

Volume 59: Number 4

OCTOBER 1995

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary (January 1996) | 241 |
| Luther's Reception of Bernard of Clairvaux Theo M. M. A. C. Bell | 245 |
| Books Received | 278 |
| Preaching the Passion of Christ on the Eve of the Reformation Franz Posset | 279 |
| Pastoral Letter on the Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office of the Church Jobst Schöne | 301 |
| Book Reviews | 317 |



Luther's Reception of Bernard of Clairvaux

Theo M. M. A. C. Bell

I. The Popularity of a Saint

The way in which Bernard of Clairvaux has come down to us is molded by history, hagiography, legends, and miracle tales, but most of all his name was made famous by his own sermons and writings and by many others which were attributed to him during the Middle Ages. As soon as a saint is canonized, he loses most of his earthly features and is refashioned by meta-historical ones.¹ His life, works, and teachings are reshaped by pious imagination and devotion. The human being is exchanged for the hero, the monk for the saint. History and legend have become so inextricably intertwined that even in this century historians are hard pressed to discern the historical figure from his legendary attributes. At the basis of all we find the *vita*, which describes the earthly life and works of a Christian who had died as a saint and molds him in the image of a saint. This *vita*, which was written as the story of a fruitful and pious life, was not meant as a biography, but as a hagiography, aiming at the ecclesiastical canonization of the saint. In Bernard's case it was especially meant to illustrate the significance of Bernard's holiness for the whole church and society. Bernard was represented not only as a Cistercian abbot, but as a *doctor ecclesiae* as well, an authoritative preacher of the church and in service of the church.² That approach paved the way to a greater glory of the saint transcending his own order. It became the way in which the Middle Ages looked at him.

Although by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Bernard's fame had increased immensely (due to the larger distribution of his authentic and non-authentic writings since the last quarter of the fifteenth century), the image of the saint still had the same features as it originally had and was still determined by the hagiography of the *vitae*. Of great importance as an intermediary became Jacob de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, which gave excerpts from the early *Vita Prima*, the first hagiography written on Bernard of Clairvaux. Critical views on his person were muted by the time. His status, on the other hand, as a miracle-man kept growing steadily. Some original elements of his teachings were magnified; by the end of the Middle Ages Bernard was uncalled as a *doctor marianus* and a Master of the Passion and Imitation of Christ. Especially the

fifteenth century viewed him as the Master of Passion-Piety and, because of this fact, Bernard was mentioned together with the four most outstanding teachers of the church (*egregii doctores ecclesiae*): Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great.³

II. Luther and Bernard of Clairvaux

It was as a young Augustinian friar in the convent of Erfurt that Luther learned to know Bernard. We do not know very much about those early years, but there is no doubt that apart from his scholastic studies at the University of Erfurt, the *Studium Generale* of his order and personal spiritual reading brought him in touch with the fathers of the church aiming at piety and spiritual life.⁴ We do not know if he already read complete sermons of Bernard; we can say, at least, of these early years that he became familiar with some thoughts of St. Bernard. An example can be found in Melanchthon's *Vita Lutheri*; he claims to have heard this story from Luther himself. An old man in the Augustinian friary had shown Luther an important passage in Bernard's sermons which taught the necessity of a personal faith.⁵ Starting with the expounding of the Psalms in 1512, the young doctor Martin Luther showed already considerable familiarity with Bernard of Clairvaux. He seems to be well acquainted with his sermons, especially with those on the Song of Songs. My question here is not whether Luther knew Bernard of Clairvaux, but, rather, which Bernard he actually knew—the one of history or the one of legend, the one of iconography or the one of popular imagination and devotion? All these various aspects seem to play a part in Luther's image of Bernard. We shall deal here only with a few aspects of the subject.⁶

A. How Does Luther Refer to Bernard of Clairvaux?

The name of Bernard appears in Luther's writings in Latin as well as in German texts most often in German spelling as "Bernhardus" or "Bernhard" or "Bernhart."⁷ The regular spelling "Bernardus" (without an "h") occurs in Luther's Latin writings too. Generally the name has no *epitheton ornans*; but, when the young Luther (until 1518) does use one, it mostly is *beatus* (also used by many late medieval theologians as, for example, Jean Gerson and Johann von Paltz). From 1518 onward we can also find *d(i)uus*, an expression

which arose in humanistic circles and which was popular from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The author's impression is that this epitheton is particularly—but not exclusively—used in academic disputes and theses. We find it for the first time in the *Acta Augustana* (1518), which record Luther's interrogation by Cajetan in Augsburg. We also find it in the Dispute with Johann Eck in Leipzig (1519), in the *Operationes in Psalmos*, and in the *Commentary on Galatians* from the same time as well.⁸ In the same period the attributive *divus* is also used by Luther in conjunction with the names of Paul, Augustine, Jerome, and even Thomas Aquinas!

From 1518-1519 the attribute *sanctus* occurs, slowly replacing *beatus*. This development may be surprising against the background of Luther's new understanding of sanctity and the rising criticism of the worship of saints. After 1520 *beatus* has been permanently replaced by *sanctus*. Luther is now generally speaking of "Sanctus Bernhardus" or "Sanct Bernhard" (or "Sanct Bernhart") in his vernacular writings, especially in his sermons. Twice, in addition, we find "der heilige Bernardus" ("Bernhart")⁹ and the honorary "Pater Bernhardus."¹⁰ Luther was also acquainted with the honorary title *doctor mellifluus*, which became popular in the fifteenth century; but though he knew it, he rarely used it. From 1521 onward Bernard's name often appears in a sequence of saints. The sequences, in which Bernard's name is included, comprise either fathers of the church or founders and fathers of medieval monasticism. In the defense of his own case Luther often referred to this mighty cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1) from the past.

B. Which Writings of Bernard Did Luther Know?

Generally speaking, Bernard's writings can be divided into sermons, treatises, and letters. We find traces of all three genres in Luther's works, though the letters play only a minor role. Most important to Luther are the sermons; they are to him the best known and favorite part of Bernard's *opera*. Apart from Bernard's own writings he was also familiar with some anecdotes of Bernard's life. Although some of them can be traced back to the early *Vita Prima Bernardi*, Luther's knowledge of this hagiography itself can still be questioned.

1. Sermons of Bernard

We come across quotations from Bernard's sermons, more than from any other non-biblical source, throughout the course of Luther's life as a theologian and preacher. He did not, to be sure, always have these quotations at first hand from Bernard; most likely many came from anthologies (*Flores, Sententiae Bernardi*) and collections of excerpts (*rapiaria*) or indirectly through other authors like Gerson, Biel, Bonaventure, and Ludolph of Saxony. The quotations are often concise and not always very accurate, so that it is hard to decide the exact place from which Luther gets them. Luther—like all monks and friars—used to learn sentences of Bernard by heart, most of the time unaware of the exact sources. Thus, primary and secondary citations of Bernard are interwoven throughout Luther's life in his works.

What collections of Bernard's sermons did Luther know? There were firstly the collection of his sermons on the Canticle and secondly his sermons on the liturgical year (particularly the sermons on Advent and Christmastide). Both collections of sermons were available in the cloister of Erfurt probably already in Luther's time.¹¹ The Augustinian friar, therefore, could very well have known Bernard at first hand even in the early years. He also knew the collection of the four sermons *Super Missus Est*, but the question remains as to how well he knew them. They are quoted for the first time in the marginal notes to the *Opuscula Anselmi* in order to emphasize the relation between grace and humility.¹² Recently it has emerged that Luther drew this and other quotations of Bernard from Pseudo-Bonaventure's *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.¹³ Later on, in the course of his Table-Talk in 1533, Luther rejects Bernard's sermons in *Super Missus Est* because they deal too much with the position of the Virgin Mary and too little with the incarnation, but even then he does not seem very familiar with the contents of these sermons.¹⁴

It appears that Luther knew pseudo-bernardine sermons too, although he rarely mentions them specifically. They are, clearly, of minor significance to him. Some thoughts on detraction (*detractio*) originate from pseudo-bernardine sermons which are yet to be recovered. They turn up in the early years but disappear again soon.¹⁵

2. Treatises of Bernard

Compared to the sermons the treatises of Bernard play a much more modest part in Luther's works. Which ones did he know directly or indirectly? One is certain, others less so. There is, in the first place, Bernard's *De Consideratione*. There is no doubt that Luther had already, as a young monk, read this famous work of the elder Bernard. It is mentioned by him for the first time in his *Commentary on Romans* (1515). Although Luther highly praises this work in a general way, he does not quote from it very often. He usually restricts himself to a few favorite passages. This fact has caused the surprise which has been expressed by such scholars as Peter Manns. Why did Luther not quote more extensively from this popular work, and why were Bernard's critical remarks on the pope and Rome passed over in silence?¹⁶ One should not, however, immediately conclude that the popularity of *De Consideratione* was declining in Luther's days. The author could find no actual evidence to corroborate this opinion.¹⁷ There are, on the contrary, more indications that this book was still popular on the eve of the Reformation.

The five books named *De Consideratione* were treated by the Middle Ages as a rich source of ideas and certainly not only as a basis for criticizing Rome. Luther does not dwell on the popular texts which were drawn from the Fourth Book of *De Consideratione* (as, for example, *In His Successisti non Petro sed Constantino*). He creates, in a sense, his own tradition by borrowing materials from Bernard for his own theology. He criticizes the spiritual power of Rome, which binds the free preaching of the gospel, and no longer criticizes its worldly power and wealth. He is partial to referring to Bernard's definition of the hardened heart (*cor durum*) and to his exhortation to tend the sheep (*evangelizare pascere est*). In his last appeal to Rome in September of 1520, referring explicitly to *De Consideratione* twice, Luther derives from Bernard the authority to address the pope by means of fraternal exhortation. At the same time he also recommends to Leo X the book of St. Bernard which, in his opinion, "every pope should know by heart."¹⁸

At the debate in Leipzig of 1519 Johann Eck skillfully referred to Bernard's *De Consideratione* in support of the primacy of Peter and

his successors by the virtue of divine right. Luther was not impressed by this citation. He refuted the allegorical interpretation of Peter walking on the water (Matthew 14:29) by appealing to the literal sense of this story.¹⁹ Treading the water does not mean ruling the whole world! The point here is that Christ comes to rescue Peter from his unbelief. In later years, when Luther remembered the Leipzig Debate and Eck's reference to Bernard's interpretation of Matthew 14:29, it is not Bernard, but Eck, who is denounced for this peculiar allegorical interpretation. According to Luther, it is a typical conclusion of the new dialectics!

The other treatises of Bernard are mentioned by Luther to a much lesser extent. It is, therefore, a valid question as to which writings Luther knew and to what extent he was familiar with them. A closer look at the few writings of Bernard which are mentioned by Luther would be appropriate. *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* was the most popular and influential of Bernard's works among the scholastics.²⁰ But it also played a special role in the *Christianae Religionis Institutio* of John Calvin, who commented extensively on several passages.²¹ What did Luther hold of it? He knew the title, certainly, of the famous treatise, but was he familiar with its contents? Did he know Bernard's definition of free will and his distinction of three states of liberty (*liberum arbitrium, liberum consilium, liberum complacitum*)?²² He could have come across the definition involved in Gabriel Biel's *Commentary on the Sentences* in his early years.²³ The only place where he explicitly quotes from *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* is in his first Explanation of the Holy Father (1518). Here he refers to a sentence which actually is a contraction of two chapters of the *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*,²⁴ but he claims to take this sentence from Bernard's exposition of "the gospel of Mary Magdalene." Presumably Luther is referring here to a pseudo-bernardine sermon or treatise which has not yet been traced by contemporary scholars. But the more important point is that this sentence originally comes from *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, whether Luther was aware of it or not. "Wir können wollen, aber nicht wol wollen. Dan wollen ist vollkommen machen, das allein gottes ist, ubel wollen ist gebruch leyden, das ist unser."²⁵ Bernard taught a distinction between "creating grace" (*gratia creans*) and "saving grace" (*gratia salvans*). The first one is responsible for the

existence of the free subject, the second one for its achievement. This distinction was fairly popular in the twelfth century. Although it is generally Augustinian in character, Bernard's adoption of it may have had something to do with its popularity. What counts for Luther here is only the "saving grace," because free choice without saving grace is just an empty term. He knows that only the justified sinner can do good, while the unjustified sinner can only do evil. That means that for Luther Bernard (like Augustine) is an advocate of the bondage of the will and an ally in his battle against scholastic anthropology. "Here Saint Bernard throws down Aristotle's doctrine."²⁶ In the same year (1518) Karlstadt referred to Bernard's treatise in his eleventh thesis against Johann Eck.²⁷ Like Luther, he also viewed free choice and saving grace in Bernard's treatise as indissolubly linked together. Karlstadt and Luther wanted to start at the real situation of man, totally captured by sin and unable to do any good without saving grace.

It was a common scholastic usage to define the (created) nature of free choice principally apart from discussions of sin and grace. It was for this reason that Karlstadt's thesis was contested by Eck at Leipzig. According to Eck, also Bernard teaches a free choice of man as a gift of creation—that is to say, as a natural gift apart from grace. Free choice after the fall is not just an empty term, but remains unviolated.²⁸ To Karlstadt (and Luther), on the other hand, it is just an empty term if it is considered apart from grace. Thus, both points of view were extracted from the same treatise. Bernard himself had tried to keep grace and free choice in balance by vindicating the sovereignty of grace without subtracting from the dignity of free choice as a gift of creation. Bernard's treatise drew for this reason the attention of Melanchthon as well. In his *Loci Communes* (1521) he spoke of Bernard as having treated the question of the will in a rather ambivalent way. Bernard did not always remain true to himself (*non similis sui*). From the early twenties of the sixteenth century on Luther seems to follow this opinion of Melanchthon. He now discerns an ambivalence in Bernard's understanding of the will and blames it on the fact that the fathers of the church spoke differently in different situations. *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* is barely mentioned.

The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of *De Praecepto et Dispensatione* was extensive in the Middle Ages. It was often regarded as a commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict. Luther, indeed, knew the work, but rarely mentioned it—mainly in one treatise of 1521, his *De Votis Monasticis Iudicium*. Luther restricts himself to a few passages that are meant to emphasize generosity in the application of monastic dispensation and to show the limitation of obedience to human rule. The brief allusions clearly have an exemplary character;²⁹ they serve as corroboration of Luther's own view, developed from his understanding of Scripture, on the relationship between baptism and vows, Christian freedom and coercion by law, divine commandments and human precepts. Luther, following Bernard, teaches that, whereas divine commandments should always be obeyed, one may be exempted at times from obeying human precepts. Where Bernard, however, sees in the latter case only a limited possibility of dispensation by a monastic superior, Luther advocates a much more accommodating view.³⁰ For as things stand, human precepts are in essence subject to abolition.³¹ Luther is not, however, advocating an arbitrary policy of dispensation, as Denifle has wrongly stated.³² Dispensation is always a matter of prudence and wisdom for Luther, just as Bernard had taught previously. Following the pattern of the later Middle Ages, Luther understood *De Praecepto et Dispensatione* as a liberal guideline in cases of dispensations from human laws and precepts. In this sense Gerson too had referred to this treatise several times in his *De Vita Spirituali*.³³

No quotation from *De Gradibus Humilitatis* occurs anywhere in Luther's works, but he clearly was familiar with the bernardine understanding of *humilitas* as the basic virtue of monastic life. This familiarity particularly shows itself in his notes on the *Opuscula Anselmi*, but is also seen later on. In citing Bernard on the theme of humility, Luther usually quotes something from one of his sermons.³⁴

3. Letters of Bernard

It is not very likely that Luther was acquainted with Bernard's letters as such. He does, to be sure, know a few sentences drawn from them, mainly concerning the necessary progress (*profectus*) of a Christian in this life.³⁵ He is also acquainted with a sentence on

faith and baptism deriving from Letter 77, which was known in the tradition of following generations as the *Tractatus de Baptismo*.³⁶ Luther must have picked up these statements from his monastic tradition during his early years since there is no trace of evidence that he knew whence these quotations originally came.

4. Examples and Anecdotes

Examples and anecdotes from Bernard's life are sometimes hard to trace back to original sources. A number of them, however, stem ultimately from the first hagiography of Bernard, the *Vita Prima*. At no point, to be sure, does Luther show any direct acquaintance with the *Vita Prima*; but, still, he does know some of its contents indirectly, most likely through the popular *Legenda Aurea* and the *Breviarium Romanum* (lectiones IV-VI on the Feast of St. Bernard). *Exempla* and anecdotes of Bernard occur in Luther's works from 1518 on. They play minor parts except for the story of the blessed death of Bernard, which assumes a central position in Luther's image of Bernard. The lamentation "perditte vixi," which Luther places on Bernard's dying lips, is initially (1518) quoted as an example of Christian penitence and humility, of which Augustine and Bernard were the most impressive examples.³⁷ But in the *De Votis Monasticis Iudicium* (1521-1522) the prayer of St. Bernard receives a new meaning: his renunciation of his monastic vows in his dying hour and his return to Christ.

In opposition to Bernard's death his life was to Luther only a side-issue. It was not his person but Bernard as an example of true Christian faith which was the main focus of Luther's attention. The few facts of Bernard's life which Luther brings to the attention of others are mostly presented by way of example. The many journeys of Bernard in the service of the church are seen as a temporary abrogation of the *stabilitas loci*. For Luther this behavior illustrates the Christian freedom in which Bernard lived his monastic life. His excessive asceticism is rejected. It is understood as a serious way of undermining oneself and consequently as falling short in the service of one's brethren.

Legends and miracle-tales of Bernard, so abundant in the Middle Ages, are but rarely found in Luther's writings and sermons. Nor

are they regarded very highly by him. They are fabrications invented to promote an even higher regard for the saint, thus actually detracting from God's glorious activity in His saints. The conception of Bernard as a great miracle-worker was certainly known to Luther, but he paid little attention to it. The iconographic representation of the legendary miracle of the *lactatio* Luther undoubtedly knew but rejected.

III. Luther's Images of Bernard of Clairvaux

The images which Luther had of Bernard are firmly rooted in the late Middle Ages and are still in line with it. In the author's opinion one must speak, not of one clearly defined image, but rather of several *images* which in one way or another are connected with the historical person and the cultic figure of Bernard of Clairvaux. These images may very well have their origin in the historical person, but were also shaped by *Übermalung* (repainting). Luther contributed to this process, too, by adding his own reformatory touches to certain images. His image of Bernard thus resembles a mosaic in which the different pieces together make up some sort of whole.

A. Bernard as the Last Father of the Church

Although Bernard belongs to the more recent authors of the church (*recentiores*), he is clearly distinguished from scholasticism as representing a type of theology not yet infected by Aristotle and still in line with the fathers of the church. Occasionally Luther speaks of Bernard as *pater*, clearly pointing to the high authority of certain fathers of the church. In importance Bernard ranks as the third *doctor ecclesiasticus* after Augustine and Ambrose.³⁸ It may be noted that these fathers, too, were generally extolled for their eloquence in preaching. The expression "the last but not the least of the church's fathers," which became popular in humanist circles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was not yet in use in Luther's time.³⁹ In fact, however, Bernard and the Victorines were for Luther the last fathers before Aristotle took hold of the theology of the universities.

B. Bernard as a Preacher

The Middle Ages loved Bernard as a preacher in line with his stylized image in the *Vita Prima*, which the Cistercians wished to transmit to the generations to come. Bernard had been not only the abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux, but also a preacher in the service of the pope and the church. Bernard was first canonized as a holy abbot in 1174, but efforts by the Cistercians to have him recognized by the pope as a *doctor ecclesiae* proved successful soon thereafter in 1202.⁴⁰ Thus, the Franciscan tradition (represented for example, by Bonaventure) reckoned, not Bernard among the *contemplativi*, but among the *praedicatores*. The *Bernardus praedicans* is an important aspect of Luther's image of Bernard and a very positive one, since it is related to his preaching of Christ as the Savior of mankind. In Luther's opinion Bernard surpasses even Augustine in his sermons as a preacher (though not as a teacher of the church). When Bernard preaches of Christ, Luther has nothing but praise for him. "Bernhardo ist der Jesu so lieb; es ist eitel Jesus mitt im."⁴¹ For Luther this is sufficient reason for ranking Bernard highly in the tradition of the church—on the first grade as a preacher⁴² and on the third grade as a teacher.⁴³ He refers to Bernard mainly in connection with the incarnation and the union of the soul with Christ. Later on Luther's criticism is aimed in the first place at the doctrinal content of Bernard; when, for instance, Bernard extols Mary as he does, he obscures the place of Christ in salvation. Something similar can be said of the monastic life of Bernard: He lived this kind of life in freedom and taught likewise within his own community. Yet outside of it he taught under papal direction the perpetual obligation of the vows. In this way he became an instrument of deception and error to many people. Bernard's doctrine, then, shifted with the situation in which it was taught.

C. Bernard as an Interpreter of Holy Scripture

This aspect of Bernard's legacy is sometimes valued in a positive way and sometimes in a negative way—in a positive way particularly in Luther's early exposition of the Book of Psalms. Bernard's effective way of interpreting Scripture touched Luther deeply then. From the Book of Psalms Bernard had drawn his abundant erudition. He who, like Bernard, is versed in the Psalms, will find much more

in them than in all the commentaries ever written.⁴⁴ The Psalms were read with monastic eyes (*lectio-meditatio-oratio-contemplatio*),⁴⁵ and Luther tried to shed light on them with the help of the fathers, among others Bernard. It is not the personal authority of Bernard which is of first importance, but some of his thoughts which shed light on the scriptural text to be interpreted. In later years, of course, Luther, emphasizing the *sensus literalis*, criticizes the random use of allegory, whereas Bernard, in line with the whole patristic tradition, had placed great emphasis on the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures.⁴⁶ Luther came, therefore, to have criticism as well as appreciation for the *mirabilis artifex in catachresibus* ("the wonderful master of *catachreses*," which refers to misapplications of Scripture). Bernard's exegesis is not always to the point; the particular meaning of a text is often applied to a more general meaning (*generalis sententia*). This general meaning Luther often calls good or pious, even if the application seems mistaken to him (*sententia bona, sed non bene applicata*).

D. The Paradigm of Bernard's Blessed Death

Luther is not very interested in the life of Bernard, except in his death as the ultimate and most decisive moment in a Christian life. Two stories are cited by Luther which relate to the blessed death of Bernard. The first one involves the often cited *perdite vixi* which was already used by the later Middle Ages in the context of *ars moriendi* (Gerson). The second one is an anecdote from the *Vita Prima*, in which Bernard—taken away in a vision—is deposited in front of God's judgment seat and appeals to the "second heritage" of Christ. Christ has a "double heritage"; one He possesses by right of His divinity, the second He has merited through His suffering, yet without needing it for Himself. From 1521 onwards Luther often mentioned (and linked) these two stories together. Until his death they remained his most favorite recollections of Bernard. Initially (1518) Bernard appears, along with Augustine, as the prime example of ultimate repentance and self-accusation in one's dying hour. Beginning in 1521, however, Luther focuses on the *perdite vixi* as the final renunciation of monastic vows as good works meriting salvation. The continuing conception remains, however, the renunciation of human righteousness and final reliance on Christ by

faith alone.

E. Bernard as a Monk

According to Joseph Lortz in the congress on Bernard of 1953 in Mainz, Luther excluded Bernard from monastic life "in a grotesque way" by having him renounce his vows in his dying hour.⁴⁷ But did Luther, in fact, ever intend to exclude Bernard from monastic life? In opposition to this opinion is the fact that Luther never denied that Bernard lived the life of a monk until his dying day. Living the life of a monk could in itself be a good thing, so long as it was not considered a way of gaining eternal life. It is for this reason that Luther used to speak of Bernard as a monk in a twofold sense: He regarded him, on the one hand, as the greatest and most pious monk who had ever lived, while, on the other hand, Luther could not keep from pointing out that even the life of the most pious of monks could effect no salvation at all. The founders of the monastic orders had instituted monastic life as a life to be lived in freedom, but their followers had imitated them wrongly; they followed the fathers in their works instead of in their faith. Because of the circumstances Luther could speak of Bernard as a monk who, deceived by the pope, believed he could merit eternal life with his *Muncherey*, but who renounced his wasted life at the end and returned to faith in Christ.

Luther speaks of Bernard as a reformer of monastic life only once and in a limited sense—in *De Votis Monasticis*: Bernard had partly restored to his own community the *vera cultus dei* urged by St. Paul (1 Corinthians 14:26).⁴⁸ This true worship in faith is characterized by the *lectio* and *expositio* of Scripture, common prayer, and singing. More often Luther remembered Bernard as an excellent monastic preacher, because "nobody can teach the word of God better than monks can, just as St. Bernard and others did."⁴⁹ A cloister lacking *doctores fidei* has no reason to exist any longer; it would be better to tear it down altogether.⁵⁰ If, however, there were still people like Bernard living in the cloisters today, the cloisters could well be tolerated.⁵¹

F. Bernard as a Worshipper of the Virgin Mary

There is no doubt about the fact that Bernard had a personal

devotion to the Virgin Mary, but, in relation to the totality of his treatises and sermons, only a very small proportion (mainly sermons delivered on liturgical feasts) deal with her. The first biographers hardly spoke of Bernard's devotion to Mary, but from the thirteenth century on marian legends were woven around him:⁵² some miraculous appearances of Mary to Bernard appealed strongly to the pious imagination of people (such as the *lactatio*). In addition, the mariological treatises of such contemporaries of Bernard as Arnold of Bonneval, Eckbert of Schönau, and Oglerius of Locedio circulated under Bernard's name throughout Europe. It is no wonder that soon Bernard was praised in tradition and art as a *doctor marianus*.

The young Luther praises with Bernard the faith of Mary; she was the first believer in the incarnation of God's Son within her.⁵³ He appeals here to an old saying of Augustine (which was familiar to Bernard also), that the virgin would never have conceived the Son of God if she had not first believed the angel's word in her heart.⁵⁴ In later years, when Luther distances himself from the worship of the saints, he distances himself from Bernard's appraisal of Mary as well. The abbot had attributed too much to her (*zuviel gethan*). Bernard had not always spoken rightly about the annunciation in his sermon (*sic*) *Super Missus Est*; he had given too much room to human digressions in Mary's honor. Anyone who reads the sermons involved, will, indeed, find that Bernard praises the honor and the election of Mary at length and that he expresses himself in a style which Christine Mohrmann has rightly called an "exubérance quelque peu baroque."⁵⁵ One should also notice, however, that the abundant praise of Mary is set completely within the framework of the incarnation.⁵⁶ Though these homilies were written as personal praise of Mary, this praise was closely connected with the annunciation of the Lord. What was it, then, which offended Luther in these sermons?

(1.) In the first place, the four homilies called *Super Missus Est*, which figure prominently among those few works of Bernard in which the Virgin Mary plays an important part, served in the Middle Ages as primary sources of Bernard's reputation as a *doctor marianus*. By virtue of the wide distribution which they received in both manuscript and print, they contributed greatly to the image of

Bernard as a *docteur marial par excellence*.⁵⁷ Bernard, for instance—and especially these homilies of his—are the most important source of the discourses on the Feast of Annunciation by Jacob de Voragine in his popular *Legenda Aurea*. Gabriel Biel's sermons on the Virgin Mary and also his *Expositio Canonis Missae* likewise refer extensively to this series of homilies called *Super Missus Est*. Johann von Paltz, a fellow-friar of Luther, had asserted in his *Supplementum Coelifodinae* that Mary had effected through her humility (*per humilitatem*) the Son of God's becoming man.⁵⁸ Mary had become a second gateway to heaven, the Queen of Mercy, the Treasury of Heaven, and the solid Foundation of the Church, all expressions which Paltz had borrowed from Bernard.⁵⁹ Nor is the well-known theme of the *mediatrix* by any means absent. Mary, the Mother of Mercy, sustains mankind in the terrifying presence of the divine "judge, in whose hand the terrible sword of His wrath is glittering above our heads."⁶⁰

(2.) Luther's literal interpretation of Scripture is a second consideration which throws light upon the *zuviel gethan* previously cited. In the twenties of the sixteenth century Luther reinterpreted certain passages of Scripture which were generally understood in the tradition of the church in a mariological sense. It was precisely these passages, which Bernard in his *Super Missus Est* gives a traditional mariological interpretation—involving, for instance, the significance of the root of Jesse in Isaiah 11:1, the fullness of grace in Luke 1:28, and the agreeing (*fiat*) of Mary to the incarnation of Christ (Luke 1:38).⁶¹ For interpretations of this kind the theologians of the Middle Ages eagerly referred to Bernard, notwithstanding the fact that these interpretations were much older than Bernard.

(3.) Although, thirdly, Bernard had tried to keep a balance between the Mother and her Son, the sermons of *Super Missus Est* were still, after all, written as a personal appraisal of Mary. For Luther some aspects of this appraisal would have sounded too one-sided, giving too much honor to a mere human being: (a.) Bernard extols the dignity of Mary as a virgin and a mother in an exuberant style. (b.) He places Mary, not inside the church as the community of believers, but rather beyond and apart from the church—close to her Son. (c.) Bernard emphasizes the importance

of Mary's agreeing to the incarnation.⁶² (d.) He stresses the Eve-Mary analogy:⁶³ as Eve took part in the perdition of mankind, so Mary as Eve's daughter takes part in its redemption. (e.) Bernard poses as a question which of the two should be admired most—the condescension of the Son or the elevation of the mother.⁶⁴ For Luther there could be no such question: "Creatura Maria non potest satis laudari, sed wenn der Creator selb komt et fit pretium nostrum, da ist die freud."⁶⁵

It is not quite clear, however, from the scarce remarks involved, to what extent Luther's criticism of the sermons of *Super Missus Est* arose from a personal perusal of Bernard's homilies in praise of Mary or from the image of them shaped by tradition. Even if, moreover, he read the sermons themselves, Luther would have read them against the background of the medieval representation of Bernard as a *doctor marianus*; nor can we underestimate the influence of this image shaped by tradition. Luther was, in addition, strongly affected by some iconographic representations, notably the image of Mary as the staircase to heaven (*Heilstreppe*), which he repeatedly attributes to Bernard's writings. As God had reached mankind in the incarnation of His Son through Mary, so mankind had to use this staircase in the opposite direction. God the Father could only be reached through His Son and the Son only through His mother (double mediation). The mother showed her breast to her Son and, in His turn, the Son His wounded heart to the Father. Though Luther sometimes attributes this theme to Bernard's writings, he generally seems to refer more to images than to writings dealing with this subject. He speaks of "paintings" which had spread this misrepresentation.⁶⁶ An important literary source for this image is the *Libellus de Laudibus Beatae Mariae Virginis* by Bernard's confrater Arnold of Bonneval, but this booklet was often attributed to Bernard. Related imagery, moreover, can be found in some of Bernard's own sermons; Mary as Mother of Mercy provides protection to mankind from the wrath of God and His Son.

G. The Master of Passion-Piety

The fact that Bernard was considered in the late Middle Ages a *doctor passionis* is not a development without its oddities. Bernard received this title, in fact, mainly because of many *pseudo-Bernard-*

iana dealing with the passion of Christ.⁶⁷ Bernard had, however, become famous as a teacher of the *memoria passionis*; he taught affection and compassion for the sufferings and helplessness of the Savior of the world in his sermons. This fame was due, still, not only to the many sermons rightly or falsely attributed to him, but also to the famous miracle-tale of Bernard being embraced by the Crucified (*amplexus Christi*). Luther appears to be familiar with this legend. Bernard, nevertheless, as a master of passion-piety plays a less prominent part in Luther's theology than one might expect in view of his ample consideration of the suffering and death of Christ. If Bernard can be said to be of any importance in this regard, the reference is mainly to the young Luther. A few of his thoughts on the passion of Christ come originally from sermons of Bernard on the Song of Songs (in meditating on the wounds of Christ and describing the passion as a bundle of myrrh). Although these thoughts had become public domain in the Middle Ages and often appeared under the name of others (such as Augustine), we can by no means draw the conclusion that Luther did not know or read Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs themselves.⁶⁸

Special consideration is given by Luther to the wounds of Christ as focal points of meditation. The wounds of Christ could be understood in terms both of God's accusation of the sinner and of His mercy to him. Luther's monastic superior, Johann von Staupitz, seems to have played a major role in this interpretation of bernardine thought, according to Luther in some retrospective statements.⁶⁹ He taught that God's mercy rather than His judgment should be sought and found in the wounds of Christ. Meditating on the wounds of Christ dispels fears relating to predestination. In his commentary on the Letter to the Romans Luther urged the "weak" to stay, with him, close to the wounds of Christ; such meditation would protect them from fearful uncertainty of predestination.⁷⁰ "Tuta satis sunt nobis vulnera Ihesu Christi, 'foramina petre.'" ⁷¹ The allusion here is to Canticle 2:14 and indirectly to Bernard's famous Sermons 61-62 on the Song of Songs; the soul is like a dove, which finds shelter in the clefts of the rock constituted by the wounds of Christ.

The passion-piety of the late medieval period, aiming at the representation and imitation of the suffering Christ, was newly

reevaluated in the *theologia crucis*. Luther emphasizes that it is the work of God which the believer should discern in this suffering. He is, consequently, more interested in the *cognitio dei et hominis*, as a knowledge of sin and salvation, than in a merely outward imitation of the Man of Sorrows.

H. Bernard as a Mystic

In research on Luther it has become common to speak of Latin mysticism (Bernard and Bonaventure) as distinct from German mysticism (Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch*). Luther's position on Latin mysticism has been seen as ambivalent as opposed to his position on the German type. The usual illustration is the bridal imagery of Latin mysticism which was partly incorporated into Luther's theology and partly rejected by him because of its erotic connotations. It is, however, very much a question if Luther ever considered Bernard a mystic; he never, at any rate, explicitly refers to him as such. Nor does Luther ever criticize Bernard's bridal mysticism in specific terms. The reformer, in fact, rather than borrowing the theme of the mystical marriage directly from Bernard, more likely derived a simplified version from Staupitz. He left out the erotic connotations of the image and restricted himself to a more biblical application to the church and the individual soul.⁷² The bridal theme provides him with words to express the mutual affection in the relationship of Christ with the believing soul and of Christ with His church. Where there is any resonance to the themes of the mystics, Luther interprets them as referring to faith and the word of God.

I. Bernard as Doctor Mellifluus

From the fifteenth century on this title of *doctor mellifluus* was utilized widely. It originally referred to Bernard as an interpreter of Scripture who had the ability "to suck honey from a rock," knowing how to elicit a spiritual meaning from an otherwise dead letter (*mel in cera, devotio in littera*). For many medieval authors, however, the word "mellifluous" referred to Bernard's preaching by reason of the sweetness not only of its contents but also of its style. Luther rarely uses this honorific title, and when he does use it, he is not referring to Bernard as an interpreter of Scripture. Once he calls

him "mellifluous" in reference to his sermons on the Virgin Mary.⁷³ This understanding places Luther in a particular late-medieval tradition which attributed the title to Bernard as a *doctor marianus* of great popularity. This could be one reason why the title was of little importance to Luther.

J. Bernard as a Forerunner of the Reformation

In the course already of the sixteenth century it became popular among Lutherans and others to depict Bernard as a forerunner of Luther and his reformation. The abbot of Clairvaux was depicted in this way by Flacius Illyricus in his famous *Catalogus Testium Veritatis* (1556) and in the *Magdeburger Centurien* (1559 and subsequently).⁷⁴ Did Luther himself, however, ever think of Bernard as his forerunner? According to Luther's view of ecclesiastical history, certainly, Bernard lived in a time of spiritual decline. In his *Supputatio Annorum* (1541) Luther worked out an outline of the six millennia of the history of the church from Abel on. The name of Bernard appears at the beginning of the last millennium, which rang in the time of the antichrist and the return of Christ at the end of times. At the year 1000 Luther notes: "In this millennium Satan is now unchained and the bishop of Rome becomes the antichrist."⁷⁵ Bernard's name erroneously appears around 1080 instead of 1090, which means that Luther (like the writer in the *Legenda Aurea*) was unaware of the exact year of Bernard's birth. Luther also mentions that Bernard became a monk in 1112, was an abbot (for thirty-six years) who built one hundred sixty monasteries, and died in the year 1153.⁷⁶ These sparse facts were doubtless drawn from the *Legenda Aurea* or Luther's breviary. According to Luther, Bernard lived in times which were already dangerous, but still when darkness had not taken over the church completely. This eventuality would come a century later when Satan brought Rome to the height of its power and took over the universities, in which no longer Christ but Aristotle would rule. Bernard was one of the few people who kept the flame of faith burning in dark times. He preached the gospel, although public preaching was suppressed by the papal government.⁷⁷ Its effect was, therefore, limited, but God had still preserved in him His church in a wondrous way.

Was Bernard, then, a forerunner of Luther's reformation? Luther

never spoke of Bernard in these terms. If he was a forerunner, he was a messenger of the coming last times, just as Luther's reformation was the beginning of the end. To the end of his life Luther's expectation of an end coming soon kept growing. Luther hoped that God in His mercy would shorten the last years of history. In this light he could have seen Bernard and himself as forerunners of God's final reformation. In one instance of his table talks, five years before his death, Luther spoke of the course of the *ecclesia ab Abel* through history. Sometimes God preserved His church in no more than a handful of people. Like a final Jeremiah Luther puts himself in the line of Augustine, Ambrose, and Bernard, in his opinion the three greatest preachers of the post-apostolic church. Why did he call himself a Jeremiah? This prophet had to announce God's punishment and wrath to the people of his own time, but at the same time he had to comfort people with the message that this wrath would not last forever. With this prophet and with Bernard Luther saw himself sharing a *schweer Predigtamt*. Jeremiah had been a sad and pitiful prophet in evil times who in spite of his steady preaching saw things getting worse all the time. "Nu das Ende der Welt herzu trit, wüten und toben die Leute wider Gott auff's aller gewlichst, lestern und verdammen Gottes wort, das sie wissentlich erkennen, das es Gottes wort und die warheit sey."⁷⁸ Like a final Jeremiah Luther saw the end of times coming. It could now be expected soon. "Bernard did something, and now something is done by me, Jeremiah. And so the end may come and that it may come immediately let all pray: Come, Christ, come."⁷⁹

IV. Some Perspectives and Some Questions

In *Divus Bernhardus* the author concentrated above all on quotations of Bernard and probable allusions to him. They offer an approach, of course, of prime importance to the subject of Luther and Bernard. By no means, however, has the subject been thereby exhaustively treated. Reinhard Schwarz has indicated the problem very well: "In welchem Masse Luther im Nachdenken über seine eigene Christus-und Gotteserfahrung von Augustin und Bernhard gefördert worden ist, lässt sich schwer ermessen. Die Anregungen liegen vor allem im Medium der Schriftauslegung; sie lassen sich nicht einfach an Zitaten oder an bestimmten theologischen Begriffen

ablesen."⁸⁰ Heiko Oberman made the point very clearly that, without the experience of the "mystical way" from Augustine to Bernard of Clairvaux, there would not have been Luther's "experience-borne," vital faith in Christ.⁸¹ Perhaps understanding the young Luther's theology as a monastic theology or a *theologia experimentalis* offers us a valuable approach.

Until now scholars have mainly focused on the setting of Luther's theology in late medieval scholasticism and German mysticism. His biblical theology has been characterized as a theology aimed at reform of the university, which pitted itself against traditional scholastic theology. To what extent, however, is Luther's theology monastic theology as well?⁸² His theology also has its setting in the spiritual teaching of his own Augustinian Order.⁸³ It has been called "Luther's inalienable inheritance of monastic theology."⁸⁴ Monastic theology can be briefly described as a theology drawing upon Scripture and the fathers of the church and orientated toward an articulation of the experience of the spiritual life.⁸⁵ The author's research has not yet endeavored to define Bernard's influence on Luther; in his opinion it is still too early to do so. First the history of the reception of Bernard in the late Middle Ages must be explored in a more nuanced way. It is insufficient to conclude that he was highly appreciated. The reception of Bernard by the monastic orders at the dawn of the reformation has to be studied and particularly how Bernard was appreciated in Luther's own Augustinian Order.

Luther was acquainted with the late medieval passion-piety in which many traces of Bernard (*vestigia Bernardi*) could be found. We already referred here to sermons of Bernard on the Song of Songs which deal with the passion of Christ and which had a deep influence on later generations. Very popular was the metaphor of "the dove in the clefts of the rock," which stood for the soul finding a safe rest in the wounds of Christ. To what extent did these bernardine thoughts influence (directly or indirectly) the development of Luther's *theologia crucis*? Although it is too early to speak yet of influence, we can at least at this time note some striking similarities between Luther and Bernard and, even more importantly, some similarities of which Luther was aware: (1.) Both theologians were

rooted in Paul.⁸⁶ (2.) Both saw the manger and the cross as the primary locations of the hidden presence of God among men.⁸⁷ (3.) Both asserted the revelation of God in hiddenness to faith against reason. (4.) Both rejected speculative theology in favor of a theology oriented to the history of salvation. (5.) Both asserted the existential and personal nature of faith in man.⁸⁸

How can we reach a more definite solution of the question of what kind of influence Bernard of Clairvaux had on the genesis of Luther's theology of the reformation? A few things may yet be said here on reception and influence. One thing is that reception by no means necessitates the full acceptance of an author from the past. Luther's reception of Bernard of Clairvaux was understandably selective; he picked up certain thoughts of Bernard and left others alone, consciously or unconsciously. His selection was determined by the writings which he knew and the way in which he appreciated them. But this selection was also determined by his congeniality toward Bernard. According to Peter Manns, this congeniality was based on a *sensorium*, which Luther developed during his early years.⁸⁹ As Luther was familiar mainly with Bernard's sermons, he admired him as a biblical theologian and a wonderful preacher. He praised his exposition of Scripture as aiming at allowing the hearts of his hearers to experience God's goodness.⁹⁰ The two Christian thinkers had much in common; for both theology had to be a preaching theology which aimed at the personal salvation of man. All other speculations were useless to them, which made them both critical of scholastic theology as of philosophy in the region of theology. Both, moreover, propagated a theology which was built, not on a neutral ontological foundation, but on an experience in faith of the living God manifesting Himself in His word. Knowing oneself and knowing God was the Augustinian framework of this *theologia experimentalis*. That which they had in common, however, was also the point at which Bernard and Luther went their own ways by reason of their different personal experiences in different situations. For Bernard the mercy of God is no existential question. Man is supposed to become aware in life that he is touched by the love of God. Bernard's theology can be defined as a (monastic) road to loving God in return with all one's heart. It is the road of the pilgrim seeking perfection, though it is certain that

this goal will never be fully achieved in this life. Luther's theology starts with a fearful question: How can God ever be loved by a sinner? How can the sinner ever be sure that he is dealing with a merciful God? Loving God can only start with believing in God's mercy. The road to God, then, becomes the road from God to mankind. God seeks out sinners and wants to tie them forever to His liberating grace. If a man believes this much about himself, he is already justified. How did the thoughts of Bernard fit with the justification by faith alone which became the heart of Luther's theology? Without portraying Bernard as a forerunner of Luther the Reformer,⁹¹ there can be no doubt that Bernard was a great help to him on his road to understanding faith as a clinging of the heart to the word of God.⁹² On his road to the reformation Bernard was a true companion to Luther; but also in his later years Luther remembered Bernard as the greatest of all the fathers of the church after Augustine.⁹³ Certainly Luther must have been aware also of several differences between himself and Bernard, but to Luther these were matters of minor importance. Their theologies circled around the same focal point of personal experience of the Holy Writ. William of St. Thierry states in his hagiography that Bernard often used to say, "It is better to drink from the source itself than from the many streams."⁹⁴ Almost four hundred years later a doctor of Scripture at the University of Wittenberg would make this saying very much his own.

The Endnotes

1. P. de Leo, "La Posterité spirituelle," in *Bernard de Clairvaux, Histoire, mentalités, spiritualité, Oeuvres complètes, I: Introduction Générale (Sources Chrétiennes, 380; Paris, 1992), 659-698, here 660-661.*
2. This is one of the main themes of a new book by A. H. Bredero, *Bernardus van Clairvaux, Tussen cultus en historie* (Kampen-Kapellen, 1993), 98.
3. B. Hamm (*Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis* [Tübingen, 1982], 193) speaks of a bernardine renaissance in the fifteenth century by virtue of his popularity as a master of

passion-piety.

4. C. Burger, "Der Augustinereremit Martin Luther in Kloster und Universität bis zum Jahre 1512," in *Kloster Amelungsborn 1135-1985*, ed. G. Ruhbach and K. Schmidt-Clausen (Amelungsborn, 1985), 166. More extensive remarks on the *Studium Generale* of Erfurt can be found in O. Scheel, *Martin Luther*, II, chapter 1, paragraph 3.
5. For a discussion of this story one may see the author's "*Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, An Example of Bernard-Reception in Luther's Theology," in *Bijdragen*, 53 (1992), 62-72.
6. The theme is treated more extensively in the author's *Divus Bernhardus, Bernhard von Clairvaux in Martin Luthers Schriften* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, 148, Mainz, 1993).
7. J. Leclercq, "Die Verbreitung der bernhardischen Schriften im deutschen Sprachraum," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux, Mönch und Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, 1955), 176 ff.
8. WA, 2, 15, 18; 2, 264, 2; 2, 543, 6; 2, 602, 8; 5, 47, 13; 5, 286, 10; 27, 335, 33; 39, II, 159, 23.
9. WA, 9, 107, 19; 21, 60, 20.
10. WA, 47, 109, 22; 52, 22, 2.
11. *De Consideratione* (Augsburg), *Sermones super Cantica Cantorum* (Strassburg, 1497), *Sermones de Tempore et de Sanctis* (Basel, 1495). One may also see J. Matsuura, *Restbestände aus der Erfurter Augustiner-Bibliothek zu Luthers Zeit*, in *AWA*, 5, 315-332; A. Zumkeller, *Handschriften aus dem ehemaligen Erfurter Augustinerkloster in der Staatsbibliothek Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, in *A. Aug.*, 40 (1977), 223-277; D. Gutiérrez, "De Antiquis Ordinis Eremitarum Sancti Augustini Bibliothecis," in *A. Aug.*, 13 (1954), especially (on Bernard) 186, 200, 207, 214, 221, 232, 243, 245, 247, 275, 277, 278, 303, 306, 307.
12. WA, 9, 107, 28, citing *Missus* 4, 9.
13. Ulrich Köpf, "Die Rezeptions und Wirkungsgeschichte Bernhards von Clairvaux," in *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, ed. Kaspar Elm

(Wiesbaden, 1994), 13-14.

14. WA, TR, 1, note 494: "Bernhardus consumit totum sermonem in laude virginis Mariae et obliviscitur rei gestae . . ." It is remarkable that Luther talks here about one sermon instead of four sermons. Possibly he had never read them and had drawn his scanty knowledge about them from another source.
15. WA 1, 49, 38; 4, 681, 4. One may see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 76-77, 244; 387.
16. P. Manns, "Zum Gespräch zwischen M. Luther und der katholischen Theologie: Begegnung zwischen patristisch-monastischer und reformatorischer Theologie an der Scholastik vorbei," in *Thesaurus Lutheri: Auf der Suche nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung*, ed. T. Mannermäa, A. Ghiselli, and S. Peura, Helsinki, 1987. Manns calls "das Echo auf diese Schrift . . . ausgesprochen mager. [. . .] Trotzdem müsste Bernhards scharfe Kritik an der Pseudomorphose des ursprünglichen Petrus-Amtes durch die päpstlichen Potentaten in der Nachfolge Konstantins eigentlich Luthers Interesse gefunden haben" (149).
17. Manns, *Zum Gespräch*, 149: "Dies mag seinen Grund darin haben, dass Bücher von dieser Berühmtheit auch für mittelalterlichen Leser schnell den Reiz der Neuheit verloren." One may compare Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 141-146.
18. WA, 7, 10, 29; Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 147.
19. *De Consideratione*, II, 8, 16. Another argument was taken by Eck from *De Consideratione*, III, 4, 17-18.
20. J. Châtillon, "L'influence de S. Bernard sur la pensée scolastique au XIIe et au XIIIe siècle," in *Saint Bernard Théologien*, ASOC, 9 (1953), 3-4:268-288.
21. B. McGinn, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatises III* (Kalamazoo, 1977), 48-50.
22. SBO, III, 170-171 (*De Gratia* 3, 6-7): *libertas a necessitate, libertas a peccato, libertas a miseria*. Although the *liberum arbitrium* remains free, it is at the same time captured by sin. It is at this point from which Luther starts.
23. Gabriel Biel, *Collectorium circa Quattuor Libros Sententiarum*, ed. W. Werbeck and U. Hofmann (Tübingen, 1973 ff.), II, 487,

-
- 489, 490. Biel provides three definitions of the free will—those of Anselm, Bernhard, and Augustine (II, 25). One may compare II, 485: "Beatus Bernardus in suo *De Libero Arbitrio* sic definit: Est 'consensus ob voluntatis inamissibilem libertatem et rationis,' 'indeclinabile iudicium.'" One may see *SBO*, III, 169, 4 (*De Gratia*, 2, 4).
24. We have here a contraction of *De Gratia*, 6, 16, and 18.
25. WA, 9, 137, 19. One may see McGinn, *Treatises III*, 25. Johann Agricola, the publisher of Luther's *Explanation of the Holy Father* (1518), indicated *De Gratia* as the original source in the margin.
26. WA, 9, 137, 23: "Hye wirfft darnydder Bernhardus dye lere Arestotelis, da er sagt, ein mensch sey eyn herr aller seiner werck, anfanges, mittels und endes. Wye kan und magk aber das bestehen, dyweyl der will, dem Arestoteles die groste macht gibt, nicht gutes tzuwollen vormagk?"
27. V. E. Löscher, *Vollständige Reformatiions-Acta und Documenta* (Leipzig, 1720 ff.), III, 289.
28. Eck asserted, ". . . dass der freie Wille nach den Fall nicht ein blosser leerer Name sei, sondern unverrückt geblieben . . ." (G. Walch, *Sämliche Schriften*, 15, 863). One may compare Bernard, *SBO*, III, 181, 24 (*De Gratia*, 7, 21): "Arbitrii utique libertatem, tam post peccatum quam ante, semper tenuit inconcussam."
29. The exemplary character of the quotations involved appears clearly in the formulations used by Luther in *De Votis Monasticis*: ". . . adeo ut et S. Bernhardus asserat" (WA, 8, 586, 17); "Concors est sententiā, quam et Bernhardus probat" (WA, 8, 653, 37); ". . . ut et Bernhardus docet" (WA, 8, 646, 9).
30. Especially the second part of *De Praecepto* (Chapters II-IV) discusses dispensation from the Rule of Benedict. Luther shows no interest in the rest of Bernard's treatise. He merely refers to the opinion of Bernard as an illustration of the limited nature of the Rule of Benedict.
31. Bernard distinguishes between *necessarium stabile, inviolabile*, and *incommutabile* (*Pre*, II, 4). Only the *necessarium stabile* has some room for dispensation, in so far as superiors can dispense

their subordinates from precepts made by men (such as the rules of orders and the decrees of councils).

32. H. S. Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum in der ersten Entwicklung*, I, 1, 50. WA, 8, 634, 1 ff. One may also see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 221; 226, note 229.
33. One may see Jean Gerson, *Oeuvres*, III, 193, 194, 199. He opposes those people who place divine and human precepts on the same level, attaching divine authority to the latter (201). According to his own words he built his *De Vita Spirituali* on the basis of Bernard's treatise: ". . . [Bernardus] scripsit volumen pulcherrimum *De Praecepto et Dispensatione*, qui liber huic operi nostro pro fundamento supponatur" (129).
34. *Missus* 4, 9, *Epi.* 1, 7, *SC*, 34, 3, *Div.* 25, 4.
35. The quotations involved stem from three letters (Ep. 91, 3; Ep. 244, 4, and Ep. 385, 1). The only other quotation from a letter of St. Bernard can be found in the marginal notes to the *Opuscula Anselmi*. Again it is a widely known sentence: "Multo facilius reperies multos seculares ad bonum converti quam unum de religiosis transire ad melius" (Ep. 96). One may see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 78 and 71-75.
36. *SBO*, VII, 190, 17 (*De Baptismo*, 2, 8). WA, 41, 594, 29; WA, 41, XXXV. WA, 10, III, 142, 18 (without mentioning Bernard's name).
37. Possibly Luther learned this quotation from Gerson, *Sermo Nuptiae Facta Sunt* (*Oeuvres*, V, 393). One may compare WA, 38, 154, 10: ". . . wie es auch Gerson an zeucht: Ich habe verdamlich gelebt und mein leben verloren . . ." One may see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 132.
38. WA, TR, 1, 683; WA, TR, 5, 5242. In the latter instance of his table-talk Luther places himself in this sequence after Bernard as a Jeremiah who announces the end of time.
39. "Ultimus inter patres, sed primis certe non impar." This title goes back to Nicolas Faber (1554-1612). Humanists saw Bernard as the symbol of a whole spiritual world, a whole literature which was a prolongation of the patristic age (Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*, 107; note 45). O. Rousseau, "Saint Bernard 'Le dernier des Pères'," in *Saint Bernard Théologien*,

- ASOC*, 9 (1953), 3-4:300-308; M. B. Pranger, "Bernardus van Clairvaux, de laatste der Vaders?" in *Millennium, Tijdschrift voor Middeleeuwse studies*, 2 (1988), 1, 41-46.
40. The mass-formulary was changed from the *commune abbatum* "os iusti" to the *commune doctorum ecclesiasticorum* "in medio ecclesiae." One may see A. H. Bredero, *Bernardus van Clairvaux*, 93-97. According Bredero it means a "shifted image of holiness" (93).
 41. WA, TR, 5, 5439. One may compare *SBO*, I, 115, 3-7 (*SC*, 20, 2): "Super omnia, inquam, reddit amabilem te mihi, Jesu bone, calix quem bibisti, opus nostrae redemptionis. Hoc omnino amorem nostrum facile vindicat totum sibi. Hoc, inquam, est quod nostram devotionem et blandius allicit, et iustius exigit, et arctius stringit, et afficit vehementius."
 42. WA, TR, 1, 871: "Bernhardus ubertrifft in seinen Predigten alle andere doctores, auch Augustinum selber, denn er lehret Christum sehr fein . . ." One may also see TR, 1, 872; 584; TR, 3, 3370b; WA, 47, 694, 4.
 43. WA, TR, 1, 683. Bernard ranks here as the third teacher after Augustine and Ambrose. The fact that Luther in a few instances of his table-talk distinguishes between preachers and teachers, does not mean that he did not appreciate Bernard as a teacher and theologian as R. Mousnier and B. McGinn have falsely concluded. One may see, for instance, B. McGinn's introduction to *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, VII; *Treatises III* (Kalamazoo, 1977), 46, note 147.
 44. WA, 5, 47, 13.
 45. Luther later changed the phraseology to *oratio-meditatio-tentatio* (WA, 50, 657-661). *Lectio* is thereby merged with *meditatio*, which may point to the inseparability of letter and spirit. *Oratio* is put in first place because there is no true understanding of Scripture without praying God incessantly for such understanding. *Tentatio* is closely connected with meditation; the whole man in his intellect and emotions is waylaid by temptations from the outside and from the inside; the consolation of God's word in temptation is a matter of experience. One may see M. Nicol, *Meditation bei Luther* (Göttingen, 1984), 179 ff.

-
46. SC, 73, 1-2: "Hic litterae, et haec iudeorum portio. Ego vero, quemadmodum accepi a Domino, in profundo sacri eloquii gremio spiritum mihi scrutabor et vitam: et pars mea haec, qui in Christum credo."
 47. J. Lortz, *Introduction to Bernhard von Clairvaux: Mönch und Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, 1955), xxv. The relationship between Lortz's opinion and Denifle's polemical statements is discussed in *Divus Bernhardus*, 210 ff.
 48. WA, 7, 622, 28ff. One may find more in Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 219.
 49. WA, 8, 648, 26.
 50. WA, 8, 328, 32.
 51. WA, 8, 622, 31-32.
 52. B. Schellenberger, *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Einführung* (Olten-Freiburg, 1982), 53-55.
 53. WA, 2, 15, 17: "Unde fidem eius [Mariae] miratur divus Bernhardus et universa ecclesia."
 54. WA, 9, 518, 6: "Hoc miraculum . . . inquit Bernhardus, certe ipsum est, das sy es glaube, nisi enim credidisset, numquam concepisset." For Bernard, one may see *Nat.* 2, 4. One may also see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 274.
 55. C. Mohrmann, *Observations sur la langue et le style de saint Bernard*, in *SBO*, II, xxv.
 56. Bernard de Clairvaux, *A la louange de la vierge mère, Oeuvres complètes, XX* (*Sources Chrétiennes*, 390; Paris, 1993), 44: "Car jamais Bernard ne sépare la Vierge Marie de son Fils. Elle n'existe qu'en fonction de lui."
 57. Bernard de Clairvaux, *A la louange de la vierge mère*, 29.
 58. Johann von Paltz, "De Humilitate Glorioso Virginis Marie" ("qua deum traxit de celis, tria vota emisit pro omnibus religiosis et omnia monasteria, immo totam fidem christianam fundavit"). One may also see M. Düfel, *Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung* (Göttingen, 1948), 41.
 59. R. Fischer, "Paltz und Luther," in *Lu. J.*, 37 (1970), 27, note 90.

Lohse, *Mönchtum*, 164.

60. Johann von Paltz, *Supplementum Coelifodinae* (*Werke*, II), 102, 11: "Ecce coram tremendo iudice peccatores assistimus, cuius manus terribilis gladium irae suae vibrat super nos."
61. WA, 7, 549, 8 (*Virga Jesse*); WA, 12, 456, 24 (*gratia plena*); *September-Bibel* (1522): "gegrusset seystu holdselige" (WA, DB, VI, 210). WA, 7, 565, 35: "wohl Vorbeterin, keine Fürsprecherin." WA, 9, 573, 24 (against emphasizing human agreement). Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 344.
62. *Missus*, 4, 8.
63. *Missus*, 2, 3.
64. *Missus*, 1, 7.
65. WA, TR, I, 494, possibly an allusion to SC, 1, 7.
66. WA 33, 83, 30; comparing WA 37, 207, 35: "pingebant"; WA 10, 1, 2, 434, 17: "pfllegt zu malen"; WA 46, 663, 31; 47, 257, 9; 52, 22, 2: "gemalet." One may also see WA 47, 257, 9 and WA 33, 83, 34, where Luther talked about "die Mahler im Papstumb." Once Luther explicitly states that the picture was taken from "Sankt Bernhards Buchern" (WA 33, 83, 38). In regard to the final sentences of III. F, see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 316-320.
67. K. Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*, I (München, 1990), 243.
68. M. Elze, "Züge spätmittelalterliche Frömmigkeit in Luthers Theologie," in *Z. Th. K.*, 62 (1965), 388. One may also see A. McGrath (following Elze's opinion), *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford, 1990), 73; and the author's discussion of Elze in *Divus Bernhardus*, 250-251.
69. WA, TR, 1, 1017; TR, 2, 1490; 1820; 2654; TR, 5, 5658a; WA, 43, 461, 10-11.
70. WA, 56, 386, 30 ff.
71. WA, 56, 400, 1.
72. WA, 5, 163, 9. Luther criticizes here an erotic understanding of the Song of Songs.

-
73. WA, 20, 638, 1. An allusion to the title *mellifluus* may also be found in WA, TR, 4, 4321.
74. Theo Bell, "Pater Bernardus. Bernard de Clairvaux vu par Martin Luther," in *Cîteaux*, 1990, 233-235: "Bernard, précurseur de la Réforme."
75. WA, 53, 152.
76. WA, 53, 156-157.
77. WA, 45, 46, 13.
78. Martin Luther, *Die gantze Heilige Schrift*, ed. H. Volz, II: "Vorrede uber den Propheten Jeremia," 1270.
79. WA, TR, 5, 5242 (September, 1540). One may compare WA, BR, 1, 83, 16.
80. R. Schwarz, "Martin Luther," in *Grosse Mystiker: Leben und Wirken* (München, 1984), 188.
81. H. A. Oberman, "Die Bedeutung der Mystik von Meister Eckart bis Martin Luther," in *Die Reformation: Von Wittenberg nach Genf* (Göttingen, 1986), 42: "Sicher ist jedoch, dass wir ohne mystische Theologie keinen 'jungen Luther' kennen würden, dass es ohne die Erfahrung des mystischen Weges von Augustin bis zu Bernhard auch nicht den erfahrungsträchtigen, vitalen Christusglauben Luthers gegeben hätte."
82. T. Rasmussen, *Inimici Ecclesiae* (Leiden, 1989), 17: "So identifizierte sich Luther in seiner ersten Psalmenvorlesung weitgehend mit einer monastischen Tradition der Schriftauslegung. Das monastische Leben und die monastische 'humilitas'-Spiritualität, die durch Jahrhunderte eine im Wesentlichen konstante und stabile 'Lebenswelt' ausgemacht hatten, war für ihn der prägende Erfahrungshintergrund bei der Aneignung der Werke der altkirchlichen und mittelalterlichen Exegeten." U. Köpf calls Luther "der grösste monastische Theologe des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts" in his "Monastische Theologie im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte*, 11 (1992), 135. According to Köpf, Luther "knüpft nicht an die monastische Theologie des 15. Jahrhunderts, sondern in selbständigem Rückgriff wieder an die Bernhards an."
83. P. Manns, *Martin Luther* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1982), chapter

- 2: "Luthers Erfurter Klosterzeit: Vom Novizen zum Priester-Mönch," 25-88. Manns calls Luther's "geistliche Erziehung zum Mönchtum und Priestertum . . . von eminenter Bedeutung für seine reformatorische Entwicklung" (27). One may also see Ulrich Köpf, "Martin Luthers Lebensgang als Mönch," in *Kloster Amelungsborn, 1135-1985*, 187-208.
84. R. Schwarz, "Luthers unveräusserte Erbschaft an der monastischen Theologie," in *Kloster Amelungsborn, 1135-1985*, 209-232. A translation by F. Posset is available in *The American Benedictine Review*, 39 (1988), 430-450. Peter Manns, "Zum Gespräch zwischen M. Luther und der katholischen Theologie: Begegnung zwischen patristisch-monastischer und reformatorischer Theologie an der Scholastik vorbei," in *Thesaurus Lutheri: Auf der Suche nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung*, ed. T. Mannermaa, A. Ghiselli, and S. Peura (Helsinki, 1987), 63-154.
85. J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York, 1982), chapter 9: "Monastic Theology" (191-235). The work was originally published as *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu: Initiation aux auteurs monastiques du moyen age* (Paris, 1957). For a characterization of sources, methods, and objects of monastic theology, one may see Jean Leclercq, "Saint Bernard et la théologie du XIIe siècle," in *ASOC*, 9 (1953), 3-4:7-23.
86. One may see, for instance, *SC*, 10, 1; *Div.* 7, 1: "Considera quantum superexcedere Pauli philosophia philosophiam sapientium mundi huius, quae nimirum stultitia est apud Deum."
87. Theo Bell, *Pater Bernardus*, 238: "L'attention durable aux mystères de la crèche et de la croix relie les deux moines. Dieu ne se laisse pas trouver dans les hauteurs, mais dans les profondeurs de l'humiliation, dans ce qui dépasse tout entendement humain. C'est là que se trouve une racine de la theologia crucis de Luther, où la folie de la Croix contraste violemment avec la sagesse de ce monde."
88. One may see *Ann.* 1, 1 especially and 1, 3 (*SBO*, V, 14), which is quoted by Luther several times: *WA*, 56, 369, 28; 56, 79, 15; 57, III, 26, 7; *WA*, 2, 458, 20.
89. Manns, *Zum Gespräch*, 143.

-
90. WA, 3, 186, 34.
 91. Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, 1966), chapter 1: "The Case of the Forerunner," 39: "To take Luther's doctrine of justification as the sole standard by which to identify a Forerunner, limits the Reformation to this one issue and betrays a dangerous bias of confessionalism."
 92. One may see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, chapter 2 (91-107).
 93. WA, 47, 694, 4, 26; WA, TR, 1, 871, 872; WA, TR, 3, 3370.
 94. *Vita Prima* I, 4, 24 (PL 185, 241). One may also see Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 165-169.

Dr. Theo Bell serves in the Catholic Theological University of Utrecht (in the Netherlands).