

INTRODUCTION

Luther's conception of prayer and his distinctive expression of "the time" or "the hour."

The many problems to be faced in the presentation which follows could not be comprehended in a common, inclusive formula. But there is one issue which will appear repeatedly throughout all three chapters; in a certain way, the main issue in Luther's thought on vocation is the relation between stability and mobility, between freedom and constraint. Sometimes life in vocation appears as subjection to a predetermined and fixed reality; but at other times man, through faith and love, bursts through the external and stands free and recreative over against the given. Certainly just this almost lighthearted feature in Luther's ethics lies behind his belief in God as he who is ever creating anew. The duality of stability and mobility gives its peculiar color to Luther's view of creation. The following discussion does not seek to solve this problem but it will now and then return to it, placing it in the center of Luther's faith. "Solution" might lie in the simple fact that both God and the devil are ever present. The devil uses a static vocation for his purpose, and God replies with free new creation. The devil uses man's freedom to promote anarchy, and God replies by setting compelling barriers against freedom. But more about this in later parts of our discussion. For the present our juxtaposition is not God versus devil, but earth and heaven.

I

Earth and Heaven

1. *The Earthly Kingdom*

Vocatio can mean different things. It can refer to the very proclamation of the gospel, through which human beings are called to be the children of God. It can also be used as meaning the work which each one does as farmer, craftsman, etc. This use of the term occurs in I Corinthians 7:20, where it is said that each shall remain in the same vocation (*klēsis*) in which he was called. Whether Luther is right in his interpretation of *klēsis* as signifying one's outer status or occupation is a question we need not answer here. It is to some degree a third use of *vocatio* or *vocatus* when the term is used to designate the call to the office of preaching. For in that case it is not the office as such which is called *vocatio* but the action by which one rightly enters the office.¹ So too the word *Beruf* has more than one meaning; but Luther uses it most often as outer status or occupation. This use of the term is new with Luther. In speaking about Luther's doctrine of vocation, we always mean vocation in accord with Luther's interpretation of I Corinthians

¹ In a Latin work, such as his *Large Commentary on Galatians*, Luther characteristically enough speaks of the office of preaching as *ministerium*. As soon as he turns from preaching to magistrates, heads of households, servants, etc. he uses the word *vocatio*. Cf. *WA* 40^H, 152-153. But in German writings *Beruf* is used also as referring to the work of the ministry, e.g. *WA* 30^H, III (*On War Against the Turks*, 1529).

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7:20. We do not deny that included as well in earthly vocation is the call to be the child of God through the gospel. As far as we can determine Luther does not use *Beruf* or *vocatio* in reference to the work of a non-Christian. All have station (*Stand*) and office; but *Beruf* is the Christian's earthly or spiritual work. Here we are inquiring only into Luther's conception of earthly work, not vocation in any other sense.²

Is there any position or occupation which is not *Beruf*, not *Stand* in the true sense? In *De votis monasticis*, Luther shows monastic vows to be contrary to faith, to freedom, to God's command and love, and to reason. A monastic vow is accordingly a vow to do evil. It must be broken, even as a vow to steal, to lie, or to murder. "It ought not to be argued whether you vow with good or evil intent, when it is certain that what you vowed was bad. One ought to be faithful to the gospel; and such vows, for whatever cause they were made, with whatever intention, and at whatever time, ought to be forsaken with all confidence, and subjected to the liberty of Christian faith."³

The entire discussion in that work has the purpose of affirming that the monastic order is a false *Stand*, in which no Christian with sustained faith and love can remain. But he makes certain qualifications. If one is so humble and simple that he can make the vow of chastity, simply because it is respected and holy to live that way, let him make the vow of chastity and serve God without marriage.⁴ But such persons can hardly be found; the very fact that one vows for all time shows that he expects thus to win something

² We shall often have occasion to come back to the question of the relation between worldly work and faith or prayer (i.e. fellowship with God).

³ *WA* 8, 668; cf. 664.

⁴ *WA* 8, 611-12.

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from God.⁵ In a sermon in his *Kirchenpostille*, on I Corinthians 7:20, Luther raises the direct question as to what it means to have a vocation. He answers that you occupy a station (*Stand*), you are husband or wife, son or daughter, boy or girl. Then he stresses the greatness of the responsibilities involved in these external relationships; if one had four heads and ten hands he would still be unable to fulfil them all. It is striking for example that being a chaste and moderate young person is part of one's vocation as son or daughter.⁶ Certainly the Ten Commandments are conceived as applicable under the term *Beruf*.

In immediate connection with this reference, Luther goes on to mention the prince, the bishop, the prelate, who are servants and have vocations, even if the last two do not fulfil them, but rather say masses without care for people. Somewhat later in this sermon Luther goes the whole way, and declares that the orders of pope, bishop, priest, and monk, "as they are now," are sinful orders like robbery, usury, and prostitution.⁷ Just orders, such as are ordained by God or those whose existence is not contrary to God's will, are husbands and wives, boys and girls, lords and ladies, governors, regents, judges, officeholders, farmers, citizens, etc.⁸ In his work about the blessed order of soldiers, in 1526, he emphasizes that the soldier's life is a ministry of love and a vocation. "So, because it is from God that a soldier receives his fitness to do battle, he may serve therewith, serving with his skill and craft whoever desires his services; and he may accept wages for his labor.

⁵ *WA* 8, 620.

⁶ *WA* 10^I, 1, 308f. Cf. Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (1930), II, p. 65.

⁷ *WA* 10^I, 1, 317.

⁸ *WA* 10^I, 1, 317.

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For his too is a vocation which issues from the law of love."⁹

If I find myself an occupant of some of these life stations which serve the well-being of others, I must not entertain the slightest doubt of God's pleasure, but believe the gospel. The significant thing is not whether I enter such a station as one who is sinful and worthless. The issue is whether the "station" itself is sinful or not.¹⁰ The sin of the person himself is judged and forgiven in heaven, where there is no question of station, office and vocation, but only about the heart. On earth, on the other hand, one must give thought to office and station, not to the sin of the heart.

Therefore a person must avoid stations which are sinful. But the same reservation that appears in *De votis monasticis* crops up again in the *Kirchenpostille*: if one can avoid making the life of the cloister a matter of right and wrong and have no thought that one is made holy by being a monk, let him remain in the cloister, exercise his faith there just as elsewhere in the world, and love his neighbor.¹¹ This is really, in principle, a negation of monasticism, modified by outward conditions which soon passed when the hesitant left the cloistered life. When after 1532 Luther's sermons were reissued, this statement about remaining in the cloister was eliminated.

A vocation is a "station" which is by nature helpful to others if it be followed. It is important to emphasize the fact that vocation is not confined to an occupation, but includes also what Betcke calls biological orders: father, mother, son, daughter. Every attempt to differentiate between the sphere of the home, where personal Christian

⁹ *WA* 19, 657.

¹⁰ *WA* 10^I, 1, 316-317.

¹¹ *WA* 10^I, 1, 493.

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love rules, and the sphere of office, where the more impersonal rules of vocation hold sway, immediately runs afoul of Luther's terminology. The life of the home, the relation between parents and children, is vocation, even as is life in the field of labor, the relation between employer and employee. In anything that involves action, anything that concerns the world or my relationship with my neighbor, there is nothing, Luther holds, that falls in a private sphere lying outside of station, office, or vocation. It is only before God, i.e., in heaven, that the individual stands alone. In the earthly realm man always stands *in relatione*, always bound to another.¹² From this it is clear that every Christian occupies a multitude of offices at the same time, not just one: the same man is, for instance, father of his children, husband of his wife, master of his servants, and officeholder in the town hall. As stated in passages we noted in the *Kirchenpostille*, all these are vocations.

To understand Luther's views as to such life stations, we might begin with a passage which Holl has discussed. "All stations are so oriented that they serve others."¹³ As an example of how work in all such stations is conducive to the good of others, Luther points to a mother who cares for her children, and a father who must arise in the morning and labor to give support to his family. Holl uses all statements like this in support of his familiar thesis that central in Luther's ethics is reason that is Christian in character. *Lex naturae* is only another term for the Christian commandment of love. If worldly orders are worldly, lacking in Christian faith, they are ethically empty. When Luther uses examples from these life stations, he always

¹² *WA* 32, 390f (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1530-32).

¹³ *WA* 15, 625.

chooses examples of love; that is, says Holl, always examples of "Christian morality." This interpretation is incorrect.

The real point in the Luther passage quoted above is the contrast between purpose and practice. "All stations are intended to serve others. But we go now this way and now that."¹⁴ Here we come across what for Luther is the decisive contrast between God's self-giving love and man's egocentricity. The human being is self-willed, desiring that whatever happens shall be to his own advantage. When husband and wife, in marriage, serve one another and their children, this is not due to the heart's spontaneous and undisturbed expression of love, every day and hour. Rather, in marriage as an institution something compels the husband's selfish desires to yield and likewise inhibits the egocentricity of the wife's heart. At work in marriage is a power which compels self-giving to spouse and children. So it is the "station" itself which is the ethical agent, for it is God who is active through the law on earth.

What is effected through these orders of society is not due to an inner transformation of the human heart. The corruption of the heart is amended in heaven, through the gospel of Christ. There the human being is a "single person" and there inquiry is made into his inner wickedness, even if on earth it has been ceaselessly repressed and hindered from outer expression. On earth and in relation to his neighbor he fills an "office"; there the main point is that creation is sustained, e.g., that children receive food, clothing and care. This work of love God effects on earth

¹⁴ Holl must have noticed that the words "we turn everything upside down" contain a meaning which is troublesome to his interpretation of Luther. Luther's meaning makes "all stations" the subject, not we who occupy these stations, not Christians by their moral behavior.

through the "orders"—the order of marriage, of teacher and pupils, of government, etc. Even persons who have not taken the gospel to their hearts serve God's mission, though they be unaware thereof, by the very fact that they perform the outer functions of their respective stations.

One human being may not take the life of another; but God is free and does so. He does it through the offices of judge and executioner. To the judge God says, "If you do not kill and punish, you shall be punished"; for then the judge would fail his vocation.¹⁵ Man must not look on a woman to lust after her; but in the "station" which God instituted for the propagation of the race, God himself effects desire thereby.¹⁶ A minister must not condemn anyone; but the office of preaching does so. "I have often said that the office of preaching is not ours but God's; but it is not we but God who does whatever is God's."¹⁷ This line of thought is not limited to Luther's *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, 1530-32. We meet it in the same form in his treatise *Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved*, 1526, and in his *Kleiner Sermon von dem Wucher* in 1519.¹⁸ This treatise of 1519 is the clearest contribution Luther made to the idea of the effectiveness of these orders themselves as instruments in God's hand, regardless of personal quality. There Luther discusses certain statements in Matthew 5, which say that one must not resist evil. He considers the objection that if we were to obey such injunctions, only

¹⁵ WA 32, 382 (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1530-32).

¹⁶ WA 32, 382f.

¹⁷ WA 32, 398. Not all who occupy the office are devout, but God does not inquire as to that; "be the person whatever he is, the office is nevertheless right and good, and not of man but of God himself." WA 32, 529.

¹⁸ "It is not man but God who hangs, tortures, beheads, strangles, and does battle. These are all his works and his judgments." WA 19, 626 (*Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved*). Cf. WA 6, 4 (*Von Dem Wucher*).

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knaves would survive, and all would end in social chaos. He replies that the temporal sword sees to it that things do not go that way. Because there is rigorous government, man can take the Sermon on the Mount in earnest. Through the temporal sword God himself protects his children. It is misunderstanding to think that people are divided into two groups, one of which (judges, executioners, etc.) resists evil and does not obey Christ's word, while the other, escaping such responsibility, can be Christian. The paradox rests with God: it is *he* who forcibly resists evil through the offices of judge and executioner, and commands all persons not to resist evil as individuals, even though they be judges and executioners. For that which the office does is not part of man's account, but of God's.¹⁹

Luther's idea of office constitutes an important element in his rich concept of creation, which is peculiarly concrete and vital. The birds, which sing even though they do not know what they are to eat, are an example for us. God pours out his gifts, seeds, herbs, and edible creatures. Our only care ought to be what we should do with all the good that God has made, so that it may benefit our neighbor. But instead we worry how we can get as much as possible for ourselves; and thus we put ourselves athwart creation's generous stream.

In his sermons of 1525, Luther interprets Christ's command against being anxious, as he refers to the lilies and the birds. Note, for instance, the reference to the wool and the sheep (p. 418): "He gives the wool, but not without our labor. If it is on the sheep, it makes no garment." God gives the wool, but it must be sheared, carded, spun,

¹⁹ Thus Luther sharply distinguishes between the office and the person. Cf. *WA* 19, 655-656.

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etc. In these vocations God's creative work moves on, coming to its destination only with the neighbor who needs the clothing.²⁰

Vocations differ from us: farmers, fishers, and men of all orders, who handle creation's wares, carry God's gifts to their neighbors, even if their purpose is not always to serve. God is active in this. There is a direct connection between God's work in creation and his work in these offices. Silver and gold in the earth, growth in the creatures of the forests, the fruitfulness and unquenchable generosity of the soil, all is the ceaseless work of the God of creation, which goes forward through the labors of mankind.²¹ God creates the babes in the mother's body—man being only an instrument in God's hand—and then he sustains them with his gifts, brought to the children through the labors of father and mother in their parental office. "Even though a father is an instrument of procreation, God himself is the source and author of life."²²

God himself will milk the cows through him whose vocation that is.²³ He who engages in the lowliness of his work performs God's work, be he lad or king. To give one's office proper care is not selfishness. Devotion to office is devotion to love, because it is by God's own ordering that the work of the office is always dedicated to the well-being of one's neighbor.²⁴ Care for one's office is, in its very frame of reference on earth, participation in God's own care for human beings.

²⁰ *WA* 17^I, 414-418.

²¹ *WA* 15, 368-369 (*Psalms 127, 1524*).

²² *WA* 40^{III}, 210f. Cf. *WA* 10^{II}, 304 (*Vom ehelichen Leben, 1522*), *WA* 15, 375 (*Psalms 127, 1524*), and *WA* 40^{III}, 254f.

²³ *WA* 44, 6 (*Commentary on Genesis, 1535-45*).

²⁴ *WA* 32, 459 (*The Sermon on the Mount, 1530-32*).

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So vocation belongs to this world, not to heaven; it is directed toward one's neighbor, not toward God. This is an important preliminary characteristic. In his vocation one is not reaching up to God, but rather bends oneself down toward the world. When one does that, God's creative work is carried on. God's work of love takes form on earth, and that which is external witnesses to God's love. If we note properly how much good God bestows upon us, both through his direct creation and through all his created orders, we shall know the truth that he forgives sins. "God has shown the forgiveness of sins in all his creation." But in dealing with the forgiveness of sins we enter another realm, the eternal, heavenly kingdom.

2. *The Kingdom of Heaven*

In no other writing does Luther set forth vocation with such force as in his *Kirchenpostille*. But there, more clearly than anywhere else, vocation is rejected as a means to man's salvation and status as child of God. In heaven, before God, vocation has as little to contribute as do good works. Good works and vocation (love) exist for the earth and one's neighbor, not for eternity and God. God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does. It is faith that God wants. Faith ascends to heaven. Faith enters a different kingdom, the eternal, divine kingdom, which Luther considers just as evident as the earthly realm, with its offices and occupations through which God carries on his creative work. In the heavenly kingdom Christ is king, and there his gospel alone rules: no law, and therefore no works. What Luther means by faith and its kingdom in heaven, in contrast to works and their realm on earth, is not clear

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apart from his view of law and gospel, spiritual and earthly rule, faith and love. For the present we must give a more general description of the heavenly kingdom. We begin with references in Luther in which vocation is, so to speak, barred from heaven and applied to earth. First we speak of the passage recently noted in the *Kirchenpostille*.²⁵

When a monk or a nun hears that the vow of the cloistered life cannot contribute to salvation, he or she may leave the cloister for the lay status, in order to be saved there. That would be like living under the tragic misapprehension that one would have to be a shoemaker to be saved, and then fall into the delusion that it is by being a tailor that he can gain heaven. The work of Christ is victory over the law in any form: good works lead to salvation by neither one route nor the other. The conscience alone, through faith in the work of Christ, is freed from a false faith. Christ frees neither the hand from its work nor the body from its office. The hand, the body, and their vocation belong to earth. There is no redemption in that, but that is not the idea. The purpose is that one's neighbor be served. Conscience rests in faith in God, and does nothing that contributes to salvation; but the hands serve in the vocation which is God's downward-reaching work, for the well-being of men. From the viewpoint of faith, vocation has no relevance. As soon as any outward quality of life claims a place in conscience or in heaven, claiming to be a condition for God's forgiveness, the immateriality of vocation must be emphasized. "The faith and the Christian station are so free a thing that they are bound to no special orders, but are above all orders, in all orders, and through all orders; wherefore there is no need for you to take up or

²⁵ WA 10¹, 1, 491-492.

leave any station in order to be saved. . . . It is all free, free."²⁶

This is the meaning of the famous statement about prince and emperor as *einzele person* before God. "So the emperor, when he turns to God, is not emperor but a single person, like any other human being before God. But if he turns to his subjects, he is emperor as many times as he has subjects. Thus we must speak about all authorities. When they turn themselves toward the authority that is above them, they themselves have no authority. But when they turn to those who are under them, they are therein clad with authority."²⁷ God dispenses all stations and offices that they may operate downward; but he confers no authority over against himself.

The truth is that the need of others is an absolute imperative in the life of a Christian concerning love, works, vocation, but it is counted as nothing before God. Faith's realm in heaven and love's realm on earth must not be confused; but neither is inconsequential. Cf. the remarkable passage in *WA* 34^{II}, 27: Here below man must obey rulers, love his wife. "Such works have their place in this life. In the other life we shall not have wife or child, and offices will have come to an end. There all shall be alike. Therefore the law shall not hold sway there." Here we see that faith's realm is a future kingdom, a kingdom after death; but vocation's realm is in the present, and will come

²⁶ *WA* 12, 126.

²⁷ *WA* 19, 652-653 (*Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved*, 1526). Cf. 661, where the thought about the soldier's station is summarized. One is saved, not as a soldier, but only as a Christian. Obedience in one's vocation is rendered, not for the sake of heaven, but because the cause is good. In death the soldier has to trust in God's grace, not in his death as a soldier. Therefore before battle the soldier ought to commit himself to God's mercy, for Christ's sake, before he takes his weapon and goes to his task.

to an end. Faith's kingdom is a realm in which all are alike; but vocation's world is full of grades and differences.

When anyone, be he emperor or craftsman, turns to God in faith, or, more concretely, in prayer, he is without the outer support which "station" gives in relation to others. Here one does not stand *in relatione*, or meet with another human being, as one does in his vocation. Each is alone before God. Before God the individual is as alone as if there were only God and he in heaven and earth.²⁸ Before God not only does station vanish, but also every work stands as sinful and worthless. Therefore all those qualities are wiped out which differentiate among men on earth. What makes the difference on earth is the structure of many offices, with their respective works. But in heaven all are alike. There all simply receive, and receive alike, the grace of God. Thus equality in the heavenly kingdom depends only on the fact that it is the kingdom of Christ, ruled by a divine gift, the gospel, not by law.

When one presents works before God in the kingdom of heaven, God's order is disrupted in both realms. Since the reign of Christ is in giving, and in grace and the gospel, to proffer gifts here is an attempt to depose Christ from his throne. A human being lets his works compete with the King of heaven. At the same time, his neighbor on earth is neglected since his good works have clearly been done, not for the sake of his neighbor, but to parade before God. Faith is revoked in heaven, and love on earth. Neither God nor one's neighbor receives that which is properly his. "Thus they corrupt both of them, faith and love. . . . They

²⁸ *WA* 7, 566 (*The Magnificat*, 1521). Being alone means that one does not come with an accompaniment of good works. Cf. *WA* 8, 66 and 79. Before God there is only one kind of righteousness, i.e. faith; before God there is only the righteousness of God.

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deny their works to their neighbor and direct them to themselves. . . . Then faith cannot continue."²⁹

Here we espy the work of the devil, through which works are forced up to heaven, salvation by the law, which is both blasphemy of God and scorn of one's neighbor, an impure performance of vocation (on earth). The devil's work is in direct contradiction to God's, and ever competes with it throughout man's world. When God battles with the devil for the life of man, his instrument is the gospel, which effects faith in man's heart; and faith is channeled to one's neighbor in works of love.³⁰ Works belong to the earthly realm, in service to others, directed downward in vocation which bears altogether the stamp of the earthly realm. And vocation is most purely and really served when through the gospel it has become clear that vocation has nothing to do with salvation. God receives that which is his, faith. The neighbor receives that which is his, works. To break down the faithfulness which God effects in man's vocation is one of the devil's greatest desires. A weapon that serves the devil well, to this end, is the cloister and the splendid saintliness that does not concern itself with vocation. Luther points this out forcefully in *De votis monasticis*. We shall return later to the dualism between God and the devil. We refer to it here simply to clarify the way in which the heavenly kingdom is, in the will of God, distinguished from the earthly.

We may point out that this demarcation between earth and heaven is the main point in two of Luther's central writings: *Large Commentary on Galatians* and *The Bondage of the Will*. "We set up, as it were, two worlds, one

²⁹ *WA* 8, 363.

³⁰ *WA* 8, 363. Cf. 372.

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heavenly (*coelestis*) and one earthly (*terrenus*). Each has its own kind of righteousness. The righteousness of the law is earthly, concerned with earthly affairs and consists of our doing of good works (*facimus bona opera*). . . . The heavenly, passive righteousness is not of ourselves; we receive it from heaven. We do not produce it but receive it in faith (*non facimus, sed fide apprehendimus*)."³¹ This concept of the two kingdoms underlies all statements in that work that aims at correct differentiation between law and gospel. It is stated directly, repeated, and driven home. "So these things ought to be noted: that you place the gospel in heaven and the law on earth; that you call the righteousness of the gospel heavenly and divine, and the righteousness of the law earthly and human."³² Even where reference is made only to law and gospel, what Luther says can be comprehended in the picture of the two kingdoms, and by that be made most vital.

But it is even more impressive that the distinction Luther makes in *The Bondage of the Will* between "things which are above us" and "things which are below us" is exactly the same as that just noted between earth and heaven. Here Luther declares that man lacks free will in that which is above him, but has free will (*liberum arbitrium*) in that which is under him. We must learn to use the term free will in such manner that "free will in man is admitted not toward that which is above us, but only in what is below

³¹ *WA* 40^I, 46 (*Commentary on Galatians*, 1535).

³² *WA* 40^I, 207. Likewise, he writes this again and again, on the succeeding pages, 208-210. On page 214f, it is stated that the law is to rule the body (i.e. on earth), while conscience, i.e. faith, abides with Christ *in sublimi monte*, without the law. The distinction is also emphasized, on page 393f, between the righteousness of heaven and of the state. It appears even more clearly on pages 469f and 544f. Cf. 622-664, and also *WA* 40^{II}, 37-38, where the terms "before God" and "before men" are used, meaning the same as "in heaven" and "on earth."

us." That is to say, will is free, not before God, but solely in earthly matters.³³

The terms "superior" and "inferior," which he uses at the beginning of this treatise, Luther interprets later when he treats of a peculiarly difficult passage in Sirach. He divides human beings into two kingdoms, *duo regna*.³⁴ In the one kingdom man acts freely, concerning the things which are below (*puta in rebus sese inferioribus*). With the introduction of our foregoing idea of the earthly kingdom we see the reason: in this realm man is to perform works, as it is filled with office and vocations and constant labor, and here man's freedom is active, thereby being an instrument in the hand of God who thus carries on his creative work. But—the passage in *The Bondage of the Will* continues—in the other realm (*altero vero regno*) man is not left to his own free will. There the *servum arbitrium* obtains. As we mentioned before, man is not to effect anything there. This is the essential characteristic of the kingdom of heaven. There is no place for vocation, works, or love as man's accompaniment. Only faith may enter. All the rest is placed on the earthly level, where his neighbor needs it. In a kingdom wherein man is not the doer, but one who only receives, his will is not free; it is bound. If freedom of will ascends to heaven, it is an infraction of the divine order, a work of the devil, identical with the circumstance mentioned above in which works are thrust up before God, not addressed to one's fellow-men, freely, directly and simply. Free will thus exists before God only as evil.

Therefore it is entirely natural for Luther, in *The Bondage of the Will*, to speak of man's co-operation with God,

³³ WA 18, 638.

³⁴ WA 18, 672f.

cooperatio. This co-operation is limited entirely to the sphere that is "below," "under us." Not only in *The Bondage of the Will* but in other writings as well, Luther speaks about God's continuing work of creation through man's work in his various stations. We meet this in Luther's exposition of *The Sermon on the Mount*, in his treatises about soldiers and about the 1525 Peasant Revolt; also in both Latin and German versions of his exposition of Psalm 127, and in the *Commentary on Genesis*. Everywhere in these writings, as in *The Bondage of the Will*, there is the same clear differentiation of the two realms.³⁵ If man lacks free will before God in the heavenly realm, but has a certain freedom of will concerning things and humans in the earthly realm, then the very idea of co-operation, confined as it is to the earthly, is in fact a greater emphasis on the truth that man is not free before God, but that all power is God's.

In the conclusion of his writing against Erasmus, Luther again returns to the distinction between the two different lines of man's action, which must be kept distinct in considering the freedom of the will. "We are not inquiring . . . into our situation on earth (*super terram*), but into our situation before God in heaven (*in coelo coram deo*). We know that man has been made master over those things which are below him (*inferioribus*), over which he has right and freedom of will. . . . But what we are inquiring about is whether he has freedom of will before God. . . . Hear John the Baptist, that no one can receive anything except it be given him from heaven (*nihil accipere posset, nisi donetur ei de coelo*). Therefore the freedom of the will comes to nothing."³⁶ In that statement every word is im-

³⁵ The chief reference to co-operation, in *The Bondage of the Will*, is found in WA 18, 753-754.

³⁶ WA 18, 781.

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portant. *Inferiora* is equated with earth, with the realm of works. There free will operates. Freedom of will is denied in heaven before God because heaven is the realm of divine giving, where man can only receive, but not offer good works. As we shall see, the bondage of the will in this sense does not at all mean mere passivity: man can receive from God only in prayer, and prayer is struggle, just as faith is struggle. Man turns himself upward toward God in prayer and faith; and the very action of both of these demonstrates our bondage of will before God. We can only take or receive from God. If one who prays begs God for something but does not receive—and that too is possible—that also demonstrates the bondage of his will.

The continuity of thought between his other writings and *The Bondage of the Will* on this point is clearly shown in his argument against Erasmus (*WA* 18, 767-768). There it is explained that the realm of the free will is the realm of the law, in which righteousness according to civil law is possible; but the will is bound in relation to the gospel, the righteousness which is bestowed apart from works of the law. "To illustrate, the free will has power through its own efforts to move forward in one way and another in manifest good works or in the righteousness of civil or moral law; but it cannot move up to the righteousness of God. . . . For Paul clearly distinguishes these two kinds of righteousness, ascribing one to the law and the other to grace, saying that the latter is given without the former and without man's own works" (p. 767f). The good that man does on earth is God's creation, and it is to be directed toward his neighbor. Before God the good is not man's but God's.³⁷

³⁷ *WA* 38, 373.

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Only before one's neighbor does the good done appear as coming from him who does it. Through this we can understand the concept of man as "mask" of God.

These statements agree fairly literally with the oft-repeated thesis of Luther's *Large Commentary on Galatians*. In it the line of thought leads directly to the earthly and spiritual kingdoms. But before we deal with these, we must devote some attention to the fact that the heavenly kingdom is a kingdom beyond death, a coming kingdom.

We have already called attention to what Luther says (*WA* 34^{II}, 27) about the difference between life on earth and life in heaven. On earth one must heed the authority of government and parents, be a good spouse and a good neighbor. In heaven man has neither wife nor children, for all offices leave off, and human beings are all alike, since the rule of law is put away. The realm of vocation is temporary. It is only in the present, short life that we are concerned with the endowments and responsibilities of office. The transitoriness of vocation can be called another aspect of the fact, already stated, that vocation has nothing to do with salvation. The gospel, as the promise of salvation, is also the promise of eternity, of a kingdom which will never pass away. On earth we receive from God gifts which are transitory; but in the heavenly kingdom we receive God himself, who never passes away. "His good things are merely gifts that last but for a season; but his grace and regard are the inheritance which lasts forever, as St. Paul says in Romans 6, 'The grace of God is eternal life.' In giving us gifts, he gives but what is his, but in his grace and his regard of us he gives his very self."³⁸

Faith cannot lay hold of an external good, or of a gift;

³⁸ *WA* 7, 751 (*The Magnificat*, 1521).

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for the gift will pass away. But faith must rise up to God himself and rest in him; faith is entrance into heaven. Love is rightly at home on earth, in the transitory world, where man cannot trust in anything, because love will be misused and betrayed.³⁹ The earthly realm is destroyed little by little, and little by little created anew by God in nature and in all offices. In this realm we live *now*, under the rule of the law. If this were the only world, the gospel would be an empty word and without meaning. "All the things which God would have done on the sabbath are manifest signs of another life after this. Why is it necessary for God to speak to us through his Word, if we are not to live in a future and eternal life?"⁴⁰

The gospel is thus an eschatological message, in the sense that it promises something that belongs to the future, life after death. This is evident in Luther's way of differentiating between *iustitia civilis* (civil righteousness) and *iustitia christiana* (righteousness in Christ). Civil righteousness is promoted by the law and is relevant in courts, in general, before man, as an adequate righteousness. Righteousness in Christ is a given righteousness, and can be said to consist of the forgiveness of sins. Luther distinguishes these two kinds of righteousness in this way: *iustitia civilis* has its function on earth up till the hour of death; but then all *iustitia civilis* becomes sinful. The forgiveness of sins is the only righteousness that is enduring. "Thus man is to be viewed in the light of two kinds of righteousness. Let him live honestly in outward relations, that he may have a tranquil life. But when the end of this life really comes, let

³⁹ WA 18, 651-652 (*The Bondage of the Will*, 1525); and WA 50, 567 (*On Councils and Churches*, 1539).

⁴⁰ WA 42, 61 (*Commentary on Genesis*, 1535-45).

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him know of what kind his true righteousness is. For there his works become sins. Then let him learn to say, 'If I had never done a good work, nevertheless I believe the article on the forgiveness of sins.' There nothing ought to be thought of but the remission of sins."⁴¹

In death man crosses the threshold into the other kingdom, which is not subject to the conditions that obtain on earth. Through the gospel of the forgiveness of sins there is proffered to us a righteousness which is valid for eternity, and which faith already receives on earth. In time and among human beings on earth, on the other hand, forgiveness of sins does not obtain as righteousness in fact; here one must take man's deeds into account. It is entirely right and in harmony with God's will that on earth a righteousness of works is demanded. But that outer righteousness is transitory, like all else on earth. It does not reach as far as heaven. At the very gate of heaven, in the hour of death with its anxiety, it totters and collapses.

So the kingdom of God is given us as a promise. When faith accepts that promise and believes it a true word of God, eternal life begins here on earth, but everything which lies on this side of death is only a weak beginning. Reality is first encountered in the resurrection. Life based on civil righteousness is of such character that it must always seek to escape death, which brings such righteousness to naught. On the other hand, a life built on faith reaches forward to death and awaits it, looking forward to the revelation of righteousness in Christ.⁴² Thus righteousness lies ahead of

⁴¹ WA 29, 572 (*Sermons*, 1529; Poach).

⁴² WA 32, 468 and 469 (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1530-32). Also, very clearly, WA 2, 278f and 734f; for example, "So then, the life of a Christian, from his baptism to his grave, is nothing but the beginning of a blessed death; for in the last day God will make him new altogether." 728 (*Treatise on the Sacrament of Baptism*, 1519).

faith, and faith awaits it. It is no contradiction of this to say that righteousness is before faith, that it is, so to say, prepared and evident through Christ. For the work of Christ has already been effected before our time, and nothing is lacking in that righteousness which Christ has acquired by his death and resurrection, but which he has not yet fulfilled in us. That will be realized only in our death and resurrection, which are still to come. Thus faith stands between two resurrections, the resurrection of Christ, which has already taken place, and our own resurrection, which lies before us. These two resurrections Luther links together in his own special way. The resurrection of Christ is "not complete" before our resurrection has come. Believers are the body of Christ; the body of Christ is not risen until they who are his are raised. Therefore to say that faith looks *forward* is not to deny that it is faith in the work of Christ. The work of Christ stretches over both the past and the future. He arose on the third day, and he arises anew wherever faith is awakened. The resurrection from the dead which he has begun with the birth of faith in a person, he will completely "fulfil" in that person's death and resurrection in heaven. Toward that glory of Christ faith looks forward.⁴³

When Stomps, from the point of view of his philosophy, takes up consideration of Luther's thought, it is this future quality, the forward reach of faith, which he points out in his view of the relation between faith and knowledge according to Luther. This is the point of value in this philosophical treatment, which otherwise expounds much that is not true

⁴³ Cf. *WA* 56, 372 (*Commentary on Romans*, 1515-16).

to Luther. But he makes a good observation in the following definition: faith looks to things which are invisible and unknowable; but they are invisible and unknowable "not because they are basically unknowable, but because they are *not yet* visible, *not yet* knowable. Faith directs itself to that which is to come—Faith is the proper way to wait."⁴⁴ It is on earth that man believes in the kingdom of heaven, for it has not yet come with power. But in the resurrection world faith no longer exists. There one sees that in which he has believed.

"When he [Christ] names only those who come into this world, he indicates that he speaks only of that light of faith which shines and helps in this life; after death no one is enlightened by it. It must occur here through faith in the man Christ, but without his deity. After this life we shall see, not through his humanity and by faith; we shall behold his unveiled deity, openly manifest in itself."⁴⁵

3. *The Spiritual and Earthly Governments*

Up to this point we have spoken of two kingdoms, without talking about the governments through which these two kingdoms carry on. Luther himself hardly ever does so. It is only because the kingdoms are ruled by God that they continue. God daily maintains outer temporal peace and tolerable life on earth through worldly government, and access to heaven through spiritual government, both "against the

⁴⁴ M. A. H. Stomps, *Die Anthropologie Luthers* (1935), p. 121. Cf. also W. von Löwenich, *Luthers Theologia crucis* (1929), pp. 112-115.

⁴⁵ *WA* 10¹, 1, 222 (*Kirchenpostille*, 1522). Cf. *WA* 18, 784 (*The Bondage of the Will*, 1525).

devil," *adversus Diabolum, carnem et mundum*.⁴⁶ Should the kingdoms be left to themselves for a moment, they would be overthrown by the power of evil and destruction.

In his treatise *Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved*, Luther shows what he means by the two governments. "For he [God] has set up two kinds of government among men. One is spiritual, through the word and without the sword, through which men might become devout and righteous, so that along with this righteousness they might receive eternal life. This righteousness he administers through the Word which he has committed to his preachers. The other is an earthly government through the sword, in order that they who refuse to be made devout and righteous unto life eternal shall by such earthly government be compelled to be devout and righteous before the world. This righteousness he administers through the sword. Though he does not reward this righteousness with life eternal, he nevertheless insists on it, in order that peace may be maintained among men; and he does reward it with temporal gifts."⁴⁷ This statement fits very easily into the picture we have given of Luther's view. One righteousness is righteousness for the world, not for eternal life, and is rewarded with *zeitlich gut* (the things of this world). Here we see again the earthly kingdom, to which our vocation is relevant, and in which God ever produces external benefits for the maintenance of life. Accordingly all this belongs under earthly government. Its work is a kind of righteousness, a righteousness of God, and yet a transitory righteousness which does not reach life eternal. The other righteousness, the righteous-

⁴⁶ See the classic reference concerning church, school, home, town hall and castle in the treatise *On Councils and Churches*, 1539; *WA* 50, 652.

⁴⁷ *WA* 19, 629.

ness which is given, is bestowed through the gospel, which has acquired the office of preaching as its instrument on earth. In the church just such a "spiritual rule" operates, and here the kingdom of heaven appears in an external way, for hereby the door is opened to eternal life.⁴⁸

Earthly government presents a variegated content. Luther usually divides its work into two "hierarchies," political economy and domestic economy (the family). A third "hierarchy," the church, alone constitutes the spiritual government. In the domestic economy one is father, mother, boy or girl. Here again we come across certain of the vocations about which the *Kirchenpostille* spoke. The list is completed in the political economy, represented in all the down-reaching ramifications of rulers, from the prince to him who handles the sword, the soldier or the executioner. Over all of this wide field God's government is carried on against the devil, against all evil which emerges among men and aims to bring forth evil deeds. Beside the sword of government is the rod in the fatherly hand for the correction of the child.⁴⁹ All this is comprehended in the law, God's law, and its civil use, its *usus civilis*. "Here [in external matters] whether you are preacher, ruler, spouse, teacher, disciple, there is not time to hear the gospel but the law; here you must fulfil your vocation!"⁵⁰ Law and the sword (*lex* and *gladius*) belong together. Law and voca-

⁴⁸ The office of preaching, as an office, is clearly one office among others; and it does not belong to that kingdom in which other orders have no place. Even the office of the ministry is a *Beruf* subject to the conditions of a vocation. Nevertheless through this particular vocation God carries out something distinctive and totally different from all other vocations.

⁴⁹ *WA* 32, 316-317.

⁵⁰ *WA* 40¹, 210 (*Commentary on Galatians*, 1535).

tion belong together. Vocation falls within the kingdom of the law.⁵¹

From the long quotation cited from *Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved* (p. 24), we might decide that earthly government is to rule over one group of people (the evil) and the spiritual government over another group (the Christians). That view is suggested too in Luther's *Treatise on Secular Authority*.⁵² But it is obvious that this statement is an abbreviated mode of expression, like "The Christian needs no law." In reality, a Christian is of course a sinner even while he is righteous, and as a sinner he is subject to the law. In the first part of our discussion we adduced quotations from Luther in which he affirms that the body is ruled on earth by the law, while the conscience or faith is in heaven from which the law is barred and only the gospel rules. Luther often emphasizes the simultaneity of these two governments over one and the same person. "With the Spirit in the paradise of grace and peace, and with the flesh in the world of toil and cross," a Christian lives his life. "So as the law holds sway in the flesh, the promise rules most graciously in the conscience. When you have thus recognized the proper sphere of each, you walk most securely with the promise in heaven and the law on earth, with the Spirit of grace and peace in Paradise and in the body of works and the cross on earth."⁵³

The two governments do indeed encompass different

⁵¹ *WA* 19, 629 (*Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved*, 1526). Also cf. *WA* 40^I, 429f concerning the civil or political use of the law (*Commentary on Galatians*, 1535), where Luther says it is "to curb the barbarous and wicked." He specifically refers to the force which government exercises. This is to be seen clearly in *WA* 40^I, 479-485.

⁵² *WA* 11, 229-281. See, for instance, page 249: "Here we must divide the children of Adam, all men, into two classes: the one belongs to the kingdom of God, the other to the kingdom of the world" (1523).

⁵³ *WA* 40^I, 469 (*Commentary on Galatians*, 1535).

groups of people, since some do not have the gospel, yet live under earthly government; but even after the gospel has freed the conscience, man is still subject to worldly government of law in his earthly vocation, the two governments thus signifying "two different positions for people," as Törnvall says. The law is really embodied in external ordinances which require work and deeds (*iustitia civilis*); and the gospel is similarly embodied in the church, which proffers the forgiveness of sins (*iustitia christiana*).⁵⁴ Now we ask whether there is any inner connection between these two governments.

The answer is twofold. There is a connection from above, from God's point of view, and a connection from below, from man's point of view. The former we have already spoken of. Both governments are expressions of God's love. In his vocation man does works which effect the well-being of others; for so God has made all offices. Through this work in man's offices, God's creative work goes forward, and that creative work is love, a profusion of good gifts. With persons as his "hands" or "coworkers," God gives his gifts through the earthly vocations, toward man's life on earth (food through farmers, fishermen and hunters; external peace through princes, judges, and orderly powers; knowledge and education through teachers and parents, etc, etc). Through the preacher's vocation, God gives the forgiveness of sins. Thus love comes from God, flowing down to human beings on earth through all vocations, through

⁵⁴ The signs which show that the church is present are "baptism, sacrament, and the gospel." *WA* 6, 301 (*On the Papacy at Rome*, 1520). Through these means the forgiveness of sins is given; wherefore it can be said that "the whole church is forgiveness of sins." *WA* 2, 722 (*Treatise on the Sacrament of Penance*, 1519). Here man is to be reminded that the forgiveness of sins is heavenly righteousness, which is effective after death. Thus the church is an eschatological reality, whereas business and civil order are relevant to the present life.

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both spiritual and earthly governments. This can also be a connection between the two governments from man's point of view, if he ponders what he receives through the faithfulness of others to their vocations. He receives the good gifts of God's love through both prince and preacher.

But we find a connection between the two governments on the horizontal plane too. This emerges if man looks at his position in his own vocation, not asking what he receives, but what he is to do, what God requires of him. Vocation is law and commandment, a synthesis of God's commands to the person who occupies the particular place on earth that his offices indicate. Thus in his vocation the law comes just as close to him as does the gospel in its incarnation in the church. Both law and gospel press themselves home upon man in tangible earthly form, the law through vocation (domestic life, officialdom, labor, kinships, talents with correlative stations), and the gospel through the church, where the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered immediately before men. The church always points, at least primarily, on towards eternity, up toward heaven. Vocation points to the present, to the present day, to this world. Here we discover a firm and definite connection, from the point of view of the individual.

Baptism is the church's fundamental sacrament. In baptism the recipient is buried with Christ: he must die with him that he may rise and live with him (Rom. 6). This takes place day by day through the putting to death of the old man and the rising of the new man out of sin.⁵⁵ This is completely effected in death, when the body of sin withers, and God's new creation appears in the consummation. Therefore man ought to rejoice in death. But instead he

⁵⁵ WA 2, 727-728 (*Treatise on the Sacrament of Baptism*, 1519).

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fears death. The old man does not want to die and leave the world of sin; on the contrary, he wants to live in it as long as possible. God must help man to die daily. For that reason God has ordained many different orders, in which man is to discipline himself and learn to suffer and die. In this connection Luther again refers to his amply differentiated vocations, all supplied with the same divine mandate, "trouble and toil."⁵⁶ In one's vocation there is a cross—for prince, husband, father, daughter, for everyone—and on this cross the old human nature is to be crucified. Here the side of baptism which is concerned with death is fulfilled. Christ died on the cross, and one who is baptized unto death with Christ must be put to death by the cross. To understand what is meant by the cross of vocation, we need only remember that vocation is ordained by God to benefit, not him who fulfils the vocation, but the neighbor who, standing alongside, bears his own cross for the sake of others. Under this cross are included even the most trivial of difficulties, such as: in marriage, the care of babes, which interferes with sleep and enjoyment; in government, unruly subjects and promoters of revolt; in the ministry, the whole resistance to reformation; in heavy labor, shabbiness, uncleanness, and the contempt of the proud. All of this is bracketed with the high and holy cross of Christ; but then that too was deep in humiliation when it was erected.

In *An die Pfarrherrn wider den Wucher zu predigen* (1540), Luther says that a Christian must suffer (e.g. p. 400), and continues, "I ask where our suffering is to be found. I shall soon tell you: Run through all stations of life, from the lowest to the highest, and you will find what you are looking for" (p. 404). Then follows a realistic

⁵⁶ WA 2, 734 (*ibid.*).

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description of a day in Germany about 1540, of peasants, burghers, nobles, etc. He then sums up. "Therefore do not worry where you can find suffering. That is not necessary. Simply live as an earnest Christian, preacher, pastor, burgher, farmer, noble, lord, and fulfil your office faithfully and loyally. Let the devil worry where he can find a piece of wood out of which to make a cross for you, and the world where it can find a branch out of which to make a scourge for your hide" (412).

In the final sentences the allusion to Christ's cross is manifest. Behind this entire view of Luther's lies the concept of vocation's work as divine love's coming down to earth, the same love as was in Christ. No person who lets the work of his vocation go forward without grudging will escape troubles, hatred, and persecution.⁵⁷ This view of vocation will be met often in our study.

The crucifixion of Christ was followed by his resurrection on the third day. One is baptized not only that he may die with Christ; but also that he may arise with Christ; not only unto the crucifixion of the old nature in vocation, but also to the resurrection of the new—through faith in the gospel, by which the life-giving Spirit is given. With the latter (the gospel, faith, the Spirit, the new creature) our next section will deal. Here it is referred to only in a summary way, because it includes the answer to our question about the connection between earthly and spiritual government from the point of view of the individual human being. The Christian is crucified by the law in his vocation, under the earthly government; and he arises through the gospel, in the church under the spiritual government. Both of these take place on earth; but both are directed toward heaven.

⁵⁷ WA 51, 325f.

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Through both the individual is incorporated into Christ; through vocation, into his cross, and through the church, into his resurrection. Christ is king in heaven, in the kingdom beyond death. That is the destination toward which a Christian is to be carried along. Baptism is therefore completely fulfilled only in death, as we saw in Luther's explanation of baptism.

Here we find a new possibility in what Luther says about the two different directions of faith and works. The true love is the love of Christ directed, even as his body is crucified, to men of death and to robbers. The human being who in his vocation serves his fellow-men fulfils his task out of love for Christ, and receives the same poor measure of gratitude as Christ did. This is the only way love of Christ can be real. Every attempt to select a gathering of holy and unworldly people for service has the result of forcing love—and that is not the love of Christ. In the cloister where such compulsion rules, Christ is accordingly not present with his love. Christ is excluded whenever the ordinary neighbor is excluded. And furthermore, since faith is simply the presence of Christ, this means that in the cloister faith is impossible. Where Christ is excluded it is not possible for man to have faith. In the cloister man is forced to perform works which are a substitute for the works which he should "pour out on his neighbor, in love," in the world at large. His works are done for a reason other than the purely earthly aim of being of service to his neighbor; his aim is now to make himself holy. That is to seek justification before God by works. Faith is wiped out.

Accordingly, in *De votis monasticis*, Luther declares that when God wants to save a monk, he compels him to occupy himself with earthly things. That is how God dealt with

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Bernard of Clairvaux (Luther has in mind Bernard's comprehensive political activity), and the same thing has happened in other cases. It was that kind of miracle by which they were saved from languishing in the cloister, with its cooped-up and fictitious love.⁵⁸ In that way marriage has the function of compelling one to work for the good of others. And when that happens, man generally stands empty-handed and helpless before God; that is to say, faith then has a chance to be born.

Christ is present with men in these works, since they serve others. And he is also present there bringing forth faith. Faith and works are never to be divorced. If a person begins in faith, works immediately leap forth, for faith is Christ. If a person begins with works that are really good (that is, works that serve others, the works of his vocation), he sees immediately that out of inner necessity faith mounts up to God, for such works empty one so completely that one cannot go on without God. This emptying is the "cross," Christ's cross and man's cross, for these two are the same, since Christ is also present. But on the other hand, the consolation of faith is the power of the Christ who is risen.

All his life the monk is supplied with food, clothing and everything else, provided by the labors of others out in the world, and put at the disposal of the cloistered inhabitants in the form of gifts and endowments. So the monk is secure, without perils or cross. To seek such a station in life is to try to escape the common trials of mankind, to "avoid looking up to heaven, expecting daily bread from God, and trusting God to provide sustenance."⁵⁹ As soon as one leaves the cloister and marries, such cares approach, that is, such

⁵⁸ *WA* 8, 628.

⁵⁹ *WA* 12, 106 (*Exposition of I Corinthians 7*, 1523).

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occasions for faith, for trust, for practice of faith. In the cloister faith has "no room, no place, no time, no occupation, no exercise." But marriage is of such character that it "teaches us and compels us to look to God's hand and grace, and simply drives us to faith."⁶⁰

We have noted above that vocation is so constituted that it is conducive to the well-being of neighbors; it serves others (love). Now we see that it also compels one to look to God, to lay hold of his promise (faith). Man is thereby put into right relation both to earth (love) and to heaven (faith). God's complete work is set in motion through vocation: he changes the world and he sheds his mercy on hard-pressed humanity. As soon as vocation is abandoned, God loses hold of man, both faith and love cease, and, since there is no free will before God, the devil, that objective power that opposes God, has gained control of man.

This view of vocation cannot be emphasized enough. Through vocation God's presence is really with man. As the God of the law, he places himself above man's self-will, and drives man to prayer, which is answered by God's love and care. In vocation works are constrained to move toward one's neighbor, toward the earth; and faith alone, trust, prayer, all without works, ascends heavenward. In all this one is incorporated into Christ; the cross in the vocation is his cross, and the faith which breaks forth from that cross in the vocation is his resurrection.⁶¹ This latter point

⁶⁰ *WA* 12, 106. Cf. *WA* 32, 511-512, where prince, judge, husband, boy, and girl are called true monks and nuns on account of the weight of their cross, while those who inhabit cloisters are said to be playing foolishly with the cross (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1530-32).

⁶¹ On the point of man's sharing in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, see, for example, *WA* 5, 128-129 (*Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519-21), *WA* 1, 112-113 (*Sermo in Die S. Thomae*, 1516), and *WA Deutsche Bibel V*, 628 (*Preface to Romans*, 1529). The last-named reference speaks of baptism exactly as Luther did in 1519 (*WA* 2).

we shall discuss in the next section about faith and love. But before that perhaps certain additional characteristic citations ought to be given, in which emphasis is given to the risk in all earthly life in the service of others.

In *Heerpredigt wider den Türken*, of 1529, Luther speaks of the "cross" which "profits man unto salvation" and in which "faith is to be exercised and sustained."⁶² It was possible that the cross which God would let many bear at that time (1529) was imprisonment by the Turks, with consequent servitude under harsh conditions and in a foreign land. As long as resistance to the Turks is possible, resistance is one's vocation (this is a major point in the entire treatise). But if one be taken prisoner, then the Turkish master becomes one's neighbor and rightful lord over one's body: then faithful service to him is one's vocation. That is where one must bear the cross. This is what Jacob did in Haran, Joseph with Pharaoh, the children of Israel in Assyria, the children of Judah in Babylon. This was the experience of Christ and all the saints. Christ permitted Pilate and Herod to do to him what they would.⁶³ When Luther speaks of earthly labor, a striking gladness rests upon the very hardships that underlie his words. In these simple difficulties on earth there is fellowship with God's Son, who was mocked and buffeted. So, for example, one sees how Luther strives, in a sermon of 1531, to express the enigmatical fact: he who loves his neighbor is smitten on the mouth, and his purpose does not prosper; but in his very failure God is close by upon earth, active and strong.⁶⁴

⁶² *WA* 30^{II}, 193 (1529).

⁶³ *WA* 30^{II}, 193 and 194.

⁶⁴ *WA* 34^{II}, 181. This thought is even clearer in Luther's exposition of *The Magnificat*.

At times Luther seems to feel that earthly life as such helps man toward faith and love. But right away he sees that the worldly man, just as well as the monk, can turn away from all concern for his neighbor and make himself comfortable for his own sake, so that he no longer stands in need of faith in God. Observations such as these lead Luther to make concrete proposals for reforms of the life of society, in which, for instance, certain forms of business, etc. are condemned. Of special interest in this connection are Luther's statements about usury.

The kind of businessman who lives by lending money at interest to working people, is to Luther extremely objectionable, as objectionable as a monk. His position is quite like that of the monk: entire security for himself without the least labor (therefore no place for faith) and without regard for his neighbor (no place for love). He who receives the loan and accedes to the demand that he pay interest has to labor to make the principal productive; but in that labor he stands ceaselessly under the power of God (*Gottes Gewalt*), amid a thousand dangers; death, sickness, water, fire, storm, hail, thunder, rain, wild beasts, and evil men.⁶⁵ The lender would certainly become aware of his insecurity if he himself, by his own toil, tried to make his money productive, instead of lending it. But he avoids insecurity by demanding a fixed interest on a given date (with the threat that otherwise he will deprive the borrower of his property which he has put up as collateral). In that situation the lender cannot pray in earnest that God give him daily bread; that necessity he himself has taken care of far in advance. Any person who does not know what insecurity is does not know

⁶⁵ *WA* 6, 56 (*Grosser Sermon von dem Wucher*, 1520).

what faith is.⁶⁶ Luther's proposal is that the lender receive interest, not on the principal of the loan but on the profit it earns for the borrower during a year. If catastrophe befall the borrower, the lender will receive nothing.⁶⁷ If things turn out well for the borrower, they also go well for the lender. Both are in the same boat. The advantage to this perhaps somewhat utopian proposal is that the rich person shares the insecurity and is thereby driven to faith, while he enters into real fellowship with the poor person, and is thereby driven to love. Thus he is brought closer to a right relationship with both God and his neighbor. It is the same point of view as the one Luther presents when he rates marriage above the cloistered life. In marriage both faith and love are promoted, whereas they are stifled in the cloister.

Through earthly and spiritual government God drives men to good works and to faith. The earthly life as such compels one to work for the good of one's neighbor, and awakens prayer for help from God, as we see Luther has said in contrasting marriage with the monastic life. Thus there is a strong pull in all earthly orders to serve others.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Luther can give heed to a concrete form of earthly life, and propose reform to foster the same

⁶⁶ WA 6, 8 (*Kleiner Sermon von dem Wucher*, 1519). Cf. WA 15, 299, where it is emphasized that God will keep us in continual uncertainty about the future. This is the way God continues to be God. See also p. 300, "For that same reason, in the Lord's Prayer, he has bidden us to pray only for our daily bread today.

"For we are to live and labor in fear, knowing that there is no time when either life or goods are certain; we are rather to expect and accept everything from his hands, for that is what true faith does" (*Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher*, 1524).

⁶⁷ This is the position taken in *Kleiner Sermon von dem Wucher*, in 1519 (WA 6, 8); it is fully developed in the *Grosser Sermon* the next year. (WA 6, 57). Luther's thought follows the same line when he condemns monopoly in *Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher* in 1524 (WA 15, 299f, for example).

⁶⁸ WA 15, 625.

pull—love to one's neighbor and faith in God—as we have witnessed in what he says about usury. When the worldly order is reformed in the right way, its reform is in harmony with the pull God has built into it. This is manifestly not a static characteristic of earthly orders; it must ever be guided forward by law. Here an active quality enters into the realm of vocations which makes unchanging conservatism impossible. One might ask why such reshaping of the orders should be needed. The answer is apparent in the sight of measures resorted to by the greedy businessman, whose dealings are contrary to both faith and love. Here Luther sees a direct expression of the "power of darkness," or the devil: the usurer is in the hands of the devil.⁶⁹ In earthly orders God and the devil are both actively at work. Therefore these orders never stand still. They are always corrupted because men depart from God's will. But they are improved and reformed anew by God, among other things, in true Christian faith and love.

4. Faith and Love

In the foregoing we have repeatedly touched on faith and the new man, but always in particular ways. As man is crucified by the law, through the cross of his vocation, he is made alive and raised through faith in the gospel. As works go forth toward one's neighbor and the world, faith reaches up to God, to heaven. As works have this life in view, faith stretches forward to life after death, away from

⁶⁹ WA 15, 293 (*Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher*); WA 6, 60 (*Grosser Sermon von dem Wucher*, 1520). In *An die Pfarrherrn wider den Wucher zu predigen* (1540), this dualistic aspect is very marked. See, for instance, WA 51, 340, "Everyone who lends and takes back more than he lent sins against God as a usurer. Even if he in that way does a service, he does it to the accursed devil."