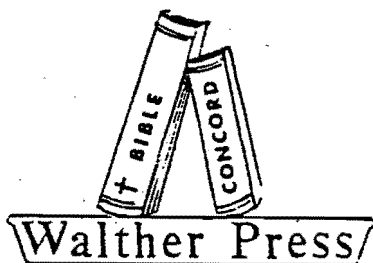


# C.F.W. WALTHER: THE AMERICAN LUTHER

Essays in Commemoration of the  
100th Anniversary of Carl Walther's Death

Edited by  
ARTHUR H. DREVLLOW  
John M. Drickamer  
Glenn E. Reichwald



130 Electa Blvd.  
Mankato, MN 56001

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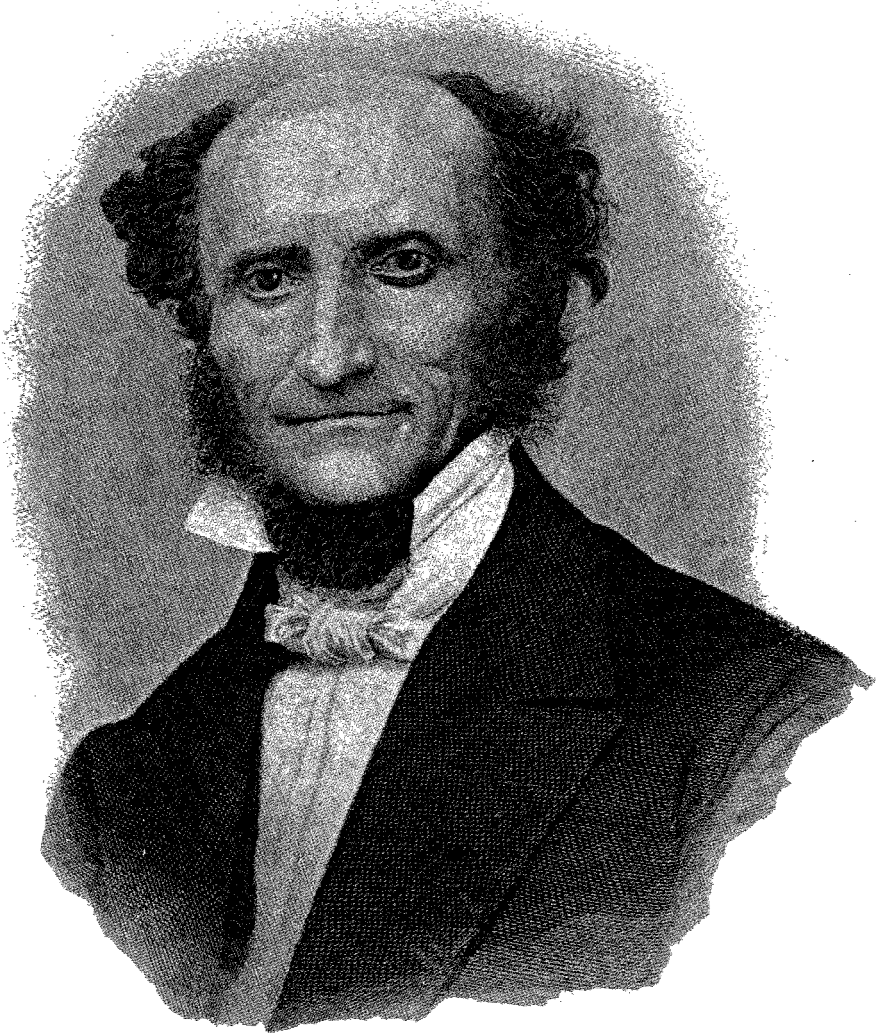
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MARTIN LUTHER



DR. C.F.W. WALTHER

## Chapter Ten

# Walther The Dogmatician

Robert D. Preus

The assignment to write a short chapter on Dr. C. F. W. Walther as a dogmatician is a pleasant but challenging task, and that for several reasons. The undertaking is challenging first because Walther never wrote a dogmatics textbook, although he wrote several works on various articles of faith which were sorely needed in the Lutheran Church in America in his day. Second, one can see Walther as a dogmatician in everything he wrote, whether it was his book on pastoral theology or his sermons or his essays delivered throughout his long career as president of the Missouri Synod and professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Third, Walther's most notable student, Dr. Francis Pieper, wrote an excellent essay on "Dr. C. F. W. Walther as Theologian" in 1890.<sup>1</sup> In this essay Pieper analyzes and evaluates the doctrinal position of his mentor, and thus also his work as a dogmatician. How can one in the 1980's possibly improve upon Pieper's excellent and comprehensive appraisal?

And so I shall not attempt to repeat what Pieper has done so well. Nor shall I try to summarize and assess the entire doctrinal and evangelical content of Walther's immense theological contribution to the Lutheran Church. Rather I shall merely list three factors which, in my opinion, make a theologian a good dogmatician, and then examine Walther's importance and impact as a dogmatician on this threefold basis.

I. A good dogmatician is one who is able to reduce all Christian theology to a meaningful and practical pattern of doctrine.

Dr. Walther was indeed a dogmatician, even though he wrote no complete dogmatics book. He wrote prolifically, however, on many important theological and dogmatic *loci*, which were under intense

debate and were of great importance in his day. He wrote extensively on such themes as Law and Gospel, the means of grace, justification by grace, faith, church and ministry, election and conversion, church fellowship and syncretism, and dogmatic prolegomena and Scripture in monographs, essays, and in pages of *Lehre und Wehre*. Although he never wrote a formal dogmatics textbook, he edited J. W. Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* in 1879.<sup>2</sup> He was the leading dogmatician of the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference—and one might add, American Lutheranism—for more than a generation, exerting a profound impact both *in rebus et phrasibus* upon the clergy of his day and especially Dr. Francis Pieper who wrote, according to many, the most impressive and surely the most influential dogmatics textbook of our present century among American Lutherans. Pieper, the dogmatician, was instructed and formed by Walther, his teacher, and, so far as I can discern, never deviates on any significant issue from the theology and dogmatics of his mentor.

The mark of a good dogmatician is the ability and aptitude (*habitus*) to reduce theology to a meaningful and practical summa and pattern (*hypotyposis, typus et forma, Vorbild* FC, SD, Rule and Norm, 10). This was no doubt Luther's foremost reason for commending Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* of 1521 so highly and saying that it deserved a place in the canon. And Luther himself distinguished himself as a dogmatician by his writing of the *Small Catechism*, the Smalcald Articles, and other works which were meant to be patterns of doctrine for the clergy or the laity. According to Luther and those who followed him II Timothy 1:13 is both the justification and the biblical injunction to do dogmatics. The writers of the Formula of Concord and the later 16th century dogmaticians, with their emphasis upon the orderly arrangement of the articles of faith, the classification of the articles or dogmas, and their insistence upon the centrality of Christ's work and the justification of a sinner before God as the foundation of the faith clearly carried out the dogmatic enterprise begun by Luther and Melanchthon. Walther followed with both conviction and devotion Luther's systematic structuring of the articles of faith as well as the centrality of the Gospel of justification both in his dogmatic works and in his preaching and all his theological activities. He recognized Luther as a far better dogmatician (communicator of the faith) than either Melanchthon or Calvin, who have often been cited as the first systematic theologians of the Reformation, and this on the basis of Luther's ability to summarize and present in an orderly and clear biblical pattern of thought the entire biblical revelation. It is Luther

whom Walther cites and imitates, not only because the great Reformer had a deeper and more evangelical understanding of theology than his contemporaries and successors, but because Walther saw in Luther a better dogmatician, pure and simple.

Walther has been called a "restitution theologian" because he follows so closely the biblical pattern of thought of Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, and the dogmaticians. He believed that Luther and the Lutheran fathers not only taught theology correctly, but were wise and biblical as they constructed and presented their pattern of doctrine. He believed unabashedly that to build his doctrine on the organic foundation of Scripture and to employ the terminology and frame of thought of Lutheran fathers was a mark of a good dogmatician. In this sense he indicated that to him the only good dogmatician in a restitution theologian, who leans on his forebears as he summarizes and presents the faith.

But Walther, the restitution theologian, is not a mere "citation theologian," as his detractors have scornfully averred. He clearly indicates his own personal *habitus practicus theodotos* as a skilled dogmatician. He does not cite the Confessions or Luther or the orthodox dogmaticians haphazardly, ostentatiously to vaunt his learning, or merely to defend some private opinion or theologoumenon, as for instance his contemporaries F. A. Schmidt and F. W. Stellhorn, but quotes them out of respect as venerable fathers of the Church, more importantly because he humbly believes that the citations he brings forth make their point and put the case for the true doctrine better than he could. Walther had a far deeper respect for the theology of the Lutheran Confessions and of Luther than the dogmaticians of his day and a far broader knowledge and understanding of the same than any of his contemporaries, even in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

Walther's ability (*habitus*) as a dogmatician is seen from his common use of theses and antitheses as he presents the Biblical and Lutheran position on various articles of faith. Such an approach, like Walther's tendency to restitution, was unusual and despised in his day. But it is clearly a mark not only of a good dogmatician but of an effective didactician. Walther employed to great advantage and with clarity the thetical approach his several monographs on the doctrine of church and ministry.<sup>4</sup> He did the same when he defended the *sola scriptura* principle,<sup>5</sup> in his defense on the confessional doctrine of predestination,<sup>6</sup> and in his treatment of the doctrine and practice of absolution.<sup>7</sup> Walther's practice of setting forth doctrine in thetical and antithetical form shows him to be one of the most orderly and systematic dogmaticians of the 19th century. His deep concern to present the doctrine of the Church in a clear and simple



fashion reveals not only his didactic interest, but also his seriousness as a dogmatician. False doctrine had to be rejected, according to the Scripture principle and the Lutheran confessional principle as well. A dogmatician is a called minister of the Church and must be utterly serious and conscientious as he presents the doctrine of Scripture. And so Walther was not merely a methodologist, a dogmatician's dogmatician, an elitist theoretician, but a dogmatician for the Church called to train and guide pastors so that they could train and guide Christians.

## II. A good dogmatician is one whose pattern of doctrine is orthodox, that is, biblical.

I suppose that his contemporaries in Europe and America, who scorned him because he was a reprobation theologian, would have judged that Walther was for that reason a poor dogmatician. This introduces the question: Can a theologian who makes little effort to be creative, who even eschews originality for its own sake in the dogmatic content of his work, be a good dogmatician? Or to rephrase the question in Walther's favor: Can a confessional Lutheran, one who like Chemnitz or Quenstedt cites the fathers in the Lutheran Confessions prolifically and favorably, be a good dogmatician? Or, loading the question still more in Walther's favor, can a theologian who binds himself utterly to the sacred Scriptures as "the only rule and standard to which all dogmas and teachers be esteemed and judged" (F. C. Epit. Rule and Norm, 1) and who subscribes the Lutheran symbols as a true and correct exposition and summary of that divine word be a good dogmatician?

Dogmatics draws its theology from that fountain of Israel, which is the divine Scriptures, and constructs its pattern of theology into that divine norm. This was the procedure and method assumed by all Lutheran theologians until the enlightenment. When Walther therefore, the reprobation theologian, held to a rigid adherence to the *solo scriptura* principle, he broke not only with the classical liberals of his day but also those dogmaticians who were called positive theologians<sup>8</sup> such as Luthardt, Thomasius, Franz Delitzsch, Nietzsche, Kahnis, and others.<sup>9</sup> But this was the only course for a Lutheran dogmatician to take who would honor God's Word and thereby honor God Himself.<sup>10</sup> To Walther dogmatics was an utterly serious enterprise, carried out in total submission to the divine Scripture, a Scripture verbally inspired by God and therefore inerrant and divinely authoritative.<sup>11</sup> Melancthon says that the words of Scripture "did not fall from the Holy Spirit unawares"; Walther comments "The

Holy Spirit has inspired the Scriptures and placed everything there deliberately. Here our Church confesses that every word and every arrangement of words, every reiteration of words, every summation, the entire way and manner of speaking [of Scripture] has its origin in the Holy Spirit. He has inspired everything, not just the basic truths, not just the sense and meaning, not just the 'what' but also the 'how.' And it was He who has chosen the words which were necessary to reveal correctly to us God's meaning."

Thus, all dogmatic conclusions drawn from the Scriptures are themselves authoritative, and the dogmatician can speak authoritatively as he patterns his theology after the divine Word. And he can and will be certain of his teaching, drawn as it is from a cognitive source that is divinely authoritative and at the same time clear.<sup>12</sup> One cannot overemphasize the importance to Walther of maintaining rigidly the Scripture principle when doing dogmatics. If a theologian abandons the principle and places himself above the Word in any way, this whole approach to theology and to God becomes fractured and skewed. Then he must depend upon his own "Christian consciousness" (Luthardt) or the "consciousness of the Church" (Kahnis) or his own "rational spirit" (Harless) or possibly the authority of the Church for certainty in doctrinal matters. Ultimately the dogmatician loses any certainty of doctrine and, worse still, the content of his dogmatics changes with the times and invariably loses its evangelical character. Walther is very prone to point out that a loss of the Scripture principle and the evangelical doctrine go hand in hand, for both oppose the unbridled reason of man, whatever form it takes. Walther not only asserted the Scripture principle and pledged his adherence to it, but he faithfully observed the principle in his practice of teaching the faith. Loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions and Luther's doctrine is based upon his previous and total commitment to the authority of Scripture which normed the Lutheran Confessions and Luther's doctrine. Walther's adamant and unflinching attachment to the Scripture principle is seen in his uncompromising stand on many doctrinal principles and issues of his day, issues which were extremely unpopular and ostensibly injurious to a small immigrant church which was trying to make its way in a free and liberal society. I am thinking of the stand he took on church fellowship and syncretism, on predestination and conversion, and especially on open questions.<sup>13</sup>

III. A good dogmatician is one whose pattern of doctrine represents a proper distinction between Law and Gospel and upholds the

**doctrine of justification by grace as the praecipuus locus of the biblical doctrine.**

Every dogmatician will emphasize certain themes, or *loci*, more than others. He does so usually not out of personal predilection merely but because of the theological climate and needs of the day. This explains the preoccupation with Christology in the 4th and 5th centuries and with soteriology at the time of the Reformation. A dogmatician will therefore invariably contribute more in certain areas of dogmatics than in others. This was true also of Walther. But his contributions to the whole of dogmatics were broader and more balanced than most, and that for two reasons. First, the theological liberalism and unionism and the devastating historical/critical exegesis of the 19th century had to be directly dealt with in the mid-nineteenth century in America, and there was scarcely anyone who could do so within the scraggly Lutheranism struggling to survive and to retain its identity in a new land. Walther was compelled to respond to these serious threats to the faith. The results were his very thorough treatment of the doctrine of church fellowship and syncretism, theological prolegomena including such topics as open questions, the authority and inerrancy of Scripture, Law and Gospel, and absolution. But at the same time Walther and confessional Lutheranism were faced with certain internal problems and exigencies which gravely threatened confessional Lutheranism. Walther coped with these aberrations within American Lutheranism head on, and in doing so he made a lasting and valuable contribution by his forthright and clear studies in the area of church and ministry, confessional subscription, election and conversion, objective justification, and many other articles of faith.

We must remember that there was no solid dogmatic tradition nor any good dogmatics book available for Lutherans in America at the time Walther came to our country. Young men aspiring to be pastors were compelled to use textbooks from Europe which were poor, or un-Lutheran, or simply not appropriate for those preparing for the ministry in America. No adequate Lutheran dogmatics book had been written for Lutherans in this country whose culture and theology, where not pagan and liberal, were overwhelmingly Calvinist and Armenian. If Walther was unable to write that much needed dogmatics textbook, he did the next best thing in producing his much enlarged edition of W. C. Baier's *Compendium* which ignored the baneful theology of the enlightenment and deadly liberalism of the 18th century and presented the very best that the old orthodox Lutherans of the 16th and 17th century had to say on the articles of faith. Walther, who possessed a deep appreciation and knowledge

of Luther, intersperses valuable and telling citations from Luther throughout. Walther's edition of Baier is without question the most useful and excellent dogmatics textbook written by an American Lutheran in the 19th century.

But Walther's contribution in his great edition of Baier and other monographs and studies was not a piecemeal or patchwork job. On every theological topic he articulated his position from a thoroughly evangelical perspective and context. He never lost sight of what Werner Ehlert called the "evangelischer Ansatz," the fact that the article of the merit of Christ and the righteousness of faith was "the first and chief article, of all theology and dogmatics (SA II, I, 1-5, cf. *Apol.* IV, 2, German text) which informs all theological labors.

Karl Barth<sup>14</sup> avers that no [Lutheran] dogmatician consistently made justification by grace the central point, or *praecipuus locus*, of all theology and of the dogmatic enterprise after Luther. Walther, the reprintation theologian, did just that and did so much more winsomely, consistently, effectively, and evangelically than Karl Barth with his Calvinistic approach to God and all theology.

The *Leitmotiv* and guiding principle of all of Walther's theological activity and presentation of dogmatics was the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith. According to Walther, the doctrine of justification "is the characteristic mark of the Christian religion, by which it distinguishes itself from all other religions."<sup>15</sup> Where the doctrine of justification is perverted, there is simply another way of salvation taught and the Church of Christ is seriously undermined. Walther says, "Upon this article our salvation rests, and therefore it is absolutely necessary for every Christian. If anyone would not rightly know and believe this doctrine, it would not do him any good if he knew correctly all other doctrines as, for instance, those of the Trinity, of the person of Christ, and the like."<sup>16</sup> Dr. Francis Pieper in his excellent article on "C. F. W. Walther as Theologian" confines his excellent discussion to Walther's doctrine of justification by grace. The teaching and fact of our justification before God by grace for Christ's sake through faith not only forms the personal faith of the Christian and saves him, but the doctrine of justification forms his entire theology and his dogmatic output, if he is to be an evangelical theologian at all. That this is the position of Walther, the dogmatician, is clear from everything he wrote, from his entire theological output—whether he was writing monographs on the doctrine of church and ministry, whether he was preaching sermons Sunday after Sunday, whether he was constructing an edition of a great dogmatics textbook—

everything attests to the centrality the article of justification by grace for Walther.

There is no necessity to belabor what has just been said to the reader. Any reader who has acquainted himself with the works of Walther is well aware of this fact. I would, however, like to mention three adjuncts to Walther's presentation of the doctrine of justification which according to Francis Pieper are both essential to his overall doctrinal position and mark him as the dogmatician *par excellence* of American Lutheranism. Walther writes, "When considering the pure doctrine of justification, as our Lutheran Church has again set it forth on the basis of God's Word in its full radiant brilliancy, we must keep in mind three doctrines; namely, (1) that of the general and perfect redemption of the world by Christ; (2) that of the power and efficacy of the means of grace; and (3) that of faith."<sup>17</sup>

(1) Walther emphasizes the fact that justification through faith in Christ is based upon Christ's general and perfect redemption by his constant emphasis upon the "objective justification" of the entire world, as the doctrine was later termed. Without the universal, objective atonement there can be no article of justification at all, no concept of the Gospel. In both his essays and his sermons Walther maintains again and again that "Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead is the actual absolution [justification] of the whole sinful world, and that therefore the justification of life (Romans 5:18) has come upon all men." He teaches that by His vicarious atonement the righteousness of Christ is not merely made possible for all men, but that it is already "*procured and affected*."<sup>18</sup> To Walther "the whole Gospel is nothing but God's message of righteousness which already has been procured and which already exists for all men."<sup>19</sup>

(2) All the benefits of Christ's redemption are brought to man through the power (*vis effective operativa*) of the Gospel which actually confers all the benefits of Christ's work; without the powerful and effective means of grace all the benefits of Christ's atoning work would be unavailable and cut off from sinful man. Walther insists against the enthusiasts that God actually confers His pardon and forgiveness through His Word and sacrament, the means of grace, and in no other way. This is the only way that the doctrine of justification by grace can be maintained and can afford the comfort which the Gospel of justification proclaims. But more than that, only by maintaining and preaching the objective power of the means of grace can a believer ever be certain of his justification and salvation.

Walther's doctrine and practice of absolution in the Church proceeds from his joining the article of objective justification with the

power of the means of grace to confer forgiveness and the grace of God and to create the faith to receive all this.

Not since the time of the great reformer himself has any theologian understood and articulated the importance of the doctrine and practice of absolution in the Church as well and as clearly as Walther. It was his understanding of the article of Christ's universal and vicarious atonement and the resultant divine justification of the world of sinners that led Walther to discuss and preach on the great value of absolution. It was also his strong reaction against the synergistic and Armenian theology of positive Lutheran theologians in Germany and of the pietistic Norwegian Lutherans in America which prompted him to lay strong emphasis on the validity of the absolution and to link absolution, whether general or private, whether in a formal rite or in the mutual consolation among brethren, to the uniquely Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. Absolution as the divine word of pardon is the Gospel applied and efficacious *in actu*.<sup>20</sup> It is God's effective word of justification for Christ's sake to the penitent sinner.

(3) There is a third adjunct to the article of justification which occupies Walther's attention and which he discussed at great length in order to portray correctly and effectively the Gospel of justification. It centers in the nature of justifying faith and the role of faith in the justification of a sinner before God. To Walther the central doctrine of justification and the comfort to be derived therefrom can be taught and maintained only if faith is understood as pure receptivity. As he said on more than one occasion, justification is *per fidem, non propter fidem*. When Scripture speaks of justification through faith the instrumental dative or genitive is invariably used; and because justification is apprehended through faith without the deeds of the law, faith in this context cannot be construed as a good work or as a self-induced activity of man. Walther emphatically and with great care stressed two aspects of the passive role of faith in the individual sinner's personal justification. First, in his many writings on the subjects of predestination and conversion he affirms that faith is a gift of God wrought by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. Second, he insists that faith is in no way a cause or condition of justification or salvation.<sup>21</sup>

Walther's masterful treatment of the aforementioned three elements of justification, elements which if ignored or obscured undermine the very Gospel itself, distinguish him, more than does any other theological contribution he made, as a truly balanced, discerning and evangelical dogmatician, a dogmatician always concerned to teach the whole Church and to keep it faithful to all the articles

of the faith by keeping it faithful to the chief article. Walther never majored in minors. He did not nitpick. Whatever theological issue he addressed, whatever doctrinal aberration he encountered, he went to the heart of the matter. And he related all issues to the material center of all theology and of dogmatics, the Gospel of justification. In this way Walther undoubtedly made a more pervasive, lasting, and theologically beneficial impression on American Lutheranism than any other dogmatician of his or our day.<sup>22</sup>

And so we have arrived at the conclusion of our very brief and inadequate discussion of Walther the Dogmatician. If we are correct in remarking that the aforementioned three factors make one a good Lutheran dogmatician; namely, (1) the ability to reduce all Christian theology to a meaningful pattern of doctrine, (2) a solid biblical basis for the pattern of doctrine, and (3) the correct division of law and Gospel and presentation of the doctrine of the Gospel of justification—if we are correct in this, then truly C. F. W. Walther was a good, in fact, the best evangelical Lutheran dogmatician our country has known. And the Church, greatly in his debt, will profit today also by giving heed to the message of this great theologian.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Lehre und Wehre*, Volume 36, 1890. Translated by John Theodore Mueller in *CTM*, Volume 26 (December, 1955).

<sup>2</sup>J. W. Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, ed. C. W. F. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879).

<sup>3</sup>This observation is supported by comparison of Walther's enlarged edition of Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, prepared and used for many years as a dogmatics textbook in the seminaries of the Synodical Conference, with Heinrich Schmid's Anthology (*Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs. Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1899. Reissued 1961, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis). Schmid's popular work consisted of a list of citations from the leading orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians from Chemnitz to Holaz. Walther's enlarged edition of Baier contains an anthology of quotations from at least ten times as many theologians as Schmid cites, thus showing Walther's vast acquaintance with the literature from Luther through the period of orthodoxy. Walther, however, quotes these old theologians, including Luther, always at their best, and sometimes from rather obscure sources, in order to edify his students and the Church. Schmid, the historian, is more interested in simply portraying what the more popular and celebrated theologians during the period of orthodoxy actually taught, and thus he winds up citing the more uninteresting,

bland, and unconvincing thetical sections of their dogmatical works. Walther, the dogmatician, ransacks all the old dogmatical works in order to discern and offer students and the Church the positive theological contribution of the great Lutheran theologians who preceded them. He also quotes the exegetical works of the older theologians. Thus, he shows not only an acute dogmatic discernment but a positively prodigious and unequalled acquaintance with Luther and all the old Lutheran teachers.

<sup>4</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, Jubiläums-Ausgabe, Zwickau i. Sa., 1911, Verlag des Schriftvereins der sep. ev.-luth., Gemeinden in Sachsen. C. F. W. Walther, *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, trans. by John T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963). C. F. W. Walther, *The True Visible Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961).

<sup>5</sup>"Vier Thesen ueber das Schriftprinzip," *Lehre und Wehre*, 4, (Aug. 1858), 225ff.

<sup>6</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *The Controversy Concerning Predestination*, trans. by August Grull (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), [Original sub. by Concordia, 1881].

<sup>7</sup>*The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 169.

<sup>8</sup>See *Lehre und Wehre*, 32 (Jan. 1886), 1ff.

<sup>9</sup>See also C. F. W. Walther, *Was Lehren die Neueren Orthodox sein wollenden Theologen von der Inspiration*. Dresden, 1871 (*Lehre und Wehre*, 17, (Feb. 1871) p. 33ff. Cf. also Robert Preus, "Walther and the Scriptures," *CTM*, 32 (Nov. 1961), p. 669ff.

<sup>10</sup>See C. F. W. Walther *Siebzehnter Synodal-Bericht des westlichen Distrikts* (St. Louis, 1873).

<sup>11</sup>*Lehre und Wehre* 13 (April 1867), 97ff. From the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (Art. IV, 108).

<sup>12</sup>*CTM* 11 (Nov. 1939), p. 831.

<sup>13</sup>*Lehre und Wehre* XIV (1868). Translation of C. F. W. Walther's article entitled 'Die falschen steutzen der modern Theorie von den offenen Fragen,' translated by Alex Guebert, is found in *CTM* 10 Apr. through Nov. 1939. In this lengthy essay Walther attacks the position of modern theologians on the matter of open questions by constant appeal to the authority and the clarity of Scripture. It was Walther's position that if the Scriptures are not clear, then the authority of Scripture is in practice made of no effect.

<sup>14</sup>Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), IV, I, 522.

<sup>15</sup>Francis Pieper, "Dr. C. F. W. Walther as Theologian" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 36, 1890), trans. by John Theodore Mueller, *CTM*, 26, p. 914 (Dec. 55).

<sup>16</sup>*Synodical Conference Report*, 1872, p. 23. Quoted by Pieper, *ibid.*, p. 915.

<sup>17</sup>*Synodical Conference Report*, 1872, p. 20. Cited in Pieper, *ibid.*, p. 918.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 920.

<sup>19</sup>Pieper's Statement. *Ibid.*, 925.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. *Law and Gospel*, pp. 151-192. Here Walther offers the clearest and most convincing discussion of absolution and the Office of the Keys ever delivered since Luther's great treatise *On the Keys*. See *LW*, Vol. 40, pp. 325-377.

<sup>21</sup>Walther's discussion of this point is in his *Law and Gospel*, pp. 265-272.

<sup>22</sup>When the latest Lutheran attempt to write a dogmatics textbook, edited by Robert Jenson and Karl Braaten and entitled *Christian Dogmatics* (ironically the same title as Francis Pieper's monumental work), barely makes any mention of Walther's contribution to Lutheran dogmatics and makes no mention whatsoever of the three students or colleagues of Walther's, i.e. Francis Pieper, Adolph



Hoenecke and Elling Hove, who were all greatly influenced by him and wrote excellent dogmatics books of their own, the contributors reveal not only ignorance of history and of Walther's contribution and evangelical dogmatic legacy to the entire Lutheran Church in this country, but also a narrow, Philistine attitude toward the dogmatic enterprise itself and the evangelical center of all soundly Christian dogmatics. See *Christian Dogmatics*, edited by Robert Jenson and Karl Braaten.