ignoscere? Si enim ignorantia vel etiam fidei error excusat penitus a culpa, unde Judaei aut gentiles vel quilibet infideles de infidelitate sua damnandi sunt, cum unusquisque fidem suam rectam esse putet? Quid enim sponte in ea persistat fide quam erroneam credat, ut sibi partem eligat deteriorem?”
adherence to the stricter Augustinianism of Anselm. He urges his readers to watch for the first suggestion of the serpent, that is, the devil, and at that point to crush him under their feet and gain victory over concupiscence, which William regards as the basis of all sin. He also mentions pleasure as a preliminary to consent, a function of the will. "Sin is present in you when you feel pleasure; it reigns when you consent. Not to feel pleasure sometimes is altogether impossible, but never to consent is not impossible, with the help of grace." At 7:23, William mentions other preliminaries of sin, along with suggestion: titillation and cajoling, obviously synonymous with pleasure. This is all, of course, concupiscence. Consent to sin is consent to the temptations and stirrings of desire, and these never end in this life.

What distinguishes William's views on consent from Peter's, besides their opinions of what one consents to, are his psychological insights into a person's inner conflict between consenting to good or to evil. These insights build on the

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238 Blomme, Doctrine, 209-212; Peppermüller, Auslegung, 141-44; and Marenbon, Philosophy, 258-64.
240 For William, the will, voluntas, is the function of the mind that desires and consents, either to good or to evil. By itself, the will is free only to choose evil and to add sins to original sin; it cannot will good without the help of grace. It is the seat of intention, and that which God examines and judges. See 1:17, CMW 17.407-10, CF 32; 1:20-21, CMW 23.616-18, 636-40, CF 33; 2:1, CMW 27.580, CF 44; 2:5, CMW 29.856-30.859, CF 47; 3:19-20, CMW 44.440-41, CF 68; 3:21-22, CMW 45.472-74, CF 69; 6:18, CMW 87.986-87; CF 123; 6:21-22, CMW 89.1044-47, CF 125; 7:17-18, CMW 101.432-37, CF 144; 7:20, CMW 102.459-62, CF 144-45; and 8:29-33, CMW 127.616-17, CF 177.
241 6:12, CMW 84.877-80: "Inest peccatum cum delectaris; regnat cum consentis. Non delectari aliquando, omnino impossibile est. Numquam vero consentire, adiuuante gratia imposibile non est." CF 119. See also 3:24-25, CMW 46.493-95, CF 70.
242 CMW 103.511-15: "Nam mens repugnat et condelectatur legi Dei, nec consentit peccato titillanti, sugerentii, blandientii, quoniam habet alias interiur delectionationes suas, delectionationibus carnis nulla ex parte conferendas." CF 146.

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Augustinian foundation of interior analysis and surpass the moralizing of Anselm and his school. William shares these insights most fully in his comments on chapters seven and eight, where St. Paul discusses his internal battle against sin and his desire to obey God's law. From 7:15 to 8:3, William follows Paul's description of consent and will closely, paralleling the Apostle's experience with his own and analyzing the process of inclination, delight, and willing in careful detail. He analyzes Paul's experience of struggle against indwelling sin to show why one should not despair; he shows how grace aids the will to resist consenting to sin; he describes the standoff between concupiscence and the will; he examines sin's production of illicit desires and the will's options of obeying and cooperating with them or resisting them, and notes human weakness and inclinations toward these desires; he compares love of justice and the fear of punishment as motives for acting; he describes the mind's delight in the law of God and other inner delights and its refusal to consent to sin's suggestions; and he encourages his readers to persist in their struggle by resisting consent to sin with the mind. Seen as part of William's description of the third stage of ascent toward God, that is, of man under grace but not yet in perfect peace, this analysis of consent shows the reader both what to expect and how to come through the struggle victoriously. It is a temporary stage, William hopes, and he strives to show how his reader, with the help of grace, can consent to what is good.

William's discussions of intention are brief but insightful. They occur primarily

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244 7:15, CMW 99.373-100.395.
245 7:18, CMW 100.411-101.419, CF 143.
246 7:18, CMW 101.432-37, CF 144.
247 7:19-20, CMW 102.459-76, CF 144-45.
249 7:22-23, CMW 103.499-517, CF 146.
in his expositions of chapters two and fourteen, apart from the discussions of consent, and sound quite similar to Peter’s discussions. At 2:2, “For we know that the judgment of God is true,” William discusses intention in terms of motive (animus):

Sometimes things that look bad are done with a good motive, and things that look good are done with a bad motive; but other acts are done with the agreement of the doer’s mind [animus], whether they appear to be done for good or evil. True judgment belongs to God alone, who knows how to judge the heart.251

Shortly thereafter, at 2:14-16, “with their thoughts accusing, or even defending them on the day when according to my gospel God shall judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ,” William speaks of thoughts as God’s basis for judging a person’s works, a concept very similar to that of Peter Abelard:

The Apostle speaks of our thoughts, because by thoughts works are judged and a person is judged innocent or guilty. Also, he speaks of thoughts, not of those which were, but of those which exist now, because even though all our thoughts and acts may perish from the memory, they do not perish from the conscience. All of them will be brought before God the Judge. That will be a fearful judgment where nothing will be introduced from outside, but everything will be produced from the conscience: the accuser, the witness, the judge, and the case.252

Here, William almost equates intention with thoughts, something Peter did explicitly in his comment on this same passage. Thoughts judge works, and can be judged by themselves, as equivalent to works. William thus distinguishes between thoughts/intentions and works, similarly to Peter, though he by no means proclaims that works are thus morally indifferent, as Peter does. He recognizes that a work may

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252 CMW 34.72-35.79: “Cogitationum autem dixit, quia ex cogitatione opera diiudicantur, et innocens quis vel reus diiudicatur. Cognitionum vero dixit, non earum qui tunc erunt, sed quae modo sunt, quia et facta nostra omnia et cogitata, licet pereant a memoria, non pereant a conscientia; quae coram iudice Deo omnia proferentur in
not always reflect the true motive of the person performing it, and that therefore God must judge the thought; but that in no way empties a work of ethical value.

At 14:4, “Who are you to judge another man’s servant?” William describes the danger of judging about “hidden matters.” “Everyone who judges in matters of this sort should be aware of two things: a hidden cause, and ignorance of how the one judged might be in the future, even when at the time it seems right to judge him.”

At 14:5, continuing the theme of 14:4, he considers God's knowledge of these intentions and motives:

... There is another, God, who judges every day, who knows about him who sins, what the disposition of his will was before the occurrence of the sin, what he intended by the sin, and what change he might undergo after the sin. To the one who has this knowledge of the sinner and the sin must be left the judgment of the sinner. We must realize that a quick judgment is to be feared in matters about which we know nothing; but concerning those acts in which God is clearly offended, it is dangerous to defer judgment.

Clearly in these passages William is speaking out of his own pastoral and abbatial experience. His comments reflect the deep insight and compassion of an abbot and spiritual father who has had to deal with the faults both of himself and his monks, judging them according to divine severity and mercy, and according to human frailty; according to received teaching and human need.

Finally, at 14:10, “But why do you judge your brother, or why do you despise your brother?” William once more speaks of God’s judgment. Most of this passage

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254 CM 180.565-74: “Alius est, Deus scilicet, qui iudicat omnem diem, qui scit de eo qui peccat, ante peccati casum, quals fuerit studii et voluntatis, in peccato cuius intentionis; post peccatum cuius futurus sit conversionis. Cui autem de peccato peccantis haec est scientia, ipsi de peccante iudicandi relinquenda est sententia. Sciemendum tamen quia de

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comes from Bede’s commentary on Luke, but in the midst of the quotation from Bede, William interjects a comment of his own. Bede had noted that those deeds “whose motives are unclear should be interpreted in the more favorable light,” and soon thereafter William adds: “For although they were men, they wished to pass judgment on the secrets of the heart, which God alone judges, on those things which can be done with a simple good conscience, although they can also be done with a bad conscience.”

In all these passages intention and motive are important to William in judging a person’s actions, but they do not make an action any less a sin, if it is sinful. What is mitigated is the seriousness of God’s judgment, and with it, the seriousness of human judgment. Some actions are clearly sin, clearly offensive to God, and there is no lessening that, whatever the motives or intentions; but others may or may not be, depending on those motives or intentions.

Like both Augustine and Peter, William refers to “the contempt of God,” at 1:20-21 and 5:7-11. In neither place does he explicitly equate contempt with sin or define it as such, although it is clear that he would have little problem with this.

William's doctrine of consent and intention, though psychologically profound, broke no new ground and was not considered controversial, as Peter Abelard's was. Its basic content is thoroughly Augustinian and Anselmian, typical of twelfth-century theology, and allows little leeway for considering an action other than sinful simply on the basis of the actor's intention. William’s psychology does not go so far as to justify

\[\text{eis, quae uniuscuiusque subdita debent esse arbitrio, et de eis quae nesciuntur, timendum est praeceptare iudicium. In illis vero actibus, in quibus manifeste Deus offenditur, periculosum est iudicium differre \ldots} \]  
\[\text{CF 248.}\]

\[\text{255 CMW 181.619-23: “De talibus enim rebus quae possunt et bono animo et simplici fieri, quamvis possint etiam non bono, volebant illi, cum homines essent, in occulta cordis ferre sententiam, de quibus solus Deus iudicat.” CF 249. The passage of Bede}\]
otherwise sinful actions on the basis of ultimate goals or motives. Considering intention, for William, simply mitigates human judgment as well as divine; it is mercy and charity tempering judgment. The divine law remains, and no breach can go unjudged; the question is the extent to which judgment will go based on the motive of the lawbreaker.

5. Conclusion

In many ways, Peter and William sound much alike in their discussions of consent and, especially, intention. Both men are deeply concerned with moral theology, either to present a logically coherent and ethical view of God and human conduct, as Peter tries to do, or to describe the struggle necessary to reach the ultimate goal of peace, as William tries to do. They can both see beyond mere actions, analyze how a person chooses good or evil before performing an action, and determine at what point a person sins. Peter is narrower than William in his analysis, however, restricting sin to consent to perform an action and usually denying moral significance to the action itself. William ascribes a wider purview to sin, seeing it as active throughout the process of suggestion to action, and regarding both intentions and actions as significant. He saw this process as a unity, and in his Disputatio would criticize Peter for shattering that unity and focussing too narrowly on consent, for disregarding the importance of not entertaining suggestions of illicit pleasures prior to consent and denying the moral bond between intention and action. William believed that if one entertained these suggestions, not acting on them was all the more difficult, and that one could not ultimately separate intention from action, even if one might not perform the action intended. His Disputatio critique would make very clear the Anselmian theology he had

comes from Expositio in Lucam 2.6, PL 92.408CD
adopted, with its broader Augustinian view of sin.

E. The Trinity

1. Introduction

One of the central doctrines of the Christian faith and a major point in the accusations against Peter in both 1121 and 1140, the Trinity looms large in the works of both Peter and William, their Romans commentaries included. Although St. Paul had no concept of the Trinity as later Christian writers would understand it, these writers, particularly Augustine and his medieval followers, would find in his epistle to the Romans ample opportunity to describe and expound on this doctrine. Typically several passages of the epistle gave rise to Trinitarian exposition in patristic and medieval commentaries on Romans: 1:4, referring to Christ’s predestination as Son of God according to the spirit of sanctification; 1:19-20, referring to what humanity could naturally know about God, his “invisible things,” his eternal power and his divinity; 11:33-36, referring to the incomprehensible depth of God’s wisdom, knowledge, and judgments; and 16:27, referring to the wisdom of God and Jesus Christ. Other passages as well, particularly from chapters five, six, and eight, dealing with the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, could also inspire such interpretation.

William follows this pattern closely in his Romans commentary, but Peter less so. William talks about the differences between the different persons of the Trinity at

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257 The Trinity is the major subject of Peter’s various Theologies, the works that caused the most concern critics such as Bernard and William. William would give full attention to the Trinity as a result of the Abelardian controversies, in works such as the Aenigma fidei, though the Trinity is by no means absent from his earlier works.
258 See, for example, the commentaries of Atto of Vercelli (PL 134, 131D; 134A, C; 170D; 171A; 201A; 209B; 213B; 219C; 248A; 285B; 286D; and 288B), and Haymo of Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
1:4 and 1:20, and engages in a lengthy discussion of the Trinity as a whole at 11:33-36, with a final, briefer discussion at 16:27 and occasional references in his comments on chapters five and eight. Peter discusses the persons of the Trinity and their distinctions at 1:4 and 1:20, especially in the latter passage, but avoids any discussion of them at 11:33-36 and 16:27. He does make continual reference to the different persons throughout his exposition of chapter eight, however.

In his *Disputation* against Peter Abelard, William devoted two long chapters to outlining and refuting the errors concerning the Trinity he had found in Peter’s works, specifically the *Introduction to Theology*. Specifically, William accused Peter of both Sabellianism and Arianism, because he first diminished the persons of the Trinity by making them less than subsisting persons and then made them unequal to each other. By assigning particular characteristics to each person—power, wisdom, and goodness—rather than to all the persons, Peter divided the Trinity’s unity, and made the names of the Trinity’s persons simply references to these qualities. By comparing the relationship of the Father and the Son to the impression made by a matrix, Peter made the Son unequal to the Father. Besides criticizing Peter, William also described the proper way to understand the persons and their qualities.

An examination of their discussions of the Trinity as they arise in their Romans commentaries will help us understand the validity, or perhaps the lack thereof, of William’s criticisms.

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259 Chapters 2 and 3, PL 180.250-257; there he quotes from the *Introductio ad theologiam*, PL 178.989BD and 1069A-1070B.
2. Trinitarian Theology in the Twelfth Century

Peter and William, like the rest of the theologians of their time and place, inherited a theology of the Trinity dominated by the thought of Augustine. To summarize his teaching briefly, Augustine proclaimed the oneness of God and the individuality and equality of the three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each Person, though distinct in role, is fully God. They share the same nature and characteristics, e.g. power, wisdom, or love; no Person can be categorized by any one attribute. Though these Persons are equal, they have differing relations with each other. The Father is Father in relationship to the Son, whom he generates. The Son is Son in relationship to the Father; he is the Son because he is generated or begotten. The Holy Spirit is the mutual love between the Father and the Son, the gift of each one to the other; in turn they send forth the Holy Spirit as their gift to creation. Human beings are created in the image of this Trinity; one may find vestiges of the Trinity in the human memory, intellect, and will.

Though Augustine's teaching was authoritative in the West throughout the Middle Ages, the complexity of Trinitarian language led to occasional disputes up to and including the twelfth century. Prior to the twelfth century, Latin theologians argued with each other over adoptionism and trinitas, and with Greek theologians over filioque. With the revival of dialectic in the eleventh century, some scholars took new and sometimes controversial approaches to explaining the Trinity. Anselm of

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260 The following is adapted from Kelly, Doctrine, 271-79; Rowan Williams, "De Trinitate," Augustine through the Ages, 845-51; and G. Bardy, "Trinité," DTC 15.2, 1681-92. See also William J. Hill, The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 53-62.

261 For a general survey of Trinitarian theology from the sixth through twelfth centuries, see A. Michel, "Trinité: La théologie latine du VIe au XXe siècle," DTC 15.2, 1702-1719.

262 See Pelikan, Growth, 52-66.
Canterbury used both traditional Augustinian concepts and dialectic to support filioque and combat the nominalism of Roscelin. Roscelin used dialectic to deny that there was a divinity uniting the three Persons, thereby making them three separate deities, for which view he was condemned in 1092. Peter Abelard likewise opposed Roscelin's views, taking a stand between nominalism and the realism which asserted the reality of universals such as divinity. We shall examine his views in more detail, but to summarize them briefly, they gave the appearance of asserting the oneness of God and denying the Persons of the Godhead, that is, they went to the opposite extreme from Roscelin's position. After Peter, Gilbert of Poitiers used dialectic to establish a strong realist position; he maintained divinity as a separate reality even beyond the Persons. Neither the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit could claim the whole of divinity; they are therefore separate deities, much as Roscelin had proclaimed by his nominalism. Gilbert was tried in 1147 and 1148, but escaped condemnation both times. Early attempts at using dialectic to describe the Trinity thus frequently caused trouble for the scholars using it.

Other scholars of the early twelfth century took a mystical approach, emphasizing the shared experience of the love of the Persons of the Trinity, while others maintained traditional Augustinian doctrinal positions. There were thus multiple, often conflicting, currents of Trinitarian thought at the time that Peter and William expressed their views, and their conflict was one of several happening in the

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264 Michel, "Trinité," 1709-1711.
265 Michel, "Trinité," 1713; Bell, *Mansions*, 140-41.
267 Michel divides Trinitarian theologians of this time into three groups: traditionalists, such as Anselm of Canterbury, Anselm of Laon, William of St. Thierry, and Rupert of Deutz; rationalists, such as the three scholars described above; and mystics, such as the Victorines, especially Richard of St. Victor. On Richard's views see G. Fritz, "Richard
early twelfth century. One conflict led to another, and those accusing sometimes found themselves in turn accused of propagating error.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter's doctrine of the Trinity has been much-studied because of its controversial nature, though few scholars have paid much attention to what he teaches in his Romans commentary, including those who have concentrated on this work. This is because his discussion of this doctrine in the commentary is occasional at best, it is never as extensive as it is in his various *Theologies*, and in many ways simply summarizes the discussions of those works, as Peter himself admits. We will give full attention to it here, however, to see how Peter's exegesis leads to his views of the Trinity and to compare his views with William's.

Peter explicitly mentions the Trinity only three times in the commentary, at 1:19, 1:20, and 8:11. Since these are the more controversial passages, we will return to them in more detail after discussing the more clearly orthodox references to the Persons of the Trinity and their relations with each other; as with Peter's doctrine of redemption, the more orthodox passages will provide the necessary context for understanding the controversial ones. He gives much attention to the relations of the Father and the Son,
but less so to the Holy Spirit's relations to them.

Peter addresses these relations of the Father and the Son in a number of passages, and in them he adheres closely to Augustinian orthodoxy, though he does not quote Augustine. In three passages, 1:3, 1:4, and 8:32, he is careful to note that Christ was Son of the Father in substance, and that he was not adopted. In the first of these passages, Peter interjects this immediately after Paul's words, "Concerning his Son," and then goes on to note that according to his divine nature, Christ was begotten only to God the Father. Like most medieval commentators, Peter discusses Christ's paternity at 1:4; Christ is Son of the Father only and not of the Holy Spirit, by whom he was conceived. In the subsequent discussion and question, Peter allows that Christ may be called Son of God in the human sense, that is, in the sense of being subject to the Father through filial fear, like all the other faithful. He reiterates that Christ does not have many fathers, namely the Father and the Holy Spirit, because of the diversity of persons in the Godhead; there is, he asserts, no diversity of things or difference of number therein. By contrast, Peter does not allow the human nature received by the Word to be considered the "adoptive Son of God." Rather, that humanity was Son of God through grace. At 8:32, commenting on Paul's words, "He did not even spare his own Son," Peter again interjects the comment that the Son was consubstantial and not adopted; and if God did not spare his own Son, neither did he spare his adoptive sons, the prophets.

Elsewhere, Peter speaks of Christ as the image of God and the express likeness of the Father, "equal to him in all good things according to divinity," and quotes

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was no heretic, and that he was misunderstood by both William and Bernard.

269 1:20, CM 70.816-71.817.
270 CMP 55.294-97.
Christ's words at John 14:9, "He who sees me also sees the Father." Christ continues at the Father's right hand in eternal blessedness according to his renewed humanity, where he intercedes for humanity to the Father. It is through the Son that the Father judges; and it is the Son who sends the Holy Spirit.

We have already seen Peter equate the Holy Spirit with grace several times. Commenting on 1:7, "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," Peter says that he is the gift of God, the grace of the Father and the Son, from both of whom he proceeds. Similarly, at 8:27, "He intercedes for the saints according to God's will," Peter says that the Holy Spirit causes the saints to pray according to what he receives from God, because he is from God and proceeds from him, and is ordered in God's very disposition. He also speaks of the Holy Spirit as the love and bond between Christ the head and his members, and of the Holy Spirit's power as "the love of God in us." Peter does consider the Holy Spirit in relation to the other Persons, but not in as much detail as the relation of the Father and the Son, or in as much detail as William describes these relations. Nevertheless, what Peter has thus far said about the three Persons of the Trinity has been quite orthodox and beyond reproach.

We turn now to the more controversial passages. First, at 1:19, "For what is known about God," he argues that what could be known about God and the nature of

272 CMP 225.519-226.527.
274 8:34, CMP 226.545-51.
275 2:16, CMP 86.355-87.357.
277 See above, pp. 179-80.
278 CMP 60.463-61.467.
279 CMP 223.431-37.
divinity was made known to Gentile philosophers through natural reason. Thus, Peter says, one can find “many clear testimonies” to the Trinity in the books of the philosophers, which the holy fathers later used to defend the faith. He does not cite them in this passage, but refers his reader to a list of them in his *Theologies.*  

This would not be a major focus of the criticism levelled against Peter, but it would raise eyebrows among those who asserted the primacy of the revelation given to the Old Testament prophets over the natural knowledge of God obtained by pagan philosophers; Peter seemed almost to be making them equal.

Much more significant is the comment that immediately follows at 1:20. There Peter makes his famous distinction of the Persons of the Trinity according to the attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness, qualities which Peter believes were evident in “the visible works of God,” and therefore were the basis of his belief that knowledge of the Trinity was available to the pagans. Peter discusses this distinction twice in this passage. The first time, Peter says that

> the entire distinction of the Trinity consists in these three things. For the name “God the Father” seems to me to express what divine power expresses, begetting the divine wisdom that is the Son; and God the Son in the same way was born the divine wisdom from God, and God the Holy Spirit as the love or benevolence of God proceeding from God the Father and the Son.

The second time, Paul's words, “His eternal power and divinity,” as well as “Christ the power of God and wisdom of God,” give Peter a scriptural basis for this assertion of

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281 15:13, CMP 318.206-209.
282 See Peter’s *Introductio ad theologiam,* PL 178.1004D-1038D for a lengthy discussion of the philosophers and their natural knowledge of God and the Trinity.
284 CMP 68.728-34: “In quibus quidem tribus totam Trinitatis distinctionem consistere credo. Id quippe Deus Pater sonare mihi uidetur quod sonat divina potentia, diuinam generans sapientiam, id est Filium; et Deus quidem Filius tantumdem quantum divinam sapientiam ex Deo Patre genita, et Deus Spiritus Sanctus quantum amor Dei siue benignitas ex Deo Patre procedens et Filio.” I use here Peppermüller’s correction of
pagan knowledge of the Trinity. He equates power with wisdom, and says that divinity is especially suited to express divine power. That power, along with wisdom and goodness, is clear in the structure of creation made from nothing, in its skillful and rational governance, and in its moderation, things noted both by Plato and Cicero.285

Peter then offers an alternative interpretation of the words, "for his invisible things were understood from the creation of the world by the things that were made." Paul, he says, was able to describe both the unity of God and the Trinity of persons by means of likenesses. Here Peter presents his analogy of the bronze seal, in a form much condensed from that found in his *Introductio ad theologiam*, to which he refers.286 Unlike the use of the analogy in the *Introductio*, where it is irrelevant to Peter’s argument,287 in the Romans commentary the analogy serves to illustrate Paul’s words that visible, created things give an understanding of the invisible Trinity; it is a form of exposition, by which Peter explains the procession of Persons.

To summarize this analogy: Peter postulates a matrix or seal of bronze, in which an image is made. The bronze and the image are in essence the same thing without number, but diverse in qualities; the bronze has its characteristics, and the image has its. Additionally, the bronze cannot be said to come from the image, but the image from the bronze. Likewise in the Trinity there is identical substance among the three Persons, but diversity of qualities; each Person has his own characteristic. Further, the Son is from the Father, just as the image is from the bronze, and the Holy Spirit is from

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285 CMP 68.717-70.789.
286 PL 178.1069A-D.
287 Murray, *Abelard*, 104-105, has argued that the analogy as found in the *Introductio* "is neither relevant to Abelard’s argument, nor is it consistent with his main position, nor are the various uses of the analogy consistent with each other." Additionally, it illustrates a duality more than a Trinity, because the Holy Spirit is left out. That is, Peter

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the other two. Obviously Peter leaves much out of this version of the analogy. He does not mention the act of sealing, which corresponds to the Holy Spirit, or the image in the wax, as is found in the *Theologia Christiana*. Still, there is enough here for a critic of Peter to accuse him of Arianism, as William did: the concept of the image being formed in the bronze, and having a period of time when it did not exist, could lead a critic to such an objection, even though Peter describes the analogy simply as a “likeness,” not an exact explanation, and uses it primarily to demonstrate the procession of persons and only secondarily to describe the persons as they are in themselves and in relation to each other.

Peter would not use this image of the seal again in the Romans commentary, but he does refer to the divine persons as power, wisdom, and goodness three more times: at 4:23-24, where Paul says God imputes righteousness to those who believe in the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, leading Peter to stress the Father’s power; he says that the Apostle “especially assigns [power] to God the Father,” and teaches that “divine power most particularly belongs to the person of the Father, just as the divine wisdom belongs to the Son and the goodness of divine grace to the Holy Spirit;” at 8:3, “God sent his Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” Peter immediately thinks of the Father and the majesty of his divine power, and interprets the sending of the Son as the Father causing “wisdom, co-eternal with himself, to be humiliated to the point of the assumption of passible and mortal humanity;” and at 8:11, where Paul speaks of could have made his point just as well without it.

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288 CMP 70.790-816.
289 PL 178.1248, 1278.
290 CMP 152.983-88: “Nota autem quod dum ait Apostolus Deum Patrem suscitasse Christum, et quod potentiae est Deo Patri specialiter assignat, diuinam potentiam ad personam Patris maxime pertinere insinuat, sicut diuinam sapientiam ad Filium et diuinae gratiae bonitatem ad Spiritum Sanctum.”
how the Spirit of the Father who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies, Peter again ascribes power to the Father, stating that this name especially designates, or expresses, or symbolizes divine power.292

Certainly one may understand from these passages how Peter could be accused of Arianism and Sabellianism. His language gives the strong impression that there was a time when the Son was not, that the Son is less than the Father, and that the Persons can be characterized by certain attributes. William criticized Peter for using the names of the Trinity simply as representations of these attributes, rather than as the actual names of the Persons.293 If we consider Peter's statements at 1:20 and 8:11 by themselves, this criticism appears to have some validity. One must ask, however, whether Peter understood “Father” as only designating power, in the Sabellian sense which William accused Peter of maintaining, or whether Peter also understood the names as pointing to actual persons with genuine relations with each other. Looking at all Peter's references to the Persons of the Trinity in the Romans commentary, one must argue the latter. This is another example of Peter's paradoxes and contradictions, of his inability to tie together his loose ends, and of his carelessness with language.

It is also true that Peter's language goes beyond that of Augustine. Quite possibly he believed that Augustine's emphasis on the relations of the Persons of the Trinity strained the development of the characteristics of each Person, and that it was necessary to develop those characteristics further through the use of dialectic.294

291 CMP 211.28-31: “Nam Deus Pater, id est diuinae potentiae maiestas, misit Filium suum in similitudinem carnis peccati, hoc est coae ternam sibi sapientiam fecit humiliari usque ad assumptionem passibilis et mortalis hominis . . .” Peter does not mention the Holy Spirit's goodness.
292 CMP 215.163-66: “Si spiritus eius, hoc est Patris, quo uidelicet Patre diuina specialiter designatur potentia; eius, inquam, qui per propriam potentiam suscitauit iam caput nostrum a mortis . . .”
293 Disp. 2, PL 180.250B, also cited by Anderson, Enigma, 81, n. 208.
Additionally, his emphasis on power, wisdom, and goodness reflects his belief in an ethical, perfect God. He pushed beyond traditional concepts in order to give each Person his full due and to present the most morally consistent picture of God, but in so doing gave the strong impression of heresy.

Finally, Peter was not the only person of his time who ascribed these attributes to the particular Persons of the Trinity, and William was aware of this. He likely saw Peter's ascription as particularly offensive when combined with what he regarded as his Arian statements.

4. William of St. Thierry

William's Trinitarian thought has been the subject of numerous studies and has been referred to in many investigations of other aspects of William's thought. Most

\[\text{294 As Schmidt argues, "Trinitätslehre,"} 181-83.\]
\[\text{295 Marenbon,} \textit{Philosophy}, 54-61, 324.\]
\[\text{296 Ascription of power, wisdom, and goodness to the Trinity in general was quite common among twelfth-century writers, as was the ascription of these attributes to the specific Persons of the Trinity. The latter tendency seems to have been common among the Victorines; both Hugh and Richard of St. Victor did it, and the latter even wrote a treatise to Bernard concerning it. See, for example, Hugh's} \textit{De sacramentis christianae fidei liii.27, PL 176.227D; Didascalicon VII.26-27, PL 196.836A-838D; the} \textit{Summa sententiarum I.10, PL 176.56D; and Richard's} \textit{De statu interioris hominis II.3, PL 196.1148BC; De tribus appropriatis personis in trinitate, ad divum Bernardem abbatem Claraevallensem, PL 196.991-994; and De trinitate libri sex, VI.15, PL 196.979C-980B. Additionally, Cistercians such as Adam the Scot could also make this ascription:} \textit{Sermon 28.xi, PL 198.264CD;} and Bernard's student Peter Lombard would do so in his own Romans commentary, PL 191.1329A. Modern scholars generally acknowledge that Peter Abelard drew his inspiration for these attributes from Augustine's} \textit{De trinitate, specifically VII.2-3. See Sikes,} \textit{Abailard, 156-57;} Raymond-M. Martin, "Pro Petro Abaelardo: Un plaidoyer de Robert de Melun contre S. Bernard," \textit{Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques,} 12 (1923): 308-333; Schmidt, "Trinitätslehre," 181-82; Luscombe, \textit{School, 116;} and Clanchy, \textit{Abelard,} who says that Peter "seems to have got the germ of this idea from his own master, William of Champeaux" (270).\]
\[\text{297 Enigma fidei 49, PL 180.421B; see also the English translation} \textit{(The Enigma of Faith, trans. John D. Anderson, Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 9 [Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1974], 81-82, with notes). William himself ascribes these same attributes to the Trinity as a whole in his own comment on 1:20-21, which does not differ greatly.}\]
of these works have concentrated on William's spirituality of the Trinity as opposed to his dogmatic teaching. Those that have examined his objective teaching, as well as those who discuss his spirituality, note the thoroughly Augustinian character of William's teaching on the Trinity, specifically, his conception of human beings as the image of the Trinity, that there is a divine imprint of the image of the Trinity in every person; and his conception of the relations between the persons of the Trinity, especially that of the Holy Spirit as the will or love shared by the Father and the Son.

In William's discussions of the Trinity in the Romans commentary, he frequently quotes from or paraphrases passages from Augustine's works. Where he does not borrow directly, he shows Augustine's clear influence. William's fullest discussion occurs in his remarks on Romans 11:33-36, where he comments on "O the depth of the riches of wisdom." There he alternates quotations from several of Augustine's works with his own, very Augustinian remarks. William's borrowings from Augustine primarily concern the relations of the Father and the Son and their common substance, and his own additions primarily concern the Holy Spirit as the Person who knows and Reveals the other two persons, and who is their unity and will.

For example, William begins his exposition of the Trinity in this passage by quoting De Trinitate VII.1 on the oneness of the Father and the Son: they share wisdom and being, and are "one essence and one magnitude, one truth, and one wisdom."²⁹⁹

He then adds his own comment on the relation of the Holy Spirit to the other two: The Spirit possesses the full knowledge of God because of his natural unity with God, but is a separate Person in the Trinity.\(^{300}\)

William continues to distinguish the Persons while asserting their equality. To do this, he quotes Augustine's *Epistle* 170: No one Person is greater or lesser than the others; the Trinity is in each Person alone as well as in all the Persons together; the Father did not diminish himself in producing the Son, but remained whole and as great in the Son as in himself; and likewise, the Holy Spirit is equal to his source, neither excelling it nor diminishing it. The Persons of the Trinity are three, yet one; one, yet three.\(^{301}\) William then returns to the theme of knowledge within the Trinity, discussing the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. Through the Holy Spirit, the will of the Father and the Son, these two give this knowledge to those to whom the Father wills to reveal the Son.\(^{302}\) Shortly after this, William again cites a passage from *De Trinitate*, on the Son's equality to the Father: they are coeternal, and the Son is the perfect image of the Father, equal to him in every way, and joined to him in the loving embrace of the Holy Spirit, who overflows from them to all creatures and maintains the created order.\(^{303}\)

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\(^{299}\) CMW 160.886-904, CF 221-22. Cp. *Trin. VII* 1-2, CCSL 50.248.144-249.2. William edits out a few sentences (CCSL 50.249.153-58, 164-65) and changes a few words, but otherwise he retains all of Augustine's meaning.

\(^{300}\) CMW 160.905-161.913, especially the following: “Istam quippe plenitudinem cognitionis sola possidet unitas naturalis, per quam sic est in Deo Spiritus eius, ut unus cum eo sit naturaliter Deus. Qui tamen sic in Deo est, et unus cum illo Deus est, ut non cum eo unam personam habeat, sicut habet cum homine spiritus hominis qui in ipso est, et una sit in Trinitate persona.” CF 222.


\(^{302}\) CMW 161.926-30, CF 223.
William quotes Augustine twice more in 11:33-36, first from *De vera religione*,

to urge readers to cherish and preserve the Gift of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, equally immutable with the Father and the Son, and of one substance with them in the Trinity. He then finishes his exposition with a passage from Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana*, where he asserts yet again the distinctness, equality, and union of the three persons of the Trinity.

William’s other Trinitarian passages all emphasize the equality of the Father and the Son, the completeness of the Father (i.e., that he is wise through his own substance and not through the wisdom he begot in the Son), and the love that exists between the Father and the Son and which is revealed in their work. At 5:5-6, again relying on Augustine, William refers to the Father as “the source of highest divinity,” the Son as “the eternal birth of eternal consubstantiality,” and the Holy Spirit as “the holy union of the Father and the Son.” In them there is “the one simple equality of holy OMOUSION.”

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304 CMW 163.995-1015, CF 225. Cp. Augustine, *vera rel.* 113, CCSL 32.259.122-260.141; William’s quotation is exact. Like the following quotation, it is also found in Florus’ compilation, PL 119.311.


308 8:33-34, CMW 129.713-14: “In Filio quippe Pater amatur, in cuius opere caritas eius commendatur.” CF 180.

309 CMW 63.103-64.119, especially the following: “Qui veniens in nos donante te, docet nos omneem veritatem, insinuans nobis in te, o Pater, summae divinitatis auctoritatem; in te, o Fili, aeternam aeternae consubstantialitatis nativitatem; in te, o sancte Spiritus, Patris Filiique sanctam communitatem, in tribus sanctae OMOUSION unam et simplicem aequalitatem.” CF 94-95. Here and in the remainder of the text William considerably alters the text of Augustine’s s. 71.12.18, PL 38.454, changing the sermon’s third-person discourse to a second-person address and otherwise altering the wording.
divinity of the Father and the Son, the divinity common to them both, their love and
goodness, as belonging to the Father and the Son, and as the love of God.

William departs from Augustine hardly at all when discussing the Trinity and the
relations between the Persons. Even when not quoting Augustine, William's comments
on the Trinity demonstrate his complete influence. He does not speculate or offer any
new analogies in an attempt to offer a newer, better understanding of the doctrine. The
ancient teaching suffices for understanding the Persons in themselves, and
forms an important basis for William’s description of the ascent through the third and fourth
stages; for him the Trinity is not only an explanation of the Persons as they exist among
themselves, but an experience in which one may participate. As with grace, William
stands within the orthodox, Augustinian mainstream of twelfth-century Trinitarian
thought, but yet stands apart from many of his contemporaries in his emphasis on
experiencing the Trinity.

5. Conclusion

One can understand William's objections to Peter's analogies of the Trinity by
observing his meticulous quotations and restatements of Augustinian Trinitarianism.
Like Augustine, William was careful to express as clearly as possible the nature of the
Godhead and the relations of the Persons to each other, so far as they could be known
through Scripture and described through rational reflection. Peter also reflected
rationally on the Trinity, but was less content than William to adhere to Augustinian
orthodoxy. Wanting to refute the errors of Nominalism and to show how even the

including the addition of OMOUCION. On this, see note 3 at CF 127.
310 1:18-19 (actually 1:20), CMW 22.593-97, CF 38. Both CF and CMW attribute this
passage to Augustine, Trin. V.11 and VI.5, though it is at most a loose paraphrase of
these passages, using major ideas.
pagan philosophers could have known of the Trinity, he went outside the bounds of strict Augustinian teaching, and again used language that could easily be misunderstood if not placed in the context of his entire thought on the subject. Peter's Trinity revealed itself to the pagans in the order of nature, and to Christians through special revelation; the pagans whose philosophy Peter admired could thus know the Trinity, however imperfectly, and the Christian revelation made it clearer to them. For William, the Trinity is particularly Christian, capable of being understood only by those who have been initiated into the Christian mysteries. William thought that Peter, in trying to show how the philosophers could have known the Trinity, strayed into the philosophical errors underlying the major Trinitarian heresies.

F. Spirituality and Ethics

1. Introduction

No comparison of the Romans commentaries of William and Peter would be complete without an assessment of the specifically practical, subjective teaching found within them. While spirituality and ethics did not play an overt role in the dispute between the two men, an analysis of the practical teaching contained in the commentaries can shed additional light on what divided them, and their interpretation of the epistle to the Romans provides significant common ground for an understanding of this division: what religious applications do they draw from the same book of scripture?

That both men should apply the teachings of Romans directly to the moral and religious conduct of their audience is no surprise. William of St. Thierry is famous, of

\[31\] 8:9, CMW 112.65-66, CF 159.
course, for his numerous writings on the interior life and the ascent to union with God, and Peter Abelard is renowned for his ethics, or rather, his attempt to apply the conclusions of his theological reasonings to practical matters of conduct such as sin and intention. William also could address ethics, of course; the life of virtue is for him a necessary preliminary to ascent. For Peter as well there was an experience of God to be attained, in addition to a moral life to be lived. The exposition of Romans gave both William and Peter the opportunity to teach spirituality and ethics along with the doctrine of the Christian Church, and here we shall find unaccustomed similarities. Both writers establish their practical teaching in the themes of grace and love, and proclaim a level of perfection. Both speak from direct experience about how to live with other people. At the same time, in their discussions of the experience of divine love, one finds the greatest difference in their teachings.

In the following sections, I will discuss the spiritualities313 of William and Peter as found in their Romans commentaries, comparing their descriptions of interior experience and showing how these spiritualities are linked to human relationships and rooted in the doctrine of the Church. Additionally, I will show how these spiritualities are founded in their exegesis of scripture.

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312 8:35-37, CMW 130.743, CF 181.
313 The term "spirituality" has many different meanings for modern readers, more, perhaps, than for medieval readers. I will use the term to refer to the attitudes, concepts, and practices pertaining to interior religious experience, and to those experiences themselves, as described by William and Peter. For discussions of the different meanings of spirituality, medieval and modern, see André Vauchez, The Spirituality of the Medieval West: the Eighth to the Twelfth Century, trans. Colette Friedlander, Cistercian Studies Series, no. 145 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 7-10; Walter Principe, “Toward defining spirituality,” Sciences religieuses 12.2 (1983): 127-41; and David N. Bell, “Is There Such a Thing as ‘Cistercian Spirituality’?”, Cistercian Studies Quarterly 33:4 (1998): 455-71.
2. Twelfth-Century Spirituality

William and Peter developed the spiritualities of love found in their commentaries and other works during a time of renewed interest in individual religious experience. During the late eleventh and especially the early twelfth centuries new movements and orders arose offering many options for the expression of religious devotion. These movements and orders included hermits, the Augustinian canons, the Praemonstratensians, and the Cistercians, to name the most important; and their devotion expressed itself in such ways as the desire for the *vita apostolica*, to imitate the Desert Fathers, for poverty, and for solitude.  

These ways of life in turn led to emphases on certain themes in their teaching and spirituality: for example, penitence, the humanity and sufferings of Christ, and the experience of divine love.

The spirituality of love had its roots in early Christian thought, but after a hiatus beginning with the fall of Rome and the Christianization of the Germanic tribes, it was revived during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and became a dominant theme among monastic thinkers during this time, considering the numbers

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317 As described by Vauchez, *Spirituality*, 11-33, and McGinn, *Growth*, 3-33, who emphasize the growth of liturgy and ritual, moralism, penance, and the cults of angels and saints.

318 For a general discussion of the underlying theology of this spirituality, see David N. Bell's introduction to the English translation of William's *The Nature and Dignity of Love*. Translated by Thomas X. Davis. Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 30 (Kalamazoo:
of treatises on love as well as commentaries and sermons on the Song of Songs, several of which were written by William and his friend Bernard of Clairvaux. These treatises described the love between God and a human being, or sometimes the Church, in several different ways: by comparing it to the love between a bride and groom; by relating the love between God and the human being to the love between the Persons of the Trinity, or by outlining the stages through which a person's love for God ascended. The goal was always the union of the human being with God, and a related effect was love of neighbor.

3. Peter Abelard

Peter was not known as a spiritual writer in his time, nor has he usually been considered one in modern times. Little has been said about his teachings on devotion and interior experience, although a number of his sermons and hymns, intended for the edification of the nuns of the Paraclete, survive. Far more has been said about his ethical teaching; virtually every major study of Abelard addresses it. This is unfortunate,
as an examination of his Romans commentary shows him to be a devout man of genuine religious experience. He wrote for scholars, not for monks, but in the midst of his comments and questions on Romans, he commended to his students an experience of divine love, and with it, an ethic of love of neighbor.

To be sure, Peter expounds no particular plan of spiritual development or ascent in his Romans commentary, and does not articulate a complex explanation of the inner experience of divine love. Nevertheless, he is profuse in referring to the love of God in this work, and affirms that one may directly experience that love. He speaks of a certain illumination or enlightenment, by faith, grace, or the Holy Spirit, though never of an enlightened love or reason.\(^{324}\) He speaks of friendship with God,\(^ {325}\) and frequently mentions clinging or adhering to God.\(^ {326}\) Though he has no plan of progress, he does speak of perfection and of those people more complete and less complete.\(^ {327}\) He is aware, of course, of the contemplative life and of how contemplative monks “burn ardently with the fire of divine love.”\(^ {328}\) And, as we will see, Peter speaks of being

\(^{324}\) See 1:14, CMP 64.583-86 (illuminated by Christ the wisdom of God); 2:2, CMP 77.25 (by divine grace), 3:27, CMP 119.290-92 (the spiritual illumination of Jeremiah and John the Baptist); 4:18, CMP 148.836-41 (Jews illuminated by faith), 847-48 (preachers who illuminate others with their teaching); 8:30, CMP 224.477-78 (the elect are those illuminated by faith and prepared for eternal life); 8:36, CMP 227.574 (by faith); 9:11, CMP 234.77 (Isaac and Esau illuminated by faith in the womb, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist); 10:21, CMP 255.252-53 (Paul’s preaching illuminates the world); 11:10, CMP 259; 11:10, CMP 259.120-21 (holy men illuminated by the Holy Spirit); 11:25, CMP 265.303 (some Jews illuminated by faith in Christ); CMP 267.364 (the illumination of wisdom); 13:12, CMP 294.262 (the illumination of the day of salvation), and 294.272 (by faith).


kindled by love or grace.

We have already seen a prime example of direct experience in Peter’s question on redemption at 3:26, where he speaks of Christ’s death as a demonstration of the love of God that binds us to him through love and that kindles love and causes us to love God more.329 There are three other major passages as well that we should examine as examples of Peter’s spirituality of love: 7:6, 7:13, and 13:9-10. All three of these passages contain questions either on the commandments or on love, and all three interrelate love of God with love of neighbor.

In the first passage, Peter discusses the Old Testament commandment to love one’s neighbor as a way of demonstrating the imperfection of the Mosaic Law and its inability to save apart from Christ. Explaining how Christ expanded the meaning of “neighbor” from friend or benefactor to one who acts mercifully,330 Peter argues that the fullest meaning of the term is found when one understands the Good Samaritan as Christ himself, who was a neighbor to the Jews both through blood and through his acts of charity toward them. To love one’s neighbor, then, is to love Christ, to cling to him and his commandments.331

After adding witnesses to this effect from Ambrosiaster and Augustine,332 Peter then turns to “the two branches of love”—God and neighbor. He interrelates them by arguing, as he would again in 13:10, that love of neighbor includes the love of God, “since no one more rightly should be understood by us as neighbor or friend than our maker and redeemer, from whom we have ourselves as much as all good things,” most

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328 4:18, CMP 148.846-47: “... id est contemplatiuorum qui diuini amoris igne uelhementis fereunt...”
329 See above, pp. 196-200.
331 CMP 192.174-87.
significantly charity. Therefore, since “neighbor” includes God, the law is fulfilled through love of neighbor and through love of God; whoever truly clings to God through love keeps his commandments. Peter argues that love is only true when referred to God, and that one must love God for his own sake and one’s neighbor for God’s sake. Whoever clings to God through charity must fulfill the commandments pertaining to strangers as much as those pertaining to one’s neighbor. Finally, Peter addresses briefly the question of love of self, included in the commandment to love one’s neighbor. All the previous discussion, he says, is of no consequence, unless we love ourselves; and this we cannot do if we act unjustly and despise God’s commandments, thus demonstrating self-hatred.

Not much later, in his comments on 7:13—comments that have been much discussed by modern scholars—Peter approaches love of God and neighbor from a


333 CMP 194.250-195.271, especially the following: “... cum nemo rectius nobis proximus uel amicus sit intelligendus quam ipse conditor noster et redemptor, a quo tam nos ipsos quam omnia bona habemus.” Peter cites Origen as the source of this concept, quoting his Romans commentary (PG 14.1231C-1232A), editing the passage considerably.

334 CMP 195.272-89; Peter quotes Augustine, *doc. Chr.* III.10.16, CCSL 32.87.

335 CMP 195.290-196.301.

336 See Marenbon, *Philosophy*, 300, n. 10, who provides the major citations. The discussion has focused largely on whether this teaching of selfless love for God came under criticism by other teachers, such as William and Bernard of Clairvaux, as argued by Étienne Gilson, and continued by Weingart. Both believe that in fact William and Bernard considered Peter’s theology misguided, and that one should love God for hope of blessedness. Gilson regards Peter’s definition as rooted, at least in dialectic, as purely theoretical, and as having no basis in “the realities of mystical experience to which he remained a stranger,” and finds his relation with Heloise to be an additional source of his teaching. He cites a passage from William’s *De contemplando Deo* as evidence that William opposed Peter’s teaching of love without hope for blessedness or reward (*Theology*, 158-66. The passage of *De contemplando Deo*, to which we shall return, is section 11, p. 56 in the English translation [On Contemplating God, Prayer, Meditations, trans. Sister Penelope, Cistercian Fathers Series no. 3 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1970)], PL 184.375D, “Quod autem est absurdius uniri Deo amore et non
different angle, that of its intention and genuineness. The true and genuine love that
Christ taught and demonstrated, he argues, sought no advantage of its own, but only
ours, with the desire for our salvation. While there is indeed a reward for love, one who
loves perfectly loves without the intention of that reward. In fact, if we love God only
for our own sake and advantage, we cannot truly call that love "charity."  

Peter then quotes Augustine at length on loving God for his own sake and not
because he gives us something; one must love God willingly and freely, simply because
God exists, and because he is good. To love God for what he can give is not to love
God freely.  

One must love God for his own sake and not one's own, not even
because God loves the lover first; one may calculate one's advantage in love, but this
will not gain the reward of righteousness. After considering the selfish, mercenary
motives with which most people love God, Peter counters that to love God for himself

Weingart agrees that Peter's teaching was opposed by William and
Bernard, and cites the same passage from William's De contemplando Deo, as well as the
whole of De natura et dignitate amoris, along with several works of Bernard and Hugh of
St. Victor (Logic, 173, n.1). I will not argue about Bernard and Hugh; I will state that
both Gilson and Weingart are wrong about William. A close examination of the
passage from De contemplando Deo, of the whole De natura et dignitate amoris, and of
William's teaching on love in the Romans commentary, as described below, shows no
significant conflict between William and Peter on the topic of love. While William does
not explicitly take up selfless love, he could hardly have opposed it, either on theoretical
or practical grounds. While William's mystical experience was much deeper than
Peter's, as Gilson rightly argues, he was equally theoretical and speculative, and was
hardly mercenary in his approach to loving God. While William certainly hoped for
beatitude and the vision of God, he did not see these as a reward for loving God, but as
graces given to those ascending to him to restore them to the divine image—to what
they were supposed to be in the first place. Marenbon also differs from Gilson by
pointing out that Peter, following Augustine, makes this selfless love not so
impracticable after all, by using the example of the father who loves his useless son or
the wife who loves her useless husband. One can apply this same love towards both
humans and God. Marenbon also shows how Peter subtly adapted Augustine's concept
of charity, presented in doc. Chr.: rather than enjoying God for his own sake, one loves
God for his own sake (Philosophy, 298-303. See also Peppermüller's brief discussion,
under the heading of charity as the fulfillment of the law, Auslegung, 159-61).

338 CMP 201.494-202.515; Peter quotes from Augustine's div. qu., q. 35.1, PL 40.23, and
alone, and not our own advantage, is true love for God, considering not what he gives to us, but what he is in himself; considering God only in the motive of love, and allowing him to act in us truly and for the best. Such a love is comparable to that of a father for a useless son or a wife for her husband, who recognize that there is no advantage to be had from them. Such should be our affection toward God, to love him for what is good in himself rather than for our advantage, because he is good in the highest degree. Still, Peter allows that we may begin to love God imperfectly, out of hope for reward or of fear rather than love, and incline toward a more perfect charity.

Peter’s teaching on selfless love, both for God and neighbor, reaches its apex in his comments on 13:8-10, where Paul considers love of neighbor. At 13:8, Peter initially, and briefly, defines this latter love as “to wish well to him for his own sake.” He takes this up again at 13:9, where Paul mentions the specific commandment to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Peter makes the distinction between “as” (sicut) and “as much as” (quantum): the first demonstrates similarity, the second equality. Peter favors the former, and expresses an ordo caritatis: since no one is to be loved except for God’s sake, a person is worthy of being loved more the dearer he is held by God and the better he is. God is to be loved above all, then those who are better. Those whom we love more, we wish to be happier; but here, intention is important. To wish that one’s enemy were dead and in heaven is not to love with proper intention, because the intention is to be rid of that enemy. One must intend that person’s happiness for his own sake. Love of neighbor works no evil, commits no adultery, and commits no
murder, as David did.\textsuperscript{345}

Like most other medieval commentators on Romans,\textsuperscript{346} Peter interjects a discussion of the love of God into Paul’s discussion of love of neighbor at 13:10, as a way of explaining how Paul can say that this latter love fulfills the law. He first defines the love of God, taken as both an objective and a subjective genitive:

Love of God from the whole heart is in us that best will toward God, by which, the more we strive to please him, the more we know how he is to be pleased. But we do that from the whole heart and whole soul, when we thoroughly direct to him the intention of our love, that we may consider not so much what is useful for us as what is pleasing to him. Otherwise we might make ourselves rather than him the object of our love, that is, the final and supreme cause. The love of God toward us is that providence of divine grace for our salvation. He loves his neighbor as himself who, for God’s sake, has so good a will toward him, that he may thus strive to conduct himself for his sake, lest the other be able justly to complain about him, just as the first does not wish anything to be done to himself by the latter concerning which he might justly be able to complain.\textsuperscript{347}

Again, intention becomes important: does one love God more for what will benefit oneself, or to please God? Peter recognizes that the former motive is in fact self-love, improperly understood. Love for neighbor takes its model from God’s love for us: just as God provides grace for our salvation, acting with a good will toward us, so we act toward our neighbor with a good will for his sake.

\textsuperscript{343} CMP 204.578-94.
\textsuperscript{344} CMP 288.85-86: "Diligere alterum est ei propter ipsum bene optare."
\textsuperscript{345} CMP 289.133-290.150.
\textsuperscript{346} See, for example, Haymo of Auxerre, PL 117L 482-83; Atto of Vercelli, PL 134.261-62; Herveus of Bourg-Dieu, PL 181.778-79; and Peter Lombard, PL 191.1506-1509.
\textsuperscript{347} CMP 290.163-291.175: "Dilectio Dei ex toto corde in nobis est optima illa erga Deum voluntas, qua ei tanto amplius placere studemus quanto amplius ei placendum esse recognoscimus. Ex toto autem corde seu ex tota anima id agimus, quando sic ad eum penitus nostrae dilectionis intentionem dirigimus, ut non tam quid nobis utile sit quam quid ei placitum sit attendimus. Alioquin nos potius quam ipsum dilectionis nostrae finem, id est finalem et supremam institueremus causam. Dilectio vero Dei erga nos est ipsa divinae gratiae de salute nostra dispositio. Proximum vero tanquam se diligit qui propter Deum tam bonam erga eum voluntatem habet, ut sic se propter eum gerere
After defining love of neighbor in terms of the negative and positive versions of the Golden Rule ("Do not do to others/Do to others"), Peter relates this love to love of God: first, God is to be loved only for his own sake, but the neighbor for God’s sake. This means that the love of God is included in love of neighbor, since the latter cannot exist without the former. Conversely, however, love of God does not necessarily include love of neighbor; God can both be loved and exist without the neighbor. Therefore, Paul could rightly say that love of neighbor fulfilled the law.

In these three passages, Peter has outlined a comprehensive ethic of love, defining its ideals, its proper conduct and intentions, and its *ordo*. He has analyzed both the love of God and the love of neighbor, separately and together, showing what each is in itself and how the latter depends on the former. The love of God is paramount; love of neighbor is secondary, and founded upon love of God. Though Peter defines “neighbor” universally, he does not assert that one must love all neighbors equally.

One might argue that Peter’s discussion of loving God, while profound, lacks the convincing experiential language that so characterizes other writers on this topic, such as William of St. Thierry. This is not to say that Peter knows or says nothing of interior experience. His frequent references to love and charity as fire and warmth, though common among spiritual writers, show that he had a certain level of experience: the ancient fathers were kindled in the love of God by hope, and those perfected are kindled in that love even more; contemplatives burn ardently with the fire of divine love; Christ’s death kindled the most high love of himself; the Apostles preached the ardor of charity; those who live according to the Spirit are inflamed with spiritual desires; the richness of the olive signifies the fire of charity; those who have received

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studet, ne ille de se iuste conqueri possit, sicut nec ipse sibi ab illo vult fieri, de quo juste conqueri queat."
grace are kindled by its love; and by heaping coals on our enemy, we kindle him to love.\textsuperscript{350} Additionally, when Peter mentions the Holy Spirit, he often does so in an experiential way, speaking of how we experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the powers and gifts of God, or of Christ indwelling us through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{351} The Holy Spirit is himself “the life of souls, because he is love.”\textsuperscript{352} The experience of that love is such that, as Peter is fond of noting, when that love is perfected, it casts out fear.\textsuperscript{353} And, as we noted above, he also frequently speaks of clinging to God. It is obvious that Peter is genuinely devout and that his spiritual rhetoric is more than just theory, even if, as Étienne Gilson points out,\textsuperscript{354} he is no mystic, or at least does not talk like one.

The love of God and neighbor is built on a moral foundation. Underlying Peter’s experience of love are penitence, virtue and obedience, self-discipline and restraint, and the imitation of Christ. Penitence to Peter is a key component both of initial conversion and of the ongoing life of faith. On the one hand, God waits long for sinners to return to him through penitence, and gives to them his kindness, hoping that will lead to penitence.\textsuperscript{355} It is a means of seeking after God, if a person understands God and his ways and promises, and of gaining peace and reconciliation with him.\textsuperscript{356}

\textsuperscript{348} CMP 291.176-95.
\textsuperscript{349} CMP 291.203-292.213.
\textsuperscript{351} See 8:5-6, CMP 212.83-213.92; 8:9, CMP 213.111-14; 8:10, CMP 214.123-26; 8:11, CMP 215.166.
\textsuperscript{352} 8:2, CMP 211.15-16: “Spiritus uitas, id est Spiritus Sanctus qui est uita animarum, quia amor est.”
\textsuperscript{354} See note 336 above.
On the other hand, penitence becomes an essential discipline for the converted, a means by which to amend their lives. Without it, sin can build a dwelling within a person and become a habit.\textsuperscript{357} Performing penance does not eliminate the need to die to sin, however; one must strive to die to it once, and not wish to sin again.\textsuperscript{358}

Hand in hand with penitence goes the quest for virtue, the avoidance of vice, and death to sin. For Peter, virtues are not just moral ideals, but are, according to the ancient Latin meaning, powers or qualities, in particular of the soul.\textsuperscript{359} Peter regards them as the substance of the true life of the soul.\textsuperscript{360} To seek virtue, therefore, is not merely to live a moral life. Virtues are conferred and multiplied by the grace which Christ gives to build in us a kingdom of righteousness that governs all longings and checks illicit impulses.\textsuperscript{361} They are the steps of newness of life which a person takes to leave behind the vices that kill the soul, to imitate Christ in the likeness of his death and burial and die to sin, and to arrive at the glory of Christ’s resurrection.\textsuperscript{362} They are akin to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which Spirit Christ is present in his people; virtues are a sign of Christ’s indwelling presence, and they are the means by which the human spirit avoids damnation and is justified.\textsuperscript{363} Peter admonishes his readers to put these virtues of Christ on, equating this with putting on Christ, himself the fullness of all virtues;\textsuperscript{364} to become perfect in these virtues, by always growing into better things and in the heavenly life of perfect happiness;\textsuperscript{365} to cling to virtue by imitating good; and to hate

\textsuperscript{355} 2:4, CMP 77.33-38; 3:26, CMP 113.102-105. In both these passages, Peter links God’s patience (\textit{patientia}) with human penitence (\textit{paenitentia}).
\textsuperscript{356} 3:11, CMP 104.266-72; 10:15, CMP 254.200-203.
\textsuperscript{357} 6:12, CMP 181.187-90.
\textsuperscript{358} 6:3, CMP 177.23-26. See also 4:7, CMP 124.65-85, and 4:8, CMP 125.103-107.
\textsuperscript{359} \textit{"n...id est virtus quae est optimus animi habitus..."} 7:18, CMP 208.710-11.
\textsuperscript{360} 8:13, CMP 216.206-208.
\textsuperscript{361} 5:21, CMP 175.754-176.765.
\textsuperscript{362} 6:4-5, CMP 177.34-49.
vices by withdrawing from the conduct and habits of the perverse.\textsuperscript{366} One must use virtues to put to death evil suggestions and fight against vices and temptations of the devil,\textsuperscript{367} because these vices in turn assault us. To defend against this assault is to suffer with Christ.\textsuperscript{368} Peter goes to great lengths urging his readers to die to sin, and not to persevere or remain in it. Baptism means that a person has crucified his old man and mortified his members, and so is no longer a slave to sin, that it should reign over him; rather, he is now a slave to righteousness, and by the Holy Spirit puts to death the deeds of the flesh.\textsuperscript{369}

Part of the quest for virtue includes obedience to God and his will. Peter defines this obedience in several ways: to act according to faith, to serve Christ, to fulfill his will, and to fulfill with a work what should be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{370} The higher form of obedience, that of sons, is rooted in love, and stands in contrast to the obedience of fear performed by a slave.\textsuperscript{371} Such obedience occurs through reason, the natural law of the mind,\textsuperscript{372} and brings health and bears fruit.\textsuperscript{373} Obedience is owed to Christ persistently and perpetually, and is one of the means by which we are bound to him and cling to God.\textsuperscript{374}

All these disciplines lead toward a final goal, that of conformity to Christ and
the restoration of the image of God within a person. Peter equates the image of God, in which human beings were created, with reason, that is, rationality, which he in turn equates with the mind or the “interior man” of Romans 7:22-23. It is through reason that a person strives for good against sin.\textsuperscript{375} That same image, or reason, can be killed by drunkenness, making the drunkard like a wild, irrational animal.\textsuperscript{376} On the other hand, there are those who try to preserve God’s creation uncorrupted within themselves and reform that image in which they were created, by resisting the sins which defile and destroy that image.\textsuperscript{377} Such people become conformed to the image of Christ, himself the image of God. They are said to “put on Christ” by laying aside the old man with his deeds.\textsuperscript{378} We have already seen the stress Peter laid on the conformity to Christ and death to sin that occurs through baptism in Romans 6; here he equates that conformity and imitation with being remade in Christ’s image and the restoration of the original image of God within us.

Reason, understood here primarily as the capability for rational and moral thought, and secondarily as logic, plays a significant role in Peter’s spirituality and ethics in the Romans commentary. Not only does Peter equate it with the original image of God within us, and with the mind; and not only does he say that it is reason that enables a person to strive against sin. He also equates reason with our spirit, which receives and recognizes the testimony from the Holy Spirit that we are the sons of God,\textsuperscript{379} and with the natural law that enables the Gentiles, who lack the written law of Moses, to obey God’s will.\textsuperscript{380} As such, reason is the opposite of sin and concupiscence, which are

\textsuperscript{375} CMP 209.740-57.
\textsuperscript{376} 13:13, CMP 295.308-311.
\textsuperscript{377} 8:19, CMP 220.328-31.
\textsuperscript{378} 8:29, CMP 224.462-76.
irrational and contrary to nature. Reason restrains and checks the suggestions of the flesh. It is the primary moral force, or virtue within a person (though Peter does not call it such), as well as the means by which a person ascends to the understanding of God, whether through observation of the God's works in the world or through logic and inquiry. But unlike William, beginning in his Romans commentary and proceeding to his later works, Peter does not move beyond rationality to a supra-rational, "spiritual" level. While his descriptions of love are profound, even moving, they do not move to the levels of William's descriptions of ecstatic love. Love and reason cooperate, but one does not surmount the other.

4. William of St. Thierry

Books, articles, and essays on William's spirituality are legion. Most of these studies neglect his Romans commentary, however, or mention it in passing. Most

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379 8:16, CMP 218.270-72.
381 7:17, CMP 207.694-208.707.
382 6:12, CMP 181.185-86; 8:13, CMP 217.221.
383 See for example 8:13, CMP 216.218-19, where Peter speaks of love strengthening reason, and 8:16, CMP 218.270-72, where he speaks of our spirit, or reason, recognizing that we are sons of God, that is, they we are subjected to God through love.
384 Most of the grand syntheses of William's thought come from French scholars: Davy, Théologie ; André Adam, Guillaume de Saint-Thierry (Bourg, 1923), and Paul Verdeyen, La théologie mystique de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, Spirituels (Paris: FAC-éditions, 1990). Additionally, one should consult the numerous works concerning or mentioning William by Jean Leclercq, Jean Dechanet, and Robert Thomas, which, taken together, would constitute syntheses of his thought. In English, the comprehensive surveys are fewer; Bernard McGinn's chapter on William in his survey of mysticism is the best short summary (The Growth of Mysticism. The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, vol. 2 [New York: Crossroad, 1992]). The several articles by Odo Brooke, some of which have already been cited, likewise could constitute a more or less complete survey of William's spirituality. Additionally, one must consult the works of David N. Bell and E. Rozanne Elder, specifically Bell's Image and Likeness and Elder's various essays and articles, most of which have already been cited. In both French and English, there are numerous other articles by other scholars that are useful for
scholars have focussed their attention on William’s shorter, non-exegetical works. The few brief studies made of the Romans commentary\textsuperscript{385} make no attempt to analyze the spiritual teaching found within it. This is unfortunate, as this teaching is profound, and represents an important development in William’s spiritual doctrine. A number of recurring themes of William’s teaching find expression in this commentary, including unity of spirit, image and likeness, stages of progress, the vision of God, and most importantly, the experience of love. Additionally, William places great importance on faith, obedience, and virtue, which may also be found in William’s other works.

William’s spirituality as found in his commentary on Romans is one of grace and love, and to describe it William defines a clear program of spiritual ascent. He organizes much of the work around this program, and carefully describes its key stages and the events of those stages, indicating what his readers, his fellow monks of Signy, may expect. In this ascent one must struggle greatly against sin, disciplining both mind and body, while relying on God’s grace and love the whole time. With the help of that grace, one receives testimony of sonship and experiences that elevate the soul toward union with and knowledge of God. Though he never speaks in the first person in outlining this program, it is clear that he speaks from his experience, from his own struggles against sin, his breakthroughs of grace, and his consolations.

This program is similar, though not identical, to the one he outlines in later works such as the \textit{Golden Epistle}, where he speaks of the three stages of ascent in the monastic life: animal man, rational man, and spiritual man. These three stages correspond to the third and fourth stages described in the Romans commentary, with the spiritual man in particular corresponding to the fourth stage of Romans. The four understanding William’s thought; but as I mention below, few refer to the Romans commentary.
stages of the Romans commentary describe all stages of human life, from utter
sinfulness to union with God, whereas the *Golden Epistle* describes life after conversion
and entry into the cloister. The *Epistle* describes the ascent to God in greater detail and
with deeper psychological analysis than does the Romans commentary, but certainly one
may observe the foundations William laid in the earlier work for what he would say
some ten years later. The exposition of a major book of Scripture helped William form
his thoughts about spiritual progress for his *magnum opus*.

Most of the Romans commentary's intended readers would have been in
William's third stage, which covers the period from a person's conversion and
redemption up to his entrance into a stage of increasing interior peace, the fourth stage.
William's spiritual teaching describes this third stage and encourages those readers
making their way through this stage's intense struggle against concupiscence and sin.
One may also experience enough divine grace and love in this third stage to overcome
temptations and rise to a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit's testimony of sonship, of
love, sweetness, and peace, if not perfection in this life. That is the fourth stage, and
though William spends less time describing it, he says enough about it to encourage
those readers struggling in the third.

The bulk of William's spiritual teaching about these stages is found in Books
Three through Five of the commentary, covering Romans 5-8. William begins Book
Three by talking about the first three stages in a preface to his discussion of Romans 5,
describing them as increasing states of vision, or awareness of one's true state before
God. One moves from seeing oneself as lawless and senseless to seeing a vision, by
grace, of what one may become through being conformed and adapted to what one
sees. This is a pledge of approaching health, though the person is still weak and will
endure strife and contradiction. William then moves on to talking about the fourth stage in his comment on 5:1, “Let us have peace toward God,” and then on 5:5-6, though it is clear from the exposition of chapters five through seven which follows that this stage has in fact not arrived. To at least mention the fourth stage at this point while knowing it is far off does not bother William; he knows that just as the Apostle’s text does not follow these stages precisely, but rather in different ways and places, so do these stages occur at different times in the person who is making progress.386

William begins his discussion of the third stage in earnest with his exposition of 5:7-11, which we analyzed in some detail above in our discussion of redemption. It is here that he speaks of Christ’s life and especially his passion as a commendation and provocation of charity. Christ died for us out of love for us, to justify us and forgive our sins, to purify our love for him, to show us how much God loved us, and to provoke our love in response.387 It is clear that William is describing the experience of conversion, which happens when a person realizes both his own lost state and the divine love that redeems and reconciles him to God. The third stage thus begins in love and grace.

After discussing original sin at length in the rest of his comments on Romans 5, William expounds Chapter 6 by contrasting the necessity for human effort to resist sin following baptism with the necessity for grace. Baptism establishes a conformity of the Christian’s life to the events of Christ’s life, specifically his passion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.388 This conformity is mystical, that is, it is achieved by Christ’s working within the person who has died with Christ, planting him with himself

385 Specifically Anderson, “Romans,” and Renna, “Jewish law.”
386 Book three, prologue, and 5:1, CMW 61.1-25, 62.64-69, CF 91-93.
387 CMW 64.141-66.216, CF 96-98.
388 6:3-4, CMW 77.623-81.789, CF 111-16. William takes much of this, as well as the
so that his roots are established and he bears fruits of life and righteousness.\textsuperscript{389} It is also moral, requiring mortification of one's members, renunciation of the world, self-examination, remembrance of Christ's passion, and of one's commitment to die to sin. Effort and grace are each essential in William's mind, but they are not separate; he sees how they cooperate, and even points out that "penitence for sin is properly the work of grace."\textsuperscript{390}

In Romans 7, Paul agonizes over the difficulties of this transformation, and William expounds his teachings to great effect, again urging human effort while assuring his reader of the divine assistance. He vividly describes the inner conflict against sin, giving special attention to consent and proper motives for action.\textsuperscript{391} He encourages his reader to leave the flesh, to bear fruit for God, not to despair, but to delight in God, his law, and his righteousness, and also to rely on grace.\textsuperscript{392}

The experience of grace that Paul mentions at 7:24 may grant a certain peace, but for William, this is not yet the fourth stage. According to William's exposition of Romans 8:1-13, the conflict against sin continues, but the reader is more aware of the Holy Spirit's help and encouragement, even to the point of experiencing a pouring out of divine charity and with it a unity of body and spirit with God.\textsuperscript{393} The fourth stage can be said to begin with a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit that leads to the realization of one's sonship, which Paul speaks of, and William expounds, at 8:14. From here to the end of Romans 8, William speaks of the future vision of God, the

\textsuperscript{389} 6:5-7, CMW 82.790-822, CF 116-17.
\textsuperscript{390} 6:3-4, CMW 81.754-55: "Et cum paenitentia peccati proprium opus sit gratiae . . ." CF 115.
\textsuperscript{391} See the fuller description of this conflict above in the discussion of William's teaching on intention and consent.
\textsuperscript{392} 7:1-23, CMW 90.24-103.517, CF 130-46.
possession of the firstfruits of the Spirit, the experience of contemplative prayer and
divine love, and the renewal of the divine image, all of which are gifts of grace.  

The ascent through the third and fourth stages is thus punctuated by the
experience of divine love. William speaks of this experience throughout the
commentary, and not always within the immediate context of describing these stages.
Certainly, though, these experiences occur somewhere in his reader’s progress.
Understanding them is important for understanding the differences between Peter and
William, because one sees in these descriptions William’s greater depth of experience
and his ability to describe them in ways beyond what Peter could do.

William describes some of these experiences in Trinitarian terms, that is, the
love one receives from God is the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the
Son; to experience the love of God is thus to participate in the life and love of the
Trinity. The best example of this experience occurs in William’s comments on Romans
5:5, “the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,” where he
includes the following Trinitarian prayer:

... This is your prayer, O Lord, which you prayed for us to the Father, “I will that
just as you and I are one so may they be one in us.” You wish this and
vehemently wish that you may love us in yourself through the Holy Spirit, your
love, and you wish to love yourself through us and in us. That precious substance
by which we love you is not in us from ourselves, but from your Holy Spirit
whom you give us. Give him to us, therefore, and dwelling in us, O God, love
yourself through us by moving and arousing us to your love, by enlightening us
and stirring us up.... When you do this, O pleasant and sweet one, those of your
servants who have become your sons find it pleasant and sweet to meditate on or
to speak of you, and in their speech and meditation their heart is made to burn
for you, and they speak of you much more fully, seeing you with their sense of
enlightened love, but most profusely when you deign to speak to the heart of the
one loving you. You speak to your lover, and it is like adding oil to the flame, so

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393 7:24-8:13, CMW 103.518-114.138, CF 146-61. See especially 7:24, CMW 104.559-
105.588, CF 148-49; 8:3-4, CMW 107.654-110.769, CF 151-55.
that he who loves loves still more, and he who burns burns more intensely. You speak to him interiorly in his conscience by the enlightenment of your Holy Spirit, and he understands "the breath of your whisper," as it is said in Job.\textsuperscript{395}

William equates oneness with God with the experience of loving and being loved by God, which experience enlightens and arouses the one who undergoes it. William does not say exactly at what point in his ascent a person may have such an experience, though he does refer to those who have become sons and who meditate on what they have felt, indicating that this comes later in the ascent.\textsuperscript{396} It thus stands in contrast to the experience of love William describes in the passage that immediately follows this one, 5:7-11, which, as we have argued above, seems related to first conversion.

William clearly draws his Trinitarian spirituality from his Augustinian doctrine of the Godhead. Augustine spoke in very similar terms of participating in the Trinity, and of human beings experiencing the love of the Father and the Son that is the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{397} In the passage cited above and the other Trinitarian passages, William does not directly quote Augustine, as he does at 11:33-36, discussing the relations between the persons, but unquestionably uses his concepts. Like Augustine, William not only

\textsuperscript{394} 8:14-39, CMW 114.139-131.783, CF 161-82.
\textsuperscript{395} 5:5-6, CMW 64.119-28, 130-37: "Ipsa est oratio tua, Domine, quam habuisti pro nobis ad Patrem: Volo ut, sicut ego et tu unum sumus, ita et ipsi in nobis unum sint. Vis enim hoc, ut uehomeret us ut per Spiritum tuum, amorem tuum, ames nos in te, et ames te de nobis et in nobis. Non enim est nobis a nobis tam pretiosa haec substantia qua te diligimus, sed a Spiritu sancto tuo, quem das nobis. Da ergo eum nobis, et in nobis habitans, o Deus, ama te de nobis, mouendo nos et accendendo ad amorem tuum, illuminando et excitando. . . . Cum hoc agis, o suavis et dulcis, filii tui de servis effecti, dulce et suauet habent meditari uel loqui de te, et in loquendo uel meditando efficitur cor eorum ardens in te; multo autem uerius cum sensu illuminati amoris te uidentes alloquuntur te; abundantissime uero cum tu loqui dignaris ad cor amantis te. Dicis enim ei, quasi oleum camino addens, ut qui amat, plus amat; qui ardet, plus ardeat; dicis autem ei intus in conscientia, ex illuminatione sancti Spiritus tu, intelligenti sicut in Iob dicit . . ." CF 95-96.

\textsuperscript{396} The other two explicitly Trinitarian passages occur in William's account of the fourth stage: 8:16, CMW 115.191-116.199, CF 163; and 8:35-37, CMW 130.739-46, CF181.

\textsuperscript{397} See, for example, Augustine's comments in \textit{Trin.} 5, 6, and 15, and Bell's discussion of
describes the Trinity as it exists in itself, but as it relates to human beings, and as human beings participate in it.

Other passages are less explicitly Trinitarian, but still describe an experience of unifying love. For example, in another prayer at 8:3-4, in the third stage, William says the following:

... When we remember with the sure sacrament of faith and a pious affection of heart what you have done for us, faith, as it were, receives it with its mouth, hope chews it, and charity cooks into salvation and life the blessed and beatifying food of your grace. There you show yourself to the soul which desires you, accepting the embrace of her love and kissing her with the kiss of your mouth. As happens in a loving kiss, she pours out to you her spirit, and you pour in your spirit, so that you are made one body and one spirit when she receives in this way your body and blood. There the conscience is not only cleansed from dead works, but is filled and strengthened with the fruits of life and of the spirit to serve the living God, when the justice of the law is completely fulfilled in her.398

Again, there is a strong mutuality between God and the soul; the soul desires, God responds, and there is one body and one spirit.399 It is less explicitly Trinitarian, but there is some interaction between the Lord, to whom the prayer is addressed—William apparently intends the Son—and the Holy Spirit, who is poured into the soul and who unites the soul with God.

The experience of contemplative prayer in the fourth stage leads to an understanding of enlightened love similar to what William described at 5:5-6:

After the soul understands its small measure and is not disturbed with itself but is

Augustine’s teaching in Image, 56-62.
398 8:3-4, CMW 108.715-26: “... cum certo fidei sacramento et pio cordis affectu recolentibus nobis quid pro nobis fecistis, fides quasi ore suscipit, spes ruminat, caritas excoquit in salutem et utiam beatum et beatificum gratiae tuae cibum. Ibi enim te exhibes animae desideranti, acceptans amplexum amoris sui, et osculans eam osculo oris tui, ubi sicut in osculo amoris solet, ipsa tibi effundit spiritum suum, et tu ei infundis tuum, ut efficiamini unum corpus et unus spiritus, cum hoc modo sumit corpus et sanguinem tuum. Ibi conscientia non solum ab operibus mortuis emundatur, sed et ad servicium Deo viventi repleta fructibus utiae et spiritus confortatur, cum plene in ea adimpletur legis
recollected and elevated and knows that it transcends all bodily things and has moved from its understanding of itself to an understanding of its Maker, then the understanding of God begins to operate in it as differently from its own understanding as the nature of uncircumscribed light differs from the nature of the soul. What the soul understands it grasps; but in this case, in an unusual way, it does not grasp but is grasped. Something sensible happens to it which only enlightened love is permitted to feel, a certain sweetness, not one which love has merited, but which, once tasted, causes love, something which is not known and sensed, the most solid substance of things hoped for, a most certain evidence of things that appear not, the faithful testimony of the Lord to the Christian faith bestowing wisdom on the little ones.  

Here William attempts to describe the indescribable; the soul has risen to the direct experience, or understanding, of God, an understanding different from anything it has encountered before, and is seized by the gracious sweetness of love, which grants to the soul wisdom. There is no mutuality here; the work is all God's. The soul does not open itself or pour itself out, but is swept away to a love that is beyond normal comprehension.

In all these passages William speaks only of loving God or of being loved by him. He does not speak of love of neighbor until late in the commentary, in his exposition of 13:8-10. Even there, he discusses love of neighbor, as well as love of self, in the context of love of God; love of God defines the other two loves. William counsels his readers to “direct all [your] thoughts, [your] whole life and [your] whole

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399 This is, so far as I can tell, the earliest reference in William’s works to “unus spiritus.”
400 8:26, CMW 123.476-89: “Postquam vero iam non ad seipsam anima turbata, sed ad seipsam collecta et subleuata modulum suum intelligit, et quia omnia corporalia transcendent cognoscit, atque ab intellectu suo ad auctoris intellectum tendit, tanto differentius operari in ea incipit intellectus Dei ab intellectu suo, quanto a natura animae differret natura luminis incircumscripti. Quod enim intelligit anima, capit; illo autem intellectu modo quodam inuisitato non capit, sed capitur, fitque ei quiddam sensibile, quod solus amor illuminatus sentire permittitur, suauitas quaedam, non quam amor meruit, sed qua au gustata, amorem facit, quiddam quod non scitur et sentitur, quaedam sperandarum rerum substantia solidissima, argumentum certissimum non apparentium, fidei
understanding toward him from whom [you] have those things which [you] direct toward him." The commandment to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind leaves no room to enjoy anything else, and anything else should be taken "where the entire thrust of love rushes." Love for self and neighbor must be referred to the love of God, which William compares to a stream that allows no rivulets to be directed away from itself.401 Love for God does lead to the other two loves, and it teaches a person to love himself and his neighbor for God's sake.402 Proper love for self has the possession of God as its goal; to love oneself correctly, one should love God.403

William does address love for neighbor by itself in this passage, in terms of its fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, and its inability to do evil. He cites an extreme example of this inability: reproving, even striking one's brother for discipline's sake; love does not allow neglect of the undisciplined, even if its rage seems more like hatred, and hatred's caresses seem more like love.404

The experience of loving and being loved by God has other effects as well for William. We have already seen from the passages cited that this experience is one of union; love unites lover and loved, making them one spirit. Additionally, this experience restores the person undergoing it to the image of God, deformed in him and almost lost through sin;405 this renewal of image also unites the person to God in likeness, making him a son of the Father.406 Renewal of image is interior, in the mind; it is there that the person is conformed to the image of Christ.407 And, through the

christianae testimonia Domini fidei, sapientiam praestans parvulis." CF 172-73.
401 13:9, CMW 174.373-175.384, CF 241-42.
403 13:10, CMW 175.404-406, CF 242.
404 13:10, CMW 175.385-98, CF 242.
405 8:20, CMW 118.301-305, CF 167.
406 8:27, CMW 124.503-509, CF 173; see also Brooke, "Trinitarian aspect," Monastic

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reasonable service of discipline and the renewal of spiritual perception, one regains that
image and comes closer to the likeness of God.\footnote{8:29-30, CMW 126.596-99, CF 176; William takes this from Augustine, \textit{civ. Dei} XXII.16, CCSL 48.835.1-8.}

In addition to regaining what was lost, one gains something new through these
experiences: the vision of God. With the third stage, one begins not only to see but to
be attracted to what is seen, that is, God, and to be conformed and adapted to it.\footnote{12:1-3, CMW 166.46-55, CF 230-31; see also Bell, \textit{Image}, 118, n. 126.} But
this is an imperfect vision. Important as it is at that early stage for nourishing a person,
that vision is unclear; the knowledge of God that it represents is elementary. As a
person ascends to and through the fourth stage, he must begin to see God face-to-face,
that is, encounter God more directly. In that process, the Father “dies,” that is, the
imperfect vision or knowledge of God is replaced by a more perfect one.\footnote{8:17, CMW 116.212-24, CF 164.} As with the
experience of love and the renewal of the divine image, this face-to-face vision unifies
all things and does away with all distinctions.\footnote{13:8, CMW 173.333-174.339, CF 240.}

Underlying these experiences of love, union, restoration, and vision, all gifts of
God, are the disciplines of prayer and meditation. We have seen the role that human
effort played in the third stage; no less in the fourth stage does it prepare a person for
the gifts. William follows his description of the vision of God in which the Father dies
with an exhortation to remember and meditate on Christ’s death, that one may suffer
with Christ.\footnote{Book III, Prologue, CMW 61.19-25, CF 92.} Additionally, one must continue to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to
fast, and to restrain one’s lustful pleasures. Most importantly, one must pray,
weeping over one’s sins and awaiting final salvation,\footnote{118, n. 126.} interceding for others,\footnote{8:29-30, CMW 126.596-99, CF 176; William takes this from Augustine, \textit{civ. Dei} XXII.16, CCSL 48.835.1-8.} and

\textit{Studies,} 29, n.126.
directing the mind’s gaze toward God in contemplation and enjoyment of God. This last kind of prayer prepares the soul for the experience of being grasped and obtaining the deeper understanding of God, and requires the rejection of all mental images and bodily senses.416

5. Conclusion

Though Peter’s spirituality reads well the first time, it is less satisfying when compared to William’s. Though Peter is every bit as devout as William, his interior experience, or at least his ability to talk about it, is not at the same level. Like William’s spirituality, Peter’s is also one of love, but it seems less developed in both theory and experience. Surveying his Romans commentary, one does not find the vocabulary of experience that one finds omnipresent in William’s. Peter does not speak of unity of spirit, and hardly at all of union with God; neither does he speak of the vision of God. He does not mention sweetness of experience or nuptials, nor does he use any other kind of marital imagery.417 The absence of an orderly plan of ascent also sets him apart from William. Overall, references to intimacy with God and a fervent interior life are nowhere near as common or as powerful as they are with William. Peter does devote more effort to discussing love of neighbor than William does; but when he talks about loving God, he lacks the convincing experiential language that so characterizes William.

412 8:17, CMW 117.239-48, CF 165.
413 8:19, CMW 117.260-67, CF 165-66.
414 8:24-25, CMW 120.380-121.388, CF 169.
415 8:26, CMW 122.432-50, CF 171. Much of this passage is taken from Augustine, ep. 130, CSEL 44.67.13-70.2.
416 8:26, CMW 122.451-123.496, CF 171-73. William borrows much of this passage from Gregory the Great, Homilae in Hierosolim II.5.8-9, CCSL 142.281-220-282.241.
Could this undeveloped spirituality, relative to William's, be an additional, unspoken reason for William's criticisms of Peter? When William read the excerpts, taken out of context, from Peter's works, and concluded that Peter's ideas were dangerous, did he also conclude that Peter's errors were due to a deficient spirituality that did not ascend above reason to an experience of union? He hints at this in several places in his Disputatio, particularly when he ascribes traditional heresies to Peter. For William, correct doctrine and interior experience went hand in hand. The former was the foundation of the latter; without correct doctrine, one could not have a genuine experience of God, or at least make adequate progress toward it. He did not understand, or perhaps did not accept, that for Peter the process of inquiry and analysis was an important part of his own spirituality, his own approach to and experience of God. Peter could certainly talk convincingly of love for God and neighbor, virtue, obedience, and the imitation of Christ. But behind his spiritual and moral teaching there lay the dialectic that expressed his own longing for God. William expressed his longing for and experience of God by pouring his heart out to God in beautifully crafted prayers and meditations, in language that reads as though he just left his prayer cell, with the sweetness of his time with the beloved still fresh in his heart. Peter expressed his longing and experience, in part, in his quest for deeper rational understanding of received doctrine and his discarding of inadequate doctrines that stifled correct understanding of God. His prayer was his dialectic, his questioning, and his search for truth. Certainly this is the major theological and spiritual difference between William and Peter, at least in their Romans commentaries.

To both medieval and modern readers, they read quite differently. One senses God close at hand in William's writings, as the intimate object of affection; with Peter,
one senses God more at a distance, as the object of analysis. Peter loved God no less than William, he simply loved him differently. To analyze God rationally was to love him. While he could write beautiful hymns, when it came to scriptural exposition, he did not write as William did. William did not criticize him for this, but underlying his critique of Peter there lay the belief that Peter’s experience, like his teaching, was deficient.

G. Conclusions

In many ways, William and Peter are not far apart doctrinally. They both are absolutely committed to the truth of the Christian faith and to the sources which convey that truth: scripture and tradition. Neither questions the authority of scripture. They differ, however, in the way in which they treat the formulations of doctrine that came down to them, and this is one of the bases for their conflict. William accepts these formulations uncritically, though not unthinkingly. He accepts them on faith, and is capable of discussing them intelligently, as we have seen. Peter, on the other hand, cannot accept them without rational analysis and criticism. He sees inconsistencies in many of the traditional formulations of doctrine, such as redemption and original sin, and he cannot allow these inconsistencies to stand, because, as Marenbon rightly argues, they represent morally and logically irreconcilable views of God, and that Peter cannot tolerate. God is only moral and can act only as he does, that is, in a moral, logical, rational way that can be understood through an inquiry which ultimately strengthens faith. This inquiry makes use both of scripture and tradition on the one hand—authority—and dialectic on the other.

It is in these ways that William and Peter are far apart. William, as we have
seen, is not averse to using logic, but he does not challenge received doctrine with it.
Neither does he set authority against authority as Peter does, at least not in the Romans commentary. For him, logic explains, it does not challenge. There is no need at all to challenge received doctrine. Any supposed inconsistencies can be worked out through meditation or chalked up to one’s own inferior understanding of scripture and the Fathers. Any supposed immorality within those doctrines represents not an immoral God but a God whose ways are beyond our comprehension, but which must be accepted as for the best and which will some day be shown to be so.

We can thus see two different views of God in the theologies of William and Peter. William’s God is paradoxically inscrutable and incomprehensible on the one hand, and overwhelmingly close on the other hand. He is truly the Other, he is mysterious. Peter’s God is comprehensible, less mysterious, but less overwhelming as well. He is just as real as William’s God, and he is to be loved, but he is not quite as close to the heart as William’s God. William understands and loves his God primarily, but not exclusively, with the heart and his emotions; Peter primarily, but not exclusively, with his reason.

Perhaps it is this rationality that provides another means of understanding the divide between the monk and the scholar: for William, as is well known, rationality was the middle step on the ascent to God; for Peter, it seems to have been the final step. William’s criticism of Peter lay, in part, in his belief that Peter assumed, and taught, that completeness lay in rational understanding of rather than direct union with God.

Taken together, all these things help us to understand better William’s

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418 2, PL 180.253CD; 3, 255BC, 257B; 4, 257C, 258B, 264C; 6, 267B; and 7, 269C.
419 Philosophy, 331.
420 For reason’s place in William’s thought, see E. Rozanne Elder, “William of St. Thierry: Rational and Affective Spirituality,” The Spirituality of Western Christendom, ed. E.
accusation of Peter. Watching William expound Romans, reading his very traditional but yet very personal explanation, we understand his reaction to Peter, or more likely, to Peter's students. Peter, he thought, challenged accepted authority, substituting his own for that of scripture and tradition, while lacking the depth of inner experience to teach divine truths as they needed to be taught. Had William read Peter's Romans commentary—and I do not believe he did, at least not in its entirety—he would likely not have accused as harshly as he did, but he would have accused nevertheless. There is enough in Peter's commentary to provoke William's concern, even when the distortions of the Liber Sententiarum are corrected. Peter's loyalty to traditional authority and doctrine would not have been strong enough for William's taste.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS:
THE COMMENTARIES AND THE CONFLICT

In the preceding chapters I have analyzed and compared the structures, methodologies, and theologies of the Romans commentaries of William of St. Thierry and Peter Abelard, with respect to how these works, the one genre of theological literature the two scholars had in common, illuminate their subsequent conflict. I have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. A. William wrote his commentary primarily to describe the ascent of the human being from the depths of sin to perfect peace in God, made possible by divine grace. This goal is elaborated in the commentary’s structure of seven books.

1. B. Peter’s commentary is less clearly focussed; it offers no discernible program of ascent, and its structure of four books seems unrelated to its content. Peter wrote it to expound the major doctrines of the Christian faith to his students, the secular clerics of the school at Mt. Ste. Geneviève.

2. A. In his exposition of Romans, William follows the program outlined by St. Augustine in De doctrina Christiana, in which elegant rhetoric conveys the wisdom of the Scriptures, and all the other liberal arts, dialectic included, serve rhetoric’s persuasive purpose. Almost every one of William’s exegetical techniques demonstrates a rhetorical way of thinking, from his citations of the text of Romans to his use of Scripture to comment on Scripture to his use of patristic sources. By William’s time, this Augustinian program was in decline everywhere but the monasteries.
2. B. By contrast, Peter Abelard, in his exegetical techniques and difficult rhetoric, demonstrates the influence of Boethius, whose writings he had studied and commented on extensively. Increasingly popular in the secular schools, Boethius submitted rhetoric to dialectic, making discernment of true and false propositions the basis of knowledge. Peter's numerous questions, his citations of Romans, his use of Scripture to comment on Scripture, his use of patristic sources, and his use of technical linguistic terms all evidence a dialectical approach to exegesis. He prefers authoritative proof-texting to eloquence, and textual analysis to the text itself.

3. A. William's theology is heavily dependent on the thought of St. Augustine, but William nevertheless speaks with his own voice on topics of great importance to him: grace, redemption, and ascent toward God. He intends his discussions of doctrine to lead his readers into a deeper experience of grace and charity, and ultimately the vision of God. Knowledge of the Trinity, for example, can lead to the experience of the Trinity, and knowledge of the work of Christ leads to love for Christ.

3. B. Peter's theology is less dependent on patristic thought, though it does acknowledge Augustine, Origen, and other Church Fathers at key points. Peter also discusses the experience of God's love, but not with the same depth that William does. He is more concerned to present a logically and ethically consistent view of God, in which God acts without arbitrariness, and makes human beings responsible for their actions and their standing before God.

These conclusions build on previous discussions of monastic and scholastic exegesis by connecting the former with the rhetorical program of Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and the latter with the dialectical emphasis of Boethius. While the rhetorical nature of monastic theology has been noted before, and likewise the dialectical nature
of scholastic theology, the exegesis of these two schools has not previously been linked with these two teachers. Additionally, these conclusions build on previous discussions of the conflict between William and Peter by emphasizing the role that Scripture and Scriptural exegesis played in forming the two theologians’ dogmatic teaching and methodologies. Scripture was the primary authority and source of doctrine for both men, and exegetical methodology was the primary means by which they uncovered Scripture's meanings and made them known to their students. Almost every major point of conflict between William and Peter had its origins in their interpretation of Scripture, and in particular of their interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans, the traditional exposition of which dealt with most Christian doctrines.

Having made these points in each of the major areas of analysis, we can make comparisons and conclusions about the commentaries as a whole and about what they contribute to our understanding of the conflict between William and Peter. Within the corpus of each writer's works the commentaries stand out as expositions of Scripture, different from yet foundational to all their other theological works. They also stand out among contemporary commentaries on Romans, and among medieval Romans commentaries considered as a whole. I would go so as far to call them the finest commentaries on Romans written between the time of Augustine and the Reformation: William's because of his excellent rhetoric and spiritual program, and Peter's because of his use of dialectic and his bold, ground-breaking positions on various doctrines. While grounded in the ancient tradition of Romans interpretation begun with Origen, the two commentaries reflect the modes of thought that make their authors stand out among other twelfth-century theologians and commentators on this epistle.
William’s Augustinian influence, seen both in his rhetoric and his theology, and Peter’s Boethian influence, demonstrated in his preference for dialectic, constitute the major difference between the commentaries that William and Peter each wrote. This thesis also defines the conflict that broke out only a few years after they finished these works as an argument between an Augustinian and a Boethian, a rhetorician and a logician.

The Romans commentaries reflect and summarize almost every major area of difference between William and Peter, methodological and theological, explicit and implicit, subtle and plain. Their conflict most explicitly concerned doctrine, but behind the doctrinal differences were methodological ones. William reached his conclusions by reading and reflecting on Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers; that teaching was dominated by Augustine, who also provided the rhetorical methodology for conveying the tradition of Christian teaching. William certainly stepped away from the tradition at points, particularly in his spiritual teaching, but he never departed from it to the extent that others questioned his orthodoxy. His teaching, rooted in the rhetoric of the past, and frequently quoting it, almost always looked back to the tradition, especially to Augustine. Peter reached conclusions often independent of those prescribed by tradition, by following the dialectical methods of Boethius: verbal analysis, distinctions, questions, authorities. Though using Scripture and the Fathers as authorities to buttress his arguments, on many points Peter went far beyond what tradition had previously concluded; his forward-looking dialectic discarded what he found contrary to his ethical view of God and God’s relationship to humanity, and presented new conclusions often at odds with past teaching.
William's *Disputatio* bears out this distinction between himself and Peter, not so much in its own style and content, but by the fact that it was only the second work that William wrote as a closely reasoned treatise on doctrinal matters using technical theological terms, the first being his *De Sacramento Altaris*. William was certainly capable of writing such works, and certainly could have written his commentary on Romans in this way, but he chose to write elegantly styled treatises on the monastic life and interior experience; he chose rhetoric over dialectic, Augustine over Boethius, until circumstances demanded that he respond to Peter Abelard on Peter's terms.

William would soon write another accusation of an errant philosopher and theologian, William of Conches, and it too used technical theological language to refute the other's errors. He would then quickly write another technical theological treatise, rooted in tradition, his *Aenigma fidei*, though like his other later works, the *Speculum fidei* and the *Epistola ad fratres Monte Dei*, it would have a strong rhetorical foundation as well. William was always primarily a rhetorician and secondarily a dialectician. He turned to the latter only when he believed that the true faith, or the true knowledge of faith, was under attack or in need of considerable clarification. To proclaim his own faith and to instruct others in the ascent toward God, William preferred rhetoric.

Peter, in some ways, was not so different. Many of his works for Heloise and the community of the Paraclete, including his hymns, show great rhetorical skill. His theologies and his commentary on Romans, on the other hand, do not. Peter wrote his theologies, at least at first, to combat the errors of such dialecticians as Roscelin, and later to clarify and develop his own thought on doctrine. His Romans commentary clarifies traditional doctrinal teaching and dispels errors and misconceptions that had arisen over the centuries. These theological works are primarily dialectical; any
eloquence is incidental. Peter was first and foremost a dialectician who used rhetoric only when dialectic would have been inappropriate, such as in liturgy.

The conflict between William and Peter can be understood, then, as an argument between one person who loved words for their immediate rhetorical power and another who sought the meanings of words in their particular usages. For William, analysis destroyed the power held in the words themselves; for Peter, analysis removed the ambiguity that obscured the words' ultimate meaning. It was an argument over words, over how they should be spoken or written, and over how they should be heard or read. For William, the importance lay in how language about God should be proclaimed; for Peter, in how that language should be understood.

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