



It would be a good thing if monasteries and religious foundations were kept for the purpose of teaching young people God's Word, the Scriptures, and Christian morals, so that we might train and prepare fine, capable men to become bishops, pastors, and other servants of the church, as well as competent, learned people for civil government, and fine, respectable, learned women capable of keeping house and rearing children in a Christian way. But as a way of seeking salvation, these institutions are all the devil's doctrine and creed, I Timothy 4[:1 ff.], etc.

But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government.

All who are engaged in the **clerical office or ministry of the Word** are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and-estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God's sight.

Again, **all fathers and mothers** who regulate their household wisely and bring up their children to the service of God are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and a holy order. Similarly, when children and servants show obedience to their elders and masters, here too is pure holiness, and whoever is thus engaged is a living saint on earth.

Moreover, **princes and lords**, judges, civil officers, state officials, notaries, male and female servants and all who serve such persons, and further, all their obedient subjects—all are engaged in pure holiness and leading a holy life before God. For these three religious institutions or orders are found in God's Word and commandment; and whatever is contained in God's Word must be holy, for God's Word is holy and sanctifies everything connected with it and involved in it.

Above these three institutions and orders is the common order of Christian love, in which one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, forgiving enemies, praying for all men on earth, suffering all kinds of evil on earth, etc.²⁸⁴ Behold, all of these are called good and holy works. However, none of these orders is a means of salvation. There remains only one way above them all, viz. faith in Jesus Christ.

For to be holy and to be saved are two entirely different things. We are saved through Christ alone; but we become holy both through this faith and through these divine foundations and orders. Even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby. For God wishes us to perform such works to his praise and glory. And all who are saved in the faith of Christ surely do these works and maintain these orders. Luther's Works, v. 37, p.364-365.

Small Catechism, Fourth Commandment

167] In addition, it would be well to preach to the parents also, and such as bear their office, as to **how they should deport themselves toward those who are committed to them for their government.** For although this is not expressed in the Ten Commandments, it is nevertheless abundantly enjoined in many places in the Scripture. And God desires to have it embraced in this commandment when He speaks of father and mother. **168]** For He does not wish to have in this office and government knaves and tyrants; nor does He assign to them this honor, that is, power and authority to govern, that they should have themselves worshiped; but they should consider that they are under obligations of obedience to God; and that, first of all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge their office, **not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, etc.,** but, most of all, **to train them to the honor and praise of God.** **169]** Therefore do not think that this is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will, but that it is a strict command and injunction of God, to whom also you must give account for it.

170] But here again the sad plight arises that no one perceives or heeds this, and all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; **171]** and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it; nor that there is so great need to be so seriously concerned about the young. **172]** **For if we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, that they may serve God and the world,** **173]** and we must not think only how we may amass money and possessions for them. For God can indeed without us support and make them rich, as He daily does. But for this purpose He has given us children, and issued this command that **we should train and govern them according to His will,** else He would have no need of father and mother. **Let every one know, therefore, that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children above all things in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are talented, have them learn and study something,** **174]** **that they may be employed for whatever need there is [to have them instructed and trained in a liberal education, that men may be able to have their aid in government and in whatever is necessary].**

175] If that were done, God would also richly bless us and give us grace **to train men by whom land and people might be improved,** and likewise, **chaste and domestic wives, who afterwards would rear godly children and servants.** **176]** Here consider now what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child **to usefulness and piety,** and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy. **177]** And because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see that it is our fault; for as we train them, we have spoiled and disobedient children and subjects. Let this be sufficient exhortation; for to draw this out at length belongs to another time.

Small Catechism, Fourth Commandment

158] Thus we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment, fathers in blood and fathers in office, or those to whom belongs the care of the family, and those to whom belongs the care of the country. Besides these there are yet spiritual fathers; not like those in the Papacy, who have indeed had themselves called thus, but have performed no function of the paternal office. For those only are called spiritual fathers who govern and guide us by the Word of God; **159]** as St. Paul boasts his fatherhood 1 Cor. 4, 15, where he says: *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.* Now, **160]** since they are fathers they are entitled to their honor, even above all others. But here it is bestowed least; for the way which the world knows for honoring them is to drive them out of the country and to grudge them a piece of bread, and, in short, they must be (as says St. Paul, 1 Cor. 4, 13) as the filth of the world and everybody's refuse and footrag.