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Walther and the Lutheran Symbols

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Not the least precious part of the heritage that Carl Ferdinand William Walther bequeathed to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is the latter's unqualified formal commitment to the Lutheran Symbols.¹

To appreciate and understand this aspect of his contribution to subsequent generations of Lutherans in the church body that he organized, we need to see him against the background of the European and American Lutheran community of his own day. It does no disservice to him to point out that he was not the wholly unique figure that a jealous filial piety has sometimes felt itself compelled to depict. On the contrary, he was in his theological origins and development part of a widespread confessional movement that affected the whole Lutheran Church in the 19th century and that is not unrelated to more or less simultaneous parallel phenomena in other Western Christian communions. This does not imply that Walther was in full accord with other protagonists and

products of the confessional movement, or they with him, but in spite of their very real and often hotly debated differences the broader and fundamental areas of agreement can be neither denied nor neglected.

Church historians trace the confessional revival with justice back to the work of Claus Harms (1778—1855), provost and high consistorial counselor at Kiel, best known for his Ninety-Five Theses of 1817, in which he called for a return to the primitive Lutheranism of the 16th century.² Among the other names associated with this revival is that of John Godfrey Scheibel (1783—1843) of Breslau, deposed in 1832 from his offices as professor and preacher because he refused to celebrate or receive the Sacrament of the Altar according to the Union service book of the King of Prussia.³ Another is the name of the Königsberg *Generalsuperintendent* Ernest

¹ Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Article II, 2; Articles of Incorporation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Article II, a; "The Order for the Ordination of a Minister," "The Order for the Installation of a Professor," and "The Order for the Ordination and Commissioning of a Missionary," in *The Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House [1941]), pp. 106, 107, 123, 124, 127, 128; "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," concluding section, "Of the Symbols of the Lutheran Church," in *Doctrinal Declarations* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), p. 57, pars. 260—264.

² Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekentnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1952), pp. 5, 6; William F. Arndt, "Some Notes on Claus Harms," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXVI (July 1955), 540—542. In 1955 Peter Meinhold edited an excellent two-volume selection of Harms' works.

³ Georg Froböss, *Drei Lutheraner an der Universität Breslau: Die Professoren Scheibel, Steffens, Huschke* (Breslau: Gerhard Kauffmann, 1911), pp. 7—34. See also Martin Kiunke's work of two decades ago, *Johann Gottfried Scheibel und sein Ringen um die Kirche der lutherischen Reformation*. Scheibel and Martin Stephan, the first leader of the Saxon emigration, were briefly but not congenially associated in Dresden; see Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), p. 65.

William Christian Sartorius (1797—1859), the "St. John of the Lutheran Church," who wrote a memorable tract on the necessity and obligatory character of denominational confessions of faith.⁴ Still others are the Danish-born *Superintendent* of Glauchau in Saxony, Andrew Gottlob Rudelbach (1792—1862), later provost in Copenhagen,⁵ regarded by his contemporaries as the most learned theologian of his age next to Ferdinand Christian Baur; and Henry Ernest Ferdinand Guericke (1803—1878), deposed from his Halle professorship in 1838 for his opposition to the Prussian Union and with Rudelbach the founder in 1840 of the Leipzig *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche*.⁶

⁴ Ernst Wilhelm Christian Sartorius, *Über die Nothwendigkeit und Verbindlichkeit der kirchlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse* (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1845; 2d ed. by Adolph von Harless [Gotha: Gustav Schloessmann], 1873), translated into English by Joseph A. Seiss (1823—1904) and published as "The Necessity and Obligation of Confessions of Faith," in *Evangelical Review*, IV, No. xiii (July 1852), pp. 1—34.

⁵ Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach, *Reformation, Luthertum und Union: Eine historisch-dogmatische Apologie der lutherischen Kirche und ihres Lehrbegriffs* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, Jun., 1839) and *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in die Augsbургische Confession nebst erneuerter Untersuchung der Verbindlichkeit der Symbole und der Verpflichtung auf dieselben* (Dresden: Justus Naumann, 1841). The former work was dedicated to Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783—1875). See also C. R. Kaiser, *Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach: Ein Zeuge der Lutherischen Kirche im 19. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Justus Naumann, 1892), especially ch. 6.

⁶ Not to be confused with the periodical founded by Gottlieb Christopher Adolph von Harless and others in 1838 at Erlangen, the *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche*, which became one of the most significant Lutheran journals of the period (Fagerberg, pp. 79—82).

These are not the only ones. In the same tradition is William Frederick Höfling (1802—53), professor at Erlangen and high consistorial counselor at Munich, the amiable and charitable defender of the Lutheran position against Roman Catholicism, the Reformed Church, and the Prussian Union.⁷ So is Godfrey Thomasius (1802—75), the Erlangen professor who played so prominent a role in leading the Lutheran Church of Bavaria back to a confessional position and who defended the thesis that "in what is properly called Lutheran we possess that which is truly Catholic and which forms the true mean between the confessional extremes" of Roman Catholicism and the Reformed tradition.⁸ The roster must also include August Frederick Christian Vilmar (1800—68), *Superintendent* at Kassel and professor at Marburg, leader of the confessional revival in Hesse;⁹ Otto Karsten Krabbe (1805—73) of Rostock; Gottlieb Christopher Adolph von Harless (1806—79), distinguished alike as a theologian, preacher, and administra-

⁷ Wilhelm Friedrich Höfling, *De symbolorum natura, necessitate, auctoritate atque usu* (Erlangen: Theodorus Bläsing, 1835; 2d ed., 1841) and *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung*, 2d ed. (Erlangen: Theodore Bläsing, 1851; 1st ed., 1850; 3d ed., 1853). See Fagerberg, pp. 80, 105, 106, 225—239, 273—285.

⁸ Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Bekenntnis der lutherischen Kirche in der Konsequenz seines Prinzips* (Nuremberg: August Recknagel, 1848). See Fagerberg, pp. 80, 81.

⁹ See Edward Frederick Peters, *The Sacraments and Sacramental Actions in the Works of August Friedrich Christian Vilmar* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary School for Graduate Studies, unpublished S. T. M. dissertation, 1958); Wilhelm Maurer, *Aufklärung, Idealismus und Restauration* (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1930), II; Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, *August Vilmar: Ein Lebens- und Zeitbild* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1913), 2 vols.; Fagerberg, pp. 95—97.

tor; John Conrad William Löhe (1808—1872) of Neuendettelsau;¹⁰ Frederick Adolf Philippi (1809—82), convert from Judaism and professor at Dorpat and Rostock; the liturgiologist Theodore Kliefoth (1810—95) of Mecklenburg;¹¹ Carl Paul Caspari (1814—92) of Oslo, Norway; the Luther scholar Theodosius Harnack (1817 to 1889), professor at Erlangen and Dorpat; August William Dieckhoff (1823—1896) of Rostock; and Gerhard von Zetzschwitz (1825—86) and Francis Herman Reinhold von Frank (1827—94) of Erlangen. This list could be considerably extended. The era was, in William Sihler's words, "a period of spiritual springtime."¹²

In the United States the first constitution of the Pennsylvania Ministerium (1778) had required every minister to profess "that he holds the Word of God and our Symbolical Books" and provided that a minister was to be disciplined if he taught "positive errors opposed to the

plain teachings of the Holy Scriptures and our Symbolical Books."¹³ From its founding in 1773 down to 1794 the New York Ministerium had required that "in doctrine and life every minister conform to the Word of God and our Symbolical Books." Even after the elimination of a symbolical pledge from its constitution it required candidates for membership to declare that they would remain in the body only as long as their colleagues found their "conduct and teaching in harmony with the Word of God and the Symbolical Books of our Church."¹⁴ While confessionalism went into eclipse in many parts of the Lutheran Church in the United States under the influence of leaders like Frederick Henry Quitman (1760—1832), the eclipse was never total, and a general return to confessionalism gradually set in at midcentury; a great domestic impetus came from individuals like William Julius Mann (1819 to 1892), whose *Plea for the Augsburg Confession* was published in 1856, and Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823—83), one of the prime movers behind the creation of the General Council in 1866.

Concrete evidence of this widespread and growing interest in the Lutheran Symbols is provided by the number of new editions of the *Book of Concord*. In Dresden J. W. Schöppf put out a new edition of the German *Book of Concord* — apparently the first in nearly four decades — in 1826—27, and in 1830 John Andrew Detzer at Nuremberg and Frederick August Koethe (1781—1850) at Leipzig

¹⁰ Löhe's collected works have been in process of publication since 1951 under the editorship of Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag). See Johann Deinzer, ed., *Wilhelm Löhes Leben aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlass zusammengestellt* (Nuremberg: Gottfried Löhe, 1873—77; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1892), 3 vols., and Siegfried Hebart, *Wilhelm Löhes Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1939).

¹¹ See Fagerberg, pp. 90—95, 239—269, 286—299.

¹² Wilhelm Sihler, *Lebenslauf*, I (St. Louis: Concordia Verlag, 1879), 90. — On the whole confessional revival see, in addition to Fagerberg, J. L. Neve and O. W. Heick, *A History of Christian Thought*, II (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c. 1946), 128—141. For a critical approach see Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neueren evangelischen Theologie* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), V, 185—210, 414—420.

¹³ Henry Eyster Jacobs, in Jacobs and John A. W. Haas, eds., *The Lutheran Cyclopedia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 493.

¹⁴ George W. Mechling, *ibid.*, p. 490.

did the same. These were followed in 1843 by Frederick William Bodemann's Hanover edition and in 1848 by the New York edition, published by H. Ludwig and Company (3d ed., 1859), and the Berlin edition, published by the Evangelischer Bücher-Verein (8th ed., 1874). In 1809 the Latin Concordia came out at Wittenberg in a new edition by Michael Weber — the first, it seems, since the 1742 printing of the Leipzig edition of Adam Rechenberg (1642—1721). In 1817 another edition was published by John August Henry Tittmann (1773—1831) at Leipzig (2d ed., Meissen, 1827), in 1827 another by Karl August von Hase (1800—90) in the same city, in 1830 another by Henry August William Meyer (1800—73) at Göttingen, and in 1846—47 still another by Frederick Francke in Leipzig. In 1857 the Berlin publishing firm of Gustave Schlauwitz reprinted the Leipzig edition of 1584.

A bilingual edition of the *Book of Concord* — the first, as far as can be discovered, since the 1750 edition of John George Walch (1693—1775) — had been prepared in 1847 by John Tobias Müller, destined in its successive revisions (12th ed., 1928) to become the international standard until the publication of the Göttingen anniversary edition of 1930 (4th ed., 1959).¹⁵

In the United States the indefatigable uncle-nephew team of Ambrose and Socrates Henkel published their English version of the whole *Book of Concord* at New

Market, Virginia, in 1851, and again, revised, in 1854.¹⁶

It is within this framework that we must evaluate Walther's confessionalism. Militant his voice is, but it is not a lonely one. Rather it is one voice in a great chorus.

The synthesis of Pietism and Orthodoxy observed elsewhere in Walther and in the church body which he organized¹⁷ finds expression to a degree in his stance over against the Symbols. Lutheran Orthodoxy's attitude toward the Symbols is ambivalent. Many Orthodox theologians conducted and published series of disputations on the *Book of Concord* and individual documents in it,¹⁸ and later Orthodoxy produced such useful introductions as that of John Benedict Carpzov (1607—57).¹⁹ Yet the first and the last major Orthodox the-

¹⁶ The information in the four paragraphs preceding is based upon Theodor Kolde, "Historische Einleitung in die Symbolischen Bücher der evangelischen-lutherischen Kirche," in Johann Tobias Müller, *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche deutsch und lateinisch*, 10th ed. (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1907), pp. lxxv—lxxvii, and the copies of the *Book of Concord* in the Pritzlaff Memorial Library, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. — The first Norwegian version of the *Book of Concord* to be published in the United States was that of Carl Paul Caspari and Gisle Johnson (1822—94), printed at Madison, Wis., in 1866; the first Swedish version to be published in this country was printed at Rock Island, Ill., in 1870.

¹⁷ See, for example, Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Jr., "Amerikanisches Luthertum in dogmenschichtlicher Sicht," *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, VI (1952), 250, 251.

¹⁸ See Johann Wilhelm Feuerlin, *Bibliotheca symbolica evangelica lutherana* (Nuremberg: Wolfgang Schwartzkopf, 1768), pp. 17—21, 23—29, 98—124, 158, 159, 172—176.

¹⁹ Johann Benedikt Carpzov, *Isagoge in libros ecclesiarum lutheranarum symbolicos*, ed. Johannes Olearius, 3d ed. (Leipzig: Johannes Wittigau, 1699; 1st ed., 1665).

¹⁵ The *Jubiläumsausgabe*: Hans Lietzmann, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959; 1st ed., 1930).

ologian deliberately to use the Symbols as the basis of a dogmatics was Leonard Hütter (1563—1616), in his *Compendium of Theological Commonplaces out of the Sacred Scriptures and the Book of Concord* (1610).²⁰ As a result of their overriding commitment to the Sacred Scriptures, subsequent Orthodox theologians made rather limited use of the Symbols in their dogmatic work.²¹ It was in the era of Pietism and its encounter with Orthodoxy that "the 'Church' began to urge the Symbols in a specific fashion."²² The attitude

of the more churchly Pietists — and of the late Orthodox theologians who came to terms with Pietism — is reflected in Walther's concern, although his interpretation of the Symbols is in the terms of the systematic-dogmatic tradition of classic Orthodoxy.

Walther's attitude toward the Symbols finds its fullest expression in the paper which he read at the synod of the Western District of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod at Trinity Church, St. Louis, in 1858: "Why Are the Symbolical Books of Our Church to Be Subscribed to Not Conditionally but Unconditionally by Those Who Desire to Become Servants of Our Church?"²³

In this paper Walther argues that the

²⁰ Leonard Hütter, *Compendium locorum theologicorum ex Scripturis sacris et libro Concordiae . . . collectum* (Wittenberg: Paulus Helwig [Johannes Gorman], 1610; other editions as late as 1751), translated into English by Henry Eyster Jacobs and G. F. Spieker, *Compend of Lutheran Theology: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Derived from the Word of God and the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Book Store, 1868). Three quarters of a century elapsed after the appearance of Hütter's *Compendium* before a similar effort was again made, in Bernhard von Sanden (1636 to 1703), *Theologia symbolica lutherana, hoc est, ecclesiae lutherano-catholicae* (Frankfurt: Johannes Adam Plener, 1688; 1st printing, 1683).

²¹ Ferdinand Kattenbusch, art. "Protestantismus," in Albert Hauck, ed., *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, XVI (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1905), 163, and art. "Symbole, Symbolik," *ibid.*, XIX (1907), 202, 203. See also Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 3d ed., trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry Eyster Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House [1961]; reprint of the 1899 ed.), pp. 99—102. More or less typically, the index to the 9-volume Preuss edition of John Gerhard's *Loci* lists 13 references to the Augsburg Confession, 5 to the Formula, 2 to the Apology; even though the index is incomplete, this paucity of reference is significant (Julius Löbe, *Ioannis Gerhardi Loci Theologici: Indices* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1885], pp. 24, 26, 51).

²² Kattenbusch, *ibid.*, XIX, 203.

²³ The *Verhandlungen der vierten Sitzungen des westlichen Distrikts der Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten im Jahre 1858* (St. Louis: Synodal-druckerei von August Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1858), p. 7, describes this paper as "an essay which a member [of the District] had submitted in response to the question posed to him by the President of the District to be answered in writing." Both the internal and external evidence supports the ascription of authorship to Walther (so, for instance, August R. Suelflow, *The Heart of Missouri: A History of the Western District of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, 1854—1954* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1954], p. 209), whose name, interestingly enough, appears in the proceedings only in the list of enfranchised clergy members (p. 4). The essay was subsequently printed in *Der Lutheraner*, XIV (1858), 201—206; by resolution of the assembly the synodical publisher also put it out the same year in "hard-cover" pamphlet form as "the unanimous expression of opinion on the part of the Synod [!]" (p. 7). An abridged translation into English by Alex William C. Guebert appeared in this journal, XVIII (April 1947), 244—253, under the title "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers, and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?"

Symbols are confessions of the church's faith or teaching and were never intended to be either more or less. For this reason an unconditional subscription to the Symbols is the solemn declaration which an individual who wants to serve the church makes to the effect (1) that he accepts the doctrinal content of our Symbolical Books *because* he recognizes the fact that they are in full agreement with the Sacred Scriptures and do not militate against the Sacred Scriptures at any point, either of major or of minor importance, and (2) that he therefore heartily believes in this divine truth and is determined to preach this doctrine without adulteration. An unconditional subscription refers to the whole content of the Symbols and does not allow the subscriber to make any mental reservation in any point—even if the doctrine in question is discussed only incidentally in support of another teaching. At the same time, the subscriber's commitment does not involve matters which do not belong in the realm of doctrine. The Symbols are not paradigms of German or Latin style or orthography. The subscriber is not bound as far as matters of human knowledge, history, and criticism are concerned. He is not committed to the Symbols' exegesis of a particular passage of the Sacred Scriptures, but his subscription is an affirmation that the interpretations in the Symbols are in accordance with the analogy of the faith.²⁴ His subscription does not bind

²⁴ Walther quotes John Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, locus I, chapter "De interpretatione Scripturae sacrae," sec. 71, ed. John Frederick Cotta, I (Tübingen: Johannes Georgius Cotta, 1732), 54. Walther also cited the famous dictum of Johann-Conrad Dannhauer, *Liber conscientiae apertus*, 2d ed., I (Strasbourg: Johann Fridericus Spoor, 1679), 258, that one could subscribe to the Qur'an "insofar as it appears to our

him to the line of argument that the Symbols use in arriving at a correct statement of doctrine. His subscription refers to the principles underlying polity and worship, but not to such ceremonies as are in the realm of Christian liberty.²⁵

Walther then proceeds to list the various kinds of conditional subscriptions which have been urged from time to time:

1. The "if" or *quatenus* subscription of the Pietists and Rationalists, by which the subscriber accepts the Symbols if they do not militate against the Sacred Scriptures or insofar as they agree with the Sacred Scriptures.

2. A subscription that affirms that the subscriber accepts the Symbols insofar as he believes that they teach the fundamental doctrines of the Bible correctly or in a substantially correct manner.²⁶

3. A subscription which contains the proviso that the Symbols be interpreted

private judgment to be consonant with the Sacred Scriptures." — The role of the Symbols for Walther is clear from his usual methodology. He first supports his thesis with the Biblical demonstration. Then he marshals the Symbolical evidence. Finally he gives the witness of the Orthodox theologians, supplementing these occasionally with patristic materials.

²⁵ *Verhandlungen* 1858, pp. 7-11. The last sentence of this paragraph refers specifically to the question concerning the status of the *Taufbüchlein* and *Traubüchlein* in Luther's Small Catechism, which were omitted from some printings of the *Book of Concord* in order to accommodate Elector Louis VI of the Palatinate (1576-83), the first of the signers of the Preface to the *Book of Concord*; see Piepkorn, "Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXIX (Jan. 1958), 10-13.

²⁶ Walther has in mind the constitution of the General Synod and the obligation imposed upon candidates for the preaching licentiate by the Hartwick Synod.

according to the Sacred Scriptures or in the correct way or in the light of their historical genesis.²⁷

4. A subscription only to those parts of the Symbols that are intended to be a confession.²⁸

5. A subscription inasfar as the Lutheran Symbols agree with certain Reformed confessions.²⁹

6. A subscription which regards certain doctrines on which the Symbols speak clearly as "open questions" if a controversy arises about them.³⁰

7. The Rationalist subscription to the "spirit" of the Symbolical Books in contrast to their letter.³¹

Symbols, Walther insists, are necessary. An appeal to the Sacred Scriptures is not adequate as a confession, since all parties in Christendom appeal to the Sacred Scriptures. One can appeal to the Sacred Scriptures and be a Papist, an Enthusiast, or a Rationalist as well as an orthodox Lutheran. The purpose of our Symbols is: (1) To enable our church clearly and unequivocally to confess its faith and its

doctrine before the whole world; (2) to differentiate it from every heterodox body and sect; and (3) to give it a united, certain, general form and norm of doctrine for all its teachers, on the basis of which all other writings and teachings can be judged and tested. All this implies an unconditional commitment to the Symbols.³²

The church in turn demands confessional subscription (1) to convince herself that her teachers really possess the orthodox understanding of the Sacred Scriptures and the same, pure, unadulterated faith that the church herself has, and (2) that the church may obligate them with a sacred promise either to teach this faith pure and unadulterated or to renounce their office and not disturb the church with false teaching. This too implies an unconditional subscription.³³

Walther criticizes as fallacious the contention that there is no better interpretation of the Symbols than that which is according to the Sacred Scriptures. The church must insist that her teachers interpret the Sacred Scriptures according to the Symbols and not vice versa. If it did not do so it would be making the personal conviction of each teacher its symbol.³⁴

Walther holds that while a subscription to a doctrinal confession concerns only the essentials, everything that is part of the doctrinal content is essential to the confession. He insists that every doctrinal statement in the Symbols is confessional; hence to say that one need accept only that in the

²⁷ Walther instances the Zwinglians generally and John Henry Heidegger (1633—98) in particular, Jerome Zanchi (1516—90), Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500—62), and John Calvin (1509—64), all of whom signed or were prepared to sign the Augsburg Confession "properly understood"; a Lutheran clergy conference in Fürth, Bavaria, under Löhe's chairmanship; and the Iowa Synod.

²⁸ Walther has Löhe and the Iowa Synod in mind.

²⁹ Walther is thinking of the United Church of Prussia and its affiliates.

³⁰ Walther refers to the Buffalo Synod, as John Andrew August Grabau (1804—79) and Henry K. G. von Rohr (1797—1874) expressed that synod's position at the Leipzig Pastoral Conference of 1853.

³¹ *Verhandlungen* 1858, pp. 11—14.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15. Since *all* other writings and teachings are to be judged and tested by the Symbols, it would seem that no subsequent document could acquire Symbolical status in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

Symbols which is of a confessional character is no real limitation. On the other hand, if the subscription were limited to the formula, "We believe, teach, and confess," the bulk of the Symbols—including the two Catechisms and the Apology—would have to be omitted from consideration.³⁵

He agrees that the Symbols must be understood in their historical sense, but this implies merely that history teaches us "how those who were then alive understood and interpreted the Sacred Scriptures in the articles that were in controversy in God's Church and the anti-Biblical teaching was rejected and condemned."³⁶ It must not be allowed to imply that the dogmas of the Symbols do not possess permanent validity.³⁷

The acceptance of mutually contradictory symbols by the United Church is sheer "Gallionism," and both the Lutherans and the Reformed members of that body are denying rather than confessing their faith.³⁸

Walther insists that to regard as "open questions" issues "on which even the most loyal and most positive Lutherans have differing opinions" is a begging of the question, since loyal Lutherans will believe what the Lutheran Church teaches in her Symbols. It is not against the spirit of a truly evangelical church to bind her teachers to the Symbols, since this demand is merely a requirement that the would-be teacher confess his faith, so that the church

can judge if she ought properly confer upon him the office of teacher.³⁹

Only the letter of the Symbols can convey their spirit. If anyone either lacks the ability to test the whole *Book of Concord* according to the Sacred Scriptures or has conscientious scruples about certain points, he is not fit to become a teacher in the church, since a bishop must be an apt teacher and be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it.⁴⁰

Walther concedes in principle that the Symbols could contain errors in points of minor importance, but he denies the fact. For 300 years, he says, all the enemies of the Lutheran Church have tried in vain to find an error in the *Book of Concord*. They have shown that our Symbols contain points that contradict their blind reason, but not the Sacred Scriptures in even the smallest point.⁴¹

Finally, he demonstrates that an unconditional subscription is in the spirit of the Symbols themselves and of the practices of the orthodox Lutheran Church as far back as the thirties of the 16th century.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 17, 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 18, 19.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 19—25. Walther quotes the requirement set up around 1532 by Luther, Justus Jonas (1493—1555) and John Bugenhagen (1485—1558) that ordinands "affirm that they embrace the uncorrupted evangelical doctrine," understood in the sense of the Catholic Creeds and the Augsburg Confession (*Corpus Reformatorum*, XII, 6, 7); the oath required of all clergymen and academicians in Albertine Saxony from 1602 on; the oath sworn in the 17th century by candidates for the licentiate in sacred theology at the University of Leipzig; and the rejection of the "insofar as" formula by the theological faculty of that university when Duke Henry (1473—1541) reformed it at his accession in 1539. (On the significance of the

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 16, 17.

³⁶ Formula of Concord, Epitome, "Of the Summary Concept," 8.

³⁷ *Verhandlungen* 1858, p. 17. Walther's polemic is addressed against the Iowa Synod.

³⁸ Ibid. See Acts 18:12-17.

A further insight into Walther's attitude is found in his *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, where he quotes the *Pastoraltheologie* of Frederick Eberhard Rambach [*fl. ca.* 1769] (who, Walther says, was otherwise anything but rigorous) with reference to the reasons for pledging a pastor to the Symbols:

1. We do not regard the Symbols as the basis of our faith, for only the Sacred Scriptures are that. We regard them merely as the criterion of our confession concerning that faith, and through a written statement of intention to teach only according to them we are merely seeking a guarantee that our church will have in its teachers upright ministers and pastors, and not foxes and wolves. No one is exerting any absolute compulsion on [the

Symbols in the Lutheran Church of the 16th century see also Heinrich Bornkamm, *Das Jahrhundert der Reformation: Gestalten und Kräfte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, c. 1961], pp. 219—225.) The first Lutheran to object to a subscription to symbols, Walther says, was Andrew Osiander (1498—1552), in connection with his anti-Melanchthonian polemics after Luther's death. Philip James Spener (1635—1705), although taking a *quia* position himself, was prepared to concede a *quatenus* subscription to an honestly scrupulous ordinand and thus paved the way for the abolition of a *quia* subscription by the later Pietists and the Rationalists. Elsewhere Walther makes a point of the fact that it was not the Lutheran Church but the Zwinglians who initiated the doctrinal obligation of their clergy in 1523 (Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, 5th ed. [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906], p. 53, n. 1). For contemporary discussions of the implications of confessional subscription within The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, see Herbert J. A. Bouman, "Thoughts on the Significance of Confessional Subscription," in *Essays on the Lutheran Confessions Basic to Lutheran Cooperation* (St. Louis/New York: The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod/National Lutheran Council, 1961), pp. 35—44, and Piepkorn (see fn. 25 above).

candidate], and if he is reluctant to subscribe the Symbols, he can go off and earn his livelihood some other way. But if he has committed himself to them and afterward departs from them, he cannot any longer claim to be an honorable man unless he resigns and lays down his office.

2. Our Symbolical Books are not a vicious contrivance and a violation of other people's consciences, but they were written in emergencies. . . . What is wrong with a Christian and evangelical government demanding a written or even a sworn pledge to these books and being unwilling to let every crazy brain create innovations as he pleases? Freedom of conscience does not allow us to force anyone to the true religion, but it does not require that everyone be granted the freedom to spread scandalous doctrines and confusion within the church.

To this Walther adds:

But it would be equally conscienceless for a candidate to pledge himself to the Symbolical Books of the church merely to get into the sacred ministry, without having read them and tested them against the Word of God and without having persuaded himself of the truth of their contents *in rebus et phrasibus*.⁴³

Walther argues along the same line in *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen Ortsgemeinde*:

It is to be noted well with reference to the obligation of the preachers upon the Symbolical Books of the church that this is one of the chief defenses of the congregation against having the preachers make themselves lords over the congregation's faith. . . . All false teachers *say* that they will teach according to the Sacred Scriptures. But if the preachers will not allow

⁴³ Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (see preceding fn.), pp. 68, 69.

themselves to be obligated upon the public confessions of the orthodox church, the congregations have no guarantee that their preachers will not proclaim papistic, Calvinist, chiliastic, Methodist, Rationalist, and similar doctrines, and the congregations will have no basis for accusing them and deposing them for bad faith. Even if they could do this, they would always be exposed to new disputations and controversies about the articles of the common Christian Creed itself, something that they would be forever spared through an obligation upon the Symbols. If therefore a Lutheran congregation prizes the pure doctrine of the divine Word, its Creed, its Christian freedom, its good order, and its peace, it should in that same degree insist that it will not receive a preacher who will not let himself be obligated on our precious *Book of Concord*.⁴⁴

It is a little difficult to define precisely the scope of the concept "the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church" in Walther's mind. Normally—as in the preceding quotation—it appears to have been coextensive with the *Book of Concord*, particularly the German edition of 1590 (minus the *Traubüchlein* and *Taufbüchlein* in the Small Catechism), although in works designed primarily for the clergy Walther freely quotes the Latin version of 1584. At the same time his Saxon background disposed him to regard the Saxon Visitation Articles of 1593⁴⁵ as a "symbol

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." When Trinity Church, St. Louis, was in the process of adopting its new constitution in September 1842, it so listed the Visitation Articles in the confessional paragraph, clearly at Walther's urging.⁴⁶ When negotiations for the organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were in process, Walther made a halfhearted effort to have them included among "all the sym-

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tian II and a committed Lutheran, directed a visitation of the Electorate immediately after beginning his regency. The Visitation Articles were first published in 1593; they are reprinted in Frederick Bente and William Herman Theodore Dau, editors, *Concordia Triglotta* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), II, 1150—1157 (see also I, 192). The authors of the Articles were Giles Hunnius (1550—1603), Martin Mirus (1532—93), George Mylius (1544—1607), Wolfgang Mamphrasius (1557 to 1616), Burchard Hebard and Joshua Löner (1516—95). From 1594 on all Saxon clergymen and academicians had to subscribe them; this requirement was finally lifted in 1836, three years before the departure of the Saxon immigrants under Stephan. (Kolde [see fn. 16 above], p. lxxxii)

⁴⁶ *Der Lutheraner*, VI (1850), 105; Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 138, 140. Although the confessional paragraph in the constitution of Trinity Church was declared "unalterable and nonrepealable" (*ibid.*, p. 141), the Visitation Articles were struck from it the year after Walther's death.

The Concordia Historical Institute has 42 printed, manuscript, and microfilmed constitutions of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod organized before 1870 which its staff kindly made available to this writer. Only three list the Visitation Articles in their confessional paragraphs: St. Trinity Church, Detroit (1851); Zion Church, New Orleans (1854); and the First German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation (now St. Paul's Church), New Orleans (1858), but not the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of the Augsburg Confession (now St. John's Church), New Orleans (1853).

⁴⁴ Walther, *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ortsgemeinde*, 2d ed. (St. Louis: August Wiebush u. Sohn, 1864; 1st ed., 1863), pp. 78, 79.

⁴⁵ Under Elector Christian I of Saxony (1586—91) and his chancellor, Nicholas Crell (1550—1601), crypto-Calvinism, suppressed in 1574 under Elector August I (1553 to 1586, revived. Duke Frederick William, regent during the minority of Elector Chris-

bols of our church" to which the prospective body was to pledge itself.⁴⁷

References to the Symbols in Walther's sermons are relatively rare.⁴⁸ We do, however, have the sermon that he preached in Trinity Church, St. Louis, on the 350th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. Under his second point he urges what in his opinion is one of the values of the Symbols:

When Luther had closed his eyes in 1546, a whole horde of dangerous false teachers arose in the course of time. They professed to be the only true Lutherans, and they appealed deceitfully, although not without a show of justification, to the Sacred Scriptures. What would have happened already in those days if there had not been confessions of the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church from which

one could demonstrate what the authentic teaching of our church was? Our church would already at that time have become a Babel, and without doubt it would have perished altogether after a few years and have disappeared from the earth forever. But although at that time doctrinal controversies began which lasted for practically three decades, the Lutherans who had remained faithful finally joined forces, with Martin Chemnitz at their head,⁴⁹ and proved irrefutably from the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the two Catechisms of Luther what the authentic and original teaching of our church was, and thereupon in 1577 they put together the Formula of Concord, a confession in which they rehearsed the teachings of their past, and lo! the church was saved. All honest Lutherans gathered again around their good old trusted banner.

From then on the practice was established in our church that all preachers, before they were installed in their office, had to attest solemnly that the faith which the church has set down in her Symbols was the faith of their own hearts and that, God and His Holy Gospel helping them, they would teach no other doctrine, secretly or publicly, orally or in writing, than that which our church had confessed in the year 1530 at Augsburg and had recorded for all times in its *Book of Concord*. The consequence of this practice was that our church burgeoned in apostolic purity for almost 200 years, superabundantly blessed herself by God and a blessing to all of Christendom.

Nevertheless, about 100 years ago,

⁴⁷ *Briefe von C. F. W. Walther an seine Freunde, Synodalgenossen und Familienglieder*, ed. L[udwig] Fürbringer, I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 16.

⁴⁸ Taking Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Evangelien Postille*, 8th ed. (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1882), as a sample, I found a total of eight quotations from the Symbols on the book's 404 pages: Preface to the *Book of Concord* (p. 72); Formula of Concord, XI (p. 94); Small Catechism, Confession, and Augsburg Confession, XXV (p. 164); Augsburg Confession, XI and XII, and Smalcald Articles, Part Three, VIII (p. 320); Augsburg Confession, XXV (p. 322). In the 27 addresses to newly received members of the combined parish (*Gesammtgemeinde*) of St. Louis contained in Walther, *Ansprechen und Gebete* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1888), this writer found only one reference to the Symbols, stipulating the new members' duty "in the event of doctrinal controversies among us to judge and decide strictly according to God's Word and the Lutheran Symbolical Writings" (p. 42). Members were required by the constitution to be familiar with both the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession (Mundinger [see fn. 46 above], p. 139).

⁴⁹ Walther held James Andreä (1528—90), the other major coauthor of the Formula of Concord, in rather low esteem as compared to Martin Chemnitz; see, for example, Walther, *Der Concordienformel Kern und Stern*, 3d ed. (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1887; 1st ed., 1877), I, 60.

either because the watchmen on the heights of our Zion were asleep or because they themselves had become traitors to the truth, erring spirits had once more insinuated themselves into our church. The oath which they had taken upon the Symbols of the church hindered them from stepping forward openly with their errors, so they began to insist either that the oath be abolished or that its execution be not so stringently insisted on, with the hypocritical pretense that a simple obligation to the Sacred Scriptures would be wholly adequate. But what happened when these enemies of the Symbols finally achieved their objective? Since everyone now interpreted the Sacred Scriptures according to his own understanding, innumerable erroneous and Enthusiastic doctrines forced their way into our church, until finally the most miserable kind of rationalism, namely, the belief in reason instead of belief in the Bible, and pagan moral and ethical instruction in place of the Gospel of Christ, destroyed our church like a deluge. The congregations had lost their liberty along with the Symbols; the preachers were now lords over their faith. When Protestant Christendom celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession half a century ago, in 1830, the abomination of desolation stood in the holy places almost everywhere in the land of our fathers.⁵⁰

In addition to the encouragement that Walther gave to the tercentenary St. Louis

edition of the German *Book of Concord* in 1880,⁵¹ we owe to his own editorial efforts an annotated German edition of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord, with historical introductions, in 1877,⁵² and the almost complete reproduction of the Solid Declaration of Article XI of the Formula, with excerpts from the Epitome of the same article, in 1881.⁵³

Walther's attitude toward the Symbols was no pose. His published works reveal an intimate acquaintance with the *Book of Concord*. He quotes liberally from all of the Symbols, with a familiarity that indicates regular personal perusal and not merely occasional reference to the index of subjects. Thus, for instance, Theodore Büniger's index to Walther's edition of John William Baier's *Compendium theo-*

⁵¹ *Concordienbuch, das ist, die symbolischen Bücher der ev. luth. Kirche* (St. Louis: Concordia-Verlag, 1880; 4th ed., 1890). A special reprint for distribution in Germany was published in 1946 after World War II.

⁵² Walther, *Der Concordienformel Kern und Stern* (see fn. 49 above). The tercentenary of the Formula of Concord in 1877 was the occasion for elaborate celebrations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America; see the subsequently published memorial volume [E. W. Kähler], ed., *Denkmal der dritten Jubelfeier der Concordienformel im Jahr des Heils 1877* (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1877), in which Walther's own sermon in Trinity Church, St. Louis, appears on pp. 223—233.

⁵³ Walther, *Die Lehre von der Gnadenwahl in Frage und Antwort* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1881). Similarly Walther's exposition of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel — both the ten lectures (1878) of *Gesetz und Evangelium* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1893) and the 39 lectures (1884—1885) of *Die rechte Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium*, ed. Th. Claus and Ludwig Fürbringer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897) — must be regarded as an extended commentary on Article V of the Formula of Concord.

⁵⁰ Walther, *Jubelfestpredigt am 350. Gedenktage der Augsburgischen Confession den 25. Juni 1880* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1880), pp. 11—13. This excerpt is significant not only because it expresses Walther's opinion of one of the values of the Symbols but also because it furnishes an insight into his historical awareness. In general, he sees the Lutheran Church persisting in pristine purity until about 1780, followed by a half-century of indifferentism and rationalism.

logiae positivae lists 54 quotations from and references to the Formula of Concord, 37 to the Apology, 35 to the Augsburg Confession, 26 to the Smalcald Articles and the Tractate on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, 7 to the Large Catechism, 4 to the Apostles' Creed, 2 each to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and 1 each to the Small Catechism and the Preface of the *Book of Concord*.⁵⁴

One area where the practice of contemporary American Lutheranism has departed far from the practice enjoined by the Symbols is in the area of private confession and individual absolution. Walther's attitude on this point is accordingly of considerable interest. In his *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* he cites Articles XI and XXV of the Augsburg Confession and Article XXV of the Apology to show that while the Sacred Scriptures do not command private confession, individual absolution ought not to be allowed to fall into disuse in the church and that it would be ungodly and impious to abolish it from the church. Hence, Walther says, a preacher cannot make private confession an absolute condition or insist upon its retention at all costs. But he has the obligation in an evangelical way, through instruction and admonition, to endeavor at first to insure that private confession is diligently used side by side with public confession and, where it is desirable and possible, finally to restore private confession as the sole mode of confession.

⁵⁴ Theodore Büniger, *Johannis Guilielmi Baieri Compendium theologiae positivae, adjectis notis amplioribus, quibus . . . curavit Carol. Ferd. Guil. Walther: Indices* (St. Louis: Officina Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae, 1899), pp. 5—9, 18, 40, 41, 59, 69.

If he finds private confession already in use in his parish as the sole mode of confession he is to insure that the practice is preserved. In no case can he under any circumstances yield to a congregation which would not allow individual members to use private confession and absolution, for thus to abolish individual absolution from the church would be impious.⁵⁵

No theologian approaches the Sacred Scriptures altogether without preconceptions that color his understanding of the text. Similarly, no Lutheran theologian ever approaches the Lutheran Symbols altogether without preconceptions which he finds reflected in their pages. That Walther should be no exception is not astonishing; what is astonishing is the relative infrequency of such instances.

He does have a partiality for certain passages from the Symbols. A case in point is paragraph 69 of the Tractatus on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope.⁵⁶ This is the one lone passage in the whole *Book of Concord* that refers—quite incidentally at that—to the “priesthood” of 1 Peter 2:9, one of Walther's favorite themes. Walther frequently quotes this paragraph in conjunction with the preceding one:

(68) The statements of Christ which attest that the keys are given to the Church

⁵⁵ Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (see fn. 42 above), p. 55. See also Walther, *Die rechte Gestalt* (see fn. 44 above), pp. 91—93.

⁵⁶ For instance, Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 4th ed. (Zwickau-in-Saxony: Schriftenverein der separierten evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinden in Sachsen, 1894, 1st ed., 1852; hereafter referred to as *Kirche und Amt*), pp. 33, 79, 80, 247, 289, 317; *Die rechte Gestalt* (see fn. 44 above), pp. 26, 27.

and not only to certain persons, "Where two or three are gathered in My Name, etc." belong here.

(69) Finally, the statement of Saint Peter, "You are the royal priesthood," also confirms this [the right of the Church to call, choose and ordain ministers]. These words refer to the true Church, which, since it alone has the priesthood, certainly has the power to choose and ordain ministers.

The logic of Melancthon's incomplete syllogism at this point is itself somewhat obscure, and Walther seems to load the passage more heavily than the statement in its immediate and larger context warrants. It should be stressed, however, that Walther very correctly makes a more careful distinction between the sacred ministry and the "royal priesthood" of the Christian community than some of his descendants have done.⁵⁷

Walther used the same passage from the *Tractatus*, amplified by the addition of paragraph 70, in his discussions of ordination.⁵⁸ Although he did not regard the imposition of hands as a divine institution, he still held ordination in higher esteem than some of those who followed him. In his *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* he affirms the thesis: "A candidate who neglects to be ordained, except in a case of emergency, is acting schismatically and demonstrates that he belongs to the number of those whom congregations with itching ears accumulate for them-

selves to suit their own likings."⁵⁹ In a note to this thesis he asserts that ordination with the laying on of hands is not of divine institution but only an apostolic ecclesiastical ordinance.

[This] needs no proof, for although the Scripture refers to this practice, the Scripture is silent about a divine institution of this practice. . . . Ordination is an *adiaphoron*, a thing indifferent, which does not make the call or office, but merely confirms both, as the solemnization of marriage in the church does not make the marriage, but only confirms in an ecclesiastical way the marriage that has already been contracted. Therefore our Church confesses in the Smalcald Articles: "These words (1 Peter 2:9) refer to the true church, which, since she alone has the priesthood, must also have the authority to choose and ordain ministers. [70] This the common practice of the church attests, because anciently the people chose pastors and bishops. Then a bishop whose seat was in the same community or in the neighborhood came and confirmed the bishop-elect through the laying on of hands, and ordination was nothing else than such a confirmation."⁶⁰

Actually, as the context indicates, the

⁵⁷ Walther, *Kirche und Amt* (see preceding fn.), Thesis I on the Sacred Ministry, pp. 174—192. See also Fagerberg, pp. 111, 112.

⁵⁸ Walther, *Kirche und Amt* (see fn. 56 above), pp. 289—314; *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (see fn. 42 above), pp. 62, 65—68.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 62. In *Kirche und Amt* (see fn. 56 above), p. 289, he says: "According to God's Word it is indubitable that even in our time ordination is no empty ceremony, if it is accompanied by the believing intercession of the church on the basis of the glorious promises given specifically to the sacred ministry, but carries with it the pouring out of heavenly gifts upon the believing recipient." Walther's concern, over against what he understood Grabau's position to be, was to reject an absolute necessity for ordination.

⁶⁰ Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (see fn. 42 above), p. 65. See also *Kirche und Amt* (see fn. 56 above), pp. 247, 289; *Die rechte Gestalt* (see fn. 44 above), p. 81.

antitheses are somewhat different: Once upon a time the people chose the bishops; now, in the 16th century, the Pope insists on choosing them. Once upon a time the ordination consisted of a simple act of recognition (*comprobatio*), the laying on of hands; now, in the 16th century, the multiplication of ceremonies that began before the days of Pseudo-St. Denis has extended the simple two-minute rite into an interminable ceremony.⁶¹

To summarize: We have in Carl Fer-

⁶¹ Paragraphs 70, 71. It should be observed that Walther also quotes, though not so frequently, passages of the Symbols which affirm the spiritual paternity of the clergy (*Large Catechism*, Decalog, 158—166; *Kirche und Amt*, [see fn. 56 above], pp. 363, 364), concede the designation "sacrament" to the sacred ministry and to the imposition of hands in ordination (*Apology*, XIII, 7—13; *Kirche und Amt*, pp. 289, 290), and affirm the validity by divine right of ordination administered by a pastor in his own church (*Tractatus on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope*, 65; *Kirche und Amt*, p. 344). This writer has not found Walther quoting *Tractatus* 72, which affirms that when the bishops become heretical or refuse to impart ordination, the churches are compelled by divine right to ordain pastors and ministers, using for this purpose such pastors of their own as may be available (*adhibitis suis pastoribus*).

dinand William Walther a product and a promoter of the confessional revival that revitalized the Lutheran Church in Europe and America in the mid-19th century and that has not wholly run its course even to-day. For him a Lutheran church by definition was a church that taught—and practiced—in accordance with the Lutheran confession, the Lutheran Symbols.⁶² On the basis of rigorous logic he demanded an unqualified subscription to the Lutheran Symbols from all those who served the church, on the ground that anything less than this is without real meaning and imperils both the doctrinal basis and the spiritual freedom of the Christian community. He himself exemplified his requirement; he knew, used, revered, and was determined to follow the Symbols. To his limitless faith in God and His Word and to his valiant confessionalism The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gratefully owes her present commitment to the Lutheran Symbols, and from his example she can still learn.

St. Louis, Mo.

⁶² Walther, *Die rechte Gestalt* (see fn. 44 above), p. 1.