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THE FORMATION AND PERMANENT VALUE
OF
LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON SAINT PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Sacred Theology
in the
Biblical Seminary in New York

April 1933

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To My Former Teacher
The Rev. Prof. Sven Gustaf Youngert
Scholar, Devout Christian, Friend

Epistola ad Galatas ist mein epistelcha, der
ich mir vertrawt hab. Ist mein Keth von
Bor.

(Veit Dietrichs Nachschriften,
Handschrift der Nürnberger
Stadtbibliothek)

Tischreden, Weimar Edition,
volume 1, page 69, number 146.

Epistola ad Galatas est mea epistola, cui me
despondi. Est mea Ketha de Bora (Kethe
de Boren).

Handschrift Rörers in der Uni-
versitätsbibliothek zu Jena.

Handschrift der Königlischen
Öffentlichen Bibliothek in
Dresden.

Handschrift der Herzoglichen
Bibliothek in Gotha.

"Mögen wir Heutigen in vielen Einzelheiten der Texterklärung zu besseren wissenschaftlichen Resultaten gekommen sein -- wer wollte daraus einen Vorwurf für den Gelehrten des 16. Jahrhunderts herleiten? --, so macht Luther gerade in diesem Kommentar im Anschluss an die energievollen Ausführungen des Paulus mit ausserordentlicher Wucht und Konsequenz das tiefste Wesen aller Religiosität: völliges Vertrauen auf Gott und gänzlichliches Absehen von aller Eigenreichtigkeit in einer Weise geltend, die auch uns noch etwas zu sagen hat."

- Weimar Edition, volume 40, page 1.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

THE FORMATION AND PERMANENT VALUE
OF
LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON SAINT PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Luther and the Reformation.

The sixteenth century witnessed the birth of movements with reason called epoch-making, greatest of which in its influence for the following centuries was the Reformation. This was a complex movement, having its roots in the labors of daring and spirit-filled souls of an earlier period. Yet the Reformation centered around one dominant and dynamic personality, for the evangelical Reformation of this century is unthinkable without Doctor Martin Luther (1). The many laudatory characterizations of the spiritual giant of this period find a noteworthy summary statement in the words of the late Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, who viewed the Reformer not only from the perspective of one given to Luther-research, but also from the broader vantage point of the scholar homed in the history and philosophy of religion: "From the point of view of the history of religion he (Luther)

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1) Mackinnon, "Luther and the Reformation," I, Preface p. iii.

stands next after Saint Paul as Christianity's mightiest creative genius" (1).

B. Increased Interest in Luther-Research.

1. Factors which have caused this increased interest.

The last half century has witnessed a tremendous increase in Luther-research, of which results the American scholar Reu gives a succinct and comprehensive survey (2). Two major factors caused this awakening of interest. There was first of all the influence of the Ranke school upon the study of history. Transplanted into the field of Church History this historical method enlisted the full attention of the German scholars Reuter and Kolde, who had even earlier pledged allegiance to its implications (3). In the second place there was the

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- 1) Söderblom, "Studiet av Religionen," p.33.
- 2) Reu, "Thirty-Five Years of Luther Research," p. 1-26.
- 3) Kolde characterizes the Rankean school, in Hauck's Realencyklopädie, vol. 23, p. 325: "Insight into the past, without reference to the present, solely with the view to ascertain by means of detailed research work in the sources, what a course events actually took, i.e., to reconstruct as much as possible with the skill of an artist the course of events, after considering all the things that limited the life of the individual as well as the development of the whole."

impetus lent by Johann Janssen, professor in the Catholic gymnasium of Frankfurt on the Main, who in 1877 published the first volume of his massive "Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters." This work enjoyed tremendous popularity, but its portrayals of Luther caused no little consternation among the scholars of the Church of the Reformation.

2. Luther-Research in Germany.

Bossert called Lutheran historians to bend every effort to conduct exhaustive researches in the history of the Reformation. In 1882 the "Verein für Reformationsgeschichte" was founded and in the following year the first of its "Schriften" was issued at Halle. Publications of this society have continued to date.

The publication by Julius Köstlin, in 1875, of his "Martin Luther; Sein Leben und seine Schriften" was also of great importance. Köstlin was a systematician rather than a church historian in the stricter sense. A splendid group of younger scholars -- Knaake, Enders, Kolde, Kawerau, Brieger, Tschackert, Buchwald, Walther and others -- affiliated with him, and they have made decidedly favorable contributions to the field of Luther-study. Nor can we forget Reuter and Böhmer, nor the many present-day German scholars, too numerous to mention, whose works have been consulted in the preparation of this treatise.

Of cardinal importance for the renewed interest in Luther-research have been the many discoveries of long-lost

works (1). Such "finds" have their romantic interest for the bibliophile and antiquary, but they are of the most realistic value to the research historian. Through them whole chapters in the inner development of Luther leap into print. Several of these discoveries will be mentioned in the course of the following pages.

New editions of Luther's works also added greatly to the renewed interest. The most monumental work of all was the beginning of the "Weimar Edition" which Reu rightly names a publication "commensurate with the period of the most intensive research in the life of Luther and certainly its pinnacle of achievement" (2).

It is indicative of the amount of research made in this field that German scholars have deemed it necessary to begin the publication of "Bibliographie zur deutsche Geschichte Im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung" (Leipzig, 1931), to supplement the classic bibliography of Dahlmann-Waitz.

3. Luther-Research in Scandinavia.

It is but natural that the new period of Luther-research should have been begun in Germany, - but it has by no means been limited to the Reformer's homeland. The movement spread to the all-Lutheran Scandinavian countries, and particularly in Sweden have the past three decades

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1) Reu, op. cit., p. 12-16.

2) Ibid., p. 28-29.

witnessed an intensive Luther-research, the results of which have claimed no little attention on the part of the German scholars. Ragnar Bring has written a very informative essay on the status of Luther-study in Sweden (1). The initiative was taken by Pehr Eklund at the University of Lund. His labors inspired Söderblom at Uppsala, whose vibrant personality has in turn directed a number of scholars to this field. He was joined by Billing, whose study "Luthers lära om staten" (1900) proved of major importance. Göransson and Holmquist have busied themselves particularly with the position Luther holds in Church History. Billing's interest is primarily in relation to systematic theology, and the important influence of his work is emphasized by the productions of four scholars who have followed in the path which he paved - Runestam, Bohlin, Ljunggren, and von Engeström. Aulén at Lund, the outstanding dogmatician of present-day Sweden, shows influences alike from Eklund, Söderblom and Billing, and in addition, from the historian Hjärne. The ethical structure in Luther's writings has been the object of study on the part of Nygren, Aulén's co-worker at Lund. It is of more than passing interest to note that the renewed study of Luther in Sweden

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1) Bring, "Den svenska Lutherforskningen under de sista tre decennierna," in "Teologisk Tidskrift" (Finland) 1931.

contributed in no mean degree to the "kyrkoförnyelse" (renewal, revitalizing of the Church) in that land (1).

4. Luther-Research in France.

A number of works have appeared in France the past few years dealing with Luther and the Reformation (2). Modern Catholic opinion is summarized in Paquier's "Le Protestantisme Allemand." There are also works by Reinach, Fabre, Humbert and Loisy. Of more than ordinary interest is "Les Origines de la Reforme" by the Professor at Paris, Imbart de la Tour, first published in the "Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale," in the Reformation number, 1918, and later given out in book form, which Söderblom places at the very top of Luther-research conducted by Catholics (3). A worthy contribution has also been made by Henri Strohl, in his two theses presented to the Protestant Faculty at the University of Strassburg: "L'évolution religieuse de Luther jusqu'en 1515" (1922) and "L'épanouissement de la Pensée religieuse de Luther" (1924).

5. Luther-Research in England and America.

In England and America noteworthy progress has been made -- and we remember that the first Luther item to be

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1) Stig Ahlstedt, "Sveriges kristliga studentförnyelse," article in Allsvensk Samling, 1930.

2) Cf. Humphrey, "French Estimates of Luther," in "The Lutheran Quarterly," April, 1918.

3) Cf. Söderblom, "Lutherforskningsens nuvarande kris," article in "Litteraturen," Copenhagen, vol. III, 1920-21, p. 61-77, 128-137.

put into English, a letter of the Reformer to Henry VIII, was dated 1526 (1) -- and the complete list of the works of Luther which have been translated into English is exceedingly impressive-looking (2). A monograph on Luther-research in these countries would indeed not be in vain. Mackinnon's four-volume work on "Luther and the Reformation" (1925) has come to be highly regarded and the names of Krauth, Jacobs, Smith and McGiffert are synonymous with scholarly production. Wentz in "Four Centuries of Luther" (3) touches on the works produced in the English-speaking countries though the major portion of his essay necessarily deals with European research. Rockwell, Pannkoke and Kieffer launched special efforts to include in their "List of References on the History of the Reformation in Germany" (4) older material in English which had been omitted in the voluminous Dahlmann-Waitz.

Half a century ago the Lutheran "Synod of Missouri" courageously ventured a republication of the old Luther-edition of Walch. In 1880-1881 the first two volumes put in their appearance, and the twenty-third and last volume was printed in 1910. This edition leaves much to be desired, and yet Hoppe's work in translating letters and table-talk from Latin into German elicited praise from

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- 1) Smith, "Complete List of Works of Luther in English," in "The Lutheran Quarterly," vol. XLVIII, No. 4, Oct. 1918, p. 490.
- 2) Ibid., p. 490-508.
- 3) Wentz, "Four Centuries of Luther," Paper read at annual meeting of the American Society of Church History, 1916.
- 4) Published by the Reformation Quadricentenary Committee, 1917.

Kawerau and Tschackert (1). Practical motives moved Dr. John Nicholas Lenker, a president of the National Lutheran Library Association, to issue Luther's works in English dress. Though this edition also leaves much to be desired, the undertaking as such must be pronounced worthy. Of greater value is the series "Works of Martin Luther with introductions and notes" for which five members of the Pennsylvania Ministerium furnished the initiative, published by A. J. Holman Company, Philadelphia, (volume VI has just now appeared). This work follows the Braunschweig-Berlin edition, improving on that, however, by arranging the writings in Chronological instead of topical order.

C. Introduction to the Problem.

It has often been said that Luther gave to his people what no other single man ever did -- Bible, Hymnbook, and Catechism. By their very nature these works became the best known and most widely disseminated of the Reformer's productions, followed by his theological and controversial writings, and more especially his spiritual treasury, the House Postill. The exegetical lectures of Luther, delivered at the University of Wittenberg (2), also lay claim to our interest. These

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1) Reu, op. cit., p. 32-33.

2) Luther's call to Wittenberg was primarily to be a teacher of the Holy Scriptures.

lectures cover a long period. He began in 1513 with a course on the Psalms and his final lectures, on Genesis, were given in 1534-1535. With the discovery of manuscripts, principally of the Psalms and the Romans lectures, there followed research work in connection with them, and also increased interest in all his exegetical work. These documents furnished first-hand information of Luther previous to 1517, and accordingly of great value.

The lectures on Psalms (1) and on Romans (2) have been given considerable treatment both as works in the

.

1) Luther's lectures on the Psalms have been treated principally by the following: Hedwig Thomas, "Zur Würdigung Luthers Psalmenvorlesung," 1920; H. Hering, "Luthers erste Vorlesungen" (Theol. Stud. e. Krit.), 1887; A. W. Dieckhoff, "Luthers erste Vorlesungen über den Psalter" (Zeitschr. f. kirchl. Wissenschaft u. kirchl. Leben), 1883; the same author's Luthers Lehre in ihrer ersten Gestalt, 1887; K. A. Meissinger, "Luthers Exegese in der Frühzeit," 1911; Strohl, "L'evolution religieuse de Luther jusqu'en 1515," 1922; Hunzinger, "Luthers Neuplatonismus in der Psalmenvorlesung," 1906; G. Koffmane, "Zu Luthers Arbeiten an den Psalmen," 1896; Arvid Runestam, "Den kristliga friheten hos Luther och Melanchthon," 1917, ch. 2; Mackinon, op. cit., I, p. 157-168; Köstlin-Hay, "The Theology of Luther," I, p. 95-124; Robert H. Fife, "Young Luther," 1928, p. 155-182; Gustav Ljunggren, "Bynd och Skuld i Luthers teologie," 1928, p. 11 f.; Torsten Hohlin, "Gudstro och Kristustro hos Luther," 1927, p. 335-361. There are also introductory notes by Kawerau in Volume III of the Weimar edition, p. 7 f.

2) The following volumes give characterizations of Luther's Lectures on Romans: Johannes Ficker (who is the first editor of the Romans Commentary) treats the

field of exegesis, and as instruments by which we can trace the inner development of Luther preceding the eventful year of 1517, when the open break with Rome occurred. To the knowledge of the writer there is no extended treatment of Luther's lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians. We must bear in mind that this Epistle occupied the attention of Luther at various times. The first set of lectures was given in 1516-1517, and the final set in 1531. Between these two dates there was the reworking of material and publication of commentaries, and four years after the lectures of 1531 there was the publication of the final commentary. On no other book of the Bible did Luther spend so much time and effort; and the 1535 Commentary may well be taken as an expression of the "mature" Luther. Through these media we are also enabled

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lectures in his extended introduction (I, p. XLVI-CII) to "Die Anfänge reformatorischer Bibelauslegung," 1908; K. A. Meissinger, op. cit.,; Adolf Schlatter, "Luthers Deutung des Römerbriefs. Ein Beitrag zur vierten Säkularfeier der Reformation," 1917; Runestam, op. cit., ch. 2; Fife, op. cit., p. 183-204; Ljunggren, op. cit., in various places; O. Scheel, "Die Entwicklung Luthers bis zum Abschluss der Vorlesung über den Römerbrief;" K. Holl, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit" in "Zeit. Theol. Kirch.," 1910; Mackinnon, op. cit., p. 168-176; Strohl, "L'épanouissement de la pensée religieuse de Luther," 1924; Bohlin, op. cit., p. 362-394 Arvid Runebergh, "Luthers inre utveckling till reformator," 1916, p. 31 f. There are also minor references in numerous other works which bear upon the general subject of Luther. The Romans lectures have not been incorporated in the Weimar edition, and we have them only in the volume prepared by Johannes Ficker, mentioned above.

to trace the progress of his inner thought and self. Runestam treats the 1519 Commentary (from the point of view of Christian Liberty) in his work alluded to above, chapter III, and in the final volume of "Luther and the Reformation" Mackinnon devotes a few pages to a characterization of Luther as we know him from the 1535 Commentary, naming him an "evangelical moralist".

D. The Purpose of this Investigation.

It is the purpose of this investigation to make an examination of Luther's relation to Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and to gather the results of such a study into a unit. The specific dimensions of the study with which we will be concerned are as follows:

- 1) The historical setting of Luther's lectures and commentaries on Galatians will be established; we will seek to bring forth the facts concerning the original lectures of 1516-1517, the commentary of 1519, subsequent commentaries, the lectures of 1531, and the final commentary of 1535.
- 2) A study will be made of Luther's background and qualifications as an exegete, dwelling particularly with his relation to the Bible as a foregoing preparation, his study of languages, and his relation to the scholarship of his time. Attention will also be given to scripture evaluation according to Luther.

- 3) A more detailed study of certain passages will follow, to note Luther's exegetical treatment of the same. By this study we will seek to determine Luther's rank as an exegete, and also the value of his work and principles in the history of exegesis.
- 4) The 1535 Commentary will be examined to determine the theological thought of the "mature" Luther as expressed through its pages. Some comparisons will be made of views held by Luther in earlier periods.
- 5) In a final chapter a summary and an interpretation will be offered, seeking to answer in definite ways the question with which we are concerned - what is the permanent value of Luther's Commentary on Galatians?

E. The Procedure.

In order to know the details of the matter a thorough orientation has been made of the periods and the historical frame from which the lectures and commentaries in question have come. A survey of all the early lectures at Wittenberg given by the Reformer has proved necessary. The letters of Luther in particular have been searched to find the evidence which they might contribute.

Both of the leading editions of Luther's works have been consulted, the Erlangen and the Weimar. The former will be abbreviated "Erl. ed." and the latter "W. ed." When in the latter edition the letters (Briefwechsel)

of Luther have been consulted the reference is given "W. ed. Br." with the number of the volume following.

An effort has been made not only to catalog the opinion rendered by others in regard to the various questions, but to make Luther's work of 1535 speak for itself, and to approach it in objective fashion, that it might really give its own picture of Luther. The idea of showing the growth of Luther has also been present in the mind of the writer.

The question with which this treatise is concerned was first suggested by hearing of the influence which the Commentary on Galatians has exerted, and also by reading several laudatory expressions regarding it. By making an objective study we have tried to answer the question concerning its permanent value.

CHAPTER II
THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF LUTHER'S
COMMENTARIES ON GALATIANS

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COMMENTARIES ON GALATIANS

A. Introduction

1. Luther's first call to Wittenberg

A mighty turning-point in the career of Luther came with his transfer to Wittenberg (1), which came when he was approaching the first objective of his theological course, the Baccalaureate in Bible (2), at the University of Erfurt. As to the reason for the transfer we know from Luther's words in a letter written to John Braun in Eisenach (March 17, 1509): "Wonder not that I departed without saying farewell. For my departure was so sudden that it was almost unknown to my fellow monks. I wished to write you but had time and leisure for nothing except to regret that I had to break away without saying good-bye" (3). At Wittenberg he was to continue his theological studies and also to lecture on Aristotle's Ethics (4). But he finds the work in Philosophy "very severe," we learn from the letter just alluded to, and Luther would "willingly have changed for theology."

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- 1) Holmquist, op. cit., p. 29.
- 2) Fife, op. cit., p. 134
- 3) W. ed. Br. I, 5; Enders I, 2; Smith I, p. 24.
- 4) Cf. Oergel, "Vom Jungen Luther," p. 110.

2. The return to Erfurt.

Luther was to stay at Wittenberg only a year, but from the reformer himself we learn that it was a very arduous one (1). On March 9 of that year he acquired the degree Baccalaureus Biblicus (2). A sudden change comes again with Luther's transfer to Erfurt. Again we remain in doubt as to the reason (3); we do know, however, that he entered the theological faculty there as professor, receiving, at the same time, the recognition of the academical rank he had acquired at Wittenberg (4), though, to be sure, he gained the degree of Sententiarius with some difficulty (5). From the marginal notes (6) made by Luther in the books of the Sentences of Lombard, we

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- 1) W. ed. Br. I, 7; Enders I, 6.
- 2) Kbstlin, "Martin Luther," p. 58-59.
- 3) Cf. Smith, "The Life and Letters of Martin Luther," p. 11. Smith says: "In the fall of 1509 Luther was sent back to Erfurt 'because he had not satisfied the Wittenberg faculty.' This sentence in the Dean's book, with Luther's own addition, 'because he had no means:- Erfurt must pay,' is usually taken to mean that he had not the money to pay the academic fees. It is also probable that there was some trouble about the lectures he was to give; he wishing to discontinue philosophy and take up the Bible."
- 4) Kbstlin, op. cit., p. 59.
- 5) Note Luther's words in a letter from the period: "Fui quidem a facultate vestra (Erfurt) cum omni difficultate admissus et susceptus."
- 6) These books were very happily discovered in 1889, having found their way to the municipal library at Zwickau. Cf. Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 131. Also Boehmer, op. cit., p. 33. The notes are published in Volume IX of the Weimar Edition.

are afforded an opportunity to study the Luther of

1509-1511. Mackinnon summarizes the results as follows:

"Generally speaking, the style of these notes is didactic and matter of fact, whilst enlivened by occasional flashes of strong feeling. Both the manner and the matter of the lectures are of the conventional scholastic type. They show no material departure from the scholastic method and the scholastic theology Within scholastic limits, however, he does exercise the critical faculty in quite a remarkable degree" (1).

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3. The Second Call to Wittenberg.

The exact date of Luther's departure from Erfurt for his mission to Rome -- which journey brought the young monk such unmistakable disillusionment -- is not known (2). But in the summer of 1511 he was called to be professor of divinity at Wittenberg, this at the recommendation of Staupitz, the vicar, who was anxious to retire and wished the younger man to take his place (3), and he made his way there probably in the late autumn of 1511. In May of the following year, at a meeting of his Order at Cologne, he was nominated sub-prior of the monastery at Wittenberg and directed to prepare himself for the theological doctorate (4). Under date of September 22 he

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1) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 135, 133. Of these notes Fife says, op. cit., p. 143: "It gives one a feeling of deep emotion to turn over the pages of notes which the young lecturer made on the cloister copy of the great medieval dogmatist We catch something of the enthusiasm -- that first great asset of the teacher -- with which the young instructor poured new wine into the dry old skins of formalistic medieval dogma."

2) The reformer in his table-talk places it now in one year, now in another, though the majority of the references give the date as 1510.

3) Smith, op. cit., p. 21

4) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, 145. For the Cologne episode cf. TR, III. 611.

wrote to the Prior and the brethren at the Augustinian Convent at Erfurt, inviting them to be present on the occasion of the granting of the degree, the opening paragraph of the letter reading as follows:

"Greeting in the Lord, Reverend, venerable and dear Fathers! Behold the day of St. Luke is at hand, on which, in obedience to you and to our reverend Vicar Staupitz, I shall take my examination in theology in the hall of the university, as I believe you already know from the letter of our Wittenberg Prior Link. I do not now accuse myself of unworthiness, lest I should seek praise and honor by my humility; God and my conscience know how worthy and how grateful I am for this public honor" (1).

4. The Promotion to the Doctorate.

On the fourth of October he was admitted to the degree of Licentiate in theology and on the eighteenth he was graduated as Master and Doctor, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, the Dean of the Theological Faculty, serving as Promotor (2). The conversation (3) of Luther and

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1) W. ed. Br. I, 5; Enders I, 7; Smith I, p. 25.

2) Cf. H. Steinlein, "Luthers Doktorat," published in Der Neuen Kirchlichen Zeitung, on the four hundredth anniversary of the doctorate, and also reprinted in pamphlet form. Volume XXIII, part 10, pp. 757-843.

The Wittenberg Doctor's Oath, according to the theological statutes of 1508, was as follows: "Ego N. iuro domino Decano et magistris facultatis Theologicae Obedientiam et Reverentiam debitam, Quod in quocunque statu utilitatem Universitatis et Maxime facultatis Theologicae pro virili mea procurabo, Sed hunc gradum non reiterabo, Quod omnes Actus Theologicos exercebo In mitra (Nisi fuerit religiosus), vanas peregrinas doctrinas ab ecclesia dampnatas et piarum annuum offensivas non dogmatisabo, Sed dogmatisantem domino Decano denunciabo infra octendium, Quod manutenebo consuetudines, libertates et privilegia Theologicae facultatis pro virilj mea, Ut me deus adiuvet et snactorum evangeliorum conditores."

3) Quoted by Smith, op. cit., p. 21

Staupitz concerning the promotion to the doctorate makes it plain that Luther had not been guilty of any selfish ambition to rise in the ranks; twenty years later he recalled the spot in the cloister court at Wittenberg where Staupitz had laid the duties of preaching and Bible teaching upon him and he had urged fifteen reasons against them, to no purpose (1). With the doctorate he had attained to the medieval hall-mark of his proficiency to expound the Scriptures (2).

B. Luther's Evaluation of Scripture.

1. His Fondness for Romans and Galatians.

It is significant to note that during the two years immediately preceding the open break with Rome Luther was occupied with lecturing on Romans (1515-1516) and Galatians (1516-1517), the two letters in which the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law is paramount. And Luther's fondness for these epistles of the great Apostle is well known. It is incontestable that Luther saw differences in value in Scripture itself, nor with all his deference to the Word of God, was he without his own canons of criticism (3). Proof of this is

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1) Cf. TR, II, 2255a - 1531; V, 5371 - 1540

2) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 147.

3) Cf. Walker, "A History of the Christian Church," p. 349. See also O. Scheel, "Luthers Stellung zur heiligen Schrift," Tübingen and Leipzig, 19102; "The Works of Luther," Holman edition, vol. VI, pp. 363 - 491.

given in the striking statement in the Table-Talk:
"Wenn sie mir folgen wolten, musten sie die bucher
allein drucken, die doctrinam haben, als ad Galatas,
Deuteronomium, in Mohannem; darnach das ander les man
nur pro historia, da man nur sehe, wie es ist angangen;
denn es ist erstlich nicht so leicht gewest als itzunder (1).
And again in the no less bold statement in the Preface to
the New Testament: "In fine, St. John's Gospel and First
Epistle, St. Paul's Epistles, especially those to the
Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter's First
Epistle, - these are the books which show Christ to you,
and teach everything which it is necessary for you to
know, even though you ^{never} ^{nor} saw ~~or~~ heard any other (2). (In
the 1545 edition of his works a new and much more moderate
preface was substituted for the old one" (3).)

2. His Basic Formula of Scripture Evaluation.

The basic formula of Scripture evaluation is given
in the Preface to James: "Auch ist das der rechte pruesteyn
alle bucher zu taddeln, wenn man sihet, ob sie Christum
treyben, odder nit, Syntemal alle schrifft Christum zeyget
(Ro. 3) unnd Paulus nichts denn Christum wissen will
(I Cor. 2.2)." (This is the true touchstone, by which all

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1) TR, 5511, p. 204

2) W. ed. "Die Deutsche Bibel" VI, 10,11; Erl. ed. LXIII, 114.

3) W. ed. "Bibel" VI, p. 3-11; Erl. ed. LXIII, 158. See
also Holman Edition, VI, pp 363-491; T. A. Readwin, "The
Prefaces to the early editions of the Bible," F.G.S.,
London, 1863. Also Chapter II, in Eidem, "Bibeln, Guds Ord."

books are to be judged, when one sees whether they urge Christ or not, as all Scripture shows forth Christ, and St. Paul will know no one but Christ.) (1). Because St. Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians in a very special way measure up to this formula of evaluation, Luther deems, they become of superior value, and he makes the most striking statements concerning these two letters. Romans is "das rechte Heubstück des newen Testament, und das allerlauteste Euangelium." (- the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the purest evangelium of all) (2). And of Galatians we read: "Epistola ad Galatas ist mein epistelcha, der ich mir vertraut hab. Ist mein Keth von Bor." (The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle, to which I have been betrothed. It is my Katherine von Bora) (3).

But before the courses on Romans and Galatians Luther lectured on the Psalms, that portion of the Bible which more than any other gave him comfort during the spiritual trials which he had known, and to the reading of which he directed all who found themselves in parallel situations.

C. The Lectures on Psalms

1. The Date of the Lectures.

Hedwig Thomas (4) prefers to believe that Luther's

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- 1) W. ed. "Bibel" VII, p 384; Erl. ed. LXIII, 157 (1522 Preface).
- 2) W. Ed. "Bibel" VII, p. 2-3; Erl. ed. LXIII, p. 119.
- 3) TR, W. ed., vol. I, no. 146, p. 69.
- 4) Thomas, op. cit., p. 50.

Lectures on the Psalms, his first course of theological lectures, began at the opening of the winter semester, in October, 1513, though the traditional view that has been held is that the work was begun in July of that year. The lectures were not concluded until March, 1515.

2. The Form of the Lectures.

A huge, widely spaced volume of the Vulgate was his "desk copy" for this course, and Luther wrote out the heads of his lectures between the printed lines (1). The accompanying facsimile gives an illustration of one of the pages as it is found in the Wolfenbüttel Library, from Luther's own hand. We garner from the notes on the Psalms that Luther considered that his task was imposed upon him by a distinct command, and that he frankly confessed that as yet he was insufficiently acquainted with the Psalms; the notes, however, also give evidence of the continued labors he expended in prosecuting his studies (2). These lectures also show that Luther followed the exegetical method of the time based on the assumption that the words of Scripture contained a four-fold sense -- the literal or historic, the figurative or allegoric, the moral or tropological, and the prophetic or anagogical sense (3).

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- 1) Lindsay, "A History of the Reformation," p. 209.
- 2) Köstlin, op. cit., p. 65
- 3) Mackinon, op. cit., I, p. 158. For Luther's eventual break with the medieval methods of interpretation see Farrar, "History of Interpretation," p. 323 ff.

FOLIVM

iniquos vias tuas: & impii ad te conuertent. **Libera me**
de sanguinib⁹ deus deus salutis meae: & exultabit lingua
mea iusticia tua. **Dñe** labia mea aperies: & os meum
annūtiabit laudē tuā. **Qm̄** si voluisses sacrificium de
dilem: unig holocaustis nō delectaberis. **Sacrificiū**
deo spūs contribulatus: cor contritū & humiliatū deus nō

despicias. **Benigne** fac dñe i bōa volūrate tua sicut ut edl
fiet mōri hierosale. **Tūc** acceptabis sacrificiū iusticia
oblatōes & holocausta: tūc ipōnē sup altare tuū vitulos
INVEHITVR DOMINVS CHRISTVS

Cōtra Iudā pditorē suū. qui p doech fuit signi
ratus Psalm⁹ LI. **Tūc** ad victoriam eruditio
David. cū venit Doech Idumae⁹ & annūciauit
Saul & dicit illi. venit David i domū Abimelecha
Vid gloriaris in malicia: qui potes es i iniquitate
Tota die iniusticia cogitauit lingua tua: sicut noua
cūa acuta fecisti doli. **Dilexisti** maliciā sup benignitatem:
iniquitatem magis q̄ loqui arguere. **Sela. Dilexisti**
omnia verba p̄piratiōis: lingua dolosa. **Propterea** de⁹

destruet te in sinē: euellet te & emigrabit te de taberna
culo tuo: & radicē tuā de terra viuētū. **Sela. Videbūt**
iusti & timebūt: & sup eū ridebūt & dicent. ecce homo

In hoc spūale dicitur non sicut in corpore...
In fine non est amplius...
+
In hoc spūale dicitur non sicut in corpore...
In fine non est amplius...
+
In hoc spūale dicitur non sicut in corpore...
In fine non est amplius...
+

3. Remaining Manuscripts.

It will be of interest to learn something of the physical characteristics of the Lectures on the Psalms as they come down to us.

One of the manuscripts, in the hand of Luther himself, has just been alluded to (1). The Vulgate text which was used was prepared by the Wittenberg printer Grune(n)berg. The textual apparatus, or glossae, consists of an interlinear glossary, ^{which} explains individual words, and a marginal glossary; "establishing the connection with illustrative citations, religious and ethical comments, and contemporary references of various kinds"(2).

In a Dresden manuscript (3) we have, also in Luther's handwriting, the scholia, which, according to medieval custom, were a necessary part of all exegetical lectures. It is safe to assume that the glossae were dictated, and taken down as given; but the scholia, in which the lecturer discussed freely the basic thoughts of the work, quoting predecessors and debating with opponents, and introducing more general material, were probably set forth informally and in much greater fullness than appears in Luther's notes, the students writing down what they could.

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1) Cf. Ficker, op. cit., I, XLVII.

2) Cf. Fife, op. cit., p. 171.

3) Published as "Dictata super psalterium," in Volume III of the Weimar Edition. Cf. the Introduction by Kawerau, p. 7 ff.

There is a third source, of unique interest, even this in Luther's handwriting, in the form of Adnotationes (1), made on the leaves of an edition of the Psalms in French and Latin by Lefevre d'Etaples (Faber Stapulensis), printed in Paris, 1509. The French exegete plays a big role in these Adnotationes, as Luther mentions him repeatedly,

4. The Use of German.

An interesting fact comes to light in the Dictata super Psalterium, giving an intimate picture of Luther as a lecturer. It is his use of German. If the Psalms lectures are the first which Luther gave at Wittenberg, which we have no way of knowing for certainty, then they very likely represent the first definite use of German as a medium of instruction in any university. In the Zwickau Ratsbibliothek there is preserved a volume of the Sententiae of Peter Lombard (2) with marginal and interlinear notes in Luther's hand, over the last word of which there is inserted a gloss with the lone German word "K u n t s c h a f f t, signum" (3). In the Dictata

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1) Published as "Quincuplex psalterium Gallicum, Romanum Hebraicum Vetus Conciliatum," in Volume IV of the Weimar Edition, p. 463 ff.

2) Published in Volume IX of the Weimar Edition, p. 28ff. In all probability this volume once belonged to the library of the Eremite cloister at Erfurt, having been used by Luther during his period as Sententarius at Erfurt University, during or after 1509.

3) Fife, "German in Luther's Early Lectures," p. 225.

super Psalterium German words and phrases are used in twenty-nine passages, eight of which are in the glosses, and twenty-one in the scholia (1). In the survey which will presently be given of the course of the Romans lectures mention will also be made of the German intercalations, and an interpretation will be offered.

D. Lectures on Romans

1. Relation to Lectures on Psalms.

a. In Content.

Scholars agree that the Roman lectures by Luther show a marked improvement over the lectures on the Psalms, Fife, asserting that they "show a notable advance in freedom of exposition and bring in political and clerico-social conditions quite liberally (2), and that "the rugged individuality of their Latin style make them vividly interesting reading, even to a generation which has lost taste for the fine distinctions of Scholasticism" (3). They give us occasion to watch "the Reformer's inner man develop in an astonishing manner" (4). Holl characterizes the period 1512-1517 in Luther's life as one when "Luther's creative power displayed itself most powerfully -- more

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- 1) Ibid., p. 226.
- 2) Ibid., p. 232.
- 3) Fife, "Young Luther," p. 186.
- 4) Reu, op. cit., p. 50.

[Faint handwritten text at the top of the page, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]

Vid ergo amplius iudero e: ad quã utilitas circu-

risiois: multu per omne modu. Primu quide quia

credita sunt illis eloquia dei. Quid em si quidam

illos non crederunt. Nuquid incredulitas illoru fidem

dei cuacuabit: Absit. Est aut deus verax. ois aut homo

mendax. Sicut scriptu e: Ut iustificeris in sermone tuo

& vincas cu iudicaris. Si aut iniquitas nra iusticiam dei

comendat: quid dicemus: Nuquid iniquus est deus qui

intra ira: secudu homine dico: Absit. Alioquin quomodo

dicabit deus huẽ mundu: Si em veritas dei in meo men-

datio abundabit in gloria ipsius / quid adhuc & ego tanq

peccator iudicor: & nos sicut blasphemamur: & sicut aut

quidã nos dicere: Faciam? mala ut veniat bona. Quos

dãnanõ iusta e. Quid ergo: Præcellimus eos: nequaquã

[A large block of handwritten text at the bottom of the page, providing commentary or a translation of the Latin text above.]

powerfully, in fact, than in the period after the Leipzig Disputation (1), and the most striking proof of this creative power is the Commentary on Romans. There is a marked advance in the apprehension and discussion of his specific doctrine of salvation, which, though already appearing substantially in the Psalms lectures, is worked out in the Commentary on Romans "in greater detail and with a firmer grasp of its implication, a keener sense of its divergence from the received theology," and with a criticism of this theology which "is wider in scope and more uncompromising in tone" (2). "Regarded purely from the point of view of scholarship," says Boehmer (3), "this commentary is an event hardly equalled in the history of exegesis. The demands of the Humanists are here satisfied, as well as the aims of the older exegetic scholars which laid more stress upon a clear understanding of the substance. But the one-sidedness of both of these schools is recognized and overcome, and thus from the scientific point of view they are outdistanced and outclassed."

b. In Appearance.

Even the physical appearance of the lectures adds to this testimony for the calligraphic appearance of the

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- 1) Holl, "Aufsätze," I, p. 91.
- 2) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 169
- 3) Boehmer, op. cit., p. 35

Romans manuscript, with underlining in red ink, and the careful working out of the scholia give evidence of greater experience and maturity than was the case in the earlier series (1), and Fife, after viewing the manuscript in the National Library in Berlin, names it "a truly marvelous example of the bibliophilic traditions of the medieval monastic university" (2).

2. The Date of the Lectures.

From the "Chronik" of Johann Oldecop, a student from Hildesheim, who matriculated at Wittenberg April 15, 1515, we can learn fairly accurately when the course on Romans was given (3), for he registered at the university just as the celebrated lecturer began. About Easter of that year, then, we find the beginning; and Oldecop says expressly that Luther continued the Romans lectures even into the summer of 1516 (4). At Christmas, 1515, though overburdened with work, Luther makes mention of his desire of adding the task of putting the Psalms lectures into print at the close of the course upon which he at that time was engaged (5).

3. The Discovery and Editing of the Manuscripts.

It is by a mere stroke of good fortune that the

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1) Ficker, op. cit., XXIII, ff.

2) Fife, op. cit., p. 185.

3) Oldecop, "Chronik," p. 128/

4) Ibid., p. 47.

5) Letter to Spalatin, Enders I, 10. (Not in Weimar edition.)

Romans lectures have come to light. And how much poorer would we have been without them; beyond a shadow of a doubt they constitute the most important "find" in reference to Luther research, affording us knowledge of a chapter of his inner development which nothing could supply.

In 1899 Dr. Hermann Vopel, working in the Vatican Library at Rome, discovered in the "Palatina" (1) a student's version of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, of 1517, but of far greater importance, he came upon a manuscript containing Luther's Commentary on Romans from 1515-1516. But a far greater surprise came with the finding -- in the show cases of the National Library at Berlin! -- of the famous Commentary on Romans in Luther's original handwriting (2). This surprise was "at first more painful than pleasurable to the learned students of libraries" (3), says Boehmer, and indeed! An edition of the latter manuscript was edited and published in 1906 by Johannes Ficker (4),

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1) A part of the Vatican Library, so called because it was originally in the Palatinate (at Heidelberg). After the capture of Heidelberg by Maximilian of Bavaria, 1622, Maximilian made a present of it to Pope Gregory XV. In February, 1623, the papal delegate Leo Allatius sent the manuscripts and a large part of the printed matter to Rome. (Reu, p. 120)

2) Reu, op/ cit., p. 14.

3) Boehmer, op. cit., p. 33.

4) Ficker, "Anfänge reformatorischer Bibelauslegung," Erste Band, "Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief 1515-1516," Leipzig, Dieterich'sche verlagsbuchhandlung. Theodor Weicher, 1908. This work is referred to merely by citation of the name "Ficker".

who also supplied a comprehensive introduction; this includes the story of the finds, a detailed account of the physical appearance of the two manuscripts, a comparison of the contents, together with a detailed analysis of Luther's exegesis as given in this work. The first part of the main body of the work is given over to the Glossae, and the second to the Scholia (1).

4. Two Features of the Lectures.

a. The Use of Erasmus' Greek New Testament.

Two interesting items claim our further attention in regard to the Romans lectures. The first is the use of the Greek New Testament of Erasmus, the first such use in a German University. Just when the first copy of that text which Ficker rightly names "the most fruitful discovery of the new century for New Testament research" (2) appeared at Wittenberg we do not know (3), but Luther intimates in a letter from the period (August 24, 1516) that he anticipated seeing the new work (4). Luther first employs the celebrated work of Erasmus

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- 1) The Ficker work has not been incorporated into the Weimar Edition.
- 2) Ficker, op. cit., p. XLVI.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) W. ed. Br. I, 19; Enders I, 19. Luther to Spalatin: "Exspecto enim Erasmanam editionem, etc."

when he gives his exposition of the ninth chapter (1). From then on he has constant recourse to it.

b. Increased use of German.

The second item is Luther's use of German in these lectures, and the increased interest which this meant for the auditors. In the Berlin manuscript there are twenty-three words and passages which are interpreted in German, establishing a ratio that is somewhat larger for the Romans' lectures than the usage in the Psalms' text (2). Very likely the glorious "faith" passages of this letter, striking something more than a sympathetic chord in the heart of Luther, brought from the lips of the Reformer many other expressions in the language the establishment of which he in no small way aided. The spirit of Luther, and the

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- 1) The first uses in the Glossae are found (Ficker, p. 83, 84) in 9.6: "Grecus: 'qui sunt ex Israel, ii sunt Israel'," and in note 1 of 9.8: "Melius 'in semen' quam 'in semine'. *Εἰς ὅτι ἐστὶν ἡμεῖς*." The first uses in the Scholia are found (Ficker, p. 222), in 9.10: "Licet Grece possit legi utrumque: etc.," and later in the same verse: "Quod Apostulus in Grece verecunde loquitur, interpres vero parum verecunde." The name of Erasmus is first mentioned (Ficker, p. 226) in the Scholia of 9.19: "Quid adhuc queritur? (9.19) Hoc aliqui passive, ut Laurentius Vallensis, Stapulensis personaliter, sed Erasmus dicit omnes interpretes Grecos deponentaliter accipere, quibus n ipso consentit."
- 2) Fife, "German in Luther's Early Lectures," p. 226.

enthusiasm with which the issue was met, burst through the Latin confines, to use the vernacular as the medium of expression.

5. The Reception of the Lectures.

In his "Chronik" Oldecop has recorded an interesting note both concerning the delivery of the Romans lectures and their reception: "Do las er flitich, und de Studenten herden one gern; wente einer geliken was dar nicht gehoret, de ein, ider latinesch wort so taffer vordutscht hadde." The students liked to hear him, for his like had not been heard there, nor one who had translated every word so boldly into German" (1). In his brilliant Reformation address of 1917, Ficker says of the reception of these lectures: "The young doctor was highly regarded in all circles at Wittenberg, and even beyond. The lectures of the past year had led him to the heights of academic success; in his lectures there was fullness of thought, originality, and evidence of a spontaneous religious life" (2).

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- 1) Oldecop, op. cit., p. 28.
- 2) Ficker, "Luther, 1517," p. 13.

E. The Lectures on Galatians 1516-1517.

1. The Date of the Lectures.

From Romans Luther turned to lectures on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The course was begun on Monday, October 27, 1516, for on the day before Luther wrote to Lang: "Scribis, te heri auspdatum secundum Sententiarum: at ego cras Epistolam ad Galatas, quanquam metuo, ut pestis praesentia permittat prosequi coeptam" (1). No evidence from Luther's letters can tell us of the termination of the course but from Plate 12 b in the facsimile edition (2) of the 1516-1517 lectures, as preserved in a student's note-book (an account of which will presently be given) we learn that the conclusion was reached "the day after the day of Pope George" --

"Finis Pauli altera die
Post Georgi pape a doctore
Martino collectum
in universitate Wittenpergensis."

(Printed form, Schubert, p. 69.)

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- 1) W. ed. Br. I, 28; Enders I, 26.
- 2) Hans von Schubert, "Luthers Vorlesung über den Galaterbrief 1516-1516" am 14. Mai 1918 -- Mit 40 Lichtdrucktafeln -- 5. Abhandlung, Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Stiftung Heinrich Lanz, Philosophisch - historische Klasse, Heidelberg, 1918, Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung. The volume contains an Introduction, pp. V - XV, the transcription of the plates, pp. 3-69, and the complete facsimiles, Bl. 1a -- Bl. 20b. This work will hereafter be referred to by the name "Schubert".

Diui Pauli Apostoli ad Galatas Epistola incipit. Capitulum Primum.

C. S. Redarguit Apostolus Galatas de veloci translatione ab euangelio Christi: quod tamen Apostolus non ab homine accepit: nec ante suam conuersationem nec post: sed a Christo

in multis capitulis tanto studio... huiusmodi... quod tamen... non ab homine... ante suam conuersationem... nec post... sed a Christo

De plus quod est... dicitur... non ab homine... ante suam conuersationem... nec post... sed a Christo

Aulus apostolus non ab hominibus / neque per hominem: sed per Iesum Christum & deum patrem: qui suscitauit eum a mortuis: & qui mecum

... non ab homine... ante suam conuersationem... nec post... sed a Christo

sunt omnes fratres ecclesie Galat. ie. Gratia uobis & pax

a deo patre nostro & domino Iesu Christo: qui dedit semetipsum

pro peccatis nostris: ut eriperet nos de presenti saeculo nequam / secundum uoluntatem dei & patris nostri: cui est gloria in saecula

saeculorum. Amen. Miror quod sic tam cito transferimini ab eo

Aii

... non ab homine... ante suam conuersationem... nec post... sed a Christo

... non ab homine... ante suam conuersationem... nec post... sed a Christo

But the "day of Pope George" is supposed to mean the day of "Gregorii papae," Schubert contends, following his study of the calendar and other sources (Boos, Urkundenbuch der Stadt Worms II, 277, Grotefend Zeitrechnung I, 73), which would make it Friday, March 13, 1517 (1).

2. The Discovery and Subsequent History of the Manuscript.

a. Discovered at Cologne, 1877.

The manuscript concerning which Schubert wrote one of the Heidelberg dissertations, and which was produced in facsimile, had had a most interesting history. For centuries it lay in concealment. Finally, a notation was found in the antiquarian catalog of one J. M. Heberle, in Cologne, in the issue of 1877. The surprising fact that the word "Wittenberg" was plainly seen in abbreviated form at the close of one of the sections (2) lent interest; but what was more, in the same passage the words "doctore Martino" stared one in the face, with the space of an inch or so left after it. Very close examination of this location produced the startling result that the name "Luther" had been carefully erased.

b. Acquired by D. Krafft.

The interesting manuscript was acquired by the evangelical pastor D. Krafft, of Elberfeld, for his valuable collection.

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- 1) Schubert, op. cit., p. VI.
- 2) Ibid., Plate 12b.

After his death it passed into the hands of Professor Nikolaus Muller in Berlin, who purchased it for his foundation, the Melanchthon House in Bretten, the means for the purchase having been donated by an understanding Frau from Basel, S. Ryhiner - Hermann (1). It was first definitely placed in the Melanchthon House, however, in 1912, no treatise having been produced concerning it, nor any transcription made.

c. Its Publication in Facsimile and Transcription.

Muller's successor was given authority by the Board of Directors of the Melanchthon House to bring about the publication, and after some delay, this was brought about through the co-labors of individuals at Heidelberg University, the Board of the Melanchthon House, and the publishers. The Heidelberg scholars agreed that the work should be treated in a complete way, and accordingly the introductory treatise, the transcription, and the original manuscript in photogravure. It is plain that the inspiring genius of the work was the learned scholar, Dr. Hans von Schubert. It is also interesting to note that in his introductory essay he makes mention (2) of the Heidelberg Dispute, in the spring days of 1518 (3),

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1) Johannes Ficker, "Zu Luthers Vorlesung über den Galaterbrief 1516-1517," p. 2 in article published in "Viertes Lutherheft der Theologischen Studien und Kritiken," Gotha, Leopold Klotz Verlag, 1926.

2) Schubert, op. cit. p. V.

3) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, 304. For Luther's letter bearing on this incident, see W. Ed. Br. Enders I, 169.

through which the Reformer appeared on the horizon in south-west Germany, a section already stirred by Humanism and the new religious awakening, and a participant in the Reuchlin controversy. Thus the publication by Heidelberg can be termed a "four hundredth anniversary" greeting, to "the spirit of Wittenberg" (1).

d. Value of the Manuscript.

Of the many works now at the Melanchthon House at Bretten, this manuscript is considered the most valuable (das weitaus wertvollste Stück), according to a statement made by Karl August Meissinger, who is known not only as a Luther scholar, but also as a connoisseur in the antiquarian field (2).

3. The Question of Authorship and Ownership.

a. The View of Schubert.

It is plain that this manuscript is the work of a student. The fact of the erasure of the name of Luther at the close of one of the sections (see above) led the editor (Schubert) to believe that the manuscript had come into the hands of a Catholic owner, who knew how to appreciate the treasure, or had some other reason for eradicating the name of the lecturer (3). Schubert also

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1) Schubert, op. cit., p. V.

2) Meissinger, p. 48 in article "Die Urkundensammlung des Brettener Melanchthonhauses," in "Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte," XIX Jahrgang, 1922, Leipzig, Verlag von M. Heinsius Nachfolger, Eger und Sievers.

3) Schubert, op. cit., p. V.

points out the number of errors and incorrect renderings in the work, and believes that the difference in German dialect, the distance between the lecturer and this auditor, and other reasons entered in to cause these (1).

b. The View of Ficker.

Ficker goes into considerable detail trying to answer the question who wrote this manuscript of the Galatians lectures. Ficker's view seems rather hypothetical (2), and yet it is certainly worth considering. He states that the physical appearance of the writing in the manuscript leads one to the conclusion that it was the work of only one person, likely a very young student, and written evidently, without any serious interruptions. The writer, like nearly every other student, has amused himself at times with calligraphic rompings. Ficker also believes that he can detect, from paleographical evidences, that the student came from a section of the middle-Frankish Rhineland.

But who is the student in question? Ficker makes out that it is one Hymmel, from Emmerich, one of two Augustinian students who had come from Cologne to attend the lectures of Luther. They had been urged to make their way to Wittenberg by Staupitz, and Luther took a personal interest in them (3). Within a year Hymmel

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1) Ibid., p. VI, VII.

2) Ficker, "Zu Luthers Vorlesung über den Galaterbrief 1516-1517" p. 1-17, in "Viertes Lutherheft der Theologischen Studien und Kritiken," 1926.

3) Cf. Luther's letters, W. ed. Br. I. 63; Enders, I, 57, 10, 67.

is named "Frater Augustinus Embricensis Aurelianeus" Ficker learns, after consulting K^ustlin's record of the Baccalaurei and the Magistri in the Faculty of Philosophy at Wittenberg, and again finds him matriculated at the University of Cologne, in the Theological Faculty, by examining the pages of the "Matrikel" of that institution. But the Augustinian from Cologne returns to Wittenberg. Perhaps he attends the Galatians lectures of 1516 - 1517. In a postscript to a letter to Lang, dated September 4, 1517, Luther writes: "Fac citius redeat Apostolus ad Galatas. Fratris Augustini enim est de Colonia" (1). Is it possible that Luther had arranged to send Lang the student's note-book, and now wanted it returned soon? But later comes the break between Luther and Rome. Perhaps the student in question returns to Cologne. There the pot is boiling, and it is almost dangerous to have it known that one has associated with the Wittenberg heretic. There is a desire to keep the notes on Galatians -- but the name of the lecturer is erased.

Ficker seems quite certain that he has solved the perplexity. But to speak with dogmatic positiveness on such a question is perhaps not the better part of wisdom. Yet, who knows -- perhaps the manuscript in question might have had just such a romantic history?

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1) W. ed. Br. I, 45; Enders, I, 45.

4. Characterization of this manuscript.

a. The Value, as Compared to Psalms and Romans.

It is most disappointing that we do not have Luther's own manuscript of his lectures on Galatians. It is but natural that the product we have can give us only a second-hand and partial, and therefore very unsatisfactory, view. This product can of course not begin to compare in value to the lectures on Psalms and Romans, because of the attendant circumstances. It is beyond question that the genuine product would have shown us a far more rugged, firm and daring Luther than do the pages of this manuscript. The student's copy-book has its interest, to be sure, and yet we are prone to agree with Strohl in his characterizations: "He (the student) appears not to have grasped the personal, novel element offered him by the teaching of his Master. He scarcely enriched our acquaintance with the genesis of the thought of Luther" (1).

b. Physical Appearance.

The set-up of the volume in question is the one so common with Luther, with the text printed with wide spaces between for the remarks, the glossae, as well as the wide margins and the pages at the close well-filled with the scholia. Grune(n)berg has also prepared this material at his printer-shop, and Ficker, by making comparisons

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1) Strohl, op. cit., p. 159.

of water-marks, finds that it is the type of paper used at other times by the Reformer and the printer (1). In four places do we find a break where German words have been inserted (2).

c. Use of Sources.

It is not amiss to make mention of the contents, even though, we remember, we do not have an immediate article before us. The Commentary of Hieronymus must constantly have been before Luther, or else he had the material well-nigh memorized, for there are innumerable quotations from it. Nicholas de Lyra and Faber Stapulensis, upon whom Luther so often leaned, are also here represented with a great number of citations. And from Saint Augustine, as one would expect, much has been taken, not only from the Commentary of the Church Father, but also from his major treatises, such as "Concerning the Trinity," "Concerning Free Will," "Concerning the Spirit and the Letter," and others. It is a joy to see the use which is made of Erasmus. A careful count will reveal no less than forty-seven instances where there is definite reliance upon the Greek findings of the great humanist.

d. Scripture Interpretation.

The medieval four-fold interpretation of Scripture still claims the attention of the Professor, as is seen

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1) See Footnote #3, Ficker, op. cit., p.2.

2) Fife, "German in Luther's Early Lectures," p. 229.

particularly in 4.24:

"Que sunt per allegoriam etc.

Quadruplex sensus scripture habitur i usu:
Littera gesta docet; quid credas, allegoria;
Moralis, quid agas, sed quid speres, anagoge."

It is well worth quoting the entire explanatory paragraph in order to get a more intimate view of Luther's processes:

"Exempli gratia Jerusalem sensu litterali civitatem metropolim Judee, tropologico animam rationalem, allegorico ecclesiam, anagogico celum. Sic enim coram dicitur. Item et hoc loco Ismahel et Isaac sunt litteraliter duo filii Abrahe, allegorice duo testamenta seu sinagoga et ecclesia, immo melius lex et gratia, tropologice caro et spiritus, anagogice celum et infernus. Unde reducunt istos 4 ad duos, scil. litteralem seu historicum et sensum mysticum seu spiritualem. Deinde mysticum in 3 partiuntur, scil. tropologicum, allegoricum, anagogicum. verum quicquid sit de illis sensibus, certum est neque apostolum neque antiquos doctores observare, qui tropologiam, mysticum seu misteria et spiritualem sensum prorsus indiscrete accipiunt, anagoges vero nec vero meminerunt. Igitur propriis loquendo secundum apostolum littera non est idem, quod historia, nec spiritus est idem, quod tropologia vel allegoria, sed littera, ut beatus Augustinus de littera et spiritu, est prorsus omnis doctrina seu lex quecumque, que est sine gratia. Unde manifeste patet, quod tam historia quam tropologia quam allegoria et anagoge est littera secundum apostolum, spiritus autem est ipsa gratia significata per legem seu id, quod requirit lex, nec vocatur ulla doctrina spiritualis, nisi, quia requirit spiritum. Idcirco omnis lex simul est littera et simul spiritualis, quia est sine gratia et significat gratiam. Quod manifeste patet Ro. 7, ubi apostolus de tota lege loquens dicit: "Scimus, quoniam lex spiritualis est." Rectius itaque, si cui placent isti 4 sensus, primus historicus dicendus est, non litteralis, cuius materia sit res gesta in natura, allegorice, autem materia sit non tantum ecclesia, sed quelibet persona in gratia vel extra gratiam constituta, tropologice vero non ipsa anima rationalis, sed ipsa gratia, iustitia, meritum et virtus et is contraria

culpa, peccatum et vitium, anagogice autem
utriusque premium" (1).

Here and there there are some interesting excursions
in Logic, as witness particularly the comment on 1.3:

"gratia dei et indignation mundi
gratia mundi et indignation dei
pax dei turbation mundi
pax mundi turbation dei" (2).

e. Evaluation as a Foundation for Later Commentaries.

It is interesting to examine the "faith" passages in
this work, in particular. To be sure, the exposition,
though interesting, does not begin to measure up to that
which we will find in his later work. But through all
we are led to believe that the foundation of the spiritual
monument which he erects in the 1535 commentary had its
roots in the lectures of 1516-1517, in agreement with
Schubert, who maintains, after speaking of the later
commentaries: "Zu alledem bildet die Urgestalt von
1516-1517 die Grundlage. Mann Kann an der Behandlung
des einen Stoffes in so verschiedenen Zeiten zu einem
guten Teile die Entwicklung Luthers verfolgen" (3).

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- 1) Schubert, op. cit., p. 60.
- 2) Ibid., p. 32.
- 3) Ibid., p. VII.

F. The Commentary of 1519.

1. The Date of the Publication.

The year 1519 was an exceedingly stormy one in the life of Luther. The nailing of the 95 theses to the door at Wittenberg had started the conflagration. And it only grew greater with time! In 1519 Luther was passing through the inner experiences which led him the following year to issue his three great Reformatory treatises. It proved to be the prelude season to the burning of the bull, which in turn, called forth the real bull of excommunication (*Decet Romanum Pontificem*), announced in Rome on the second of January, 1521 (1).

But in the midst of the busy year 1519 Luther found time to assemble the material of his Galatians lectures into a sizeable and comprehensive Commentary (2). On March 13 of that year he writes to Spalatin that the work is under progress (3), and exactly a month later (April 13) he informs Lang that the material has been sent to Leipzig for publication (4) (at the same time that he asks pardon for not being present at Lang's promotion to the doctorate). The same friend is

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1) Reu, op. cit., p. 66.

2) W. ed., II, pp. 443-618, "In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas commentarius, 1519."

3) W. ed. Br. I, 161, Enders I, 448: "iam & Paulum ad Galatas parturio."

4) W. ed. Br. I, 167; Enders II, 172: "Ego simul commentaria ad Galatas Lipsiae excudenda."

informed (May 16) that the work of printing is progressing (1); and on May 30, Martin Glaser learns definitely by letter from Dr. Martin that the lectures are in type (2). Printers' delays were evidently the rule in that time also, for it is not until the third of September that Luther writes to Johann Lang, announcing completion of the work (3). The publishing had been done by Melchior Lotther, in Leipzig (4).

2. The purpose of the Commentary.

Luther summarizes the purpose of publishing the Commentary in the final paragraph of the Preface, which Preface was in fact a letter of Luther to Peter Lupinus and Andrew Carlstadt (5), and which certainly was composed considerably earlier than the time of the publication of the Commentary, for in it he speaks of Erasmus' Paraphrase to Galatians, published August, 1519, as not yet out (6). The paragraph is as follows:

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- 1) W. ed. Br. I, 176; Enders II, 184: "Epistola mea ad Galatas sub incude Lipsiae laboratur."
- 2) W. ed. Br. I, 182; Enders II, 190: "Epistola ad Galatas iam sub typis formatur."
- 3) W. ed. Br. I, 196; Enders II, 212: "Epistola ad Galatas hodie finita mihi dicitur."
- 4) Enders II, p. 16, footnote 32. Luther intimates that Lotther is the printer of the book in W. ed. Br. I, 198; Enders II, 214.
- 5) W. ed., Br. II, 445; Enders II, 136.
- 6) Cf. Note in Smith I, 156.

". . I refer to you, or, to use Paul's words, I lay before you this study of mine on Paul's epistle, a small thing, not so much a commentary as a witness of my faith in Christ, unless, perhaps, I shall have run in vain and not have seized Paul's meaning. In this point, because it is a mighty matter from God, I desire to learn even from a boy. Certainly I should have preferred to have waited for the commentaries long since promised us by Erasmus, that theologian too great even to envy. But while he procrastinates (may God grant it be not forever), this fate which you see, compels me to publish. I know I am a child and unlearned, but yet, if I dare say it, zealous for piety and Christian learning, and in this more learned than those who have made the divine commands simply ridiculous by the impious addition of human laws. I have only aimed at making Paul clearer to those who read my work, so that they may surpass me. If I have failed, I shall have willingly lost my labor, for at least I shall have tried to invite others to study Pauline theology, for which no good man will blame me. Farewell."

3. Luther's Evaluation of this Commentary.

Luther characterizes his work as "a small thing" (*tenuis quidem illud*). This is not the only place where he uses a negative term in describing his production. In the Table-Talk, speaking of this Commentary, and the German version of 1523, he says: "Non putassem primos meos commentarios ad Gallatas adeo infirmos esse. O, sie taugen nymer pro hoc saeculo!. Fuerunt tantum prima lucta mea contra fiduciam operum" (1). But in the next breath he appends: "Ich hätte nicht

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1) TR. 1963. W. ed. II, p. 281

gemeint, dass meine Auslegung und was ich geschrieben hab über die Epistle S. Pauli an die Galater, so schwach wäre. O sie tügen nicht mehr, für diese Welt; denn am ersten ist mein Kampf gewest wider das Vertrauen auf die Werk, darauf doch die Welt so hoch pocht und trotzt, als sollten gute Werk auch mit nößlug sein zur Seligkeit" (1). The same shift in sentiment is noticed in the letter to John Staupitz (October 3, 1519) (2). Luther announces that he has sent to his father-confessor (3) two copies of "foolish Galatians" (insensatorum Galatorum meorum); he adds "I do not care for what I have written, as I see the epistle could have been expounded so much more fully and clearly," but concludes in a different tone "I trust the work may prove clearer than previous ones written by others, even if it does not satisfy me." An interesting sidelight is thrown on the circumstances surrounding the commentary in one of the Prefaces, written by Philip Melanchthon under the pseudonym of Otho Germanus. He writes: "Moreover, while he (Luther) was thus defamed and his life imperilled, he composed, among other profitable works, this commentary on the epistle of Paul

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1) Ibid.

2) W. ed. Br. I, 202; Enders II, 223; Smith I, p.219.

3) See an interesting note concerning copy sent to Staupitz in W. ed. Br. I, p. 515.

to the Galatians. And being unable to polish it on account of his preoccupations with his enemies, he disdained to call it a regular commentary, and it was published by his friends against his will" (1). Very likely this commentary was revised and polished by Melanchthon (2); from the stylistic standpoint the Galatians was the most carefully prepared of all Luther's commentaries (3).

4. The Evaluation by Others.

The fact that the friends of Luther had a hand in the publication of the 1519 commentary gives us to understand that they valued it highly, even though Luther himself was so modest in his judgment of the work. A few months after the appearance of the volume Martin Bucer wrote to Spalatin (January 23, 1520) in the following way: "Cum nuper mei instituti frater quidam eius (Luthera) commentarium in epistolam D. Pauli ad Galatas Norimberga attulisset, quanto me credis gaudio exultasse? Etiamnum, libello vix per transennam viso, parum aberat, quin choro illi

Aristophanico in Pluto succinuissem: ὡς ἠδόμεθα, καὶ
τέρπόμεθα, καὶ βούλομαι χαρῆσαι ἐφ' ἡδονῆς.
Μακρὸν ὁ σὺρὸς τῶν ἀληθινῶν χρημάτων

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- 1) Corpus Reformatorum I, p. 120.
- 2) Cf. Ellinger, "Philip Melanchthon," p. 100.
- 3) Cf. Smith I, p. 218, footnote #5.

non iam nunciabatur venire, sed praesens ipsis oculis sublicebatur" (1). Testimony is also added from a letter of Boniface Amerbach to Ulrich Zasium (October 3, 1519), announcing that "Martin edits commentaries on Galatians at Wittenberg", and adding an especially interesting sentence, filled half with a spirit of realization and half of anticipation: "How sweet it is to live, especially now, when all sciences and especially theology, on which our salvation depends, have left trifling and are brought back to their sister, light" (2). The reception of the commentary is also colorfully depicted in the letter of Martin Bucer to Luther (January 23, 1520): "The occasion of my writing now for the first time is my immense desire for your Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. For I only had a chance to see it, when a certain man brought it here from Nuremberg. By various wiles I extorted it from him and sent it to Beatus Rhenanus, so that, if no one gets ahead of us, it can be reprinted by Lazarus Schürer (3) and having no little need of the commentary, which seemed to me a treasury full of the dogmas of pure

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1) W. ed. II, p. 437.

2) T. Burckhardt-Biedermann, "Bonifacius Amerbach und die Reformation," Basle, 1894, p. 137. Smith I, p. 222.

3) This hope was probably not fulfilled. W. ed. II, p. 439.

theology, I ordered someone else to procure me your works. . . . I approve all your teachings without exception, but I am especially pleased at what you say about charity, rightly execrating that always present curse of a Christian, the sayings; Charity begins at home, and, Be your own neighbor" (1).

G. The Versions of 1523 and 1525.

1. Comparisons with the foregoing.

Two further editions of the 1519 commentary appeared in the same year, and three editions in 1520 (2). In August, 1523, a revised and abbreviated form was issued, in which some of the previous supplements were stricken. The Foreword is by Melancthon. Though this version is shorter, it is clearer and more to the point (3). The 1523 commentary also shows the growth of Luther (4); he has turned more and more away from the humanists and the philological ways of Erasmus, not to the extent of erasing his name entirely, but certainly making less use of him (5). Generally speaking, Luther has here gained a more independent position. This independence is also seen in the diminished number of references to

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- 1) W. ed. Br. I, 3241 ; Enders II, 263; Smith I, 277-278.
- 2) Cf. Irmischer, Introduction to Commentary on Galatians, in Erl. ed., p. V - VII.
- 3) Ibid., p. VIII - IX.
- 4) W. ed., XVIII, p. 594.
- 5) Ibid., footnote #4.

Augustine, Ambrose, Bernhard and others (1). A second printing of the 1523 version soon appeared, and two further editions were issued in 1524.

2. Edition in German.

That the work grew in popularity is attested to by the fact that a German translation was made by Per Vincent Heydnecker, and published, together with a Preface by John Bugenhagen, in 1525 (2).

H. The Final Commentary of 1535.

1. The Lectures of 1531.

It is unfortunate that we find no references in Luther's correspondence from the year 1531 to his course of lectures on Galatians delivered at that time. There is not even in the letters of this or subsequent years any indications of his intention to publish any extended work on the epistle. We must rely entirely upon external evidence to ascertain approximately the time of the beginning of the course. And such evidence we find in two places.

The first source of information comes to us in a letter of Anselm Pflüger to Johann Schradin in Reutlingen, October 19, 1531, where the following is written: "venit enim modo iusto tempore quo quaedam audit hand poenitenda.

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1) Ibid.

2) The various editions of these years are traced in Irmischer, p. VIII - IX, and W. ed., II, p. 428-442.

praelegit namque D. Martinus pater noster epistolam ad Galatas tanta diligentia et eruditione, ut praeterea nil addi possit. Quid de reliquis dicam eius concionibus atque domini Philippi praelectionibus, cum res ipso loquatur? cum cogitamus, quod res est, confluunt undique scholastici et tanta copia hic est, quanta ne unquam fere fuit. Ideo summam quam possunt, omnes adhibent, diligentiam (vident, imo experti sunt rei eventum), ut doctrina Euang. probe inculcata apud posteros maneat. Et praecipuum D. Martini negotium est, ut articulum iustificationis, cuius discipuli per totam vitam manemus propter eius difficultatem, tradat. Hic enim si radices in cordibus nostris fixerit, non facile in fanaticorum spiritum errores incidemus quos cum nostro maximo dolore successum habere videmus. Quapropter nos exercere debemus in fide nostra, ne ab istis pessimis hominibus circumveniamur qui nunc undique irrepunt" (1).

The second item is from an interesting excerpt of a diary from the family Cöler in Nürnberg, which has found its home in the British Museum. Likely it is a student son in the family who writes under the date of October, 1531, the following words: "Item den 23 dito hab ich denn Herr Doktor Luther hören lesen Im

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1) Letter in "Neue Mitteilungen des Thüring.-sächs. Geschichtsvereins," v. Förstemann, vol. 7, part 3, p. 73 f.

Neuen Collegio auss der Epistel Pauli sum Galatern
das 4. Capitel Lateinischs" (1).

2. The Work of George Rörer.

We have further evidence concerning the beginning and the course of the lectures in the marginal notes given on the "Kollegnachschrift" of George Rörer which has been preserved. This copy book of Rörer's has been printed together with the 1535 commentary in Volume 40 (parts 1 and 2) of the Weimar Edition, and the comparison of the two is highly interesting. Over chapter I of the Rörer product we read the date "Anno 1531. 3 Iulii quae erat lunae" and over Chapter VI merely the annotation "12 Dezember".

Rörer had studied at Leipzig before coming to Wittenberg in 1522. In 1525 he was ordained a Deacon for the church, and in 1533 was made librarian of the university (2). He had attained forty years of age when he attended Luther's 1531 lectures on Galatians. That he was one of Luther's chief literary helps is well known, and he gave admirable assistance particularly during the period of the Bible translation, the group of translators holding the "sittings" in his home, as we shall see in a later chapter.

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- 1) British Museum, Ms. 15, 217. Priebisch, Deutsche Handschriften in England 2, 129. W. ed. 34 (2), p. 575.
- 2) Realencyklopädie, XXIV, ADB, Supplement.

Being trained to the mind of Luther Rörer was in a position to make a fairly accurate copy of Luther's paragraphs as given from the cathedra in the lecture hall. And the nachschrift gives evidence of his careful work.

3. The Kollegnachschrift of Rörer and the Printed Commentary.

The Rörer product shows many variations when compared to the completed 1535 commentary. Mackinnon has evidently not given this careful examination when he writes that the 1535 commentary "comprises his lectures on Galatians in 1531, taken down by Rörer as he delivered them "(1). There are certainly many differences. There is the difference in language and style. Rörer's work naturally savours of the class note-book, but the 1535 commentary strikes a very formal note. In the former we see constant use of German (certainly a far greater ratio than in the Psalms or Romans or the first course on Galatians) which tells us that Luther became more and more free in his mode of address, and popularized his work by rendering a greater number of passages in the vernacular. Whereas the Rörer work conveys a spirit of class-room freshness and immediacy, the finished product appears more formal, groomed and

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1) Mackinnon, op. cit., IV, p. 252.

polished. Both have their value, the former to give us a more first-hand glimpse of Luther the lecturer, the latter to give us the pondered and formalized language of the theologian in his study.

Gerhard Schultze has written a rather encyclopedic essay in which he makes detailed analysis of the two works (1), in their relation to one another. This comparison he makes under three headings: 1) personal notes and remarks, 2) historical references, and 3) theological views and conceptions. His conclusions match the description given in the previous paragraph.

What definite conclusion can we reach? Before attempting any such let us remind ourselves that the original title given the 1535 commentary was as follows: "Commentarius ex praelectione D. M. Lutheri collectus." The words "praelectione" and "collectus" give their verdict. There is also Luther's own words in the Preface to the volume, in which he says that he (at the time of that particular writing) could not understand that he could have been so verbose (at the time of lecturing, understood), that he had expounded "with so many words".

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1) Gerhard Schulze, "Die Vorlesung Luthers über den Galaterbrief von 1531 und der gedruckte Kommentar von 1535," article in "Lutherana IV", an issue of "Theologische Studien und Kritiken," Gotha, 1926.

4. An interpretation.

From the examination of Schultze, from personal study of the two products, and from the introductory notes in the Weimar edition, I would state the case as follows:- Luther lectured on Galatians in the fall of 1531. Rörer, who was in the class, took copious notes, perhaps nearly as complete as the original lectures that were given. At the close he compiles the same into his "Kollegnachschrift". At a later date the material is handed to Luther, and very likely he is urged to revise and publish the work. Luther looks at the lectures as taken down by his friend and pupil; he is not a little surprised that his remarks had been so full and comprehensive; and he makes a thorough redaction of the corpus at hand, deleting much, adding here and there, and finally sending the completed product to press. Hence the original title that was given.

Edition followed edition of this completed work. The German translation of the final commentary was made in 1539 by Justus Menius. Of the wide circulation of the commentary we will mention further in the concluding chapter. The editions of the 1535 work which were published have been listed both in the remarks of Irmischer in the Erlangen Edition, and in the introductory notes to the Weimar Edition.

I. Conclusion.

Thus we have traced the development of the 1535 Commentary on Galatians from the first series of lectures on that Epistle given by Luther in 1516-1517. In conclusion, let us be mindful of the fact that on no other letter of the Scriptures did Luther lecture so often and so much. Indeed, this Epistle to the Galatians proved to be his "Keth von Bor" to whom he was betrothed. It is incontestable that the fact that this Commentary is a growth and development, and that the final work comes in the period of the "mature" Luther, adds much to its value. It is not a document, hastily written for polemical reasons or in the heat of strife; it represents patient scholarship and mature, sane and balanced judgment.

Some years later Luther's warm-hearted friend Philip Melanchthon wrote of the importance of the series of exegetical lectures of Luther, of which series the Galatians lectures form so important and vital a part, and of their meaning for that day:

"Haec scripta sic illustravit, ut post longam et obscuram noctem novae doctrinae lux oriri videretur, omnium piorum et prudentum iudicio. Hic monstravit Legis et Evangelii discrimen, hic refutavit errorem, qui tunc in scholis et concionibus regnabat, qui docet mereri homines coram Deo iustos esse disciplina, ut Pharisaei docuerunt. Revocavit igitur Lutherus hominum mentes ad filium Dei, et, ut Baptista, monstravit agnum Dei, qui tulit peccata nostra, ostendit gratis propter filium Dei remitti peccata, et quidem oportere id beneficium fide accipi" (1).

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1) Corpus Reformatorum, 6, p. 160 f., (from June 1, 1546.)

CHAPTER III

THE BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS OF LUTHER AS AN EXEGETE

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A. Introduction

In the "Bampton Lectures" delivered at Oxford University in 1885, Dr. Frederic W. Farrar pays a high tribute to the exegetical principles of Luther (1). The author speaks of the views of Luther in the following way:

"They show a clearer vision and a more vital faith in the Holy Spirit than had ever been full manifested since the Apostolic Age, or than has since been attained by any but a brave and faithful few. They were the ripe fruits of long results of Christian time, and they furnished to the principles of manly Christian exegesis a more valuable contribution than interminable folios of traditional commentary."

This is a high claim for Luther as an exegete. What proofs can be summoned that he deserves such a position in exegetical theology? In the present chapter we will discuss the factors which turned Luther in the direction of exegetical theology, and the qualifications he possessed to be an exegete. In the chapter following a more detailed investigation of his exegesis in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians will be made.

It is perhaps commonly considered that Luther was a pioneer voice in sounding the cry "Back to the Bible," and that he was the first to translate the Bible into

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1) Farrar, "History of Interpretation," p. 341.

the common language of the people. Both statements are erroneous. Luther's contributions to exegetical theology must of course be studied against the broader background of the position in which the Bible was held in the times and his own personal relation to that Book.

B. The Position of the Bible Before Luther.

1. The Emphasis upon Popular Use.

From the beginning of the fourteenth century a remarkable emphasis is placed upon rendering the Bible into the common language of the people. There were three factors, principally, which lay at the root of this movement (1).

The Waldensians had in spite of stiff opposition created secret groups (by the close of the thirteenth century) over the greater part of Germany, and intensive Bible-reading characterized the members of this sect. To be sure their conception of the Bible and its reading reflected a rather slavish attitude; Holmquist portrays their manner of reading as "visserligen på katolskt sätt som en lagbok för det yttre livet" (2).

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1) Holmquist, "Luthers Nya Testamente," article in Lunds Stifts Julbok, 1917, p. 12.

2) "In Catholic fashion, to be sure, as a law-book for external life."

In addition, there was the influence of Saint Francis. By the close of the thirteenth century the trend of piety which had its source in his powerful personality had made a deep impression upon the religious life in large areas, and since personal faith-life and a mystical contemplation of the suffering of Jesus on the cross were the dominant notes in this movement, it meant necessarily that the need of popular reading of the New Testament came to the fore.

A third factor came as the fruits of the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Religious authority became unsettled because of the convulsive nature of conditions; but that same condition led those who were more deeply religious away from ecclesiastical tradition and pronouncement to the authority of the Bible. William of Occam (1), at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and Wycliffe, at the close of the same period, are clear examples of this.

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1)Eidem, in "Bibeln, Guds Ord," p. 18-19: "There is nothing really new in Luther's insistence of the supremacy of the Bible over tradition. The important medieval movement called nominalism, among whose leaders the great Franciscan Occam was numbered, had urged the same fact. And while at Erfurt Luther had come into contact with the theology of Occam, which held sway at that university. 'Scripture alone' had been the cry of

2. The Reaction of Rome.

Holmquist indicates the indifferent and at the same time the cautious attitude on the part of the Church of Rome (1). Bible-reading by the laity was not encouraged, nor do we find any suggestions toward the same in medieval sermons and pastoral work. In places where there had been heretical tendencies a prohibition of reading the Bible (in the popular language) was set up (2), but otherwise the general rule obtained that Bible-reading would be tolerated if it did not interfere with church discipline, yet discouraged because it easily led to strange doctrine.

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Occam. And from Johannes Gerson, for whom Luther had great regard, studying him thoroughly, he found this expression: 'The Bible is the sufficient and infallible rule for the leading of the church and her many parts to the end of the earth.' Luther was also well acquainted with Pierre d'Ailli, in whose writings he read: 'One statement from the Holy Scriptures has higher authority than any pronouncement of the Christian Church!'"

1) Holmquist, op. cit., p. 12-13.

2) Only in the case of England (during the fifteenth century) did such an edict cover an entire country.

C. Luther's Practical-Religious Relations to the Bible

It is of course impossible, and unnecessary, in this treatise to give in detail the account of Luther's translation of the Bible. At the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation W. Walther published an interesting and informative volume (1) on this chapter, so highly important in the history of the Reformation, religious history, culture and even philology. But we need to examine more closely certain threads which went into the tapestry of the finished product; they will aid us in knowing Luther's qualifications for exegetical work and in forming our estimate of him as an exegete.

1. Earlier German Versions.

As mentioned above, Luther was not the first to translate the Bible into German. From the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Germany there are still preserved more than 170 manuscripts; the majority, however, do not include the entire Bible, but give only the Psalter and the Gospels (2). The first high-German Bible was printed in Strassburg in 1466 (3). Holmquist points out an interesting fact relative to

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- 1) W. Walther, "Luthers deutsche Bibel," 1917.
- 2) Holmquist, op. cit., p. 14.
- 3) Eidem, "Vår Svenska Bibel," p. 50.

the number of Bible translations into the German at this period (1). During the years 1466-1487 there were no less than eleven complete German translations published; but during the following period of 32 years there were only three. In between there stands the edict of the Primate of the German Church, the Archbishop of Mainz, issued in 1485, censuring translation of religious literature in his great domain. But it is plain that the translations before the time of Luther made no deep impression, this because of several reasons. All, save one (and that limited to the Psalter), were renderings from the Latin Vulgate, and were a curious mixture of latinizations and barbarous German (2). Eidem makes mention (3) of an investigation recently conducted which shows that of 681 German writings from the years 1522-1525 only 28, in making citations from Scripture, followed the medieval German Bible. Even the 1466 Strassburg Bible, which before Luther dominated the field,

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1) Holmquist, op. cit., p. 14.

2) Ibid., p. 15. W. Walter, in "Die deutsche Bibel-übersetzung des Mittelalters," Braunschweig, 1889-1892, gives a detailed account of the medieval translations.

3) Eidem, op. cit., p. 51.

having been reprinted thirteen times, had a limited circulation (1) because of its size and price (2).

2. The Rank Accorded Luther's Work^{as} Bible Translator.

Though errors and weaknesses are found in Luther's translation of the Bible -- and improvements have since been made (3) -- scholars are in almost total agreement that Luther's translation stands near the very summit of his achievements, superceded only by the daring evinced in his official break with Rome. Mackinnon aptly measures its value: "It was the fruit of the recognition of the unrestricted right, and, indeed, the clamant obligation of the people to read the Bible in the common tongue as the source and standard of religious life" (4).

3. The Course of the Publication.

Luther completed the translation of the New Testament during the last three months of his sojourn at the Wartburg. Holmquist rightly states that Luther at Wartburg gave to Christianity that treasure which has deservedly hallowed the little room in the great castle

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1) Holmquist, op. cit., p. 15.

2) This book was 43 cm. high and 30 cm. wide, and in its twelfth edition contained 1,011 pages. The cost was 9-12 gulden, at a time when a fat ox brought 3 gulden.

3) A revised version of the German Bible was made in 1883-1892, and the later version was completed in 1913. Hirsch, in "Luther's Deutsche Bibel, 2 p. 3 f., has made a comparison of Luther's translation and these versions, together with a criticism of them.

4) Mackinnon, op. cit., IV, p. 273

as one of the most memorable places known to history (1).

The first edition of the New Testament appeared September 21, 1522 (2), bearing the title "Das Neue Testament Deutsch, Vuittemberg," and was published without the name of translator or publisher, and also without year of publication (3). During 1523-1532 installments of the Old Testament appeared in translation; the Apocrypha translation appeared in 1534, which date also marked the first complete Lutheran Bible. The study of Luther as a Bible translator and Luther as an exegete is obviously closely related, for what better training for exegetical work could he possibly have had than the labors expended in translating the Bible? It is of more than common interest to trace the course of the translations in the references to the same in Luther's correspondence; these, too, aid us in forming our opinion of him as an exegete.

4. Luther's Comparison of His Work with the Vulgate.

Parenthetically, we add at this point that Luther was not at all modest in naming his own version superior

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1) Holmquist, "Martin Luther," p. 80

2) W. ed. Br. II, 536; Enders IV, 574. This was called the "September Bible," and was followed by a second and revised edition in December. W. ed. Br. II, 557; Enders IV, 596.

3) An authentic copy was published in 1918 by G. Kawerau and O. Reichert, Furche-Verlag, Berlin.

to the Vulgate (1). He told Mathesius:

"The advantage of this translation is so great that none can form a proper idea of it. What we formerly sought and never could attain with the utmost industry and ceaseless study, the perfectly clear text now provides without any trouble. We could never have found it in that obscure old translation (the Vulgate). It is so good and acceptable that it is better than all the Greek and Latin translations, and more is to be found in it than in all the commentaries. For we have cleared away all the stumbling-blocks, so that others can read it without hindrance" (2).

And again:

"I dare say, though I have no desire to praise myself or claim that I have attained perfection, that the German Bible is clearer and more reliable in many passages than the Vulgate, and that, where the printers, with their usual negligence, have not corrupted it, we have now in the German language a better translation than in the Latin. I need only appeal in proof of this to the reader" (3).

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1) There had been earlier objections to the Vulgate as a text. Lorenzo Valla (1465), a canon of Saint John Lateran, in several of his exegetical notes, did not scruple to criticize the Vulgate. See Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 313. Vallo also wonders why schoolmen who were ignorant of Greek should ever have ventured to comment on Saint Paul: "Quem (Remigium) et item Thomam Aquinatem . . . ignaros omnino linguae Graecae, miror ausos commentari Paulum Graece loquentem" (Annot. in I Cor. IX, 26). There was also Jacques LeFevre D'Etaples, who made a new translation of St. Paul's Epistles; and Reuchlin, who frequently corrects the Vulgate in favor of the Hebraica Veritas (Farrar p. 314-315).

2) Quoted by Walther, "Luthers deutsche Bibel," p. 173.

3) Erl. ed., 63, p. 24.

And in the Tischreden Luther says:

"While the Romish church stood, the Bible was never given to the people in such a shape that they could clearly, understandingly, surely, and easily read it, as they now can in the German translation, which, thank God, we have prepared here at Wittenberg" (1).

But we are willing to forgive these exuberant utterances of the great Reformer, knowing something of his polemical and impetuous nature, and also sensing something of the joy he must have felt that a new child had been born into the world.

5. Luther on Translation.

Luther certainly sensed the difficulties inherent in the work of translation. "Translating," he says, "is a special grace and gift of God" (2). And again, "Translation is not every one's art. It is indispensable for this work to have a right, pious, true, reverent, experienced and responsive heart" (3).

In speaking particularly of the Hebrew and its translation, Luther says:

"To render them intelligibly, we must not attempt to give word for word, but only aim at the sense and idea. In translating Moses, I made it my effort to avoid Hebraisms; 'twas an arduous business. The wise ones who affect greater knowledge than myself on the subject, take me to task for a word here and there. Did they attempt the labor I have accomplished, I would find a hundred blunders in them for my one" (4).

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- 1) Hazlitt, "Table-Talk," p. 2.
- 2) TR, IV, p. 57.
- 3) W. ed. XXX, Pt. 2, p. 640.
- 4) Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 15.

His own canons of translation are well set forth
by himself:

"It is not possible to reproduce a foreign idiom in one's native tongue. The proper method of translation is to seek a vocabulary neither too free nor too literal, but to select the most fitting terms according to the usage of the language adopted. To translate properly is to render the spirit of a foreign language into our own idiom. I do this with such care in translating Moses that the Jews accuse me of rendering only the sense and not the precise words. For example when the Hebrew says, 'the mouth of the sword' I translate 'the edge of the sword,' though in this case it might be objected that the word 'mouth' is a figurative allusion to preachers who destroy by word of mouth.

I try to speak as men do in the market-place. Didactic, philosophic, and sententious books are, therefore, hard to translate, but narrative easy. In rendering Moses I make him so German that no one would know that he was a Jew" (1).

D. Luther's Work as Bible Translator as
a Foundation for Exegetical Work.

1. The Work on the New Testament.

Under date of December 18, 1521, Luther writes to John Lang at Erfurt, from "The Wilderness" (Wartburg), informing him that he (Luther) will "lie hidden" until Easter, and announces as his program for that time that he will continue to write his Postils and also "translate the New Testament into German," adding that this is a thing which his friends demand (2).

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1) W. ed. XXX, p. 632.

2) W. ed. Br. II, 445; Enders III, 256.

Luther's solace for the popular reading of the New Testament is vouched for by the fervent sentence in the same letter: "Would that every town had its interpreter, and that this book alone might be on the tongues and in the hands, the eyes, the ears, and the hearts of all men."

That Luther was not autocratic in his work of translation is borne out by a reference in his letter to Philip Melanchthon (January 13, 1522), asking that friend Philip prepare him lodging, "because my translation of the Bible will require me to return to you" (1), and again in his letter to Spalatin, from Wittenberg (March 30, 1522), saying that he had translated "the whole New Testament while I was at my Patmos, but now Philip and I have begun to polish the whole thing, and (God willing!) it will be a worthy piece of work" (2). Spalatin's services will be employed in "finding the right words" so he is asked "to be ready". But "simple terms" must be used for (again Luther's conception and insistence of the popular character of the New Testament comes to the fore) "this book must be adorned with simplicity." Spalatin seems to be regarded by Luther as something of a specialist in philology, for in a letter (Decem-

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1) W. ed. Br. II, 450; Enders III, 272; Smith-Jacobs II, p.84.
2) W. ed. Br. II, 470; Enders III, 324; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 118-119.

ber 12 ?, Wittenberg) he calls upon him to give the correct words for the birds of prey, game animals, reptiles and night birds, references to which are found in the Old Testament (1). One almost shares the mental travail which the work of translating occasioned Luther, when in a lengthy letter to Hartmuth von Cronberg (middle of March) one reads that Luther has returned to Wittenberg "to see whether I can show the devil a thing or two," and then the following: "I have also undertaken to put the whole Bible into German. I had to do it; otherwise I might have died with the mistaken idea that I was a scholar. All those who think themselves learned ought to do some such work " (2).

2. Publication and Revisions.

As mentioned above, the translation of the New Testament appeared September 21, 1522. On the day previous Luther wrote to Spalatin, saying: "You now have copies of the whole New Testament for yourself and the Elector, all except the Preface to Romans, which will be finished tomorrow" (3).

It is a high tribute to Luther as a Bible translator, which also directly bears upon his qualifications as an exegete, that he showed constant care and diligence

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- 1) W. ed. Br. II, 556; Enders IV, 594; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 151-153.
- 2) W. ed. X, part 2, p. 53 F.
- 3) W. ed. Br. II, 536; Enders IV, 574; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 140,141.

in making improvements upon his work. The December edition of the New Testament appeared with more than five hundred improvements (1). Still further changes are noted in the editions of 1526 and 1530 (2). As late as January 3, 1530, Luther writes to Nicholas Hausmann at Zwickau: "We have finished the corrections on the New Testament and more than half of it is printed" (3). Eidem makes a striking statement in regard to this persistence on the part of the great Reformer: "He never canonizes his own translation"(4).

3. The Work on the Old Testament.

The work of Luther in translating the Old Testament is pretty much a parallel of the foregoing. He writes to Spalatin (November 3, 1522), saying that in the translation of the Old Testament he had only come to Leviticus; but he is to shut himself up at home and hasten the work, so that Moses may be in press by January (5). In the same letter he intimates that the installment plan will be followed in publication. To Nicholas Hausmann he writes more than a year later (December 4, 1523), announcing that the second part was finished and would be published at Christmas (6).

1) Eidem, op. cit., p. 52

2) Ibid.

3) Enders VII, 1586; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 511.

4) Eidem, op. cit., p. 52

5) W. ed. Br. II, 546; Enders IV, 585; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 141

6) Enders IV, 735; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 210.

But the third part, he adds, "is the hardest and the longest." Of his wrestling with this part he again writes to his friend Spalatin (February 23, 1524):

"We have so much trouble in translating Job, on account of the grandeur of his sublime style, that he seems to be much more impatient of our efforts to turn him into German than he was of the consolation of his friends. Either he always wishes to sit on his dunghill, or else he is jealous of the translator who would share with him the credit of writing his book. This keeps the third part of the Bible from being printed" (1).

"Zechariah is in press" by January 10, 1527 (2), and in the spring of the same year Luther is "girt up" to translate the Prophets, finding, incidentally, that a German translation which had just appeared at Worms was quite obscure, "perhaps because of the dialect used" (3). But putting the Prophets into German was no small task. It is Luther's own confession that he sweat at the task, and he adds in a letter to Link (June 14, 1528):

"God, how much of it there is, and how hard it is to make these Hebrew writers talk German! They resist us, and do not want to leave their Hebrew and imitate our German barbarisms. It is like making a nightingale leave her own sweet song and imitate the monotonous voice of the cuckoo, which she detests" (4).

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- 1) Enders IV, 764; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 221.
- 2) Luther to Nicholas Hausmann, Enders VI, 1132; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 392.
- 3) Luther to Wenzel Link, Enders VI, 1160; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 399.
- 4) Enders VI, 1348; Smith-Jacobs II, p. 445.

4. Publication and Revisions, and Luther's estimate.

It was not until March 16, 1532, that the last portion of the Old Testament came out (1). Revisions were made from time to time (2). Even as late as 1546, the year of his death, Luther makes some changes. The completed work brought forth an expression of legitimate pride from the dominating figure who did most to produce it:

"I do not wish to praise myself, but the work speaks for itself. The German Bible is so good and precious that it surpasses all the Greek and Latin versions, and more is found in it than in all the commentaries, for we clear the sticks and stones out of the way that others may read without hindrance" (3).

The work of translating the Bible brought Luther into the most intimate contact with the Scriptures. No training could have been of greater importance in fitting him for exegetical tasks. The fact of the constant changes and improvements made in his own work bears witness of thoroughness and meticulous labor, perhaps too seldom associated with the character of the impulsive Reformer.

But there were also other very direct factors which entered in to his background and qualifications as an exegete.

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- 1) Smith, "The Life and Letters of Martin Luther," p. 264.
- 2) *Eidem*, op. cit., p. 53.
- 3) Quoted by Smith, op. cit., p. 264.

E. Luther's Study of the Original Languages of Scripture As a Foundation for Exegetical Work.

1. His Studies and Evaluation of the Original Languages of Scripture.

Erfurt was chosen by Luther to be his university. It was the only institution for general study in Germany between Cologne and Leipzig (1). Scheel has made a truly encyclopedic analysis of Luther's university studies (2). Surely Hebrew and Greek went into his program of studies there. Fife affirms that "the texture of his early training as a linguist is shown by his mastery of Greek and Hebrew at Wittenberg in the midst of the bitterest polemical crisis of his life" (3). Luther's study of Hebrew at the Erfurt monastery is alluded to in his own writings (4). The belief that Luther learned Hebrew from a Jew at Rome during his visit there December, 1510, to January, 1511, receives mention by Oldecop, but otherwise it is veiled in obscurity (5). Testimony of his knowledge of the original languages of Scripture is also given by Peter Mosellanus, professor at Leipzig, who was a supporter of Luther at the Leipzig debate, in writing to Julius Pflug, a moderate Catholic pupil of his, enlightening him of "the history of the

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- 1) Fife, op. cit., p. 52.
- 2) Scheel, "Martin Luther," I, ch. 4. Cf. also "Acten der Erfurter Universitet," II, p. 143 ff.
- 3) Fife, op. cit., p. 50.
- 4) W. ed. Br. II, 4501; Enders III, 537. Cf. also W. ed. IX, p. 115.
- 5) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 143.

cause of Martin the theologian" that: "He (Luther) is so wonderfully learned in the Bible that he has almost all the texts in memory. He has learned enough Greek and Hebrew to form a judgment of the translations" (1). And that Luther was solicitous that students learn Hebrew is attested by the contents of a letter to John Lang (2), in addition to what has been learned through a popular account (3). Hebrew and Greek were also objects of study when Luther was at the "Isle-of-Patmos" (Wartburg), referred to in a letter to Spalatin (June 10, 1521) (4).

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- 1) J. Jortin, "Life of Erasmus," II (1760), 353 ff.
- 2) W. ed. Br. I, 167; Enders II, 172.
- 3) "There is a charming story told by Johannes Keszler, and reproduced in extenso by Gustav Freytag in his admirable Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit (Vol. I, p. 818-824, Th. Knauer Nachf., Berlin), of how he and a fellow-student, on their way to Wittenberg to study theology under the reformers, on the evening of the fourth of March 1522 put up at an inn where they encountered a friendly stranger, whom they took to be a knight, 'with deep dark eyes that flashed and sparkled like a star.' In the course of the conversation the knight, who seemed strangely familiar with Melanchthon, Erasmus and Luther, and who interspersed his conversation with Latin phrases, advised the young men to study Greek and Hebrew, for 'these were necessary,' he said, 'to the understanding of Holy Scripture.' On the table in front of the knight lay a book. Keszler's friend picked it up and noted that it was a Hebrew Psalter. 'I would give one of the fingers of my hand,' said he, 'to be able to read that.' 'Well, and so you will,' said the knight, 'if you work hard. I also am anxious to improve my knowledge of it and I practise the reading of it every day.' In the sequel the knight turns out to be no other than Martin Luther himself."
- 4) W. ed. Br. II, 417; Enders III, 441; Smith I, p. 43.

Luther held the Hebrew language in high esteem. Of it he spoke in the Tischreden: "The words of the Hebrew tongue have a peculiar energy. It is impossible to convey so much so briefly in any other language" (1). Again he reveals to us how by constant labors he advanced in the knowledge of Hebrew: "I have learned more Hebrew in my own reading by comparing words and passages in the original than by going merely by the rules of grammar I am no Hebraist according to the grammar. I do not allow myself to be cramped by its rules, but go freely through the passage " (2).

3. His Insistence of Going to the Original Text.

It is plain that Luther established a foundation for modern exegetical theology by his insistence on a return to the very sources of the sacred writings, as outlined above. With only the Vulgate, the traditional Latin version of the Catholic Church -- and far from the best medium -- no satisfactory progress could be expected in exegesis. The spirit of return to the classics was rife in this period of dawning humanism and renaissance. It is significant to note that Luther was awake to make use of the best results of scholarship of his day. McGiffert characterizes him in this respect: "He was always alive, indeed, to the progress of scholarship in his chosen field" (3).

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1) Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 15.

2) TR. 62. 314.

3) McGiffert, "Martin Luther, the Man and His Work," p. 60.

Luther's evaluation of the study of the original sources in biblical exegesis he trenchantly makes by saying: "The farther from the spring, the more water loses taste and strength" (1). And of the direct relation between the Reformation movement and the study of the Scripture in the originals he states:

"I would have failed in my work if the languages had not come to my aid and made me strong and immovable in the Scriptures. I might, without them, have been pious and preached the gospel in obscurity, but I could not have disturbed the Pope, his adherents and all the reign of Anti-Christ" (2).

F. Luther's Relation to the Field of Scholarship.

1. The Relation to Reuchlin.

This return on the part of Luther to the original sources of Scripture meant a reliance upon the work principally of two scholars, Reuchlin and Erasmus.

"It was by no means an accident that the Reformation was contemporary with the Renaissance," says Mackinnon (3).

And he continues:

"Here was a movement which, with its insistence on a Biblical theology in opposition to scholasticism, its appeal to the sources of Christianity as the real norm of faith, its application of the critical method to the study both of theology and ecclesiastical history, its new conception of life, its keen sense of individual liberty, its insistent demand for a reformation of religion, anticipated much that Luther ultimately stood for, and materially aided him in the conflict with corporate authority, into which he was gradually drawn."

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- 1) Quoted by McGiffert, op. cit., p. 59.
- 2) Luther, letter to Mayors, p. 192-193.
- 3) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 249-250.

John Reuchlin had brought back from Italy the more serious spirit of Italian humanism, and combined allegiance to the faith with the critical spirit as applied to the sources of Christianity, particularly the Hebrew Scriptures. He was first and foremost a philological and critical scholar and though a jurist by profession, and a layman, produced a number of works, among them a combined Hebrew grammar and lexicon, in which he did not hesitate to point out after the method of Valla, the errors of the Vulgate translation of the Old Testament (1). From Reuchlin's "Rudimenta", the first Hebrew Grammar, with glossary attached, published in Germany, Luther received his first knowledge of Hebrew. From these he learned the Hebrew letters and their phonetic values (2). During his days as lecturer at Erfurt Luther had recourse to the Hebrew grammar and dictionary of Reuchlin (3). He also uses Reuchlin's apparatus and his exposition of the penitential psalms when he gives the lectures on the Psalms (1513-1516) (4), and for the meaning of Hebrew words and passages during the Romans lectures (1515-1516), where he uses Reuchlin's Hebrew grammar with increasing independence (5).

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- 1) Ibid., p. 244-245
- 2) Ibid., p. 157.
- 3) W. ed. IX, p. 26, 32, 33, 63, 67.
- 4) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 157.
- 5) Fife, op. cit., p. 187.

It is the claim of Farrar that Reuchlin effected for the study of the Old Testament even more than Erasmus achieved for the New (1). In one characteristic sentence Reuchlin gives us the secret of his great services: "Novum Testamentum graece lego, vetus hebraice, in cujus expositione malo confidere meo quam alterius ingenio" (2).

Luther's personal relationship to Reuchlin seems to begin with a letter to him under date of December 14, 1518, in which he states: "My hearty love for you has impelled me to write, for I feel (although I have not met you) familiar with you, partly because I think so much of you, and partly by meditation on your books" (3). Subsequent relations with Reuchlin were to take quite a different turn.

2. The Relation to Erasmus.

Rich, indeed, is the field of study which concerns itself with the relations between Luther and Erasmus. Luther exceedingly disliked Erasmus as a theologian, naming him "a foe to all religion and a thorough sham," yet estimated him highly as a grammarian (4). The battle between the two was indeed a tragedy (5). But is

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1) Farrar, op. cit., p. 314.

2) Ibid., p. 315.

3) W. ed. I, 120; Enders I, 122; Smith I, p. 139.

4) TR, II, p. 402, 419.

5) The tone of the correspondence between Luther and Erasmus (also Melanchthon) is sketched in an article "Erasmus Roterdamus in His Relation to Luther and Melanchthon," by Ernst Voss, in "The Journal of English and Germanic Philology," vol. XXVI, 1927, p. 564-568.

it not a tribute to the scholarly nature of Luther that he did not "throw out the child with the bath"? To agree with Erasmus in religious matters was for him impossible; but he valued the positive contributions of the great humanist which really laid the foundations of modern textual and Biblical criticism.

Erasmus' editio princeps of the New Testament, published early in 1516, "formed a great epoch in the history of Western Christendom, and was a gift of incalculable value to the Church (1). The reformer and the humanist were at one in their burning zeal to make Scripture a popular, every-day instrument, for the use of all. How similar to the quotations in regard to the solace of Luther in making the Bible a people's book cited above, is not the following statement by Erasmus:

"I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, and that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey" (2).

The edition of Erasmus came into Luther's hands when he was in the midst of the lecture course on Romans. He had expounded the first eight chapters.

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1) Cf. Westcott, "History of the English Bible," pp. 26, 140, 203-205.

2) Quoted by Murray, "Erasmus and Luther," p. 21, in Paraclesis in Nov. Text. p. 2.

After that Luther has constant recourse to Erasmus' Greek text; it is significant to note that we have here for the first time in^a German University the use of the basic original text of the New Testament (1). Fife gives an interesting sidelight:

"To^a modern philologist it is a joy to see how, armed with this increasingly adequate equipment, he attacks the text and displays a fine technique in observation and combination and in the use of his grammatical and logical apparatus to interpret the sense of the original" (2).

3. The use of Commentaries.

Knowledge of Luther's acquaintance with the earlier commentators also assists us in portraying his background and qualifications as an exegete, though by no means so important as the fact of the recourse to the original text and his intellectual discipleship at the feet of Reuchlin and Erasmus.

Thomas, Peter Lombard, and Paul of Bergos had been studied, and free use is made of Nicholas de Lyra and Lefevre d'Étaples (also called Faber Stapulensis), the father of Western European exegetes (3), though Luther fears that both the latter have tried to defend "the literal, that is the killing, sense of Scripture" (4). "Almost all the commentators after Augustine" are full

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1) Fife, op. cit., p. 186.

2) Ibid., p. 187.

3) Ibid., p. 186.

4) W. ed. Br. I, 27; Enders I, 25; Smith I, p. 44.

of this error, Luther asserts in the same letter to Spalatin, in which he also pays tribute to the great church father of whom he was a spiritual son. The commentaries of Cassiodorus and the writings of Anselm and Bernard also make their contribution (1). The lectures on Romans show a more critical attitude toward the predecessors in the field of exegetical theology; there is a conscientious striving, under humanist influence, to improve on the old commentators (2).

4. The Relation to Intimate Associates.

It is plain that Luther's ability as an exegete was favorably increased by the personal contacts with his immediate associates at the University of Wittenberg. The great present day German painter Bauer has given us an interesting sketch as he imagines Luther at work with his associates in translating the Bible; and the picture indeed reminds us of the accounts given of the sitting of more recent editorial boards and commissions of revisers.

Luther's friendship with Philip Melanchthon was beautiful and fructifying. The record in the Codex Bavari (p. 1003) tells us that on August 26, 1518, under the rectorate of Nicholas Gingelm "Philip Melanchthon of Bretten, a Tübingen Master of Arts, was

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1) Mackinnon, op. cit., I, p. 157.

2) Ibid., p. 170-171.

registered (at Wittenberg) as the first professor of the Greek language." He had left Leipzig to come to Wittenberg, and though his fame had preceded him, his appearance disappointed expectation (1). But this was only of short duration, for four days after his arrival he delivered his Inaugural "De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis," which at once established him securely in the university life. Referring to this lecture Richard says: "No similar programme had ever been exhibited to the professors and students of a German university" (2).

Luther had the most profound respect for Melanchthon and his learning. He names him "the most learned and perfect Grecian" (3), one who has almost every virtue known to man" (4), and who "will make many Luthers and a most powerful enemy of scholastic theology" (5). Luther's characterization of Melanchthon that "this little Greek beats me even in theology" (6) has not been the verdict of history, but certain it is that the superior ability of Melanchthon in the field of Greek was a positive influence for Luther, whose praise

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- 1) Richard, "Philip Melanchthon," p.36.
- 2) Ibid., p. 39.
- 3) W. ed. Br. I, 93; Enders I, 96; Smith I, p. 113.
- 4) W. ed. Br. I, 120; Enders I, 122; Smith I, p. 220.
- 5) W. ed. Br. I, 202; Enders II, 223; Smith I, p. 220.
- 6) W. ed. I, 232; Enders II, 255; Smith I, p. 264.

he sung so uniquely ("reverence, almost idolatry" is the opinion of Dr. Preserved Smith) in a Greek poem (1).

The meaning of the intimate relation of these two giant minds for the progress of the Reformation is summarized in splendid fashion by Melanchthon's biographer:

"The two great men were at once drawn to each other. Luther's clear understanding, deep feeling, pious spirit, heroic courage, overwhelmed Melanchthon with wonder, so that he revered him as a father. Melanchthon's great learning, fine culture, philosophical clearness, his beautiful character and tender heart, acted as a charm upon Luther. Each found the complement of his own nature in the other. God had joined the two with marvellous adaptation. If Luther was a physician severer than the diseases of the Church could bear, Melanchthon was too gentle for the heart of the declining Church, which could not easily bear either her diseases or the remedies required to heal them. Together they achieved what neither could have done without the other. Hence they are entitled to share equal honors for the work of the Reformation" (2).

Luther himself has put his gifts and those of Melanchthon in happy juxtaposition:

"I am rough, boisterous, stormy, and altogether warlike. I am born to fight against innumerable monsters and devils. I must remove stumps and stones, cut away thistles, and thorns, and clear the wild forests; but Master Philip comes along softly and gently, sowing and watering with joy, according to the gifts which God has abundantly bestowed upon him" (3).

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- 1) See Enders I, 127; also note by Dr. Preserved Smith in "Luther's Correspondence" I, p. 144.
- 2) Richard, op. cit., p. 41-42.
- 3) In Preface to Melanchthon's Commentary on Colossians.

There was also Jodocus Koch, commonly called Justis Jonas, who spend twenty-one years at Wittenberg and took a prominent part in the Reformation (1), and John Bugenhagen, who made large and important contributions to the Reformation in the form of translating Luther's New Testament into Low German, assisting in revising Luther's Bible and writing many tracts on theological subjects, in addition to his greatest service in the field of practical reform (church organization and worship) (2). There was also Caspar Crugiger, who came to Wittenberg in 1521 to study under Melanchthon. Upon his return to Wittenberg in 1528 to be preacher at the Castle Church and also professor at the University he became one of the inner circle of Luther's intimate friends, assisting in the completion of the Bible translation, and serving as one of the editors of the first (Wittenberg) edition of Luther's collected works (3). It is certain that Matthew Aurogallus stood him in good stead, for he came to Wittenberg in 1521 and was appointed professor of Hebrew to succeed Adrian, and was of great help to Luther in translating the Old Testament (4). The companionship with Rörer, of whom mention

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- 1) For life see Realencyklopädie. Was with Luther at the time of the latter's death.
- 2) Smith-Jacobs II, p. 132.
- 3) Smith-Jacobs II, p. 305.
- 4) Smith I, p. 465. See also Allegemeine deutsche Biographie. Aurogallus published a Hebrew grammar in 1535.

was made in the previous chapter, was also a fruitful one.

It is certainly fair to believe that the association with the above-named individuals would not only prove stimulating to Luther, but would also aid him materially in scholarly ways, and better prepare him for the task of exegesis.

G. Negative Factors.

1. Unscientific training.

A present-day student examining the commentaries of Luther finds there little in common with the commentaries of the past century. He would be led to believe that Luther paid exceedingly little attention to the Greek text. But we must examine the commentaries in the light of their historical setting. Luther's prime purpose was to get at the thought of the mind of the writer. In considering Luther's relation to exegesis we are not unmindful of some negative factors.

Luther's training in the languages could not be called scientific in the best sense of the word. From foregoing sections we have shown that Luther possessed far greater knowledge and ability in the field of languages than is commonly attributed to him. In the circumstances his accomplishments were nothing short of the phenomenal; but the past four centuries have

added much to our store of knowledge in these realms, and have aided us in getting far closer to the meaning of the Scripture-writers.

2. The Relation to Medieval Interpretation.

Luther also came to a theological world that was bound by a dwarfing and vain method of Scripture interpretation. And by it he is held for some time. The passages of Scripture must be subjected to a four-fold treatment: the literal, the anagogical, the allegorical, and the tropological. It is plain that with such a method no satisfactory progress could be made in the field of exegesis. It is not until after Luther has been lecturing for some years upon the books of the Bible that he makes bold to divorce himself from the straight-jacket method of medieval interpretation. Meissinger, who has made a first-hand study of Luther's exegetical work, maintains that this break on the part of Luther was one of the great land-marks in the history of exegesis, and that as an accomplishment by Luther, it ranks in the same class with his translation of the Bible (1). The same author finds upon further investigation that the first evidence of a definite parting with the medieval tradition and an establishment of a newer

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1) Meissinger, "Luthers Exegese in der Frühzeit," p.36

principle is seen in the 1519 Commentary on Galatians (1). The enslaving power of the medieval method of interpretation is indeed a negative factor during the earlier period, but the break with that method, and the growth in independence is certainly a factor which contributed in the most positive way to Luther's ability as an exegete.

3. The Over-Emphasis on Personal Experience.

The fact that Luther passed through such a vital religious experience may have meant abundantly much for the genesis and progress of the Reformation, but it actually did hinder him in some respects in exegesis. And religious history can point to thousands of cases where personal experience of a very intense and vital kind has warped an individual's interpretation of certain passages in Scripture. Certain passages of Luther's exegesis, particularly in the Psalms lectures, will show where interpretation leads when in a detailed way every passage must "show forth Christ". The Psalmist speaking of his lying down and rising again is made to mean the burial and the resurrection of Jesus. Personal experience being of the nature that it is, it can not be denied that Strohl is in the right when he speaks of the "caractère subjectif de l'exégèse de Luther" (2), for particularly in his

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1) Ibid., footnote #1.

2) Strohl, op. cit., p. 104.

earlier lectures does Luther show this lack of pure objective judgment; his later work certainly shows a more balanced view.

4. The Disadvantage of Strife and Polemics.

The "reading in" of certain meanings into Scripture, just mentioned, comes to the fore in the writings of Luther particularly in such passages which suggest to Luther anything concerning the ills of Rome. There likely was much of the "extremist" in Luther; but then, the extreme situation also demanded that an "extremist" lodge the battle. The constant strife and polemic in which Luther found himself could hardly have furthered in any healthy way his interpretation of Scripture, even though he in such strife was constantly driven to the Word for support and strength. It would indeed be interesting to make a conjecture as to how far Luther could have gone in the field of exegesis had he enjoyed a more scientific training in languages, a less tumultuous atmosphere and surrounds^{ing}, and an apparatus criticus such as present-day scholars possess. Given this, it is safe to assume that he would not only have prepared the way for a sound historical exegesis (1), as he did, but would also have made greater strides on that way.

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1) Harnack, "History of Dogma," vol. p. 234.

H. Conclusion.

But there is a final consideration. Luther certainly possessed one qualification, not a technical one to be sure, but one which is the sine qua non of the exegete. It must be admitted that the deep sincerity of Luther, his pioneering spirit, his daring to seek untrammelled ways, his earnestness in seeing in the Bible the Word of the Living God, whose favor he wanted to assure for himself, his zeal that the full Gospel might come into its own, certainly added greatly to the more material qualifications he possessed. Without this burning spirit the rest might have gone for nought. On one occasion he wrote to John Lang at Erfurt: "Our times are very perilous and everyone who knows Greek and Hebrew is not for that reason a wise Christian, seeing that Jerome, with his five languages, did not equal Augustine with his one" (1). Technical apparatus was and is of utmost importance; but the spirit of Luther -- to seek to know the will of God as it was revealed in the Word -- in a measure outdistanced all else.

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1) W. ed. Br. I, 35; Enders I, 34; Smith I, p. 54-55.

CHAPTER IV
EXEGETICAL VALUES IN
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A. Introduction

In the previous chapter we have made mention of the background and qualifications of Luther as an exegete. In the present chapter it is our purpose to make closer examination of Luther's exegesis as revealed in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians. At the outset we must remember that Luther's burning desire to establish the doctrine of justification by faith was paramount. His interest was primarily the doctrinal and theological, and to puzzle over cases, moods and tenses never proved to be his prime objective. In this respect the work of Luther and Calvin were quite different. The higher place as a critical exegete must unreservedly be accorded the French Reformer, "whose penetrating insight into the supreme purpose and appropriate problems of Sacred Scripture distinguishes him from all his predecessors, and makes him almost the creator of genuine exegesis" (1). Of all the exegetes of the period of the Reformation the first

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1) Ladd, "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," vol. II, p. 171.

place must unquestionably be given to him (1). But there was groundwork to be accomplished, and the arduous effort of Luther to make his translation of the Bible as accurate as possible went far toward establishing sound methods of criticism and exegesis (2).

A good understanding of Scripture comes only by the union of the exegetico-historical study with a profound sympathy with the biblical author. Paul's experience with legalism and Luther's experience with Romanism furnish a parallel. By virtue of experience Luther was eminently qualified to understand and interpret Saint Paul (3). Immer maintains that this religious understanding of the Apostle Paul on the part of Luther, springing as it did, from true spiritual relationship, the fruit of which understanding is given in the Commentary on Galatians, is of such a value that even the exegete of the nineteenth century (the English version of Immer's volume was published in 1877) will draw rich instruction and edification from it (4). To an exegete who works among "earthly vessels" of the Word and is so fascinated and engrossed in his worthy enterprise that he becomes, however, unwillingly, partially

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- 1) Terry, "Biblical Hermeneutics," p. 676.
- 2) Ibid., p. 673.
- 3) Findlay, in "Expositor's Bible," volume on Galatians, p. 3-4.
- 4) Immer, "Hermeneutics of the New Testament," p. 366.

blinded to the spiritual marrow and the truth and experience which the words are intended to convey, Luther's commentaries, especially in the case of Galatians, have a singularly salutary influence, for it must be admitted that by dint of his religious genius Luther "felt out the kernel of the matter" (1), and in so doing produced a noble work.

It is but natural that advances should have been made in interpretation since the time of the Reformation which have profoundly influenced for good the commentaries which have been written. Speaking of these advances particularly in relation to Luther's Commentary on Galatians as compared to commentaries of subsequent times, Immer states: "Whatever advance has been made upon this is due partly to the philological understanding purified through historical criticism" (2). To catalog Luther's principles of exegesis would be far from an easy task; no corpus of hermeneutical principles could be found as such in the Reformer's writings, though here and there he makes utterances on the subject. An individual whose great objective was to direct his generation back to the open Bible would very likely not have as his prime concern the establishment of

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- 1) Ibid., p. 40.
- 2) Ibid., p. 366.

exegetical principles. "It was more, indeed, by what the Reformers did in their exegetical productions, and their comments on Scripture, than by any formal announcement or explanation of their hermeneutical principles, that both they themselves and their immediate followers gave it to be understood what those principles really were" (1).

Luther was fair and straightforward in his interpretation of the meaning of exegesis. On one occasion he expressed his platform as follows: "We must not make God's Word mean what we wish; we must not bend it, but allow it to bend us; and give it the honour of being better than we could make it; so that we must let it stand"(2). But certainly this rule was not followed with any great degree of faithfulness.

A study of any of Luther's commentaries, and even an examination of single pages such as are shown in facsimile in Chapter II, lead us to concur in the statement of Hurst:

"Luther's commentaries were practical expositions, little space being given to philological discussions. It was his habit to present the argument of a book in a full introduction, and in language that the uneducated could understand. His interpretations were crisp and strong declarations of the author's meaning. He gave conclusions, and but little of the process by which he reached them" (3).

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- 1) Fairbairn, "Hermeneutical Manual," p. 69.
- 2) Quoted by Ibid., p. 69.
- 3) Hurst, "Short History of the Christian Church," p. 225.

B. Exegesis During the Period of the Reformation

1. The Effect of the Reformation upon Exegesis.

The Reformation diverted attention away from the productions of the Fathers, which had been followed with more or less slavish obedience, and led to the open Bible as the source. This necessarily meant an ensuing development of principles of exegesis. Of the noteworthy new tendencies which characterized the Reformation period, some promised good results, and others evil. Ladd points out that there were three tenets which proved beneficial:

a) There was a "renunciation of authorities, whether found in ancient translations, scholastic opinions, or ecclesiastical traditions."

b) There was "a shrinking from lawless allegorizing, and a feeling of the necessity for emphasizing historical interpretation."

c) There was an "increase of confidence in the unity of the meaning of Scripture, and in the ability of Scripture to furnish, so far as necessary ethical and religious truths are concerned, its own interpretation" (1).

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1) Ladd, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 169.

The same author states that the evil tendencies appeared in three directions:

a) The principle that "the Bible is its own interpreter" was erected into " a theological dogma which put the exegete under bounds to interpret according to the so-called 'analogy of faith'."

b) There was a "lack of relative interest in the work of Biblical Introduction."

c) There was a disposition "to make the establishment of dogma the great final purpose of the study of the Bible" (1).

2. Luther's Relation to the Changing Scene.

Had Luther done nothing else but direct the Christian body back to the Scriptures he would have to his credit a monumental accomplishment. He proclaimed the basic nature of the sacred writings, and by so doing he established the only platform for exegetical work. The Bible itself was his great textbook, and in reading his works one can not help but take note of how he has saturated himself in the Word. His own pronouncements are substantially supported by the witness of Scripture quotations (2). He was not bound to the Letter, being fearless in his criticism

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1) Ibid.

2) e.g., Gal. comm. p. 18, 23, 82, 90, 175, 201, 208, 212, 236, and innumerable other sections. This principle of Luther is shown particularly well in his explanation of the Small Catechism.

of Scripture and having his own canons of Scripture evaluation (as seen in Chapter III, paragraph on "Scripture Evaluation"), and yet through the books of the Bible he plainly heard God speaking to man, offering him His grace and righteousness.

This is proved by his very pointed sentences in the Prefaces to the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament Preface of 1523 (revised and expanded in 1545), he refers to the Old Testament as

"a book of laws, which teaches what men are to do and not to do, and gives, besides, examples and stories of how these laws are kept or broken; just as the New Testament is a Gospel-book, or book of grace, and teaches where one is to get the power to fulfill the law In the Old Testament there are, beside the laws, certain promises and offers of grace, by which the holy fathers and prophets, under the law, were kept, like us, under the faith of Christ" (1).

And in the 1522 Preface to the New Testament (used again, with some revisions in 1545), he writes:

"The New Testament is a book in which are written the Gospel and the promises of God, together with the history of those who believe and of those who do not believe them. For Gospel is a Greek word, and means in Greek, a good message, good tidings, good news, a good report, which one sings and tells with rejoicing. . . . The Gospel, too, is a good story and report, sounded forth into all the world by the apostles, telling of a true David who strove with sin,

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1) "Works of Martin Luther," Holman edition, vol. VI, p.368.

death, and devil, and overcame them, and thereby rescued all those who were captive in sin, afflicted with death, and over-powered by the devil; He made them righteous, gave them life, and saved them, so that they were given peace and brought back to God, and are glad forever, if only they believe firmly and are steadfast in faith" (1).

In such a way was the Bible -- a conveyor of the essential fact of the Gospel -- a means of grace.

Luther's alliance to individualism is plainly sensed in two of his epoch-making principles: the universal and spiritual priesthood of all believers, which lies at the base of all Protestantism, and the absolute indefeasible right of private judgment in relation to Scripture. With the latter we are particularly concerned at this place. This claim for the individual, which Luther maintained with all his force, appears with him "almost for the first time in history" (2). It is plain that the insistence upon this principle proved to be of utmost importance and value; with it Luther indignantly swept aside the fiction of a usurping hierarchy, that priests were in any sense the sole authorized interpreters of Scripture (3). But the progress of this opinion was fraught with sore difficulties. Luther often found in his bitter controversies that Zwingli, Erasmus, Campanus, Emser, and Carlstadt

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- 1) Ibid., p. 440.
- 2) Farrar, op. cit., p. 329.
- 3) Ibid., p. 300.

could appeal to Scripture, to all appearance, as constantly as himself. Melanchthon's proposition of getting over the difficulties by having "a consensus of pious men" (1) was certainly unsatisfactory, for by so doing a return would be made to the very principle the Reformers had sought to defeat. Though his new views caused no small amount of difficulty and disturbance -- such we must expect in a period that was essentially a pioneering one -- yet Luther must have "preferred the hurricane of controversies to the stagnation of enforced uniformity, and the pestilence of authoritative error"(2).

C. Luther's Exegesis as Revealed in this Commentary.

In the light of Ladd's citation and evaluation of exegetical principles evolving from the Reformation let us examine the 1535 Commentary on Galatians to note if Luther shows any tendencies toward "renunciation of authorities, whether found in ancient translations, scholastic opinions, or ecclesiastical traditions," "a shrinking from lawless allegorizing, and a feeling of the necessity for emphasizing historical interpretation," and toward "an increase of confidence in the

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1) "Interpretatio est dondum piorum," in Melanchthon's "Loci Communes," p. 369.
2) Farrar, op. cit., p. 331.

unity of the meaning of Scripture to furnish, as far as necessary ethical and religious truths are concerned, its own interpretation." We bear in mind that this Commentary is the fruit of continuous labors, and that it comes, not out of the heat of sudden struggle, but rather as a studied expression of the mature Luther.

1. The Relation to Authorities.

A study of the student's manuscript of the 1516-1517 Lectures shows us how constantly Luther relied upon the productions of the saints of the Church, and in a foregoing section (1) mention was made of the sources which he had chiefly consulted. In fact, a great portion of his lectures consisted of such a collection of quotations from the Fathers. The same had been true of the earlier courses on Psalms and Romans (2).

With the 1535 Commentary before us it is a sincere joy to see how Luther has grown to an independent attitude. The same independence which he showed in his evaluation of Scripture and in his belief in private judgment, now comes to the fore in his work of exposition. Quotations from the Fathers have been virtually

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1) ut supra. p. 40.

2) Cf. analysis of citations in Romans Lectures in Ficker, op. cit., p. 155-158.

obliterated, though he speaks reverently of the virtuous life lived by some of them (1). Luther stands alone before the naked Word. It is plain that when Luther divorced himself from the custom of making incessant and indiscriminate selections from the writings of the Fathers, in order to enlarge his comments, he broke with a custom at once artificial and unfruitful. In that ecclesiastical tradition was one of the buttresses against which Luther hurled his theses in 1517, it is to be expected that at the late date of 1535 there would be no trace of allegiance to such traditions. And intertwined with his pronouncements of the meaning of the law and the gospel, faith and good works, justification through personal belief and not through merit, there is thrust after thrust aimed at the dwarfing and life-quenching ecclesiastical traditions, such as when he makes a brave excursion against the teaching of the "schoolmen" on justification (2), the divinity of the "schoolmen" (3), the attack on the "Form of Monkish Absolution" (4), and the constantly recurring criticism of papal dominion and authority.

In certain places in this Commentary, however, we

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- 1) Gal. comm., p. 415-416.
- 2) Ibid., p. 227.
- 3) Ibid., p. 109.
- 4) Ibid., p. 132.

find remnants of the scholastic fondness for dialectic and logic. In the use of logic the Fathers had revelled. One instance of the use of such a terse and crisp syllogism in the 1516-1517 Lectures - to be sure, one which did no violence to truth - was cited in chapter II (1).

Entirely just and reasonable, and literally based on Paul's words in Gal. 2.19: "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God," is the syllogistic excursion made on this verse:

"But this seemeth a strange and wonderful definition, that to live to the law, is to die to God: and to die to the law, is to live to God. - These two propositions are clean contrary to reason, and therefore no crafty sophister or law-worker can understand them. But learn thou the true understanding thereof. He that liveth to the law, that is, seeketh to be justified by the works of the law, is and remaineth a sinner: therefore he is dead and condemned. For the law cannot justify and save him, but accuseth, terrifieth, and killeth him. Therefore, to live unto the law, is to die unto God: and contrariwise, to die to the law, is to live unto God. Wherefore if thou wilt live unto God, thou must die to the law: but if thou wilt live to the law, thou shalt die to God. Now to live unto God, is to be justified by grace or by faith, for Christ's sake, without the law and works" (2).

And many other such expositions cast in the formal mode of logic could be cited, in which he does no violence to sound reason. But Luther certainly courts

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1) ut supra, p. 42.

2) Gal. Comm. p. 136-137.

trouble when he builds his logic upon such an insecure premise as he establishes in his exegesis of Gal. 3.1: "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth," where he speaks of "Bodily and Spiritual Witchcraft." Luther's well-known fondness for a well-laden table, plus accompaniments, hardly increases our belief that he actually meant what he said in the following:

"Afterwards, in the fifth chapter, he rehearsed sorcery among the works of the flesh, which is a kind of witchcraft, whereby he plainly testi-
fieth, that indeed such witchcraft and sorcery there is, and that it may be done. Moreover, it cannot be denied but that the devil liveth, yea, and reigneth throughout the whole world. Witchcraft and sorcery therefore are the works of the devil; whereby he doth not only hurt men, but also, by the permission of God, he sometimes destroyeth them. Furthermore, we are all subject to the devil, both in body and goods; and we be strangers in this world, whereof he is the prince and god. Therefore the bread we eat, the drink which we drink, the garments which we wear, yea, the air, and whatsoever we live by in the flesh, is under his dominion" (1).

This paragraph borders upon the ludicrous. By no possible stretch of the sentences can we make it square with his classic explanation of the first article in the creed, as given in the Small Catechism:

"I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, with all my limbs and

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1) Ibid., p. 165.

and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with my raiment, food, home, and family, and all my property; that He daily provides me abundantly with all the necessaries of life, etc." (1).

But we do not need to go outside of the volume we have before us to find passages that show us that Luther knew better than to maintain that all temporal things are under the dominion of the devil. The sensible and healthy utterances given on a subsequent passage give us a view of the Reformer which we would much rather accept, and were Luther to make closer examination of these two, placed side by side, it is reasonably sure that he would recognize the following as being in more perfect accord with his real self. To quote the passage:

"For to have a kingdom, laws, and civil ordinances, to have a wife, children, house, and lands, is a blessing. For all these things are the good creatures and gifts of God. But we are not delivered from the everlasting curse by this corporal blessing, which is but temporal, and must have an end. . . . Therefore we make here a distinction between the corporal and spiritual blessing, and say, that God hath a double blessing; one corporal for this life, and another spiritual for the everlasting life; Therefore, to have riches, and children, and such like, we say it is a blessing, but in its degree; that is to say, in this life present. . . . Corporal blessings . . . God distributeth in the world freely, and bestoweth them both upon the good and bad, like as he suffereth the sun to rise both upon the good and evil, and sendeth rain upon the righteous and unrighteous" (2).

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- 1) Luther, "The Small Catechism," p. 11.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 216-217.

The moral is, that an exegete should not deduce from a sentence dealing with witchcraft and sorcery, the premise that all things in this world are under the dominion of the devil. However, the faint remnants of the scholastic love for logic and dialectic which we meet in this commentary are by no means harmful; they do not constitute a flagrant wrong.

2. In the second place, Ladd points out that there followed in the wake of the Reformation a "shrinking from lawless allegorizing, and there grew a feeling of the necessity for emphasizing historical interpretation."

a. Relation to Allegory.

Particularly in the Lectures on Psalms had Luther given himself over to ways of unwarranted allegorizing, which gave distortion to his efforts. Not a few of his early sermons would also fail if subjected to an examination on this point. But with his growth in the methods of interpretation we find that he comes to reject the validity of allegory. From the writings of Luther, Farrar has culled several pronouncements of the Reformer relative to allegorizing: "An interpreter must as much as possible avoid allegory, that he may not wander in idle dreams." "Origen's allegories are not worth so much dirt." "Allegories are empty speculations, and

as it were the scum of Holy Scripture." "Allegory is a sort of beautiful harlot who proves herself specially seductive to idle men." "To allegorize is to juggle with Scripture." "Allegorizing may degenerate into a mere monkey-game." "Allegories are awkward, absurd, invented, obsolete, loose rags" (1).

Of slightly different nature are the references to allegory in the Table-Talk:

"Allegories and spiritual significations, when applied to faith, and that seldom, are laudable; but when they are drawn from the life and conversation, they are dangerous, and, when men make too many of them, pervert the doctrine of faith. Allegories are fine ornaments, but not of proof. . . . To play with allegories in Christian doctrine is dangerous. The words, now and then, sound well and smoothly, but they are to no purpose. . . . When I was a monk, I was much versed in spiritual significations and allegories. 'Twas all art with me; but afterwards, when through the Epistle to Romans, I had come a little to the knowledge of Christ, I saw that all allegories were vain, except those of Christ. Before that time I turned everything into allegory, even the lowest wants of our nature. But afterwards I reflected upon historical facts. . . . Now I have shaken off all these follies, and my best art is to deliver the Scripture in the simple sense; therein is life, strength, and doctrine; all other methods are nothing but foolishness, let them shine how they will" (2).

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- 1) Farrar, op. cit., p. 328. Most of these quotations are taken from Luther's Commentary on Genesis. Farrar adds the following, in footnote #3: "He is least true to his own principle in the comments on Job, Psalms, and Canticles, and is by no means always consistent."
- 2) Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 326-328.

Of unique interest are particularly two further statements. The first is taken from the 1519 Commentary on Galatians:

"Rudiores similitudinibus, parabolis, allegorias etiam cum voluptate capiuntur apostolus verbum eorum captui attemperat" (1).

The second is taken from the work we are studying:

"Allegoriae non pariunt firmas probationes in theologia, sed velut picturae ornant et illustrant rem" (2).

We note at once the similarity between these statements and the tone of the excerpts from the Table-Talk.

Let us now turn to some of the evidence which the 1535 Commentary gives. - There is a suggestion of allegory in the treatment of 2.14: "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." In distinguishing between the law and the gospel Luther says the following:

"Now the way to discern the one from the other, is to place the gospel in heaven, and the law on the earth; to call the righteousness of the gospel heavenly, and the righteousness of the law earthly, and to put as great difference between the righteousness of the gospel and of the law, as God hath made between heaven and earth, between light and darkness, between day and night. Let the one be as the light and the day, and the other as the darkness and the night" (3).

More emphasized is the treatment of 2.19; "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live

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- 1) W. ed., III, p. 344.
- 2) W. ed., XXXX (2), p. 248.
- 3) Gal. Comm., p. 100.

unto God." The empty grave of Christ, the prison which Peter left, the bed of the man sick of palsy, and the couch of the resurrected maiden are used to illustrate the relation of the law to the Christian. This treatment could hardly be called "lawless allegorizing"; it is safe to say that Luther meant these words more in the spirit of an ornamentation of his exposition, and yet such tactics can hardly be considered helpful to exegesis. The unique method Luther employs in seeking to elucidate the fact of the believer being free from the law is worth quoting:

"Christ rising from death is free from the grave, and yet the grave remaineth still. Peter is delivered from the prison, the sick of the palsy from his bed, the young man from his coffin, the maiden from her couch, and yet the prison, the bed, the coffin, the couch do remain still. Even so the law is abolished when I am not subject unto it, the law is dead when I am dead unto it, and yet it remaineth still. But because I am dead unto it by another law, therefore it is dead also unto me; as the grave of Christ, the prison of Peter, the couch of the maiden, etc., do still remain: and yet Christ by his resurrection is dead unto the grave, Peter by his deliverance is freed from the prison, and the maiden through life is delivered from the couch" (1).

A present-day Christian would very likely revolt at the picture of sin given by the medium of the description of a serpent: "Indeed, many things are

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1) Ibid., p. 135.

purged in us, and principally the head of the serpent; that is to say, infidelity and ignorance of God is cut off and bruised, but the slimy body and the remnants of sin remain still in us." (1).

Of graver danger is the use of allegory as in 3.15. An unbridled use of such a method as is hinted at in the following paragraph will involve all manner of danger:

"So the prophets have very often used similitudes and comparisons taken of creatures, calling Christ the sun, the church the moon, and preachers and teachers of the word the stars. Also there are many similitudes in the prophets, of trees, thorns, flowers, and fruits of the earth. The New Testament likewise is full of such similitudes" (2).

Luther does not actually go astray in his interpretation of 3.9, but one can detect a faint remnant of the medieval four-fold plan of interpretation:

"Now, by these words, 'shall be blessed,' Paul gathereth an argument of the contrary: for the scripture is full of oppositions, as when two contraries are compared together. And it is a point of cunning to mark well these oppositions in the scriptures, and by them to expound the sentences thereof. As here this word 'blessing' importeth also to the contrary; that is to say, 'malediction.' For when the scripture saith that all nations which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, it followeth necessarily that all, as well Jews as Gentiles, are accursed without faith, or without the faithful Abraham. 'For the promise of blessing was given to Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed.' There is no blessing then to be looked for, but only in the

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1) Ibid., p. 164.
2) Ibid., p. 258.

promise made unto Abraham, now published by the gospel throughout the whole world. Therefore, whatsoever is without that blessing, is accursed" (1).

The wording in one of the sentences, particularly, catches our attention: "As here this word 'blessing' importeth also to the contrary; that is to say, 'malediction'." This, it will be seen, savours not a little of the spirit of the second item of a typical medieval "exegetical table" (2), such as Luther himself used at an earlier period:

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|-----------|--------|----------|---------|
| lit. | Alleg. | tropol. | anag. |
| Jerusalem | Boni | virtutes | praemia |
| Babylon | Mali | vitia | poenae |

Several other instances of the use of allegory by Luther might be cited, though hardly necessary. There is unmistakable presence of allegory in this volume, though in no way commensurate with the use of the same in the earlier works, where extremes led to ludicrous results. And might we not take the examples found in this work as sincere examples of Luther's own principle, laid down when he expounded on the Hagar and Ishmael allegory, used by Paul in Chapter 4: "Allegories do not strongly persuade in divinity, but, as certain

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1) Ibid., p. 214.
2) Meissinger, op. cit., p. 49.

pictures, they beautify and set out the matter.
For it is a seemly thing sometimes to add an allegory,
when the foundation is well laid, and the matter thorough-
ly proved; for as painting is an ornament to set forth
and garnish a house already builded, so is an allegory
the light of a matter which is already otherwise proved
and confirmed¹⁾ (1).

b. Relation to Historical Interpretation.

Before proceeding to an examination of Luther's
sense of historical interpretation as shown in the
1535 Commentary on Galatians, let us consider the topic
in a broader context.

Luther made noble contributions -- even though
they may to us appear limited -- to the science of
Biblical Introduction, by placing emphasis upon histori-
cal interpretation, this both in regard to single books
of the Bible, and in his treatment of individual passages.
His critical faculty is evinced by the very fact that he
wrote separate introductions for nearly all the books
of the Bible, in additions to treatises covering the
Old Testament and the New Testament as collections
of books (2). By so doing he recognized the native
worth and unique character of each separate book,

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 292.

2) The finest English translations of these Prefaces is
given in the Holman Edition of Luther's Works, volume VI,
p. 365-491.

3) ~~Ut supra, p.~~

and sought to acquaint the readers with its own peculiar message.

That he sensed the particular meaning of the New Testament in relation to the Old Testament has already been pointed out (1). Luther considered the New Testament the historical sequel of the Old, "an open preaching and proclamation of Christ, appointed by the sayings of the Old Testament and fulfilled by Christ (2). For the New Testament the Old Testament furnished "the ground and proof" and for that reason was surely not to be despised (3).

At times, in these introductions to books of the Bible, he gives a summary of the contents, as in the case of Job (4) and others (and in the instance of Job also making comparisons in regard to language and style) (5); at times he pours out glorious paragraphs in praise of the writings, as shown particularly in the Preface to the Psalter (6), and it is not difficult to recognize that Luther in the soulful utterances of the Psalter had found a companion in his own spiritual struggles, as indeed he intimates (7).

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- 1) Ut supra, p. 98.
- 2) Holman VI, p. 367.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) Ibid., p. 383.
- 5) Ibid., p. 384.
- 6) Ibid., p. 384-388.
- 7) Ibid., p. 387-388.

But there is also direct evidence of his leaning toward a sound historical interpretation. He studies the books in the light of the purpose of the writer (1), and certainly this is a fundamental tenet in historical interpretation. He is by no means blind to the problems of authorship: Isaiah may have arranged his prophecies "according as time, occasion, and persons suggested" (2), or the finished product may be the result of redactors (3), - Luther confesses he is not ready to give the final word; he finds internal evidence in the Book of Hebrews which satisfied him that Paul could not have been the author, for "it says, in chapter II, that his doctrine has come to us and remains among us through those who themselves have heard it from the Lord. Thus it is clear that he speaks of the apostles as a disciple to whom this doctrine has come from the apostles, perhaps long after them. For St. Paul, in Galatians I, testifies mightily that he has his Gospel from no man, neither through men, but from God himself (4). The author is judged by the nature of the product. With Hebrews, Luther believes that it is "an epistle of many pieces put together, and it does not deal with any one subject

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- 1) e.g., Preface to the Proverbs of Solomon, *ibid.*, p. 393.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 407.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 406.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 476.

in an orderly way" (1), but who the author may be is not known, "and will not be known for awhile (sic!); it makes no difference"(2).

Rightly to understand a book, and this comes to the fore particularly in relation to prophetic writings, though by no means absent in the rest, one must study the writer in relation to the broader context of his times. The condition of the land at the time of Jeremiah, the vices and the idolatry, must be known if one is to appreciate the message (3), and a "cross-reference" study must be undertaken in the closing section of Kings and Chronicles," to take in the whole contents of them, especially the stories, speeches and events that occurred under the kings named in the title" (of the opening verse of Isaiah), if the Prophecy of Isaiah is to be grasped (4). How like a modern Bible assignment is ~~not~~ the following paragraph:

"For if one would understand the prediction, it is necessary that one know how things were in the land, how matters lay, what was in the mind of the people, and what kind of intentions they had for or against their neighbors, friends and enemies; and especially what attitude they took, in their land, to God and the prophet, toward His Word and His service" (5).

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- 1) Ibid., 477.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Ibid., p. 408.
- 4) Ibid., p. 404.
- 5) Ibid.

In addition, careful attention must be given to lexical questions; in Romans one must have knowledge of what Paul means with the terms "Law, sin, grace, faith, righteousness, flesh, spirit, etc.," otherwise "no reading of it has any value"(1), and there is much to be gained in making comparisons of a term found in one letter with the same term employed in another by the same author (2).

It is also interesting to note that Luther, in the great majority of the Prefaces, senses that there are logical divisions in the various writings, and boldly sets out to establish the lines of an analysis. And his outlines given in the Prefaces could do service even today. Indeed, he has grasped the main steps in the progression of Paul's thought as expressed in the Epistle to the Galatians in a way almost identical with many modern commentators (3).

In the treatment of individual passages in his Commentary on Galatians Luther also shows that he has a real interest in historical interpretation. In the very opening pages he makes it plain that he senses the historical situation out of which the Epistle grew. Paul had planted among the Galatians the pure doctrine

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1) Ibid., p. 447.

2) Ibid., p. 453.

3) Cp. Luther's Preface to Galatians, *ibid.*, p. 466-467, with analysis given by Burton, "The Epistle to the Galatians", p. lxxii - lxxiv, and by Lightfoot, "Galatians", p. 65-67.

of the Gospel, and the righteousness of faith; "but by and by, after his departure, there crept in certain false teachers, which overthrew all that he had planted and truly taught among them" (1). And in this connection what insight Luther shows in describing the subtle wiles of the false prophets who contested Paul's calling and apostleship and sought to bring to nought his labors:

"These false apostles being of the circumcision and sect of the Pharisees, were men of great estimation and authority, who bragged among the people that they were of that holy and chosen stock of the Jews, (John viii; Romans iv, 4, 5, 6) that they were Israelites, of the seed of Abraham, that they had the promises and the fathers; and finally, that they were the ministers of Christ, and the apostles' scholars, with whom they had been conversant, and had seen their miracles, and perhaps had wrought some signs or miracles themselves; for Christ witnesseth (Matthew vii, 22) that the wicked also do work miracles. Moreover, these false apostles, by all the crafty means they could devise, defaced the authority of Saint Paul, saying: 'Why do ye so highly esteem of Paul? Why have ye him in so great reverence? Forsooth, he was but the last of all that were converted unto Christ. But we are the disciples of the apostles, and were familiarly conversant with them. We have seen Christ working miracles, and heard him preach. Paul came after us, and is inferior unto us: and it is not possible that God should suffer us to err who are of his holy people, the ministers of Christ, and have received the Holy Ghost. Again, we are many, and Paul is but one, and alone, who neither is conversant with the apostles, nor hath seen Christ. Yea, he persecuted the church of Christ a great while. Would God (think ye) for Paul's sake only, suffer so many churches to be deceived?' " (2).

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- 1) Gal. comm., p. 9.
- 2) Ibid., p. 10-11.

There is distinct evidence that Luther had searched the pages of Acts in order to locate historical material that would have bearing on the Epistle to the Galatians. He finds a commentary on Gal. 1.17 ("immediatly I communicated not with flesh and blood") in the biographical notes on Paul given in the ninth chapter of Acts (1), and in the same chapter also finds references in explanation of the relation of Barnabas to Paul (2). He correlates the data given in the first chapter of the Epistle to Titus with the reference to that disciple in Gal. 2.1 (3). In considering Paul as the apostle who was given the special charge of giving the Gospel to the Gentiles Luther refers the reader to the evidence in Acts 13.2 and 28.28 (4), in addition to the commission of Christ in Matthew 28.20 and Mark 16.15 (5). The appeal of Paul to the faith of Abraham in Gal. 3. 6-8, finds Luther not only examining the pages of Genesis to find the historical background (6), but also finds him going to Romans to analyze Paul's similar use of this material in that letter (7), and to the Gospel of

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- 1) Ibid., p. 66.
- 2) Ibid., p. 67.
- 3) Ibid., p. 71.
- 4) Ibid., p. 88-89.
- 5) Ibid., p. 88.
- 6) Ibid., p. 193, 203, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212.
- 7) Ibid., p. 194, 196, 202, 207.

John to note Christ's answer to those who boasted vainly of their sonship with Abraham (1). Paul's use of allegory in Gal. 4. 24-31 spurs Luther to give close study to the sections in Genesis which furnish the materials (2). From this analysis it is clear that just as Luther endeavored to see each book of the Bible in its historical setting, likewise he essayed to understand the contents of a book, such as Galatians, in the light of the intentions of the writer and the situation which called forth the work, and by giving consideration to the historical frame in which individual incidents mentioned in the book were set. This constitutes more than a feeble beginning in the direction of historical interpretation.

3. Ladd lists finally "an increase of confidence in the unity of the meaning of Scripture to furnish, so far as necessary ethical and religious truths are concerned, its own interpretations" as one of the benefits in the field of exegesis resulting from the work of the Reformation.

Turning to Luther's Commentary on Galatians we are at once impressed with the fact that the author must veritably have been steeped in Scripture, both the writings of the Old and the New Testament. Observing

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1) Ibid., p. 204.
2) Ibid., p. 390-395.

proper laws it is perfectly correct to interpret Scripture by means of Scripture. But in order so to do, passages and verses can not be hewn out of their correct context, just in order to furnish a corner stone for theological argument. Nor can we be bound or blinded by slavish literal meaning; the true spiritual sense of the author must be sought. By a mechanical use of this principle - which will at once be forced and dishonest - anything at all could be proved or disproved.

What does an examination of Luther's use of Scripture in this Commentary reveal?

There are certain instances where Luther has plainly "read in" to the text or to Scripture verses used in the exposition something which essentially does not belong there. In commenting on the nature of the Gospel he likens it to a "queen and spouse", and warns that it be not defiled with the law, but kept without spot for her only husband Christ (1). To support his figure he quotes II Cor. xi.2: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Luther's use of the verse becomes artificial when we note that Paul used the figure, speaking of the congregation to whom he was writing, and its relation to Christ. Again, he uses the simple statement

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1) Ibid., p. 103.

of Paul in Philippians II. 8, speaking of the outer appearance of Christ, to illustrate the fact that there is no real difference between the outer appearance of Christian and infidel. A reminder of the illicit treatment given by Luther to the Psalms in his early lectures crops out in the exposition of 3.13. He is speaking of the fact that Christ took the sins of man upon Him, that He was made to be sin on our behalf, that He identified Himself with sin in order to establish forgiveness for us. And Luther finds a figure of this in Psalm 40. 12: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." "In this psalm," he says, "and certain others, the Holy Ghost speaketh in the person of Christ, and in plain words witnesseth that he had sins. For this testimony is not the voice of an innocent, but of a suffering Christ, which took upon him to bear the person of all sinners, and was made guilty of the sins of the whole world" (1). It is plain that Luther here makes a Good Friday scene out of a penitential outcry coming from the Psalmist David.

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1) Ibid., p. 244.

Though there are such examples of trespassing as given above, yet, in the main, it is a joy to see how sensibly Luther summons the witness of Scripture to serve as proof for contentions and pronouncements he has made.

In pointing out Paul's position when he made known that he was not trying to please men, but to be a servant of Christ (Gal. 1.10), and the disfavour into which he had been plunged by his stern preaching, Luther calls the words of Jesus, which tell of His experiences in a similar situation, to give their testimony: (John 7.7) "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil;" as well as (John 3.19) "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (1). And again the testimony in Matthew 6, referring to the hypocrites who do all things to have the glory of men, and in John 5.44: "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (2).

A whole array of Bible quotations are cited when Luther begins his exposition of Gal. 2.6: "God accepteth not man's person"(3). There is the ancient law from the

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- 1) Ibid., p. 52.
- 2) Ibid., p. 53.
- 3) Ibid., p. 82.

pen of the author of Leviticus (Leviticus 19.15):
"Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor," as well as the reminder of the stern justice of God as revealed in the course of the historical document (II Chronicles 19.7): "There is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes." Three similar statements are culled from the writings of the great Apostle: (Romans 2.11) "There is no respect of persons with God" (context - the greater advantage of the Jews was of no avail); (Ephesians 6.9) "Knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him" (context - relations of servants and masters; but both alike before God); (Colossians 3.25) "For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (context - domestic relations, and an exhortation to hearty service as unto the Lord, and not unto men); and, in addition, the weight which is lent from the identical topic as voiced in a sermon by Peter (Acts 10.34): "And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (context - the world

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mission of the Gospel, given to all nations, all of which are alike before God).

In one of his great "faith passages" (Gal. 3.7) (1) Luther speaks of the faith of the fathers as being grounded on Christ which was to come, just as our faith is grounded on Christ which is now come, and summons proof from the words of Peter (Acts 15.11): "We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they;" of Paul (I Corinthians 10.4): "Our fathers . . . drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ;" and of Christ (John 8.56): "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."

In speaking of the Christ who gives comfort to those who have hearts that are heavy-laden, Luther points to the genuine pearls of Scripture: the gracious invitation to the heavy-laden (Matthew 11.28), to the thirsty (John 7.37), and to the broken-hearted (Psalm 117.3) (2).

It is interesting to note that Luther, in commenting on Gal. 4.29: "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also it is now" finds that his own relation to Rome is a parallel to the situation reflected in the allegory

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1) Ibid., 205-206.
2) Ibid., p. 293.

of Gal. 4. 24-31, and that which obtained in the case of Paul himself. And from the verdict of Scripture Luther learns that the one who would "preach Christ truly, and confess him to be our righteousness, must be content to hear that he is a pernicious fellow" (1). Such was the case, as told in the seventeenth chapter of Acts, when Paul and Silas were accused by the Jews of having done contrary to the decrees of Caesar, as also he was called a pestilent fellow and an author of sedition, in the twenty-fourth of Acts, and a troubler of the city in the sixteenth chapter of the same document. But Luther sees the same clouds of opposition gathered about Christ, for He has indeed come to send fire upon the earth (Luke 12.49) (2).

Studying passages like to the above one is forced to admit that if Luther did not have a Bible Concordance, his phenomenal memory and his intimate knowledge of scripture served mightily in its stead.

4. A Study of Selected Passages.

A final test of Luther as an exegete is his treatment of individual words and passages. In this section we shall observe Luther's attention to language which reveals Paul's relationship to the Galatians, his atten-

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1) Ibid., p. 407
2) Ibid., p. 408.

tion to individual words and phrases.

a. Attention to language which reveals Paul's relationship to the Galatians.

Luther seems particularly quick to understand Paul's state of mind and attitude as revealed in the choice of words by the great Apostle. Of the false apostles Paul writes " ἀνάθεμα ἐστίν " (1)

at the very beginning of the epistle and later issues the threat " ὁ δὲ ταρταρῶσιν ὑμᾶς

βαρταρῶσιν τὸ κρίμα, ὅστις ἐστὶν ἡ " (2).

These statements, aimed at the Judaizers, shows that Paul is "very hot and full of indignation against those false apostles and seducers," and they really constitute "plain thunderings and lightnings against them" (3), and "dreadful thunderclaps against the righteousness of the flesh or the law" (4). Such falsity calls for a rebuke in the sharpest of language. But with the Galatians the case is different; they have been foolish and bewitched, and at this Paul marvels

(θαυμάζω) (5).

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- 1) Gal. 1. 8-9.
- 2) Gal. 5. 10.
- 3) Gal. Comm., p. 37.
- 4) Ibid., p. 38.
- 5) Gal. 1. 6.

Luther sees in this language of Paul the key to understanding his mind, for:

"He (Paul) doth not at first set upon them with vehement and rigorous words, but after a very fatherly sort, not only patiently bearing their fall, but also in a manner excusing the same. Furthermore, he showeth towards them a motherly affection, and speaketh them very fair, and yet in such sort, that he reproveth them notwithstanding: howbeit with very fit words, and wisely framed to the purpose" (1).

And again:

"He might have handled the Galatians more uncourteously, and have inveighed against them more roughly But forasmuch as his purpose is to raise up them that were fallen, and with a fatherly care to call them back again from their error to the purity of the gospel, he leaveth those rough and sharp words, especially in the first entrance, and most gently and mildly he speaketh unto them. . . . Therefore, of all the sweetest and mildest words, he could not have chosen any one more fit than this, 'I marvel:' whereby he signifieth both that it grieved him, and also displeased him, that they had fallen away from him (2).

Paul's language and style in the question " Ἄρατε

ἴσατε ἄνθρωπος πείθω ἢ τὸν δεόν; ἢ

ἴσατε ἄνθρωπος ἀρεσκέν; "(3)

reveals to Luther that Paul speaks with "vehemency of spirit (4). And Luther reads between the lines:

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- 1) Gal. Comm., p. 37.
- 2) Ibid., p. 38.
- 3) Gal. 1. 10.
- 4) Gal. Comm., p. 51.

The sudden addition by Paul of the words " $\epsilon\lambda\kappa\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ " (1) to the censure involved in the question " $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\ \epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\kappa\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$;" shows Luther a sudden transition also in Paul's mood. It is added, Luther deems, "as a correction: whereby he mitigateth the reprehension that goeth before, which was somewhat sharp" (2). Paul has a real purpose with this change for he does not want to "terrify the Galatians too much. Although he chideth them, yet notwithstanding he always doth it in such sort, that he poureth in sweet oil withal, lest he should drive them to desperation." Paul's language reveals that he "must needs speak somewhat roughly" to the Galatians, and must even be "sharp in the chiding," but "sickly and scabbed children may not be cast away, but must be tendered and cherished more diligently than they which are in health," and accordingly Paul "handleth the Galatians very gently, that by his mildness he might heal them" (3).

The language of Paul in the early portions of the epistle may reveal that he is considerably wrought-up over the actions of the Galatians; but any element of sharpness is removed when Paul in the opening words of the fourth chapter begins to speak of sonship with God. By so doing "he lieth in wait, with a certain holy subtlety, to take the Galatians unawares; for the

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1) Gal. 3.4.

2) Gal. Comm., p. 189.

3) Ibid., p. 190. Cf. also treatment of Gal. 1.6, *ibid.*, p. 40.

ignorant people are sooner persuaded with similitudes and examples, than with deep and subtle disputations" (1). The Apostle's language and choice of material in this section shows "with what vehement affection Paul goeth about to call back the Galatians." This spirit of Paul is further evidenced in his language in Gal. 4.12 (2).

Luther has also understood to mark well the language Paul uses in describing the law:
" ἔπι τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κοσμοῦ " (3)
and " ἐπὶ τὰ ἑδερῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα " (4).
No other apostle, Luther finds, spoke in such a way concerning the law. "Only Paul, among all apostles, calleth the law 'the rudiments of the world' and 'weak and beggarly rudiments'." And Luther adds that if anyone would be a right scholar in Christ's school, "let him mark diligently this manner of speech used in the Apostle" (5). Luther himself would not have dared to have given "such terms unto the law, but should have thought it great blasphemy against God, if Paul had not done so before." By the words "weak and beggarly rudiments" the Reformer interprets the Apostle as meaning to say that the law is "utterly

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- 1) Ibid., p. 321.
- 2) Ibid., p. 373.
- 3) Gal. 4.3.
- 4) Gal. 4.9.
- 5) Gal. Comm., p. 328.

unprofitable to righteousness" (1).

The aim of the exegete is to search out the original meaning in the mind of the author. To a considerable extent an author, especially of the type of Saint Paul, will reveal his mind through the medium of the language he uses in addressing his audience. Rightly to evaluate and grasp that language is a decided aid in comprehending the essential message. Luther shows, as presented above, great diligence and effort toward a true understanding of that language, and in so doing manifestly comes closer to the original meaning of the author.

b. Attention to figures of speech.

Luther gives some attention to figures of speech, though the instances are exceedingly rare, and altogether too rare to name him a rhetorician.

In the exposition of Gal. 2. 7-8 Luther states that Paul, finding that the Judaizers alleged against him the authority of the great apostles, contrariwise alleged the same against them. This "returning their argument against themselves" is "a figure which is called an inversion" (2).

In the same verses when Paul calls uncircumcision "the Gentiles", and circumcision "the Jews", he employs a figure named synecdoche, which, under a part, compre-

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1) Ibid., p. 366.
2) Ibid., p. 87.

hendeth the whole; which figure is commonly used in the Scripture; the gospel then over uncircumcision, is that which was appointed to be sent unto the Gentiles"(1).

And again, Luther considers that Paul uses a figure of speech in Gal. 4. 4-5, when he speaks of Christ being born "under the law" that he might redeem them that were "under the law", by personalizing "the law" and setting forth the law "as a certain mighty person, which had condemned and killed Christ" (2). This figure is called prosopopoeia (3), and is also used by Paul in Romans 8.3, I Corinthians 15.57, and Colossians 2.15 (4). The final victory in this battle, however, Luther assures us, belongs to Christ who has conquered death (Ephesians 2) and led captivity captive (Psalm 118).

Figures of speech are used by a writer to contribute vividness and clarity to the conveyance of his thought. Discovery of the figure, and proper attention to it, assists materially in bridging the natural gulf between writer and reader. Luther's attention to Paul's figures of speech, brought him that much closer to the mind of the great Apostle.

c. His Attention to Individual Words.

1. Gal. 1.1 - "οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδέ δι' ἀνθρώπου"

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1) Ibid., p. 89.

2) Ibid., p. 332.

3) A personification or dramatizing, making or inventing a person - Century dictionary, p. 4788.

4) Gal. Comm. p. 332.

(not from men, neither through man). In his treatment of these words Luther makes a sincere attempt to grasp the meaning in the apostle's mind, even though he drags in extraneous material, bearing on a local situation, and even though he uses the phrases as a medium for expounding on the method God uses in calling men to the ministry.

Let us place Luther's explanation side by side with that of a great modern commentator. The following words are by Burton:

" The first phrase denies that Paul's apostleship had a human source, the second that it had come to him through a human channel, by human agency. Paul claims not only to be an apostle, but to have an apostleship which is in no sense indirect, dependent, or secondary " (1).

The following is Luther's explanation:

" Therefore, when Paul saith, 'not of men, neither by man,' he beateth down the false prophets; as though he would say, although those vipers brag never so much, what can they brag more than that they are either come from men, that is to say, of themselves without any calling, or by man, that is to say, sent of others? As for me, I am called and sent neither of men, nor by man, but without means, that is to wit, by Jesus Christ Himself, and my calling is like in all points the calling of the apostles, and I am indeed an apostle" (2).

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- 1) Burton, op. cit., p. 3.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 13.

Luther may not make as pointed a technical distinction as Burton between Paul's use of the genitive of source, with $\alpha\pi\acute{o}$, and the genitive of means or agency, with $\sigma\epsilon\acute{\iota}$, and yet in substance, the same interpretation is there: "neither of men, nor by man (appreciates the difference in number), but without means, by Jesus Christ Himself." Paul's purpose was to prove the authority of his calling and apostleship, and asserts the directness of his revelation from Christ. Luther's wording: "I am indeed an apostle" is a genuine echo of Paul's original proclamation.

2. Gal. 1. 8-9 - " $\alpha\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$ $\epsilon\sigma\tau\omega$ " (let him be anathema). We are impressed to note that Luther chooses the stronger of the two meanings which can be given to the word $\alpha\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$. Burton says of this word that it can denote "a thing devoted to be destroyed" or a thing "under the curse of God" (1). The first meaning is that which is found in the LXX. Luther believes that the Greek $\alpha\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$ is identical with Hebrew אָנָּתָהּ , and accordingly that it "signifieth a thing accursed, execrable, and detestable, which hath nothing to do, no participation, or communion with God" (2), and calls the words in Leviticus 27. 28-29 and Joshua 6. 26 to illustrate his meaning, in addition to citing the example afforded by the history of the

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- 1) Burton, p. 28.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 49.

city Amaleck. Luther paraphrases Paul's words in the following way:

"I had rather that myself, and other my brethren, yea, and an angel from heaven, should be accursed, than that we or others should preach any other gospel than that we have preached already" (1).

Luther shows us that to determine the exact meaning of this word he has conducted a comparative lexical study. He notes its use in the Septuagint, and the word in Hebrew for which it is a rendering. In addition he gives close study to the historical predicate, making the historical happening itself serve as the lexicon which will give the real meaning of the word used to convey the idea.

3. Gal. 1. 12 - " *Ἐκ ἀποκρυφείων Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* " (through revelation of Jesus Christ). Luther summons data from the ninth chapter of Acts in order to lend weight to Paul's claim that his gospel was given him through revelation. The chronological note in the relation to Ananias is stressed, in order that the greater emphasis might be placed on the "revelation". For Paul, says Luther, was not bid by God to go into the city that he might learn the gospel of Ananias:

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1) Ibid.

"but Ananias was bid to go and baptize him, to lay his hands upon him, to commit the ministry of the word unto him, and to commend him unto the church, and not to teach him the gospel, which he had received afore, as he glorieth in the same place, by the only revelation of Jesus Christ. And this Ananias himself confesseth, saying, 'Brother Saul, the Lord which appeared to thee in the way, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight.' Therefore he received not his doctrine of Ananias, but being already called, lightened and taught of Christ in the way, he was sent to Ananias, that he might also have the testimony of men, that he was called of God to preach the gospel of Christ" (1).

4. *σαρκί* (flesh). There is decided value to study Luther's interpretation of this word which occurs so often in Paul's writings, and no less than sixteen times in this Epistle alone. Luther gives attention to the individual instances with considerable show of critical faculty. The use of the word in Gal. 1.16 is dismissed as merely referring to "any man" (2), but in commenting on Gal. 2.16 he makes a more extended excursion into the meaning of the word. He claims that Paul by using the word *σαρκί* does not signify "manifest and gross sins" (as the schoolmen dream) for Luther finds that Paul was wont to call such sins "by their proper names". Christ's sentence, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (3)

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- 1) Ibid.
- 2) Ibid., p. 66.
- 3) John 3.6.

helps to clarify the meaning in Luther's mind, whereupon he offers the following definition:

"Flesh, therefore, according to Paul, signifieth all the righteousness, wisdom, devotion, religion, understanding, and will, that is possible to be in a natural man; so that if a man be never so righteous, according to reason and the law of God, yet with all his righteousness, works, merits, devotion, and religion, he is not justified. Flesh signifieth the whole nature of man, with reason and all other powers whatsoever do belong to man" (1).

The use of ^{"flesh"} Gal. 2.20 has reference merely to physical life, that physical life which is the vessel and bearer of the life "by faith" (2), but in expounding Gal. 3.3 Luther returns to his definition as given in Gal. 2.16 (3), to say:

"Paul setteth here the spirit against the flesh. He calleth not the flesh fleshly lust, beastly passions, or sensual appetites: for he entreateth not here of lust and such other fleshly desires; but of forgiveness of sins, of justifying the conscience, of obtaining righteousness before God, of deliverance from the law, sin and death. Flesh therefore is here taken away from the very righteousness and wisdom of the flesh, and the judgment of reason, which seeketh to be justified by the law. Whatsoever then is most excellent in man, the same here Paul calleth flesh, as the wisdom of reason, and the righteousness of the law itself" (4).

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- 1) Gal. Comm., p. 119.
- 2) Ibid., p. 148.
- 3) Ibid., l. 119.
- 4) Ibid., 187-188.

Luther adds his opinion to those given by the long list of commentators who have wrestled with what Paul meant with the words "an infirmity of the flesh" (1). Summoning the reader to examine Paul's autobiographical statements in II Corinthians 11 and 12, as well as his mention of infirmity in I Corinthians 4.12, II Corinthians 4.9, 11, 12 and other places, Luther concludes from his own study of those passages that Paul with "the infirmity of the flesh" meant "no disease of the body, or temptation of lust, but his suffering and affliction, which he sustained in his body. These afflictions, which he suffered in his body, he calleth the infirmity of the flesh, and not any corporeal disease. As though he would say, When I preached the gospel amongst you, I was oppressed with sundry temptations and afflictions; I was always in danger, both of the Jews, of the Gentiles, and also of false brethren. I suffered hunger and wanted all things. I was the very filth and offscouring of the world" (2). But added to these outward temptations, Paul also referred to "inward and spiritual temptations, as Christ has in the garden." Paul's "great heaviness, anguish, and terror" constituted such a spiritual trial, as

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1) Gal. 4.13
2) Gal. Comm., p. 376.

he also intimates with the words in II Corinthians 7.5, "Fightings without, and terrors within". In the earlier Commentary on Galatians the view was different. In that work "infirmity" referred merely to "persecution", but as we have just seen, the interpretation in the 1535 Commentary is dual in nature; and lastly in the Table-Talk Luther drops persecution and speaks of "spiritual trials only" (1).

In noticing Paul's use of *σὰρξ* in Gal. 5.16 and 19 we are led to wonder if Luther in his explanation will hold to the view as expressed in Gal. 2.16 and 3.3. His position does involve a change. Yet he insists that though concupiscence "comprehendeth carnal lust," yet it is by no means limited to "that only" (2). With this we see that Luther never used the concept "flesh" to describe only immorality (3). The term

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- 1) Cf. Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 189, footnote #1, also p. 188.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 469.
- 3) In Luther's writings the term "concupiscentia" often occurs. Of greatest importance, if one wants to have a correct understanding of Luther on this point, is to bear in mind the point just made, as deduced from his own pronouncements. From a very insecure premise, and with a juggling of the materials, Denifle has produced his account of Luther which places the Reformer in an unfavorable light. It is impossible in this place to enter more fully into the meaning of sin as held by Luther, but it is interesting to note that Luther's treatment of "flesh" in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians lends a great deal of clarity on the subject. Ljunggren, in his splendid study "Synd och Skuld i Luthers Teologi" devotes an entire chapter to this topic "Kött och ande" (flesh and spirit) p. 54 f. Ljunggren asserts that in Luther's conception

has a far wider meaning; for "it comprehendeth all other corrupt affections, wherewith the very faithful are infected, some more, some less: as pride, hatred, covetousness, impatiency, and such-like" (1). The term really means "the whole dominion of sin" (2).

We maintain that Luther's treatment of the *σάρξ* passages is of value to us in the following directions: it proves that Luther was awake to make comparisons of the contexts in which the same word is found; there is evidence of change and progression over views previously held; it reveals that Luther distinguished carefully the senses in which the same word is employed by the same author, which shows no blind and unquestioning acceptance, but a display of critical ability; and also, by his interpretations, we get a better understanding of the interpreter himself.

5. Gal. 3.1 - *πρὸς πρόδη* (openly set forth).

Luther's treatment of this word is particularly appreciated when one studies it in the light of the added flavor that is given to its meaning by the

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of "flesh and spirit" there is a most definite parting of the way with the conceptions that were held during the middle ages. Luther's view on this topic is even presaged as early as in some of the 95 Theses.

1) Gal. Comm., p. 469.

2) Ibid.

evidence of the papyri. The emphasized meaning of the word comes to the fore in Luther's exposition, even though it can not compare with the clearer interpretation suggested in the papyri (1), "to have set up a proclamation," in the sense of having proclaimed something just as clearly as if it had been posted on a bulletin board.

Luther follows exegetes before his time in giving "to paint" as the fundamental meaning of *ὑπογράφω*, the worth of which view has been minimized by Burton (2) and Lightfoot (3). Yet no real violence is done to the meaning of the word by following that interpretation. Unquestionably Paul uses the word *προσῆγγίζω* to show with what zeal and fervency he had preached Christ, and with what bold notes he had proclaimed the life in Him.

It is interesting in this connection to make comparisons of Luther's interpretation, with that of Calvin, the great exegete who followed him, and with that of Bishop Lightfoot, one of the leading minds in the field of exegetical theology during the last century.

Luther: ". . . . Which arguments he had before more vehemently prosecuted and more largely amplified

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- 1) Cf. Milligan, "Selections from the Greek Papyri," document 27, line 11.
- 2) Burton, op. cit., p. 144.
- 3) Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 134.

in their presence, even as if a painter had portrayed Christ Jesus before their eyes. Now being absent, he putteth them in mind of the same things, saying: 'to whom Jesus Christ was described in your sight.' As if he said: 'There is no painter that with his colours can so lively set out Christ unto you, as I have painted him out by my preaching; and yet notwithstanding ye still remain most miserably bewitched'"(1).

Calvin: "(after speaking of Augustine's view)" . . . Others propose a different phrase, (proscriptus), which, if used in the sense of 'openly proclaimed', would not be inapplicable. The Greeks, accordingly, borrow from this verb the word *προσκηρυχματα*, to denote the boards on which property intended to be sold was published, so as to be exposed to the view of all. But the participle, painted, is less ambiguous, and, in my opinion, is exceedingly appropriate. To show how energetic his preaching was, Paul first compares it to a picture, which exhibited to them, in a lively manner, the image of Christ" (2).

Lightfoot: "It is the common word to describe all public notices of a trial or condemnation, and this meaning is assigned to the word here by several

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 170.

2) Calvin, "Commentary on Galatians," p. 79-80.

ancient commentators. The context, however, seems to require rather the sense 'placarded,' 'publicly announced,' as a magisterial edict or proclamation. This placard ought to have kept their eyes from wandering, and so to have acted as a charm against all Judaic sorceries" (1). There is an essential agreement in the interpretations of Luther, Calvin and Lightfoot, interpretations which were not wrong, but rather incomplete. How Luther would have enjoyed to fill out his exposition with the added information gained through the papyri.

6. Gal. 3.13 - *Χριστός ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα*

(Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us).

One of the most lengthy expositions in the entire Commentary is that given by Luther on Gal. 3.13, and it is likewise one of the most illuminating and profitable. The doctrine set forth in this verse is indeed "the principle article of all Christian doctrine" (2), one which has been darkened by the popish schoolmen, and which would have been put to nought if the great Christological controversy in 325 A.D. had resulted

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1) Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 134.
2) Ibid., p. 247.

in the opposite way, for "here ye see how necessary a thing it is to believe and to confess the article of the divinity of Christ, which, when Arius denied, he must needs also deny the article of our redemption." Surely it "is not the work of any creature to overcome the sin of the world, death, the curse, and the wrath of God in himself." One who could accomplish that "must needs be truly and naturally God," for such works are "of the divine power only and alone" (1). Luther's discussion of this verse findshim setting forth his doctrine of the person of Christ (2), a beautiful statement of his Christ-mysticism (3) and a bold proclamation of assurance (4).

Luther hinges his statements not only on the word *κατάρα*, but also on the polarities expressed in *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* and in *ἐν ἑαυτῷ* (Col. 2.15). "All the weight of the matter standeth in this word 'for us' " (5), and again, "Christ is not the law, or the work of the law, but a divine and human person, which took upon him sin, the condemnation of the law and death, not for himself, but for us: therefore all all the weight and force hereof consisteth in this

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- 1) Ibid., p. 248.
- 2) Ibid., p. 243, 248, 251, 252.
- 3) Ibid., p. 249.
- 4) Ibid., p. 246, 247, 250.
- 5) Ibid., p. 242.

word, 'for us' " (1). Luther speaks of the $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\phi\omicron\alpha$ as the sum total of all evil. But Christ triumphed over all the powers involved in that curse; He Himself was that victory. Luther takes the $\epsilon\upsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ in Col. 2.15 to refer to Christ Himself; the Revised Version renders $\epsilon\upsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ as "in it" referring back to "the bond written in ordinances." No serious difficulty is involved in this, however, for the redemptive death of Christ is plainly meant in both instances.

What does Luther believe that Paul meant by saying that Christ became "a curse" for us? It narrows itself down to this, that Jesus actually identified Himself with human sin. He was not "made a curse for himself" (2) for he is "innocent concerning his own person." But He became a "transgressor," as Isaiah and other prophets foretold, and though "it is very absurd and slanderous to call the Son of God a cursed sinner," some say, yet if that is denied, then "deny also that he was crucified and dead" (3). Though Jesus is "the unspotted and undefiled Lamb of God," yet "because he beareth the sins of the world, his innocency is burdened with the sins and guilt of the whole world. Whatsoever sins I, thou, and we all have done, or shall

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- 1) Ibid., p. 251.
- 2) Ibid., p. 242.
- 3) Ibid., p. 243.

do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins, as verily as if he himself had done them" (1). But where is the victory even in this identifying by Christ of Himself with sin? "Because in the self-same person, which is the highest, the greatest, and the only sinner, there is also an everlasting and invincible righteousness; therefore these two do encounter together, the highest, the greatest, and the only sin, and the highest, the greatest, and the only righteousness" (2). But what comes of the combat? "Righteousness is everlasting, immortal and invincible. . . . So in Christ all sin is vanquished, killed, and buried, and righteousness remaineth a conqueror and reigneth forever" (3).

Burton names five ways in which this phrase may be understood: 1) That Christ became a curse in that he was the object of divine reprobation, personally an object of divine disapproval; 2) That He became the actual object of divine reprobation vicariously, enduring the penalty of others' sins; 3) That He experienced in himself God's wrath against sinners, not as himself the object of divine wrath, but vicariously and by reason of his relation to men; 4) That He was the object of human execration -- cursed by men;

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- 1) Ibid., p. 243-244
- 2) Ibid., p. 246/
- 3) Ibid.

5) That He fell under the curse of the law, not of God or of men (1).

In which category can Luther's view be placed? It is difficult to trim or prune Luther's view to fit any one of those named, but the writer deems that the Reformer's view more nearly proximates that expressed in 2, 3 and 5.

Luther's interpretation of this passage is of particular value because of the positive and triumphant note (2) which he strikes. He centers the mind on the victory over the curse, on the righteousness in Christ which remains a conqueror. Were Luther asked to give one verse of Scripture which would best lend itself as an exegesis of the verse in question, he doubtless-ly would choose II Corinthians 5.21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

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1) Burton, op. cit., p. 172.

2) This note comes particularly to the fore when Luther's exposition of this passage is compared with other interpretations, as given by Beza, Gregory Nazianzus, Quesnel, Fausset, Sanday, Wordsworth, et al., as given in Garvie, "Galatians" (The Study Bible Series), p. 49-51.

7. Gal. 6.11 - "Ἰδετε πηλίκως ὑμῶν
ῥαψάσω ἐγράψα τῷ ἐμοῦ χερσὶ

(See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand).

In his interpretation of this often-discussed verse it is of interest to see how closely Luther approaches the accepted opinion of the present day, only to fall short in the final moment. From a study of other epistles by Saint Paul Luther learns that the apostle was wont to employ an amanuensis to aid him in the actual writing, Paul giving his signature at the close. He writes: "For as for his other epistles, as he spake, others wrote them, and afterwards he subscribed his salutation and name with his own hand, as it is to be seen in the end of his epistles"(1).

Luther gives us no clue as to why he makes an exception in the interpretation of this type of a salutation in this particular epistle, unless his interpretation in this instance is changed for purely sentimental reasons. We remember Luther's characterization of this epistle as being his very own, to which he was betrothed. This his sentiment warps his observation of grammar so that he sees "πηλίκως ῥαψάσω"

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 523.

as meaning "What a letter!" rather than the correct "with what great letters," and his words "This he saith to move them, and to shew his motherly affection towards them" betrays his mind.

Luther then expresses his opinion that "in these words (as I suppose) he hath respect to the length of the epistle," which view has no foundation, because Paul invariably uses the term ἐπιστολή for epistle (seventeen times), and because such a meaning would demand an accusative rather than a dative, and finally, because this epistle is not notably long as compared with the apostle's other epistles (1).

The conception held by Luther has been accorded stubborn longevity, however, for it was not only followed by Calvin (2), Bengel (3), Olshausen (4) and others, but the rendering "how large a letter" still lives in the Authorized Version.

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- 1) Burton, op. cit., p. 348.
- 2) Calvin, op. cit., p. 181.
- 3) Bengel, "Gnomon," p. 739.
- 4) Olshausen, "Commentary on Galatians," p. 103-104. The view of Olshausen, however, is more tempered, as is not in its entirety the same as the view of Luther, Calvin, et. al.

The opinion of present day commentators that these words refer to the large handwriting of Paul -- for at this point of the epistle, they claim, he takes the pen himself from the amanuensis -- over which he himself makes merry, is presented particularly well by Deissmann (1).

8. Gal. 6.17 - τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
(the marks of Jesus).

There has been no end of speculation among scholars of the New Testament as to what the Apostle Paul meant by the term τὰ στίγματα . Elsner and Raphelius have made capital of the explanation of a custom spoken of by Herodotus (2.113) according to which safety was granted the fugitive who fled to a temple and there received upon his body the marks of the god (2). The opinion that Paul thought of himself as a slave of Jesus, His Master, and that the marks of his sufferings were similar to the marks on the body of a slave, has recommended itself to others (3). Deissmann (4) believes that "the curious sentence about 'the marks of

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1) Deissmann, "Light from the Ancient East," p. 166, footnote 7. See also his "Bible Studies," p. 348, and the article by Moulton and Milligan in "The Expositor," October, 1908, p. 383.

2) Burton, op. cit., p. 360.

3) Ibid., p. 361.

4) Deissmann, "Light from the Ancient East," P. 301, "Bible Studies," p. 346.

Jesus' is best understood if read in the light of a magical formula handed down in a Leyden Papyrus," (1), "in the sense of a charm, warding off attack. Deissmann's view is also held by Zahn (2) but not by Moulton and Milligan (3) in their Vocabulary (4) of the Greek New Testament.

Burton states his own conclusion in the following summary:

"The thought of himself as a slave of Jesus is a favorite one with the apostle, and the custom of branding or otherwise marking slaves was undoubtedly familiar to the Galatians. These facts make it most probable that it is the idea of himself as a slave of Jesus, marked as such by the scars of his sufferings, that underlies the language of the apostle"(5).

With these discussions in mind let us turn to Luther's Commentary to ascertain his view. These "badges of Christ my Lord" are indeed "not marks of mine own procuring, but are laid upon me against my will, by the world and the devil, for none other cause but for that I preach Jesus to be Christ" (6). Luther interprets the words as referring to something purely

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- 1) Papyrus J. 383 of the Leyden Museum. Cf. article by J. de Zwaan in "The Journal of Theological Studies," April, 1905, p. 418.
- 2) Zahn, "Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater," p. 285.
- 3) Burton claims that Moulton and Milligan follow Deissmann.
- 4) Moulton and Milligan, "Vocabulary," p. 590.
- 5) Burton, op. cit., p. 361.
- 6) Gal. Comm., p. 535.

physical: "The stripes and suffering, therefore, which he did bear in his body, he calleth marks" (1). The apostle's biographical notes in I Corinthians 4.9, 11-13, II Corinthians 4.4-6, and 9.23-26, support this belief, Luther considers.

It is really to be wondered, after constant reading of this and other writings of Paul, if the offerings of modern commentators really constitute any improvement over Luther in his explanation of Gal. 6.17:

"These be the true marks and imprinted signs, of which the apostle speaketh in this place; the which we also at this day, by the grace of God, bear in our bodies for Christ's cause. For the world persecuteth and killeth us, false brethren deadly hate us, Satan inwardly in our heart with his fiery darts terrifieth us, and for none other cause but for that we teach Christ to be our righteousness and life. These marks we choose not of any devotion, neither do we gladly suffer them; but because the world and the devil do lay them upon us for Christ's cause, we are compelled to suffer them, and we rejoice in spirit with Paul (which is always willing, glorieth, and rejoiceth,) that we bear them in our body; for they are a seal and most sure testimony of true doctrine and faith" (2). And again, "The marks that be in my body do shew well enough whose servant I am" (3).

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- 1) Ibid.,
- 2) Ibid., 536.
- 3) Ibid., 535.

D. CONCLUSION

It has been our purpose in this chapter to point out the effect of the Reformation upon exegesis, and Luther's relation to the changing scene. A study was made of Luther's Commentary on Galatians to determine its exegetical values, particularly in the light of three tendencies in the field of exegesis developing from the Reformation period, enumerated by Ladd. We found that in this Commentary Luther has renounced authorities and scholastic opinions and ~~has~~^{he} come to a position characterized with far greater independence than in any earlier period; we found that the Reformer has practically renounced the allegorical method of interpretation and has taken definite steps in the direction of historical interpretation; and we also found that the Reformer has so homed himself in the books of the Bible that he calls upon Scripture to interpret Scripture, and does so in very satisfactory manner. To be sure, we also found some ~~traces~~^{traces} of the medieval love for logic and dialectic, and detected some instances of rather naive allegory as well as cases of "reading in" material and meanings into the text, but these are all the exception rather than the rule.

We were pleased to notice that Luther gives explicit

attention to the language of St. Paul in an effort to understand more intimately Paul's relationship to the Galatians; he gives attention to figures of speech; and he gives evidence of having made a sincere attempt to grasp Paul's thought through his study of individual words and phrases. Luther was handicapped by limited equipment for exegetical work, but he understood how to conduct comparative lexical studies and how to search for the meaning of a word by going to historical sources. Placing his interpretations side by side with those of later commentators we were pleased to see that the comparison proved particularly favorable to Luther.

The conclusion reached is that there are positive exegetical values in this Commentary, even though exegesis, in the way we now understand the word, was not uppermost in the mind of the author at the time of the writing; and in addition to these values in the Commentary itself, we do not forget that this was one of several works which assisted in turning minds of that period back to the Bible itself, and in so doing, laid solid foundations for subsequent advances in the field of exegesis.

CHAPTER V
LUTHER'S THEOLOGY AS REVEALED
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1535 COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS.

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A. INTRODUCTION

In the two immediately preceding chapters of this thesis we have spoken of the background and qualifications of Luther as an exegete, and also made a more detailed excursion into the 1535 Commentary on Galatians to note the exegesis of Luther as given in that volume. In the present chapter it is our purpose to examine and catalogue the leading theological teachings of Luther as he expounds them in this Commentary. We bear in mind that through the 1535 Commentary on Galatians we have an opportunity of studying Luther as he appears in his maturity. To get the real worth out of this work one must read with discretion, paying less attention to Luther's recitation of the wrongs of Rome and concentrating more on the pearls of theological thought that are found, at times almost hidden, in his mass of material. It is not the purpose of this chapter to erect a system of dogmatics with the pages of this Commentary as the corpus, but rather to make mention of the leading tenets held by Luther, particularly as viewed

in relation to his growth and development.

We will deal, principally, with the following themes:

1. Justification by faith alone, certainly the one doctrine which we more than any other associate with Luther. What does this Commentary reveal concerning this fundamental teaching of the Christian Church?

2. Christian liberty and assurance. Has the monk who pined away in his convent cell, crying in anguish over his sin, the trembling soul who sought the pastoral advice of Father Staupitz, the God-sensitive individual who demanded to know whether or not he was in the favor of God, come to any clarity concerning his spiritual standing? Has he arrived at any degree of assurance, to know the peace of God which passeth understanding?

3. Clearer than elsewhere in his writings does Luther in this Commentary distinguish between the realm of the law and the realm of the Gospel, faith and good works. What is the real mission of the law and that of the Gospel? What do these pages reveal relative thereto? Is man merely to be content with knowing that he is justified by faith, or are there any definite ethical implications? Our fourth section will give a review of these questions.

4. Inasmuch as Luther's problem was primarily the soteriological one, let us note finally his philosophy concerning man. Does he insist on calling man a "worm"

or has he come to regard human personality as the temple of God? Is there anything in Luther which can be called a sound Christian humanism?

The Reformation was essentially a movement from a mechanical to an individual and subjective conception of religion, the doing away with externals and the seeking of an immediate relation to God. Luther was fitted to be "the prophet of his age because "he had the most searching experience in which that age imperiously demanded, personal religion" (1). His great problem, as just mentioned, was soteriological in nature, and for that reason we have selected the four topics given above, in the light of which to conduct our study of the 1535 Commentary on Galatians, which represents the mature Luther.

Many years earlier in his life had occurred that experience when light flashed through the darkness and when he saw that the phrase justitia dei (righteousness of God) in Romans 1.17, was not the justitia qua deus justus est et peccatores injustosque punit, but that qua non deus misericors justificat per fidem (2). That the soteriological problem was the one uppermost in the life of Luther is borne out by the question which in

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1) Smith, "Luther's Doctrine of Justification," p. 425.

2) Erl. ed. (Lat. 32, 22: Tischreden 58, 413). "The righteousness by which God is just and punishes unrighteous sinners, but that by which a merciful God justifies us through faith."

his earlier years had troubled him mightily, and which he in 1535 formulated, in the colloquial German of his time: "O wenn willst du einmal fromm werden und genug thun, das du einen gnädigen Gott kriegest?" (O when will you become pious, and do enough that you may get a gracious God?) But he was led finally to discover that man cannot make himself righteous and, therefore, God gracious; but that God is gracious and, therefore, makes man righteous. When Luther came to this conception, then he had an evangel, and "ceasing to be at heart a Catholic priest, he became an evangelical prophet"(1). With this background in mind we can more clearly understand the real nature of Protestantism, for it "originated not in a reform of doctrine, or of morals, but in a quest for salvation. It was the result of a new experience of righteousness before God, a new answer to the question, 'How can a man become just before God?'" (2), the answer to which became the corner stone of Luther's life and doctrine (3).

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- 1) Richards, "Ways of Salvation," p. 181.
- 2) Ibid., p. 176.
- 3) Smith, op. cit., p. 424.

B. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

1. The "rediscovery" of this doctrine.

No doctrine is more closely associated with the German Reformer than the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which teaching Luther characterized as being the summary of all Christian faith. The "rediscovery" of this doctrine is a fruit of the Reformation period. Of the "majesty" of this doctrine Luther often spoke (1); and it ever remained true concerning Luther: "Hoc dogma meum: Sola fides iustificat" (2). We find in fact, that this article of faith appears as the "articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae" (3), even though that exact wording is not found in Luther's writings.

2. The time of this experience for Luther.

When did the doctrine of justification by faith alone dawn and develop in the personality of Luther? Scholars have attempted to localize this "discovery" of Luther's, but to call the names of those who have labored in this particular field would be to pass in review practically all the leading Protestant students and all the savants in the field of religious dogma

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1) e.g., W. ed., XXXX, part 1, p. 192.

2) W. ed., II, p. 302.

3) Cf. Loofs, "Der articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae," in *Lutherana I*, (Theol. Stud. u. Krit.) p. 323 f.

in the past twenty years (1). Some, principally O. Ritschl and Seeberg, place it as early as the Erfurt lectureship. Scheel, joined by Boehmer, would put it during the preparation of the Psalms Lectures, and Müller somewhat later. Smith dates the new teaching in 1515 or 1516, chiefly because he finds the thought lacking in the writings of or earlier than 1515, but fully developed in the letters of 1516 and in other writings of that year (2).

3. Justification by Faith in the Psalms Lectures.

The Psalms Lectures (1513 - 1515) show us that Luther has already arrived at a fairly advanced position. Smith finds that an analysis of these lectures shows us a Luther who no longer places the whole emphasis upon works, as he apparently did in the first monastic years, but on the other hand a Luther who had not yet

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1) Fife, op. cit., p. 164.

2) Smith, "Luther's Doctrine of Justification," in "Harvard Theological Review," October, 1913, p. 420, footnote 28. Smith adds a brief note, but of unusual interest, concerning the dating of this experience by Luther himself. I quote from the same footnote by Smith: "Luther himself places it between his two courses on Psalms (1516-1518, Scheel: Dokumente, 17), and says that it came to him while lecturing on Romans. Tischreden, Weimar, I, 335. Further he says the crisis came when he was 'over thirty'. Werke, Erlangen, XLVI, 78."

arrived at the sola fides (1). And of certainty regarding salvation, Luther is also wavering; he neither despairs of it, as previously, nor postulates it, as later (2). But to localize and make definite from the point of view of time just when the various steps of his new theological position occurred involves all the difficulties of tracing the subtle working of the spirit in the hidden laboratory of the subconscious mind.

Loofs (3) believes that he can trace an evolution of the new teaching in the exposition of certain individual psalms, from which premise Hedwig Thomas (4) proceeds in the study of the religious development of the Reformer. Bohlin summarizes the idea of justification as it appears in Luther's Lectures on Psalms: "The central thought which rules the portrayal in the Psalms Lectures can be summarized by saying that God makes righteous that individual who in the contrition of heart comes to an inner agreement with (makes up with) God's judgment, to the end that iustificatio Dei primarily comes to mean the act of God in imputing righteousness to Man. In that the individual no longer battles with God concerning the truth but pronounces

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- 1) Smith, op. cit., p. 418.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Loofs, op. cit., p. 416 f.
- 4) Thomas, op. cit., p. 15, 49 f.

the same judgment upon self, which God in His justice and righteousness has already pronounced, the individual, says Luther, becomes just and righteous before God -- and like unto God" (1).

4. Justification by Faith in the Romans Lectures.

Fife gives an interpretation of Luther's Lectures on Romans in the following words:

"It cannot be denied that to the modern reader there is a somberness in Luther's presentation of sin and justification that has something of the gloom of medieval ascetism. Nor can it be denied that there are uncertainties in his theological position particularly as regards predestination. But the Lectures in this very phase, with their intense eloquence and lurid flashes of temperamental vehemence, reflect the soul battles through which he had passed. Indeed, he reenacts these struggles before us in theological costume" (2).

In regard to the teaching of justification by faith there is not only a similarity in the Lectures on Romans to the Lectures on Psalms, but there is also an evident advance. Luther's problem is ever the soteriological one. How can an individual lost in sin stand before a holy God? A span must be effected between these two.

Human righteousness is of no avail. This note rings like an opening chord in the first sentence of the Scholia of the Romans Lectures: "The sum and

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1) Bohlin, op. cit., p. 342 -343.
2) Fife, op. cit., p. 194-195.

substance of this Epistle is to destroy and scatter all wisdom and justice of the flesh and to set fast and confirm and magnify sin" (1). And at the very beginning of the course of the Lectures the professor is not ready to proclaim assurance of salvation (2).

There is unmistakable relationship in the Romans Lectures to the spirit of Augustine. Strohl finds that the great African Father is cited no less than 124 times in the Lectures, of which "De spiritu et litera" is quoted no less than 26 times (3). Ficker also notes that there is "an influence of the Confessions of Augustine on the language employed by Luther in the Scholia" (4).

There is an emphasis in the Romans Lectures on the passivity of man, and this passivity on the part of man is the only way to court the grace of God. The battle is not to the strong, but to him who can yield himself most perfectly into God's hands (5). And yet even in this sphere of religious life there is a development in the Romans Lectures over those on the Psalms,

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1) Ficker, II, p. 1.

2) Cf. Fife, op. cit., p. 193, and also Söderblom, op. cit., p. 311.

3) Strohl, op. cit., p. 100.

4) Ficker, Vol. I, p. lxi.

5) Smith, op. cit., p. 421.

tending to the positive. The negative side, accusation of self and insistence on the worthlessness of self, is a dominant note in the Psalms Lectures. But with the Lectures on Romans we find the positive note stressed considerably more, for Luther has come to believe not only in a God of judgment, but in a God of forgiveness. Faith is of importance not only as the medium for the reception for God's grace, but comes to have a most intimate part in the grand process of justification.

A great discovery indeed is made when Luther in his exposition comes to Romans 1.17. Small wonder that Luther comes to call that particular verse in the Scripture the "portal of Paradise." Belief in the essential message of this great verse of Scripture on the part of Luther means in him an increase in bold independence and individualism which from this time on increasingly marks his work (1).

Luther has come to see that even though man is lost in sin, the opportunity for man being made righteous to stand before the face of the Holy God has been established. The crucified and resurrected Christ becomes the sole mediator. By faith in Him man is justified.

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1) Fife, op. cit., p. 201.

5. Justification by faith in the Commentary on Galatians.

The clearest possible portrayal of justification by faith as held by Luther is rendered us in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians. It may truly be considered the position of the "mature reformer." There are parallels, to be sure, with what is found in previous works, and yet there is also a most decided development to maturity.

a. The God Who justifies.

Strohl characterizes Luther's idea of the God Who justifies as portrayed in the Romans Commentary as follows:

"Toute la justification de l'homme est l'oeuvre de Dieu, de Dieu exclusivement. L'homme ne peut pas y contribuer, il peut uniquement l'entraver. L'homme n'a qu'à se confier à Dieu comme le malade au chirurgien et à se laisser soigner et diriger. S'il recouvre la santé, ce n'est aucunement son mérite, mais celui de son médecin. C'est donc à celui-ci que revient tout l'honneur, toute la gloire, et le malade doit lui être reconnaissant de l'avoir sauvé. C'est le médecin qui a pris l'initiative, qui a offert ses services, qui commence, continue et mène à bonne fin son oeuvre. Pour parler le langage de l'Ecole, ce n'est pas seulement 'la grâce première' qui est un 'don gratuit', mais la grâce reste toujours un acte divin absolument contingent, souverain, et l'homme ne la mérite jamais en aucune façon. Cette théorie accentue le monergisme divin, caractéristique pour Luther. Elle est essentiellement religieuse" (1).

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1) Strohl, op. cit., p. 44-45.

In the Romans Lectures Luther maintains that the Christian will experience that the severity which seems to be the essence of God's nature is merely a covering or an appearance (Sed sub istis latet pax quem nemo cognoscit, nisi credat et experiatur) (1), and may come to know God as the highest good (2).

Luther is convinced that God is the author of salvation. It is plain from his argument that man would never have arrived at any semblance of justification if the seeking had been limited to the sphere of man. And Luther is very evidently at war with all "false apostles" who would pervert the article of justification. The seeking begins with God:

"And this hath He done, 'according to the will, good pleasure, and commandment of the Father.' Wherefore we be not delivered by our own will, or cunning, nor by our own wisdom of policy, but for that God had taken mercy upon us and hath loved us: like as it is written also in another place (I John 4.10): 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' That we are then delivered from this present evil world, it is of mere grace and no dessert of ours" (3).

Knowing that the genesis of justification is with God, Luther does not have a heart filled with fear when he approaches Him; for

"The whole Scripture teacheth us, and especially above all things, we should not doubt, but

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- 1) Ficker, op. cit., (Scholia), p. 83
- 2) Ibid., p. 223.
- 3) Gal. Comm., p. 36.

assure ourselves and undoubtedly believe that God is merciful, loving, and patient; that He is neither a dissembler nor a deceiver; but that He is faithful and true, and keepeth His promise: yea, and hath performed that He promised in delivering His only begotten son to death for our sins, 'that everyone that believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life' " (1).

What an antithesis ~~is~~ to the early conception of God held by the reformer is ~~not~~ that which is confidently voiced in the words:

"Here we cannot doubt but that God is pleased with us, that He loved us indeed, that the hatred and wrath of God is taken away, seeing He suffered His Son to die for us dejected sinners" (2)!

It is Christ Who has conveyed to man this truth concerning God as a loving Father:

"Wherefore, Christ is the only mean and, as you say, the glass, by the which we see God; that is to say, we know His will. For in Christ we see that God is not a cruel exactor or a judge, but a most favorable, loving, and merciful Father, Who, to the end He might bless us, that is to say, deliver us from the law, sin, death, and all evils, and might endue us with grace, righteousness, and everlasting life, 'spared not His own Son, but gave Him for us all.' This is a true knowledge of God, and a divine persuasion; which deceiveth us not, but pointeth out God unto us rightfully" (3).

In no other god can we expect to find the source of justification. "Such a god as, after this sort, forgiveth sins and justifieth sinners, can nowhere be found,

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- 1) Ibid., p. 347.
- 2) Ibid., p. 347.
- 3) Ibid., 356.

and therefore this is but a vain imagination, a dream, and an idol of the heart" (1). Anyone who trusts in his own righteousness, and who elevates will-works, rites, and ceremonies, has made out of them an idol in his own heart. "For the true God speaketh thus: No righteousness, wisdom, no religion, pleaseth me, but that only whereby the Father is glorified through the Son. Whosoever apprehended this Son and Me and My promise in Him by faith, to him I am a god, to him I am a father, him do I accept, justify, and save. - Others abide under wrath, because they worship that thing which by nature is no god" (2).

Thus nothing else can be manufactured to displace the righteousness which is of faith. Any such attempt constitutes a denial, for "to seek to be justified by the works of the law is to deny the righteousness of faith" (3).

An excursus of more than passing interest is that which has as its rubric "A rule to be observed, that men ought to abstain from the curious searching of God's majesty" (4). Luther bases this on the fact that Paul added the words "and from our Lord Jesus Christ" to the salutation at the very beginning of

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- 1) Ibid., p. 357.
- 2) Ibid., p. 219.
- 3) Ibid
- 4) Ibid., p. 21 f.

the Epistle. Can it be possible that this excursus is aimed particularly at the vain mysticism which was current in some quarters of that day? Possibly so.

But the paragraphs in question allow us insight into the mind of Luther (1) to note particularly his thoughts on God's revelation in Christ, and also -- strange as it may seem for that time! -- something relative to comparative religion.

Christ who is ever "very God by nature" (2) remains to Luther God's complete and final revelation to man, and "besides this way Christ, thou shalt find no way to the Father, but wandering: no verity, but hypocrisy and lying: no life, but eternal death (3). A vain searching of the majesty of God will net^{no} thing, for "if thou seek thus to comprehend God, and wouldst pacify him without Christ the mediator, making thy works a means between him and thyself, it cannot be but that thou must fall as Lucifer did, and in horrible despair lose God and all together" (4). The real knowledge of God only comes "by Jacob's ladder" (5), for the true Christian religion "beginneth not at the highest, as other religions do, but at the lowest" (6), and that is to say, a man occupied in

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- 1) cf. Otto, "The Idea of the Holy", p. 101 f.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 24, 26.
- 3) Ibid., p. 23.
- 4) Ibid., p. 22/
- 5) Ibid., p. 23.
- 6) Ibid.

the matter of his salvation should set aside "all curious speculations of God's unsearchable majesty" and "run straight to the manger, and embrace this little infant, the Virgin's little Babe . . . and behold him. . . born, growing up, conversant among men, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending up above all the heavens, and having power above all things" (1).

The positive Christo-centric note of Luther has nothing at all in common with the ultra-humanistic tendencies of today, with the theory that social welfare and the Kingdom of God are identical, with the lowering of the Christian religion to the plane of a cultural force only, and with a loose-jointed proclamation of the brotherhood of all faiths and teachings. Though "Mahomet speaketh honorably of Christ" (2), the Turk believes that if he "keep the things that are commanded in the Alcoran God will accept me, and give me everlasting life" (3), and the Jew: "If I keep those things which the law commandeth, I shall find God merciful unto me, and so shall I be saved (4). All this constitutes "removing the mediator Christ out of their sight" (5). But true Christian divinity commands us "to know his will set out to us in Christ, whom he would have to

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- 1) Ibid., p. 24.
- 2) Ibid., p. 25.
- 3) Ibid., p. 21.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Ibid.

take our flesh upon him, to be born and to die for our sins, and that this should be preached among all nations" (1).

Luther considers that the God who justifies has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus. Man will never reach God unless he comes through Him who is the Mediator.

b. Man who is justified.

Christian righteousness, according to Luther, consists of the faith of the heart and God's imputation. Speaking of the case of Abraham in the exposition of 3.6 Luther says: "It is not without cause that he (Paul) addeth this sentence out of the fifteenth chapter of Genesis: 'And it was imputeth to him for righteousness.' For Christian righteousness consisteth in two things, that is to say, in faith of the heart, and in God's imputation." Both elements are necessary. "For faith being not enough to God, because it is imperfect, yet, rather, our faith is but a little spark of faith which beginneth only to render unto God His true divinity. We have received the first fruits of the spirit but not yet the tenths. . . . Wherefore faith beginneth righteousness, but imputation maketh it perfect unto the day of Christ" (2).

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1) Ibid., p.22.
2) Ibid., p. 197.

Throughout the many excursions on this topic Luther emphasizes the need of humility in the heart of man as a requisite to true faith. Any establishment of justification on the grounds of good works, fulfillment of the law, constitutes a serious breach and stands in the way of receiving the righteousness of Christ. Even though faith is weak, it is the one and only vessel by which righteousness can be received. "For faith is weak, and therefore God's imputation must needs be joined with all; that is to say, that God will not lay to our charge the remnant of sin; that He will not punish it, nor condemn us for it, but will cover it and will freely forgive it, as though it were nothing at all; not for our sake, neither for our worthiness, and works, but for Jesus Christ's sake, in whom we believe" (1).

To make man naked of any pretense of gaining justification by his own good works, Luther warns time and again that any such attempt constitutes an infraction of spiritual law which robs Christ of His mission and lowers Him from the throne of His office as the Saviour of man. Not only that, such individuals also incur for themselves the danger of becoming more weak and beggarly: "They are by nature the children of wrath, subject to death and everlasting condemnation,

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1) Ibid., p. 199.

and yet they lay hold upon that which is nothing else but weakness and beggary, seeking to be strengthened and enriched thereby" (1).

c. The new creature.

Justification by faith alone never appears in the writings of Luther as a soul-state, which, once arrived at, should merely be enjoyed. Such a doctrine would render man impotent and make for stagnation.

Concerning Luther's doctrine concerning the life which should follow justification we will make more detailed analysis under a later heading. Suffice it to say at this juncture that Luther considers that when man is justified by faith he becomes a new creature who is to show forth a life of spiritual activity. The new creature is the work of Christ alone: "Now a new creature, whereby the image of God is renewed, is not made by any color or counterfeiting of good works but by Christ, by Whom it is created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness" (2).

This treatment of "The New Creature" also gives us occasion to speak of the meaning of "Christ-myxticism" for Luther. The life in Christ was to Luther the most real of things. Not only in this Commentary but also in other writings Luther makes it plain that the work of Christ is not only an external one, giving "the way,

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1) Ibid., p. 363.
2) Ibid., p. 532.

the truth and the life," but He Himself is that way, that truth and that life, in such a way that He has His abode in the believer, and the believer lives in Him (1). His words in a postscript to a ^el_^tter of Melanchthon to Brenz makes that plain: "Sic dicit: 'Ego sum via, veritas et vita'; non dicit: ego do tibi viam, veritatem et vitam, quasi extra me positus operetur in me talia. In me debet esse, manere, vivere, loqui" (2). Bohlin characterizes the Reformer's Christ-mysticism as being "personal-dynamic" in character. Christ is both subject and object: the believer, as long as he lives, is transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ, and it is the living Christ Himself, who is to realize this progressive sanctification (3). In the same year when this Commentary was written we find Luther in another production stating: "Christum in nobis efficacem contra mortem, peccatum et legem" (4) and "Imo Christus ipse in nobis facit omnia" (5), and two years later: "Formatur enim Christus in nobis continue, et nos formamur ad imaginem ipsius, dum hic vivimus" (6).

Christ-mysticism, as we meet its expression in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians, is in sincerity and

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- 1) Bohlin, op. cit., p. 427.
- 2) Enders IX, p. 20.
- 3) Bohlin, op. cit., p. 427.
- 4) Luther, Thesis #10, 1535.
- 5) Luther, Thesis #29, 1535.
- 6) Luther, Thesis #34, 1537.

strength not superseded in any other writing of the Reformer (1). In his exposition of Gal. 1. 17 Luther joyfully proclaims that "where Christ is, there must needs be joy of heart and peace of conscience: for Christ is our reconciliation, righteousness, peace, life, and salvation. Briefly, whatsoever the poor afflicted conscience desireth, it findeth in Christ abundantly" (2). But the real evidence of the presence of Christ-mysticism comes in the treatment of Gal. 2.20, as we would expect. The life of a Christian is dual in nature: the first life, which is the natural, is his own, but not so with the second, for that is the life of Christ in the Christian (3), active and dynamic, indeed, for "Christ speaketh in him, liveth in him, and exerciseth all the operations of life in him" (4), and it is given to the Christian by Christ through faith (5).

The mystical union is far from being grasped with ease, "for we cannot spiritually conceive that Christ is so nearly joined and united unto us, as the colour or whiteness are unto the wall (6). Christ is joined and united to the believer, and abides in him, and "Himself is this life which now I live. Wherefore Christ and I in this behalf are both one" (7). This

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- 1) Bohlin, op. cit., p. 427, footnote #1
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 130.
- 3) Ibid., p. 147.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Ibid., p. 148.
- 6) Ibid., p. 144.
- 7) Ibid., p. 145.

is beyond the comprehension of the natural man, for "he heareth the wind, but whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, he knoweth not" (1); it is "not the life of the flesh, although it be in the flesh; but of Christ the Son of God, whom the Christian possesseth by faith" (2).

What are the fruits which result from this indwelling Christ? The Christian becomes a partaker of Christ's grace, righteousness, life and eternal salvation (3); a happy change has been made, for Christ gives man His innocent and victorious person. This is not brought about "by speculation and naked knowledge," but rather "in deed, and by a true and a substantial presence," for "Christ must live and work in us" (4). We wonder if anyone has better stated the full meaning of the presence of Christ in the heart than the Reformer in the following sentence: "So the glory of the whole Kingdom of Christ is translated unto us" (5). But this presence can not be a temporary thing, if it is to be true and salutary in influence; Christ comes to the believer daily "to the end that we may increase in faith, and in the knowledge of him" (6).

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- 1) Ibid., p. 149.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Ibid., p. 145.
- 4) Ibid., p. 319.
- 5) Ibid., p. 320.
- 6) Ibid., p. 313.

C. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND ASSURANCE.

There is a healthy militant spirit pervading the 1535 Commentary. Assurance and a sense of spiritual abandon rule in the heart of the Reformer. He no longer agonizes in an almost morbid fear of self or an unnecessary fear of God. He has dared to launch out on the deep.

1. The Growth of Assurance from 1517.

In this part of his character there has been a decided and marked growth (1). The course of events which centered in the year 1517 did more than all else to assist in creating this spirit. In a very interesting way has Otto Ritschl portrayed how the experiences Luther encountered with Tetzel and Rome hastened the fruition of his practical-religious and even his theological development (2). In the rising tide of the battle which centered about the 95 Theses it proved impossible for Luther to continue strict allegiance to the ideal of humility as constituting the right and true relationship to God. He was pitched into a situation where it meant daring to live in and upon and by one's faith. Then faith blossomed into sound assurance and trust. The bold stroke made by the Reformer for the sake of God and truth in the world reacted upon his life of faith and led it to greater

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1) Cf. Article concerning Assurance in Romans Lectures, by von Engeström, in the testimonial volume given to Söderblom on his 60th birthday.

2) Ritschl, "Dogmengeschichte," II, 1, p. 102.

strength and clarity (1). Runebergh characterizes the mind of Luther in this period as follows:

"The year 1517 is of the greatest importance in the life of Luther. It is not only the year of the 95 theses, and with that the birthyear of the Reformation. The same year brings us face to face with the final great stage of development in his inner practical-religious life. For the first time he speaks unwaveringly of the necessity of the Christian being certain of his salvation. A free and fearless note is heard from the Reformer, which indicates that the passivity inherent in the ideal of humility is retreating before the power and activity of secure trust in God. And the reason is not hard to find. The 95 Theses against Tetzl and the Indulgences have found a world-audience. Rome issues threats; there is a battle in the offing. But withal, it was a healthy atmosphere in which to breathe, which meant chest-expansion, and a vitalizing of mind and thought and a challenge to bolder undertakings. Long enough had the spirit hovered over its own nest, even though in ever-widening circles. The hand of necessity now directed to untrammelled ways and to paths of adventure" (2).

Again we emphasize that Luther's problem was fundamentally a soteriological one. To be right with God and to have His favor was the question that had given him so many perplexity-filled hours. But pride, in any semblance, had been characterized by Luther as one of the gravest of sins; "superbia" is pictured as the very essence and nature of sin itself. But in the period from which the 95 Theses originated Luther's view changes to some degree. The accusation is brought against him that pride lay at the root of the Theses, and prompted him to take the first giddy steps of protest

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- 1) Runestam, "Den kristliga friheten hos Luther och Melanchthon," p. 58.
- 2) Runebergh, "Luthers inre utveckling till Reformator" p. 35-36.

and revolt, to which he directs an answer that a spirit of "superbia" is necessary in the life of that Christian who takes up the sword against existing wrongs; that is substantiated by the example of Christ and all the martyrs (1).

In the exposition of the seven penitential Psalms, given in the early part of the year 1517, though sounding much of the ideal of humility, there is heard a proclamation which calls to independence, courage, Christian liberty and assurance. He writes:

"Seyt trotzig unnd ubermutig, erhebt euch, rimet euch, habt ein wolgefallen gleich wie ein mensch der gloriert. dan das hertz, das richtig ist zu got, unnd nit eyngekrumet auff sich selb ader etwas anders dan gott, ist auff das ewige gut gegrundt und steet. darumb hat es uberflussig, da von es gloriern, prachten, prangen und trotzen kan" (2)

2. The note of assurance as reflected in 1519.

The year 1519, when the first Commentary on Galatians appeared, is one of increasing courage and assurance of faith (3). His view of Christian assurance and liberty, the spirit of which seemed lacking on the occasion of the Heidelberg Dispute in April, 1518, has now come definitely into its own (4). It is not amiss to consider the teaching of Christian liberty as given in the 1519 Commentary as a prelude to that document

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1) Enders I, 126.

2) W. ed. I, p. 173; cf. also I, p. 190.

3) Cf. Runestam, op. cit., p. 59.

4) Söderblom, "Humor och melankoli och andra Lutherstudier," chapter on "Vissheten" (Certainty), p. 311-312.

named by Protestants as "perhaps the most beautiful of Luther's writings, the result of religious contemplation rather than of theological labor" (1), the treatise of the Reformer which "ranks with the best books of Luther, and rises far above the angry controversies of his age, during which he composed it, in the full possession of the positive truth and peace of the religion of Christ" (2) -- the Treatise on Christian Liberty.

The 1519 Commentary shows us a Luther who warns individuals of being uncertain in the spiritual relationship to God; we are to be certain that in ourselves we are lost, but we are also to have the assurance which comes from faith in Christ who has given Himself for our sins, he says in commenting on 1.4 (care te, ne aliquando sis incertus, sed certus, quod in teipso perditus. Laborandum autem, ut certus et solidus sis in fide Christi pro peccatis tuis traditi) (3). Schubert finds that this note of assurance is far in advance of anything in the Commentary on Romans (4). This faith unites the Christian with Christ, so that sin becomes Christ's, and Christ's righteousness is given to the Christian (5). This is the *enaestimabilis gloria Christianorum* (6). This liberty of the Christian is not

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- 1) Kolde, "Luther," I, p. 274.
- 2) Schaff, VI, p. 224.
- 3) W. ed. II, p. 458.
- 4) Schubert, "Luthers Fruentwicklung," p. 33.
- 5) W. ed. II, p. 504, 455, 491, 535.
- 6) W. ed., II, p. 504.

a licentia ad peccandum; it is certainly rather a libertas faciendi as opposed to a libertas omittendi. The Christian is free from the demands of the law, and love and faith combine in the heart of the Christian to give him peace and joy, and "to make him the doer of all good things, to vanquish death and to spurn hell" (1).

Liberty through trust in God is for Luther the very signature of religion (2). And the teaching of Christian liberty and assurance, strengthened in the life of Luther through the experiences with which he met during the course of the years, finds a mature expression in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians.

3. Christian liberty and assurance in the Commentary of 1535.

Luther constantly appears in the role of the victor in the Commentary which we are studying (3). The experiences through which he has passed have moulded in him a Christian optimism and a note of faith and assurance which has lifted him ^{from} the dregs of despair to the mountains of hope. Let us examine the elements which make up this assurance.

a. There is, first of all, the assurance which he feels in his personal relationship to God. This

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1) W. ed. II, p. 490.

2) Söderblom, op. cit., p. 330.

3) For the advance of the 1535 Commentary over that of 1519 in this respect cf: Runestam, op. cit., p. 146 f.

follows naturally after his experience of justification by faith. Now he is bold enough to assert that a man who believes in Christ "is altogether a divine person, the child of God, the inheritor of the world, a conqueror of sin, death, the world, and the devil: therefore he cannot be praised and magnified enough" (1). But the only ground for such a personal assurance is Christ himself (2). "For Christ only is set between man and the evils and troubles which afflict him, and in the stead of sin and death He (Christ) giveth unto us righteousness and everlasting life. . . . Whosoever, then, believeth in Christ, the Son of God, he hath this liberty" (3).

This assurance, however, can be lost, temporarily at least: "For I know in what hours of darkness I sometimes wrestle. I know how often I suddenly lose the beams of the Gospel and grace, as being shadowed from me with thick and dark clouds." But in all such struggles the power of the Word must rekindle the note of assurance (4).

b. Assurance in the protection offered by God.

The note of assurance in the heart of the Christian allows him to face the future without timidity and fear. God offers His protection. When the individual

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- 1) Gal. Comm., p. 214.
- 2) Ibid., p. 246-247,
- 3) Ibid., p. 420.
- 4) Ibid., p. 56.

is covered under the shadow of Christ's wings, as is the chicken under the wing of the hen, then he can dwell without all fear under that most ample and large heaven of the forgiveness of sins (1). To persevere in such assurance one must keep the heart and mind directed toward Christ: "For Christ, on Whom our eyes are fixed, in Whom we live, Who also abideth in us, is Lord and Conqueror of the law, sin, death, and all evils: in Whom most certain and sure consolation is set forth unto us, and victory given" (2).

c. Assurance of the victory of Christ's cause.

Luther shows us that he was by no means a pessimist regarding the cause of the Kingdom of God. The militant spirit comes forth particularly when he encourages to carry the battle to the enemy (3), and when he states that he believes that though the truth may be assailed, yet it can never be overthrown (4), and that when the voice of the Gospel once has been set forth it shall not be called back again until the Day of Judgment (5).

d. The attitude created by that assurance.

The presence of this assurance in the heart of

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- 1) Ibid., p. 198,
- 2) Ibid., p. 144.
- 3) Ibid., p. 53.
- 4) Ibid., p. 48.
- 5) Ibid., p. 49.

man creates in him a holy pride (1), and gives him a spirit of defiance (2) which one has learned to expect from a true soldier of Christ. He must possess a faith that is invincible (3), for he has companionship with the Conqueror (4), is the heir of His kingdom (5), and dares to "mount up" (6), for even in weakness God affords the strength (7).

e. Assurance and liberty do not mean license.

Luther guards carefully lest his constant emphasis upon the theme of Christian liberty and assurance should develop into any form of license. The freedom from the law rather makes man free not to sin. In this respect Luther underscores the words of Him whose letter he is expounding: "For brethren ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. 5.13).

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- 1) Ibid., p. 67.
- 2) Ibid., p. 87.
- 3) Ibid., p. 90.
- 4) Ibid., p. 114.
- 5) Ibid., p. 115.
- 6) Ibid., p. 136.
- 7) Ibid., p. 168-169.

D. THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL, FAITH AND GOOD WORKS.

Luther's treatment of the law and the gospel as given in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians constitutes a great forward step over that in the 1519 Commentary (1). In his explanation to the Small Catechism Luther tells us that "the Bible is divided as to its contents into the law and the gospel," the law being "God's command that we should be holy in heart and life" and the gospel being "the glad tidings that God in His great love sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save sinners" (2).

1. Luther's interpretation of the term "the law".

It is plain that in the work we are studying Luther considers the law in two aspects: first, as a revelation of God to serve spiritual purposes for man, as a guide and rule for life, a revealer of sin, and a power to drive man to Christ; and secondly, as a salvation-way, impossible of attainment, to be sure, and yet chosen by many as a way of endeavoring to gain righteousness before God. In this sense the terms "salvation by the law" and "salvation by good works" are identical in meaning.

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1) Runestam, op. cit., p. 59: "Luthers galaterkommentar av 1519 är en väldig protest mot gärningstron. Men å andra sidan kan man icke heller vid läsningen av den samma och vid en jämförelse med Luthers senare åskådning, exempelvis i hans senare galaterkommentar av 1535, ungå att säga sig, att han ännu icke kan med samma säkra hand som senare dela rätt mellan lag och evangelium och ge vardera sitt."

2) Luther, "Catechism," p.31.

2. The spiritual uses of the law.

Taken in the former sense the law has the following uses, according to Luther's explanation:

a. Its first use is "to bridle the wicked"(1).

The relation of religious law to the state and to civil ordinances is brought out particularly well in the following words: "Therefore God hath ordained magistrates, parents, ministers, laws, bonds, and all civil ordinances, that if they can do no more, yet, at the least, they may bind the devil's hands, that he rage not in his bondslaves after his own lust" (2). Coupled with this is the use of the law "to be a light and a help to man, and to shew him what he ought to do, and what to leave undone" (3), which use Luther names excellent indeed, as also he calls all the legitimate uses of the law good. But it is highly important to have the proper definition of the law. "We say with Paul, that the law is good, if a man do rightly use it; that is to say, if he use the law as the law" (4), but to translate it to another use, and to attribute unto the law that which we should not, not only perverts the law, "but also the whole scripture" (5).

b. The second of the spiritual purposes of the law is to increase transgressions, "that is to say, to reveal unto a man his sin, his blindness, his misery, his

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- 1) Gal. Comm., p. 271.
- 2) Ibid., p. 271, 272.
- 3) Ibid., p. 160.
- 4) Ibid., p. 270.
- 5) Ibid.

impiety, ignorance, hatred, and contempt of God, death, hell, the judgment and deserved wrath of God" (1), which "is the proper and the principle use of the law, so is it very profitable and also most necessary" (2). In no other way can God "mollify and humble" sinful man so that "he may acknowledge his misery and damnation" except by means of the law (3). Luther minces no words in speaking of this use of the law; by lightning, tempest, and sound of the trumpet it is to terrify, and by thundering it is "to beat down and rend in pieces that beast which is called the opinion of righteousness" (4). Calling to mind the words in I Kings 19. 11-13, Luther declares the law to be a hammer, fire, mighty strong wind, and terrible earthquake (5). This use of the law is further clarified to Luther by the experience which the children of Israel passed through at Mount Sinai. There was "a singular holiness" about this people, for they were "washed, righteous, purified, and chaste," and yet "there was not one of them that could abide this presence of the Lord in his majesty and glory". The very presence of God meant the living presence of the law to be holy in life, and it had the following consequence: "No purity

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- 1) Ibid., 272
- 2) Ibid., p. 273.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Ibid.

nor holiness could then help them; but there was in them such a feeling of their own uncleanness, unworthiness and sin, and of the judgment and wrath of God, that they fled from the sight of the Lord, and could not abide to hear his voice" (1).

Under the figures of a light and a mirror Luther also speaks of the law. As a light, "it sheweth and revealeth, not the grace of God, not righteousness and life; but sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God" (2).

c. The next step in the natural progression of the office of the law, in Luther's exposition, is that "it is a true and profitable minister, which driveth a man to Christ" (4). When the law has humbled and terrified man, and brought him to "the very brink of desperation," having revealed sin and the wrath of God, then it has by no means completed its purpose (5), for it must also drive men to Christ. And "this use of the law the Holy Ghost only setteth forth in the gospel, where he witnesseth that God is present unto the afflicted and broken-hearted" (6). When the law has driven an individual to Christ "then is the law in

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- 1) Ibid., p. 274.
- 2) Ibid., p. 276.
- 3) Ibid., p. 277.
- 4) Ibid. p. 278.
- 5) Ibid.
- 6) Ibid., p. 279.

his true sense," and "this is the best and most perfect use of the law" (1).

Luther is almost poetic when he speaks of this great use of the law, to drive a man to Christ.

He says:

"There is a common proverb, that hunger is the best cook. Like as, therefore, the dry earth coveteth the rain, even so the law maketh troubled and afflicted souls to thirst after Christ. To such, Christ savoureth sweetly: to them, he is nothing else but joy, consolation and life. And there beginneth Christ and his benefit rightly to be known. . . He poureth not his waters upon fat and rank grounds, or such as are not dry and dovet no water. His benefits are inestimable, and therefore he giveth them to none but unto such as have need of them, and earnestly desire them" (2).

3. The Realm of the Law and the Gospel.

a. The necessity of correctly distinguishing between the two.

Luther considers it of cardinal importance that one know how rightly to judge between the law and the gospel, and his remarks in this connection continue to have their value for every individual entrusted with pastoral care. The law is to be used to the fullest extent, and yet it is not permitted to take a single step outside of its rightful domain. "He who can rightly judge between the law and the gospel," says Luther, "let him thank God, and know that hã is a

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1) Ibid.
2) Ibid., p. 293.

right divine" (1). Luther's sermons bear their own testimony of the care he gave to divide the Word of God rightly, and his principles have influenced the preaching of succeeding generations. The spirit of the following words, by the Provost J. N. Rexus, show that the writer is a direct spiritual descendant of the Reformer: "Give no support or encouragement to the unrepentant when they remain in an unrepentant state; never close or make more difficult the avenue of approach to grace for him who has a repentant heart, and who, because of his misery, hardly dares to tread the path to the throne of grace" (2).

Not only for the pastor is it of utmost significance to judge rightly concerning the law and the gospel, but for the individual in his own soul-struggles, the same diligence must be exercised. Of his own shortcoming Luther speaks: "I confess that I myself do not know how to do it as I ought" (3). The individual whose conscience is terrified with sin must learn that there is a time to hear the law, and a time to despise it. When the law has accomplished its work, then it must be bidden to depart, and the

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1) Ibid., p. 100.

2) Cf. my article "A Chapter in Pastoral Theology" in "The Augustana Quarterly," April, 1932, p. 162-169.

3) Gal. Comm. p. 100.

gospel must then be summoned (1). Luther offers the following naïve explanation:

"Wherefore, if thy conscience be terrified with the sense and feeling of sin, think thus with thyself: Thou art now remaining upon earth: there let the ass labour and travel; there let him serve and carry the burden that is laid upon him; that is to say, let the body with his members be subject to the law. But when thou mountest up into heaven, then leave the ass with his burden on the earth; for the conscience hath nothing to do with the law, or works, or with the earthly righteousness. So doth the ass remain in the valley, but the conscience ascendeth with Isaac into the mountain, knowing nothing at all of the law or works thereof, but only looking to the remission of sins and pure righteousness offered and freely given unto us in Christ" (2).

But above all, in the final matter of justification, great care must be observed in consideration of the law and the gospel. In this, Luther uses "the law" as a salvation-way, as opposed to justification "by faith". In this realm the law has very definite limitations.

b. Limitations of the Law.

Though the law in its legitimate sphere is a good and excellent thing (3), yet it has definite bounds; it is impossible of complete fulfillment (4). Christ and the law ("the law" as a way to justification) "can by no means agree and reign together in the conscience" (5). It is a case of either - or. "For either Christ must remain, and the law perish, or the law must remain, and Christ perish" (6). An individual who endeavors to win

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- 1) Ibid., p. 101.
- 2) Ibid., p. 100.
- 3) Ibid., p. 160, 170.
- 4) Ibid., p. 19, 20.
- 5) Ibid., p. 47.
- 6) Ibid.

justification by the law, makes of Moses a Saviour, and of Christ a destroyer and murderer, which constitutes "a horrible blasphemy", and Christ's death, preaching and victory are all in vain (1). The law, as a guide and rule, as a revealer of sin, as a directive force to Christ, has spiritual purpose (2), but outside of this it can do nothing (3).

Luther names three classes of people who are abusers of the law. There are those who "utterly exempt a Christian man from the law" (4). Of this the "brainsick Anabaptists" are guilty. Also there are those who continue under the law and do not understand that the law should drive them to Christ (5). But "first of all" among the abusers of the law are "the justiciaries and hypocrites, which dream that men are justified by the law" (6).

Strohl gives an excellent summary of Luther's conception of the limitation of the law:

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- 1) Ibid., p. 125.
- 2) Ibid., p. 308.
- 3) Ibid., p. 290, 325.
- 4) Ibid., 307.
- 5) Ibid., p. 308.
- 6) Ibid., p. 307.

"The law in itself, considered as a way of conduct, a revelation of the will of God in the conscience, is good. What Luther wishes to combat, when he compares the law and the gospel, is the religious system addressed to the free will, to the natural faculties of man and which suggest perfection through man's own merits and means. It is of this system of moralists that he says that the law does not give life, but that it kills, since it demands of man that which he is incapable of supplying and leads to despair a soul athirst for the absolute. Thus it makes man worse instead of better." (1)

c. The Office of the Gospel.

To show the relation between the law and the gospel Luther quotes the words of a poet: "Dulcia non meruit, qui non gustavit amara" (2). When the heart has been humbled by the law, broken, and brought to the brink of despair, then the gospel comes with its healing and lifting influence (3). But the individual who has made of the law a way of salvation has already put to nought Christ's work as a Redeemer, and has perverted it (4).

The gospel, Luther considers, is a "revelation of the Son of God" (5). It does not threaten death nor despair. In that it is a doctrine concerning Christ

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- 1) Strohl, op. cit., p. 161, 162.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 293.
- 3) Ibid., p. 293, 295.
- 4) Ibid., p. 47, 48.
- 5) Ibid., p. 64.

it points to Him who is "our righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption" (1). It is revealed by the Holy Ghost, "yet in such sort notwithstanding, that the outward word must go before" (2). The gospel teaches man not what he ought to do, "but what Jesus Christ the Son of God hath done for me: to wit, that he suffered and died to deliver me from sin and death" (3). This doctrine is "a far higher matter than is the wisdom, righteousness, and religion of the world" (4), and by the preaching of this doctrine "the devil is overthrown, his kingdom destroyed" (5). The preaching of the gospel has brought grace and peace to the world, and is not "invented by the reason or wisdom of man, but given from above," and Christians who are exercised and armed with this doctrine "get victory against sin, despair and everlasting death" (6).

4. Faith and Good Works.

In dealing with Luther's teaching concerning faith and good works we are on a topic already touched upon, at least to some extent, in previous sections, in dealing

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- 1) Ibid.
- 2) Ibid., p. 65.
- 3) Ibid., p. 80.
- 4) Ibid., p. 9.
- 5) Ibid., p. 10.
- 6) Ibid., p. 19.

with related topic. There is an evident parallel between good works and faith on the one hand, and the law and the gospel on the other.

a. The Nature of Faith.

What is "faith" according to Luther? We have already noted, in dealing with the topic Christ-mysticism, that faith to Luther is the one power which unites the believers with Christ. Living faith is of a far higher order than a mere belief in an historical thing, and again it is opposed to "that faith which is furnished with charity." No one was ever saved by such a faith, and "an historical faith concerning Christ, . . . the devil also and all the wicked have" (1). Faith and the Word are intimately related, for faith is given through the Word, and afterwards is exercised, increased, strengthened and made perfect in us through the Word. The knowledge of Christ, and of faith, "is no work of man, but simply the gift of God, who as he createth faith, so doth he keep it in us" (2). Faith has assurance as its counterpart, for it "is neither law nor work, but an assured confidence which apprehendeth Christ" (3), and "with faith always must be joined a certain assurance of God's mercy. Now this assurance comprehendeth a faith-

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- 1) Ibid., p. 146.
- 2) Ibid., p. 57.
- 3) Ibid., p. 311.

ful trust of remission of sins for Christ's sake" (1). Faith is really "nothing else but the truth of the heart" (2). It is never changed by "the diversity of times," that is to say, faith, both in Old and New Testament times, remains the one and only power to unite man with God (3). By saying "Abraham believed" Paul makes of faith in God the chiefest worship, duty, obedience, and sacrifice (4). So is faith

"an almighty thing, and that the power thereof is infinite and inestimable; for it giveth glory unto God, which is the highest service that can be given unto him. Now, to give glory unto God, is to believe in him, to count him true, wise, righteous, merciful, almighty; briefly, to acknowledge him to be the author and giver of all goodness. This reason doth not, but faith. That is it which maketh us divine people, and (as a man would say) it is the creator of a certain divinity, not in the substance of God, but in us. For without faith God loseth in us his glory, wisdom, righteousness, truth, and mercy. To conclude, no majesty or divinity remaineth unto God, where faith is not. And the chiefest thing that God requireth of man is, that he give unto him his glory and his divinity: that is to say, that he take him not for an idol, but for God, who regardeth him, heareth him, sheweth mercy unto him, and helpeth him. This being done, God hath his full and perfect divinity, that is, he hath whatsoever a faithful heart can attribute unto him. To be able therefore to give that glory unto God, it is the wisdom of wisdoms, the righteousness of righteousness, the religion of religions, and sacrifice of sacrifices. Hereby we may perceive, what a high and an excellent righteousness faith is, and so, by the contrary, what a horrible and grievous sin infidelity is."

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- 1) Ibid., p. 205.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Ibid., p. 206.
- 4) Ibid., p. 194.

b. The Impotence of Good Works in Winning Salvation.

Luther maintains that those who speak of fides infusa, which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and fides acquisita, faith gotten by industry, are perverters of the gospel, for "this is to prefer charity before faith, and to attribute righteousness, not to faith, but to charity" (1). Every effort of man to gain righteousness by works is vain; in fact, even worse, to make such an attempt is to do away with the mission of the Saviour, "for if our sins may be taken away by our own works, merits and satisfaction, what needed the Son of God to be given for them? But seeing he was given for them, it followeth that we cannot put them away by our own good works" (2).

But "the true gospel indeed is, that the works of charity are not the ornament or perfection of faith: but that faith of itself is God's gift, and God's work in our hearts, which therefore justifieth us, because it apprehendeth Christ our Redeemer" (3).

c. Good Works as the Fruit of Faith.

In the very clearest of fashion the Reformer proclaims that a living faith will produce good works. Faith alone leads to justification, "and yet it standeth

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- 1) Ibid., p. 236.
- 2) Ibid., p. 26.
- 3) Ibid., p. 77.

not alone, that is to say, it is not idle" (1). The believing man has in his heart the Holy Ghost who will not suffer man to be idle, "but stirreth him up to all exercises of piety and godliness, and of true religion, to the love of God, to the patient suffering of affliction, to prayer, to thanksgiving, to the exercise of charity towards all men" (2), but "this charity or works following, do neither form nor adorn my faith, but my faith formeth and adorneth charity" (3).

As we might expect, Luther preaches through the figure of the tree and its fruit. On two occasions he insists that the apples do not make the tree, but the tree brings forth the apples (4), and concludes that "Christians are not made righteous in doing righteous things, but being now made righteous by faith in Christ, they do righteous things" (5).

d. Luther as "Evangelical Moralism".

The passages just referred to prove to us that Luther, like Paul, strove to make the principle of justification by faith the lever of the practical religious life. Faith to Luther did not mean finding an escape, a method of quieting one's conscience. It

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- 1) Ibid., p. 238.
- 2) Ibid., p. 133.
- 3) Ibid., p. 138, 139.
- 4) Ibid., p. 147, 221.
- 5) Ibid., p. 221.

was a personal dynamic. With this in mind we are in a position to see how different in kind was Luther's piety from the conventional ecclesiastical type. Luther's living faith delivered him from the enslavement of conscience; he does not torture himself with good works and acts of penance in order to win merit and favor for "his trust in God involves distrust of self and all its works, and a breach with the medieval formalism and the superstitious devotion, which have grown out of the misapprehension and the perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith" (1). For medieval formalism Luther substituted "the piety of common life, and, in so doing, extended its range over the whole complex of life and nature" (2).

Vedder's statement that "Luther offered a theological reform, not an ethical one" (3) is exceedingly misleading, and McGiffert's statement that Luther conceived of a God so angry that "the one thing needful seemed escape from the divine wrath" (4) falls far short of giving a true understanding of the matter; it would not square with the note of triumphant assurance and certainty of which we have spoken previously in this chapter. Luther was certainly interested in the moral

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- 1) Mackinnon, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 256.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 257.
- 3) Vedder, "The Reformation in Germany," p. 391.
- 4) McGiffert, "Protestant Thought Before Kant," p. 24.

transformation of society, but the way to such a transformation went by way of transformed individuals; a righteous life was the natural consequence of a living faith in Christ.

Mackinnon gives the following splendid summary:

" . . . The distinctive mark of the justified believer and the association of believers alike is the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit acting through the Word reproducing and perpetuating in both, in mystic devotion and active service, the eternal Christ. This they do, not under the yoke of the law, of legality, but in voluntary devotion to the good for its own sake and in joyous response of a dynamic faith. It is the religious and moral, not the legal factor that actuates the Christian life. This is an essential of the Lutheran principle of justification by faith, in which, like Paul, he found the formula of his religious experience. It is patent both in his writings and in his personal piety." (1).

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1) Mackinnon, op. cit., IV, p. 252.

E. THE DOCTRINE OF MAN.

One of the happiest surprises which comes in reading this Commentary is to find the hearty and wholesome attitude which Luther entertains concerning man. One is led to the conviction that there is much of positive Christian humanism in Luther, not a humanism which glorifies self and nullifies the glory of God, but a humanism which sees the glory of God reflected in man, thereby giving him his real worth. In his teaching concerning man there is in Luther a constant and decided growth, a sequel to the development noted in regard to Christian liberty and assurance.

1. Sinfulness of man.

Luther, more than most theologians, has emphasized the native sinfulness of man. He stresses his impotence (1), and maintains that all man's attempts at making himself righteous result in nothing but "stinking puddles" (2). Sin is to Luther one of the greatest realities of life. The meaning of sin to Luther has called forth several splendid studies, notably Braun's "Die Bedeutung der Concupiscenz in Luthers Leben and Lehre" and Ljunggren's "Synd och skuld i Luthers Teologi." Philosophy, Luther maintains, speaks of man

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 51.

2) Ibid., p. 64.

as a reason-endowed being, jurisprudence has to do with man as the owner and lord over his possessions, medicine studies man in the state of health or of disease, but theology treats of man as being laden with iniquity (1). Medieval theology had adopted a view which produced optimism regarding man's resources and which undermined any thought of sin-consciousness. Instead of Augustine-flavored pessimism, there was found a reliance upon the native powers of man, and a stressing of their meaning for salvation (2).

In the state of sin all men are alike before God. There may be outward differences, but the power of sin in the lives of men has reduced all to the same lowly position before the Holy God (3).

2. Man a vessel to receive God's grace.

Though man, in a personal way, is afflicted with sin (4), yet he is a vessel chosen by God to receive the grace which God offers in Christ. The miracle remains that from an individual lost in sin God by grace can make the new creature (5), the Christian man. Christ remains the one and only power which can accomplish that transformation, for "Christ both

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1) Ljunggren, p. 2. W. ed., XXXX, part 2, p. 327:

2) Ibid., op. cit., p. 7.

3) Gal. Comm., p. 82, 89.

4) Ibid., p. 311

5) Ibid., p. 533.

delivered us from the same (law, sin, death, power of the devil, hell, etc.) Christ hath made me free, and delivered me from them all Wherefore the majesty of this Christian liberty is highly to be esteemed, and diligently considered" (1). Luther ventures the following definition of a Christian man: "A Christian is not he which hath no sin, but he to whom God imputeth not his sin, through faith in Christ" (2).

3. Man's relation to past sin.

To the individual who has sensed his own lost condition in sin, Luther gives the directive word to turn to Christ. He exhorts man to arm himself with sentences of Holy Scripture that an answer might be given to all accusations. "As often as thou objectest that I am a sinner, so often thou callest me to remembrance of the benefit of Christ my Redeemer, upon whose shoulders, and not upon mine, lie all my sins; for the Lord hath 'laid all our iniquity upon him' Wherefore, when thou sayest I am a sinner, thou dost not terrify me, but comfortest me above measure" (3).

That Luther successfully emerged from the long

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- 1) Ibid., p. 419.
- 2) Ibid., p. 114.
- 3) Ibid., p. 30.

cloister-experience, during which he showed tendencies to dangerous brooding and despair, too much of introspection to allow a healthy mental life, is vouchsafed by ever so many of his utterances in this Commentary. Should man torture and plague himself with the memory of the sins and wrongs he has committed? Unreservedly no!

There is a considerable element of autobiography in the lines:

"But the man that putteth not away the remembrance of his sin, but keepeth it still and tormenteth himself with his own cogitations, thinketh either to help himself by his own strength or policy, or to tarry the time till his conscience may be quieted, falling into Satan's snares, and miserably afflicteth himself, and at length is overcome with the continuance of the temptation; for the devil will never cease to accuse his conscience." (1).

And again in a later section, in speaking of the course of spiritual experience, Luther says:

"For he being thus terrified with the law, utterly despaireth of his own strength: he looked about, and sigheth for the help of a mediator and saviour. Here then cometh in good time the healthful word of the gospel, and saith, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Matt. ix, 2). Believe in Christ Jesus crucified for thy sins. If thou feel thy sins and the burden thereof, look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are translated and laid upon Christ, whose stripes have made thee whole (Isa. liii, 5)." (2).

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 31.
2) Ibid., p. 112.

But may not such seasons of soul-anguish recur again in the life of a Christian? Indeed! But there is a positive and impregnable armour:

"Labour therefore diligently, that not only out of the time of temptation, but also in the time and conflict of death, when thy conscience is thoroughly afraid with the remembrance of thy sins past, and the devil assaileth thee with great violence, going about to overwhelm thee with heaps, floods, and whole seas of sins, to terrify thee, to draw thee from Christ, and to drive thee to despair, that then I say, thou mayest be able to say with sure confidence, Christ, the Son of God, was given, not for the righteous and holy, but for the unrighteous and sinners." (1).

And again he warns man not to follow "his own feeling", but to resort to the Word of God, in which he will learn that "God is near unto them that are of a troubled heart, and saveth them that are of a humble spirit" (2). And in these conflicts and terrors "which often return and exercise thee", we are to "wait patiently through hope for righteousness" (3).

4. Relations to fellow-man.

The Christian man, according to Luther, must exercise his spiritual virtues in relation to his fellow-man. Above all, he must show mercy and compas-

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- 1) Ibid., p. 29.
- 2) Gal. Comm., p. 438.
- 3) Ibid.,

sion - for it is easy enough to fall; there are innumerable examples of this (1), and not a few among Biblical characters. Luther quotes Paul's sincere admonition, that those who are spiritual must assist him who has fallen into any fault (2), for Christ Himself never casts down the afflicted (3).

5. Sanctification.

The fact that Christ wields the power over sin gives man hope and boldness. He can hope not only for deliverance but also for growth in a life of sanctification. The goal of man is to be drawn to the Father (5). Though grace is freely offered to man, yet it never makes him perfect (6), and there is to be a constant growth in virtue and holiness. This implies a daily dying to sin, and a daily resurrection in the power of Christ. Here we find the same doctrine as expressed so beautifully in the Small Catechism.

This process of sanctification is gradual, but none the less certain. Its final goal is reached

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- 1) Ibid., p. 84.
- 2) Ibid., p. 38.
- 3) Ibid., p. 32.
- 4) Ibid., p. 30.
- 5) Ibid., p. 36.
- 6) Ibid., p. 164

when man arises like unto Christ. That is unmistakably the meaning in the exposition on 3.25 (1):

"Right gladly I would that that little light of faith which is in my heart, were spread throughout all my body, and all the members thereof; but it is not done; it is not by-and-by spread, but only beginneth to be spread. In the mean season this is our consolation, that we who have the first fruits of the spirit, do now begin to be leavened; but we shall be thoroughly leavened, when this body of sin is dissolved, and we shall rise new creatures wholly, together with Christ."

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1) Ibid., p. 314.

F. CONCLUSION.

To study Luther's theology as revealed in the 1535 Commentary on Galatians has been the purpose of the present chapter. No effort was made to erect a system of dogmatics, but attention was given particularly to four soteriological questions: Justification by Faith, Christian Liberty and Assurance, the Law and the Gospel and Faith and Good Works, and the Doctrine of Man.

Comparisons made with previous works showed that in this Commentary Luther's views on justification and assurance reach a mature expression. Clearer than in his other writings does he here distinguish between the law and the gospel, and the sphere of faith and good works. The Commentary proves without question that faith to Luther meant something dynamic and personal, which of necessity bore fruit in ethical idealism. Luther's doctrine concerning man receives a particularly happy expression in this work. There is a note of positive Christian humanism; he has passed through earlier soul-struggles, and has emerged victorious.

In this Commentary Luther proves to us that the burning question of his younger years has now been answered: he has finally discovered that man can not make himself righteous and, therefore, God gracious; but that God is gracious and, therefore, makes man righteous. No longer does he ask: O when will you become pious, and do enough

that you may get a gracious God? He has learned that God is gracious, and that through a living faith in Christ man can stand before God and is pronounced righteous.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF LUTHER'S COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

A. INTRODUCTION.

In the foregoing chapters of this thesis we have sought to give a detailed account of the historical setting of Luther's commentaries on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, tracing the growth of the famous Commentary of 1535 from the lectures of 1516-1517, the Commentary of 1519, the German version of 1525, and the lectures of 1531; to portray the background and qualifications of Dr. Martin Luther as an exegete; to study the permanent value of Luther's exegesis as revealed in this Commentary; to outline Luther's theology as it is expressed in this work, making some comparisons with earlier versions and works, in order to know "the mind" of the mature Luther through this medium.

The purpose of this final chapter is to establish a summary and offer an interpretation, through which we would seek to give an answer to the question with which this investigation is concerned: In what does the permanent value of Luther's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians consist?

B. THE WIDE CIRCULATION OF THIS WORK.

The Commentary on Galatians is certainly one of the best known of the Reformer's works, and particularly in the Lutheran countries of Europe has it been a volume of wide circulation (1). Hardly, however, can we concur in the hurried statement of G. G. Findlay, that "Of all of the Reformer's writings this was the widest in its influence and the dearest to himself (2). It is extremely doubtful if any direct statement from Luther himself could be summoned to substantiate this latter contention, and anyone homed in Lutheran history knows that for range of influence the Catechisms -- though written for common peasant-folk -- outrank the more scholarly Commentary, being in the same category of influential writings with his German Bible, hymns, the much-loved "House Postil" and even some of the reformatory treatises, to say nothing of the ninety-five theses, the very tinder-box of the Reformation.

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1) Concerning the early translation of this work, cf. statement by Irmischer in the introduction to the Commentary in the Erlangen Edition: "tantoque cum applausu exceptus est, ut non solum eodem et sequente anno typis repeteretur, sed etiam in praecipuas Europae christianae linguas, et ante quidem apud exteras, quam apud Germanos transferretur" (p. iv).

2) G. G. Findlay, in "The Expositor's Bible," p. 4.

But not only in the Lutheran countries of Europe has this work seen numerous editions; it has proved exceedingly popular also in England and America.

"A Commentarie of M. Doctor Martin Luther upon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Galathians first collected and gathered word for word out of his preaching and now out of Latine faithfully translated into English. London. T. Vautrroullier. 1575." Such is the title-page of the first English version (1). The printer was a Huguenot who came to England about 1559, was admitted to his guild in 1564, and died in 1587. A Preface (2), written by Edwin Sandys, Bishop of London (3), tells all that is known of the transla-

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1) Otto Schmoller makes the following remark: "So highly esteemed was this work that there are but few early English commentaries. We may notice, however, Thomas Lushington: Commentary on Galatians, London, 1650. James Ferguson, Edinburgh, 1659." (In the Lange Commentary, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1870, p. 10, footnote.) However, it seems a rather far-fetched conclusion. (The commentary by Lushington has not been listed in the Bibliography of Commentaries given in Burton's Commentary, pp. lxxxii - lxxxvi, which aims at being exhaustive.)

2) The same Preface is found in my copy of the 1807 edition; very likely it was included in the majority of the printings.

3) A curious error has been made on p. vi in the Preface to "Five Minutes Daily With Luther", prepared by Dr. John Theodore Mueller (MacMillan, 1926). The compiler states that he is indebted to "Translation of Luther's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," by Edwinus London (!); (= Edwin, Bishop of London) was not the translator.

tors. It is not amiss to quote in extenso this word directed "To the Reader":

"This Book being brought unto me to peruse and to consider of, I thought it my part not only to allow of it to the print, but also to commend it to the Reader, as a Treatise most comfortable to all afflicted consciences exercised in the School of Christ. The Author felt what he spake, and had experience of what he wrote, and therefore able more lively to express both the assaults and the salving, the order of the battle, and the mean of the victory. Satan is the enemy; the victory is by only faith faith in Christ, as John recordeth. If Christ justify, who can condemn? saith St. Paul. This most necessary doctrine the Author hast not substantially cleared in this his commentary. Which being written in the Latin tongue, certain godly learned men have most sincerely translated into our language, to the great benefit of all such who with humble hearts will diligently read the same. Some began it according to such skill as they had. Others, godly affected, not suffering so good a matter, in handling to be marred, put to their helping hands for the better framing and furthering of so worthy a work. They refuse to be named, seeking neither their own gain nor glory, but thinking it their happiness, if by any means they may relieve afflicted minds, and do good to the church of Christ, yielding all glory unto God, to whom all glory is due.

Aprilis 28, 1575.

EDWINUS LONDON."

Dr. Preserved Smith believes that among English-speaking peoples this Commentary has proved of all the Reformer's writings the most popular (with which statement I in a general way do not hesitate to agree, for it

Dr. John Luther

COMMENTARY

ON
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS,
WHICH IS MOST EXCELLENTLY SET FORTH,
THE GLORIOUS RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE,
AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL;

WITH THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL:

AND
STRENGTH OF FAITH DECLARED, TO THE JOYFUL
COMFORT AND CONFIRMATION OF ALL TRUE
CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS;

ESPECIALLY SUCH AS BEING INWARDLY AFFLICTED AND
GRIEVED IN CONSCIENCE,

Do hunger and thirst for

JUSTIFICATION IN CHRIST JESUS;

FOR WHOSE CAUSE THIS BOOK IS MOST CHIEFLY TRANSLATED
AND PRINTED, AND DEDICATED TO THE SAME.

To which are now added,

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND PORTRAIT.

VOLUME I.

WRITTEN BY THE

**Famous Champion for the Faith of Christ,
DR. MARTIN LUTHER.**

*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth
not, shall be damned, Mark xvi. 16.
Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, John xii. 35.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BAXTER, AND SOLD BY WILLIAMS AND
SMITH, CROSSY AND CO., STATIONER'S COURT; HUTTON
AND HAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND
OGLE, HOLBORN.—1807



Dr. Martin Luther

Engraved by J. Baxter, London, 1807.

C. ESTIMATES OF THIS COMMENTARY.

It is but natural that Luther's Commentary on Galatians should have been judged in various ways; yet it is surprising to find such a note of agreement in the evaluations of his work which have been offered.

The popular tone to the language of this commentary, and its spiritual sincerity, have commended it wherever it has gone, is the verdict of Jacobs:

"In his lectures on Galatians he (Luther) gives expression to the faith of his heart on the central truths of Christianity, in language that has made them a favorite in many lands and tongues and ages, and to men of diverse creeds" (1).

The same Luther-scholar, writing in the Preface to the American edition of Meyer's Commentary, adds that Luther's Commentary owes all its power to the high degree with which Luther caught the spirit of Paul, applying his argument with the same earnestness to the relations of a later time (2).

Rev. William Pringle, who has translated the Commentary on Galatians by John Calvin, states in his Preface that Luther's Commentary is of a kind which gives an interesting link between Dogmatic and Exegetical Theology (3).

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1) Jacobs, "Martin Luther," p. 147.

2) Meyer, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Galatians," Preface to American Edition, p. iii.

3) Calvin, "Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians," Translator's Preface, p. vi.

"Thrown into the form of a Commentary," he states, "and honestly aiming at a faithful exposition of the Epistle, it nevertheless digresses frequently into doctrinal essays or treatises, exceedingly valuable in themselves, but not fitted to throw much light on that portion of the inspired writings which it is his professed object to investigate."

Such essays or treatises, however, Pringle maintains, are digressions which no one would want spared, for they are the most fascinating passages of a work which "the world will not willingly let die," and though the biblical critic may sometimes be disappointed with the defects of exposition, yet compensation is given with the earnest dwelling on the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, pronounced by Luther as the articulum stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae. Nothing can exceed the delightful freshness of Luther's illustrations on topics generally regarded as commonplace, nor "the easy, natural and varied statements which his sanctified genius pours forth out of the fulness of a deeply Christian heart."

With the implication couched in a statement in the Preface to Lightfoot's Commentary, that "the value of Luther's work stands apart from and in some respects higher than its merits as a commentary" (1) we shall deal in the next section, as with Findlay's statement

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1) Lightfoot, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," Preface, p. ix.

that "Luther's Ad Galatas is of unique historical interest" (1). I interpret the statements of both writers to refer to the position which the Commentary occupies principally in the history of exegesis.

Sanday and Headlam are of the opinion that "as marking an epoch in the study of St. Paul's writings, the most important place is occupied by his (Luther's) Commentary on the Galatians" (2). These authors add words concerning the Commentary in respect to exegesis, which we will treat below; and of Luther's relationship to St. Paul they state:

"By grasping, if in a one-sided way, some of St. Paul's leading ideas, and by insisting upon them with unwearied boldness and persistence, he produced conditions of religious life which made the comprehension of part of the Apostle's teaching possible."

Eadie also notes the parallel of the experience of Luther and the experience with which the Epistle to the Galatians has to do; the contents of the epistle, he states, "fitted in wondrously to his (Luther's) similar experiences and trials". In connection with this indirect estimate of the Commentary Eadie gives a paragraph summary of the theology of Luther as contained in his work (3).

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1) Findlay, in article on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. II, p. 1163.

2) Sanday and Headlam, "Commentary on Romans, in International Critical Commentary, p. ciii.

3) Eadie, "A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians," Preface, p. vii.

In the Preface to his own exposition on the Galatian Epistle Beet pays a tribute to Luther's work, telling of the value which it has meant for him:

"Luther's famous work has been constantly in my hands. I have read it with unflagging interest and great benefit. It is true that modern research has corrected not a few points in the Reformer's exegesis. And it is unfortunately true that occasionally his firm grasp of the great life-giving doctrine of Justification by Faith has obscured his view of other related doctrines, and has thus led him to incorrect or dangerous assertions. But in spite of the immense progress since his day in New Testament scholarship, and in spite of some blemishes, it is yet my deliberate judgment that, for the purpose for which the Epistle was written and for its chief practical worth now, Luther has caught and reproduced the inmost thought of Saint Paul more richly than has any other writer, ancient or modern. The Reformer's disposition and history and surroundings placed him in sympathy with the Apostle to a degree which no mere scholarship can reach. His Commentary on Galatians has therefore an interest which can never pass away" (1).

There is, then, in general, an agreement among commentators regarding the worth of Luther's Commentary, an agreement in regard to the relatively insignificant value of the work in the field of pure exegesis, but an appreciation of the work as a product of that time, and above all as an interpretation of the great author of the Epistle, Saint Paul.

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1) Beet, "Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," p. xii.

A common denominator of the many estimates given is found in the very sensible characterization of the work furnished by the editors of "Commentarius ad Galatas" in the Weimar Edition of Luther's works:

"Mögen wir Heutigen in vielen Einzelheiten der Texterklärung zu besseren wissenschaftlichen Resultaten gekommen sein -- wer wollte daraus einen Vorwurf für den Gelehrten des 16. Jahrhunderts herleiten? -- , so macht Luther gerade in diesem Kommentar im Anschluss an die energievollen Ausführungen des Paulus mit ausserordentlicher Wucht und Konsequenz das tiefste Wesen aller Religiosität: völliges Vertrauen auf Gott und gänzlichliches Absehen von aller Eigengerechtigkeit in einer Weise geltend, die auch uns noch etwas zu sagen hat" (1).

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1) W. ed. XXXX, p. 1.

D. THE POSITION OF THIS COMMENTARY IN THE
FIELD OF EXEGESIS.

In Chapter III of this dissertation we portrayed the backgrounds and qualifications of Luther as an exegete, and in the following chapter we made a more detailed examination of his exegesis as shown in this Commentary. Does Luther's Commentary on Galatians have any permanent value in the field of exegesis? As mentioned previously, comparing this work with commentaries of the present day, we at once see its tremendous shortcomings in the field of exegesis. As a work of pure exegesis, accordingly, the Commentary itself has no definite permanent value.

But considered in the light of its relation to the history of exegesis, we must say that it has more than ordinary value. It truly marked an epoch in the study of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Calvin, Hugo Grotius, and Bengel were to follow, There is a consistent development and evolution until we come to the massive productions from the pens of noted exegetes of the past generation. If Luther's Commentary on Galatians had done nothing further than to awaken an interest in the study of the Epistle itself - which reawakened interest lies at the very ground of the exegesis of all subsequent periods - it would have assured for itself

a permanent value. In such a way did this Commentary mark "an epoch in the study of St. Paul's writings" (1), and in the light of this we understand better Harnack's words: "In principle Luther prepared the way for a sound historical exegesis" (2).

E. THE VALUE OF THIS COMMENTARY AS AN
INTERPRETATION OF ST. PAUL.

Not a few scholars who have dealt with the life and the works of St. Paul, in commenting particularly on his Epistle to the Galatians, have made mention of Luther as the ideal interpreter of the spirit of St. Paul as exemplified in this Epistle. Deissman points out that the Apostle and the Reformer were the same in temper and temperament (3), and that there can be found a similarity even in the style of writing (4). Deissmann also points out that Luther together with Calvin, had a sympathetic understanding of the apostle's Christ-mysticism (5). The parallel of the spirit in Luther's work and writings and that of the epistle in question is hinted at by Farrar (6), and Glover adds the following interesting paragraph:

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- 1) Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. ciii.
- 2) Harnack, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 234.
- 3) Deissman, "St. Paul", p. 18.
- 4) Ibid., 68.
- 5) Ibid., p. 155.
- 6) Farrar, "The Life and Work of St. Paul", p. 2

"In the story of the Christian church two men stand out, qualified beyond others by genius and experience, to understand Paul - Augustine and Luther. Much material, unknown to either of them, is available for the modern scholar; but one is disposed to question whether after all it is so important as we sometimes suppose - whether it really matters at all, compared with the insight, which in Augustine and Luther was given by God and developed in life. Genius rather than scholarship is the touchstone by which to test genius" (1).

The same author states:

"Luther remains a great interpreter of Paul; for, whatever ought to be deducted because of sixteenth-century controversies and all the history, traditions, and politics that colour them, whatever must be modified by later-gained precision in scholarship, Luther has the same largeness and variety of mind as Paul, the same experience of failure in the struggle for righteousness, the same realization of a new life given by Christ; and these after all are the central and decisive things in Paul" (2).

Strohl also stresses "la parenté' entre Luther et Paul," speaking particularly of the conception of "spirit and flesh" which the two had in common, the experiences which they passed through, and also their similar conception of the true nature of religion (3).

In commenting on 1.14 Luther speaks very pointedly of the similar nature of the experience of Paul and that which he himself had passed through. Paul had been a most zealous and earnest defender of the law of Moses

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- 1) Glover, "Paul of Tarsus", p. 46.
- 2) Ibid., p. 74.
- 3) Strohl, op. cit., p. 1516.

and had been strong in the traditions of the Fathers, living a life which proximated the ideal of human righteousness before the law. Luther had been zealous for the papistical laws and traditions of the Fathers, earnestly maintaining and defending them as holy and necessary to salvation. Perhaps no portion of the Commentary shows us more keenly how Luther sensed his spiritual relationship to St. Paul than the one just cited (1). Luther's Commentary remains an exceptionally excellent study of the mind of St. Paul.

F. THE VALUE OF THIS COMMENTARY IN
GIVING US AN INSIGHT INTO THE SPIRITUAL
NATURE OF LUTHER.

Had we no other works from the pen of the great Reformer we would nevertheless be in a position to judge fairly accurately concerning the man, his personality, influence, and theology from the pages of the 1535 Commentary. For we must bear in mind that this is a production of the mature Luther and one upon which he had placed thought and labor for many years. We would certainly not be in uncertainty of Luther's position

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 60.

relative to leading doctrines as expressed in this Epistle. In no other single work of the reformer does he so clearly distinguish between the meaning of the law and the meaning of the gospel, and the sphere of faith and good works. The doctrine of justification by faith alone, with which he had come face to face during his Lectures on Romans, now has been seasoned and finds in this Commentary a most notable expression.

Dr. Preserved Smith, in speaking of the course of Luther's Lectures on Psalms 1513-1516, states that the subjective nature of the material in the Lectures is a decided advantage to us in studying and understanding Luther, for, he says, "the less of the Psalmist and of Paul, the more of Luther" (1).

In the work which we have studied we find no such an abundance of autobiographical material as is found in the Psalms Lectures. Largely with the material at hand in this volume, however, plus the material given in the Tischreden, William James has given us his psychological study of Luther (2).

On several occasions, as we would expect, Luther in this Commentary makes mention of the spiritual struggles which he had known during the monastic life.

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- 1) Smith, "Luther's Doctrine of Justification", p. 418.
- 2) James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience", pp. 128, 137, 244, 330, 348, 382.

Some of the passages in this Commentary in which Luther tells us of his heaviness of heart and his melancholy, remind of the treatment by Söderblom of this same element of melancholy in the life of Luther (1). Of the serious nature of the struggle through which he passed during his monastic life we have a reminder in this Commentary when he says that he would have been driven unto desperation "if Christ had not mercifully looked upon me and delivered me out of this error" (2). But there is also found in these pages a note of assurance, a militant Christian spirit, seldom, if ever, equalled in the Reformer's writings.

He even rises on one occasion in this Commentary to a defense of his own marriage when he says: "And this place must be well considered, because of the slanderous and caviling papists which wrest the same against us saying, that we in popery began in the spirit, but now, having married wives, we end in the flesh. . . . The spirit is whatsoever is done in us according to the spirit; the flesh, whatsoever is done in us according to the flesh without the spirit. Wherefore, all the duties of a Christian man, as to love of his wife, to bring up his children, to govern his family, and such like (which unto them are worldly

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 155. Cf. Soderblom, op. cit., p. 69-119.

2) Ibid., p. 199

and carnal) are the fruits of the spirit" (1).

An interesting sidelight into his personal relationship to the Church of Rome is given us in the sentence: "Wherefore, if the Pope will grant unto us that God alone by his mere grace through Christ doth justify sinners, we will not only carry him in our hands, but will also kiss his feet" (2). Does it not cast some light on the oft-repeated statement that Luther sincerely wished that the break with Rome could have been averted?

G. THE VALUE OF THIS COMMENTARY AS A
RELIGIOUS CLASSIC.

Luther's celebrated Commentary on Galatians has also most decidedly enjoyed another value which we can not pass by. We refer to its value as a religious classic, as a devotional book which has seen constant use for centuries, particularly within the Lutheran Church. Luther wrote it that it might serve as an aid to all those who have an "afflicted conscience", by which he meant, doubtlessly, those who pain themselves by seeking to win righteousness through adherence to the law and who have not come to know the glorious freedom which is in Christ.

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1) Gal. Comm., p. 188.
2) Ibid., p. 86.

In the homiletical department of Lange's Commentary, Schmoller, who writes the volume on Galatians, uses Luther's Commentary more often than any other volume. The American editor of the Commentary states that this constant use of Luther on the part of Schmoller "almost requires an apology". He then adds that the best apology which could be offered would be the words of John Bunyan: "This methinks I must let fall before all men. I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all books that ever I have seen as most fit for a wounded conscience" (1). The fact that this work of Luther's has enjoyed such tremendous popularity, of which we made mention in a previous section in this same chapter, leads us to believe that thousands of similar sentiments have been ^{held} ~~thought~~ or expressed.

A tacit recognition of the spiritual value of this volume is found in the number of quotations made from it in the devotional volume "Five Minutes Daily with Luther" (2). In this book there are no less than 132 meditations which are excerpts from Luther's Commentary on Galatians. There are 80 from

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1) Lange, "Commentary", p. 9

2) Cf. Mueller, "Five Minutes Daily With Luther".

the Commentary on I Peter, and 40 from the Commentary on II Peter. From this one can see what value is placed upon the contents of this commentary for devotional reading.

To have a correct understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith, of the relation of the law and the gospel, and of faith and good works is of cardinal importance for every Christian. In giving a clear exposition of these, Luther's Commentary on Galatians has assured for itself a permanent place among religious classics of the world.

H. CONCLUSION

Three times must the student of Ecclesiastical History make a pause in his studies in order to acquaint himself more intimately with a personality, seeking to analyze its spiritual content and contributions (1). At the threshold of the Old Church stands the Apostle Paul, engaged in battle with the Judaizers, proclaiming the freedom for which Christ hath set us free, encouraging to spiritual stability, and warning of the entanglement and bondage to which enslavement the opposition tended. Saint Augustine appears at the beginning of the Middle Ages. Forgiveness through the free grace which is in Christ had been his vitalizing

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1) Schubert, "Luthers Fr^uentwicklung," p. 1.

experience, and to such a soul the claims of the Pelagians, encouraging to good works for merit, constituted the robbing from Christ of His spiritual glory as Lord and Redeemer. The sixteenth century witnessed a renewal of the conflict. Sinful man has the boldness to appear before the Holy God, not clothed in the filthy rags of his own righteousness, but embracing in faith the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself up for his redemption. The exchange is effected. Sinfulness is cast upon Christ; His righteousness is given in return. The lower self is sacrificed; a new life appears, created by the presence of the Inner Guest in the heart of man. Man is justified by faith; that life of faith necessarily blossoms into a life of good works. Dr. Martin Luther was the mouth-piece of God calling his and succeeding generations to seek and to receive that higher righteousness. In the volume with which this treatise has been concerned this his cardinal doctrine is expounded. Luther has been called an apostle by some and named a prophet by others. But the rather did God summon him to be an evangelist (1), to rediscover and proclaim the Good News for which sinful man is hungry. We do not need a new Reformation, If the races of men in our times return to the Word of God, in penitence and faith, then we shall witness the Continued Reformation.

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1) Billing, "Luthers storhet," p. 31.

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