

# Calling, Estate and Virtue: Martin Luther's Response to the Scholastic Views on the Virtues of Office

*Prof. A.W.G. Raath & N.P. Swartz*

## **Samevatting**

*Luther se leerstuk van roeping is wesenlik 'n leerstuk van die sosiale terreine in die samelewing. In Luther se verwysingsraamwerk is "roeping" (Beruf) en "sosiale stand" (Stand) bykans identies. Die woord "roeping" verwys na "ampte" of "klasse" wat duidelik onderskeibaar is. "Roeping" verwys na die geheel van die mens se verpligtinge in die wêreld. Teen die einde van die 1520's het Luther se leerstuk van die drie hierargieë 'n belangrike dimensie by sy teologie oor die sosiale terreine en roeping gevoeg. Teenoor die middeleeuse onder-waardering van die huwelik en politieke regering en die verheffing van die kloosterlewe en kerkregering, het Luther die idee van die drie "heilige regerings" gepostuleer – die vader van die huishouding en die politieke regeerder beoefen beide ampte wat gelykmatig deur God verorden is en op dieselfde vlak as dié van kerklike regeerders staan. Die drie "ordes" wat Luther onderskei is die priesteramp (Ampt), die sosiale terrein van die huwelik en die politieke regering van die politieke regeerders. Al drie ordes is gelyklik heilig omdat dit op die woord van God gegrondves is. Die gemeenskaplike orde van Christelike liefde is te alle tye op alle mense van toepassing. Alhoewel Luther die Aristoteliese sosiale teorie gekritiseer het, het sowel hy as Thomas van Aquinas belangrike aanknopingspunte vir hul denke oor roeping, sosiale stand en amp by Aristoteles gevind.*

## **1. Introduction**

Although the theology and political theory of Thomas Aquinas did not consciously strive to depart from the political and legal conceptions that

bore the sanction of Christian antiquity, namely the validity of natural law and its binding authority over rulers and subjects, the obligation of kings to govern justly and in accordance with law, the sanctity of the constituted authority both in church and state, and the unity of Christendom under the parallel powers of *imperium* and *sacerdotium*, he did introduce significant new ideas about law and governance that had a lasting effect on the Western heritage of the nature and institutional effects of office in civil society.<sup>1</sup> Arguably one of the most influential ideas emanating from Thomas's idea of office was the notion that the king himself must not only rule justly, but also must administer the law subject to the ethical standards imposed upon the office of the king. In his consideration of the standards to which the office of bearers of authority are subject, Thomas interpreted Aristotle's views to mean that political society and the state ceased to be considered as institutions of sin – they became instead the embodiment of moral purpose and instruments in the realisation of justice and virtue.<sup>2</sup> Although the shift towards the moral dimensions of the ruler's office was prepared in fundamental ways in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury, drawing much from the works of Cicero and Seneca, it was Thomas's interpretation of Aristotle that produced the late medieval culture of relying on the Aristotelian conceptions of moral virtue in the social life of the community. By drawing together the traditions of Christian theology and Greek philosophy, Thomas's views on office reflected the complex historical relationships – including its inherent tensions – typical of the Aristotelian medieval tradition.

The idea of office and its foundational importance in civil and political life, forms part of the all-embracing system of universal synthesis, the keynote of which is harmony and consilience. Although in Thomas's system revelation is above reason, it is in no way contrary to reason; theology completes the system of which science and philosophy form the beginning, although it never destroys its continuity. Faith is the fulfilment of reason.<sup>3</sup> Together faith and reason constitute the temple of knowledge,

---

1 A.P. D'Entreves, *Aquinas. Selected Political Writings* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), ix, states: "But the full implications of St. Thomas's attitude to politics can only be grasped in the light of the great issues which it lays bare, the issues which confronted medieval Christianity. St. Thomas stood at a crossing in the development of European thought. His age was an age of transition and crisis, and nowhere, perhaps, was that crisis more apparent than in the field of political theory."

2 *Ibid.*, xi.

3 *Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit.*

and nowhere do they conflict or work at cross-purposes.<sup>4</sup> Thomas's conception of social and political life fits directly into his larger plan of nature as a whole, and the most important passages in which he treated the subject were a part of the great systematic work on philosophy and theology – his *Summa Theologica*. Like all nature, society is a system of ends and purposes in which the lower serves the higher and the higher directs and guides the lower.<sup>5</sup> Following Aristotle, Thomas described society as a mutual exchange of services for the sake of a good life to which many callings contribute, the farmer and artisan by supplying material goods, the priest by prayer and religious observance, and each doing his own proper work.

The basic theme throughout Martin Luther's work is the statement of the basic antithesis between theology and philosophy. In a lecture on Paul's Epistle to the Romans he expressed himself on this basic contradiction as follows: "Indeed I for my part believe that I owe to the Lord this duty of speaking out against philosophy and of persuading men to heed Holy Scripture. For perhaps if another man who has not seen these things, did this, he might be afraid or he might not be believed. But I have been worn out by these studies for many years now, and having experienced and heard many things over and over again, I have come to see that it is the study of vanity and perdition. Therefore I warn you all as earnestly as I can that you finish these studies quickly and let it be your only concern not to establish and defend them but treat them as we do when we learn worthless skills to destroy them and study errors to refute them. Thus we study also these things to get rid of them, or at least, just to learn the method of speaking of those people with whom we must carry on some discourse. For it is high time that we undertake new studies and learn Jesus Christ, 'and Him crucified' (1 Cor. 2:2)."<sup>6</sup>

Neither did Luther hide his opposition to Aristotelianism. In his *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* of September 1517 he observed that it "is

---

4 Therefore, reason and faith, human nature and supernatural values are fundamentally in harmony.

5 See D'Entreves, *Aquinas*, xiii: "St. Thomas's assertion that Grace does not abolish Nature but perfects it implies that human values and truths are not necessarily obliterated by the revelation of higher ones ..."

6 Luther's Works 25[*LW*, 25]: Commentary on Romans 15:33. Luther also observes: "Thus the apostle is right in Col. 2:8 when he speaks against the philosophy, saying: 'See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition' (ibid.)."

an error to say that without Aristotle no one becomes a theologian. On the contrary, one only becomes a theologian when he does so without Aristotle. The assertion that a theologian who is not a logician is an abominable heretic, is itself abominable and heretical ... in short, the whole of Aristotle is related to theology as darkness is to light.”<sup>7</sup>

This does not mean that Luther attacked Aristotle as such, but rather he attacked the manner in which Aristotle's philosophy was applied in the field of theology. Ebeling observes that Luther's attack on Aristotle was a struggle for true theological thought and that a proper understanding of his outlook is consequently to be obtained not from his “general invective” against Aristotle, but “only by a study of the concrete theological context in which the use of Aristotelian thought forms was in fact harmful.”<sup>8</sup> In fact Luther relied on Aristotelian psychology in explaining the role of grace, acting as intellectual and moral virtues in perfecting man's faculties of his soul, and as the essence of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Neither does Luther dispute that particular virtues can be achieved in the moral and political spheres, nor does he have any objection to the Aristotelian concept of merit as a substitute for grace; he was aware of the danger of not making a clear distinction between the moral and the theological aspects. Therefore, one must accept the fact that Luther maintained a qualified criticism of scholastic thought. He does not merely play off theology against philosophy, but regards their relationship as one which makes a proper distinction between them and accords its own sphere to each, as can be gleaned from his *Disputation concerning Man*

---

7 *LW*, 31: *Disputation against Scholasticism Theology*, p. 12. Luther adds: “Virtually the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. This in opposition to the scholastics. It is an error to maintain that Aristotle's statement concerning happiness does not contradict Catholic doctrine. This in opposition to the doctrine on morals. It is an error to say that no man can become a theologian without Aristotle. This in opposition to common opinion. Indeed, no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one with Aristotle. To state that a theologian who is not a logician is a monstrous heretic – this is a monstrous and heretical statement.”

8 Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (tr. R.A. Wilson) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 89.

9 *Ibid.*, 90.

10 See e.g. Luther's observation (*LW*, 34: *Career of the Reformer IV*, 142ff): “(P)hilosophy must be separated from theology. Philosophers and Aristotle are not able to define what the theological man is, but by the grace of God we are able to do it because we have the Bible.” Also at 142: “There are four causes through which all things are known to us. Therefore it has perfect knowledge about man.” He adds (at 191): “We are urged by reason and knowledge of philosophy to attain to a knowledge of the gospel.”

(1536).<sup>10</sup> Correctly understood the reason of man is actually something of divine origin – if kept within its limits it cannot be too highly praised. When reason tyrannizes the conscience and puts itself on the throne of God, it is the duty of faith to oppose it. It is therefore of major importance to state clearly the relationship between theology and philosophy in the light of his contradictory statements concerning reason and virtue. This is also true for understanding his views on the values and virtues governing the execution of their office by rulers in positions of authority. Furthermore Luther's thought on office and political virtues can only be understood and applied if the scholastic background of his thought is taken into account.

## 2. The aims and responsibilities of public office

In his *De Regimine Principum*<sup>11</sup> Thomas addresses the question whether honour or glory are sufficient incentives for a monarch to govern wisely. To Thomas the duty of a king is to provide for the good of the community. Since such a task would appear to be too weighty unless it is accompanied by some commensurate reward, it must be considered what the particular reward for a good monarch should be. After having considered the opinions of the pagan philosophers Cicero<sup>12</sup> and Aristotle, as well as the Old Testamentary prophet Isaiah, Thomas concludes that human glory is an insufficient reward for the kingly office.<sup>13</sup> It is also hurtful to the community to set such a reward before princes, for it is the duty of a just man to despise glory, together with all other temporal rewards: “A virtuous and high-souled man should despise glory and even life itself for the sake of justice.”<sup>14</sup> So it is a remarkable paradox that while glory follows virtuous action, there is virtue in despising glory”. A good man then, is not fittingly rewarded merely by that glory which the good avoid. The love of glory leads to other and more dangerous evils. Another vice of like nature is deceit: “For it is a difficult task, and one in which few succeed, to practise true virtue, which alone is honourable: but because many desire glory they are led to simulate virtue, which alone is

11 *De Regimine Principum* [DRP] in D'Entrevés, *Aquinas*, 2-83 at 37-42.

12 *DRP*, VII: 37: “Quoniam autem, secundum praedicta, regis est bonum multitudinis quaerere, nimis videtur onerosum regis officium, nisi ea aliquod proprium bonum ex hoc proveniret. Oportet igitur considerare, in qua re sit boni regis conveniens praemium.”

13 *DRP*, Chapter VII, page 37 [VII: 37].

14 *DRP*, VII: 37-39.

honourable”.<sup>15</sup> So just as it is perilous for the community if the ruler should seek pleasures and riches for his reward and thus become rapacious and overbearing, so it is equally perilous if he be eaten up with desire for glory and thus becomes presumptuous and a deceiver.<sup>16</sup> Thomas's argument implies that one who desires only to dominate and cares nothing for glory will not fear the disapproval of right-thinking men, but will more often seek to obtain what he wants by open crimes, “surpassing even the beasts in cruelty and debauchery”.<sup>17</sup> Thomas adds: “For of all earthly rewards the highest perhaps, is that a man's virtues should be publicly attested by his fellows”.<sup>18</sup>

Because political rulers are ministers of God, receiving all their power from God, kings must expect recompense from God in return for government; not an earthly but a heavenly reward; one which is to be found in God alone.<sup>19</sup> Virtue, being that which perfects its possessor and renders action beneficent, has as its reward blessedness.<sup>20</sup> Rulers can be considered happy who rule wisely, who prefer the suppression of evil to the oppression of peoples, and who carry out their duties, “not from a desire of empty glory but for love of eternal blessedness. God grants to kings not only that temporal salvation which is commonly enjoyed by both men and beasts, but also that hope of which Isaias says: ‘My salvation will be for eternity’”.<sup>21</sup> In this sense it may rightly be concluded that the reward of a king lies in honour and glory – what worldly and fleeting honour, says Thomas, can equal that which makes a man a citizen and member of the household of God, “by which he is numbered among the sons of God and becomes co-heir with Christ of the celestial kingdom?”<sup>22</sup>

Because blessedness, to Thomas, is the reward of virtue it follows that a greater degree of blessedness will be owed to greater virtue.<sup>23</sup> The worthy exercise of the kingly office requires, then, excelling virtue and must be required by a high degree of blessedness.<sup>24</sup> For this reason a king merits greater reward for ruling his subjects justly than does one of his subjects for acting aright under his government.<sup>25</sup> Because virtue is that quality

---

15 *DRP*, VII: 39.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *DRP*, VII: 41.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *DRP*, VIII: 43.

20 *DRP*, VII: 45.

21 *DRP*, VIII: 47.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *DRP*, VIII: 49.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*

which makes a man's actions good, it follows that greater virtue is required for a greater act of goodness.<sup>26</sup> Because the good of the community is greater and more divine than the good of the individual, the hurt of some individual is sometimes to be tolerated, if it makes for the good of the community.<sup>27</sup> It is the king's duty to foster the common good with all care, therefore a greater reward is due for good rulership "than to his subjects for right action".<sup>28</sup> If an individual person is praised by men, and God "considers him worthy of reward if he succours the needy, or brings peace to those in strife, or saves the weak from oppression by the strong",<sup>29</sup> how much more then, does he deserve praise of men and reward of God "who gladdens a whole country with peace, restrains the violent, preserves righteousness, and orders the actions of men by his laws and precepts?"<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, good kings who dedicate themselves with all care to the common weal and who by their efforts bring their subjects to enjoy greater prosperity, are loved by most of their subjects in return for the love they have shown them: "for no community is so faithless as to hate those who are its friends and return evil to its benefactors."<sup>31</sup>

The essence of Thomas's views on political office and its purpose in society can be summarised as follows: political government and its accompanying authority is a divine institution. The aim of the ruler must be to preserve or to establish the subjects, which can best be done by preserving unity of purpose among the subjects. Peace must also be maintained at all costs. The more effective the government is in preserving peace, the more virtuous and useful it is.

Contrary to Thomas's approach to office by reasoning from man's aspirations to virtue, Luther argues from God's sovereign will in the instituting of office. In his commentaries on the Psalms, Luther emphasises the divine nature of office. Relying on Psalm 82: 1,<sup>32</sup> Luther states that office-bearers are called "gods" because all the offices of government, from the least to the highest, are God's ordinance, as St. Paul

---

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 *DRP*, VIII: 51.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 *DRP*, X: 57. He adds: "This is the reason for the stability of the those kingdoms which are governed by good kings; for their subjects are willing on their account to run every risk."

32 *LW*, 13: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1. Luther uses Psalm 82 (Weimar, XXXI-1, 189-218), as the basis for an essay on the Christian prince, as a *Fürstenspiegel*.

teaches in Romans 13: 1, and king Jehoshaphat says to his officials in 2 Chronicles 19: 6: "Consider, and judge rightly, for the judgment is God's."<sup>33</sup> Because this is not a matter of human will or devising, but God Himself appoints and preserves all authority, and if He no longer held it up, it would all fall down even though all the world held it fast – therefore it is rightly called a divine thing, a divine ordinance: "And such persons are rightly called divine, godlike, or gods; especially is this so when, beside the institution itself, we have a word or command of God for it, as among the people of Israel, where the priests, princes and kings were appointed by the oral command and word of God."<sup>34</sup>

The divine nature of office demands that men obey office-bearers as God's officers and be subject to them "with all fear and reverence, as to God Himself." Whoever resists them or is disobedient to them or despises them, whom God names with His own name and calls 'gods', and to whom He attaches His own honour – whoever despises, disobeys, or resists them is thereby despising, disobeying, and resisting the true Supreme God, who is in them, who speaks and judges through them, and calls their judgment His judgement.<sup>35</sup> What they win by it St. Paul shows (Romans 13: 4) and this is abundantly shown by experience (Psalm 82: 1).

This is demanded by God because it is His will to establish and maintain peace "among the children of Adam" (Psalm 82: 1).<sup>36</sup> Where there is no peace, no one can keep his life or anything else, "in the face of another's outrage, thievery, robbery, violence, and wickedness" (Psalm 82: 1).<sup>37</sup> Office-bearers are publicly placed in an office which God has instituted; they are instruments of God; their sayings and deeds must be regarded as if they had proceeded from God Himself" (Psalm 90: 1).<sup>38</sup> Because Moses holds an office entrusted to him by God, men should believe him when he teaches, no less than God Himself." (Psalm 90: 1).<sup>39</sup>

Although there are clear parallels between Thomas's and Luther's views on public office, the most important point of difference in their approaches is situated in the fact that whilst Thomas argues from the virtuous aims of public office, Luther proceeds from God's graceful intervention in man's

---

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 *LW*, 13: Commentary on Psalm 90: 1.

39 Ibid.



sinful existence by providing for offices to curb man's sinful lusts and desires. The implications of Luther's approach to the nature and functions of public office are, amongst others, that God instituted offices as divine institutions committed to men by God. God maintains His government of mankind through various offices, all of which are in principle equal. Divine office is for the good administration of mankind; God assigns men their offices and the accompanying duties attached to office, and good government and virtuous maintenance of one's office is pleasing to God.

(a) God instituted the various offices, which means that offices are divine institutions committed to men by God to curb man's sinfulness.<sup>40</sup>

In the preface to the *Book of Concord*<sup>41</sup>, containing the confessions of the Lutheran Church, the rulers who signed the document committed themselves to the office "which God has committed to us"<sup>42</sup> to which end they "have not ceased to apply our diligence to the end that the false and misleading doctrines which have been introduced into our lands and territories and which are insinuating themselves increasingly into them might be checked and that our subjects might be preserved from straying from the right course of divine truth which they had once acknowledged and confessed."<sup>43</sup> One of the implications of Luther's views on divine office is that when officers of the state do or say something in their official capacity, they are not acting or speaking of their own persons but in God's stead.<sup>44</sup>

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 *LW*, 13: Commentary on Psalm 90: 1.

39 Ibid.

40 See *The Book of Concord: The Smalcald Articles*, 2, III, 2.

41 *Book of Concord [BOC]*.

42 *The Book of Concord [BOC]: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (tr. & ed. Theodore G. Tappert) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), Preface. In *LW*, 2: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6-14* (Commentary on Genesis 13: 16), Luther says: "Age, sex, and callings differ greatly in this life. One leads the church, another serves the government; still another instructs the youth; a mother busies herself with the care and upbringing of children ...."

43 *BOC: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Preface. This also implies that offices were instituted by God and that Christians may serve in office, contrary to the views of the Anabaptists (*The Formula of Concord*, I, XII, 13). In the *Augsburg Confession*, 2, XVI, 2 & 3, VI, 55 Luther speaks out against the error "that all magistracy and all civil offices are unworthy of Christians and in conflict with evangelical counsel."

44 *LW*, 1: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*: Commentary on Genesis 3: 10.

God appointed three social classes to which he gave the command not to let sins go unpunished. The first is that of the parents, who should maintain strict discipline in the house “when ruling the domestics and the children”.<sup>45</sup> The second is the government, for the officers of the state bear the sword “for the purposes of coercing the obstinate and remiss by means of their power of discipline.” The third is that of the church which governs by means of the Word.<sup>46</sup> Through the offices in the three estates of civil society, “God has protected the human race against the devil, the flesh, and the world, to the end that offences may not increase but may be cut off.” In all three estates office-bearers have the duty to curb vice: parents are the children’s tutors, as it were; those in the state who are remiss are curbed through the executioner, whilst those in the church are excommunicated.<sup>47</sup> Luther stresses the importance of parents in executing their duties as office-bearers in opposing sin: “Furthermore, this command (in Genesis 19: 16) about censuring sins concerns not only the teachers in the church and the officers in the state but also every citizen and every member of a household”.<sup>48</sup>

(b) God governs his creatures through humans and His gracious support

God supports his creatures, including the office-bearers in the three estates, also by support of angels, “who support the godly, defend the entire human race, even though it is exposed to lions, wolves, dragons, and all the horrible leaders of Satan who have been trained to inflict harm not only with the sword, plagues, and countless diseases but also with heresies of every kind” – and evidently it is pleasing to God to reveal His glory through His creatures.<sup>49</sup> Luther adds that God no longer wants to act in accordance with His extraordinary or (as the scholastics express it), absolute power, but rather wants to act through His creatures, whom He does not want to be idle.<sup>50</sup>

Governing virtuously on behalf of God, says Luther, means that people should not rely on their own counsel and wisdom when they assume an office: “Consequently, if you are in government, beware of depending on your own wisdom; beware yourself and pray privately with folded hands: ‘Heavenly Father, be Thou with me; help, guide, and direct me’”.<sup>51</sup>

---

45 *LW*, 3: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*: Commentary on Genesis 19: 16.

46 *Ibid.*

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*

51 *LW*, 5: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*: Commentary on Genesis 27: 15.

Because governing is a divine power, God calls all magistrates gods<sup>52</sup>, not because of the creation but because of the administration which belongs to God alone: “Consequently, he who is in authority is an incarnate god, so to speak. But if they force their way into the government of the church, the state, or the household rashly and without due preparation, exclude God, do not pray, and do not seek advice from God but want to rule everything with their own counsels and strength, then it will eventually happen in the management of household affairs that an honorable and chaste wife will become a harlot of the worst kind and that the children will degenerate and come into the power of the executioner.”<sup>53</sup> Luther adds: “In the civil government the state will be thrown into confusion by insurrections, wars, and countless other perils. In the church heresies, Epicurian contempt of the Word, desecration of the sacraments, etc., will arise. Why? Because such a head of a household, prince, or pastor does not recognise GOD as the Author of all counsel and government but by his presumption and arrogance destroys himself and others over whom he rules”.<sup>54</sup>

All offices, whether ecclesiastic, political or domestic, are in principle equally pleasing to God. Luther opposes the distinction of the Roman Catholic Church between secular, or carnal, and spiritual matters, which “taught that the domestic sphere should be avoided as though it were disregarded and disapproved of by God...”<sup>55</sup> Luther reminds the bearers of office in all three estates that their respective offices are equally important and pleasing to God.<sup>56</sup> Addressing the householders, for example, Luther states that devout householders should know that all their actions are pleasing to God, “whether they care for the flocks of the fields, or even for the stinking dunghills”.<sup>57</sup> All these matters are not regarded as profane and forbidden if they are done by saintly people: “But since God Himself is the Author of these offices, there are no grounds at all for thinking that the worship of God is hindered by these matters, but they are the most excellent and most pleasing exercises of godliness towards God and men.”<sup>58</sup> Also the youth, says Luther, should be inculcated with an

---

52 Psalm 82: 6.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 *LW*, 6: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*: Commentary on Genesis 37: 15.

56 For the three estates of households, state and church, see *LW*, 1: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*: Commentary on Genesis 3: 20.

57 *LW*, 6: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*: Commentary on Genesis 37: 15.

58 Ibid.

appreciation of the importance of fulfilling one's office to the glory of God: "These matters should be dealt with often and inculcated especially in the youthful age that it may learn to form a more correct judgment about these matters than the corruptions of law and the papists are accustomed to do, who do not cease to prefer the orders and rules of monks and nuns to domestic and civil offices, however much they are commended and adorned by God. Let them know that a woman suckling an infant or a maid sweeping a threshing floor with a broom is just as pleasing to God as an idle nun or a lazy Carthusian. This they should know over against the papal abomination which was introduced into the church in former ages when they said that all other estates were secular and useless and they honored only their tonsures and cowls."<sup>59</sup>

(c) Office-bearers are called to serve the common good

Commenting upon the text of Genesis 41: 46, Luther states that the service rendered by office-bearers is so indispensable, that Scripture teaches that administrative duties should by no means be avoided. In 1 Timothy 3: 1 Paul says: "If anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task," – that is, a task useful and pleasing to God. Although to those in office it may be troublesome, unpleasant, and evil, "but to God it is pleasing, and it is useful to the church and the state."<sup>60</sup> Office-bearers are called by God to serve their neighbour: "But who could bear those pricks of the thorns, the sorrow, the harshness, the troubles, and the difficulties of every kind? I would rather flee. You shall not flee. Indeed, right from your earliest years you must accustom yourself, not to pleasure but to that which is of service to the common life. For this is why you devote yourself to the study of letters, in order that you may serve the common good, whether in the church or in the state".<sup>61</sup>

Because of the burdens of civil office, it really is a kind of punishment: "(N)ot light and small but very severe and cruel – against original sin, in order that we may learn how great the malice of men who are ruled is, and how great Satan's malice is. For no one understands or believes this except the magistrate, whom the devil resists with all his might".<sup>62</sup> Luther confesses that the text of Acts 13: 36, where it is stated that David served God's will, has often been a source of comfort to him, even though

---

59 Ibid.

60 *LW*, 7: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*.

61 Ibid. Also see *The Book of Concord: The Confession of Faith*, 2, XXI, 1.

62 Ibid.

David's government "was most wretched and full of sedition and confusion of every kind in the civil and domestic sphere, to such an extent that it did not differ much from the rule of Herod".<sup>63</sup> Therefore, men must not seek pleasure in serving the will of God but must seek "mortification, God's ordinance, and the welfare of our neighbor".<sup>64</sup> Although man has "thistles and thorns" in his field, "he shall be content with the glory that he is sure of the grace and favor of God in this office and obedience".<sup>65</sup>

(d) God assigns office-bearers their offices and duties

With reference to the overlords and judges whom Moses calls "gods" in Exodus 22: 8, Luther states that although they are gods over men, they do not have power (or authority) over God Himself. God will remain the Supreme God, "a Judge over all gods".<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless Moses calls them gods because all the offices of government, from the least to the highest, are God's ordinance.<sup>67</sup> This is not a matter of human will or devising, but God Himself appoints and preserves all authority, "and if He no longer held it up, it would all fall down, even though all the world held it fast – therefore it is rightly called a divine thing, a divine ordinance".<sup>68</sup> Luther adds: "And such persons are rightly called divine, godlike, or gods; especially is this so when, beside the institution itself, we have a word or command of God for it, as among the people of Israel, where the priests, princes, and kings were appointed by the oral command and word of God".<sup>69</sup>

Because offices are divine institutions and office-bearers are called by God to fill these offices, we see "how high and glorious" He holds rulers, and that men ought to obey them as His officers and "be subject to them with all fear and reverence as to God Himself".<sup>70</sup> Whoever resists them or

59 Ibid.

60 *LW*, 7: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*.

61 Ibid. Also see *The Book of Concord: The Confession of Faith*, 2, XXI, 1.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.: Commentary on Genesis 41: 46.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 *LW*, 13: *Selected Psalms II: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1-2*.

67 Ibid: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1.

70 Ibid.: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1. See *LW*, 1: *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5: Commentary on Genesis 3: 10*: "Similarly, when officers of the state either do or say something, they are not acting and speaking for their own persons but in God's stead. For this reason Scripture gives the name of God's judgment to the judgments administered or transacted through the agency of human beings."

is disobedient to them or despises them whom God names “with His own honor, thereby despises, disobeys and resists the true Supreme God”, “who is in them, who speaks and judges through them, and calls their judgment His judgment”.<sup>71</sup> This is contained in the Scriptures because it is God’s will to establish and maintain peace among men for their own good (Romans 13: 4). For where there is no government, or where government is not held in honour, there can be no peace. Where there is no peace, no one can keep his life or anything else, “in the face of another’s outrage, thievery, robbery, violence, and wickedness”.<sup>72</sup> Because God will not have the world desolate and empty but has made it for men to live in, to till the land and fill it<sup>73</sup>, and because this cannot happen where there is no peace, He is compelled, as the Creator, to preserve “His own creatures works, and ordinances, to institute and preserve government and to commit it to the sword and the laws”.<sup>74</sup>

Just as God on the one hand keeps down the disorder of the rabble by subjecting them to the sword and the laws, so, on the other hand, He keeps down the rulers, so that they do not abuse His majesty and power according to their own self-will, but use them for that peace for which He has appointed and preserves them: “Nevertheless it is not His will to allow the rabble to raise their fist against the rulers or to seize the sword, as if to punish and judge the rulers”.<sup>75</sup> The implications of offices being divine institutions in Luther’s social theology are manifest: government officials, for example, hold public office; they are publicly placed in offices instituted by God; they are instruments of God, which implies that their “sayings and deeds must be regarded as if they had proceeded from God Himself”.<sup>76</sup> The office entrusted to man by God includes three factors: the person, the authority, and the calling. The authority of those in office demands respect; the calling implies that the person in office is a divine instrument in the hand of God, so that whoever despises him despises God (Luke 10: 16), and although office-bearers, like Moses, may fall into sin, the authority of those in office (accompanying their calling) remains.<sup>77</sup>

---

71 Ibid.: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1.

72 *LW*, 13: *Selected Psalms II*: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1.

73 Genesis 1: 29, 30.

74 Ibid.: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1.

75 Ibid.: Commentary on Psalm 82: 1. Luther reacts to the political developments of the decade since the Diet of Worms. In 1525 the German peasants, unable to obtain satisfaction for their grievances by peaceful means, had resorted to rebellion.

76 Ibid., Commentary on Psalm 90: 1.

77 Ibid.

(e) The institution of office is based on certain constituent elements, corresponding with the divine purpose for which office was instituted.

In the case of the office of judging and governing, the constituent elements are to remove “or stop unrighteousness and wickedness and to bring forth righteousness”.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore Luther holds that the Word of God hallows and deifies everything to which it is applied; therefore those estates (and accompanying offices) that are appointed in God’s Word are all holy, divine estates, even though the persons in them are not holy: “Thus father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant, maid, preacher, pastor – all these are holy and divine positions in life<sup>79</sup>, even though the persons in these positions may be knaves and rascals. So, because He here founds and orders the office of ruler, the rulers are rightly called ‘gods’ and ‘children of God’ for the sake of the divine office and the divine Word, and yet they are wicked knaves ...”.<sup>80</sup>

(f) There is a clear distinction between the divine office instituted by God and the person filling that office.

Offices are divine institutions to which God appoints office-bearers.<sup>81</sup> In his commentary on the text of Matthew 7: 24 Luther responds to those bishops, preachers, “and others in office” who imagine that this entitles them personally to God’s special favour. God did not give them the power to do these things “for their sakes personally but for the sake of validating their office”.<sup>82</sup> This distinction has important implications, as described by Luther in his commentaries on the books of Matthew, John, Romans, Galatians and Timothy.

No person has the innate right to judge or to rule or to have sovereignty except God alone, or those whom He has commissioned with it; those offices through whom He maintains His rule (Matthew 6: 14).<sup>83</sup>

---

78 *LW*, 13: Commentary on Psalm 110: 7: “This is the way in which he intends, through His Word, to convert heathen from their sins to His obedience and salvation, and He will do this wherever the heathen may be ...”

79 These are equal positions. See *The Book of Concord: The Confession of Faith*, 3, VI, 13.

80 *LW*, 13: Commentary on Psalm 82: 7.

81 See *LW*, 14: Commentary on Psalm 118: 10: “We should use and enjoy the princely office and temporal government for food, protection and peace on earth, as God instituted it.”

82 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 7: 24.

83 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 6: 14.

In man's personal (unofficial) capacity he must be meek towards everyone else; but in the execution of his official duties he must be sharp and strict; for here he must do what God puts into his hands and commands him to do for His sake (Matthew 5: 6): "The man who is called Hans or Martin is a man quite different from the one who is called elector or doctor or preacher. Here we have two different persons in one man. The one is that which we are created and born, according to which we are all alike – man or woman or child, young or old. But once we are born, God adorns and dresses you up as another person. He makes you a child and me a father, one a master and another a servant, one a prince and another a citizen. Then this one is called a divine person, one who holds a divine office and goes about clothed in its dignity – not simply Hans or Nick, but the Prince of Saxony, father, or master. He is not talking about this person here, letting it alone in its own office and rule, as He has ordained it. He is talking merely about how each individual, natural person is to behave in relation to others" (Matthew 5: 6).<sup>84</sup>

Although anger is sometimes necessary and proper for those in office, office-bearers are commanded to use it correctly. They are commanded to get angry, not on their own behalf, but on behalf of their office and of God: "(Y)ou must not confuse the two, your person and your office. As far as your person is concerned, you must not get angry with anyone regardless of the injury he may have done to you. But where your office requires it, there you must get angry, even though no injury has been done to you personally. For example, a pious judge gets angry with a criminal, even though personally he wishes him no harm and would rather let him off without punishment. His anger comes out of a heart where there is nothing but love toward his neighbor" (Matthew 5: 27).<sup>85</sup>

It is possible that various offices may be combined in one person, though they are distinguishable from one another. It is even conceivable that at one and the same time the same person may be expected to tolerate everything and not tolerate it, but in such a way that what is distinctive about each office is applied to it (Matthew 6: 22).<sup>86</sup> Commenting on the text of Matthew 5: 43, Luther explains the implications of the combination of various offices in one person: "In addition to being a Christian, he would be a prince or a judge or a lord or a servant or a maid – all of which

---

84 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 6.

85 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 27.

86 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 6: 22.



are termed ‘secular’ persons because they are part of the secular realm.” He adds: “Yes; God Himself has ordained and established this secular realm and its distinctions, and by His Word He has confirmed and commended them. For without them this could not endure. We are all included in them, indeed, we are born into them even before we became Christians.”<sup>87</sup>

Each status or office is properly distinguished from the other, although they are combined in one person – at one and the same time the same person is supposed to tolerate everything and not to tolerate it, but in such a way that what is distinctive about each office is applied to it (Matthew 6: 22).<sup>88</sup> To Luther this implies the following: “If it involves me as a Christian, I should tolerate it, but if it involves me as a secular person (an obligation not between me and my land and people, whom I am commanded to help and protect with the sword that has been placed in my hand for that purpose) then my duty is not to tolerate it but the opposite (Matthew 6: 22).<sup>89</sup>

Office-bearers often abuse their office and authority; there are, for example, rogues and rascals sitting on judges’ benches and holding public office. They are supposed to administer justice, yet they turn and twist the law to support their own whims (Matthew 5: 43).<sup>90</sup>

In principle all offices are equal, yet in all the distinctions between the various offices the Christian should remember that “in all these distinctions of position the hearts should have the same attitude and pay no attention to the dissimilarity” (Matthew 7: 3).<sup>91</sup> When my neighbour is a groom taking care of a horse, I should be just as pleased with his work as with my own work when I preach and govern land or people; “I must not look at the outward masks we wear, but at the fact that he lives in the same faith and the same Christ as I, that he has grace, Baptism, and the Sacraments as much as I, though my work and my office are different and higher”.<sup>92</sup>

---

87 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 43.

88 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 6: 22.

89 *Ibid.*

90 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 43.

91 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Mathew 7. See *The Book of Concord, XXVII: The Confession of Faith*, 3, VII, 9.

92 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 7: 3. In his “Ein Sermon von dem Neuen Testament” (1520) in *LW*, 35, *Word and Sacrament I: A Treatise on the New Testament, that is the Holy Mass*, at 101, Luther states the principle of the equality of faith of all believers, irrespective of office or calling: “For faith must do everything. Faith alone is the true priestly office. It permits no one else to take its place. Therefore all Christian men are priests, all women priestesses, be they young or old, master or

Office-bearers executing their office properly, cannot avoid judging and punishing because it is all part of the secular realm (Matthew 7: 3).<sup>95</sup>

On Judgment Day God will demand from everyone<sup>94</sup> an accounting of how he carried on his office or calling (John 1: 14).

The distinction between the secular emperors, kings, and princes (entrusted with the sword of iron) on the one hand, and the apostles and the preachers on the other must remain intact. If this distinction is not maintained and “if the princes continue to jumble the two ... then may God in His mercy shorten our lives that we may not witness the ensuing disaster. For in such circumstances everything go to wrack and ruin”.<sup>95</sup>

An office-bearer (as a faithful servant of God) is in duty bound not to exceed the authority of his office and not to abuse it for the sake of his own pride but to administer it only for the benefit of those who are entrusted to him (Romans 15: 33).<sup>96</sup>

Anyone who fills an office and exercises a position of authority in the church or in government should believe for a certainty that his office is

---

servant, mistress or maid, learned or unlearned. Here there is no difference, unless faith be unequal.” In *LW*, 52, *Sermons II*, 38, Luther places faith in the centre of being called: “For a Christian knows that it all depends upon faith; for this reason he walks, stands, eats, drinks, dresses, works, and lives as any ordinary person in his calling ...” In his address to the Christian nobility (“An den Christlichen Adel” in *LW*, 44, *The Christian in Society I*, 128), Luther bases the equality in office on being baptised: “Since those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same baptism, and have the same faith and the same gospel as the rest of us, we must admit that they are priests and bishops and we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the community.” To Luther this means that although there may be a difference in office, there is no distinction in status: “It follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work to do. Just as all priests and monks do not have the same work” (at 129) and “A cobbler, a smith, a peasant – each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops” (at 129).

93

Ibid.

94 *LW*, 22: Commentary on John 1: 14.

95 *LW*, 22: Commentary on John 2: 17. Therefore, everyone should remain in his calling: “Thus someone who is a magistrate, a householder, a servant, a teacher, a pupil, etc., should remain in his calling and do his duty there, properly and faithfully, without concerning himself about what lies outside his own vocation” and “(E)veryone should know that his work, regardless of the station of life in which he is, is a divine work, because it is the work of a divine calling and has the command of God” (*LW*, 27, *Lectures on Galatians*, (Commentary on Galatians 1: 1)).

96 *LW*, 25: Commentary on Romans 15: 33.

pleasing to God.<sup>97</sup> This means that not only the office occupied by the person but the person himself is pleasing to God: “For it is the person who was baptized, who believes in Christ, who was cleansed of all sins by His blood, who lives in the fellowship of the church, who not only loves the pure doctrine of the Word but takes great pleasure in its propagation and in the growth of the number of believers, and who, on the other hand, hates the pope and the fanatical spirits with their wicked doctrine ...” (Galatians 4: 7).<sup>98</sup>

Office-bearers should devote themselves to their office.<sup>99</sup> If, for example, a person exists in the realm of reason, rules a family, builds a house, or carries on a governmental office, he should execute all his obligations to the best of his ability. (Galatians 2: 21).<sup>100</sup>

The first moral work of love among Christians is toward civil office; the first fruit of love is to be that Christians respect every public officer in the world and that they pray for them to keep the realm in peace.<sup>101</sup> When a good magistrate fails or is upset, then nothing good is left in this life: “Then you will be unable to come to love, to obey parents, rear children, or support the wretched. We must forget about all fruits of love if public offices do not stand firm in peace. In time of war you must anticipate your death at every moment, the inviolacy of virgin, wife, and all property is in peril. God has His will in peace; in the opposite condition the devil his”. (1 Timothy 2: 1).<sup>102</sup>

Because the spiritual kingdom will remain and secular government will be abolished by Christ, Who will deliver it to God, secular government with its estates and offices, such as father, mother, child, servant, lord, prince,

---

97 See Luther’s remarks in *LW*, 27, *Lectures on Galatians*, Commentary on Galatians 1: 1: “Thus we learn to praise the works that each man performs in his calling – even though in external appearance they appear to be trivial and contemptible – provided that they have been commanded by God, and, on the other hand, to despise the works that reason decides upon without a commandment from God, regardless of how brilliant, important, great, or saintly they seem to be.”

98 *LW*, 26: Commentary on Galatians 4: 7.

99 Office-bearers should take the duties of their offices seriously. See *The Book of Concord: The Small Catechism*, 4 & 16: “You should also take pains to urge governing authorities and parents to rule wisely ...” Office-bearers should act, metaphorically speaking, like fathers (*The Book of Concord: The Large Catechism*, 1, 158).

100 *LW*, 26: Commentary on Galatians 2: 21. Because one office is not more pleasing to God than another (see *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of Faith*, 56).

101 *The Book of Concord: The Large Catechism*: 3, 76.

102 *LW*, 28: Commentary on 1 Timothy 2: 1.

peasant and burgher will be terminated. None of these will be needed any longer: "For since the spiritual rule of the Word and of faith will cease, the office of the emperor and of Jack Ketch with the sword must also terminate. Only One will remain: He will be called God. He Himself will be Preacher, Comforter, Father, Mother, Lord, and Emperor" (1 Corinthians 15: 25).<sup>103</sup>

Temporal life (with its office) will be completely destroyed, and nothing of it will remain, while spiritual life will be transferred into a better and more perfect existence, in which everything we now look forward to by faith will be external and present. Commenting upon St. Paul's remarks in his letter to the Galatians (15: 24, 25), Luther not only distinguishes between the spiritual kingdom and the secular kingdom (with its estates and offices), he also awards different meanings to the "rule", "authority", and "power" pertaining to secular offices. To Luther "rule" (*principatum*) refers to the office of supreme lordship: for instance, the emperor in his empire, a prince in his country, a count in his county, and the burgomaster in a city "as the head from whom all commands emanate".<sup>104</sup> "Authority" (*potestates*, refers to those who receive the commands from the supreme government and are authorised to issue further commands, such as officials and judges. "Powers" (*virtutes*) embraces those who carry out and execute the commands, such as the servants of the lords and princes, "Jack Ketch"<sup>105</sup> and municipal officers.<sup>106</sup> The three divisions of secular offices in all estates and classes of government, from the highest to the lowest, are termed by St. Paul "rule", "authority" and "power".<sup>107</sup>

### **3. The virtues required of those in office**

#### **3.1 St. Thomas on the virtues for governing human society**

In his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas discerns a close relationship between man's office and the virtues those in office should exhibit in the performance of their duties. Because man is called to fill his office to the glory of God, Thomas pays close attention to the ethical standards required to the filling of office. The virtues required of those in office pertain to man's mastership over others, the diversity of orders in human

---

103 *LW*, 28: Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15: 25.

104 *LW*, 28: Commentary on 1 Timothy 4: 15.

105 Luther's term for "executioner" is Meister Hans. In English history a notorious practitioner, Jack Ketch.

106 *LW*, 28: Commentary on 1 Timothy 4: 15.

107 *Ibid.*

society, the fact that office is directed at a particular end, and that there is a hierarchy of offices in human society. The right ordering of the various regiments is the end intended by the various offices.

To Thomas, mastership has a twofold meaning. First, as opposed to slavery, it is the sense in which a master means one to whom another is subject as a slave. In its other sense mastership refers generally sense to any kind of subject; and in this sense even he who has the office of governing and directing free men, can be called a master. In the state of innocence man could have been a master of men, not in the former but in the latter sense. The virtues required from those in office have therefore to be discerned according to God's creation ordinances in establishing the order necessary for man's existence in society.<sup>108</sup>

To Thomas, human society requires a diversity of order, constituting a hierarchy of authority. The diversity of order arises from the diversity of offices and actions, "as appears in one city where there are different orders according to the different actions; for there is one order of those who judge, and another of those who fight, and another of those who labor in the fields, and so forth".<sup>109</sup> Although one city comprises several orders, all may be reduced to three, namely a beginning, a middle, and an end.<sup>110</sup> So in every city, a threefold order of men is to be seen, one of which is supreme, as the nobles; another order is the last, which are the common people, and a third order holds a place between these, as the middle-class (*populus honorabilis*).<sup>111</sup>

Order is twofold. In one way it is taken as the order comprehending in itself different grades; and in this way a hierarchy is called an order. In another way one grade is called an order, and in this sense there may be several orders in one hierarchy.<sup>112</sup> To Thomas perfect knowledge is a virtue to aspire to. It enables man to distinguish the various orders (and offices) – whoever knows anything perfectly, is able to distinguish its acts, powers, and nature, down to the minutest details, whereas he who knows anything in an imperfect manner can only distinguish in a general way. Thus, one who knows natural things imperfectly, can distinguish their orders in a general way, placing the heavenly bodies in one order, inanimate inferior

---

108 ST: (P(1)-Q(96)-A(4).

109 ST: P(1)-Q(108)-A(2).

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 ST, P(1)-Q(108)-A(2)-RO(1).

bodies in another, plants in another, and animals in another; whilst he who knows natural things perfectly, is able to distinguish different orders in heavenly bodies themselves, as well as in each of the other orders.<sup>113</sup>

The executioner of office has two important aspects pertaining to the accomplishment of the end for which it was instituted – it will cease accordingly as offices are directed towards leading others to their end; and it will remain, accordingly as it agrees with the attainment of the end – similar to the various ranks of soldiers having “different duties to perform in battle and in triumph”.<sup>114</sup>

Although men are equal in nature, still inequality exists among them, “as Divine Providence orders some to the greater, and others to the lesser things.” The Lord has divided and diversified their ways: some are blessed and exalted, and some are cursed. Thus it is a greater office to guard one man than another<sup>115</sup>; therefore some offices are superior in power to others.<sup>116</sup>

Thomas applies the Aristotelian distinction between universality and particularity to explain the differences among office-bearers: firstly, the more particular the form is from which a difference is taken, the more specific is the difference. Secondly, the more remote an end is, the more universal the agent to which it corresponds; for example, victory, which is the last end of the army, is the end intended by the commander in chief; while the right ordering of this or that regiment is the end intended by one of the lower offices.<sup>117</sup>

Thomas maintains that virtue denotes a certain perfection of power and that human virtues are habits.<sup>118</sup> The highest point to which a power can reach is said to be its virtue. An act of virtue is nothing other than the good use of free choice.<sup>119</sup> Virtue itself is an ordered disposition of the soul, in so far as the powers of the soul are in some way ordered to one another,

---

113 *ST*, P(1)-Q(108)-A(3).

114 *ST*, P(1)-Q(108)-A(7).

115 *ST*, P(1)-Q(113)-A(2)-RO(3).

116 *ST*, P(1)-Q(114)-A(1).

117 *T*, P(2a)-Q(18)-A(7)-A: “From all this it follows that the specific difference derived from the end, is more general; and that the difference derived from an object which is essentially ordered to that end is a specific difference in relation to the former. For the will, the proper object of which is the end, is the universal mover in respect of all the powers of the soul, the proper objects of which are the objects of their particular acts.”

118 *ST*, P(2a)-Q(55)-A(1)-A.

119 *ST*, P(2a)-Q(55)-A(1)-RO(2).

and to that which is outside of man. The more man is conformed to God, which is the end of human life, the more virtue is reflected by man.<sup>120</sup>

Virtue implies a perfection of power, and therefore the virtue of a thing is fixed by the peak of its power. Because the peak of any power must needs be good, all evil implies defect. Therefore human virtue that is an operative habit, is a good habit, productive of good works.<sup>121</sup>

To Thomas the definition that virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us without us, comprises perfectly the whole essential notion of virtue, for the perfect nature of anything is gathered from all its causes.

Thomas sees prudence as a virtue; it is the *right reason for things to be done*. It is the right reason about human acts themselves; it is of good counsel about matters regarding man's entire life, and the last end of human life. Prudence is a virtue most necessary for a good life, for a good life consists in good deeds. In order to do good deeds, it matters not only what man does, but also how he does it; in other words it matters that he does it from a right choice and not merely from impulse or passion. An intellectual virtue is needed in the reason, to perfect the reason and to make it suitably affected towards means ordained to the end; and this virtue is prudence. Consequently prudence is a virtue necessary for a good life.<sup>122</sup>

There are three acts of reason in respect of anything to be done by man: the first of these is counsel; the second judgment; the third, command. In things done by man the chief act is that of command, to which all the rest are subordinate. Consequently, that virtue which excels in commanding, viz. prudence, as obtaining the highest place, has other secondary virtues annexed to it.<sup>123</sup>

For a man to do a good deed, it is requisite not only that his reason be well disposed by means of a habit of intellectual virtue, but also that his appetite be well disposed by means of a habit of moral virtue.<sup>124</sup> There are four subjects of virtue, viz., the power which is rational in its essence, and this is perfected by *prudence*; and that which is rational by participation, and is threefold, the will, subject of *justice*, the

---

120 See *ST*, P(2a)-Q(55)-A(1)-RO(3).

121 See P(2a)-Q(55)-A(1).

122 *ST*, P(2a)-Q(57)-A(5).

123 *ST*, P(2a)-Q(57)-A(6).

124 See *ST*, P(2a)-Q(58)-A(3)-A.

concupiscible power, subject of *temperance*, and the irascible power subject of *fortitude*. These four are reckoned as cardinal virtues according to the four formal principles of virtue. They are called *principal virtues* because they are general in comparison with all the virtues. So for instance, any virtue that causes good in reason's act of consideration may be called prudence; every virtue that causes the good of rectitude and the due in operations, may be called justice; every virtue that curbs and represses the passions, may be called temperance; and every virtue that strengthens the soul against any passions whatever, is called fortitude.<sup>125</sup>

Following Augustine, Thomas maintains that the soul needs to follow something in order to give birth to virtue. This something is God, and if we follow Him, we shall live the good life.<sup>126</sup> Since man by his nature is a political animal, these virtues, in so far as they are in him according to the condition of his nature, are called *political* virtues, "since it is by reason of them that man behaves himself well in the conduct of human affairs".<sup>127</sup> Human virtue, directed to the common good which is defined according to the rule of human reason, can be caused by human acts; for such acts proceed from reason, by whose power and rule the good is established.<sup>128</sup>

A virtue, considered in its species, may be greater or less, either absolutely or relatively. Hence "justice" is the most excellent of virtues. Relying on Aristotle's views on virtue, Thomas states that those virtues must needs be greatest which receive the most praise, since virtue is a power of doing good. Hence the brave man and the just man are honoured more than others, because the former, namely, fortitude, is useful in war, and the latter, namely, justice, both in war and in peace.<sup>129</sup> In St. Thomas's theological system the virtuous ruler acts justly. The virtuous ruler is led by his reason to act in the common good with fortitude, temperance and justice.

### **3.2 Martin Luther on the virtuous ruler**

According to Luther's perspectives on office, the virtues of the ruler play an important role in guiding his actions executed in the exercise of his duties in office. In *The Confession of Faith*<sup>130</sup> it is stated, for example, that

---

125 ST, P(2a)-Q(61)-A(2)-A(3).

126 ST, P(2a)-Q(61)-A(5)-A.

127 ST, P(2a)-Q(61)-A(5)-A.

128 ST, P(2a)-Q(63)-A(2)-A.

129 ST, P(2a)-Q(66)-A(4)-A.

130 2, XXI, 1.



good works are to be an example for us, “each of us in his own calling”. So the king may “in salutary and godly fashion imitate the example of David in making war on the Turk, for both are incumbents of a royal office which demands the defence and protection of their subjects”.<sup>131</sup> In opposition to the Anabaptists, Luther rejected the idea that no Christian can hold an office in the government with an inviolate conscience<sup>132</sup>; that no Christian may with an inviolable conscience use an office of the government against wicked persons as occasion may arise, nor may a subject call upon the government for help<sup>133</sup>, and that the government cannot with an inviolable conscience impose the death penalty on evildoers.<sup>134</sup>

In the secular sphere Biblical principles of virtue apply to all three estates: those of the household, the state, and the church. These principles apply to the offices of each estate, without confounding their various functions and spheres of operation. Inasmuch as the power of the church or of bishops bestows eternal gifts and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with government or with temporal authority. Temporal authority is concerned with matters altogether different from the Gospel; temporal power does not protect the soul, but with the sword and physical penalties it protects body and goods from the power of others.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, the two authorities, the spiritual and the temporal, are not to be mingled or confused, for the spiritual power has its commission to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. Hence it “should not invade the function of the other, should not set up or depose kings, should not annul temporal laws or undermine obedience to government, should not make or prescribe to the temporal power laws concerning worldly matters”.<sup>136</sup> All exercise of power is subject to God’s Word, for example, according to divine right, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, to forgive sins, to judge doctrine and to condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, as well as to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest: “All this is to be done not by human power but by God’s Word alone”.<sup>137</sup>

131 *The Book of Concord: The Confession of Faith*, 2, XXI, 1.

132 *Ibid.*, 2, XII, 18.

133 *Ibid.*, 2, XII, 20.

134 *Ibid.*, 2, XII, 21.

135 *The Book of Concord: The Confession of Faith*, 3, VII, 9.

136 *Ibid.*

137 *Ibid.*, 3, VII, 9.

Virtuous rule demands praying to God to ask and endow the emperor, kings, and all estates with wisdom, strength, and prosperity to govern well.<sup>138</sup> The main principle pertaining to the conduct of rulers is the principle of love – in each estate all offices are to be executed according to the rules of love.<sup>139</sup> Calling, vocation and office go hand in hand. The Church has the duty to preach this to all areas of life: “It (the Church) sits at His feet and listens to His Word, that it may know how to judge everything – how to serve in one’s vocation and to fill civil offices, yes, how to eat, drink, and sleep – so that there is no doubt about any area of life, but that we, surrounded on all sides by the rays of the Word, may continually walk in joy and in the most beautiful light.”<sup>140</sup> From the perspective of the Word, the most important is man’s divine callings in all spheres of life: “Age, sex, and callings differ greatly in this life. One teaches the Church; another instructs the youth; a mother busies herself with the care and upbringing of children; and the husband is concerned with providing an honest living. In the opinion of the world these are not very grand and impressive works. But if you look at the Word, that heavenly adornment and divine glory, why should you not act proudly over against Satan, and why should you not give thanks to God for such great gifts? For these are not bare works; they are adorned with the Word of God, since they have been enjoined on you by God”.<sup>141</sup> Luther adds that if we want to practice godliness, “let us not do so by means of unfruitful works but by means of fruitful ones. That is, let us first receive the Word of God, and let us believe in Christ. Then let us walk in our simple calling: let the husband support his family; let the maid obey her mistress; let the mother wash, dress, and teach the children”.<sup>142</sup> Because these works are done in one’s calling “and in faith in the Son of God, they shine in the sight of God, of the angels, and of the entire church of God. For they are clothed in the heavenly light of the Word, even though in the sight of the pope’s church they are despised for being ordinary and common”.<sup>143</sup> However, there is no calling without the Word. Luther mentions the example of Noah: he not only had the liberty to sacrifice as priest and

138 *The Book of Concord: The Large Catechism*, 3, 75.

139 “Therefore you must learn that peace and love are the moderator and administrator of all virtues and laws ...” A reference to Aristotle in the fifth book of his *Ethics*” (*LW*, 2: Commentary on Genesis 13: 10).

140 *LW*, 2: Commentary on Genesis 13: 16.

141 *LW*, 2: Commentary on Genesis 13: 16.

142 *Ibid.*

143 *Ibid.*

prophet, but the obligation as well; and he did what he did by virtue of his calling: “But because there is no calling without the Word, he built the altar and sacrificed in accordance with the Word and at God’s command”.<sup>144</sup> Luther then addresses the current practices in the Church: “Hence let a monk demonstrate the office and calling by virtue of which he may wear the cowl, call upon the Blessed Virgin, pray the rosary, and do similar things; and we shall praise his life. But because there is no such calling, because no word gives the direction, and because the office is lacking, both the life and all the works of all monks deserve to be condemned”.<sup>145</sup> Everything must be done in accordance with God’s command, in order that we may determine with assurance in our conscience that we are doing it because we have been commanded by God; “(h)ence those who run in a calling that pleases God do not run in vain or beat the air, as those do who have no course on which they have been commanded to run. Therefore they cannot hope for the prize either (1 Corinthians 9: 24-26).<sup>146</sup>

God’s commands must be absolutely enforced. Thus when the government, by virtue of its office, calls citizens into military service in order to maintain peace and to ward off harm, obedience is shown to God. For the Lord tells us (Romans 13: 1): “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.” If someone would say: “Obedience is dangerous, for I may be killed!” Luther’s view is: “Whether you kill or are killed is immaterial, for you are going as the Lord has told you. It is, therefore, a holy and godly deed even to kill an adversary, provided the government commands it.”<sup>147</sup> We must also have the same conviction about the general call, “when you are called to the ministry of teaching: you should consider the voice of the community as the voice of God, and obey”.<sup>148</sup>

Luther calls upon office-bearers to take refuge in prayer, to set forth the difficulty of the office to God, and to say: “Our Father who art in heaven, etc., give me the wisdom that sits by Thy throne” (*Wisdom of Samuel* 19: 4). The sects and the sectarians do the opposite; they burst rashly into the church, do not pray, and do not believe that the administration either of the church or of the state is a gift of God; but they force themselves in as teachers and leaders: “Therefore it eventually happens that they confuse and

144 *LW*, 2: Commentary on Genesis 7: 2.

145 *Ibid.*

146 *Ibid.*

147 *LW*, 2: Commentary on Genesis 12: 5.

148 *Ibid.*

hinder what has been profitably built by others”.<sup>149</sup> The same thing happens in the state to those who rely on their own counsels and wisdom when they assume an administrative office.<sup>150</sup> In similar fashion, in the management of the household father and mother are the instruments through which the house and household affairs are governed: “But they themselves should also acknowledge that by their own power, diligence, or effort they can never bring up their children properly and successfully”.<sup>151</sup> What happens to those in office when they rely on their own counsels and strengths? Governing is a divine power and for this reason God calls all magistrates gods (Psalm 82: 6), not because of the creation but because of the administration which belongs to God alone. But if they force their way into the government of the church, or the household “rashly and without due preparation, exclude God and, do not pray, and do not seek advice from God but want to rule everything with their own counsels and strength, then it will eventually happen in the management of household affairs that an honorable and chaste wife will become a harlot of the worst kind and that the children will degenerate and come into the power of the executioner. In the civil government the state be thrown into confusion by insurrections, wars, and countless other perils. ... Why? Because such a head of a household, prince, or pastor does not recognize GOD as the Author of all counsel and government but by his presumption and arrogance destroys himself and others over whom he rules”.<sup>152</sup>

Which are the virtues required to execute one's office according to the will of God? Luther does not provide us with a systematic exposition or framework within which he deals with the virtues required of office-bearers. References to such virtues, though they may be brief, are scattered throughout his commentaries on Genesis 40 *et seqq.* Such virtues are, *inter alia*, the need to conduct one's office well<sup>153</sup>; humility in office, as reflected by the administration of their offices by Abraham, Joseph and David<sup>154</sup>; not to neglect one's office<sup>155</sup>; the reverent conducting of oneself in the execution of one's office<sup>156</sup>; to humble oneself in performing one's duties<sup>157</sup>; to execute one's office faithfully and diligently<sup>158</sup>; performing

---

149 *LW*, 5: Commentary on Genesis 27: 15.

150 *Ibid.*

151 *Ibid.*

152 *Ibid.*

153 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 40: 1.

154 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 41: 41.

155 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 40: 6.

156 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 41: 46.

157 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 41: 41.

158 *LW*, 7: Genesis 39: 11.

one's duties in the spirit of serving one's neighbour<sup>159</sup>; to act with faithfulness and constancy in one's office<sup>160</sup>; to refrain from overstepping the boundaries of one's office<sup>161</sup>; not to abandon one's station and thus forsake one's obligations.<sup>162</sup> Public administrators and judges are to judge justly<sup>163</sup>; office-bearers are to rule with equity<sup>164</sup>; people in office are not to show hatred, passion, vanity and avarice<sup>165</sup>; rulers in office are to love justice and to further peace<sup>166</sup>; they must not be greedy in executing their duties<sup>167</sup>; the promotion of political righteousness is a most important virtue<sup>168</sup>; rulers are to render judgments that are true and make for peace<sup>169</sup>; those in office have the duty to do good works<sup>170</sup>; office-bearers are to obey God's commands<sup>171</sup>; they must act with respectability and honesty<sup>172</sup>; and should manage their offices in a way that is pleasing to God.<sup>173</sup> Office-bearers are servants of God and must hold their offices in high honour<sup>174</sup>; those in office should reflect loyalty and trustworthiness<sup>175</sup>; to be in office means to serve one's neighbor<sup>176</sup>; the duties of office are to be exercised for the welfare of the subjects<sup>177</sup>; all offices should be performed to the praise and glory of God<sup>178</sup>; those in political office have to protect their subjects<sup>179</sup> and conduct their office with humility.<sup>180</sup>

- 
- 159 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 41: 46.  
 160 *LW*, 7: Commentary on Genesis 39: 20.  
 161 *LW*, 8: Commentary on Genesis 47: 1.  
 162 *LW*, 8: Commentary on Genesis 47: 5.  
 163 *LW*, 9: Commentary on Deuteronomy 17: 8.  
 164 *LW*, 12: Commentary on Psalm 45: 7.  
 165 *LW*, 15: Commentary on Ecclesiastes 4: 14.  
 166 *LW*, 16: Commentary on Isaiah 32: 2.  
 167 *LW*, 16: Isaiah 32: 7.  
 168 *LW*, 17: Commentary on Isaiah 62: 2.  
 169 *LW*, 20: Commentary on Zechariah 8: 18.  
 170 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 7.  
 171 *LW*, 21: Commentary on Matthew 5: 7.  
 172 *LW*, 22: Commentary on John 3: 3.  
 173 *LW*, 24: Commentary on John 14: 7.  
 174 *LW*, 25: Commentary on Romans 15: 33.  
 175 *LW*, 28: Commentary on 1 Timothy 3: 11.  
 176 *LW*, 30: Commentary on 1 Peter 4: 12.  
 177 *LW*, 40: Concerning Rebaptism (1528), 238 (Weimar, 26, 144-174).  
 178 *LW*, 41: Against Hanswurst (1541), 221 (Weimar, 51, 469-572).  
 179 *LW*, 46: On War Against the Turk, (1529), 185: "The Emperor should seek nothing else than simply to perform the work and duty of his office, which is to protect his subjects ..." (Weimar, 30, (81) 107-148).  
 180 *W*, 51: Sermon at the Dedication of the Castle Church in Torgau, Luke 14: 1-11, October 5, 1544, 333-354, at 351: "Therefore, no one should vaunt himself before God and put himself above his neighbor because he is in a high station, but realize that if he does not remain humble in his high station, he is sinning abominably and will be far more severely condemned than the others." 181 See Ebeling, *Luther*, 84.

#### 4. Conclusion

At the beginning of the classical medieval period the publication of the complete works of Aristotle formed an important turning-point in intellectual history, and this coincided with the achievement of the papacy in extending its influence over secular rulers. The great achievement of Thomas Aquinas was to work out this comprehensive system down to the finest detail, in accordance with the principle that since grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, the natural reason must serve faith, "in the same way as the natural inclination of the will follows love".<sup>181</sup> Therefore, revelation is beyond reason, but not contrary to man's rational faculties. The application of the typical Aristotelian emphasis on reason is clearly manifest in Thomas's perspectives on virtue – virtue is based on reason and perfected by Scripture.

Luther, on the other hand, is essentially Ockhamist, an influence manifesting itself in his identification of the tension between philosophy and theology, and submitting Aristotle to criticism. To Luther a genuine understanding of Holy Scripture should not be concealed by the terminology and method of inquiry of Aristotelian thought. Consequently, Luther approaches the understanding of Scripture differently from the traditional philosophical language of scholastic theology.<sup>182</sup> So for example understanding (*intellectus*) is not the knowledge of an arbitrary object but something specifically biblical, "namely the wisdom of the cross of Christ, that is, faith". In short: whilst for Thomas, virtue is an essential quality in one's quest to live and promote the good life, Luther regards virtue primarily as doing the will of God.

Although Luther expressed himself against Aristotle's philosophy, it is important to note that Luther was not concerned with Aristotle as such, but with the use that has been made of Aristotle in theology – his "attack on Aristotle was a struggle for true theological thought".<sup>183</sup> Significantly he observed about righteousness: "We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous, but being made righteous we carry out righteous acts".<sup>184</sup> The danger in Aristotelian ethics is not the view that a particular virtue can be achieved, even in the moral sphere, by practice, but its introduction into the doctrine of grace.<sup>185</sup> In essence Luther, therefore, guards against the

---

182 Ibid., 87.

183 Ibid., 89.

184 Ibid., 90.

185 Ibid., 90.

application of Aristotle's philosophy in the field of theology, with the effect of introducing an element of merit. To Luther, although the reason of man is something divine, it has to be kept within its limits. In no way can merit be introduced upon the grace bestowed on man by the coming and death of Christ.

Different, therefore, from the schematic Aristotelian system of St. Thomas's scholastic approach, Luther's theory of the virtues of office shows a spontaneous commitment to Scripture.

Luther's anti-scholastic approach to social issues does not imply that he broke completely with the classical Aristotelian and Thomistic interpretation of virtue. Love, justice, temperance, moderation, fortitude and the serving of one's neighbour were just as important to Luther as to Aristotle and St. Thomas; not because they lead to man's salvation, but because of the grace bestowed upon man by Christ: man now has the ability to act justly, moderately and with fortitude. No office-bearer gains merit before God by acting virtuously, but gains it rather because virtue is the outflow of grace. Therefore, not man's reason, but the will of God revealed in Scripture is the foundation of true virtue; man's reason being the instrument empowering office-bearers to make the right decisions in the execution of their God-given duties and responsibilities.

Luther's theology of estates and callings is intimately connected to his views on the relation of man's offices and duties as Christians in society. Contrary to the medieval distinction between nature and grace, and the traditional hierarchical views of the estates and offices in society, Luther developed his theology of calling, estate and office, based on new perspectives of the nature and role of man's callings, estates and offices in the world. Firstly, to Luther, none of the estates or callings of the world is specifically Christian as opposed to the others; secondly, man's existence as a Christian is distinguishable in two realms of Christian existence – on the one hand the invisible and spiritual estate and calling belonging to heaven, and on the other the visible and active belonging to the world of Christian existence in the flesh. In the third place, Luther maintains that all Christians are priests and priestesses because of the equality of faith – all Christians are of the spiritual estate, without distinction between them, except that of office. Furthermore, the priestly office does not differ in estate from those of laymen, prince and bishop, except that there are differences of office and work, and callings are common to all men in the world so that everyone should await what is commanded of him and take heed of his calling. Finally, everyone should take care that he remains in his estate, looks to himself, realizes his calling and in it serves God and keeps his command.

Luther's doctrine of calling is essentially a doctrine of worldly estates. In the world "calling" (*Beruf*) and "estate" (*Stand*) are virtually synonymous. The word "estate" refers to "offices" or "classes" which are clearly discernable. "Calling" alludes to the totality of man's obligations in the world. Towards the end of the 1520s Luther's doctrine of the three "hierarchies" added an important dimension to his theology of the estate and calling. Against the medieval under-valuation of marriage and political government and the exaltation of monastic life and church government, Luther postulates the concept of the three "holy rules" – the father of the household and the political ruler exercise offices which are equally God-ordained and holy with that of the clergy, while, on the other hand, the office and estate of the clergy is not equal to that of the other two hierarchies. The three "orders" distinguished by Luther are the priestly office (*Ampt*), the estate of marriage, and the political rule of magistracy. All three orders are equally holy, because they are founded in God's word. The common order of Christian love applies to all men at all times.

Although none of the orders in the world leads to man's salvation, which is only attainable by faith in Christ, holiness is attainable through faith in Christ and through the practising of Christian virtue in the holy orders.

Luther's contribution towards the Reformational perspectives on calling, estate and office played a major role in reforming the hierarchical views of Scholasticism and formed the basis of the Reformed theory of limited government in all spheres of life. However, Luther did not escape from the medieval principal that there is an internal morality of social life, which subjects all bearers of office to universal ethical principles of virtue. It was Luther's efforts that redirected these principals to their Scriptural context and their Christological foundations.

Arguably the most important impetus for the reformation of social, economic and political life emanating from Luther's thought, was the conviction that the principles of political, economic and social life are not autonomous and independent of those of morality and religion. Contrary to the Renaissance views of separating religion from social life and making religion the servant of civilization, Luther proposed that reason, the instrument for ordering civil affairs, is informed by deeper driving forces of Christian religious commitment. Above all, love sets a higher goal for human relations than the mutual benefits derived from the co-operation for the common good or the greatest happiness.

To Luther, man's involvement in society is a relational exercise that demands that the Christian exercise Christian virtues in society. Love, as



the driving force, can only endure if it is renewed by the consciousness of the union with God.<sup>186</sup> The Christian's involvement in society is largely shaped by his calling and the commitment emanating therefrom. As Karl Holl pointed out, Luther changed not only the content of the word "calling"; he re coined the word itself. In his mature years he sees the "call" of God exclusively in secular duties, thereby uniting those two elements which in medieval thought were contradictory and could not coexist.<sup>187</sup> By including man's secular existence in God's calling of man, as a God-given obligation, Luther postulated the Reformational alternative to the medieval conception of "good works" alongside man's vocation.<sup>188</sup> The piece of work, says Holl, that the individual performs, is only a small part of the total enterprise that the various vocations in co-operation with one another carry out for the common good: "But it is indispensable in its place and it fulfills its purpose only when it is done faithfully and devotedly with an eye to the supreme good."<sup>189</sup>

## Bibliography

D'ENTREVES. A.P. (Ed.). 1965. *Aquinas. Selected Political Writings*. Tr. J.G. Dawson Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

186 Karl Holl, *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 29.

187 *Ibid.*, 34.

188 *Ibid.*

189 *Ibid.*, 35. Also note his remarks in his work "An den Christlichen Adel" (*LW*, 44, *The Christian in Society I: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, 129): "Further, everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own good work or office so that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all members of the body serve one another [1 Corinthians 12: 14-26]." This implies that all estates must have the freedom to perform their respective callings: "I say therefore that since the temporal power is ordained of God to punish the wicked and protect the good, it should be left free to perform its office in the whole body of Christendom without restriction and without respect to persons, whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or anyone else" (*ibid.*). Therefore, "everyone (must) strive to do his duty in his calling and to help his neighbor in whatever way he can" (*LW*, 27, *Commentary on Galatians 1: 1*). In his commentary on Galatians, Luther's perspectives on calling had become more earnest: "In times past when I was a young theologian, I thought Paul did unwisely in glorifying so often in his calling. But I did not understand his purpose, for I knew not that the ministry of God's Word was so weighty a matter. ... For by boasting, we seek not estimation of the world, or praise of men, or money, or pleasure, or favor of the world; but so that people may know us to be in a divine calling, and in the work of God, therefore we vaunt and boast of it" (Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (Modern-English Edition) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 2001), 28).

- EBELING, GERHARD. 1980. *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- HOLL, KARL. 1959. *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation* Tr. Karl & Barbara Hertz & John H. Lichtblau. New York: Meridian Books.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1955. *Luther's Works, Volume 12: Selected Psalms I*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XL, 193-312; XL, 472-610; XL, 315-470; XLV, 204-205; XVII-1, 228-243; XXXI-1, 580-586; LI, 267-295.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1956. *Luther's Works, Volume 13: Selected Psalms II*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1956. *Luther's Works, Volume 21: The Sermon on the Mount (Sermons) and the Magnificat*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XLVII, 232-6277 XXXVIII, 443-667.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1957. *Luther's Works, Volume 22: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. Tr. Martin H. Bertram. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XLVI, 538-789; XLVII, 1-231.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1957. *Luther's Works, Volume 31: Disputation Against Scholastic Theology (1517) (LW, 31)*. Eds. Harold J. Grimm & Helmut T. Lehmann. Tr. Harold J. Grimm. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Weimar, 1, 220-228.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1958. *Luther's Works, Volume 40: Church and Ministry II*. Eds. Conrad Bergendorff & Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1959. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Tr. & Ed. Theodore G. Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Containing the following works: Preface to the Book of Concord (1580); the Augsburg Confession (1530); The Smalcald Articles (1537); The Small Catechism (1529); The Large Catechism (1529); The Formula of Concord (1577).
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1960. *Luther's Works, Volume 2: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6-14*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Daniel E. Poellot; Tr. George V. Schick. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XLII, 264-549<sup>190</sup>.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1960. *Luther's Works, Volume 9: Lectures on Deuteronomy*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Daniel Poellot. Tr. Richard R. Caemmerer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XIV, 497-744.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1960. *Luther's Works, Volume 34: The Disputation Concerning Man (1536) (LW, 34)*. Eds. Lewis W. Spitz & Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Weimar, 391 (174) 175-180.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1961. *Luther's Works, Volume 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*. Ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. Tr. George V. Schick. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XLII, 550-XLIII.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1961. *Luther's Works, Volume 24: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Daniel E. Poellot. Tr. Martin H. Bertram. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XLV, 465-733 & XLVI, 1-11.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1963. *Luther's Works, Volume 26: Lectures on Galatians (1535): Chapters 1-4*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Walter A. Hansen. Tr. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963. Weimar, XL-1.

---

190 For the sake of convenience, the references in the standard Weimar edition (1883ff.) are given at the end of the bibliographic information.

- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1965. *Luther's Works, Volume 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Walter A. Hansen. Tr. Paul D. Paul. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965. Weimar, XLIV, 304-581.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1966. *Luther's Works, Volume 8: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 45-50*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Walter A. Hansen. Tr. Paul D. Paul. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966. Weimar, XLIV, 581-825.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1966. *Luther's Works, Volume 41: Church and Ministry III*. Eds. Eric W. Gritsch & Helmuth T. Lehmann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1967. *Luther's Works, Volume 30: The Catholic Epistles*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Walter A. Hansen. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XXVI, 123-124; XII, 259-399; XIV, 14-91; XX, 599-801.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1968. *Luther's Works, Volume 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*. Jaroslav Pelikan & Walter A. Hansen Trs. George V. Schick & Paul D. Pahl (Eds.) St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968 Weimar, XLIII, 431-695.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1970. *Luther's Works, Volume 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*. Jaroslav Pelikan & Hilton C. Oswald Tr. Paul D. Paul (Ed.) St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970. Weimar, XLIV, 1-304.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1972. *Luther's Works, Volume 15: Notes on Ecclesiastes; Lectures on the last words of David*. Eds. Jaroslav Pelikan & Hilton C. Oswald. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972. Weimar, XX, 7-203; XXXI-2, 586-769; LIV, 28-100.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1972. *Luther's Works, Volume 17: Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*. Ed. Hilton C. Oswald; tr. J.A. Bouman. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972. Weimar, XXXI-2, 261-585.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1972. *Luther's Works, Volume 25: Lectures on Romans. Glosses and Scholia*. Ed. Hilton C. Oswald. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, LVI & LVII.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1973. *Luther's Works, Volume 28: Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7; 1 Corinthians 15; Lectures on 1 Timothy*. Ed. Hilton C. Oswald. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 1975. *Luther's Works, Volume 18: Lectures on the Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi*. Ed. Hilton C. Oswald. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Weimar, XIII.
- LUTHER, MARTIN. 2001. *Commentary on the Galatians*. Modern-English Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Flemming H. Revell.
- PEGIS, ANTON, C. 1944. *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Vols I & II. New York: Random House.