

Nothing is clearer in Luther's teaching than that Christ is not to be made another Moses (see, e.g., *LW*, 35: 119, 360). Moreover, his talk of Christ as, first of all, a "gift," or a "sacrament," and his statements that Christ does not "compel," but "beseeches," and so on, may seem to confirm that there is no demand aspect to Christ or the gospel. Thus he says, for example, "We must know what the law is, and what the gospel is. The law commands and requires us to do certain things. The law is thus directed solely to our behavior and consists in making requirements. For God speaks through the law, saying 'Do this, avoid that, this is what I expect of you.' The gospel, however, does not preach what we are to do or to avoid. It sets up no requirements but reverses the approach of the law, does the very opposite, and says, 'This is what God has done for you; he has let his Son be made flesh for you, has let him be put to death for your sake.' So, then, there are two kinds of doctrine and two kinds of works, those of God and those of men. Just as we and God are separated from one another, so also these two doctrines are widely separated from one another. For the gospel teaches exclusively what has been given us by God, and not—as in the case of the law—what we are to do and give God" (162). But as clear as Luther's teaching on this point appears to be, there are passages that quite preclude inferring from it that Christ and the gospel are in no way demand as well as gift.

Thus, for instance, in speaking about faithfully accepting the priest's words of absolution—or those of a devout Christian comforting you in your sin—Luther can say, "Since by God's grace it is commanded of us to believe and to hope that our sins are forgiven us, how much more then ought you to believe it when God gives you a sign of it through another person! There is no greater sin than not to believe this article of 'the forgiveness of sins' which we pray daily in the Creed. And this sin is called the sin against the Holy Spirit. It strengthens all other sins and makes them forever unforgivable. Consider, therefore, what a gracious God and Father we have. He not only promises us forgiveness of sins, but also commands us, on pain of committing the most grievous sin of all, to believe that they are forgiven. With this same command he considers us to have a joyful conscience while he uses the terrible sin [against the Holy Spirit] as a means of driving us away from sins and from a bad conscience" (*LW*, 35: 14).

In another passage, where Luther admonishes, "See to it. . . that you do not make a Moses out of Christ, or a book of laws and doctrines out of the gospel," he proceeds by explaining, "For the gospel does not expressly demand works of our own by which we become righteous and are saved; indeed it condemns such works. Rather the gospel demands faith in Christ: that he has overcome for us sin, death, and hell, and thus gives righteousness, life and salvation not through our works, but through his own works, death, and suffering, in order that we may avail ourselves of his death and victory as though we had done it ourselves" (360; Note, incidentally, how this second passage also makes clear that we are indeed saved by works, albeit through Christ's works rather than our own.).

In other words, how gracious God is is proved not only by his promising us forgiveness of sins, but also by his commanding us to believe that they are forgiven; and even though the gospel does not demand works, it does demand faith.

On the other hand, there are also passages where, commenting on Deuteronomy 18:15-19, he says, "God here promises another Moses whom they are to hear," even while emphasizing that "this other one would teach something different from Moses; and [that] Moses gives up his power and yields to him" (246). In a somewhat similar vein, he can say, "Moses is a teacher and doctor of the Jews. We have our own master, Christ, and he has set before us what we are to know, observe, do, and leave undone" (173 f.). Couldn't one say, then, in the light of passages such as this that, while Luther emphatically denies that Christ is another Moses in one sense of the words, he nonetheless affirms that he is another Moses in another, different sense of the words? Christ is another Moses in that he, too, demands—namely, faith—even while he is not another Moses in that he does not demand—namely, works?

Compare in this connection what Luther says about Christ's abolishing the law: "[W]hen Christ comes the law ceases, especially the Levitical law which . . . makes sins of things that in their nature are not sins. The Ten Commandments also cease, not in the sense that they are no longer to be kept or fulfilled, but in the sense that the office of Moses in them ceases; it no

longer increases sin [Rom 5:20] by the Ten Commandments, and sin is no longer the sting of death [1 Cor 15:56]. For through Christ sin is forgiven, God is reconciled [*sic!*], and man's heart has begin to feel kindly toward the law. The office of Moses can no longer rebuke the heart and make it to be sin for not having kept the commandments and for being guilty of death, as it did prior to grace, before Christ came" (244).

2 March 2001