

2-1-1938

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Recommended Citation

Buzin, Walter E. (1938) "The Import and Content of Luther's Exegetical Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 9 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol9/iss1/10>

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4. Wann wurde Christus geboren? (Vgl. Bb. III, 725 ff.)

5. Der Judaismus am Anfang der christlichen Ära. Die strengere Richtung oder Schule des Schammai und die liberalere des Hillel; die verschiedenen Parteien oder Sekten innerhalb der jüdischen Kirche (Pharisäer und Sadduzäer, später auch Essener); die jüdische Gottesdienstordnung und die jüdische Liturgie; die messianischen Erwartungen des jüdischen Volkes. Vgl. Apost. 26, 3 ff.

Dieser Artikel ist absichtlich dispositionsmäßig und aphoristisch gehalten, damit er als Vorlage für Konferenzerarbeiten oder beim Privatstudium verwendet werden kann.

P. E. Preßmann

The Import and Content of Luther's Exegetical Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews

It has been abundantly proved that, when Luther nailed the famous Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, he had no thought of disrupting the Church. The tenor of the theses shows very clearly that he had in mind only to uphold the honor and the integrity of the Church he loved and to keep his fellow human beings from being defrauded financially as well as spiritually. His theses likewise show that he wanted to be and remain a faithful subject of the Pontiff at Rome. He took for granted that the Pope would heartily disapprove of the tactics and practises of Tetzl. He not only nailed his theses to the door of the Castle Church, but also very obediently sent a copy to his archbishop.

Luther was still a young man at the time he took this step which did so much to shape his career. His thirty-fourth birthday was only a few days distant. During the early years of his life he had made marvelous progress in all that he undertook. Available records show that he had been a high-grade student at the schools which he had attended. The University of Erfurt, which he entered in 1501, was noted for its laudable ecclesiastical life and enjoyed great fame. While a student at this institution, Luther interested himself particularly in the Latin classics and in philosophy. When he entered the monastery in 1505, he took his copies of Vergil and Plautus with him. He purposely entered a monastery whose standards of life, discipline, morality, and religiosity were far above the standards of the average monastery. Luther was not a typical monk, however, and even in the Augustinian monastery which he entered he was far above the ordinary. His mind was by nature too active to permit him to idle away hours in inert meditation, as did his fellow-monks. He gave much time to intense study, especially to a deep and serious study of theology. Most monks of the

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monastery were required to devote from six to eight hours daily to chapel services; those studying theology, however, were excused from a large part of chapel attendance. Luther grasped the opportunity of studying theology while his fellow-monks spoke their paternosters to the count of rosary beads. In these days, too, he convinced himself of the futility of work-righteousness through personal experiences as well as through the study of Scripture. Previously he had regarded Jesus merely as a severe Judge; but now he learned to know Him as his loving Savior. He studied deeply and, like a real scholar, did not permit himself to be swayed by mere fancies.

Luther was ordained into the priesthood in 1507, made a journey to Rome in 1510, and in 1512 was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology. A year before he received this degree he was called to the chair of Biblical exegesis at the University of Wittenberg, which had been founded by Elector Frederick the Wise in 1502. Luther was inclined not to accept this appointment, feeling incapable of doing the work required of a professor of theology. His disinclination was intensified by reason of the circumstance that frequent preaching was considered a part of such professorship. For this work he likewise considered himself unworthy and unqualified. Had it not been for Staupitz, he very likely would not have accepted the proffered chair. In the first five years of his professorship he lectured with immediate success on the Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews.

It is highly significant that Luther, during all his years at the University of Wittenberg, taught exegetical branches only. He undoubtedly was well qualified to teach theology in its systematic, historical, and practical divisions, but having been called to teach exegesis, he evidently desired to restrict himself to this one particular field. It is well to bear this in mind when examining the part Luther played in the Reformation movement as well as when considering Luther's act on that memorable 31st of October. Luther was far from being a mad monk or an insolent priest. He was conservative by nature, and his Ninety-five Theses were not published until he had first occupied himself most carefully with the entire problem of indulgences. His studies in exegesis undoubtedly helped him realize what was really wrong about the sale of indulgences. Humanly speaking, it is very doubtful if he would have been successful in his work of reforming the Church had he not been an exegete. There is hardly another branch of theology which could drive him so deeply into the Scriptures. It is not at all surprising to hear him, the Great Reformer, emphasize time and time again that the Word is the chief thing in the Christian Church. He himself had learned to know the power of the Gospel of Christ Jesus,

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and he knew that, if a reformation was to take place, the power of the Word alone would bring it about.

While Luther developed and grew as an exegete, he learned more and more what great values are attached to studying the Scriptures in the original. His early lectures on the Psalms, Galatians, and Romans, it is true, were based on the Vulgate version of the Bible. He noted, however, that the humanists in their endeavors adopted as a principle the words "*Ad fontes*"; and when Erasmus in 1516 published the original Greek version of the New Testament Scriptures, Luther was among the first to make use of it. He was, in fact, the first exegete to use the original Greek text as the basis for his lectures in a German university. He first used the Greek text when he lectured on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The first eight chapters were presented according to the Vulgate, but from the ninth chapter on he based his lectures on the original Greek. His first discourses on Galatians, which preceded those on Hebrews, were likewise based on the Greek text. Before Luther began lecturing on Hebrews, he felt his way a great deal, as it were, when reading and studying his Greek. It was actually not until he lectured on Hebrews that he gave the impression of having mastered the language to a degree. He had derived a great deal of help in the understanding of Greek from his fellow-monk and colleague Johann Lang, a humanist. He had already known Lang as a student at Erfurt. Both had been together in the same monastery in Erfurt, and both were again together in Wittenberg until Lang, in 1516, departed from Wittenberg to become a prior in Erfurt. When preparing his lectures, Luther frequently consulted Lang concerning the etymology of certain Greek words and also sought his advice concerning a number of lexical problems. It is noteworthy that Luther had studied Greek quite thoroughly even before he came to Wittenberg in 1508, although he did not fully master the language until the *Praeceptor Germaniae* had been his colleague for some time. It is believed that Luther's lectures on Hebrews had much to do with the calling of Melanchthon to Wittenberg. Melanchthon was recommended to Elector Frederick the Wise by Johannes Reuchlin, a great-uncle of Melanchthon.

It so happened that at the very time Luther was preparing his lectures on Hebrews, Erasmus was engaged in a study of this epistle jointly with Faber Stapulensis (Lefèvre d'Étaples). Faber was a famous French exegete and an outstanding humanist, to whose *Quincuplex Psalterium* Luther often reverted while preparing his lectures on the Psalms and whose commentary on the Pauline epistles Luther had used extensively when he prepared his lectures on Romans. Erasmus and Faber had published their findings and conclusions, and Luther followed their work very closely.

When a comparison is made of Luther's lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews with his earlier lectures on Galatians, it is significant to note that he referred back to the original text more frequently in the former than in the latter, quoting words and expressions from the original Greek seventeen times. What is just as significant is the fact that Luther in his lectures on Hebrews quotes from the original version of Old Testament words and passages no fewer than twenty-nine times. At first he transliterated the Hebrew with Latin letters, but later he employed the Hebrew script. By this time he knew the Hebrew language far better than when he had lectured on the Psalms. At that time his knowledge of Hebrew, like that of Greek, was slightly more than rudimentary. For this reason his early lectures on the Psalms were based largely on the Vulgate. He was quite dissatisfied with the first exegetical course he had offered at Wittenberg, largely because he learned to realize the insufficiency of an exegetical course not based on the original text of the Scriptures. He studied Hebrew assiduously and observed keenly what had been said and written by such noted Hebraists as Johannes Reuchlin († 1522) and Nicolaus von Lyra († 1340). When preparing his lectures on Hebrews, he used not only Reuchlin's edition of the Penitential Psalms, but he also made great use of his *Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae* as well as of his *Vocabularius Breviloquus*. Nicolaus von Lyra had gained fame chiefly through his *Bibelpostille*, which was highly regarded in the Church of the 15th and 16th centuries. Preparing his first lectures on the Psalms and on Romans, Luther, as a rule, rejected most of what von Lyra had said. At the time he prepared his lectures on Hebrews, however, he had learned to depend heavily on von Lyra, at least in matters of linguistics and philology.

Luther at times also compared the LXX version of certain Old Testament texts with the Masoretic texts of the Old Testament Scriptures. He was quick to notice that the Apostle Paul usually used the LXX when quoting from Old Testament Scriptures. In his lectures on Hebrews he often exerted definite efforts at analyzing certain forms and did not hesitate to use words which had not been used in translations before. He, moreover, observed not only details, but also made certain general observations. He had developed a remarkable *Sprachgefuehl* for both the Greek and the Hebrew, so that even at this time the great translator of the Bible is recognizable.

Luther's lectures on the Psalms, on Romans, and on Galatians had already revealed his extensive knowledge of the Scriptures as well as of the writings of commentators and the Church Fathers. It is therefore not surprising to note that he revealed wide knowledge along these lines in his lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

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Here we discover how well he was acquainted with the writings of such men as Paul of Burgos, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, and particularly of Bernard of Clairvaux, whose writings were published in Germany and were also being studied in class at the University of Wittenberg at the very time when Luther lectured on Hebrews. Luther likewise quotes from the writings of Cyprian, Gregory the Great, and Dionysius the Areopagite. Occasionally he refers to the writings of Origen, and it was Luther who invented the verb *origenisare*, to allegorize. He often consulted Chrysostom in preparing these lectures; but he confessed later in his *Tischreden*: "Er liess mich stecken an allen orten, da ich sein darft. Er ist ein lauter wescher, lest den text fallen." (*Tischreden*, Weimar Ed., I, 1912, No. 188.) Jerome, whose writings were edited by Erasmus, was also carefully read by Luther, particularly, however, at the time when he prepared his lectures on Galatians. Later he no longer regarded him as a trustworthy authority. His study of the Epistle to the Hebrews helped in having him arrive at this conclusion. Luther's greatest authority of course was Augustine, who came to be a tremendous influence in shaping his theological mind. Luther's study of the writings of Augustine, together with his study of the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians, prompted him to forsake definitely the scholastic theologians.

The question of the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews disturbed theologians in the 16th century, just as it vexes the scholars of today. Faber believed that the epistle had originally been written in Hebrew by Paul. Erasmus fought against the Pauline authorship at the time when he worked with Faber on this epistle. Luther at first agreed with Faber, believing that the epistle had been written by Paul. Some years later Erasmus, in order to maintain peace in the Roman Catholic Church, bowed to the Church's authority and also accepted the belief that Paul had written the epistle. Luther, following his own convictions, later changed his mind and no longer regarded Paul as the author. We here observe a characteristic difference between these two great men. Luther never would have sacrificed his convictions merely to preserve peace.

Luther delivered his lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, according to Karlstadt, from Easter of 1517 to Easter of 1518. Immediately before he had lectured on Galatians, and some assert that the lectures on Hebrews really were a supplement and complement to those on Galatians. His second series of lectures on the Psalms followed his lectures on Hebrews. He had enjoyed an enviable reputation as a teacher and exegete long before he delivered these lectures. His lectures on Hebrews, however, were so successful that his colleague Karlstadt could not refrain from re-

ferring to Luther publicly as the outstanding instructor at the university. In making this pronouncement, he also extolled Luther's knowledge of the Scriptures "*non modo Latinarum, sed et Graecarum et Hebraicarum.*" (Karlstadt, *Erlaeuterungen zu Augustinus De Spiritu et Literu; Anrede an die Wittenberger Studierenden*. H. Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt*; Leipzig, 1905, II, 536.) The lectures proved to be a powerful influence among the followers of Luther. Bugenhagen is known to have used them in his lectures, and Amsdorf turned them to rich account in his lectures on Hebrews. Luther offered this course at a critical stage of his career, at a time which really marked the end of the first and the beginning of the second great period of his life. We view here not only the great translator of the Bible, but also Martin Luther the Reformer, a man whose work of reforming was first begun after he had evidenced his greatness as a theologian, scholar, and thinker. In these lectures is recorded forcefully his ability as a philologist, exegete, and teacher. He knew how to present lucidly what is most important and to stress what is most significant.

Since Luther's lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews form such an important link in the chain of his many works, one would think that the world had known and studied their contents from pages printed widely as far back as the 16th century. This unfortunately is not the case. That Luther did actually deliver these lectures one need not doubt; for he himself referred to them several times in his *Tischreden* (cf., e.g., Weimar ed., Band I, 1912, No. 188). Karlstadt, as previously stated, testified to their delivery, as did also Poliander (cf. Weimar ed. of Luther's Works, IX, 1893, 324), Johannes Aepinus (*Enarratio in Psalmum 68*; Francofurti 1553, p. 170), and others. Strange to say, a copy of the lectures was not found until the year 1899, when Hermann Vogel and Johannes Ficker discovered a copy, bound together with Luther's lectures on Titus and other *Lutherana*, in the Vatican Library in Rome. These lectures were found at the time when Vogel and Ficker brought to light Luther's lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. His lectures on Hebrews were not published until Emmanuel Hirsch and Hanns Rueckert published them in July, 1929, by the house of Walter de Gruyter of Berlin and Leipzig. In the same year Johann Ficker finally published his find, though he was quite chagrined that the Hirsch-Rueckert edition had appeared prior to his own. In the following year a German translation was published, which had been prepared by Erich Vogelsang. An English translation has not as yet appeared.

It is most unfortunate that nothing is known of the whereabouts of Luther's own manuscript and notes and that scholars and research-workers are compelled to base their studies of these lec-

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tures largely on material derived from two students' note-books. Three sources are extant today, from which Vogelsang, Hirsch, Rueckert, Ficker, and others have ascertained the actual contents of these lectures.

The first source is the copy found in the Vatican Library. It had once been in the possession of Ulrich Fugger. Later it was transferred to the library at Heidelberg and some time after the middle of the 16th century found its way to the Vatican Library. In this manuscript Luther's exposition of the epistle does not go beyond Heb. 10:26. The handwritings are those of Aurifaber, who was among the first to edit Luther's Works, particularly his *Tischreden*, and of an assistant, a skilled chirographer, with genuine scholarly ability. The lectures were copied very carefully. Aurifaber and his assistant call attention to portions of lectures which had been omitted by the student whose notes they copied and in several instances to the possibility of other readings. Erasures and corrections show that the copyists tried industriously to reproduce a trustworthy copy. Nevertheless not a few mistakes crept in. Many words were omitted, and the references to passages in the Bible were not always complete and correct in these notes. The student taking notes, a large part of which had been dictated, committed many *Hoerfehler*, and there are not a few mistakes in spelling (e. g., *simpola* for *symbola*, *fere* for *vere*, *licebat* for *dicebat*, etc.). The copyists also made mistakes. They mistook *cum* for *eum*, *factum* for *factura*, *poenae* for *paene*, *omnium* for *hominum*, *Bonifacius* for *Bonaventura*, *Redelstein* for *Reuchlin*, etc. Meissinger believes that Luther's Saxon dialect was partly responsible for the *Hoerfehler*. (*Luthers Exegese der Fruehzeit*, Meissinger; Leipzig, 1911, p. 20.)

The second source is a student's note-book which is in the library in Dessau, Germany. The name of the student was Sigismundus Reichenbach of Lobnitz. These notes, too, are incomplete; several pages are missing. They were manifestly written hurriedly, and many abbreviations are to be found in them. Certain parts were taken down as dictation, whereas other parts, it seems, were copied from other students, evidently when young Reichenbach had been absent from class. In these notes there likewise are many *Hoerfehler*, and often much is omitted, which indicates that the student found it difficult to follow Luther. The notes therefore are often not satisfactorily intelligible. They are, however, highly valuable, since they indicate to some extent what Luther dictated and also what he said when he made offhand remarks.

The third source is the lectures Amsdorf delivered on Hebrews, in which he not only leans very heavily on what Luther had said, but in which he even appropriates Luther's own words and passes

them on as his own. These lectures were found in the library of the *Ratsschule* at Zwickau. They are believed to have been delivered ca. 1530. Amsdorf is known to have leaned quite heavily on Luther also in other exegetical lectures.

The first two sources agree quite well and also supplement each other. In the manuscript found in Rome, Greek and Hebrew words are occasionally recorded. It is not surprising that Greek and Hebrew words were often badly misspelled. A perusal of almost any student's notes on exegesis will establish that this happens even in our own age and time. Mr. Reichenbach refused to expose himself to this danger, however, and transliterated all Greek and Hebrew words with Latin letters.

In the Vatican manuscript it is stated expressly that the lectures were delivered in 1517 and 1518. The class met twice a week, from twelve o'clock until one. When setting up the physical structure of his lectures, Luther followed the custom of his day of having them consist of two distinct parts, the so-called *glossae* and the *scholia*. The *glossae* were interlinear and marginal remarks entered directly into his text of the epistle, the former explaining individual words and the latter establishing the connection with illustrative citations, religious comments, and various contemporary references. Accompanying this textual apparatus, we have in the other manuscript the *scholia*, in which Luther discusses freely the basic thoughts of the work and debates with his predecessors and opponents, drawing on a wide range of authors as well as on contemporary history for illustration and support.

The Dessau manuscript contains the *scholia* of the first five chapters, but none on the lectures delivered in the course of the winter semester. During the spring or summer semester Luther covered chapters one to five. The remaining chapters were treated in the winter semester, which, according to all indications, began on October 26, five days before Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Castle Church. Unfortunately the *scholia* which are available today do not bring out the vigorous character which Luther invariably evinced in his classroom lectures. It may be that the students who took down these notes are responsible for this. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with which Luther opened his lectures for the winter semester, we find that the writer of the epistle calls his readers to repentance and to faith; but Luther says nothing which points to his Ninety-five Theses. Luther's remarks on Heb. 10:26—36 were not recorded at all. It is believed by some that he was perhaps in haste and spoke freely on this section, without dictating any notes. Possibly he had not had the time to prepare notes for dictation. The Ninety-five Theses were by this time undoubtedly showing effects, which absorbed

much of Luther's time. His summer lectures had been quite detailed, but in his lectures on the later chapters of the epistle he usually, though not always, ignored details and hurried along. His lectures on the later chapters of the epistle are not so well balanced as his lectures on the early chapters. At times he devotes much time to certain special points and words (e. g., Heb. 11:1, where he devotes practically the entire consideration to the word *substantia*), and at other times he hurriedly passes over points to which one would expect him to devote much attention. At times he grips with only a few pointed and energetic words (e. g., his remarks on Heb. 12:1, 2); at other times he goes into great detail and uses many words in order to stress his point (cf. his remarks on Heb. 2:14). It seems that the matter of his Ninety-five Theses does not explain entirely the haste shown in expounding the last chapters of the epistle. Other teachers of exegesis are known to have accelerated their tempo in order to complete their exegetical lectures on an entire book of the Bible.

Studying the theological content of Luther's lectures on Hebrews and comparing what he there says with what had been said in his lectures on Romans and the Psalms, we can distinctly notice that and how Luther was growing and becoming more and more evangelical in his theology. As one reads these commentaries, one would never surmise that they were written by an ardent Roman Catholic. There is in them an evangelical strain which sounds quite different from what other Roman Catholic commentators had to say. On the other hand, although these lectures on Hebrews were delivered at the time Luther began his career as a Reformer, we find in them no ranting and raving about the sale of indulgences and other abuses which had crept into the Roman Catholic Church. Luther seems to have remained cool and sober. It may be, as stated before, that those taking notes purposely omitted such remarks. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that students, who are usually fond of explosions and seldom fail to note them, should have ignored such remarks completely had Luther made them. We do find a slight reference or two which point to the indulgence traffic, e. g., in Luther's remarks on Heb. 11:4; but he is by no means obsessed with the idea, and throughout these lectures we see him exert the finest kind of self-control. His lectures on Romans reveal the spiritual corruption of his day much better than his lectures on Hebrews, though also in these lectures he occasionally points to the evils of his day, e. g., in his remarks on Heb. 5:1, where he strongly denounces the frenzy of certain Romanists who were persecuting Jews that had cut up Communion wafers with knives and perforated them with small picks. Luther at this point does become rather fiery, even calling those priests "demons" who

took part in, and encouraged, this persecution. In these lectures he in fact does begin to attack the clergy with greater acerbity than ever before; but he is not yet nearly as emphatic as he later got to be.

Even at this early stage of his development Luther does not hesitate to reject certain traditional views and attitudes which had crept into Roman theology. The very fact that he used Erasmus's edition of the original Greek text of the New Testament Scriptures in preference to the Vulgate manifests the spirit of independence which was beginning to assert itself more strongly in him. He read and used, as pointed out, what such men as Chrysostom, Augustine, Faber Stapulensis, Reuchlin, Erasmus, and others had said and written, though he did not take for granted that all of it was true and reliable. On the contrary, in looking for the interpretation of Scriptures, he trusted implicitly only the Scriptures, adopting as his principle *Scriptura Scripturam interpretat*. When the Scriptures spoke, he maintained silence. Traditions of the Church and the writings of the Fathers he valued highly, but only the Scriptures were final. Here is the essential difference between Luther and Rome and likewise between Luther and the humanists. The humanists, including Erasmus, believed, as do many today, that knowledge and learning, culture and erudition, can improve man. Luther stressed that only a change of heart (*transitus cordis*) can change man for the better. The humanists did not hesitate to weave their own thoughts into Biblical passages. Luther, on the other hand, feared and respected the Word so intensely that he did not dare to have his own thoughts invade Scripture-passages. This is what he said in this connection in his lecture on Heb. 6:13: "For that reason those do err badly who attempt to understand the Holy Scriptures and the Law of God with their own spirit and through their own efforts. From this arise heresies and godless dogmas, namely, as soon as they approach the Scriptures not as receptive students, but as meddling teachers (*sed magistri operosi*). How can one [of himself] understand God, to say nothing about loving Him, when all His counsels and all His thoughts are rejected? Therefore it is the work of the Holy Spirit which helps man when he is in such spiritual darkness to understand this invisible will of God." In other words, Luther emphasizes that, since man is by nature in spiritual darkness, he can only put his own conception of the will of God into the passages of Scripture. The words of Scripture itself must interpret the will of God which is revealed in it.

Although Luther had stressed the importance of faith prior to his lectures on Hebrews, notably in those on Galatians and Romans, he had never so strongly emphasized the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion as he did in his lectures on Hebrews. His studies

of Galatians and Romans had positively saturated him with this great doctrine, and now, when he lectured on Hebrews, the fruits and blessings of his study of this doctrine became richly manifest. It has been indicated that, as he advanced toward the end of his lectures, he rather hurried along and did not show the thoroughness observable in the early chapters of the epistle, in the spring of 1517. It must be noted that, although in a hurry, he did retard his speed considerably when treating that precious eleventh chapter, which emphasizes that all the great men of God have been heroes of faith. Here he took great care to drive his point home. But also when treating other chapters, did he greatly stress the importance of faith. Thus, when expounding Heb. 4:2, he was at great pains to impress upon his students the close relationship between faith, the Word, and the heart. It is faith which serves as the connecting link between the Word on the one hand and the heart on the other. Through faith, he says, these two are united, "just as man and woman become one flesh when they are united in marriage."

But Luther has more to say about faith. It is something that is sure and certain, and it is something that each individual must with God's help acquire for himself as a personal possession if it is to be of any value. All that man possesses outside of faith is merely a fancy or a dream, which is as easily extinguished as the light of a candle when it is beaten by the wind. Genuine personal faith, moreover, is like a sunbeam, which cannot be extinguished even by storms and tempests. So Luther speaks when treating Heb. 11:6. In connection with Heb. 11:1, 2 he defines faith as a "clinging to the Word of God"; he also quotes Chrysostom, who says: "Faith is a beholding of those things which we do not see." (*Homil.*, 21:2 f., 51.) Throughout these lectures one perceives that Luther is in his element when speaking of faith and the blessings of faith. His discussions of faith are full of warmth and sanguineness, and he fairly becomes ecstatic when he accentuates the bliss which comes to those who have faith in the Redeemer of mankind and thus are saved. Had not his own personal experiences shown him the futility of man's efforts to save himself through other means? We here have the reason why Luther became so positively bitter against the Church of Rome and her theologians because they gave less prominence to faith in Christ than to the works of man. "The just shall live by his faith," Hab. 2:4; these words of the Old Testament prophet became the great slogan of Luther and all his followers. It must not be forgotten that Luther was convinced of the truthfulness of these words before he ever thought of writing a set of theses and publicizing them.

This faith, however, is not a product of nature, but is the work of God. Luther's own words on this point were: "*Haec autem fides non ex natura, sed ex gratia venit. Natura autem formidat et fugit a facie Dei, non Deum, sed tyrannum et tortorem et iudicem eum credens. . .*" (On Heb. 11:6.) When treating Heb. 10:5, he said very plainly: "*Dominus est operator, qui operatur omnia in omnibus, et nos nihil operamur. Deus solus operator.*" He herewith attacked of course the whole system of those who taught work-righteousness as well as of those who believed they could create faith. To such Luther says pointblank: "*Nos nihil operamur.*" "With might of ours can naught be done." When evaluating man's native religiosity in this connection, he simply says: "*Nihil autem est in homine, quod non sit vanitas et mendacium.*" (On Heb. 11:6.) This was another point on which Luther insisted throughout his career as Reformer, and of this point, too, he was absolutely sure before he ever began his work of reforming.

We can likewise see from his lectures on Hebrews that Luther at this stage began to be aware of the difference between Law and Gospel, between the dispensation of the Old Testament, which was under the Law, and the dispensation of the New Testament, which is free from the yoke of the Law. The ceremonialism of the Old Testament was but a shadow of what was to come, but the body was of Christ. When Luther therefore lectured on Heb. 7:12 ("For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law"), he stressed not only that the Old Testament ceremonies had been abrogated through the work of Christ, but also that, while the children of God in the Old Testament had been obligated by God to observe certain outward practises and ceremonies of life, the children of God in the New Testament are to pay greater heed to the internal things of the Spirit of God. The priests of the Old Testament were obliged to clothe themselves in beautifully colored garments and vestments; but to the clergy of the New Testament apply especially the words of the psalmist: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness," Ps. 132:9. In other words, says Luther, while the priests of the Old Testament were to be distinguished from other people through their clothing, the clergy of the New Testament are to distinguish themselves through noticeable sanctity and righteousness. Furthermore, while the children of the Old Testament dispensation offered goats and rams as their sacrifices, the children of the New Testament offer their hearts and souls to God. When treating Heb. 7:12, Luther also added the following significant remarks: "For this reason the office of the New Testament priest is not really to teach the Law but to proclaim the grace of Jesus Christ, which is the fulfilment of the Law, that they might 'show

forth Thy loving-kindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness every night,' Ps. 92:3." We see here not only many thrusts against Roman Catholicism but also against the moralists and legalists of our own day, who teach and elevate everything but the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Because the members of the clergy are given the privilege of preaching the Gospel, Luther calls the office of the ministry an *opus bonum, non otiosum*. (On Heb. 5:4.) Serving as clergyman in Luther's days was, in the eyes of the public, anything but an *opus bonum*; but Luther considered it a wonderful and necessary office, instituted by God for the welfare of mankind.

Luther's remarks on the rites and ceremonies of the Christian Church are very interesting. These were made particularly when he came to the opening verses of the tenth chapter of Hebrews. Luther said: "Outward ceremonies have been instituted not because salvation is to be found in them, but rather that they might afford opportunities to practise Christian faith and love and to ward off sin more effectively. When people, however, begin to have some other object in view and make use of them for some other purpose (as is done among the hypocrites), then should they be done away with and destroyed altogether. The same might very well be said today of ecclesiastical ceremonies. Tonsures, vestments, and pompous ceremonies may serve a worth-while purpose when one observes the law; that is, keeping and regarding the laws and regulations instituted by the Church serves a worthy purpose if Christians try thereby to heed God's Law more perfectly and strive thus to keep away from sinful activities; but if people cling only to these [ceremonies or customs], then their circumcision has been made uncircumcision, Rom. 2:25, that is, then the keeping of the Law has become a transgression of the Law. For this reason we read there also: "Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonorest thou God?" (Rom. 2:23. Luther's translation of this passage into German indicates better what he means here. His translation reads: "*Du rühmest dich des Gesetzes und schändest Gott durch Uebertretung des Gesetzes.*" Ceremonies, symbols, musical instruments, and other externals the Church is to tolerate (*tolerantur*; on Heb. 5:12). "*Solae aures sunt organa Christiani*"; that is, the preaching of the Word is what the Christian is vitally interested in; externals are only secondary in importance. The *neglecta Scriptura* Luther therefore calls *horribilis aspectus*. (On Heb. 5:11.) On this point, too, Luther had therefore early arrived at the conclusions which he maintained later in life.

Studying these lectures of Luther, one must marvel at his definite stand also when speaking of the Sacraments. *Vogelsang*

believes that Luther arrived at his convictions concerning the Eucharist when he studied the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Vogelsang, *Luthers Hebräerbrief-Vorlesung*, 1930, p. 20.) In the exegetical lectures which he had delivered before this time Luther was still vague and uncertain; but now he is sure of certain points, which he maintained throughout the remainder of his life. He regards Holy Communion as Christ's last will and testament to His believers. Through this Sacrament the believer receives the remission of sins. He says, when lecturing on Heb. 7:12: "*In sacramentis gratiae habemus promissionem Christi.*" Referring particularly to the Sacrament of Holy Communion, he emphasized that through faith, not merely through attendance, do we receive grace; for we cannot receive the spiritual blessings of God through a purely external act. He could not but think of the sacraments also when he compared the New Testament with the Old. "The sacraments of the Old Covenant (*sacramenta legis*) could not justify; but the sacraments of the New Covenant offer grace to all those who do not put some obstruction in the way." These words were spoken when he lectured on Heb. 7:12. Luther gladly assented to the dictum "*Non sacramentum, sed fides sacramenti iustificat,*" which was heard quite often in his day. He also agreed with Augustine, who said of the Eucharist: "*Iustificat non quia fit, sed quia creditur.*" (Ev. Joan, Tract 80:3.) Luther likewise testified (Heb. 5:1) that the Sacrament of Holy Communion calls for, and demands, a clean and a pure heart and that man's heart can be purified alone through faith in Christ, which accepts God's grace and His merciful forgiveness. In these lectures Luther, however, said nothing concerning the proper administration of Holy Communion or concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation. All these statements show that Luther had not yet reached full clarity in this doctrine.

The alpha and omega of Luther's lectures on Hebrews is of course Jesus Christ. Thomas Aquinas had already said: "*Excellentia Christi—haec est materia huius epistolae, quae ab aliis distinguitur.*" (Cf. the preface to his remarks on this epistle.) Luther develops this same idea in his lectures on Hebrews. He constantly points to the majesty of the Son of God, particularly, however, when he contrasts Jesus, the High Priest of the New Testament, with the priests and high priests of the Old Testament. He seems always to be particularly happy when he can contrast the power of the Gospel of Christ Jesus with the impotence of the Law. The Law points out the *via peccati et mortis*; but the Gospel points out the *nova via iustitiae*. Heb. 10:20. In connection with this matter he emphasizes that the apostle first teaches, then exhorts; first he leads to faith in the *unus et solus Christus*,

then he calls attention to morals. Faith must therefore precede good works; the good works and morals of the Christians are fruits of their faith in Christ. While he does speak of the crucified Christ, he is happiest when he speaks of the resurrected Christ. Cf. his remarks on Heb. 2:14. Christ conquered death, and we Christians need no longer harbor any fears of death. Luther even advises the Christian to wish for death, since it puts an end to his sins, serves as a portal to eternal life, and leads him from this world to his home above. (On Heb. 11:4.) The Christian should always be happy, and songs should ever be on his lips (*semper gaudere, semper cantare*; on Heb. 5:6).

Many other points could be adduced to prove conclusively that Luther was a well-equipped theologian as early as 1517; but what has been mentioned will suffice to prove that he was not a mad monk or an ignorant priest when he nailed his theses to the door of the Castle Church. He was a man thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures, intimately acquainted with the writings of the Church Fathers, well versed in Greek and Hebrew, sound and sober in his Christianity. If would-be prophets and reformers within the Christian Church today would first learn to equip themselves as well as did Martin Luther, the Church of Jesus Christ would not be obliged to suffer and chafe as she must.

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The Doctrine of Justification According to Thomas Aquinas

Before the Reformation there were two streams of thought within the Christian Church. The one was evangelical; the other was legalistic. The one confessed and restated (though not always clearly) the truth of Scripture; the other was a development of that moralism which was so prevalent in the Post-Apostolic Age. The one may be compared with an underground stream sometimes reaching the surface as in Bernard of Clairvaux (cf. *C. T. M.*, Oct., 1937); the other may be compared to a deep and broad river flowing above the ground and carrying in it all the contamination and filth which it has accumulated from its tributaries.

In the centuries preceding the Reformation this river had become thoroughly polluted. Law and Gospel were not only confounded, but the Gospel was regarded as the Law, the New Law taking the place of the Old Law promulgated on Mount Sinai. Another point must here be emphasized. Even as in the first centuries after the apostles, so the primary emphasis was laid not