LUTHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD
ST. BERNARD

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, Marquette University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
July, 1969
Historians generally speak of Luther's high regard for St. Bernard. To a varying degree they see the twelfth century monk as an influence on Luther. Whoever reads Luther's writings will encounter references to Bernard. What was it that attracted Luther to the Cistercian? Was this interest of such a nature that Bernard became a major factor in Luther's life? Did Luther's praise for the Cistercian abbot continue throughout his life? These questions call for answers. While doing a "Bibliographical Study of Luther and the Reformation" under the direction of Dr. R. Zupko of Marquette University I found that only limited research had concerned itself with Luther as he relates to Bernard. It seems reasonable then to undertake a quantitative and horizontal study of Luther's attitude toward the medieval monk and saint.
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ABBREVIATIONS

LW    Luther's Works, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis and Philadelphia, 1955-).


WA    D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. (Weimar, 1883-).

WM    D. Martin Luthers Werke. Briefwechsel. (Weimar, 1930-).

INTRODUCTION

Bernardus Claraevallensis was the last, but not the least, of the Church Fathers. Although Bernard declined any position of authority within the hierarchy of the Church, although he accepted no ecclesiastical preferment beyond the abbacy of Clairvaux, his influence was considerable during the twelfth century and far beyond. It was Bernard who injected new life into the Cistercian order. He traversed Europe to end a papal schism. He was victorious over Abelard, his superior in dialectical skill. He was the preacher and protagonist of the Second Crusade, the failure of which can hardly be charged against him. Indeed, it was he who became the mentor of Eugene III, a Cistercian who rose to the papacy, and wrote his famous De consideratione sui by way of paternal Christian concern for his spiritual son. Quite properly Bernard has been called "one of the most prominent personalities of the twelfth century, of the entire Middle Ages, and of church history in general."\(^1\) At the 800th anniversary of his death, in 1953, Pius XII honored the memory of this "last of the Fathers" with the Encyclical Letter, Doctor Mellifluus.\(^2\)

Among those who esteemed Bernard highly was Martin Luther. In his early years he quoted Bernard with approval. However, also after Luther had broken with Rome, after he had renounced monasticism, a major factor in Bernard's life, Luther continued to count Bernard among the greatest of doctors, preachers, and monks. As a doctor of the Church he placed

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Bernard third, after Augustine and Ambrose. Bernard, the preacher, however, "excelled all other doctors, even Augustine himself." He is "pure gold when he teaches and preaches." Even as a monk Bernard receives commendation from Luther. Admitting that "Francis, Dominic, Bernard, and the others . . . were not without their gifts," Luther singles out Bernard as the one whom he prefers "above all the others, for he had the best knowledge of religion . . ." He regarded him as "the most pious of all the monks" and preferred "him to all the others, even to St. Dominic." To the end of his life, Luther continued to have the high regard for Bernard that he expressed in 1524: "St. Bernard was a man so lofty in spirit that I almost venture to set him above all other celebrated teachers both ancient and modern."

In view of Bernard's position of eminence and influence, in view of Luther's high esteem for the Cistercian abbot, the question is relevant: Did Bernard exert a theological influence on the sixteenth century reformer? Did Bernard make a significant contribution that led Luther

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3 WT 1, No. 683: "Bonaventura inter scholasticos doctores optimus est. Inter ecclesiasticos doctores Augustinum primas tenet, Ambrosius secundas, Bernhardus tertas."

4 WT 1, No. 872: "Bernhardus in sermonibus suis omnes alios doctores, etiam ipsum Augustinum excellit . . ."

5 WT 1, No. 584: "Sic Bernhardus ist gulden, quando docet et praedicat . . ."


7 WA 47, 109: "Also hat auch S. Bernhard gethan, welchen ich fur den aller fromsten Munch halte und allen andern Munchen, auch S. Dominico, furziehen . . ."

8 WA 15, 40: "Sanct Bernhart ist eyn man von grossem geyst gewesen, das ich yhn schier thurst uber alle lerer setzen, die berumbt sind, beyde alte und newe."
to his ultimate evangelical theology? What was Luther's attitude toward Bernard? To investigate this question I shall begin by examining a much quoted excerpt from Melanchthon's biography of Luther, written soon after Luther's death. Thereupon, I shall take up a study of references to Bernard from Luther's own writings. These will be examined for what they reveal about Luther's knowledge of Bernard and about Luther's attitude toward Bernard's views. In the final part I shall make some observations and draw some conclusions that this examination seems to justify.
I. MELANCTHON'S BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE

Was Luther influenced by Bernard in his theological development? A source that historians have used in answering this question is the biography of Luther, written by Melanchthon soon after Luther's death in lieu of an autobiography from Luther's own pen.

Köstlin, one of the first to write on the history of Luther's theological development, sees Bernard's sermons exerting as much of an influence on Luther as Staupitz's personal assurances. He bases this on an excerpt from Melanchthon's biography. In Luther's spiritual struggles at Erfurt an old Augustinian monk had directed Luther to this statement from Bernard's sermon De Annuntiatione:

In addition you must also believe that through Him your sins are forgiven. This is the testimony that the Holy Spirit has put into your heart when he says: 'Your sins are forgiven you.' For this is the meaning of the Apostle, that man, without merit, is justified through faith.9

Melanchthon, according to Köstlin, sees the witness of Bernard's sermons exerting a powerful influence on Luther in spite of all the other parts of Bernard's theology that Luther considered unevangelical.10

Schaff in his seven volume History of the Christian Church quotes Köstlin and the comment on Melanchthon's biography as evidence of Luther's high regard for Bernard.11 Fife refers to Melanchthon's biography to show that "the practical mysticism of the great medieval

10Ibid., p. 26
preacher may well have furnished him (Luther) with consolation in the Erfurt days."  
Schwiebert adds a further comment of Melanchthon to the effect that the statement from Bernard's sermon "clarified for him the meaning of the passage in Romans: 'The just shall live by faith.'"  

Referring to Luther's struggles at Erfurt, Kuiper, too, mentions Bernard of Clairvaux and Johann von Staupitz as the "two men who did more than any others to help him through this period."  

More recently Atkinson says that "Bernard is known to have had an influence on the young Luther," and Pauck on the basis of the Lectures on Romans sees the mystics, particularly Bernard of Clairvaux and Tauler, as important, after the Bible and Augustine, in determining Luther's theological outlook.  

However, Pauck credits not only Bernard's mysticism with attracting Luther to him, but also Bernard's "teaching on the personal faith in the forgiveness of sin."  

This is the content of the quotation mentioned by Melanchthon from Bernard's De Annuntiatione, which Luther quotes in his Romans lectures.  

Closely related to the question of Bernard's influence on Luther is another: to what extent did Luther occupy himself in his early years with reading Bernard's writings?

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13 E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis, 1960), p. 171.  
14 Barend Klass Kuiper, Martin Luther, The Formative Years (Grand Rapids, 1933), p. 118.  
17 Ibid., p. i.
Kuiper lists Bernard as the greatest of all the mystics with whose writings Luther came into contact in his studies at Erfurt from 1505 to 1508.\(^\text{18}\) However, he gives no evidence from which this conclusion is drawn. Fife, too, asserts that Luther's "acquaintance with the works of Bernard of Clairvaux . . . dated back to his early theological studies in Erfurt."\(^\text{19}\) Preserved Smith mentions Bernard of Clairvaux together with Occam, Gabriel Biel, Ailly, Gerson, Bonaventura, Mauburn and Gerhard of Zütphen as the men whom Luther read between 1505 and 1512. Of these, especially Bernard, Bonaventura, Gerson, and Gerhard of Zütphen are listed as those whom Luther continued to read during his lectures on Romans.\(^\text{20}\)

Quite different views are held by Otto Scheel, whose Martin Luther, Vom Katholizismus zur Reformation, published in 1917, is still considered "one of the most adequate treatments of Luther's intellectual background."\(^\text{21}\) Admitting that he cannot base his opinion on clear evidence, Scheel says of the early Erfurt years: "Whether he read Bernard's writings, especially the sermons, is doubtful."\(^\text{22}\) He does concede, however, that it is not improbable. He correctly points out that Melanchthon is silent about any acquaintance of Luther with Bernard's.

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\(^{18}\) Kuiper, p. 114.

\(^{19}\) Fife, p. 217.

\(^{20}\) Preserved Smith, The Life and Letters of Martin Luther (Boston and New York, 1914), pp. 12, 27.


\(^{22}\) Otto Scheel, Martin Luther, Vom Katholizismus zur Reformation II (Tübingen, 1917), p. 109: "Ob er Bernhards Schriften, namentlich die Predigten gelesen hat, bleibt zweifelhaft."
sermons through personal study.

Scheel is reluctant to accept Melanchthon's biography as significant evidence of Bernard's influence on Luther. He considers Melanchthon "unreliable" because he believes that Melanchthon in his account of the "old man" who quoted Bernard's sermon to Luther is writing "without exact knowledge of what happened." What Melanchthon relates is in contradiction with Luther's own assertions. Scheel writes: "The reformer makes no mention of an 'old man' at Erfurt nor of Bernard's sermon when he speaks of his discovery of the Gospel . . . nor does he identify him as someone who led him to the Gospel." He believes Melanchthon must have misunderstood Luther or confused some of Luther's reminiscences.

Following the lead of Scheel, Heinrich Boehmer in his more popular Road to Reformation writes of Luther: "Later he prized the greatest religious genius of the Middle Ages, Bernard of Clairvaux, almost as highly as Augustine. But Luther nowhere suggested that Bernard gave him any help, nor is it evident in his writings." Ebeling, on the other hand, asserts that Luther's acquaintance with Bernard's sermons goes back to around 1507, although he recognized that Scheel rejects the incident mentioned by Melanchthon as unreliable. He makes no attempt to evaluate the significance of Bernard's influence.

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23 Scheel, p. 364, n. 38: "ohne genaue Kenntnis des Vorgangs."

24 Ibid., p. 137: "Der Reformatoren weisst gar nichts vom Erfurter 'Greis' und von Bernhards Predigt, wenn er von der Entdeckung des Evangeliums spricht . . . und kennzeichnet ihn nicht als einen seiner Führer zum Evangelium."


on Luther but is satisfied to establish it as a fact so far as Luther's interpretation of the Gospel is concerned. 27

This raises some questions: Has more weight been placed on the incident of the "old man" in Melanchthon's biography than it can carry? Exactly what does Melanchthon say? Must every statement of Melanchthon find corroboration in Luther's writings before it can be accepted?

This is what Melanchthon wrote (my translation):

He (Luther) also related that he was often reassured by conversations with an old man at the Augustinian brotherhood at Erfurt. When he explained to him his inner fears, he heard him expound at length on faith, and he said that he was directed to the Creed where it says: I believe in the remission of sins. The old man had interpreted this article as follows: Not only should one believe in general that some few receive forgiveness, as even the devils believed that David and Peter were forgiven; but the command of God is that each one individually should believe that his own sins are forgiven. And he said that this interpretation was confirmed by the saying of Bernard, and a place was pointed out from the sermon de Annunciatione, where these words appear: In addition you must also believe this that through him your sins are forgiven to you. This is the witness which the Holy Spirit raises in your heart, saying: your sins are forgiven you. The Apostle thus is of the opinion that man is justified freely through faith.

Luther said that by this conversation he had not only been reassured, but had also been reminded of the entire meaning of Paul, who so often inculcates this word: by faith are we justified. Since he had read the interpretation of many people on this point, he now from the conversations of this man and from the consolation of his own mind had come to see the emptiness of the interpretations then at hand. Gradually as he read and compared the words and examples spoken by the Prophets and Apostles and as he stirred up his faith through daily prayer, he reached greater clarity. At that time he also began to read the books of Augustine, where in the exposition on the Psalms and in the book on the spirit and the letter he found many clear statements that confirmed this doctrine about faith and the comfort which had been kindled in his heart. Nevertheless, he did not immediately forget about the commentators on Lombard's Sentences (Sententiar10s). Gabriel Biel and Peter d'Ailly he was able to recite nearly verbatim from memory. He spent much

27Ebeling, p. 156.
time reading the writings of Occam, whose acumen he placed above that of Thomas and Scotus. Also Gerson he had read with diligence. But the many writings of Augustine he had read most often and remembered best. 28

My interest here is only to ask what Melanchthon says about Luther and Bernard. On this the following may be said:

1. The "old man" used the quotation from Bernard’s sermon de Annunciatione to corroborate his interpretation of the credal statement: I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

2. The "old man" showed (monstratum locum) this quotation from Bernard’s sermon to Luther. This does not appear to be a mere reference from memory, but apparently a copy of this sermon was at hand to which he directed Luther’s attention.

28 Corpus Reformatorum (New York and London, 1963 reprint), VI, 159:

Et senis culsum sermonibus in Augustiniano Collegio Erphordiae saepe se confirmatum esse narrabat, cui cum consternationes suas exponeret, audivit eum de fide multa disserentem, seque deductum aiebat ad symbolum, in quo dictur: credo remissionen peccatorum. Hunc articulum sic ille interpretatus erat, non solum in genere credendum esse, aliquibus remittit, ut et daemones credunt, Davidi aut Petro remittit, sed mandatum Dei esse, ut singuli homines nobis remittit peccata credamus. Et hanc interpretationem confirmatam dicebat Bernardi dicto, monstratumque locum in concione de Annunciatione, ubi haec sunt verba: sed addo, ut credes et hoc, quod per ipsum peccata TIBI donatur. Hoc est testimonium, quod perhibet Spiritus sanctus in corde tuo, dicens: dimissâ sunt tibi peccata tua. Sic enim arbitratur Apostolus, gratis justificari hominem per fidem.

3. Melanchthon says nothing more about Bernard directly. In the next paragraph he comes back to the "conversation" of the "old man" and says that this directed Luther's attention to Paul's word: by faith are we justified. However, only gradually did Luther begin to see the meaning of this statement more clearly. Whether Bernard's sermons contributed to this is not directly stated. Nothing in the account leads to this conclusion.

4. In the final paragraph Melanchthon lists the particular writings that occupied Luther at this time. He mentions Augustine, Biel, d'Ailly, Occam, and Gerson, but Bernard is not included.

From the above it would seem that Melanchthon's biography does not force one to conclude that Bernard was a major, continuing influence on Luther. But neither does it completely rule out such a conclusion. However, without other evidence, it is based on a weak foundation.

On the other hand, is Scheel justified in casting doubt on Melanchthon's accuracy in the account about the "old man"? Melanchthon was a careful scholar. One hesitates to question his historical veracity. The account can be true even though Luther never mentions it in his writings. Scheel's argument, based on Luther's silence regarding this incident, is hardly conclusive. Nevertheless, Scheel is correct in not accepting this account by itself as evidence that Bernard was an important influence on Luther's theological development. Scheel is also on safe ground in asserting that there is doubt whether Luther at this time read Bernard's sermons, although it is not improbable. The seeming presence of a book of Bernard's sermons when the "old man" quoted Bernard to Luther adds to the probability. But further evidence must be sought.

To gain this further evidence research can proceed in a number of
directions. The most thorough study would examine the writings of Luther and those of Bernard in depth and attempt to determine whether Luther follows thought patterns, methods of argumentation, doctrinal or exegetical expositions, that are similar to those of Bernard. In fact, one would have to look for similarities in any area at all. However, even then a further study would have to be made to discover whether possibly a similarity that was found might merely point to both having had the same antecedent influence. Specifically, both Luther and Bernard might have been influenced on some point by Augustine without Bernard being the influence on Luther in spite of their similarity. The difficulty and scope of this procedure rule it out as the place to begin. Before pursuing such a study, there would have to be reason to believe that the influence was there and should be capable of detection. The above method would also take one far beyond the limitations of this thesis.

I have therefore chosen a more limited method. This is to examine the references in Luther's major writings in which he makes mention of Bernard or quotes directly from him. Do these references reveal anything about Luther's knowledge of Bernard's writings? What are Luther's views of Bernard? What conclusions can be drawn from these findings? It will be the purpose of the remaining parts of this thesis to examine Luther's references to Bernard for answers to these questions.
II. LUTHER'S KNOWLEDGE OF BERNARD

This study is based on an examination of nearly 200 references to Bernard from Luther's writings. These references are of different types. Sometimes Luther adduces a quotation; at other times he refers to Bernard's life or doctrine, or merely mentions him together with other theologians.

The references are taken from a variety of writings and from all periods of Luther's life. However, particularly Luther's early lectures on the Bible, some of his treatises, and the Tischreden were checked for as complete a listing as possible. Beyond that, the indexes used provided references from major and some minor works of various types, without giving the assurance that the listing is complete. This does, however, provide a broad, yet comprehensive, sampling that should lead to some

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29 Since there is no single, comprehensive index to D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar, 1883- ), the search for references presents some difficulty. The index volume, WA 58, 88, 178-180, provides some references. For the Tischreden the indexes in WT 6, 529, 712, are adequate. The introduction in WA 57, lxxxii, lists all references to Bernard in Luther's Ad Hebraeos epistola. Volume XV of The Library of Christian Classics has a good index of "Proper Names" for Luther's Ad Romanos epistola. Each volume of Luther's Works (St. Louis and Philadelphia, 1955- ) has an index and to the extent that these indexes are complete, they provide the Bernard references for the works included. They yield numerous references from Luther's In primum librum Mose narrationes, his Ad Galatos commentarius of 1519 and of 1531, and his sermons on the first four chapters of the Gospel of St. John. The index volume of Luthers Sämtliche Schriften (St. Louis, 1880-1910) has four columns of references that are taken from the writings included in this set of 23 volumes. While this is not complete, it does provide numerous references from a great portion of Luther's writings. Some of Luther's major works, particularly his Dictata super Psalterium, were examined in their entirety to find all Bernard references in them, since these writings were considered important for this study and no index provides this information.

30 Note 29, which outlines the mode of procedure followed in searching for references to Bernard in Luther's writings, also indicates many of the major works of Luther from which the majority of the references are taken. Besides those mentioned, two writings from 1521, De abroganda missa and De votis monasticis, have 7 and 9 references respectively. Each of a number of other major works provide only one or two references to Bernard.
tentative conclusions.

How familiar was Luther with Bernard's writings? This will appear from the material quoted, from the manner of quoting, and from the type of works in which the quotes appear.

From which of Bernard's writings does Luther quote? In the Dictata super Psalterium of 1513-15 Luther quotes four times from the Sermones in cantica, three times from other sermons,33 and three times the identical reference from a letter of Bernard.34 The years 1515-16 saw Luther lecturing on Divi Pauli apostoli ad Romanos epistola. He again uses the quotation from Bernard's letter,35 quotes from the sermons three times,36 and adds the treatise, De consideratione, as a source of reference.37 In his lectures on Divi Pauli apostoli ad Hebraeos epistola of 1517-18 and his Divi Pauli apostolici ad Galatos commentarius of 1519 he continues with several references to the sermons38 and one to De consideratione.39 In 1521 he makes mention of De praecepto et dispensatione.40 Of more than 50 quotations in Luther's writings after 1522, nearly all are from Bernard's

31 WA 3, 417, 420; WA 4, 74; WA 55/2, 101.
32 WA 3, 175, 236; WA 4, 198; WA 55/2, 119.
33 WA 3, 110; WA 4, 364; WA 55/2, 64.
34 WA 56, 239, 441.
35 WA 56, 79, 369f., 486.
36 WA 56, 19, 137, 192, 480.
37 There are only two references in each to the sermons: WA 57, 169, 216; WA 2, 543, 602.
38 This is in the lectures on Ad Hebraeos epistola, WA 57, 162.
39 WA 8, 634.
sermons, with only one from De consideratione and one from his letters. Twenty-six of the quotations from the sermons are from the Sermones in cantica.

According to this, Luther quotes by far most often from Bernard's sermons. Among these, the Sermones in cantica provide about half of the quotations. Of the treatises, only De consideratione receives appreciable mention. Surprisingly, the well-known and important treatises of Bernard, De diligendo Deo and De gratia et libero arbitrio, have not been identified as sources for any of the quotations I found. This does not necessarily justify the conclusion that Luther was not familiar with these other treatises of Bernard. When Luther writes that he knows Bernard, he, no doubt, had the treatises as well as the sermons in mind. The

40 Of these quotations, 14 are found in the In primum librum Mose enarrationes, written 1535-45, eight from his sermons on John 1 to 4 from the years 1537-38, five from the Tischreden, three from his 1531 Ad Galatos commentarius, three from his 1523 sermons on First Peter. The remaining are found widely scattered with only one or two in any other single writing.

41 Both of these references are in the In primum librum Mose enarrationes, WA 43, 36, 194.

42 There is an allusion to De gratia et libero arbitrio in WT 1, No. 589, when Luther says that in his treatises Bernard assigned too great a role to the commandments and free will: "Ibi nimium tribuit praecepto et libero arbitrio." Also in Luther's De servo arbitrio, WA 18, 644, he refers to Bernard's view of free will without directly naming or quoting from De gratia et libero arbitrio. However, it must be stated that only limited research has been carried on to identify quotations from or allusions to Bernard's writings in Luther. In his introduction to WA 55/1, 29*, Reinhard Schwarz includes Bernard and his mysticism among those to whom references in the notes are rather incomplete. He writes: "Die Herausgeber sind hier sehr auf zufällige Entdeckungen angewiesen. Denn es fehlt welthin an vorbereitenden Untersuchungen zu Detailfragen und an hilfreichen, mit umfassenden Registern versehenen Editionen der einschlägigen Quellen . . . ."

43 In 1521 in the treatise Kationis Latomianae confutatio Luther wrote: "Sed esto, sit aliquid patrum, quem ego nondum viderim. Nam Augustinum, Hieronymum, Ambrosium, Gregorium, Bernardum novi, ut frustra mihi tot nubes obieceris." WA 8, 102.
overwhelming use of the sermons in contrast to the treatises does not mean that he knew the former and not the latter. It is entirely in keeping with the opinion Luther expresses on Bernard's writings. He praises Bernard as excelling all other doctors of the Church in his sermons. In his disputations or treatises, however, Bernard is a different man and contradicts what he writes in the sermons. The very fact that the comparison is made shows that Luther was familiar with both. In addition, Luther's knowledge of Bernard included the letters. He quotes, however, from only two of them, although the one is used several times.

To sum up, Luther was acquainted with all of Bernard's writings. He had a definite preference for the sermons and these are the source of his quotations in about 88% of those that were identified.

Does the manner in which Luther quotes Bernard reveal anything about his knowledge of the latter's writings? How frequently and how accurately does Luther quote? Does he identify the source, i.e., the particular writing from which he quotes?

Although the number of references to Bernard, when they are grouped together, seems quite large, these references do not appear with conspicuous frequency in any one of Luther's writings. Nineteen references to Bernard in the Dictate super Psalterium are not many when they are spread out over the thousand pages of this work. The same is true of the thirty-one references I found in the three volumes of In primum librum Mose enarrationes. Then, too, when the nineteen references in the

44 WT 1, No. 872: "Bernardus in sermonibus suis omnes alios doctores, etiam ipsum Augustinum excelle, quia Christum pulcherrime praedicat, sed in disputationibus suis plane sui est dissimilis et omnio contrarius sibi in sermonibus." Cf. also WT 1, No. 584, No. 871; WT 3, No. 3370b.

45 Cf. notes 33, 34, and 41.
Dictata are spread out over the years 1513 to 1515 and the thirty-one references in the Enarrationes over the years 1535 to 1545, their frequency is not impressive. And yet, there is a consistent, though somewhat scattered, mention of Bernard. In this there does not appear to be any appreciable change over the years. The Dictata from early in Luther's life compare favorably in the number of references with the Enarrationes from Luther's last decade.

In this connection it is necessary to note that Luther often repeats the same reference. Gottfried Edel draws attention to this and lists some examples.\(^46\) It is not surprising that the most frequently used quotation is from the Sermones in cantica \(XX\).\(^47\) The following is a typical use of this source:

St. Bernard also, while he was in agony, shouted, "I have lived in a reckless manner for I have wasted my time; I have nothing, but I know that because my heart is contrite and humble, O God, Thou wilt not despise me" (Ps. 51:17).\(^48\)

Luther uses this quotation for the first time in 1518 and thereupon with continuing consistency.\(^49\)

Similarly, although with far less frequency, the same quotation from a letter of Bernard is repeated a number of times in Luther's early

\(^{46}\)Gottfried Edel, *Das geweinkatholische mittelalterliche Erbe beim jungen Luther* (Marburg an der Lahn, 1962), p. 31.

\(^{47}\)PL 183, 867.

\(^{48}\)The translation is from LW 31, p. 89. (WA 1, 534). This will be the manner of indicating the English translations from the LW edition. The original as found in the Weimar Edition will be included in parentheses.

\(^{49}\)Of the quotations I gathered, 17 contain this reference. That these are representative of the use of this reference over the years becomes evident from the following chronological listing:

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writings. A quotation that is used by Luther with particular approbation is from the *Sermo in festo annuntiationis*. This is the reference to which Luther's attention was drawn early in his monastic life. He uses this in his *Ad Romanos epistola* and *Ad Hebraeos epistola*. From *De consideratione* he quotes the same references several times.

In a similar manner Luther may refer to the same event in Bernard's life repeatedly. Again and again, for example, he relates from the *Vita Prima* how Bernard "denied his body so much that his breath stank." This raises the question: how broad was Luther's knowledge of Bernard? Did he know only a few select quotations that he simply repeated? Some have raised the question whether Luther truly understood Bernard when he quotes him. This latter question is really not pertinent to this present study. Any influence of Bernard on Luther can be based only on Luther's actual understanding of Bernard, whether correct or not.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to inquire into the breadth of Luther's

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50 PL 182, 224. This is mentioned 3 times in the *Dictata*, cf. note 33. Other references: WA 1, 649; WA 56, 239.

51 PL 183, 383f.

52 Cf. p. 7 and note 28.

53 WA 56, 369f.

54 WA 57, 169.

55 WA 1, 601; WA 43, 36; WA 56, 19, 192.

56 WA 12, 282ff., 295; WA 20, 627ff.; WA 43, 331; WA 47, 62, 85; MT 3, No. 3777.

knowledge of the monk of Clairvaux. The repetition of quotations seems to show that this was not as great as the number of references indicates. However, further comment on this will have to await the examination of the topics in connection with which Luther mentions Bernard.

A further question, however, is in place at this point: how accurately does Luther quote Bernard? Does he quote from memory or does he copy from a text?

It would be useful to know what editions of Bernard the libraries at the universities of Erfurt and Wittenberg possessed. Did Luther possibly have copies of Bernard in his personal library? Unfortunately, this information evades detection. By 1500 forty-four editions were at hand.\textsuperscript{58} The introduction to the revision of Luther's Dictata in the Weimar Ausgabe lists works of Bernard that were published in Venice, Basel, and Strasbourg in 1495 and 1497.\textsuperscript{59} Since we do not know which editions Luther had available, we cannot compare Luther's apparently direct quotations with the text he used.

Another procedure can better answer the question of accuracy. A comparison of the references to the same quotation would reveal something about the accuracy of the quotations. If quoted accurately, the same reference would be identical wherever it appears.

The most often repeated reference is from Bernard's Sermones in cantica XX. Of the more than 17 quotations from this same source, no two are identical. The following three are similar in length, originate from about the same period in Luther's life, and come closest to being

\textsuperscript{58} Edel, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{59} WA 55/1, 36*. 
identical. By comparing them we can see the freedom Luther used in quoting:

Sic enim b. Bernhardus . . . 'perdidi tempus meum, quia perdite vixi nec habeo nisi quod cor contritum et humillatum, deus, non despicies.' 60

. . . perdite vixi, quia tempus perdidi, nihil habeo, nisi quod scio, quia cor contritum et humillatum, deus, non despicies. 61

Tempus meum perdidi, quia perdite vixi. Sed unum me golature, quod spiritum contritum et humillatum non despicies. 62

The first two quotations are from 1518, the third from 1521. They appear to be direct quotations. Yet differences make it evident that Luther was not copying directly from a text of Bernard. 63 Was he perhaps intentionally paraphrasing? I am rather led to conclude that he was quoting from memory, with no concern about complete accuracy. To that extent the result may be a paraphrase.

This free quoting from memory is, of course, much more evident when Luther uses this same reference in a sermon. Luther’s Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount began as a series of sermons preached in the years 1530 to 1532. In these he quotes the reference from the Sermones in cantica XX with dramatic elaboration, carrying on a dialog with Bernard as follows:

He (Bernard) was an example for everyone else, and I know no one among the monks who wrote or lived better than he. And yet, when the anguish of death came upon him, he himself had to pronounce

60 WA 1, 323. From Sermo de poenitentia, 1518.

61 WA 1, 534. From Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute, 1518.

62 WA 8, 601. From De monasticis Martini Lutheri judicium, 1521.

63 The text in both PL 183 and in S. Bernhardi Opera I, p. 114 reads: " . . pro his vero quos vivendo perdidi, quia perdite vixi, cor contritum et humillatum, Deus, non despicias."
this judgement on his whole life: "Oh, I have lived damnably
and passed my life shamefully." "How so, dear St. Bernard?
Have you not been a pious monk all your life? Are not chastity,
obedience, preaching, fasting, and praying something valuable?"
"No," he says, "It is all lost and belongs to the devil."64

This free quoting from memory, on the other hand, does not become
evident in the three quotations from Epistola 91 in the Dictata. These
have the same wording: ubi incipis nolle fieri melior, desinis esse bonus.65
The only difference in the three is that when this is quoted for the third
time another sentence is added. But what is there in all three is identi-
cal. Since this is a very brief quotation, however, not much can be
concluded from the identity. Furthermore, when Luther quotes this same
reference in his Ad Romanos epistola, the singular verb becomes a plural:
et ubi incipimus ...66

Luther quotes twice in Ad Romanos epistola from De consideratione I, 2. The footnotes that identify this quotation in the Weimar Ausgabe
both mention the free manner of quoting used by Luther, although the
quotation in the Glossa is acknowledged to be somewhat more exact than
that from the Scholia.67

In introducing these quotations Luther frequently uses expressions
like ut ait S. Bernardus68 or ostendit B. Bernardus ... dicens.69
This gives the impression of a direct quotation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Luther was not quoting with scholarly exactness. He is not concerned with exact words but often appears to quote ideas rather than verbatim sentences.

Does Luther identify the writing from which he quotes? I found only fifteen examples of this. Nine of these occur in his early lectures; only six are in his later writings. This means that a larger percentage of the quotations in the early lectures is identified than occurs later. Generally also the identification is more exact. In later years the identification is more casual and less precise. This may result partly from the fact that the earlier quotations are found in lectures, while the later quotations are from various types of material, including sermons and the Tischreden and had a different type of audience in mind. However, also in the later lectures, prepared for his students, Luther makes no such closer identification. Could this mean that in the earlier years Luther was closer to the time when he had studied Bernard, that in his later years he quoted from a memory that was somewhat farther removed from this study? If that conclusion can be drawn, it means that the greater part of Luther's study of Bernard may have been either in the years before the lectures, or during those years. Since Bernard has no single work on the books of the Bible on which Luther lectured, and since Luther devoted

70 WA 3, 82, 198; WA 56, 137, 192, 369f., 480; WA 57, 162, 169, 216.

71 WA 44, 362; WA 1, 601; WT 1, No. 118, No. 494; WA 8, 634; WA 51, 128. This includes the writings from 1518 on after the "early lectures."

72 For example, in the Dictata Luther mentions the exact sermon (ser. 27 super Cant.), WA 55/2, 101. In Ad Romanos epistola twice the book De consideratione is identified, WA 56, 192, 480; similarly in Ad Hebraeos epistola, WA 57, 162.
much time to the study of the extant commentaries on those books, his work with Bernard may have to a great extent preceded the time of his early lectures.

To sum up, Luther seemingly quotes directly from Bernard's writings. However, the free reproduction of Bernard's words points to an acquaintance with Bernard that allowed Luther to quote from memory. This knowledge may well have been acquired during his early monastic years, and possibly during the time of the early lectures.

In what kinds of works does Luther make reference to Bernard? His lectures, as has already been pointed out, contain such references with as great a frequency as is found in any of the writings. This is true of his early lectures, the Dictata, as well as his late lectures on Genesis. The sermons delivered in 1537 and 1538 on the first four chapters of John contain references to Bernard with similar frequency. So there appears to be little difference between the more formal and more carefully prepared lectures and the more freely presented sermons that have been preserved through copies made by friends. Similarly, his Tischreden, these completely free discourses, contain references to Bernard with about equal frequency. The indexes I used revealed comparatively few references to Bernard in the letters. However, the verification of this would have to await a more careful examination of the complete body of Luther's letters.

The treatises of Luther present a somewhat different picture, although not one of major significance. An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation

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73 This conclusion is supported, if in a small way, by reference to Bernard already in Luther's marginal notes to Peter Lombard’s Sentences, WA 9, 69f. WA 9, 107 also reproduces some Bernard quotations found on the inside cover of Luther’s copy of Anselm.

74 The index in LW 22 lists 19 references to Bernard in these sermons.
from 1520 has no reference to Bernard. De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae from the same year has only one reference.75 This reference appears in connection with Luther’s criticism of monasticism. Another major writing from 1520, Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen, contains no reference to Bernard in the treatise itself. However, in the introductory letter to Pope Leo X Luther twice refers to Bernard’s De consideratione, written for Eugene.76 Two treatises from the year 1521 yield many more references. These are De abroganda missa privata and De votis monasticis. In these I found 7 and 13 respectively.77 The subject matter accounts for the frequency of reference. On the other hand, one might expect Luther to mention Bernard in his De servo arbitrio, since the latter wrote a treatise De gratia et libero arbitrio.78 However, Luther’s work contains only one reference to Bernard79 and this contains the oft-quoted words from the Sermones in cantica XX.

This is a survey of only a limited number of Luther’s treatises. However, the pattern seems to be that Luther does not take up any specific work of Bernard for careful reference, even on a subject like De servo arbitrio, but refers to Bernard as the subject matter brings him to mind. This happens especially in connection with discussions on monasticism, accounting for the many references in De votis monasticis.

This brief examination of the various types of writings brings nothing

75 WA 6, 540.
76 WA 7, 42-49.
77 WA 8, 484-485, 527-530; WA 8, 586, 600-603, 612, 617, 622, 628, 634, 640, 646.
78 Cf. note 42.
79 WA 18, 644.
unusual to view to change the impressions that have been gained. Whatever the type of writing, there is little difference in the frequency and manner of quoting, except for greater freedom in the quotations found in the sermons.

There remains the question of the breadth of Luther's knowledge of Bernard, especially since he does repeat the same quotations many times. Does Luther limit his reference to Bernard to a few select subjects, knowing nothing of Bernard beyond these?

In the Dictata Luther quotes Bernard to show that a time of peace and security is the most difficult time (amariissa) for the Church, to speak of the value of self-examination, of the need for a desire to become better, of divine consolation. In his Ad Romanos epistola he quotes Bernard on the hardened heart, and on the need of faith for forgiveness of sins. At various times he mentions Bernard's view of Mary, of prayer, of monastic obedience, of celibacy, of ingratitude.

80 WA 3, 417.
81 WA 4, 198.
82 WA 3, 110; WA 4, 364.
83 WA 4, 331.
84 WA 56, 19, 192.
85 WA 56, 369f.
86 WT 1, No. 494; WA 43, 590.
87 WT 5, No. 6013; WA 57/3, 216; WA 6, 232; WA 43, 327.
88 WA 44, 686.
89 WA 3, 644.
90 WA 44, 363.
He speaks of Bernard's manner of interpreting Scripture. Luther tells of Bernard's advice to someone who is unable to excuse his brother's sin and mentions Bernard's testimony that Jesus' suffering on behalf of man moves man to grieve over sin.

These references have been chosen somewhat at random to show the wide variety of subjects on which Luther quotes Bernard. Although there are some subjects to which Luther refers repeatedly, he by no means limits himself to only these.

On the other hand, seldom does Luther enter into a long consideration of any quotation from Bernard. Generally he does not discuss Bernard's views at length. Usually there is only a brief reference, a quotation with little comment. The chief references I found that are somewhat longer are two: one from his Ad Romanos epistola and another from his De votis monasticis Martini Lutheri judicium. The former is a more extensive reference to the quotation from the "Sermon on the Annunciation" to which, according to Melanchthon, an "old man" had directed Luther early in his monastic life. In the latter Luther repeatedly mentions Bernard as an example of a monk who, despite his monastic vows, found salvation through faith in Christ, referring also here to the oft-quoted passage from the Sermones in cantica XX.

That Luther had a broad knowledge of the content of Bernard's writings appears evident. However, that Luther made a careful study and

91 WA 44, 361.
92 WA 2, 602.
93 WA 2, 543.
94 WA 56, 369f.
95 WA 8, 600-603.
analysis of Bernard's theology, consciously examining the various aspects of Bernard's thinking and aiming to bring them together in logical fashion, cannot be proved. There is no attempt systematically to practice critique, favorable or unfavorable, on Bernard. This also was not called for, since Bernard antedated Luther by 400 years. There would have to be a specific, urgent occasion for such critique, and such an occasion did not arise, even though Bernard's writings enjoyed continued use.

In 1521 Luther wrote: "It may be that there is some father of whom I have not yet taken notice. As for Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory, and Bernard - I know them . . . ." There is no reason to question this assertion. I arrive at the following conclusions as to Luther's knowledge of Bernard and his writings:

1. Luther was acquainted with all of Bernard's writings, his sermons, treatises, and letters. Of these, he quoted most often from the sermons, especially the *Sermones in cantica*. He had a preference for the sermons, although even his criticism of the treatises means that he had read them.

2. Luther was sufficiently well acquainted with Bernard's writings to be able to quote them from memory, a conclusion based on the generally free and inexact references.

3. Although there are examples where Luther repeated the same reference or quotation a number of times, yet the variety of subjects on which he quoted Bernard shows a broad knowledge of Bernard. There is, however, little likelihood that Luther had systematically analyzed Bernard's entire theology.

96 LW 32, p. 221 (WA 8, 102).
4. Since Luther already in his earliest lectures quoted Bernard with the same frequency as in his later lectures, his study of Bernard will have occurred during his early monastic years. It is especially in these early lectures that Luther identified the book and chapter or sermon from which he quoted, something that appears less frequently and less precisely in later writings. This points to the possibility that Luther studied Bernard in his earlier years and later drew from his memory of these early studies.

5. I am inclined to place the time during which a major part of this study occurred into the period between Luther's entrance into the monastery and his biblical lectures, that is, between 1505 and 1513. When Luther lectured on the Psalms, he gave concentrated attention to those authors who had written commentaries on the Psalms. Bernard produced no such commentary. The rather infrequent references also raise a doubt about Luther's direct and consistent study of Bernard during the preparation of the Dictata, and of the lectures on Ad Romanos epistola and Ad Hebraeos epistola.

All of the above conclusions are not equally compelling. They are adequate, however, for the assumption that as far as Luther's knowledge of Bernard and the time when it was acquired are concerned, the possibility exists that Bernard's writings could have contributed to Luther's theological development. This also can well add credence to Melanchthon's account of the "old man" who directed Luther to one of Bernard's sermons early in the Erfurt years. The historians that speak of Luther reading Bernard in those early years may well be correct.

The question nevertheless remains: how much of an influence did Bernard's writings have on Luther? How much did they contribute toward
the development of his theology? I shall pursue that further by turning now to an examination of Luther's references to Bernard to see what his views of the Cistercian monk were.
III. LUTHER'S VIEWS OF BERNARD

The aim here is to examine whether Bernard exerted an influence on Luther's development. This aim establishes the method of this investigation and sets up certain limits.

It is necessary to inquire into what Luther says about Bernard at different periods of Luther's life. For purposes of this study the year 1521 can serve as a useful dividing point. The reason for this choice is that by this time Luther's theology had become rather well stabilized and his relationship to the Roman Church had reached its climax. In 1520 Luther wrote the three writings in which his theology found mature expression, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and "The Freedom of a Christian." Then early in 1521 the final bull of excommunication, Decret Romanum, was issued in Rome, and later in the same year Luther was placed under the imperial ban. 1521 therefore appears as a favorable date to choose if there is to be any division of his life in studying these references.97

To remain within the limitations of this study, those areas must be investigated in which Luther's theology distinguishes itself. The first area is the doctrine of the justification of the sinner before God. In this, there are three significant emphases: solus Christus, sola gratia,

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97The year 1521 was chosen rather than the time of Luther's so-called "breakthrough" in his Turmerlebnis. The time of the latter has never been established. The Turmerlebnis is still the subject of much study and debate, not only as to the time when it occurred, but also as to wherein it consisted. For a recent discussion of this, cf. Kenneth G. Hagen, "Changes in the Understanding of Luther: The Development of the Young Luther," Theological Studies, XXIX (Sept., 1968), 472-496.
and *sola fide.* The second area concerns itself with the Holy Scriptures as the sole authority and source in matters of Christian doctrine and life, the *sola Scriptura* principle. These are the two basic areas concerning which the question should be asked: did Bernard make a contribution to lead Luther to the positions he arrived at? These two areas are the two foci to which all other points relate.

Does Luther express himself about Bernard's views on these subjects? What does Luther say in the formative years until 1521? How does Luther evaluate Bernard in the later years on these subjects?

During the years until 1521, Luther's references to Bernard are almost always favorable. When he quotes Bernard, he does so to corroborate a point that has been made. I referred above to his manner of introducing a quotation. This indicates approval. He does not take issue with Bernard. Whenever he speaks of Bernard, he does so with commendation.

It is not until 1520 and especially 1521 that Luther begins to express any disagreement with Bernard. In 1521 Luther wrote the two treatises, "The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows" and "The Misuse of the Mass." It would indeed be surprising if Luther at this time found himself in full agreement with Bernard on these subjects. Since Bernard was an ardent monk, one might expect some severe criticism of the medieval saint.

98 In this presentation I am assuming that Melanchthon's brief article on the doctrine of justification in the Augsburg Confession represents Luther's position. This contains the three significant emphases I am using in connection with this point. Cf. The Book of Concord, ed. by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 30: "It is also taught among us . . . that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith . . ."

99 See part II, p. 23.
However, this is not the case, as will be shown shortly. The man who could write with unvarnished severity against Eck, Erasmus, and Zwingli was quite gentle with Bernard.

But does Luther mention Bernard at any time in connection with the doctrine of justification as later defined in the Augsburg Confession? One reference in the Dictata is of interest in this connection. Commenting on Psalm 31 (32): 3, Luther refers to two points that the Psalm teaches here: 1. that all are in sins and no one is blessed; 2. that no one has the strength to gain remission of sins, but that only God remits freely by not imputing sin. These the world ignores and rejects Christ. He ends this sentence with the words: "... as Bernard beautifully meditates in a certain sermon." The reference is so general that one can only surmise what sermon Luther had in mind. But a quotation from Bernard on The Nativity could well qualify as that "certain sermon":

... for we all offend in many things, and we have need of the fountain of mercy, to wash away the filth of our sins. For all have sinned and do need the glory of God ... Therefore, since no one is free from sin, the fountain of mercy is necessary for everyone, and everyone, Noe, Daniel and Job, ought to make haste to go to that fountain with the same eagerness.

The reference by Luther stresses that forgiveness must come freely by grace because man on his part is a sinner. This forgiveness comes from God through Christ. The third point, faith, is not mentioned. This does, however, soon come in for considerable attention.

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100 WA 3, 175: "Ut pulchre Bernardus in quodam sermone meditatur."


102 Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London, 1953), p. 147, shows that Luther does stress "only faith" in the Dictata. This, however, is not present in connection with this reference to Bernard.
In his Ad Romanos epistola Luther makes the specific reference to Bernard's "Sermon on the Annunciation." This is the quotation to which an "old man," according to Melanchthon, had directed Luther in his early days at the Erfurt monastery. This same reference is quoted again in Ad Hebraeos epistola. In connection with this reference, Luther emphasizes not only that sins are freely forgiven through the mercy of God, but stresses particularly the role of faith. In both citations the emphasis is on this that the individual should believe not only that God in general forgives sins, but that He has forgiven also his own sins. In Ad Romanos epistola Luther quotes Bernard as follows:

For, if you believe that only God can take away your sins, you have the right faith, but from here you must go on to believe, and you yourself must believe . . . that through him you really have the forgiveness of your sins. This is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that he says to us: Your sins are forgiven to you. And this is what the apostle means when he says that a man is justified by faith. . . .

To be noted is the stress on faith as the means by which the individual gains personal assurance, applying the forgiving mercy of God to himself. On this point Luther finds himself in conscious agreement with Bernard.

In 1518 Luther published the Acta Augustana, the proceedings of his meeting with Cajetan. He pointed out that his doctrine of justification by faith was not a new one. In this connection he refers to "the holy

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103 Pauck, p. 234 (WA 56, 369).
104 LW 29, p. 171 (WA 57, 169).
105 Pauck, p. 234. This is a fairly close rendering of Bernard's sermon. The text in PL 183, 383f. reads as follows: Ideoque si credis peccata tua non posse deleri nisi ab eo cui soli peccasti, et in quem peccatum non cadit, ene facis: sed adde adhuc ut et hoc credas,quia peripsum tibi peccata donantur. Hoc est testimonium quod perhibet in corde tuo Spiritus sanctus, dicens: Dimissa sunt tibi peccata tua. Sic enim arbitratur Apostolus, gratis justificari hominem per fidem.
Virgin" and mentions that "St. Bernard and the universal church marveled at her faith."\textsuperscript{106} He considered Bernard a protagonist of his doctrine.

But what about Bernard's monasticism? As Luther's theology developed, he turned against monastic vows as conflicting with justification by grace through faith. Already in 1520 he expressed doubts about the monastic modes of life and warned against a defense that pointed to "SS. Bernard, Francis, Dominic, and others, who founded or fostered monastic orders."

If these he says that "it is certain that none of them was saved through his vows and his 'religious' life; they were saved through faith alone.\textsuperscript{107}

In the following year Luther came out unequivocally against monastic vows. While residing at the Wartburg he wrote "The Judgement of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows." This contains a number of references to Bernard. However, Luther sees a difference between Bernard and the monasticism of his own time. The saints who made vows "used evil for good." Now "they all vow the evil itself. Nobody vows to live in the spirit in which Bernard lived."\textsuperscript{108} What was that spirit? Bernard's spirit was one of freedom: he did not live up to the vows "because the vows compelled him to do so, but from a free choice of spirit ...\textsuperscript{109}" or, to put it another way, "St. Bernard and others kept vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, but not because of the vows. Instead, they observed the ancient example of the fathers and the gospel."\textsuperscript{110} The reason Bernard and many other monks

\textsuperscript{106} LW 31, p. 273 (WA 2, 15).
\textsuperscript{107} LW 36, p. 77 (WA 6, 540).
\textsuperscript{108} LW 44, p. 354 (WA 8, 640).
\textsuperscript{109} LW 44, p. 309 (WA 8, 612). Luther expresses this same opinion about Bernard's vow in a letter to Melanchthon on Sept. 9, 1521, WBr 2, No. 428.
\textsuperscript{110} LW 44, p. 316 (WA 8, 617).
were saved was that "in these cases the poison did them no harm because of the faith in Christ with which they were filled." Although Luther rejected monastic vows, he did not condemn Bernard, a man deeply involved in this institution. The reason was that he knew Bernard's sermons, in which he saw Paul's doctrine of salvation through faith in the redemption won by Christ proclaimed. He writes:

I know perfectly well that Bernard and many men like him were upheld by God . . . The sermons which he preached and taught are extant in the community of brothers. By this one work he restored the old institution of Paul, and saved himself and his brethren with him . . ." 112

In fact, Luther saw Bernard, when faced with death, cast aside any merit he might claim on the basis of works, including his monastic works, and rely solely on the mercy of Christ. This appears in the oft-quoted reference to the Sermones in cantica XX. 113 Referring to this, Luther writes: "You see, these are the words of a great Christian soul, because he put all his faith in Christ and despaired absolutely of his own works." 114

I find then that throughout these years Luther cites Bernard for the views he expresses on the forgiveness of sins, or justification. Already in the Dicata this includes two of the three emphases mentioned earlier, solus Christus, and sola gratia. With the Ad Romanos epistola the third receives considerable attention, the sola fide. Even when Luther begins

111 LW 44, p. 289 (WA 8, 601).

112 LW 44, p. 325 (WA 8, 622).

113 See page 22 where several versions of it from this period are given.

114 LW 44, p. 290 (WA 8, 601). Denifle, Luther und Lutherthum I (Mainz, 1904), pp. 56-63, accuses Luther of deliberate deception in the use of this quotation from Bernard. My concern here, however, is not to examine the accuracy of Luther's understanding of Bernard, but his actual views as expressed in Luther's own writings.
to reject monasticism, he does not condemn Bernard for his preoccupation with it. Bernard had embraced monasticism, but according to Luther, his true hope for forgiveness centered in Christ, by grace, through faith.

It is another question, however, whether Luther was led to this doctrine of justification through the active influence of Bernard's writings. Before attempting any judgment on this, it is well to consider the second doctrinal area that needs investigation, the sola Scriptura principle. Is there any connection between Bernard and Luther in this?

Bernard's deep interest in the Holy Scriptures cannot fail to draw the attention of anyone who reads his works. The Fathers are seldom quoted, the Scriptures constantly. When he received his early education, this interest in Scripture already began. In the Vita Prima Bernardi William of St. Thierry writes of young Bernard: "He was intent on his books and studies, for he saw these as a way of coming to know and find out about God in the Scriptures." Later he has more to say on Bernard's knowledge of the Scriptures and their use:

It was his great delight to pass hours in reading Scripture. He used to read the books straight through in their proper order, and never had any difficulty in understanding what the words meant. He used to tell us that he found it easier to understand the text of Scripture itself than lengthy explanations of it... And like them (the Fathers) he drank avidly of the one fountain, which is Holy Writ... And as he preaches and bases his sermons on scriptural text, he makes the passages so clear and moving that anyone versed at all in secular or spiritual learning cannot help marveling at the words he speaks.

115 For example, Terence L. Connolly, Saint Bernard on the Love of God (New York, 1937), in his footnotes indicates at least 276 biblical references in this short treatise.

116 St. Bernard of Clairvaux: The story of his Life as recorded in the Vita Prima Bernardi by certain of his contemporaries... trans. by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (Westminster, Maryland, 1960), p. 16f.

117 Ibid., pp. 42f.
There is good evidence for the judgment of Watkin Williams, a 20th century biographer of Bernard: "What chiefly concerned him as a student was the Bible; a merely cursory reading of his works reveals no less; he may almost be said to think in the language of the sacred Scriptures." 118

Was Luther influenced by Bernard in this preoccupation with Scripture? Did Bernard possibly even influence Luther in the direction of sola scriptura? When noting Bernard's unusually diligent use of Scripture, his unmitigated citing of Scripture as proof that what he says is true, one might expect to find indications favorable to an affirmative answer to these questions. However, I find no evidence of such influence from Luther's references to Bernard during these years. There is a close kinship between Bernard and Luther in their knowledge of Scripture and their unceasing use of it. But Luther nowhere points to Bernard as an example of this. Luther nowhere credits Bernard with fostering the sola scriptura idea.

The point, on the other hand, might be made that this was hardly necessary. From the very beginning of Luther's theological study at Erfurt, a kind of sola scriptura principle was a part of the training Luther received at the university where the tradition of Occam reigned. Whatever form the sola scriptura principle may have taken and in whatever ways it may have differed from Luther's later views, 119 it did give him

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a high regard for biblical authority from the inception of his biblical studies.

Nevertheless, for Luther the prime concern was not one of where to find authoritative teaching. His first question was: where can I find forgiveness of sins? How can I find a gracious God? The Scriptures ultimately gave him the answer. And as Luther recognized ever more clearly that the Scriptures had the prime purpose of proclaiming a forgiving Christ, his views of the sola scriptura principle deepened, for more was involved than a basis of authority. For Luther his soul's salvation was at stake. Once Luther had arrived at this profounder significance of the sola scriptura principle, he did not hesitate to apply it in judging Bernard.

Twice in his "The Misuse of the Mass," written in 1521, Luther mentions Bernard in connection with the Scriptures. This is what he writes: "We will not listen to this: 'Bernard lived and wrote thus'; but only to this: 'He was supposed to live and write according to the Scriptures." Later in the same work Luther says that there are those who point to the Fathers like Gregory, Bernard, Bonaventura, and others as men who considered the mass a sacrifice. Luther's reply to them is that "nothing is more dangerous than the works and lives of the saints which are not founded in the Scriptures." What Luther is doing in both of these references is applying the sola scriptura principle to Bernard and the other Fathers. He will not let Bernard stand as an authority aside from Scripture. Whenever the works and lives of saints like Bernard do not find their

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120 Sasse discusses the relationship of the sola fide to the sola scriptura at greater length, pp. 59-73.

121 LW 36, p. 137 (WA 8, 485).

122 LW 36, p. 186 (WA 8, 527).
basis in Scripture they are dangerous, and the danger Luther has in mind pertains to man's salvation.

It appears then that Luther was not led to the *sola scriptura* principle by Bernard, but, having arrived at it, he applied it to Bernard's life and work as a criterion by means of which to judge them correctly.

I now return to the question whether Luther was led to the doctrine of justification by faith through the active influence of Bernard's writings. Did Bernard help Luther find a forgiving Christ? This is not only possible, but very probable. Bernard preached a Christ through whom there is forgiveness. Luther read this, remembered it, and quoted Bernard in his lectures to that effect. It would indeed be strange if Luther's study of Bernard had had no influence on him at all. The question is not so much one of the probability of influence, but of the extent. Did Bernard exert a major influence on Luther in this area?

In part two I came to the conclusion that Luther's main study of Bernard occurred in his early years, perhaps between the time of Luther's entrance into the monastery and his biblical lectures. If this is correct, then his major influence on Luther's development would occur in those years. Whatever influence Bernard had, would be in evidence from the time of Luther's earliest lectures.

It was noted that already in the *Dictata* Luther mentions Bernard in connection with a consideration of man's forgiveness through Christ. Luther finds this thought beautifully presented by Bernard. Nevertheless, it must also be recognized that the reference in the *Dictata* in which this is mentioned still speaks of justification in an incomplete manner. The *sola fide* is not mentioned. Furthermore, of the nineteen references to Bernard that I found in the *Dictata*, only the one cited earlier concerns itself with forgiveness through Christ. All of this gives little support
for considering Bernard a major influence in Luther's development. If Bernard was a factor in leading Luther to justification by grace through faith, why does this not become more evident already in the Dictata? Why is Bernard not mentioned more often by Luther in connection with forgiveness through Christ? Why of all the references to Bernard is there only one where this is done? Why is the reference he makes to Bernard still incomplete, even though later he does quote Bernard also on the subject of the sola fide? In view of these questions, I arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Luther's early reading of Bernard's writings, especially his sermons, brought him into contact with a forgiving Christ. That this had its influence on Luther is to be expected.

2. That Bernard was a major influence in leading Luther to his doctrine of justification by faith through grace is, however, questionable. The evidence in the Dictata allows for recognizing influence but does not compel the conclusion that Bernard's influence was a chief factor in Luther's development.

3. As Luther continued to lecture on other books of the Bible, especially Romans, his doctrinal position became more clearly established. He is pleased to refer to Bernard's writings and life as being in substantial agreement with him.

4. As Luther matured in his understanding of sola fide, also his appreciation for the sola scriptura principle grew. He began to apply this principle to the Fathers, including Bernard. One cannot escape the question whether ultimately we must find the major influence on Luther only in the Scriptures. It is not the purpose of this thesis to concern itself with that specific question. This, however, is of interest: Bernard, too, made the Scriptures his major study. Here is a point of contact between
The two men that cannot be ignored.

After 1521 Luther continued to refer to Bernard with about the same frequency as before. As we proceed to these references, the question is: do they compel a modification of the above conclusions about the relationship of Bernard and Luther?

In the area of justification by grace through faith for Jesus' sake, Bernard continues to receive the praises of Luther. He says of Bernard: "Whenever he begins to speak of Christ, it is a pure pleasure to follow."\(^{123}\)

Here Luther applies superlatives: "Bernhard in his sermons surpasses all other doctors . . . because he preaches Christ most beautifully."\(^{124}\)

Luther mentions Bernard in connection with the wonders of Christ's incarnation: "Bernard loved the incarnation of Christ very much."\(^{125}\) He marvels at the indescribable dignity with which God invests man by this wonderful union, joining Himself to the human nature.\(^{126}\) Luther quotes from a sermon of Bernard to show the comfort the latter derived from the incarnation: "Now I can see that God my Lord is not angry with me; for He is my flesh and blood and sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father as Lord over all creatures. If he were ill-disposed toward me, He would not have taken on my flesh and blood."\(^{127}\) Luther even is pleased with Bernard when he imagines that the devil fell because of envy when he knew

\(^{123}\) LW 14, p. 38 (WA 31/1, 256).

\(^{124}\) WT 3, No. 3370b: "quia pulcherrime praedicavit Christum."

\(^{125}\) LW 5, p. 221 (WA 43, 581).

\(^{126}\) LW 5, p. 220 (WA 43, 580).

\(^{127}\) LW 22, p. 105 (WA 46, 627). Luther quotes from the *Sermones in cantica* XX, PL 183, 792.
that God would become man, begrudging "man such great dignity." "These thoughts of Bernard," Luther writes, "are not unprofitable, for they flow from admiration for the boundless love and mercy of God." 128

Most often Luther repeats the reference from the *Sermones in cantica* XX, praising Bernard for turning to Christ alone in the face of death. Sometimes he adds a further reference from the *Vita Prima Bernardi*. 129 In *De servo arbitrio* the former is used to stress that man has no power that can apply itself to grace. 130 The latter is used to show that Bernard, when he was in danger of death, found hope in the passion of Christ. In his *in epistolam S. Pauli Ad Galatas commentarius* of 1535 Luther combines the two references. He sees Bernard, "a man so pious, holy, and chaste that I think he deserves to be put ahead of all other monks," lay all his good works and acts of piety aside and take "hold of the blessing of Christ by faith, saying: 'I have lived damnable.'" This is from the *Sermones* reference. As Luther continues to quote Bernard, he turns directly to the *Vita* reference: "But thou, O Lord Jesus Christ, hast a double right to the kingdom of heaven: first, because Thou art the Son of God; secondly, because Thou hast won it by Thy passion and death. The first Thou dost keep for Thyself by Thy birthright; the latter Thou dost grant to me by the right, not of works but of grace." 131 Here all three, *solus Christus*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide* are in clear evidence and Luther ascribes all three to Bernard. Throughout the years to the end of his

128 LW 5, 221 (WA 43, 581).
129 PL 185, 491.
130 WA 18, 644.
131 LW 26, p. 460 (WA 40/1, 687).
that God would become man, begrudging "man such great dignity." "These thoughts of Bernard," Luther writes, "are not unprofitable, for they flow from admiration for the boundless love and mercy of God."128

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128 LW 5, 221 (WA 43, 581).
129 PL 185, 491.
130 WA 18, 644.
131 LW 26, p. 460 (WA 40/1, 687).
life Luther made use of these references, commending Bernard.\textsuperscript{132}

All of this leads Luther to the judgment that Bernard "had the best knowledge of religion, as his writings show."\textsuperscript{133} He only was "worthy of the name 'Father Bernard' and of being studied diligently."\textsuperscript{134}

In the years after 1521, Bernard, however, also is criticized. I already referred to Luther's moderate criticism of Bernard in 1520 and 1521 because of his monasticism. In the Tischreden Luther says that Bernard, pious monk that he was, yet presumed to declare that if someone failed to remain in the cloister, he would surely merit damnation. Luther goes on to say that Bernard may have been a sincere monk, yet he set a bad example.\textsuperscript{135} In what did Bernad's poor example consist? In the early twenties already Luther wrote that saints like Jerome, Augustine, and Bernard failed in this that they "set up orders and rules of works contrary to the purity of faith."\textsuperscript{136} Luther often pointed out that the monks of his day no longer were following the spirit of their founders. However, even if the religion and discipline of Bernard and the others were observed, "we would still have to say: 'If you have nothing to set against the wrath and judgment of God except your sanctity and the chastity of your lives, you are clearly sons of the slave woman, who must

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{132}For a longer listing of such references, cf. note 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{133}LW 2, p. 269 (WA 42, 453).
  \item \textsuperscript{134}LW 22, p. 388 (WA 47, 109).
  \item \textsuperscript{135}W 4, No. 4772: "Sanct Bernhard ist der frömmste Mönch gewesen, 
  . . . doch hat er dürfen sagen: Es ware ein gewis Zeichen der Verdammisz, 
  wenn einer nicht im Kloster bliebe . . . Er ist wol ein erfahrener und 
  geübter Mönch gewesen, aber er hat ein bös Exempel geben."
  \item \textsuperscript{136}LW 9, p. 130 (WA 14, 648).
\end{itemize}
be cast out of the kingdom of heaven and condemned."137 Luther's criticism is that in his monasticism Bernard is not true to the purity of faith. In 1537 he wrote: "I follow him wherever he preached Christ ... But I will not consent to wearing his cowl, his hair shirt, and his monkish garb."138 Forgiveness from Christ by grace through faith is placed into the scale against which Luther weighs Bernard's monasticism and finds it wanting. Bernard, Augustine, and many others "would certainly have had to be condemned (as Wycliffe says) if they had not come to their senses and been saved by the richness of their faith in the midst of unrecognized error."139 For Luther, Bernard's faith and love for Christ still outweighed the errors in which he unwittingly, as Luther thought of it, was involved.

This same standard was used by Luther to evaluate Bernard's life of abstinence. Frequently he makes mention of the torture Bernard inflicted on his body by not eating. This caused the stench of his breath to be "unbearable to the rest when the choir was assembled."140 On the one hand, Luther does mention that later Bernard "came to his senses and also told his brothers not to hurt the body too much. For he realized that he had made himself unable to serve his brothers."141 Nevertheless the

137 LW 26, p. 459 (WA 40/1, 686). This is from Luther's 1535 lectures on Galatians 4:30.

138 LW 22, p. 268 (WA 46, 782).

139 LW 9, p. 130 (WA 14, 648).

140 LW 5, p. 71 (WA 43, 477f.). For additional references to this incident, cf. also LW 30, p. 27, 40 (WA 12, 282-3); LW 4, p. 273 (WA 43, 331); WT 3, No. 3777. This incident is taken from the Vita Prima Bernardi, PL 185-1, 239-40.

141 LW 30, p. 27 (WA 12, 283).
abstinence imposed by St. Bernard's order had to be evaluated according to the standard of Luther's view of justification. In 1522 he writes: "The orders of St. Benedict, St. Bernard, and Carthusians, and all others, oppose Christ when they abstain from meat and the like as a matter of necessity and command, as if it would be a sin not to abstain." If fasting was imposed as a necessity so that failure to abstain became a sin, then it came into conflict with Luther's sola gratia justification. The latter was the criterion by which Bernard's fasting had to be judged.

In Luther's later years, Bernard's Mariology frequently calls forth criticism from Luther. This is to be expected, since Bernard, according to Thomas Merton, "is one of the greatest and most important theologians of Mary in the Catholic Church." Merton goes on to say that before Bernard "there was, strictly speaking, no such thing as a completely developed 'Mariology.'" He quotes another "modern theologian" to the same effect: "It is impossible to speak or write adequately of Mary without having first studied what Saint Bernard has written about her." On the subject of Mariology, Luther is critical of Bernard.

We must, however, note carefully the reason for the criticism, for Luther does also praise Bernard for what he says about the Virgin Mary. Referring to Mary's response to the angel's announcement that she is to be the mother of Christ, Bernard says "that the strength of faith of the Virgin who could believe the words of the angel was no less a miracle than the incarnation of the Word itself." Luther uses this as an

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142 LW 35, p. 134 (WA 10/2, 74).
143 Merton, p. 86.
145 LW 5, p. 234 (WA 43, 590).
example that shows the importance and the power of the words which God
spoke to the saints, calling forth faith. He finds no fault with Bernard's
comment about the miracle of Mary's faith.

However, whenever anything Bernard says of Mary conflicts with Luther's
doctrine of justification, his criticism is quick to appear. He calls a
picture of Judgment Day, based on St. Bernard's writings, "shameful and
blasphemous," because it showed "St. John and Mary interceding for us at
the Last Judgment, the mother showing the Son the breasts He had sucked."
Luther decries the fact that "such paintings . . . have been used to
frighten people's consciences and to make them think that they must fear
and flee from the dear Savior, as though He wanted to drive us from Him
and avenge our sins."¹⁴⁶ He did not find this at all to Bernard's credit.

Similarly Luther finds fault with Bernard for directing attention to
Christ's harsh condemnation of the Pharisees in contrast to Mary's kind-
ness and gentleness which permitted her to utter no unfriendly word.
Luther quotes Bernard as inferring from this that "Christ is given to
scolding and punishing, but Mary has nothing but sweetness and love."¹⁴⁷
The result was, according to Luther, that "Christ was generally feared;
we fled from Him and took refuge with the saints . . . Christ was only the
executioner, while the saints were our mediators."¹⁴⁸ The same Bernard,
who wrote so well about a forgiving Christ, here is blamed for leading men
to fear and flee from Christ.

Any thought of Mary serving as intercessor before her Son was for

¹⁴⁶ LW 23, p. 57 (WA 33, 83-4).
¹⁴⁷ LW 22, p. 377 (WA 47, p. 99-100).
¹⁴⁸ LW 22, p. 377 (WA 47, 100).
Luther a contradiction of the *solus Christus* in justification. In a sermon in 1537 he refers to Bernard's teaching that one must have Mary as intercessor; when the Son sees his mother's breasts, He will become gracious and forget his wrath. To this Luther responds: "No, breasts will not do this; something else is required."\(^{149}\)

Shortly before his death in the last sermon preached at Wittenberg Luther mentions Bernard in connection with Mary. He asks: "Are we to worship only Christ? Indeed, shouldn't we also honor the holy mother of Christ? She is the woman who bruised the head of the serpent. Hear us, Mary, for thy Son so honours thee that he can refuse thee nothing." Luther answers: "Here Bernard went too far in his 'Homilies on the Gospel Missus est Angelus.'\(^{150}\)

Mary was not to come between the sinner and Christ. She is not to be honored at the expense of the *solus Christus*.

This same sermon of Bernard is mentioned by Luther in the *Tischreden*. Luther complains that Bernard devotes the entire sermon to Mary alone and has nothing to say about the incarnation.\(^{151}\) At another time he points to this sermon as an example of some of the many things Bernard had written about Mary that are most impious. But then he adds that in the end of his life Bernard turned alone to Christ, combining again reference to the *Sermones in cantica XX* and to the *Vita Prima Bernhardi*.\(^{152}\)

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\(^{149}\) St. L. VII, 913.

\(^{150}\) LW 51, p. 375 (WA 51, 128).

\(^{151}\) WT 1, No. 494: "Bernhardus consumit totum sermonem in laude virginis Mariae et obliviscitur rei gestae; er und Anshelmus haben Mariam so hoch gehabent. Sed ein christ lest disputationes stehn et tractat affectus. Incarnationem igitur sol man hoch halten. Creatura Maria non potest satis laudari, sed wenn der creator selb kompt et fit pretium nostrum, das ist die freud.

\(^{152}\) WT 1, No. 118.
Luther's entire criticism of Bernard's Mariology is in the interest of preserving the honor of Christ. Wherever Bernard somehow conflicts with Luther's doctrine of justification, criticism of the medieval saint is not spared. At the same time, Luther continues to accept the reality of Bernard's personal Christianity and salvation. But he sees Bernard's salvation taking place according to his own doctrine of justification.

Bernard's use of Holy Scripture receives both praise and criticism in the later years of Luther's life. Luther has high praise for Bernard's understanding of the Psalms. Making the point that the Psalms must be lived to be understood, he writes: "I see that St. Bernard was an expert in this art and drew from it all the wealth of his learning."153 He includes Bernard among the theologians of whom he says: "In public they interpret the Scriptures purely and in a clean manner."154

For Luther a proper use of Scripture required understanding of its two topics: threats and promises, that is, the Law and the Gospel. He finds support for this when Bernard writes in De consideratione: "... hearts that are neither softened by kindnesses nor improved by blows are properly called hard."155

Even his sola scriptura principle Luther sees Bernard supporting. St. Bernard had declared that he learned his wisdom from the trees; the oaks and pines were his teachers. This Luther understands to mean that "he conceived his ideas from Scripture and pondered them under the trees."156

153 LW 14, p. 311 (WA 5, 47).
154 LW 9, p. 164 (WA 14, 667).
155 LW 3, 225 (WA 43, 36)
156 LW 41, 20 (WA 50, 520).
In this connection Bernard also added the thought that "he regards the holy fathers highly, but does not heed all their sayings . . . he would rather drink from the spring itself than from the brook." Luther makes the comment: "Thus Scripture, too, must remain master and judge . . ." 157 In Bernard's preferring the spring, Scripture, to the brook, the Fathers, Luther with some justification sees his sola scriptura principle expressed.

However, in his use of Scripture Bernard also meets with Luther's disapproval. Although Luther recognized Bernard's excellent understanding of the Psalms, he does not hesitate to say in reference to Psalm 91: 5-6: "This is my understanding of the passage. I know, of course, that St. Bernard has a different interpretation, which is all right, though in my own opinion, it savor.s all too strongly of monkishness . . . " 158

Bernard is among the Fathers who allegorize a great deal in their exposition of Scripture. This is not to Luther's liking: "The trouble is that since they spend too much time on allegories, they call hearts away and make them flee from the historical account and from faith . . ." 159

Luther sees Bernard's ignorance of languages resulting in false interpretation. Bernard might be lofty of spirit and be preferred "above all other celebrated teachers both ancient and modern." Nevertheless, he often "plays with the Scriptures and twists them out of their true sense." 160 This is true especially when he is called upon to give response to some question. Too often he takes "something away from Scripture,"

157 LW 41, 20 (WA 50, 520).
159 LW 2, p. 164 (WA 42, 377).
160 LW 45, 363 (WA 15, 41).
and does "violence to the words of God."  

An examination of the quotations from the years after 1521 leads to some observations that need to be recorded here. To what extent they add to or modify conclusions previously stated will be the concern of the final part of this thesis.

1. In the years after 1521 Luther continues his high praise of Bernard. There is, however, more frequent criticism than before. The criticism also is more severe, although it remains unusually mild for a man accustomed to expressing himself in language that to twentieth century ears is harsh.

2. Luther's doctrine of justification is the chief criterion used in his judgment of Bernard. This also determines the doctrines in which criticism is expressed: monasticism, asceticism, Mariology. Where these conflict with Luther's solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide, Luther is not slow to express criticism. This even carries over into his criticism of Bernard's interpretation of Scripture, when Luther, for example, finds Bernard influenced by his monkishness.

3. In these later years Luther frequently draws attention to what he considers contradictory views in Bernard. Bernard lived a strict, ascetic life, yet in the end his hope was in Christ alone. He praised works, yet he turned to Christ in faith. He could write beautiful expositions of Scripture, yet he failed to follow Scripture in his treatises. When Bernard lets Scripture in its simple meaning stand, when Bernard speaks from Scripture, Luther praises him highly. What this really means is that when Bernard was, in effect, following Luther's sola scriptura principle,

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161 LW 9, p. 164 (WA 14, 667).
Luther found himself in agreement with Bernard. When Bernard departed from this principle, and this Luther saw happening particularly in Bernard's treatises, Luther found him contradicting himself and erring.

4. In spite of this, the overall view that Luther has of Bernard is still a favorable one. The errors he sees in Bernard he considers errors ignorantly espoused. Bernard did not cling to them with soul-destroying tenacity. Unwittingly he gave them up when he looked upon Christ. They did not overthrow his simple faith in Christ. The latter was so evident in Bernard's writings that it far outweighed whatever Luther found to reject in Bernard.
IV. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It is my purpose in this final part to draw together by way of summary observations and conclusions the points that have been made in the preceding sections. These conclusions make no pretense at being definitive; more extensive research would be required for that. I recognize that they are based on research that is still incomplete, for the relationship between Bernard and Luther, although often recognized as significant, has not received extensive study. Nevertheless, the following conclusions, though less compelling than one might wish, seem valid at this point.

1. Luther occupied himself with a study of Bernard's writings, especially his sermons, early in his monastic career. I see no reason to question Melanchthon's account of the aged monk who directed Luther's attention to one of Bernard's sermons. Scheel's doubt that Luther in his early Erfurt years read Bernard's writings I do not find supported. Although Melanchthon does not specifically include Bernard as an author with whom Luther concerned himself in his early years, the evidence from Luther's own writings leads to this conclusion. When Luther began his lectures on the Psalms, he studied with care the available commentaries on them, which do not include any written by Bernard. His references to Bernard at this time are not so frequent that they point to a deep preoccupation with him. On the other hand, they are sufficiently extensive to indicate considerable familiarity with Bernard's works. I therefore conclude that he must have read Bernard in the earlier monastic years.

2. Luther appears to have gained an extensive knowledge of Bernard's writings in those early years. He could quote Bernard, apparently from
memory, on a wide variety of subjects, even frequently naming the source. Since the quotations generally are not exact, one may conclude that Luther had a knowledge of Bernard that permitted such free quoting without the need each time to turn directly to his source. If the latter had been necessary, one would expect the citing to be verbatim. There is little change in the frequency or breadth of reference over the years. This supports the claim for an early and extensive knowledge of Bernard on the part of Luther.

3. This early and extensive knowledge of Bernard's writings will not have failed to influence Luther in his formative years. Particularly Bernard's sermons are quoted by Luther with approval. Even in his later years he speaks of them with praise, while he is critical of Bernard's treatises. These sermons contain many references that direct the individual to Christ for forgiveness, comfort, and peace. In his sermons Bernard frequently expounds Scripture in a simple manner with no effort to force his exposition into a specific theological framework. By selective use of quotations from Bernard, one can show him to have held Luther's doctrine of justification. There are statements by Bernard that at times express the principles of solus Christus, sola gratia, and sola fide.

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162 Theo. Dierks in "The Doctrine of Justification According to Bernard of Clairvaux," Concordia Theological Monthly, VIII (Oct., 1937), 748-753, uses select quotations from Bernard to show the similarity between his doctrine of justification and that of Luther. The references indicate that Bernard at times expresses himself in a way that Luther could not but approve. The question still remains whether these select quotations present the total picture of Bernard's theology. There is also the question whether Bernard with expressions that are similar to those of Luther was using them in the same way and with the same meaning. Dierks does, however, also refer in his introduction to selections from Bernard that show Bernard's Catholic views on merit. He, however, considers the former the "real Bernard."
If, as we concluded, Luther's attention was drawn to Bernard's sermons in the early years at Erfurt, their influence on Luther in the critical time of his life can hardly be completely rejected.

4. Nevertheless, Bernard alone would not have led Luther to his doctrine of justification. Bernard's total theology cannot be identified with Luther's. Bernard's monasticism, asceticism, and Mariology find strong expression in his writings and are recognized by Luther in his later years as conflicting with his own doctrine of justification. When Luther mentions that Bernard sometimes praised Mary with the result that Christ was feared as an avenger of sin, this may well describe some of his own reactions to those parts of Bernard in his early years. This would have lessened Bernard's influence. That the influence of Bernard was not major is borne out by the limited reference to Bernard in the Dictata and the other early lectures in connection with points related to the doctrine of justification. I conclude therefore that, although Bernard's influence on Luther's development cannot be denied, its place in the total picture is a limited one.

5. Scheel's comment that the Reformer does not place Bernard among those who led him to the Gospel is an argument from silence and in itself is not conclusive. It does, however, lend some support to the conclusion

163 Roland Mousnier, "Saint Bernard and Martin Luther," The American Benedictine Review, XIV (Sept., 1963), 448-462, says, on the one hand, that Bernard had the greatest influence on Luther after St. Augustine. Nevertheless, after noting several points of similarity between the two, Mousnier takes up the differences and comes to the conclusion that Bernard was not a source of Luther's ideas, rather, that Luther did not really understand Bernard. Mousnier wants to view Bernard's theology as a unit and finds Luther's distinction between Bernard in the sermons and in the treatises invalid. He assumes that a man must be consistent with himself, which may not always be the case.
of limited influence in view of the fact that there are others whom Luther does call his masters, either positively or negatively. Luther, for example, calls Occam magister meum and mein liebster Meister. In a more complete sense Staupitz receives credit from Luther for leading him to Christ. On the other hand, of Erasmus Luther says: Ex Erasmo nihil habeo. Since Luther did mention some who were his masters, the omission of any mention of Bernard in this role is supporting evidence, if not conclusive, that Bernard's influence on Luther was not of significant magnitude.

6. The fact remains, nevertheless, that Luther mentions Bernard with words of high praise. In the early years, Bernard is simply quoted with approval. In the later years, although Luther criticizes Bernard for some of his views, his words of commendation for the monk's sermons continue. If there are reasons for not speaking of a major influence of Bernard on Luther, there is every reason to speak of considerable appreciation on the part of Luther for Bernard.

7. The conscious point of contact where Luther found himself at one with Bernard is their view of Christ. This finds repeated expression in Luther. Another point of contact, not consciously mentioned by Luther, yet the basis for the former, is their high esteem for Scripture and its consequent authoritative use. It is when Bernard in simple terms expounds

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164 WT 2, No. 2544.
165 WA 30/2, 300.
166 WT 1, No. 526: "Sed Staupicius meus dicebat: Man musz den man ansehen, der da heyst Christus. Staupicius hat die doctrinam angefangen."
167 WT 1, No. 173. Here he also refers again to Staupitz: "Ich habe all mein ding von Doctor Staupitz; der hatt mir occasionem geben."
portions of Scripture that lie at the center of Luther's theology that
the two meet in their thinking. 168

8. This final observation is intended to record a general impression
gained from the study of Bernard and Luther in relation to one another.
There are many broad similarities between the two so that it is not sur-
prising to find Luther attracted to Bernard. 169 For both, religion was
a deeply inward matter of the heart. Both were profoundly concerned about
the removal of sin and about salvation. Both found the ultimate answer
in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. Both were zealous against error
that might undermine the truth as they had come to know it. Both were
preachers who inspired and influenced their hearers beyond measure.
Both were fearless in pursuing whatever course their convictions led them
to. Each became in his own way the man of his century. The fact that
one championed the papacy to the end of his life, the other finally saw
in it the Antichrist does not nullify the similarities between the two
men, separated by four centuries of history.

168 Karl Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze. I (7th ed., Tübingen, 1946), p. 28,
correctly sees the ultimate influence on Luther in Paul, and that means,
in Scripture. In footnote 2, he comments: "Alle anderen Einflüsse, die
sonst in dieser Zeit auf Luther gewirkt haben . . . sind zuletzt für
Luther nur soweit wichtig geworden, als sie ihn zu Paulus hinführten."
The closer anyone was to Scripture and to Paul, the greater was Luther's
appreciation of him. This is true also of Luther's appreciation for
Bernard.

169 Richard Friedenthal, Luther: Sein Leben und seine Zeit (Munich,
1967), p. 79, refers to the affinity of temperaments between Luther and
Bernard: "Es gibt Affinitäten der Temperamente: Augustin war schon aus
diesem Grunde Luther näher (als Thomas), oder auch Bernard von Clairvaux,
in dem er den grossen Prediger und Volksmann schätzte."
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This thesis has been approved by the following committee:

[Signatures]

Ronald B. Zumpko
Director

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G.A. Williams