

I find it significant—and equally characteristic—that, for all of his insistence that "the mass is directed toward the feeding and strengthening of faith," Luther can also say, "by means of the sacrament, all self-seeking love is rooted out and gives place to that which seeks the common good of all" and "the sacrament has no blessing and significance unless love grows daily and so changes a person that he is made one with all others" (*LW*, 35: 91, 67, 58).

The reason for this, of course, is that faith and love for Luther are inseparable, notwithstanding the priority of the first to the second. Thus, in his discussion of the sacrament of penance, he says—again, characteristically—"in the sacrament we let faith be the chief thing, the legacy through which one may attain the grace of God. After that we can do a lot of good [works]—to the glory of God alone and to the benefit of our fellow-men, and not in order that we might depend upon that as sufficient to pay for our sin. For God gives us his grace freely and without cost; so we should also serve him freely and without cost" (*LW*, 35: 17).

Elsewhere he says: "[T]o a believer no law is given by which he becomes righteous before God, . . . because he is alive and righteous and saved by faith, and he needs nothing further except to prove his faith by works. Truly, if faith is there, he cannot hold back; he proves himself, breaks out into good works, confesses and teaches this gospel before the people and stakes his life on it. Everything that he lives and does is directed to his neighbor's profit, in order to help him—not only in the attainment of this grace, but also in body, property, and honor. Seeing that Christ has done this for him, he thus follows Christ's example. That is what Christ meant when at the last he gave no other commandment than love, by which men were to know who were his disciples [Jn 13:34 f.] and true believers. For where works and love do not break forth, there faith is not right, the gospel does not yet take hold, and Christ is not rightly known" (*LW*, 35: 361).

As for the other point about the priority of faith, Luther puts it this way: "he who loves Christ will surely do what pleases him and will leave undone what does not please him. But who will love Christ unless he tastes the riches of this testament of Christ, bequeathed to poor sinners out of pure mercy and without cost? This taste comes by the faith which believes and

trusts the testament and promise" (*LW*, 35: 89). In the same connection, he also says, "[t]hereby [*sc.* by the believer's right use of the sacrament to strengthen faith] his heart may become sweet toward God and obtain a comforting confidence toward him" and "God desires thereby [*sc.* by the testament of Christ, which brings blessings so great to people so unworthy] to awaken love for him above all things" (*LW*, 35: 90, 110).

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