

If there are places where Luther's polemic against the *opus operatum* appears to go so far as to make faith a necessary condition of the validity of the sacrament, there are other places where he evidently denies that faith is any such necessary condition.

Thus, for example, he says of "the often quoted saying of Gregory," that "a mass celebrated by a wicked priest is not to be considered of less effect than one celebrated by a good priest," that "Gregory speaks the truth, only they misunderstand his words. For it is true beyond a question that the testament or sacrament is given and received through the ministration of wicked priests no less completely than through the ministration of the most saintly. For who has any doubt that the gospel is preached by the ungodly?" (LW 36: 55 f.).

Or, again, he says, "Indeed, I have no doubt that if anyone receives baptism in the name of the Lord, even if the wicked minister should not give it in the name of the Lord, he would yet be truly baptized in the name of the Lord. For the power of baptism depends not so much on the faith or use of the one who confers it as on the faith or use of the one who receives it" (63 f.). True, the "not so much . . . as" formulation may seem to imply that the validity of baptism does depend on the faith of the person conferring it after all, even if not as much as it depends on the person receiving it. But the earlier passage clearly rules out such an interpretation, as is clear from what Luther goes on to say in the next paragraph: "Therefore, just as a wicked priest may baptize, that is, apply the word of promise and the sign of water to the candidate for baptism, so he may also set forth the promise of this sacrament [*sc.* of the bread] and administer it to those who partake, and even partake himself, as did Judas the traitor at the supper of the Lord [Mt 26:23-25]. It still remains the same sacrament and testament, which works its own work in the believer but an 'alien work' in the unbeliever" (56).

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