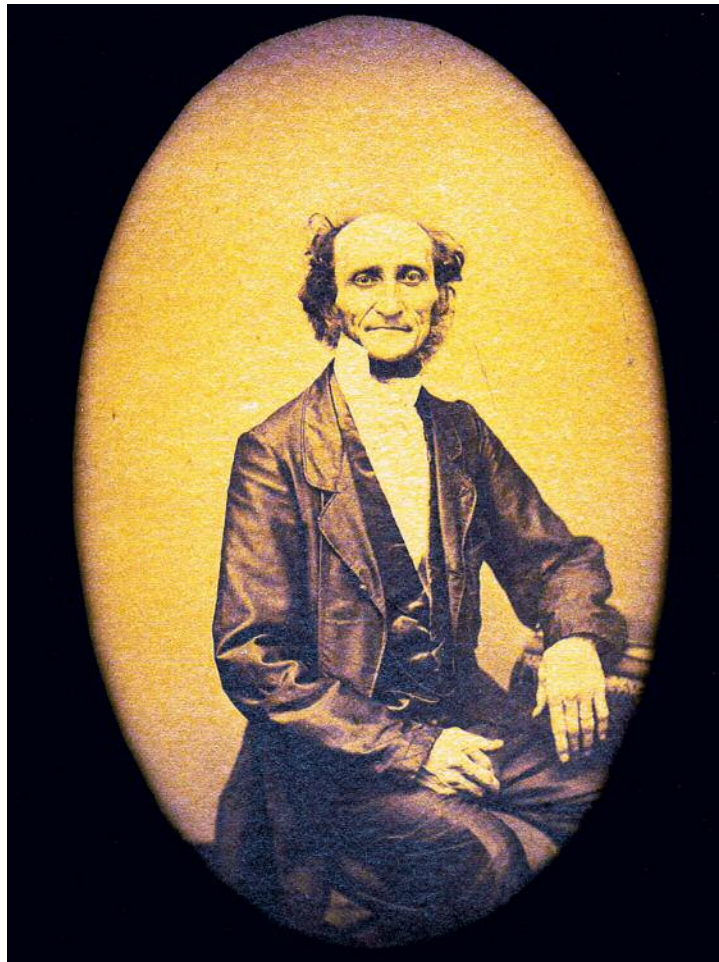


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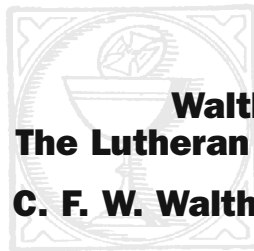


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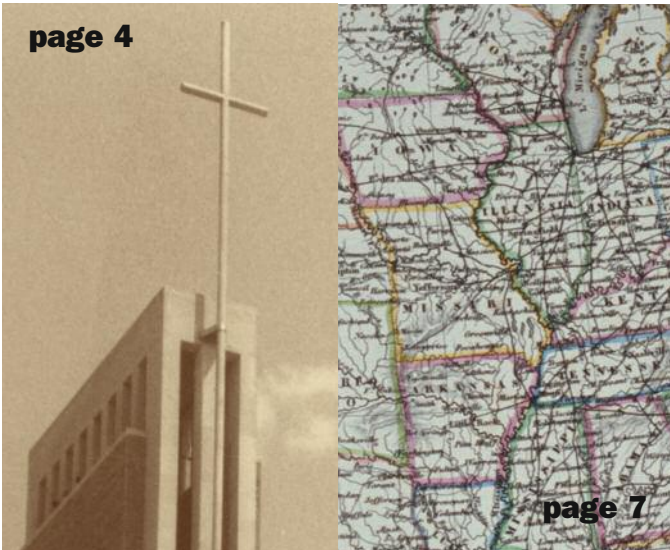
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FEATURES

4 Walther as Churchman

By the Rev. Dr. Edwin S. Suelflow, former President of the South Wisconsin District, now living in Mequon, Wisconsin

Walther's primary goal was to give all glory to God, as a humble servant of the Lord. He was one of those distinguished churchmen whom God sends to His Church on earth at various times and in various places to address the needs of the Church in a forceful, yet evangelical manner.

7 Walther and the Formation of the The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

By the Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

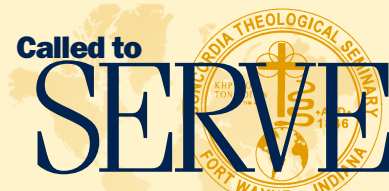
So the question becomes, if there were already so many Lutheran synods in America, why start another one? The answer is simple. Given the familiarity with the American religious scene generally and American Lutheranism more specifically, the founders of Missouri were determined to establish an orthodox, truly confessional Lutheran synod in the United States.

10 C. F. W. Walther—Pastor and Preacher

By the Rev. Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie, Chairman of the Historical Department and Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

For Walther, the most important task of the pastor was preaching. In addition to leading worship, making pastoral visits, and providing leadership to the congregation, a pastor must proclaim God's Word publicly to his people.

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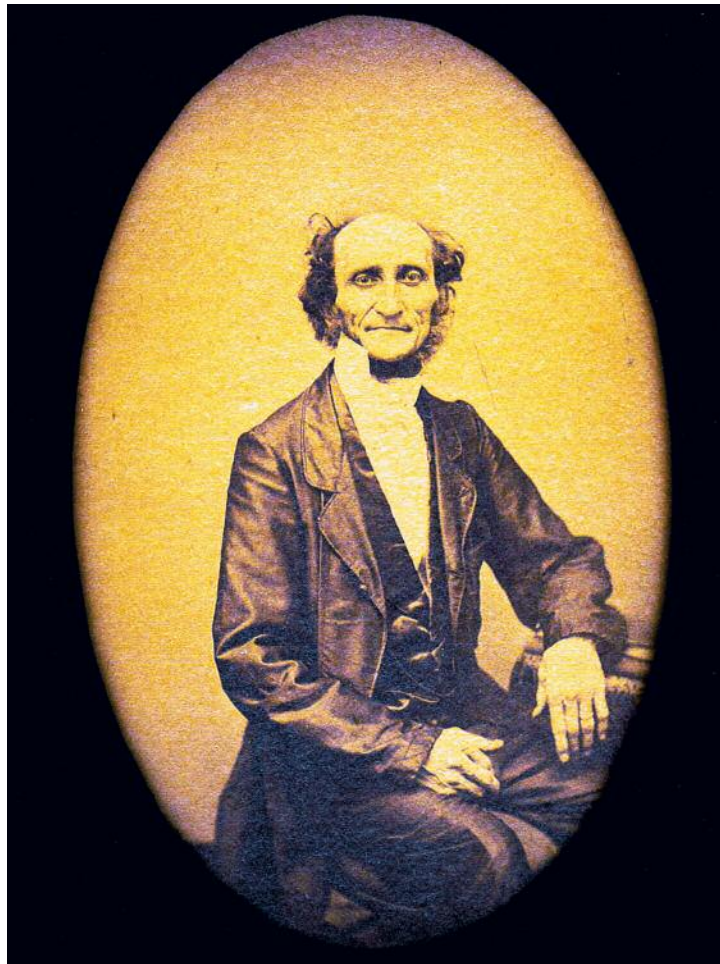
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C. F. W. Walther

PASTOR AND PREACHER

By the Rev. Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie

C. F. W. Walther's contributions to the history of Lutheranism in America are many. A founder of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and her first President, Walther was also Professor of Theology and President of Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) and founding Editor of both *Der Lutheraner* (*The Lutheran*) and *Lehre und Wehre* (*Doctrine and Defense*), two important periodicals for promoting confessional Lutheranism in nineteenth century America and around the world. In applying Lutheran theology to the American situation, Walther wrote and spoke frequently and so produced works that are still read, studied, and applied. At the most recent synodical convention, for example, delegates once more reaffirmed his book, *Church and Ministry*, as the official teaching of our church.

What is amazing then—in view of everything else that he accomplished—is the fact that Walther was also a parish pastor. Indeed, at the heart of his long career was his concern that people hear the Word of God in its truth and purity. To that end, he not only prepared others to preach, but he also did it himself right to the end of his life.

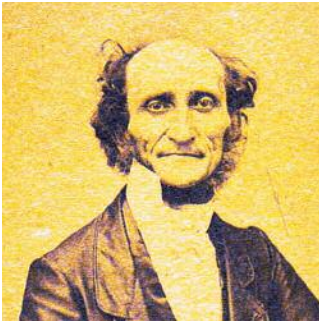
After studying theology at the University of Leipzig, Walther was ordained and became pastor of the state Lutheran church in Braeunsdorf, Saxony, in 1837. Within two years, however, he had resigned in order to follow Martin Stephan to America where he resumed his ministry in Perry County, Missouri, in 1839. By 1841, he was serving in St. Louis. Over the years, his one congregation grew to four and Walther took on several assistants, but he remained pastor until his death in 1887.

For Walther, the most important task of the pastor was preaching. In addition to leading worship, making pastoral visits, and providing leadership to the congregation, a pastor must proclaim God's Word publicly to his people. For it is through the Word that the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith. There is nothing that people need more than to hear about Christ their Savior, and it is the pastor's task to tell them.

Through the years, Walther preached thousands of sermons and during his lifetime, several collections of his sermons were published. Some were subsequently translated into English, although none is currently in print. Walther also lectured and wrote about preaching. Indeed, what is probably his greatest work, *Law and Gospel*, was originally a set of lectures to seminary students, aimed at shaping them into faithful and effective preachers.

In another work, *Pastoral Theology*, Walther addressed the full range of a pastor's activities, everything from visiting the sick to presiding over voters' meetings. Of course, he also discussed preaching. Following Luther, Walther insisted first of all that preaching be God's Word, not man's. But this means more than simply quoting Bible passages. Instead, it means reproducing from the pulpit the purpose for which God gave the Scriptures in the first place, viz., to confront men with their sins (Law) and to comfort them with forgiveness (Gospel). Preaching that does not have this twofold aim misses the mark, however much it is otherwise filled with biblical content. For God has established the office of the ministry as an office of salvation, but salvation is *salvation*

Following Luther, Walther insisted first of all that preaching be God's Word, not man's. But this means more than simply quoting Bible passages. Instead, it means reproducing from the pulpit the purpose for which God gave the Scriptures in the first place, viz., to confront men with their sins (Law) and to comfort them with forgiveness (Gospel). Preaching that does not have this twofold aim misses the mark.



Walther taught, according to Lutheran theology, that God brings the salvation Christ has won only through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Furthermore, God has graciously established the office of the public ministry to administer these means on behalf of and in the midst of His people.

from sin through Christ. Pastors need to preach this message.

But Walther also believed that pastors must be skillful in how they apply Law and Gospel. To preach the Law to penitent sinners could mean driving them into despair, but to preach the Gospel to impenitent sinners could mean making them feel secure in their sins. Each message is God's truth but misapplying either could be fatal to the hearer. Therefore, in terms of preparation for preaching, Walther placed a high priority on rightly distinguishing Law and Gospel.

Another important part of preaching for Walther is that it be doctrinal. Any admonition, comfort, or exhortation in the sermon must come from God's truth. It does no good for pastors to impress people with their rhetoric if their hearers think they are listening only to the pious opinions of the preacher. They need to know what God says, not men, and what God has done and still does to save them. Preaching doctrine accomplishes this aim.

But preaching true doctrine also means identifying false doctrine. In his day, like ours, there were many different interpretations of the Christian Gospel, so Walther believed that pastors needed to help their people sort through the options by pointing out both the true and the false. "The correct doctrine," Walther wrote, "is often correctly grasped only when the opposite is made clear at the same time. The false teachers try to wrap their error cleverly in the appearance of truth so that simple people are all too easily deceived . . . if they have not been warned in advance."

True Christianity, however, means not just knowing the truth. It also means living in the light of that truth. For what God has done for us

in Christ has to have an impact on the way we live. So Walther also believed that faithful pastors should use their sermons to exhort their people to good works. By this, Walther meant encouraging people, not scolding or rebuking them, for "upright Christians, even if burdened with various weaknesses, do not want to reject God's Word. They want to live for Him who died for them. . . . If they hear in the exhorting preacher the voice of their gracious God, they neither can nor want to oppose it." So pastors, always using the Word, urge people to follow God's ways in their life and work in this world.

In this way, through preaching, Walther believed that pastors would proclaim "the whole counsel of God" for the salvation of their listeners. By teaching true doctrine and refuting false, by rebuking sin and encouraging sanctified living, and especially by proclaiming the Savior, Lutheran pastors become spokesmen for God when they enter their pulpits.

Walther taught, according to Lutheran theology, that God brings the salvation Christ has won only through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Furthermore, God has graciously established the office of the public ministry to administer these means on behalf of and in the midst of His people. For fifty years, C. F. W. Walther held this office and faithfully carried out its responsibilities, especially by preaching the Word of God. Today, it is more likely that we will read his books and essays than his sermons. But the most important part of his ministry, like that of any pastor, was when he entered the pulpit to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to sinners.

Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie is Chairman of the Historical Department and Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.