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### The Doctrine Of The Church and Ministry According to Dr. Walther, in Relation to the Romanizing Tendencies Within The Lutheran Church

Waldemar Streufert

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY  
ACCORDING TO DR. WALTHER,  
IN RELATION TO THE ROMANIZING  
TENDENCIES  
WITHIN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
(1840-1860)

A Thesis presented to the  
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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Concordia Seminary,  
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## INTRODUCTION

When one studies the writings of Dr. Walther in the field of the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, one cannot fail to notice his peculiar approach to this locus of theology. In employing the word 'peculiar,' we do so advisedly. In a certain sense, he expresses the same doctrine proclaimed by the martyrs of apostolic days. In this respect, Walther is ecumenical, not peculiarly original. On the other hand, placing his theories beside the theories of his contemporaries, we must admit that Walther is an exception to the rule.

Walther's peculiarity consists in his strict adherence to the Scriptures in matters of doctrine and life. Also in this doctrine concerning the Church and the Ministry, Walther displays this particular characteristic. His Scriptural approach to this doctrine has saved us from many possible aberrations in our own day. From his vast experience we can see the dangers that lie in any slight departure from the Scriptural view of the Church and the Ministry. Furthermore, no one can really evaluate, understand, and appreciate what Walther has done under God, unless he discovers the underlying reasons for his remarkable approach to this doctrine.

The chief point to remember in Walther's theology, in general, is that nothing of it belongs in the purely ✓ academic category. On the contrary, his theology comes

from the Scriptures and follows a great struggle of conscience in the performance of practical church duties and obligations. In citing the men who were responsible for the problems of Walther's time, we shall consider only the doctrinal aspects, and not the historical features of the period.

Since our interest is doctrinal, we shall confine ourselves to the main points at issue. After the deposition of Stephan, great doubts arose as to whether they were still a 'church', in the true sense of the term. Inasmuch as Stephan had stressed that nothing was to be done, nothing was to be preached without his approval, that any sacred act performed by one not in harmony with his views was not valid, the group was filled with consternation. The general impression now was that they were not a legitimate group, but a 'rabble', which had forsaken the true church in Germany. Stephan, with his hierarchical views, had so thoroughly dominated the thinking of the <sup>Saxon</sup> settlement, that even Walther was in great doubt for some time. "The clergy' was troubled by the question whether the colonists constituted congregations with authority to call ministers, and many of the laymen entertained similar doubts concerning the right of ministers to hold their office here after having left their charges across the sea." 1)

Incidentally, one might mention in this connection other errors which called for a clearer treatment of this

1) Concordia Cyclopaedia, Concordia Publ. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1927, p.486.

Notes: It will be remembered that Stephan served as self-appointed bishop of the settlement at Altenburg, Mo.

doctrine of the Church and the Ministry. Marbach and Vehse, laymen, had misconceptions regarding the relation of the Church to the State. They maintained that the Government should make the regulations for the execution of church affairs. This thought is pertinent to our subject, since it shows the need of clarification of the Biblical teaching of the Church and Ministry. Vehse<sup>x)</sup>, as we are told, after expressing extreme views on the rights of the laity, returned to Germany. He had gone to the other extreme and had taught that the clergy should have no voice in the synodical deliberations. After Marbach had drawn up certain theses on this important subject, Walther held a debate with him at Altenburg during this time of doubt and uncertainty. Walther, basing his theses on the universal priesthood of all believers, won the victory. Again there was peace in the hearts of the people. Even Marbach himself was convinced of the Scripturalness of his opponent's principles.

The second controversy, occasioned by the Hirtenbrief of Pastor Grabau of Buffalo, N.Y., brought Walther and his colleagues to grips with the same problem in slightly different form. Certain congregations under Grabau's influence, in Wisconsin and elsewhere, asked Grabau whether it was proper for them to appoint an elder to administer the sacraments and perform other functions, when it was impossible to secure the services of a regularly ordained pastor. 2) "Es ist vor-

2) Cf. Th. Buenger, Synodal Bericht, 1901, p. 38.

x) Zeitschrift fuer die gesammte luth. Theologie und Kirche, vol. I, pp. 133 to 144, a critique of Vehse's work: Die Stephanische Auswanderung.

anlaszt worden, durch eine Anfrage der Gemeinden in Milwaukee und Freistadt, ob nicht einige ihrer Vorsaeher ordinirt werden moechten, die Sakramente usw. zu verwalten, da sie keinen Prediger haetten; sie haetten schon den Bruder N.N. erwachlt und baeten um dessen Bestaetigung, dass er, ohne Prediger zu sein, die Amtsverhandlungen verrichten moechte". The answer was in the negative, which he expressed in the Hirtenbrief. He warned them against such a praetise as imitating the spirit of the heretics and enthusiasts. He also sent a copy of this letter to the Saxon brethren for a theological opinion. In view of their recent experience with Stephanism, they could hardly answer otherwise than they did.\* Unfortunately, the controversy was characterized by much bitterness and emotional writing. For this reason, it is very difficult ✓ to give an exact evaluation of Grabau's writings. He may not have been extreme, but we can only judge by the written word. One thing is certain, however, and that is this: Grabau was of a different spirit. He had little patience with any principle which would elevate the laity to the heights as Walther did. Nevertheless, this bitter struggle only served to deepen the conviction of Walther that the supremacy of the local ✓ congregation must be upheld. The result of the controversy was a clearer conception of the doctrine not only among Missouri men, but even among the men of the Buffalo Synod, the group which Grabau organized later in 1845. After 1866, when the Buffalo Colloquium had finished its deliberations, no less than eleven men of his group joined the ranks of our

\*The Saxons had to reject (<sup>Grabau's?</sup> Stephan's) stand as Romanizing.

Synod, The ultimate fruit of the discussion was remarkable, although Grabau remained unchanged until the very last.

Related to this controversy is the theology of the noted Pastor Wilhelm Loehe, of Germany, a contemporary of Walther and Grabau. It is difficult to criticize his views, inasmuch as he represents the German method of approach, which calls for careful and scrutinizing study, if one is to conceive of theology correctly. His language differs greatly from Walther's; his approach is altogether unusual, to say the least. From another point of view, Loehe's theology, especially his treatment of the Church, is rather enigmatic. Several times he utters truths and words to which we may subscribe whole-heartedly, but then again he introduces matters which distort his fine description of the Church of Christ. From another standpoint, Loehe's writings must be treated with discretion. He lived in the State-Church, and, although he often wished to see the Lutheran Church as an independent body, he never could fully appreciate the situation in America. Also from a historical point of view, Loehe is to receive a balanced evaluation. In the practical field of mission work, he did much for our Synod, in establishing outposts with his trained candidates and missionaries.

While his relationship with Walther and our Synod had been very intimate, already in 1850 there were signs of difference. For a number of months the difference in views on the Church was expressed in their correspondence with each other. While Loehe's principles were not quite so crass, there was considerable hesitancy in subscribing to them.

Loehe, unaccustomed to the practical application of Luther's ideals in Church polity, felt that the group in America, especially the Saxons, had become infected with the liberty of American churches. He felt that this would be a misapplication of Christian liberty. In various letters it was pointed out to him that this was not the general trend in America, inasmuch as the Episcopalian and Presbyterian forms of church polity predominated. The hierarchical tendencies were far more in evidence, as was also the case with Stephan.

Since no clear view could be set forth by correspondence and no agreement could be reached, Synod delegated Walther and Wyneken to visit Loehle personally. In the summer of 1851 they met with Loehle and discussed the points of difference. Then it seemed as though all the main matters had been clarified and expedited. Within two years, however, the tide changed. Grabau and his co-workers also visited Loehle and seemingly persuaded him to accept their point of view. That Loehle approached the views of Grabau, can be seen from Loehle's statements in his Unsere Lage aus Bayern, in which he sets forth the various issues in the controversy between Walther and Grabau. Gradually it became apparent that Loehle, while not fully endorsing the views of Grabau, could not agree with the principles of Walther. The break came very reluctantly, and Loehle's followers formed the Iowa Synod, while many of his Sendinge joined the Missouri Synod.

While this struggle was going on, the leaders of the Saxons formed the Missouri Synod at Chicago, Ill., in 1847. At this convention it was apparent that Walther's Biblical

principles were to have an influence upon the shaping of the new body. Its constitution and by-laws everywhere emphasized the supremacy of the congregation. Every clause was worded carefully so as to safeguard the rights of every congregation member, in contrast to any hierarchical tendency, so prevalent at the time. Although the original has undergone certain revisions, the constitution still emphasizes these principles. That this body is not a consistory, not a church government in the real sense, is evident from Article VII,

The Relation of Synod to its Members:

"In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregations' right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears inexpedient as far as the condition of the congregation is concerned." 3)

By the grace of God, this principle of lay rights and congregational freedom has been upheld in this Synod to the present day.

Aside from the results and circumstantial causes of Walther's vigorous defense of the universal priesthood of all believers and the supremacy of the local congreg-

3) Synodical Handbook of the Evang. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, Concordia Publ. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1937, p. 5;

gation, there is also a motivating factor in Walther's theological background that draws one's attention. It is his dependence upon the clear, Biblical thinking of Luther, in connection with the doctrine of the Church and Ministry. While Walther does quote the early Church Fathers, the most prominent source of testimony (note: not of proof!) is the great Reformer. Particularly, the letter of Luther to the Bohemians occupies a great place in Walther's writings. Walther's Kirche und Amt, his Rechte Gestalt,\* and his Die Wahre Sichtbare Kirche auf Erden give evidence for our contention that he approached this problem under the 'tutelage' of Luther. All these factors tend to shape Walther's theology and place him among the few theologians who have had the correct conception of the believer's status, blessings, and privileges in the household of God. 4)

4) Note: In the development of this group of theses, we shall devote more attention to Grabau and Loche's views, and not so much the theory of Stephan. Moreover, we have seen fit to delimit our topic still more, by eliminating from our discussion both the Milwaukee and Buffalo Colloquia.

\* The more complete title of the second work listed above: Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhaengigen Ev. Luth. Ortsgemeinde;



UNIT ONE: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

I The Definition of the Church:

There is no discussion of the Church and Ministry which can ignore the definition of the Church. Any vagary is the result of an error in this basic conception. Only when the definition is clear, can there be clarity in any point of the doctrine. Walther, therefore, very properly begins with this thesis:

"The Church, in the proper sense, of the term, is the communion of saints, that is, the sum total of all those who have been called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel from out of the lost and condemned human race, who truly believe in Christ, and who have been sanctified by this faith and incorporated into Christ." 5)

Grabau's View of the Church

In order to understand the approach of Grabau, it is well to bear in mind that the majority of German theologians conceived of the Lutheran Church as an ~~abstract~~ ideal, which was to be perpetuated from centuries to centuries. Cfr. Werner Elert: Der Christliche Glaube, as well as Siegfried Hebart: Wilhelm Loehes Lehre von der Kirche, ihr Amt und Regiment. With an ideal picture of the Lutheran Church in mind, Grabau defined the true Church, the una sancta, to the exclusion of members of all heretical bodies. The

5) Dallmann-Dau-Engelder: Walther and the Church, Concordia Publ. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1936, p. 56, a translation of Walther's writings on Church and Ministry;

Church, in Grabau's thinking, coincides with the sum total of those who visibly take part in the Church's Word and Sacraments, the administration of which is in every respect in accordance with Christ's institution. He maintains very definitely that the true flock of Christ is not found among the false churches:

"Ferner sollte man mit unserm ~~mit un-~~  
serm Herrn Jesu Christo sagen, dass  
Er seine Schafe nicht in falschen Kir-  
chen sammle, sondern sie herausführe  
zu einer Heerde," Joh. 10, 16. 6)

Evidently, Grabau either missed the point or was making a false charge against the Saxons, when he accused them of saying that the false churches per se belonged to the una sancta. Walther, therefore, explained the Saxon position and refuted this charge of Grabau:

"Zu bemerken ist hier, dass das Informa-  
torium uns den Wahn beibringt, dass die  
falschen Kirchen als solche ein Teil  
der allgemeinen Kirche seien, während  
wir behauptet haben, dass sie mit zur  
katholischen Kirche gehören, nur ins-  
fern und soweit sie die Güter derselben  
behalten haben." 7)

On the one hand, Walther safeguarded any mistake in his definition by clearly excluding the false teachers who denied the fundamentals of Christian faith and nominal members of the Church who belonged merely to the external organization. On the other hand, he included those in the una sancta, who, in spite of membership in an erring communion, still clung to

6) Grabau: Informatorium, II, pp. 58 and 59; Cfr. Lutheraner vol. 9, par. 9, series;  
7) Walther: Lutheraner, vol. 9, pp. 81 and 82;

the several essential doctrines of Christianity. Furthermore, Grabau definitely attacked Walther's view that the communion of all true believers is the Church. He strenuously rejected ~~the~~ Walther's statement that membership in the invisible Church is absolutely necessary. He wrote:

"Es sei Schwaermerei, dass es hinreichend zur Seligkeit ist, zu einer unsichtbaren Kirche zu gehoeren, da die unsichtbare keine aparte, sondern die Eine heilige christliche Kirche mit einmuetigem Bekenntniss der Wahrheit sei." 8)

As we notice from a later passage in his Informatorium, ca. p. 70 ff., vol. II, Grabau's objection was motivated by a deep concern for the visible Church. He felt that a statement like ✓ Walther's would only serve to encourage independists, who underestimate the visible Church. He felt that it would cause them to disregard the visible churches all the more. Although we anticipate somewhat, we might add here that Grabau confuses the invisible and the visible Church. Walther very ably removed the objection of Grabau. The substance of his words is: We profess that it is not absolutely necessary to know which is and where the true visible Church is, for we teach, in opposition to the papists, that ordinarily, not necessarily, ~~that~~ a man may be saved without knowing this, if he is only a member of the invisible Church. 9) Thus Grabau confused the visible and the invisible Church.

However, for Grabau, the correct administration of the Sacraments does not yet guarantee that there one has the una sancta, the true Church. The correct, valid, and ef-

8) Grabau; Informatorium, II, p. 70;

9) Walther; Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 13 of series;

efficacious administration of the Sacraments, of the means ✓  
of means of grace, is contingent upon the right call of  
the pastor, or the rite vocatum. (As we shall see later,  
he says that not only the words of institution, but also  
the correct call is necessary for the proper and valid ad-  
ministration of the Sacraments.) Grabau states:

"Es bleibt auch dabei, dass die Worte  
des Sakraments des Altars nur in die-  
render Ordnung des Amtes kraeftig sind,  
in welcher der Herr sie will gebraucht  
haben." 10)

He also remarks, in another connection:

"Daher hat auch die Kirche seit den ae-  
ltesten Zeiten geglaubt, dass zur rech-  
ten Verwaltung der ehil. Sakramente,  
zur Ertheilung der Absolution, nicht al-  
lein das Wort der Einsetzung an sich ge-  
hoerd, sondern auch der rechte goettliche  
Beruf und Befehl," etc. 11)

The sacerdotalistic trend in Grabau is here very apparent,  
for such a view as he expresses really makes the ministry a  
Levitical priesthood, an intermediary between the means of  
grace and the people. Of this we shall treat in Unit II, in  
greater detail.

Grabau, at any rate, is very emphatic in  
pointing to the right call as making a certain group a part  
of the true Church, the una sancta. Grabau insisted that the  
validity of the pastor's call is so essential that those who  
disagreed with his view would be on the verge of losing the

10) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 45;

11) Grabau: op. cit., p. 15;

name 'Church'. He states this matter very clearly: ✓

"Und wenn die Gemeinde einen solchen Unberufenen aufwirft, so macht sie sich selbst der troestlichen Gewissheit verlustig, ob Gott die wahre Kirche bei ihr erhalten werde." 12)

Similarly he writes:

"Eine Gemeinde, die sich solchen goettlichen Ordnungen nicht unterwerfen wolte, hoerte auf, lutherisch kirchlich zu sein und waere nicht anders, als mit Namen einer Rotte zu nennen." 13)

He went to the extent of saying that those who were disagreeing with him on this point, were no longer a Church and were distributing mere bread and wine in Holy Communion. 14)

The question, however, arises: Whose pastors have the right call? Those who have conceived of ordination as a divine ordinance. Who has this teaching? The Lutheran Church, according to the Confessions. (Grabau operates chiefly with the visible Church, and with the Ministry as a clerical order.) Since the Lutheran Church has this right call, it can be called the Church. Grabau says that the only true Church, the Church of Christ on earth, is the visible Lutheran Church. He states very emphatically:

"Diese alle (welche ausser der sichtbaren lutherischen Kirche sich als Glaebigen befinden), wo man sie findet, gehoeren zu der einen sichtbaren Kirche und Gemeinde Gottes auf Erden: saessen sie auch mitten unter Paebstlern, Calvinisten, Tuerken, Hei-

12) Grabau: op. cit., p. 17;

13) Grabau: op. cit., p. 47 and 48;

14) Note: This matter is taken up at greater length in Unit II, in connection with the Administration of the Sacraments. Grabau, moreover, made the validity of the call contingent again upon the rite of ordination. This rite to him was a divine ordinance, an essential part of the right call. The term 'right' call, cf. Unit II.

den. Sie sind Lutheraner. Informatorium, I, 2. In dieser Einigen sichtbaren Kirche ist die sogenannte unsichtbare, sonst nirgends, wie nun der Glaube an die reine Lehre und Sakramente, so ist Gottes Reich an die wahre sichtbare Kirche verbunden. Und aller wahrer, lebendiger Glaube, der durch's Wort in den Herzen der Menschen auf Erden ist, gehoert in der sichtbaren Luth. Kirche hinein, alles, was berufen ist, und dem Worte Gottes glaubt und goettlich lebt, zaehlet Gott in die sichtbare luth. Kirche hinein, und alles, was heuchelt, und traegt, zaehlet er hinaus." 15)

Observing Grabau's definition of the Church, we might say that it is too narrow; if there are believers within the heretical communions who cling to the merits of Christ, they are included in the una sanctorum, regardless of the fact that their church may have the wrong notion regarding the ministry. Walther also indicated that we do not deny the call of a Calvinistic pastor, insofar as he is the preacher of the Gospel, chosen by believers to serve them. His call, in that respect, is valid. Secondly, Grabau's view militates against the sola-gratia, if consistently carried out in its details, insofar as it makes it imperative to belong to the visible Lutheran Church to have positive assurance of salvation. This view is definitely Romanizing. It agrees with Rome's dictum: 'Extra ecclesiam nulla est salus.' He says: "Die lutherische Kirche sei eine sichtbare Kirche ausser welcher Niemand selig werden koenne!" 16) In an incisive essay on this period, Walther

15) Lutheraner, vol. 9, p. 74ff., par. 8;

16) Grabau; Syn. Bericht, 2, 24; Informatorium, I, 2.

also stated his impressions on this statement of Grabau, "Die lutherische Kirche sei die allein seligmachende." 17) A similar remark in Grabau's writing manifests the same position: "Dass ausser der lutherischen Kirche niemand selig werden kann, ist nur zu gewisz." 18) The third point which we criticize in Grabau's definition is this: the deciding factor which decides whether or not you belong to the una sancta, the true Church, is the call of your pastor. This, very logically forces the conclusion: the clergy, then, is the Church, the teaching office is the una sancta. We arrive at Rome again. This view is definitely Romanizing. 19) (Cfr. Unit II, for further discussion of Grabau's view that the clergy coincides with the Church, especially his view of the Office of the Keys). Another writer, Koesterling, selects several quotations from Grabau's writings, particularly stressing the words of the Informatorium I, p.22 ff., as follows:

"Wohl sagt er, diese Gewalt sei der ganzen Kirche gegeben; was er aber damit meint, spricht er an einem andern Orte klar aus, wo er sagt: 'Christus gibt das hoechste und letzte Gericht der Kirchen, da er spricht, sag's der Kirche. Daraus folgt nun, dass in solchen Spruechen nicht allein Petrus, sondern der ganze Haufe Apostel gemeint wird.'" 20)

Digressing on this point for a moment, we may say that, as

- 17) Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 6 of the series;
- 18) Syn. Bericht, 1901, p. 46;
- 19) Cfr. Rom. Trid. Catechism, I, 10,7; also: Catech. Romanus I, 10, question 9; "Zuweilen werden auch mit dem Namen der Kirche Vorgesetzte und Pastoren bezeichnet."
- 20) J. F. Koesterling: Auswanderung der saechs. Lutheraner im Jahre 1838, A. Wiebusch Publ., 1867, St. Louis, p. 102

Koesterling implies, Grabau evidently identified the clergy with the Church, for, if the Church as a whole is given the power of the Keys, and the clergy alone transmits this power to another person when ordained, with the result that the laity remains passive, there is no other conclusion to make, except that the Church is the clergy. That is precisely the point which Grabau had pressed, although he did not express himself as clearly as one might expect. However, his insistence that the Church and the Ministry are correlatives, only serves to strengthen our conviction on this point:

"Kirche und Lehrer der Kirche sind göttlich zusammengefasst, wo eins ist, solls andere sein, es sind Correlativa; wie keine Braut ohne Brautigam sein kann."21)

This peculiar emphasis of Grabau, though seemingly correct if understood correctly, is nevertheless indicative of Romanizing clericalism. This previous statement is pertinent to his remarks concerning Matth. 18, 20, 'telling it to the Church', etc. Using the Latin term 'ubicunque', namely, ✓ 'wherever', he maintains that this implies that the Church has the ministry according to the ordinance of Christ. He says that the entire Church, the whole Church, is spoken of here in Christ's statement: 'Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them'. Walther, on the other hand, answers this stand with a quotation from the

21) Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 12 of series, citing Grabau's second Synodalbrief.



Locci of Gerhard, in which he shows that it makes little difference who gathers the believers, as long as they are gathered in Jesus' name and by God's Word. If they follow Christ's word, then God is in their midst, then is also the Church. Cf. Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 12ff. of series.

Finally, the action taken by Grabau and his followers in 1859, when they excommunicated the entire Missouri Synod, indicates the lack of clarity in Grabau's conception of the Church. His concept of the una sanata was very limited in scope, for, by this action he defined the Church as constituting those who followed him. The rest, whom they (his followers) excommunicated, were to be considered outside of the Christian Church. That is what excommunication implies, and we have no reason to <sup>question</sup> ~~doubt~~ that Grabau did not abide by this distinction. That action was the ultimate and practical development of his thesis as to the essence of the Church. (We might remark that the wholesale excommunication harks back to Roman Catholic practises, before Luther broke the power of the ban.)

In retracing our steps, we might examine these contested points more closely in the light of Walther's rebuttals in the Lutheraner. First of all, we bear in mind that the validity or efficacy of the Sacrament depends neither upon the call, nor upon the character of the administrant. To use Luther's phrase, they are valid, whether administered by one 'geweiht oder eingeschlichen'. Philipp. 1,18

applies here. Secondly, it is wrong to make the right call the conditio sine qua non of the Church. Thirdly, the pious life is not a part of the essence of the Church, but belongs to the well-being of the Church. Cfr. The Augsburg Confession. Fourthly, Grabau confuses the visible and the invisible Church. Evidently, he identifies the una sancta with the visible Lutheran Church. Walther correctly maintained in his forceful statement, which we translate rather freely ✓ here, as a contrast to Grabau's view:

"There is only one Church. Since the universal Church is split up into several different parts, (the one holy Christian Church is a militant one), the question arises: Is the Lutheran Church a true church of Christ? This can be maintained: the Lutheran Church is a true church of Christ, but it cannot be said that the Lutheran Church is the entire universal Church of Christ. The Article of Faith says that Christ gathers believers and preserves them in faith. They make the one universal Church, although they may be in true or in only partly true visible churches. Neither can any visible church be the universal Church." 22)

From this, one can conclude: it cannot be said that outside of it (of a visible church) there is no salvation. Luther said that the Church is found among Catholics as well, but does not say this of the Roman Church as such, or of the visible Reformed Church as a visible Church.

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22) Walther: Lutheraner, vol. 9, p. 74, par. 8;

Upon a closer investigation of Walther's rebuttal of Grabau's claims and of Grabau's theses, we find more and more indications of Romanizing tendencies in the thinking of Grabau. In one paragraph, as we have already seen, Grabau objected that the Savior does not gather His flock out of false churches. In reply, Walther states that one must distinguish between the essence of the Church and that which <sup>is</sup> a necessary cause of its existence, without which the Church cannot exist. (Some one has also suggested, that, if this distinction is not kept in mind, then, God would belong to the essence of the Church.) Again the Roman dictum: extra ecclesiam nulla est salus rings through the objections of Grabau, and a dictum which he accommodates for himself.<sup>23)</sup> It is particularly the overemphasis upon visible membership <sup>24)</sup> in the Church that makes Grabau's view Romanizing, besides the fact that he speaks of 'no salvation outside the Luth.

23) The Roman Catholic position is indicated by the quotations in Pop. Symbolics, p. 159ff., where the exact statements of Roman pontiffs are given: "That there is no salvation outside the (Roman) Church is the claim made by Pope Pius IX in his Allocation of Dec. 9, 1854: 'It is to be held as a matter of faith that no one can be saved outside the apostolic Roman Church'... Gibbons: 'Consequently, to be true followers of Christ, all Christians, both among the clergy and the laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor,' op. cit., p. 95."

24) Note: Rome defines the Church as consisting of those who visibly submit themselves to the Roman pontiff, cfr. Pohle-Preuss: Soteriology etc.

Church. On the contrary, he remarks, there is a difference between a true church, which is true in outward appearance and form, and one which is true in all respects. It is a different matter when we speak of the mark of a true church, than when we speak of the mark of the <sup>Church</sup> OR an absolutely true church. As long as the main parts, Gospel, Word, and Sacraments are left pure and intact, that is a Church.

Moreover, Grabau cannot employ the passage, Matth. 18,17, where the clause is used to instruct the procedure of discipline: "tell it unto the Church", in order to prove his thesis. He regards this as a term representing the 'ministerium'. Bellarmin already had referred this to the 'prelates'. But Walther argues: the Church does not consist merely of prelates, neither is the council the Church of Christ, neither the bishops, for also the hearers belong to the Church. 25) But, if you say that it is the Church represented by these men, you are still in error. One may object that 'tell it to the Church' cannot refer to every individual, but neither bishops nor presbytery nor councils can represent the Church, to which not only servants of the Word belong, but also the deacons, whose duty it is to attend to the matters of the Church in the name of the Church. But even when the presbyters and deacons perform something, the hearers are not to be excluded.

25) Note: Grabau's view coincides very well with the Roman Cath. exegesis of the term 'tell it to the Church': "Aber durch dieses; sage es der Kirche, wird ein Kirchenpraelat oder ein Council von Kirchenpraelaten verstanden." Catech. Rom. I, 10, ques. 9.

In observing the thoughts previously expressed in the preceding section, we note that Grabau's system of theology centered about three serious misconceptions: first, the validity of the means of grace ~~is~~<sup>are</sup> contingent upon the right call, that is, the call of the administrant; second, inasmuch as the Lutheran Church has the correct position on the call, only members of the visible Lutheran Church are members of the una sancta; third, only members of this body have the full assurance and certainty of salvation; fourth, inasmuch as the right call determines the validity of the Sacraments, and determines the constituents of the una sancta, then, the clergy belongs to the essence of the Church. Finally, as we have already intimated, Grabau taught that the Lutheran Church is the only saving Church, which militates against the sola gratia, making outward membership a condition of salvation.

The Evidence for Walther's Thesis:

In contrast to the externalizing view of Grabau, we have seen that Walther insisted upon the essence of the Church as being the sum total of all true believers. For his thesis, Walther appeals particularly to such passages as Eph. 1,22: "And (God) hath put all things under His feet and gave Him (Christ) to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Walther explains his position as follows:

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"Ist hiernach Christus das Haupt der Gemeinde oder Kirche und diese sein Leib, so ist die eigentliche wahre Kirche die Gesamtheit aller derjenigen, welche mit Christo wie die Glieder eines Leibes mit ihrem Haupte verbunden sind."26)

If Christ is the Head of the Church, then, very logically, those constitute the Church who are the members of one body, joined with their Head, who are joined with Christ. They form one spiritual unit. In addition to this, Walther points to another passage, which serves as a fitting foundation for his definition: Eph. 5, 23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Another passage which he cites is: I Cor. 3, 16, 17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." This passage very emphatically stresses the fact that the believers, members of the Christian Church in the real sense, are those who have the Spirit dwelling in them. In other words, these are members of the Christian Church who have faith. The Holy Spirit has entered

26) Walther: Kirche und Amt, Zwickau, 1894, fourth ed., p.13

entered their hearts and through the Word sanctifies their souls and bodies, making them worthy temples of God. Therefore also the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews states, chapter 12, 23: "the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." That is the name which is given to the Church of Christ. John 11, 51 f., also applies here: "Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The definition of Walther is fitting, in line with this passage:

"Hence the Church which Jesus came into the world and died to establish and gather is the sum total of the children of God." 27)

While Walther employs the Scriptural approach in this discussion, he does not fail to see the value of citing the statements of the Church Fathers and also the Confessions. He uses these, however, only in a secondary sense, not as proofs, but as evidences that he is not proclaiming any new theology. He states that the Confessions, first of all, serve as a testimony to his thesis.

The Apostles' Creed states: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, & holy Christian Church, the communion of saints." The expression, 'communion of saints', so abused in Luther's day as well as in our own, is an explanation of the words 'a 27) Walther and the Church, p. 57;

communion of saints', rather, an explanation of the words, 'a holy Christian Church'. The second phrase is in apposition to the first, and does not introduce a second thought.

28) The Creedal statement is to be guarded against any visible interpretation, of which we are to treat later. The Large Catechism states: "Thus the word Kirche (church) means really nothing else than a common assembly, and is not German by idiom, but Greek, as is also the word ecclesia; for in their own language they call it kyria, as in Latin it is called curia." He continues the citation: "Therefore in genuine German, in our mother-tongue, it ought to be called a Christian congregation or assembly (eine christliche Gemeinde oder Sammlung), or, best of all, and most clearly, holy Christendom (eine heilige Christenheit). 29) Here Luther,

like Walther <sup>three</sup> ~~some~~ centuries later, expressed the Scriptural truth that the Church is composed of true believers. As we shall see later, several difficulties are involved in using the word 'Church', inasmuch as we always associate with that concept the building itself. Luther was well aware of this problem. Nevertheless, he showed that the Christian Church is the communion of those who have been called, justified, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The Large Catechism continues in another paragraph, which Walther also quotes:

"So also the word communio, which is added, ought not to be rendered com-

28) Note: It is well to observe that definitions of the term even go so far as to render this 'a sharing of spiritual gifts'. Cf. Report of the World Conference on Faith and Order, 1937 and 1940, p. 316f.

29) The Large Catechism, The Creed, Art. III, Conc. Trig., 691;



munion (Gemeinschaft), but congregation (Gemeinde). And it is nothing else than an interpretation or explanation by which some one meant to explain what the Christian Church is..But to speak correct German, it ought to be eine Gemeinde der Heiligen (a congregation of saints), etc.... But this is the meaning and substance ~~of~~ of this addition: I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost, in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with manifold gifts," etc. 30)

Walther's position also echoed the spirit of the Augsburg Confession, of which he quotes the Article VIII, as follows:

"Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers." 31)\*

As we continue to list the quotations which Walther employs to clinch his entire argument, we can observe that he had the correct conception of the Church. The third testimony from the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church which he cites, is Article VII of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

"Dass (es) gewisz wahr bleibt, dass der Haufe und die Menschen die rechte Kirche seien, welche hin und wieder in der Welt, vom Aufgang der Sonne bis zum Niedergang, an Christum wahrlich glauben...Wiewohl nun die Boesen und (die) gottlosen Heuchler mit der rechten Kirche Gesellschaft haben in aeszterlichen Zeichen, in Namen und Aemtern, dennoch, wenn man eigentlich reden will, was die Kirche sei, muss man von dieser Kirche sagen, die der Leib ..

30) Concordia Trigl., Large Catechism, p. 691;  
 31) Op. cit., Augsburg Confession, p. 47; \* incomplete Quots.

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Christi heiszt und Gemeinschaft hat  
nicht allein in aesserlichen Zeichen,  
sondern die Güter im Herzen hat, den  
Heiligen Geist und Glauben," usw. 32)

Walther continues the quotation and brings out the fact that if the person wishes to know what constitutes the Church, one must know the means which bring them into the Church.

"Denn man muss recht eigentlich wissen,  
wodurch Gliedmasz Christi wir werden,  
und was uns macht zu lebendigen Glied-  
massen der Kirchen." 33)

The quotation from the Apology points out further that, if we were to define the Church merely as an outward polity of the good and the wicked, no one would clearly understand what is meant. The Kingdom of Christ is truly spiritual, wherein Christ, within the hearts of men, rules, strengthens, comforts, and distributes spiritual gifts together with the Holy Ghost. Otherwise, one would regard the Church as something external, composed of various regulations of ceremonies and worship. Paul also distinguishes between the Church of the Jews from the nation of the Jews, as the Apology has it:

"Dass er sagt, die Kirche sei ein geistlich Volk, da ist ein solch Volk, welches nicht allein in der Polizei und buergerlichem Wesen unterschieden sei von den Heiden, sondern ein recht Volk Gottes, welches im Herzen erleuchtet wird und neu geboren durch den Heiligen Geist."...Diese aber ist eigentlich die Kirche, die den Heiligen Geist hat."  
34)

32) Gene. Trigl., Apology of the Augsburg Confession, p.228

33) Op. cit., p. 230; and 230;

34) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 4;

Walther, in distinction from Grabau, agrees that even in heterodox bodies, insofar as they still possess the true Gospel, members of the una sancta, the true Church, are to be found. He quotes the Apology again, namely Article III, concerning the abuses:

"Also hat Gott seine Kirche, das ist, etliche Heiligen, unterm Pabstthum dennoch erhalten, dasz sie die christliche Kirche nicht untergangen ist." 35)

The simplicity and clarity of the Scripture is so evident in this point, that Walther correctly cites the Smalcald Articles, Part III, article 12:

"Denn es weisz, gottlob! ein Kind von sieben Jahren, was die Kirche sei, naemlich die heiligen Glaebigen und die Schaefflein, die ihres Hirten Stimme hoeren. Denn also beten die Kinder: 'Ich glaube Eine heilige christliche Kirche.'" 36)

Thus we see that in Walther's definition of the Church as the sum total of the believers in Christ, there is an agreement with Scripture and with the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

Furthermore, Walther evidences harmonious agreement with the private writings of the Fathers of the Church, both apostolic, ancient and modern. All these quotations shall have a cumulative effect in setting forth the correctness of Walther's position. It would be beyond our scope to give the entire number of quotations, but a selection from them will point to the agreement of Walther with the Church of the past.

35) Walther: loc. cit.

36) Walther: loc. cit.

As we have stated before, Walther was greatly influenced by the Scriptural methods and teachings of Luther in the doctrine of the Church. Walther, therefore, as can be expected, quotes several pages from the great Reformer's works.

"Die Christen sind ein besonder berufen Volk und heissen nicht schlecht Ecclesia, Kirche oder Volk, sondern Sancta, Catholica, Christiana, das ist, ein christlich, ein heilig Volk, das da glaebet an Christum, darum es ein christlich Volk heisst, und hat den Heiligen Geist, der sie taeglich heiliget, nicht allein durch die Vergebung der Suenden, so Christus ihnen erworben hat, sondern auch durch Abthun, Ausfegen und Toeten der Suenden, davon sie heissen ein heilig Volk. Und ist nun die heilige christliche Kirche so viel als ein Volk, das Christen und heilig ist, oder, wie man auch zu reden pflegt, die heilige Christenheit, item, die ganze Christenheit." 37)

Walther also quotes the dogmaticians of the Lutheran Church approvingly and thus shows his full agreement with their position on the doctrine of the Church. Joh. Gerhard wrote:

"Wie geben von der Kirche die Definition, dass sie die Gemeinde der Heiligen sei, damit nicht jemand glaube, die Kirche sei nur eine gewisse aeszterliche Polizei von Guten und Boesen, da sie, eigentlich und genau reden....Zu einem wahren Glied der wahren Kirche wird nicht nur erfordert das aeszterliche Bekenntnis des Glaubens und der aeszterliche Gebrauch der Sakramente,

37) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 4, quoting Luthers Schrift von Konzilliis und Kirchen vom Jahre 1539, Hal. Tom. XVI, 2778,79.

sondern auch die innerliche Erneuerung durch den Heiligen Geist, weil die Kirche nicht allein Leib, sondern auch Seele, das ist, ein lebendiger und beseelter Leib ist," usw. 38)

Another excellent statement of Gerhard's appears in Walther's writing, which stresses the point that not the externals, (but the inward matter of faith), not the sum total of baptized dare enter into the definition of the una sancta. Faith, not external connection, makes one a member of the true Church.

"Wir sagen, dass sowohl die Katechumenen, als auch alle anderen, die mit dem wahren innerlichen Glauben begabt sind, in der Kirche seien, selbst wenn die Taufe noch nicht in der Tat empfangen haben." 39)

This statement, which Walther quotes, represents Walther's position as well. 40)

Quenstedt, another dogmatician, likewise says: "Eigentlich und urspruenglich ist die Kirche die Versammlung der Heiligen und wahrhaft Glaubigen." 41) The same author emphasizes the true nature of the Church with unusual force, when he says:

38) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 5 and 6, quoting from Gerhard's Locl, theo. de. ecol., par. 5 and par. 53;

39) Walther: op. cit., p. 6, quoting Gerhard, op. cit., par. 54;

40) Note: This statement does not minimize Baptism as a means of grace, but it rather points to the danger of defining the Church as the sum total of the baptized, as in our day. This would also, by the ambiguity, include the lapsed, nor would it be in keeping with the invisible nature of the Church.

41) Walther: op. cit., pp. 6 and 7, citing Quenstedt: Th. did.

"In Bann Gethane, wenn sie Glauben und Liebe haben, sind in Wahrheit Glieder der Kirche." 42) Here Walther, quoting Quenstedt, even includes those who have been excommunicated in the Church unjustly, as belonging still to the una sancta, if they have faith. Here Walther strikes home his definition of the Church with a very emphatic quotation. Then, it is not so much what the visible Church does, nor what the member does externally, but what the Holy Spirit performs in that individual heart by means of the Word, that makes a person a member of the una sancta. This is the very antithesis of any Romanizing view of the Church and its members.

Incidentally, we might add that Walther also here keeps the central teaching of Scripture uppermost in his mind: justification by grace alone. It is not an agency, not an external institution, but it is God's grace alone that has brought these souls into the fold of the una sancta. That the Holy Spirit employs the Word which is proclaimed by a visible body does not uproot Walther's position. That Walther clings to this central principle of grace alone, is shown by the previous quotation. Even when a person stands condemned by the congregation and the ban has not yet been

42) Walther: loc. cit.

lifted, and the person has returned to faith, such a one is a member of the una sancta. 43) All this, we notice, points to Walther's definition: those who have faith are members of the Church.

Walther likewise accepts the view of

Baier, who writes:

"Die streitende Kirche wird in einem zweifachen Sinne genommen: einmal eigentlich und genau bestimmt fuer die Versammlung der wahrhaft Glaebigen und Heiligen, welche Christo dem Haupte durch den Glauben eingepflanzt sind und wie lebendige Glieder mit Ihm Hinen mystischen Leib ausmachen." 44)

Walther also quotes several early

writers of the Christian Church and thereby shows his ecumenical view of the doctrine of the Church. He shares with them the correct conception of the Church. The early Church Fathers bear testimony to the view that the Church is the sum total of all those who have been called, justified, and sanctified through faith in Christ Jesus by the working of the Holy Spirit. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Smyrnians, chapter 1, wrote as follows:

"Dass er (Christus) auf ewig durch seine Auferstehung ein Zeichen fuer seine Heiligen und Glaebigen aufrichte sowohl unter den Juden, als Heiden, in einem Leibe der Kirche." 45) ....  
"Ignatius, der von Gott geliebten heili-

43) Note: We do not discredit the power and the validity of the congregation's ban, but we are to view this in contrast with Rome's notion of the ban. Rome looks upon the ban per se as excluding from the Christian Church the recipient of a such a decree. The ban must be founded upon a proven charge and fully warranted.

44) Walther: op. cit., p. 7, quoting Baier, Th. pos., P. III ch. 13, par. 2;

45) Walther: op. cit., p. 8, quoting from Ignatius;

gen Kirche, welche zu Tralles in Asien ist, der ausgewählten und Gott wuerdigen." 46)

Moreover, very striking is the definition which Chrysostom gives:

"Wenn du zur Kirche fliehst, so fliehe nicht zu dem Orte, sondern fliehe mit dem Gemuete zu ihr. Denn zum Wesen der Kirche gehoert nicht Wand und Mauer, sondern Glauben und Tugend.. Sie heisst wegen ihrer ~~Stärke~~ ~~Stärke~~ Festigkeit ein Berg; wegen ihrer Heiligkeit eine Jungfrau; wegen ihrer Herrlichkeit eine Koenigin; wegen ihrer Verwandtschaft mit Gott eine Tochter des Koenigs; wegen der grossen Menge ihrer Kinder, die sie empfangt, nachdem sie lange Zeit einsam gewesen war, eine Mutter, die eben geboren hat; unzählige andere Namen zu geschweigen, die sie in der heiligen Schrift sonst hat." 47)

Also the Latin Fathers speak in the same tone, as we observe in the writing of Jerome:

"Die Kirche ist die Versammlung aller Heiligen".. "Die Kirche ist keine andere, als die Seele derer, welche an Christum glauben." 48)

Augustine, the great Church Father upon whom Rome depends for much of its theory and doctrine, says:

"Der Leib dieses Hauptes ist die Kirche, nicht die an diesem Orte ist, sondern die hier und in der ganzen Welt ist, und nicht die, welche zu jetziger Zeit ist, sondern von Abel an bis auf diejenigen, welche bis zum Ende der

46) Walther: loc. cit., quoting Ignatius' letter to Tralles

47) Walther: op. cit., p. 9, quoting Chrysostom's sermon on the Fall of Eutropius, Cramer Transl., Vol. VII, pp. 23.36/.

48) Walther: op. cit., p. 9, citing Jerome's comments on Ps. 87 and Job 20.



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Welt geboren werden, das ganze Volk  
der Heiligen, die zu einer Stadt ge-  
hören, welche Stadt der Leib Christi  
ist, deren Haupt Christi ist." 49)

Thus Walther's view that the Church is essentially in-  
visible finds full agreement with the writings of the  
Church in modern and in ancient times.

#### The Foundation of the Una Sancta

If the Church is essentially the Body  
of Christ, it follows, then, that it receives its spiri-  
tual strength from its Head, Christ Jesus. In intimate  
fellowship with Him by faith, the members of His Body are  
one with Him in attitude, thinking, and walk of life. But  
all this is possible only because they are linked with the  
Head, without whom they can do nothing. From His lips, there-  
fore, they also receive instruction, strengthening, and com-  
fort. His Word is to them spirit and life, that alone can  
give them strengthening of faith. His Church is, therefore,  
built upon His Word, their strength (of the members) is  
derived from that Word and through that Word members are  
added. Christ Himself spoke of His Church as being built  
upon the faith in Jesus as Lord and Redeemer: Matth. 16, 18:  
"Upon this rock will I build My church, and the gates of  
hell shall not prevail against it." Walther speaks on this  
49) Walther: *op. cit.*, p. 9, quoting Augustine's comments  
on Ps. 92.

point very forcefully:

"Die Kirche im eigentlichen Sinne ist also in ihren Gliedern auf den Felsen Christum und sein Wort gebaut; darauf ist aber allein der gebaut, der im lebendigen Glauben darauf gegruendet ist." 50)

Walther is impatient with any foundation of human authority and opinions:

"Darum gilt es nicht nur, allein auf den Grund Christum, sondern auch auf denselben nicht Heu, Holz, und Stoppeln, naemlich allerlei menschliche Gedanken und Opinionsen, die in dem Feuer der Anfechtung und Todesnoth nicht bestehen, viel weniger in Gottes Gericht, zu bauen, sondern allein Gold, Silber, und edles Gestein, naemlich solche Lehren, die selbst im heiszesten Feuer der Anfechtung und Todesnoth bestehen, ja, die dann nur um so heller blinken und die Seele der Menschen mit Gewissheit, Zuversicht, Trost, Kraft und Hoffnung erfüllen, welche naemlich den Grund nicht nur nicht umstossen noch erschuettern, sondern die auch klar in Gottes Wort geoffenbart sind und daher, wie alle Worte Gottes, nicht vergehen werden, ob auch Erde und Himmel untergehen." 51)

Walther's standing motto was: "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Cornerstone." Eph. 2,20/. Here, too, Walther is in full agreement with the writings of the Church. Cfr. Walther Kirche und Amt, p. 8 f.

Also the Confessions clearly bring out

50) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 2;

51) Walther: Brosamen, p. 451;

the fact that the Church is to be built upon Scripture alone, the Word of Christ. They set aside everything which is against Scripture, but set forth emphatically each doctrine in its truth and purity.

The Foundation of the Church not the Confessions:

The literalistic views of Walther's opponents often motivated them to charge Walther with 'confessionalism', or symbolatry. Cfr. Grabau's Widerlegung. It is, therefore, proper that Walther did stress this negative side of the questions the Church is not founded upon the Confessions. While Walther did quote freely from the Confessions, he never leaves the impression that he seeks to make them the dominant foundation of the Church. On the contrary, he has the true theologian's conception of the distinction between the Bible, as norma normans, and the Confessions, as norma normata. Walther said: "You must again and yet again draw everything through the Scriptures - even the Confessions." Cfr. Walther and the Church, p. 43 f. Eminent scholars of Walther speak of Walther's stand thus: "Walther heartily accepted the Confessions as fully agreeing with Scripture. Scripture, however, is the norm which makes the Confessions normal." 52) Thus Walther believed that the only foundation of the

52) Dau-Kingelder-Dalimann: Walther and the Church, p.43;

Church was Scripture alone, is evident from his own statement:

"In this new Concordia Seminary the instructors and students will indeed humbly sit at the feet of those blessed teachers of the Church who have mined priceless treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge from the rich vein of Holy Scripture..but deeply will the great word of the Lord be impressed upon our eager youth: 'One is your Master, even Christ.'" 53)

However, some may question the position of Walther if they read the following statement of his: "Dasz das Lehren nach unserm Bekenntnis eine Gemeinde zu der unsrigen macht, bezeugt Luther." 54) Here, superficially at least, it would appear as though Walther were placing too great an emphasis upon the Confessions. However, the connection must be kept in mind: Walther is speaking of the local congregation, the visible congregation. Then he states that whatever Church agrees with our Confessions, is one of us. We, in establishing external church fellowship, must have a standard by which we can tell what She teaches. The Confessions then ✓ serve as a means of clarifying a position, not as a means of establishing doctrine. That is undoubtedly what Walther meant. On the other hand, without a Confession, or without a creed, we would have difficulty, as the confusion of the 'Schrift-ganzes' principles shows us very definitely.

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53) Op. cit., p. 17;

54) Walther: Die Rechte Gestalt, p. 1;

The View of Loehle and the Iowa Synod:

In contrast with Walther's view, the various leaders of the Lutheran Church, especially Loehle, held a different view in the matter. Loehle, together with the later group called the Iowa Synod, held that no doctrine is absolutely settled, until the Confessions have made it clear. This, particularly, belongs in the field of 'Open Questions', but it does normally suggest itself here, because it involves the foundation of the Church. Dr. Theo. Buenger states: "Die Iowa Synode sagt in ihren Schriften: die Fragen vom Kirche und Amt seien nicht klar und deutlich in den symbolischen Buechern unserer Kirche entschieden, darum mueszten sie noch im Schweben bleiben." 55) A doctrine is binding only when the Confessions make it so, they maintained. "Die Iowa Synode hingegen hat sich fruher ganz klar und deutlich dahin ausgesprochen, dass man erst dann eine Lehre als allgemein verbindlich hinstellen duerfe, wenn sie in den Symbolen der Kirche gelehrt sei." 56) This tendency is definitely Romanizing, for Rome says that the moment she has spoken on a doctrine, that settles the matter. (For instance, Rome refuses to recant or recall any of her doctrines; once proclaimed, they are binding on every conscience.)

55) Synodalbericht (Iowa) 1901, p. 64; (Iowa Distr. of Mo. Synod)  
 56) Op. cit. p. 65;

According to the impression made upon his own biographers, Loche seems to have preferred a type of development in doctrine, a progress in theological thought. While not radical, Loche certainly is not in accord with the early Fathers of the Lutheran Church in regard to their view of the Confessions. He seems to view the Confessions as the foundation of the Church, the source of real authority, but at the same time, finds in them a germ for further development in doctrine. We cite a statement from his biographer, Hebart, who says: "Es gilt am Faden der Heiligen Schrift die Fortsetzung der uralten apostolischen Kirche zu finden und die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Kirche zu sehen und an der Heiligen Schrift zu prüfen." 57)

Loche expressed great dissatisfaction with the locus on the Ministry in Lutheran theology, and, while rather ambiguous, he does stress a progress in doctrine:

"Das Amt ist selbst ein dogmatischer locus; nichts desto weniger ist unsere Dogmatik kaum in einem Punkte so unausgebaut, als hier; es finden sich offene Widersprueche (S. Capitel der Ordination), zu deren Loesung das Zeit, wie es scheint, bisher kein Beduerfnis und keine Noethigung gehabt haben will." 58)

We might even say that in this respect, the Romanizing Lutherans were treading on dangerous ground. It is Rome who claims that it can bring forth new doctrines. While

57) Hebart: Loches Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment, Freimund Verlag, Neuendettelstau, 1939, p. 146. (Perhaps some of Hebart's own views have colored these statements culled from Loche).

58) Loche: Aphorismen ueber die neutestamentlichen Aemter, Muerberg, Verlag Joh. P. Rawschen Buchh., 1849, pp. 15 and 16;

we hesitate to pass judgment on Loehé's tendencies and endeavor not to go to extremes in our criticism, we believe that a consistent application of his principles would lead to severe removal from the foundation of Scripture. However, that Loehé may have been inconsistent cannot be denied, but our point is that the tendencies he expressed were dangerous in their very implications. Loehé, moreover, speaks of a succession of doctrines:

"Es gibt auch eine Succession, aber nicht der Orte und der Personen, sondern der Lehre. Die Lehre stirbt nicht aus und wohin sie wandert, da ist die rechte Kirche, da die rechten Bischöfe, die rechten Priester. Wo sie nicht ist, da ist alle andere Succession ein leeres Prophetengrab, eine leere, ja eine mit Moder und Raub gefüllte Schuessel. Wenn uns nur diese Succession der Lehre bleibt, dann fehlt es an Kraft und Leben nicht, auch vor der Menschen Augen zu beweisn, dass eine Kirche da ist! Auf diese Succession soll man dringen, dann fehlt nichts, - am wenigsten rechtmässige Berufung der Lehrer, Handauflegung, Gebet, Segen, und Gaben des heil. Geistes zum heil. Amte."(59)

In this respect, Loehé viewed the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as something yet incomplete. Pastor Roebbelen, who wrote a pamphlet against Loehé's views, remarks that Loehé views the Lutheran Church as still incomplete. Cfr. Wie Stehen Wir zu Pfarrer Loehé?, p. 15f. 60)

Loehé: Drei Buecher von der Kirche, Stuttgart, 1845, (59) Sam. G. Lietsching Verlag, p. 91;

60) Note: While we feel that Roebbelen may have gone too far in his contentions and became somewhat emotional, we believe, in view of the stress of his times, the judgment which he gives of Loehé is very accurate.

The influence is felt ~~from~~ (Loeche's view) in the Iowa Synod, particularly in the early years. We note the following statement of one of its theologians and historians:

"Im Zusammenhang mit dem Kirchen- und Amtsstreite entwickelte sich die Differenz betreffs der Stellung zu den kirchlichen Symbolen. Während missourischerseits die Verbindlichkeit derselben ausnahmslos auf alle datinnen vorkommenden Lehr<sup>u</sup>erzungen ausgedehnt wuerde, beschr<sup>a</sup>enkten wir dieselbe auf dasjenige, was die Symbole symbolisch feststellen wollen, und unterschieden zu diesem Zwecke zwischen den thetischen und antithetischen Entscheidungen, als der gewissensbildenden Substanz des Bekenntnisses, und zwischen den anderweitigen Ausfuehrungen, Beweisen usw...als Bestandteilen ohne unmittelbare und selbststaendige symbolische Geltung." 61)

Grabau's Position

Very similar to these opinions expressed, is the position taken by Pastor Grabau, who figured in the famous controversy on the question of the ministry. He held, among other things, that the Confessions were to decide the doctrine, not the individual believer. He thus made the Confessions the foundation of the Church. He wrote:

"Was aber wider und nicht wider Gottes Wort sei, das entscheidet kein einzelnes Glied der Kirche, sondern die Kirche in ihren Sym-bolen, Kirchenordnungen, und Synoden." 62) ✓

Thus he inclined very much toward the view of Loeche. 63)

61) Deindoerfer: Die Geschichte der ev. luth. Synode von Iowa, p. 133, point 6;

62) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 14;

63) Note: The Roman Church says that both Scripture and tradition form the foundation of the Church. Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, vol. on Soteriology, ca. pl. 50.



The Church Invisible in Essence:

Walther has emphasized the truth that the Church is the sum total of true believers in Christ. He then also offered his thesis as to the essence of this composite group of believers. He showed that the essence of the una sancta is invisible. He states in Thesis III: "The Church, in the proper sense of the term, is invisible." 64) Walther, therefore, stressed the invisible essence of the Church, but had a definite reason for doing so, and this will become apparent in the antithetical statements of such men as Loehe, Stephan, and Grabau.

The Antithesis:

In contrast to Walther's thesis as to the essence of the Church, the ideas of Loehe on this point proved to be the very opposite. However, Loehe does admit that the invisible Church is the more significant of the two: "Die Seele ist des Leibes Leben, die unsichtbare Kirche die Seele der sichtbaren als ihrer Leiblichkeit. Die unsichtbare Kirche ist und bleibt daher Hauptsache, wie die Seele ueberhaupt sich vor dem Leibe diesen Vorzug beilegt." 65) He also emphasizes correctly that there are not two churches, but

64) Walther and the Church: p. 58;

65) Loehe: Kirche und Amt, Th. Blaessing Verlag, Erlangen, 1851, p. 6;

one: "Eben so ist es aber auch eine ausgemachte Sache, dass man unter sichtbarer und unsichtbarer Kirche nicht zwei von einander geschiedene Kirchen zu verstehen habe, sondern eine und diesselbe, nur in verschiedenen Betracht." 66)

66) In his Drei Buecher von der Kirche, he has excellent statements on the inner fellowship of the believers. However, his approach is rather weak, when compared to Walther's, for he begins with the thesis that there is always a desire in the human heart for some type of fellowship.

He says:

"Von Anfang her ist der Mensch so beschaffen, dass er allein nicht gluecklich sein kann...Alleine koennte der Mensch nicht einmal selig sein. Wird mirs unertraeglich, von Gottes Hoehen in wunderbare Tale und Gelaende hinzuschauen, ohne durch mein Ach der Freude einen gleichen Ton in einer verwandten Brust zu erwecken: wie viel weniger werde ich alleine in ewige Seligkeiten schauen koennen, ohne mich nach einem Genossen umzusehen..Es gibt viele Gemeinschaften auf Erden; aber es befrriedigt keine den durstenden Sinn, als Eine, gleichwie auch jede Gemeinschaft nur eine mehr oder minder vollkommener Schattenriss jener einem von Gott gewollten, von Gott zur Ewigkeit berufenen Gemeinschaft ist. Diese eine Gemeinschaft ist die Kirche Gottes, die Gemeine der Heiligen." 67)

However, there is another trend in Loche's theology, which connects with his visible idea of

66) Loche: Kirche und Amt, Erlangen, p. 1;

67) Loche: Drei Buecher von der Kirche, Stuttgart, Sam. Lietsching Verlag, 1845, p. 1 and 6;

the Church. It is a notion which reminds us very much of Melancthon's ideal of the continuity of the Church. Cf. Hebart, op. cit. He employs the statements of Luther, but maintains that the statements imply more than is usually admitted by the theologians. For example, he takes the analogy of Luther about the body and soul, and uses this for his background of the concept of the visible-invisible Church. While not denying the existence of the invisible Church, he feels that there is also a visible side to the Church. To him, the Church is 'coming into appearance', or in-Erscheinung-tretende Kirche. Loehe says:

"Von Ueberschaetzung der unsichtbaren Kirche braucht man ohnehin nicht zu warnen, denn sie findet sich nicht, wenn man nicht etwa den Geschwaetz jener Toren, die, nur um keiner sichtbaren Kirche angehoeren zu duerfen, eine unsichtbare, das ist ein geistliches Utopien preisen, auf die unge-rechteste Weise eine Ueberschaetzung waehl-nennen will." 68)

For Loehe, this 'visible side' of the Church is so important that he attaches the permanence of the in-visible Church with the visible Church. In other words, it is only through the visible Church that the invisible Church is realized. He states, in accordance with his analogy, that both body and soul come into existence at once. Therefore, he says, one cannot say that the invisible or the visible came before the other. He says:

68) Loehe: Drei Buecher von der Kirche, p. 41; Loehe correctly emphasized the necessity of being in contact with the means of grace, but overstressed the necessity of external membership.

"Sowie vom Menschen nicht zuerst ein Teil, sei es Leib oder Seele, und dann der andere, sondern beide zusammen ins Dasein getreten, und unser Wesen vom ersten Augenblick an als ein zwar zusammengesetztes, aber in seinen Teilen zur innigsten Gemeinschaft und Einfacht verbundenen, als ein geistig-leibliches zu fassen ist; so kann man im Grunde auch nicht sagen, dass entweder die sichtbare oder unsichtbare Kirche zuerst allein da gewesen ist; sondern die Kirche ist wie der Mensch selbst in ihren ersten Anfängen zugleich verborgenen und offenbaren Lebens, unsichtbar und sichtbar, geistig und leiblich gewesen. Es kann nicht anders sein, denn sie besteht aus Menschen, - und wie der Mensch, so ist die Kirche." 69)

Incidentally, we might add here the view expressed by one of Loehle's followers, showing the influence of Loehle's ideas in the Iowa Synod. Deindoerfer writes:

"Die Kirche ist nach den Symbolen vornehmlich eine innere Genossenschaft (principaliter societas interna), und diese Innerlichkeit wird der puren Aeusserlichkeit der römischen Kirche gegenüber aufs staerkste betont. Die Kirche ist aber auch eine äußere Genossenschaft, und ohne diese äußere kennen die Symbolen keine congregatio fidelium (Versammlung der Heiligen); durch die äußere ist die innere nothwendig bedingt, weil es kein Entstehen, Sein und Werden der Kirche gibt, ohne die göttliche geordnete Gemeinschaft des Wortes und der heiligen Sakramente." 70)

Regarding Loehle's view of the Church as the Church 'becoming visible', Hebart also states:

"Wir sahen, dass Loehle ganz realistisch

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69) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 3;

70) Deindoerfer: op. cit., p. 69;

denkt: die unsichtbare Kirche, das Reich Christi muss immer mehr sichtbar werden. Das wird sie, wie wir weiter sagten, wo die rechte Gnademittelverwaltung und die daraus entspringende rechte Nachfolge Christi ist." 71)

Hebart then quotes Loehle: "Wir sehnen uns nach einer wahrhaftigen Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen, die Kirche soll, so wuentschen wir, nicht bloß ein Glaubensartikel sein, sondern ins Leben eintreten und erscheinen." 72) From this we note that Loehle viewed the Church both as something visible and invisible. He realized the contradiction, but continued to hold this view. He did not prefer the position taken by Walther and others, that the Church is the invisible body hidden in the visible Church, as under a pavilion. He stated: (These are the remarks of Hebart, but also citations from Loehle himself) -

"Wie fruher wuentscht Loehle auch jetzt, dass die unsichtbare Kirche in die Erscheinung trete. Es ist des Herrn Wille, dass sie nicht in der sichtbaren verborgen bleibe, sondern auch sich erweise und wirke. Loehle will.. 'Dass die sichtbare Kirche nicht bloß ein Bergungs oder gar Verbergungsort der unsichtbaren Kirche sei, sondern dass sie ganz nach des Herrn Absicht eine Offenbarung und Erscheinung der unsichtbaren Kirche in der Welt sein soll.' " 73)

Hebart, furthermore, connects Loehle's concept of the Church with his views of the ministry:

"Die Amtslehre Loehles war zuletzt auch eine

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71) Hebart: op. cit., p. 130;

72) Hebart: op. cit., p. 131;

73) Hebart: op. cit., p. 248;

Konsequenz seines Kirchenbegriffes. Galt es, um die Lebensgestaltung der unsichtbaren Kirche zu kempfen, sollte die Kirche nicht nur Glaubensartikel, sondern auch Sehartikel sein, dann musste der Nachdruck auf die sichtbare Kirche, auf die Heilsanstalt und auf ihre Ordnung, naemlich auf das Amt fallen." 74)

Here the question arises, what, then, is the relation between the visible and the invisible Church? The visible Church, according to Loehle, is the 'handmaid' of the invisible Church. The visible Church is the organum as it were.

"Dazu ist der Leib das Organ der Seele, und es steht dem Menschen keine Verbindung frei als durch den Leib und leibliche Mittel. Wie es in der Ewigkeit sein wird, wie dort die Seelen mit einander in Verbindung treten, ist eine andere Frage; aber fuer uns Lebendige ist alle Seelenverbindung durch Leibliches bedingt. So ist denn auch die unsichtbare Kirche nur durch die sichtbare, in die Moeglichkeit der kenntlichen und fuehnbaren Gemeinschaft gesetzt, und die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen beurkundet ihr Dasein vor ihren Gliedern nur vermoege des sichtbaren kirchlichen Daseins." 75)

Loehle also stressed the idea of completion in his concept of the 'invisible-visible' Church. In the visible Church alone, says Loehle, does the invisible Church find on earth her fullest fruition and completion. In eternity her

74) Hebart: op. cit., p. 270;

75) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 69

further completion will be realized, he says.

"Auch findet nur in der sichtbaren Kirche die unsichtbare hier auf Erden ihre Voelligkeit, wie ueberhaupt ohne Leibesleben das Seelenleben weder hier noch jenseits des Todes vollkommen sein kann. Nicht Seelen, nicht Leiber allein, sondern Menschen, die aus Leib und Seele bestehen, hat Gott der Herr geschaffen, erloest, geheiligt, - und des Menschen Vollendung kommt erst mit der Auferstehung des Leibes, des ewigen Genossen der Seele." 76)

A critique written at the time of the controversy between Loehle and Walther, states that Loehle looked for a completion of the Lutheran Church. We have referred to this in a previous section. Cfr. Roebbelen. Another expert in this field of Lutheran history of doctrine, Dr. Th. Buenger, describes Loehle's view as follows:

"Die lutherische Kirche habe genug Wasser des Lebens und Himmelsanna im Ueberfluss, aber sie sei in den letzten dreihundert Jahren nicht ein groeszere Segen fuer die Welt geworden aus Mangel an Gestalt und Form. Sie muesse eine -wuerdige aeußzere Erscheinung finden, ein goettliches, nach allen Seiten hin geruestetes Ministerium. Ohne so etwas zieht, lockt, fesselt, haelt sie nicht." 77)

Although this particular section thus quoted deals with the Lutheran Church, and, therefore, not strictly with the invisible Church, it nevertheless shows the desire of Loehle to associate very much of the concept 'Church' with a visibilization, so to say, of the una sancta.

76) Loehle: op. cit., pp. 6 and 7;

77) Synodal Bericht (Iowa Distr.) 1901, p. 62;

The question in this connection may also arise: How does the invisible Church become visible? Walther agreed that the Church, the una sancta, is perceivable by the presence of Word and Sacraments, but maintained that the una sancta itself remained invisible. Loche, however, applies the Word and Sacraments to the essence of the Church. He thereby confuses the instruments which bring about the Church and the essence of the Church itself. It has been remarked that, if one were to be consistent in making everything a mark of the Church which has brought it into being, then God would belong to the essence of the Church. Loche says: "Der Geist, durch den die Kirche handelt, beruft, erleuchtet, heiligt, er ohne ausserer Mittel, ohne Wort und Sakrament? Beruft, erleuchtet, und heiligt er nur die Seelen, nicht auch die Leiber?" 78) According to Loche, this 'visibilization' of the Church takes place where the correct administration of the means of grace occurs. Hebart says: "Wir sehen, dass Loche ganz realistisch denkt: die unsichtbare Kirche, das Reich Christi muss immermehr sichtbar werden. Das wird sie, wie wir weiter sagten, wo die rechte Gnadenmittelverwaltung und die daraus entspringende rechte Nachfolge Christi." 79) But Loche goes farther and says that the communion of saints dare not remain hidden. It is not

78) Loche: Kirche und Amt, p. 4;

79) Hebart: op. cit., p. 130, cf. later citation;



enough that the means of grace be administered correctly, says Loehe, but the fellowship of the believers should become visible. 80) Hebart says of Loehe's view:

"Es genuegt noch nicht, dass die communio sanctorum an ihrer rechten Wortverkuendigung und rechten Sakramentsverwaltung sichtbar wird. Das Wort will nicht nur Glauben wirken, es will auch umgestalten. Der Gedanke der communio schlieszt, wie wir bereits oben sahen, den Gedanken der sittlichen Persoenlichkeit ein. Die communio sanctorum darf daher nicht abscondita bleiben. In der Gemeinschaft des sittlichen Handelns wird sie sichtbar. So ist das Reich Christi, der coetus electorum, an der reinen Lehre wie auch am Ethos seiner Glieder erkennbar." 81)

More in particular, however, Loehe saw the visibilization of the Church in the cultus of the Lutheran Church, especially the Sacrament of the Altar. Cfr. Roebbelen, pp. 16,17. op. cit. Hebart says: "Loehe geht es auch um das Abendmahl, aber darueber hinaus um die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit der Kirche ueberhaupt." 82) Evidently, the Sacrament of the Altar, especially belongs to the 'visible side' of the Church, in his theory. On the other hand, one must guard against condemning Loehe too freely. His li-

80) Note: This idea of visibilizing the communion of saints is still with us today in various forms of unionism. The common fallacious objection is: If we are one mystical body, why not give evidence of this fact openly and jointly?

81) Hebart: op. cit. p. 126;  
82) Hebart: op. cit. p. 142;

turgical endeavors cannot be passed by without a certain balanced ~~fairness~~ of judgment. There is much in his Agenda that is deserving of certain praise, and much that raises the pastor's own fervor for his work in the ministry. However, he seems to make the cultus and liturgy the determining factor which characterized the Church as 'complete and rich', or as 'incomplete and poor'. He overemphasized the liturgy in many respects and thus leaned to Romanizing views concerning the 'visible side' of the Church. A characteristic statement of Loeche's is found in his Agenda, which shows some of his Romanizing tendencies: "So wie es keinen luth. Kirchenbau geben kann, so wie alle..so lange man nicht zugesteht, dass der Altar das ganze System regiert; so gibt es keine luth. Liturgie, solange man im heil. Abendmahl nicht die Summe aller Liturgie und der vollendeten Hoehenpunkt alles gottesdienstl. Lebens erkennt." 83)

Through these means of grace, says Loeche, God issues a call of grace, and invites to the visible and to the invisible Church at the same time. He states in a paragraph heading: "Es beruft sie zu Einer Kirche, die da sichtbar und unsichtbar zugleich ist." 84) The peculiar emphasis upon the Sacraments as bringing one into the Church is

83) Loeche: Agende fuer christliche Gemeinden, p. vi bottom; Cfr. also, his Kirche und Amt, p. 34, stress of sacramental side of the pastor's office;

84) Loeche: Drei Buecher von der Kirche, p. 40;

quite prominent in Loehle's theology, as it is in the ritualistic churches of Europe. 85) We do not deny that Baptism regenerates and brings one into the Kingdom of grace, but it is the formalism that is objectionable, which leads to defining the Church as the total of the Baptized. To this call, which God issues, says Loehle, three distinct attitudes are shown: one attitude is that of no reaction and stubborn unbelief; another attitude is that one decides to join the visible Church (note the stress on visible membership); finally, one attitude is to become one of the elect. His own words reflect his view, showing his confusion of the terms 'visible Church' and 'una sancta':

"Je nachdem nun diesem Briefe Berufe entweder gar nicht, oder in einem niedrigeren oder hoeheren Grade Gehorsam geleistet wird, nimmt man seine Stellung zu, oder seine Stelle in der Kirche Gottes ein. Die gar keine Folge leisten, ob-schon sie die Berufung vernehmen, gehoeren zu der Welt; die sich ausserlich von der Welt trennen und sich vor jedermann zu Christo und seiner Kirche bekennen, werden mit dem Ehrentitel der Berufenen geschmueckt, weil sie die Berufung nicht umsonst vernommen, sondern, der Ladung ge-

85) Philip Schaff: Creeds of Christendom; vol. III, p. 499; p. 504 esp., Thirty-Nine Articles: "They that receive Baptism are rightly grafted into the Church". Article XIX brings out the visible Church, as they see it. Gfr. Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 136f., states that the Sacraments establish membership in a social community which is the Church.

horsam, bei dem Hochzeitsmahle des ewigen Königs sich eingefanden haben; die aber unter den Berufenen, welche sich nicht bloss aeußerlich und vor den Augen der Menschen, sondern auch innerlich und nach dem Urtheil des Herrn selbst von der Welt getrennt und zu seiner Kirche gesammelt haben, welche deshalb am Ende von Herrn auch öffentlich als die Söhne werden anerkannt werden, heißen die Ausgewählten." 86)

It is rather confusing to speak of a call to the visible and to the invisible Church. We have no Scriptural basis for such an expression. Loche failed to note that there may be salvation outside of the Church, as in cases like the dying thief, or some person who has not had the opportunity. Loche failed to clarify the point concerning the call to the visible Church. Would he exclude those from salvation who never joined a visible Church? We do not believe that Loche went this far, as we have seen in his Kirche und Amt, but it is peculiar that he has not worded this paragraph as carefully as he might have done.

Therefore, according to Loche, the Church is really an 'institution for salvation'. "Nun, ist freilich die Kirche nicht nur gottmenschliche Gemeinschaft, sondern sie ist auch nach ihrer objektiven Seite die von Christo ins

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86) Loche: op. cit. pp. 40 and 41;

Leben gerufene Staette seiner Wirksamkeit, sie ist von Gott gestiftete Anstalt." 87) Loehle's favorite phrase is 'Heilsanstalt fuer Heilsordnung'. Cfr. Elert: Der Christl. Glaube.

Hebart states:

"Weil nun Wort und Sakrament Substanz dieser Gemeinschaft sind, (note how he defined the essence of the Church) deshalb kann sie nicht untergehen. Die Kirche ist aber fuer Loehle nicht nur Sammlung und Versammlung, sie ist auch Sammlerin, Heilsanstalt, eine Stiftung Gottes, seine Gabe." 88)

But this is a confusion of terms. It confuses the Church's functions with the essence of the Church. A sane criticism of this theory is given by Dr. Engelder, when he says:

"But the Church does not consist of institutions, but of men, Eph. 5, 25ff.,...Certainly the Church works for the salvation of men, but this Romanizing conception confuses the work of the Church with its essence." 89) Loehle is nevertheless insistent upon his external view of the Church: "Sie ist Sammlungsort, ein Hospital, in welchem der beste nur ein Gensender, eine Rettungsanstalt, in welcher der beste nur werdender Heiliger ist." 90)

Besides this 'institutionalized' view, Loehle holds another view, closely allied with this, which places too much importance or emphasis upon the external membership in the visible Church. We have implied this indirect-

87) Hebart: op. cit., p. 113;

88) Hebart, op. cit., p. 49;

89) Dr. Th. Engelder: Doctrines of the Church, Dogmatical Notes, p. 2;

90) Loehle: Evangelienpostille, II, p. 24;

ly in a preceding section. He states, for instance, in one of his writings:

"Die Glaebigen wissen, dass ausser der Kirche keine Vergebung ist und kein Friede, und darum schuetzen und preisen sie es fuer ein gresstes Glueck, dass sie zur Kirche gehoeren, in welcher ihnen taeglich alle Sunden reichlich vergeben werden." 91)

We grant that membership in the visible Church has many advantages, and that the constant opportunity for receiving the means of grace is there. However, Loehle stresses the visible Church here to such an extent as to make it appear almost impossible to have forgiveness outside the Church. At least, he does not specify what he means by the Church. It would be tantamount to 'extra ecclesiam nulla est salus', if one would really press this statement of his. While he correctly emphasized the importance of receiving the means of grace, he was in danger of reducing the force of the sole gratia. (Making membership in visible Church a condition of salvation and forgiveness). He says:

*so vaelligens sind*

"Da nun die unsichtbare und sichtbare Kirche ist, so ist offenbar, dass man die sichtbare Kirche um der Heuchler willen nicht veraechtlich behandeln duerfe, dass vielmehr jeder, welcher zur unsichtbaren Kirche zu gehoeren muesse, -dass mit einem Worte die sichtbare Kirche die Huette Gottes unter den Menschen und ausser ihr kein Heil sei." 92)

91) Loehle: Evangelienvostille, II, p. 121;  
92) Loehle: Drei Buecher der Kirche, p. 43;

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Thus there are several ideas expressed in Loehe's doctrine of the Church that are not based upon clear Scriptural passages. This quotation shows that Loehe makes external membership a condition for becoming a believer. Secondly, he distorts the solus Gratia by stating that there is no salvation outside of the visible Church. In another statement he misapplies his principles by stating that all believers are inside the visible Church. That is not true. What of those independents, who either through weakness of faith and lack of knowledge do not join a visible Church? They certainly can be saved through the Gospel to which they cling. Loehe's view tends to reduce the importance of the Word per se. Must it be spoken by the Church to be effective? He does not say this, but that is the conclusion one is apt to draw from his remarks. (Cfr. Barth and the Word of God in the sermon). He says: "Daher ist es auch recht, dass man die sichtbare Kirche 'heilig' nennt; denn nicht nur sind alle Heiligen in ihr," usw. 93) Loehe forgets that the ransomed saints, or 'holy ones' can be outside the visible Church as well, as we have repeatedly mentioned. Since Loehe calls the Church 'Gnadenmittelgemeinschaft', which has a visible and an invisible

93) Loehe: Drei Buecher von der Kirche, p. 44;

side, he places much emphasis upon visible membership. The objection of Dr. Engelder is very much in place at this point, when he says: "Membership in the Church does not necessarily involve membership in the communion of saints."

94) Another observer of the theology of Loehle, gives evidence of the difference between the doctrine of Loehle and that of Walther:

"Denn in dem Gedanken, dass fuer den perso-  
enlichen Heilsstand der Glaebigen das  
Streben nach Aeuszerung, nach Gemeinschaft,  
Lebenbedingung ist, liegen die charaktischen  
Merkmale der Lehre Loehles von Kirche u. Amt,  
dass naemlich die Kirche nicht bloss die Ge-  
samtzahl aller an die stellvertretende Gemig-  
tung Christi bestaendig Glaebigen oder  
Auserwählten ist, die an keine Organisation  
auch nicht die lutherische, gebunden ist."  
95)

Loehle, therefore, does not distinguish properly between the Lutheran Church as a visible and particular Church, and the invisible Church, of which all believers are a part, whether within the Lutheran, Reformed, or even within the Roman Catholic Church group.

Loehle, nevertheless, stresses the unity of the Church. He points out that there are not two, but there is only one Church. His definition of the Church, however, is

94) Engelder: op. cit., p.2;  
95) Das: Lehre u. Wehre, vol. 71, p. 13ff.



hardly adequate, in view of Scripture. 96)

The View of pastor Stephan:

Reverting to the earlier years of walther's activity, we notice the peculiar views of pastor stephan, whose tendencies in the doctrine of the Church and Ministry led walther to defend the scriptural position at the Altenburg Debate. The thought of Stephan was to establish the episcopal form of Church government, for that, he said, was something real, tangible, and something that would bring order into the church. In stressing the hierarchy as he did, he held the view of grabau, that the Church is the community of those who gather about the clergy. Again, we have the ultimate conclusion: the clergy is the Church. (similar to grabau's view)

96) Cfr. The Anglican view: Doctrine in the Church of Engl. pp. 99 and 100.

Within the Luth. Ch.: Cf. Journal Amer. Luth. Conf., July 1938, 33ff. sectarian perversions: Rev. and Expos. Jan. 1940, p.33ff.

later, 97) the followers of Stephan, at least many of them, said:

"Die Kirche, hiesze es, wandere aus; Niemand koenne ohne hoechste Gefahr seiner Seele zurueckbleiben. Man naehrte auf alle Weise den graeulichen Irrthum, Stephan und seine Anhaenger seien allein die recht glaubige Kirche. Andere bekenntnistreue prediger und Christen, deren es ja noch hin und wieder gab, wurden eben darum, weil sie es nicht mit Stephan hielten als Bekenntnisseue, wanjelmuechtige verdaechtigt." 98)

Stephan, especially after his induction into office as bishop, was very insistent upon these views. In other words, like Loehle and Grabau, he visibilized the Church (Cf. Hochstetter, p.30, top). Also, like Grabau, he defined the Church in too narrow terms, including only his followers in the true Church. (Cf. Hochstetter, p.31). Dr. Buenger says: "Waehrend man unter Stephan meinte, die Auswanderer bildeten die kirche allein - die Kirche stehe auf zwei Augen (naemlich Stephans), wenn jene fuenf schiffe untergehen wuerden, hiesz es, wuerde die Kirche untergehen -, so zweifelte man jetzt daran, ob ueberhaupt die Kirche unter ihnen sei". 99). They identified their group exclusively as being the Church, and not only representatively (which would have been correct). (Cf. Hochstetter, p.28 bottom)

97) Note: Grabau used the picture of Revelation, of the woman fleeing to the wilderness. This Grabau used on the seal of the Buffalo Synod, symbolizing that the church (una sancta) (!) was fleeing from Germany to America, because of persecution.

98) G.A. Schieferdecker, Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Ansiedlung, usw. Wartburg Seminary Press, Iowa, 1865, p.7

99) Dr. Th. Buenger: Synodal Bericht, 1901, p. 23;

If they would perish while on the sea, then the entire Church, ✓  
they said, would be a thing of the past. With this thought in  
the minds of the settlers, we can readily see how necessary the  
leadership of Walther became. With his theses, based alone on  
Scripture, he produced clarity of thinking among them and al-  
so peace of conscience, together with unity of Spirit.

The Proof for Walther's Thesis:

From the theories of Loehle and Grabau,  
it is very evident that the thesis of Walther was motivated  
by an endeavor to combat the dangerous Romanizing tendencies ✓  
of these two men. In view of the lack of basis which the  
errorists manifested in the development of their theses,  
Walther, on the other hand, has definite and direct scriptural  
proof for his statements. The evidence for Walther's thesis  
is shown, first of all, by the fact that the militant and tri-  
umphant church is invisible to us. In order to clarify his,  
position, Walther points to the words of Christ: Luke 17,  
verse 20 and 21: "The Kingdom of God cometh not without (out-  
ward) observation, neither shall they say, Lo here!, or Lo  
there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you".  
Then also, Peter writes in his First Epistle, chapter 2,  
verse 5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual  
house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,  
acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here we see very clearly

that the Church is a spiritual body, and therefore, not a visible organization or building, as is commonly conceived. ?

Furthermore, the believers are scattered throughout the world. The scattered individuals form the invisible body which we call the *una sancta*, or the Church. Even as the seven thousand faithful who had not bowed down their knees to heathen idols were not manifest to the Lord's discouraged servant, thus also today the true believers, members of the *una sancta*, are not always apparent. No matter where they are, as long as they trust in the merits of Christ alone, they are members of the true Church of Christ. That the believers are generally known only to God Himself, and to Christ the Savior, is stated by the following passage, which Walther also quotes: 2Tim. 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." These passages show that the Lord alone <sup>un</sup>mistakably know<sup>s</sup> who belongs to the Church. Therefore, since He alone knows this, the Church is invisible.

Moreover, we know that faith, which alone makes one a member of the Church, ~~may be~~ difficult to detect as to its presence or absence in an individual, since it is in the heart. We say, furthermore, in the Apostles' Creed: " I believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints". If we make the Church a matter of faith, it is something which we cannot see, but must comprehend through the illumination of the

Holy spirit. walther says:

"Ist aber hiernach die Kirche etwas, was man glauben muss, so kann sie nicht sichtbar sein, denn 'der Glaube ist eine gewisse Zuversicht des, das man hoffet, und nicht zweifelt an dem, das man nicht siehet' Heb. 11,1. Daher denn Augustinus schreibt: 'Das ist Glaube, glauben, was man nicht sieht' ". 100)

Returning to our first thought, that faith is invisible and the Church, therefore, is spiritual, we find that walther quotes the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

"Dasz Christi Reich geistlich ist, wie es doch ist, darinnen Christus inwendig die Herzen regieret, tröestet, den Heiligen Geist und mancherlei geistlich Gaben austeilet; sondern man wird gedenken, es sei eine aeußerliche Weise, gewisse Ordnung etlicher Ceremonien und Gottesdiensts." 101).

In order to complete walther's treatment on the invisible nature of the Church, we translate freely two sections which walther wrote in connection with the Grabau controversy:

" In two ways and from two aspects the Church is invisible. First, since the universal Church of the saints is invisible, for the true believers and saints are distinguishable from the hypocrites in this sense, that the Church remains invisible, although the entire world were made up of particular churches. Second, since the particular churches can be brought into such condition that they are not visible to the world through an outward glow and distinctive evidence, as is the case when heresies overtake the churches. when such a dark time comes, that the outward glow of the visible Church dies and ceases, then it is not necessary to salvation that one join a visible and particular church, but one reaches out to the

100) walther: Kirche und Amt, p.15.

101) walther: op.cit. p.15.

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fact that by faith one is a member of the universal Church, for of this Church one really can say, that outside of it, there is no salvation." 102).

While we cannot unmistakably determine who has faith, and who is a member of the true Church, we have seen that faith alone makes one a member of the Church. Conversely, as Walther states, there are no hypocrites or unbelievers to be found in the Church, in the proper sense. He says in Thesis II: "To the Church in the proper sense of the term belongs no godless person, no hypocrite, no one who has not been regenerated, no heretic." 103). For this thesis he draws proof from scripture especially from Romans eight:

\* If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His".

John writes in his first epistle concerning the hypocrites, who ultimately also severed external connections with the Church: chapter 2, 19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Their leaving the Church was only a confirmation of their condition which had obtained already while they still belonged outwardly to the visible Church. Even then already they were not really members of the *una sancta*. Again the Savior says: John 15,6:

102) Walther: Lutheraner, vol. 9, p. 73 (Gerhard's Loci).  
103) Walther and the Church, p. 57.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered."

Walther also notes that the Confessions testify to this position. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII and VIII, states:

"Likewise, that the wicked are in the Church only in name, not in fact; but that the good are in the Church both in fact and in name. And to this effect there are many passages in the Fathers. For Jerome says: The sinner, therefore, who has been soiled with any blotch cannot be called a member of the Church of Christ, neither can he be said to be subject to Christ." 104)

Another statement in a later paragraph of the same Confession reads as follows:

"Therefore, only those are the people, according to the Gospel, who receive the promise of the Spirit. Besides, the Church is the kingdom of Christ, distinguished from the kingdom of the devil. It is certain, however, that the wicked are in the power of the devil, and members of devil, as Paul teaches: Eph. 2:2, when he says that the devil now worketh in the children of disobedience. And Christ says to the Pharisees, who certainly had outward fellowship with the Church, i.e., with the saints among the people of the Law (for they held office, sacrificed, and taught): "Ye are of your father, the devil." John 8,44. Therefore, the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is properly the congregation of saints. For the wicked are ruled by the devil, and are captives of the devil; they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ." 105)

104) Concordia Triglotta, p.229, Apology of Aug. Conf.

105) op. cit., p.231.

walther also points out that the dogmaticians of the Lutheran Church, as well as the early Church fathers, corroborate his view. Especially the private writings of Luther testify to this fact:

"Wer aber nicht rechtglaeubig noch heilig und gerecht ist, der gehoert nicht in die heilige christliche Kirche..... Und dies ist der Artikel, so in dem loeblichen Konzilio zu Kostnitz verdammt ist, samt diesem Vers und der ganzen heiligen Schrift. Denn Johannes Husz bekannte dazumal, dass eine heilige christliche Kirche sei: wo der Pabst nicht fromm und heilig waere, so koennte er nicht ein Glied, vielweniger das Haupt der heiligen Kirche sein, ob er gleich drinnen das Amt haette; das muszte er als ein ketzer brennen und verflucht sein. Sie setzen dawider und sagen: Wenn der Pabst, Bischoefe, und sie alle gleich sehr suendigen, so sind sie dennoch nicht vom reufel, noch von seiner Synagoga, sondern sind von Christo und von Gott, Gleider und haupter der der Christenheit. Ja, sie sind Glieder der Kirche, gleichwie Speichel, Rotz, Eiter, Schweisz, Mist, usw. des Leibes Glæder sind; dieselbigen sind auch in und am Leibe, die der Leib tragen musz mit groszer Gefahr, Muehe, und Unlust."106)

He also brings out the truth that even though many are baptized and outwardly partake of the sacraments, are none the less hypocrites: "Gleichwie ihrer bei uns viel sind, die ~~getauft sind,~~ getauft sind, zum Sacramente gehen, stellen sich als christen, und doch schaelke in der Haut, sie sind nicht rechtschaffen."  
107) . Also the dogmatician Gerhard has an excellent statement regarding the hypocrites who partake of the sacraments:

106) Walther, Kirche und Amt, p.11.

107) Walther, Kirche und Amt, p.12.



"wir halten dafuer, dass die Heuchler, die gottlosen, die Verborgenen Unglaebigen und ueberhaupt alle Verworfenen, solange sie solche sind und bleiben, nicht wahre Glieder der wahren Kirche seien, obgleich sie aeuszerlich denselben glauben mit den Heiligen bekennen und die selben sacramento gebrauchen." 108)

Gerhard also cites John 17,14, showing that, as the disciples in the world, but not of the world, thus the hypocrites are in the Church, but not of the Church. Calov emphasizes this fact and directs us to the truth that there is only one Church, not two. He says: "Obgleich die Heuchler in jenem Haufen sind, in welchem die Kirche ist, so sind sie doch nocht eigentlich in dem Haufen, welcher die Kirche ist.... Wir mache nicht eine zweifache Kirche, eine der Heiligen, eine andere, welche eine gemisachte waere." 109). Quenstedt also supports this view:

"Die ueblen Fechtigkeiten sind keine Glieder des Koerpers; die Bosen sind wie ueble Fechtigkeiten; also sind keine Glieder des Leibes, naemlich Christi, sonder sie haengen der Kirche an, wie die Geschwuere den Koerper, von welchem sie ohne Verletzung, ja zum groszen Vorteil des Koerpers getrennt werden koennen." 110)

Even a man living as early as in the fifth century of the Christian era expressed himself in this way. Augustine says: "Die Kirche selbst ist unbefleckt und keusch und rein, und daher gehoeren zu ihr nicht die Geizigen, die Rauber, die Fuecherer, nicht nur welche draussen, sondern auch welche draennen sind." 111)

108) Walther: loc. cit.  
109) Walther, op. cit. p.13.  
110) Walther, loc. cit.  
111) Walther, op.cit. p.14.

Also the noted Church Father Jerome agrees with this contention: "Wer ein Suender ist und mit einem Flecken verunreinigt ist, der kann nicht von der Kirche Christi heissen, noch von ihm gesagt werden, dass er Christo untertan sei." 112)

Since we know that faith cannot be unmistakably discerned, and that faith alone makes one a member of the Church, the question of finding faith comes to the fore. From the Bible we know that faith is found and results from the hearing and preaching of the Word. Faith, as scripture teaches, comes only through means. Therefore, where ever these means are found, namely, Word and Sacrament, 113), there faith is to be found. We know that where these means are present and employed, there faith in Christ is possible, for we have the promise that the Word never shall return to Him void, but accomplish its purpose. The promise emphasizes the fact that the means are always effective. 114). Therefore, where these means of grace are found and employed, there the church of Christ, though invisible, is nevertheless present. This important truth Walther constantly held before him as he developed his remarkable theses on the doctrine of the Church.

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112) Walther, loc. cit.

113) Note: In the strict sense, there is only one means; the Word. However, this Word is also in the Sacraments; the Sacraments are the 'verba visibilia'.

114) Note: This effect may be either as the means of salvation or a stone of offense. At any rate there is always some effect.

### The Marks of the Church

Although Walther was convinced of the invisible nature of the Church, he also recognized the Scriptural teaching that the Church nevertheless manifests its presence by certain marks, by which one can conclude that the Church is there. He maintains this in Thesis V:

"Although the true Church, in the proper sense of the term is invisible as to its essence, yet its presence is perceivable, its marks being the pure preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the holy sacraments in accordance with their institution by Christ." 115)

That the una sancta, though invisible, is perceivable by the presence of Word and Sacraments, can certainly be maintained. The Word and Sacraments are conceived of as the marks of the Church, which point to the presence of the una sancta. 116). Walther explains his position by quoting the parable of Mark 4, 26 and 27: "So is the kingdom of God (that is, the Church) as if a man should cast seed into the ground and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how." However, Scripture shows what this seed is: in verse 14, it states: "The Sower soweth the Word." According to the Scriptures the Word of God is the seed from which the members of the Church, or, in the

115) Walther and the Church, p.60.

116) Note: When we speak of the 'marks' of the Church in this way, we do not conceive of these marks as a visible side of the Church.

language of Scripture, ' the children of the kingdom', Matth. 13,38, sprout forth and are generated. At the same time, however, God issues in Scriptures the precious promise of the effectiveness of the Word. 117). Cfr. Is.55,10,11. We see from this that the Word is effective. Walther says:

"Hieraus sehen wir, das Wort ist nicht nur des Same, aus welchem allein die Glieder der Kirche geboren werden, sondern aus welchem auch gewisz immer, wo nur dieser himmlische Same ausgesaet wird, da sieht man zwar die Kirche nicht aber da hat man ein untrugliches Kennzeichen, dass die Kirche, dass ein Haeflein wahrhaft Glaebiger und Geheilgter in Christo Jesu, ein Gemeinlein der Kinder Gottes da sei." 118)

According to the Scripture, also the Sacraments bring about the gathering of God's people. They as the Word visible, also bring about faith and thus add to the temple of the una sancta. This is evident, as Walther notes, from the Great Commission, in which Christ commands His disciples and the believers to extend the Kingdom through the means of preaching and baptizing. Cfr. Matth. 28,18-20 and Mark 16:16. Walther remarks: "Wo also Gottes Wort geprediget, die heilige Taufe und das Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Jesu Christi verwaltet wird, da sind Glieder am Leibe Jesu Christi, da muessen wir glauben: Hier ist eine heilige christliche Kirche."

119)

117) Walther and the Church, p.60 - 61.

118) Walther, Kirche und Amt, p.53.

119) Walther, op. cit. p.54.

Walther explains what is meant when we speak of the Word as a mark of the Church, as he quotes the writing of Luther on Councils and Churches:

"Erstlich ist dies christliche heilige Volk dabei zu erkennen, wo es hat das heilige Gottes-Wort...Wir reden aber von dem ausserlichen Wort, durch Menschen, als durch dich und mich, suendlich gepredigt. Denn solches hat Christus hinter sich gelassen als ein ausserlich Zeichen, dabei man sollte erkennen seine Kirche oder sein heilige christlich Volk in der Welt. Auch reden wir von solchen suendlich Wort, da es mit Ernst geglaubet und oeffentlich bekannt wird vor der Welt, wie er spricht, Matth. 10,32,33. Marc. 8,9:" 120)

Included, of course, in the marks of the Church are the office of the Keys and the ministerial offices. Cfr. Matth. 18, 15,16. Walther states, quoting from Luther:

"Zum vierten, kennet man das Gottes-Volk oder heilig Christen an den Schluessen, die sie oeffentlich brauchen, das ist, wie Christus Matth.18, 15. 16 setzt, wo ein Christ suendiget, usw.. Zum fuenften, kennet man die Kirche ausserlich dabei, dass die Kirchendiener weihet oder beruft, oder Aemter hat, dae sie bestellen soll." 121)

Among other things, however, we must observe that all these marks do not belong to the essence of the Church. Moreover, there are marks in the wider and in the narrower sense.

Walther, moreover, shows that the Church is in-

120) Walther: Die Rechte Gestalt, p.5;  
121) Walther: Kirche u. Amt, p. 59;

visible, even with all these marks, for the concept of true  
worship is worship in spirit and in truth.<sup>122)</sup> Cfr. Jesus and  
the woman at the well. Moreover, the Church is the spiritual  
and mystical body of Christ, not the physical body. From the  
Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII: "Die christ-  
liche Kirche stehet nicht allein in Gesellschaft aeußerlicher  
Zeichen, sondern stehet fuernehmlich in Gemeinschaft inwendig  
der ewigen Gueter im Herzen, als des Heiligen Geistes, des  
Glaubens, der Furcht und Liebe Gottes." 123) In describing  
the Church as a spiritual body and an invisible communion,  
Walther uses the excellent analogy of Luther. The human be-  
ing is composed of body and soul, and yet is a member of  
the *una sancta* in a spiritual way: that is, according to his  
soul, not according to his body. The following statement is  
quoted by Walther, in his Die Rechte Gestalt, in order to  
show the true nature of the *una sancta*: "Also wenn der Kaiser  
allen durchgehends ein Fasten geboete, so gehorchen auch die,  
so in der Kirche sind, weil die Kirche unter dem Kaiser nach  
dem Fleisch ist, nicht aber als Kirche gehorchet." 124)  
Thus the glory of the Church invisible finds its proper em-  
phasis in the theses of Walther's theology.

122) Note: Luther includes 'prayer' and 'sanctification' as  
the marks of the Church, but in the wider sense.

123) Walther: *op. cit.*, p. 55;

124) Walther: Die Rechte Gestalt, p. 11; (We shall see how  
Loehs misapplies this analogy of Luther's)

The Local Congregation in Relation to the Una Sancta:

The local congregation finds a very prominent place in the development of Walther's doctrine of the Church and Ministry. Basing his theses especially upon the universal priesthood of all believers, he places in the foreground the supremacy of the local congregation. He says:

"An Evangelical Lutheran local congregation is a gathering of believing Christians at a definite place, among whom the Word of God is preached in its purity according to the Confessions of the Ev. Luth. Church and the holy sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution as recorded in the Gospels, in whose society, however, false Christians and hypocrites will always, and manifest sinners may sometimes be found." 125)

Similarly, following the definition of Walther, we may state:

"A local congregation is the total number of believers who at a specific locality gather about God's Word and the Sacraments. While the local congregation properly speaking is composed of believers only, hypocrites are and manifest sinners may be mingled in the outward association of the true believers." 126)

In other words, according to the thesis of Walther, the local congregation in the proper sense is the una sancta representativa. This is the part of the whole Christian Church, represented in the local congregation, a group of true believers at a particular place.

125) Walther and the Church, p. 88;

126) F. E. Meyer: Notes on the Doctrine of the Church, p.24;

The View of Stephan and Grabau on the Local Congregations:

In contrast to the high regard which Walther expressed for the local congregation, we find certain tendencies at his time which motivated the very wording of his theses to guard against the aberrations of these erring leaders. Most prominent are the views of Stephan and Grabau, who did not share Walther's point of view in any respect. To Stephan especially, the local congregation was to be a rather passive, subservient, and inactive group. For him the clergy of higher rank towered above the congregation. The very fact that he so readily assumed the office of bishop shows his hierarchical tendencies. To be sure, it was by tacit consent. This was, however, only after he had persuaded them of the 'correctness' of his views. One phrase seems to echo thru his writings: 'Die Laien muessen gehorchen.' (The laity must obey). Stephan often insisted upon carrying out his plans without consulting his members. Even in matters of adiaphora he was very dictatorial. Cfr. Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Missouriischen Synode. While much of this sad period resulted in much emotional and tendential recording of events, the germ of truth can be found: Stephan mistrusted the rights of the laity. ✓ ||

Grabau, like Stephan, held a very disparaging view of the congregation. Though he admitted that they (laity) had the right to call and to elect a pastor, the clergy must



be there continually, to expedite matters and control every-  
thing. (Cfr. Unit II). Grabau expressed and reflected his  
view of the congregation in his definition of the local cong-  
regation: "Der Pastor und die Vorsteher sind die Gemeinde."  
127) Grabau also denies the authority of the congregation  
by depriving them of the right of final decisions: "Also soll  
das hoechste und letzte Gericht nicht der Haufen einer Orts-  
gemeinde, sondern der Haufe der Apostel, und jetzt die im  
heiligen Predigtamt stehende haben, in dem Amt, das die Be-  
kenntniss fuehret." 128) Anticipating Unit II, we cite the  
view of Grabau in regard to the relation of the congregation  
to the Office of the Keys: "Die Gemeinde hat die Schluessel  
nicht unmittelbar, sondern mittelbar im Worte Gottes und im  
heiligen Predigtamt." 129) What Stephan and Grabau feared  
was the 'Poebelherrschaft', as they termed the rights of a  
layman. 1103-2112

#### The View of Loehle and the Iowa Synod:

Another view, prevalent in Walther's day,  
was likewise Romanizing, but not quite as crass as the for-  
mer position. This was the conception of Loehle with regard to  
the congregation. In order to understand Loehle's view, one  
must bear in mind the large role which the State-Church idea  
played in his thinking. Moreover, his concept continually as-

- 127) Synodal-Bericht, 1901, p. 46;  
128) Grabau: Informatorium, II, 5.6.  
129) Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 14 of series;

sociates the Lutheran Church as a whole with the idea of the Church, as an ideal yet to be realized, with the result that the concept of the local congregation recedes into the background. Loehs states that the local congregation is to be conceived only together with the Church at large:

"Und da eine Gemeinde nur einen oder etliche Prediger haben wird, so wird man auf den Zusammenhang mit Presbyterien oder Ministerium der naechsten Gemeinden, d.i. auf Organisirung eines groesseren Ganzen wie von selbst hin gefuehrt und genoehtigt, und so gewisz das Setzen dem Ministerium zugewiesen ist, so gewis wird alsdann nicht die Ortsgemeinde (independentische Gemeinde) allein, sondern sie im Zusammenhang mit dem und geleitet von dem Ministerium des groesseren Complexes, zu dem sie gehoert, Wahl und Berufung vorzunehmen haben." 130)

Loehs's view is definitely Romanizing, because it has little prominence for the local congregation and stresses instead the visible Church at large. His view is definitely hierarchical, for it gives so much authority to the clergy which is not warranted by Scripture. The latter trend is particularly evident in his statement: "Alle sind einig, Hirten und Heerde, jene verfahren ganz im Sinne und unter Zustimmung der Gemeinde, wenn sie ihres Amtes walten, und was sie amtlich thun, das hat mit ihnen die ganze Gemeinde in ihrem Masse zu thun." 131) Hebart states the conclusion from this idea of Loehs's: "Ohne Amt kann die Gemeinde nicht foermlich

130) Loehs: Unsere Kirchl. Lage, pp. 97 and 98;  
 131) Hebart: op. cit., quoting Loehs's Vorschlag zur Hingung, p. 58;

bannen." 132) When Loehle speaks of the Power of the Keys, he continues to give us the same impression. As indicated in the former quotations, Loehle maintains that the clergy should and must be present, should and must cast a vote with the congregation. (Cfr. Unit II). For Loehle, not the local congregation as Walther saw it, but the congregation in 'Gesamtheit' has the Office of the Keys, meaning the clergy particularly.

In this connection, it is well to examine the definition of a congregation, or of the 'Gemeinde' concept in Loehle's thinking. He calls the congregation a dualism, consisting of clergy and laity. He states:

"Unter Gemeinde aber sind ordentlicher Weise nicht bloss diejenigen zu verstehen, welche das Amt nicht haben (die Laien), sondern auch die, welche es haben (das Ministerium, presbyterium), und erst aus Zusammensetzung der beiden zu einem Ganzen wird die Gemeinde, durch welche Gott das Amt fortpflanzt." 133)

He says, moreover:

"Aus all dem Gesagten ist ein kirchlicher Dualismus zwischen dem Ministerium und dem Volke und ein Zusammenwirken beider zur Amtfortpflanzung zu erkennen. Diesen Dualismus, der eben so wohl in der Natur einer Gemeinschaft (italics our own), als in Worte Gottes begründet ist, hat der Herr fuerst erste im Interesse seiner Wahrheit gewollt. Die Gemeindeglieder und das Ministerium, jedes an seinem Teil und fuer sich, koennen von der Wahrheit fallen. Geschieht es beiden zugleich, so verlischt die

132) -----

Loc. cit.

133) Loehle: Kirche u. Amt, Erlangen, 1851, p. 52;

Leuchte, und es gibt keine Hilfe mehr als Gottes wunderbare Gnade. Faellt aber bloß ein Teil dahin, so ist der andere zum Stuetzpunkt der Wahrheit versehen. Die Gemeinde hat bei diesem Dualismus alle Freiheit, sich vor falschen Propheten zu hueten, gegen falsche Lehrer, die sie schon haette, sich in Gottes Namen zu erheben, gegen Aufbuerdung solcher, die man ihr erst geben wollte, sich zu wehren." 134)

Loeche becomes very definite when he stresses the importance of the clergy's role:

"Andererseits vermag auch die Gemeinde, so lange sie des Herrn sein will, nichts ohne das Ministerium, auf die Eintracht mit welchem sie apostolisch ist...Kein Lehrer kann aufkommen, ueber den nicht Gemeinde und Ministerium (italics our own) einstimmig geworden sind, es sei denn dass man den Leib Christi zerreißen wollte. (Evidently the clergy, or ministerium, belongs to the essence of the Church)-Nur wer unter Zusammenklang der beiden Factoren der Gemeinde berufen wird, weidet im Vertrauen, und findet in diesem Vertrauen den von Gott gesegneten fruchtbaren Boden der Wirksamkeit." 135)

Gfr. Deindoerfer, op. cit., p. 27, point 3.

This dualism reflects Loeche's view of the Church as a visible body. He states:

"Das Presbyterium, das Episcopat erweist sich als aeusserliches Bindemittel und Einheitspunkt der Gemeinden eines Bekenntnisses. Durch Zusammenhang mit demselben wird ein Haufe zur Gemeinde eines Bekenntnisses. Durch Zusammenhang mit demselben wird ein Haufe zur Gemeinde (not faith is stressed by Loeche, but connection with clergy makes it a congregation..of. clergy is Church), durch Anerkennung eines gemeinsamen, zur Amtsbestellung mitwirkenden Ministeriums ein Haufe von Gemeinden zu einem sichtbaren

134) Loeche: op. cit., p. 71;

135) Loeche: op. cit., pp. 71 and 72;

Ganzen. An ihren Ministerien schliessen sie sich kenntlich und fuehlbar zusammen. Die Einheit im Bekenntnis drueckt sich in der Kirchenverfassung durch die Gemeinschaft des Ministeriums aus." 136)

Furthermore, Loehle makes the ministry an essential mark of the Church: "So wird das Predigtamt mit ein auszueres Zeichen der Kirche und an ihm erscheinen klar die andern Zeichen: reines Wort und Sakrament." 137) That Loehle has the Lutheran Church as a whole in mind and lets the congregation recede into the background is manifested by his statement:

"Zwangles, jede fuer sich ihrer Dinge walgend, haben sie doch ein festes auszueres Band, das sie, weil in freier Zustimmung, desto fester halten und das auch sie desto fester haelt, aus welchem sich auch leicht eine gottwohlgefaellige Gesamtverfassung fuer viele vereinigen- den entwickeln kann." 138)

Therefore, the statement by Dr. Th. Buenger is correct:

"Da aber die Gemeinde nur einen oder etliche Prediger hat, so meint Loehle, wuerde man auf eine Organisierung eines groeszeren Ganzen hingeleitet, und das Ministerium des groeszeren Koerpers, also bei uns die Synode, haette dann Wahl und Berufung vorzunehmen." 139)

Equally strange is Loehle's position that no order and discipline is possible in the local congregation without the ministerium occupying this high rank and authority. He writes concerning the dualism of clergy and laity:

"Auf diesem Dualismus ruht auch Zucht und moegliche Reinheit. So wie die Gemeinde erst durch

136) Loehle: op. cit., pp. 72 and 73;  
137) Loehle: op. cit., pp. 53;  
138) Loehle: op. cit., p. 73;  
139) Syn. Bericht, 1901, p. 59;

Zusammenschluss mit dem Ministerium zu Gemeinde wird; (Clergy makes the Church!) so werden auch ihre Ordnungen alle erst durch diesen Zusammenschluss zur Wahrheit. Paer alle Ordnung der Gemeinde ist das Presbyterium Anfang, Ausgangspunkt und, wie man sagt, Princip. Was von allen Ordnungen gesagt ist, gilt insonderheit von der Zuchtordnung." 140)

For Loehle, the congregation finds its summit not in its inherent rights and privileges, but in the clergy:

"Wie die Gemeinde im Presbyterium gipfelt und der Herr durchs Presbyterium mit ihr handelt; so gipfelt in dem antlich formalen Thun und in der Leitung des Presbyteriums der heilige Ernst der Gemeinde, das Boese nicht zu leiden, und der Herr reicht ihr im absolvierenden oder bindenden Ministerium die Hand. Das Amt der Schlüssel vollendet die Gemeinde zu einem festen und kraeftigen Organismus, und durch es tritt der leuchtende Gang ihrer Heiligung ans Licht." 141)

Thus, for Loehle, Grabau, and Stephan, the local congregation is a seeming non-entity, an abstract thing, without the clergy. If it is to have a full concept, they maintain, the ministerium must be included, as well as the other congregations. Loehle disliked any elevation of the congregation to the heights of Walther's theses, cfr. Loehle: Aphorismen ueber die neutestamentl. Aemter, p. 130. A. Loehle

This view reflected itself also in the later development of the Iowa Synod. It is apparent especially in their doctrine of the call and the Office of the Keys. An ex-

140) Loehle: op. cit., p. 73;

141) Loehle: op. cit., p. 73;

tract from the Constitution of the Iowa Synod (which now is part of the American Lutheran Church): (Cfr. also: Deindoerfer, Geschichte der Ev. Luth. Kirche, Synode von Iowa, Wartburg Publ. House, Chicago, 1897, p. 83, points 5-7):

"Tritt die Nothwendigkeit der Berufung eines neuen Pastors ein, so wirket die Gemeinde mit dem Ministerium zusammen. Die Gemeinde wendet sich entweder durch die Kirchenverwaltung oder durch einen benachbarten Pastor an das Ministerium mit der Bitte, ihr einen neuen Pastor zu setzen. Hat die Gemeinde bereits zu einem Pastoren oder Candidaten Vertrauen, so kann sie ihn dem Ministerium bezeichnen zur Berufung, und das Ministerium hat die Pflicht ohne Noth dem Willen der Gemeinde nicht zuwider zu sein. Ist aber dieses nicht der Fall, so wird ihr das Ministerium einen andern, wo moeglich mehrere, in Vorschlag bringen. Werden ihr mehrere vorgeschlagen, so wahlen die stimmfaehigen Gemeinde-Glieder einen unter Zuziehung und Leitung eines Gliedes unsers Ministeriums durch Stimmenmehrheit. Die Vocation ist vom Ministerium zu unterzeichnen." 142)

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142) Chr. Otto Kraushaar: Verfassungsformen der Luth. Kirche Amerikas, Guetersloh, C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1911, p. 148, Kirchenordnungen von 1856;

Note: In concluding this Unit, of the Doctrine of the Church, we should like to stress the fact that both Grabau and Loehe seemed to divide their concept of the Church into two parts. Loehe, as we have seen, regards the ministerium and the laity together as consisting of the congregation. Grabau views the Church as consisting of two states, the ecclesiastical, which governed, and the domestic, which obeyed. These two states, said Grabau, make up the visible community which is the Church. Cf. Walther and the Church, Foreword, p. VI. Cf. Loehe's 'Hirtenstand'.

Walther's Thesis Proved:

Walther's thesis that the local congregation is the una sancta representativa, in contrast to the peculiar views expressed by Stephan, Grabau, and Loehe, is proved by several passages of Scripture. Among them are: Acts 2, 42-47; Acts 15, 6 ff., and also Acts 5. 143) The local congregation, in the proper sense, is the una sancta at a particular place. The una sancta is found wherever the Word and Sacraments are administered. (Cfr. previous discussion)

That is the reason why Walther shows from Scripture that the local congregation must be given honorable titles. We note, for instance, Acts 20,28: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Also, Rom. 1,7 shows how the local congregation is regarded: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." Then also: I Cor. 1,2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Other passages are: II Cor. 3,3; 6,16; 11,2; Phil. 1,1 etc.

143) Walther's approach and Pieper's approach differ from each other in this respect: Walther conceives of the local congregation as part of the una sancta, as the Church, by synecdoche: because some members belong to the una sancta, the whole congregation is pictured as part of the una sancta, by this figure, Pieper states that when Scripture uses the term 'ekklesia', in the greetings to the various congregations, it means only the believers.



From this fact it follows that such a group, honored with names belonging to the una sancta, certainly also have the privileges which accrue to those belonging to the una sancta. Here we see the strong point in Walther's thesis; he exalts the local congregation to its proper rank. He states in Thesis VII:

"Even as the visible communions in which the Word and the Sacraments still exist in their essence, bear, according to God's Word, the name of CHURCHES because of the true invisible Church of the true contained in them, so likewise they, because of the true, invisible Church concealed in them, though there be but two or three, possess the POWER which Christ has given to His entire Church." 144)

Even Hebart presents Walther as defending the rights of the local congregation in opposition to any encroachment upon the same:

"Hier wird ganz klar, dass Walther bestrebt ist, sich der Freiheitsliebe der Gemeinden moeglichst anzupassen. Nicht nur dem Amte gegenueber bewahrt die Einzelgemeinde ihre Rechte, auch im kirchlichen Verband, in der Synode, hat nun jede Gemeinde voellige Freiheit. Sie hat selbst Kirchenregiment." 145)

While Hebart seems to understand this view of Walther, he does

144) Walther and the Church, p.64;

145) Hebart, op. cit., p. 168;

not interpret Walther's motivation accurately. It was not to satisfy the popular love of Christian liberty, but an attempt to quiet disturbed consciences through the Word of God that moved Walther to state his theses in this way and to stress the rights of the individual believer. 146) Walther was motivated by the force of Scriptural statements to do this, not by the desire of the laity for power and freedom. Hebart is correct in stating that Walther viewed the congregation as a self-governing body. The local church was to be supreme. It is very conceivable that this view of Walther did not find favor with men in the Romanizing ranks, nor with many in European circles.

One of the chief opponents of Walther's view was Loehe, who otherwise had a very intimate relationship with the Saxon group. He feared that Walther's stress on lay rights and on congregational self-government was influenced by the American democratic spirit. Loehe wrote:

"Wie heillos die saechsischen Brueder von Stephan betrogen worden, weiss jedermann. An ihm hatten sie hierarchische Bestrebungen der schlimmsten Art kennen gelernt, und die gewaltige Enttauschung war ganz geeignet, sie von jedem hierarchischen Gedanken zu befreien, dagegen aber fuer eine Art amerikanisch

146) Note: We might add here that in Unit II we shall discuss in greater detail the Office of the Keys as administered by the local congregation through the local ministry.

Ausprägung des allgemeinen Priestertums empfaenglich zu machen." 147)

In another section Loehle says:

"Bei aller Hochachtung und Liebe vermag ichs aber doch nicht zu verhehlen, dass mir der lutherische Grundsatz von der Befugnis der Gemeinden oftmals auf eine gefaehrliche Weise hervorzutreten scheint, dass die theuern Brueder nicht bloss Stellen aus Luthers Werken, die wahrlich nicht fuer amerikanische Verhaeltnisse geschrieben sind, sondern auch eigene Gedanken, veroeffentlichen, die amerikanische Lust und Neigung fuer fleischliche Lust und Neigung fuer fleischliche Freiheit in kirchlichen Dingen naehren koennen." 148)

Moreover, he places the charge: "So fuerchte ich auch, es moechte manches in Wort und That meiner theuren Brueder in Missouri usw. den Verdacht entschuldigen, dass sie im Betreff der kirchlichen Verfassungsfrage von amerikanisch-demokratischen Geiste angehaucht seien." 149)

Nevertheless, in spite of these objections, Walther had definite Scriptural proof for his view. He drew his thesis from such passages as Matth. 18, 17: "Tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This is very evident that a local church is spoken of. He decisively wins his point when he stresses verse 18, which guarantees and delegates the power of the keys to each local church: "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be

147) Loehle: Unsere Kirchl. Lsgg. p. 87;

148) Loehle: op. cit., p. 104;

149) Loehle: op. cit., p. 105;

bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But Walther makes certain that this applies not only to a large congregation, but to the small one as well. It is not size, but faith, which makes them possessors of this glorious power. He quotes also verses 19 and 20: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." We might also add Walther's consideration:

"Accordingly, if in a local congregation there were only two or three believers, true children of God, true members of the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, the congregation would on account of them be a congregation of God and in legitimate possession of all rights and powers which Christ has acquired for, and given to, His Church." 150)

Walther brings testimony for his position by citing several statements from the Confessions.

"Dass wir auch gar nicht zweifeln, dass eine christliche Kirche auf Erden lebe und sei, welche Christi Braut sei, obwohl der gottlose Hauf mehr und grosser ist, dass auch der Herr Christus hie auf Erden in dem Haufen, welcher Kirche heisst, taeglich wirke, Suende vergebend, taeglich das Gebet erhoeere, taeglich in Anfechtungen die Seinen mit reichem starkem Trost erquickte, und immer wieder auf richts; so ist

150) Walther and the Church, p. 64;

der troestliche Artikel in Glauben gesetzt: 'Ich glaube eine katholische gemeine christliche Kirche.' Hiernach bekennt die Apologie, dasz man darum gewisz sein koenne, dasz Gott 'in dem Haufen, welcher Kirche heiszt,' obwohl er viele Nichtheilige enthaelt, wirke, weil wir glauben koennen und sollen, dasz mitten in diesem sichtbaren Haufen eine heilige christliche Kirche verborgen liege, welche den Herrn und seine Gueter mitten unter sich hat." 151)

Another reason why Walther so clearly shows that the una sancta is represented by the local congregation is that he wished to stress the identity of the duties of the members of the una sancta with the duties of the local congregation. Walther states: "It is the duty of the congregation carefully to see to it that the Word of God may richly dwell and have full and free scope in its midst. Col. 3,16: 'Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly!' etc.152) This also agrees with the words of the Smalcald Articles: "Wherever the Church is, there is the authority (command) to administer the Gospel." 153) The Apology states: "The true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the Sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like." 154) Luther's statement has become proverbial: "God's Word cannot be without God's people. On the other hand, God's people cannot be without God's Word." 155)

151) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 78 and 79;

152) Walther and the Church, p. 91;

153) Loc. cit.

154) Loc. cit.

155) Luther: vol. XVI, par. 2276, (St. Louis ed.)

Furthermore, Walther states in par. 7 of his Die Rechte Gestalt that the duty of the congregation is also to care for the purity of doctrine and life in its midst and to exercise church discipline in these matters. This is the very task of the members of the una sancta. The following passages indicate the correctness of Walther's position. These are addressed to local congregations. Besides Matth. 18, 15-18, he cites Romans 16, 17: "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses among you contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Also, I Cor. 5, 1-13: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?... Put away from among you the wicked person."..Cfr. also: I Cor. 6, 1-8; II Cor. 2, 6-11; Gal. 6,1; 5,14; II Thessal. 3,6; also, v. 14 and 15; II John 10. 11.

Various other duties give one the definite assurance that, when we deal with the local congregation in the proper sense, we are dealing with the una sancta representa-tiva.

In this connection, it is especially important to note that Walther's deep respect for the rights of the local congregation is not to be understood as placing the congregation above Scripture. (This was the charge raised by the opponents, cfr. Hirtenbrief.) Walther stressed the sola Scriptura as well. The local congregation is not to be bound by

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any pope, hierarchy, clergy, but by Scripture alone. This is entirely different from Congregationalism 156), on the one hand, and the Anabaptist conception, on the other. In Congregationalism, likewise, the congregation is supreme, but in a more radical sense, for it can decide what doctrine it is to teach and what it wishes to believe. In the next unit, we shall see that Walther teaches that the local congregation has the right to judge doctrine (in fact every believer has this right), but this is no license to create or reject Scriptural doctrine according to one's personal desires. Furthermore, the view of Walther is oppsed to any lowering of the office of the ministry, as is the case with many of the enthusias- tic sects, which maintain that the public ministry is not a necessity. In a word, then, Walther's view of the congrega- tional rights was both a Scriptural and a balanced one. One can little realize or predict what the outcome of the Luth- eran Church's work would have been without his noble efforts.

156) Cfr. Williston Walker: Creeds and Platforms of Congrega- tionalism, p. 548: "Allow to each other the right to form an unbiased judgment of the Word of God."

Cfr. Congregational Creed of 1883, based on the Savoy Declaration of 1658, Article XI: "We believe that the Church of Christ, invisible and spiritual, com- prises all true believers, whose duty it is to as- sociate themselves in churches, for the manifesta- tion of worship, for the promotion of spiritual growth, and fellowship, and for the conversion of men; that these churches, under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures and in fellowship with one another, may determine - each for itself- their organization, statements of beliefs, etc. Ph. Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III, p. 913; (This is the leading principle of the Congregational Church, and upon which they have prided themselves to this day)

Unit II: The Doctrine of the Ministry

In the Letter to the Ephesians, Paul develops the concept of the Church as the body of Christ, the total of all true believers in Christ, their Head. Accordingly, as we have seen, Walther also defines the Church as the sum total of those who believe in Jesus Christ, their savior. In thesis VII particularly, Walther treats of the local congregation, as the representative group of the una sancta, as well as in Thesis VI of his doctrine of the Church. The members of the una sancta possess by faith all the treasures of God's grace, including the Office of the Keys and the administration of the means of grace. Paul had stressed the wealth of these treasures and then proceeded to show how these treasures are placed at the Church's disposal. Having given to the believers the means of grace, God gave them the right to exercise the Office of the Keys. As Walther points out, then, the Church, in obedience to the command and according to the institution of Christ, establishes the public ministry in her midst. Walther explains in what manner the Church follows these divine ordinances and establishes the office of the ministry for the welfare of souls purchased with Christ's blood,



Although Walther regards the status of the believer very highly, he does not fail to make the proper distinction between the office of the believer and the office of the public ministry. On the one hand, he states that the ministry flows from the priesthood of all believers, but makes a distinction between the two offices: "The holy ministry, or the pastoral office, is an office distinct from the priestly office, which belongs to all believers." 157)

Definition of the Ministry:

In Walther's theses of the doctrine of the ministry, we notice that his treatment agrees very well with his doctrine of the Church. However, there had been certain undercurrents of thinking within the Lutheran Church which led Walther to emphasize certain points very definitely and to bring them into sharp relief. While the Lutheran theologians were agreed that the office of the ministry was ordained by God, the difference becomes apparent when we note the interpretations of Thesis I. In our discussion, we shall pay particular attention to Walther's position in direct contrast to the views expressed by Loehe and Grabau.

157) Walther and the Church, p. 71, Thesis I; (on ministry)

The Divine Institution of the Ministry: Involved in the Definition of the Office of the Ministry;

In writing his famous Hirtenbrief, Grabau correctly stressed the fact that the office of the ministry was ordained by God. He stated:

"Die Heilige Schrift lehrt vom heiligen Predigtamt, dass es sei ein solcher von Gott verordneter Stand auf Erden, in welchem Er etliche gewisse tuechtige Personen aus den Menschen dazu verordnet, dass sie mit goettlicher Autoritaet als Botschafter an seiner Statt, ihres Herrn Wort Andern vortragen, die Sakramente ihnen reichen, sie also zu Christo zu fuehren und zum ewigen Leben erbauen sollen. Diese Definition stimmt genau mit Gottes Wort." 158)

Like Grabau, Walther firmly believed that the office of the ministry was instituted by God, for he says: "The holy ministry, or the pastoral office, is not a human ordinance, but an office established by God Himself." 159) Therefore, it is evident that Walther did not view the ministerial office as a merely historical development within the Church, which came of necessity, but as a work of God Himself. 160) He proved this, first of all, from the Old Testament prophecies, which promise that God Himself would bestow pastors upon the Church: "The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it." Ps. 68, 11/. He also quoted Jer. 3,15:

158) Grabau: Anticritique, p. 38;  
159) Walther and the Church, p. 71, Thesis II (Translation)  
160) There have been individual theologians in the Wisconsin Synod who were not convinced that the office of the ministry was a divine institution.

Note: There have been controversies, esp. among German theologians, as to whether both the Predigtamt and the Pfarramt are divinely instituted.

"I will give you pastors according to Mine heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." In using Joel 2,23, Walther employed Luther's translation: 'teachers of righteousness', which is the marginal reading of the Authorized Version. Moreover, said Walther, the divine institution of the ministry is evident from the call of the apostles to the ministry of teaching by the Son of God: 161) Matth. 10; 28, 18-20; Luke 9, 1-10; Mark 16, 15; John 20, 21-23; 21, 15-17; and of the seventy disciples: as recorded in Luke 10, 1-22.

Other evidences for the divine institution of the ministry will be considered in connection with our discussion of the divinity of the call issued by the local congregation.

Walther's position is also in full accord with the Lutheran Confessions. He quotes the following: "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das Predigtamt eingesetzt." 162) His view is similarly congruent with the writings of the writings of the Church Fathers and leaders in the past: "Ich hoffe, ja, dass die Gläubigen und welche Christen heissen wollen, fast wohl wissen, dass der geistliche Stand sei von Gott eingesetzt und gestiftet." 163)

161) Cfr. Walther and the Church, p. 72;

162) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 194, quoting the Augs. Conf., Art. V;

163) Walther: op. cit., p. 196, quoting Luther;

From the writings of Chemnitz, Walther selects the following: "Dass das Amt des Wortes und der Sakramente von dem Sohne Gottes auch im N.T. eingesetzt sei, ist kein Zweifel. Die Kirche hat auch den Befehl, Diener zu berufen und zu bestellen." 164) He also gives this interesting quotation from Gerhard, as an evidence that his thesis expresses true Lutheran teaching: "Die urspruengliche wirkende Ursache des Kirchen-amtes ist der einige und alleinige wahre Gott Vater, Sohn, und Heiliger Geist." 165) Walther intensifies and deepens the reader's understanding of the divine institution of the ministry by selecting Gerhard's statements regarding the evidences for the divine institution. These evidences, five in number, are of value and of force because they emphasize what Scripture has stated on this point. First of all, there are specific passages which prove explicitly the divinity of the ministerial office. Secondly, there are many promises which God gives to the shepherds of His Word. Among them are the promises for the granting and the preservation of the teaching office. Thirdly, God gives honorable titles to Himself as the Preserver of this office. These passages show that the office belongs to Him. Fourthly, God exhorts the Christians to appoint pastors. Fifthly, the fact that God transferred the teaching functions over to Adam, Noah, and the patriarchs,

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164) Walther: op. cit., pp. 198 and 199;

165) Walther: loc. cit.

and later to the apostles, brings evidence for this conclusion. Another evidence is the fact that the Holy Ghost once spoke through the prophets which were sent by God as well as through the holy writers of the New Testament, who were sent by the Church. From I Cor. 12, 4-11 it is very evident that the Holy Ghost gives His servants needed gifts, and hence, He is the Author and Preserver of the ministry.

Loehe, like Walther and Grabau, agreed that the office of the ministry was instituted by God. He states his position very clearly: "So ist es doch auch ueber alle Zweifel erhaben, dasz der Herr Christus selbst ein Amt des Neuen Testaments gestiftet hat." 166) However, he adds: "welches mit dem allgemeinen Priesterthum aller Christen durchaus nicht vermengt<sup>werden</sup> darf und von diesem eben so wenig aufgehoben wird, als es dasselbe aufhebt." 167) Loehle, as one notices from his statements, felt that the so-called 'transference' theory of Walther eliminated the divine institution. The dilemma which Loehle forcefully pressed was: either the ministry is from God, or it is from the congregation. Of this we shall treat later. Then, Loehle insisted that the office of the ministry was instituted by God together with the Sacraments, together with the means of grace. Above One paragraph he gives the heading: "Mit den Gnademitteln ist das Amt gestiftet." 168)

166) Loehle: Aphorismen ueber die neutestamentlichen Aemter und ihr Verhaeltnis zur Gemeinde, Nuernberg, 1849, p. 11;

167) Loehle: loc. cit., (This may not be an extreme statement, in view of the enthusiasts' abuse of the priesthood of all believers. Yet, his stress upon the ministry and his distinction between the two offices goes farther than Walther's distinction, as we shall see later.)

168) Loehle: Kirche u. Amt, p. 21, par. 10;

The impression is given that these two gifts of God, the office of the ministry and the sacraments are almost inseparably united. 169) He says: "Die Gnadenmittel erheischen gebieterisch Menschen, welche sie verwalten, weder Wort noch Sakrament verwaltet sich selbst, so verwaltet sie auch nicht der heilige Geist in eigener und sichtbarer Gestalt." 170) He combines the institution of the Altar Sacrament, very closely with the institution of the office of the ministry: "Und wie er daher theils vor seinem Sterben, theils vor seiner Auffahrt den Predigtbefehl gab und die Sacramente stiftete; so berief er gleichzeitig auch Menschen zur Verwaltung und gab ihnen die Verheissung seines Beistandes bis ans Ende der Tage." 171) Here already, then, we see a great difference in the minds of the various theologians as the understanding of the clause: "The office of the ministry is instituted by God."

In this connection we recall what we have previously stated regarding Loehle's view of the ministry. We might add, however, that, while he believed in the divine institution of the ministry, he maintained that it was ordained within the priesthood of all believers, but did not flow from the priesthood of all believers. He stressed

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169) We grant that there is an intimate connection between the office of the ministry and the administration of the means of grace, but that this must be correctly understood. See later section on administration of the means of grace.

170) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 20;

171) Loehle: op. cit., pp. 21 and 22;

particularly the expression 'en tee ekklesia', in I Cor. 12, 28, from which he concluded that persons singled out from the group of believers were called pastors, but not that the congregation 'transferred' the office from themselves to one individual. 172) This matter will be discussed when we treat the Office of the Keys.

The Romanizing tendencies of certain Lutheran leaders and theologians of Walther's day become very apparent in the description of the office of the ministry. This general attitude of minimizing the rights and privileges of the laity is the strong point of similarity of the hierarchical Lutherans with the Roman errors. For Rome the believer's rights are not spoken of particularly, but rather the member's submission to the Vicar of Christ and to the clergy of the Church. Rome emphasizes the clergy as the Church, the teaching office. The chief difficulty in the Romanizing Lutheran theories is their failure to distinguish clearly between the ministry in abstracto and the ministry in concreto. From all appearances, Grabau viewed the office of the ministry as identical with the ministerium. He, likewise, fails to differentiate between the ministry in the abstract and the ministry in the concrete: he makes the ministry appear as a rank, a higher state, or

172) Dr. Theo. Graebner, who holds Walther's view, makes an excellent distinction: "The ministerial office does not originate with the general priesthood of believers. It originated through an institution by Jesus Christ, when He, in the apostolate, established the public ministry. It is Christ likewise who calls our pastors, each into his respective office, to his particular parish. But He does this mediately, through the congregation. By virtue of possessing these rights for their own use," etc. Luth. Witness, vol. LV, p. 98;

as a priesthood. "Wahrend das geistliche Priesterthum einer Person ihr glaeubiges Verhaeltnis zu dem versoehnten Gott ist, so ist das heilige Predigtamt ein von Gott geordneter Stand, der es mit der Gemeinde zu thun hat."

173) What Grabau undoubtedly feared was an abuse of the Christian liberty on the part of the laity. However, such a definition as this results in a too rigid and unbiblical distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the ministry.

That Grabau evidently defined the ministry as constituting the clergy, i.e., the persons holding the office of the ministry, one can notice from his following remark:

"Die Gewalt aber des Pradigens, Bindens und Loesens, geht durch ordentliche Mittel aus dem Evangelio des Mundes Christi in den Mund der Apostel, Propheten, Hirten und Lehrer ueber. Und so tritt es als ein Amt oder Kirchengewalt hervor in die taegliche Ausuebung, und wird dann der Name 'Kirchengewalt' in keinem anderem Verstande gebraucht, denn als Amtsname gewisser Personen 'in' der Kirche." 174)

Walther, on the other hand, showed that Grabau failed to distinguish between the possession and the practical use of the Church Power. In his rebuttal, Walther shows that Grabau is Romanizing by citing Bellarmin's statement:

"Die ganze Vollmacht der Kirche ist formaliter nur in den

173) Grabau: Anticritique to Hirtenbrief, p. 38,2;

174) Grabau: Informatorium, vol. I, p. 85;



Kirchenpraelaten, sowie das Gesicht des ganzen Koerpers formaliter nur in dem Haupte ist." 175) Viewing this very objectively, one is compelled to reach such a conclusion, for Walther's comparisons were not overdrawn, but indicative of a deep insight into the various ramifications of the clericalistic view of the ministry. Another statement by Grabau shows the justification for Walther's contention:

"Wir glauben und bekennen auch, dass dieses Amt als Gottes eigene Ordnung in der Kirche einen absonderlichen Stand mache..Der Apostel Petrus sagt: (I Ep. 5,1.2.) nicht: priestert anstatt der Heerde, die auch etwas uebertragen hat,... Wir priestern nicht aus eigenem Glauben oder geistlichen Priesterthum an unser oder anderer Leute statt." 176)

In contrast to Grabau, Walther shows that the difference between the priesthood of believers and the office of the ministry is not a difference in functions, but in the use of the same functions. In other words, the public administration of the means of grace, though a right belonging to all, is delegated to one individual. In other words, the ministry is the public administration of the Office of the Keys and the means of grace. All believers have this inherent right, but, in obedience to divine command and for the

175) Lutheraner, vol. 9, series, par. 23;

176) Grabau: Informatorium, Vol. I, pp. 73.74.75.

x) Doctrine in the Church of England: p. 115; Macmillan, New York, 1938: "The ministry, then, is to be regarded as an original and essential element in the Church..But distinction corresponding to that was drawn later between clergy and laity. Kleeros and laos is there from the outset..yet the Ministry exists in succession to the original Apostolate.. But Christ, in drawing men to Himself, unites them in a bond of fellowship of which the Apostolate and the Ministry are the ministreing organs."

sake of order, delegate these functions to one individual. He performs these duties in their name and in their stead, while they still remain possessors of these rights. The ministry is, then, not the body of ordained persons, but the office of administering the means of grace and exercising the Office of the Keys.

Keeping in mind Grabau's clericalism, we can readily see why Walther worded his thesis so pointedly:

"The ministry of preaching is not a peculiar order, set up over and against the common estate of Christians, and holier than the latter, like the priesthood of the Levites, but it is an office of service." 177)

This thesis of Walther was the result of his thorough investigation of such passages as I Pet. 2,9 and Rev. 1,6, in which the Christians are called 'kings and priests'.

178) All believing Christians belong to a priestly estate. Moreover, there is no rank among themselves, for they are 'all one in Christ Jesus', Gal. 3,28; 'they are all brethren', Matth. 23, 8-12. Walther makes the difference between the universal priesthood and the ministry very plain:

"However, as in the Old Covenant all sons of Aaron were indeed of priestly descent and order, while only some were engaged in the priestly office and ministered, so in the New Covenant also those who are in charge of the public ministry of preaching are not priests on that account or priests before others, but they are only the ministering persons among a priestly people." 179)

177) Walther and the Church, p. 73, Thesis IV;

178) Cf. Loche's rebuttal, in his Kirche und Amt, p. 38 f., in which he denies that these passages prove this point.

179) (Walther) loc. cit. (Walther and the Church)

Other passages bring out the fact that the ministry is precisely what the etymology of the word indicates: it is an office of service, as Walther also maintained. "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believe?" I Cor. 3,5. "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus, the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." II Cor. 4,5. Finally, also: "For His body's sake, which is the Church, whereof I am a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given me for you to fulfil the Word of God." Coloss. 1, 24.25.

Walther's concept of the ministry as an office of service is in full agreement with the Confessions. He cites the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXII (X):

"Gabriel unter andern Ursachen, warum den Laien nicht beide Gestalt gereicht werde, setzt auch diese: es habe muessen ein Unterschied sein, sagt er, unter Priestern und Laien. Und ich halt wohl, es sei die groesste und fuernehmste Ursach, warum sie heutiges Tages festhalten, damit der Pfaffenstand heilliger scheine gegen den Laienstand; das ist nun ein Menschen-Gedanken; worauf der gehe, ist wohl abzunehmen." 180).

Another statement from the Apology emphasizes the ministry as an office of service: (Article XXIV, (XII)-)

"So heisset Liturgia griechisch eigentlich ein Amt, darinne man der Gemeinde dienet; das schicket sich wohl auf unsere Lehre, dasz der Priester da, als

180) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 222;

ein gemeiner Diener, denjenigen, so kommunizieren wollen, dienet und das heilige Sakrament reichet." 181)

Walther's thinking follows the same development of the doctrine of the ministry as the Confession do, on the basis of Scripture.

This view of the office of the ministry was also expressed in the various writings of orthodox theologians at the time of the Reformation and in subsequent periods of the Lutheran Church. Among these writers, Walther quotes Henricus Barnerus, who writes:

"Da muss man unterscheiden inter statum et officium, zwischen Stande und Amte, Zum Amte gehoeret specialis vocatio, sonderbarer Beruf; dasz muss aufgetragen, befohlen werden. Aber zum Stande nicht. So sind zwar alle Christen Priester, aber nicht alle Pfarrherrn." 182)

He also selects one of the statements by Luther:

"Darum sind wir Priester, so viel unser Christen sein. Welche wir aber Priester heissen, seind Diener von uns erwahlet, so auch in unserm Namen alles verrichten sollen. Und ist das Priesterthum nichts anders, denn ein Dienst." 183)

Walther very properly includes also the remarks made by Hesshusius in this connection:

"Alle glaeubige Christen, nicht allein die im heiligen Predigtamt sind, sondern auch weltliche Regenten und Handwerker, die im Namen Christi getauft, und durch den Heiligen Geist erneuret sind, die sind Priester und Priesterinnen, die Fug und Recht haben, geistliche Opfer zu opfern." 184)

181) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 222;

182) Walther: op. cit., pp. 222 and 223;

183) Walther: op. cit., p. 225;

184) Walther: op. cit., p. 234;

Irenaeus states: "Alle Gerechte sind priestlichen Standes."  
185) Walther also drew from the writings of Tertullian, Augustine, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Jerome, and even from the early writer, Justin Martyr, who emphasize this outstanding characteristic of the ministerial office: service. Walther quotes an excellent paragraph from Jerome's works:

"Zwischen einem Haushalter und den Dienerschaft ist lediglich der Unterschied, dass er als Mitknecht vorgesetzt ist seinen Mitknechten. So erkenne denn Bischof und Presbyter, dass der Haufe ihr Mitknecht, nicht ihr Knecht ist." 186)

Thus we see that the view of the earliest Church Fathers is that the ministry is an office of service. Thus, their view is repeated in the theses of Walther, centuries later. Walther's view, then, is not an eccentric and unwarranted one, but a position that is both Scriptural and ecumenical as well. This truth, that the ministry is an office of service, has been proclaimed by Christians in all ages and times.

In order to complete a survey of Walther's thesis that the ministry is an office of service, it is well to consider, as we have stated previously, that the leading Lutheran antagonists of Walther, especially Grabau, failed

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185) Walther: op. cit. p. 236;

186) Walther: op. cit., p. 237;

to distinguish between the ministerium in abstracto from the ministerium in concreto.<sup>y)</sup> The opponents identified the persons in the ministry with the office itself. This, as one can readily see, is definitely Romanizing, for Rome leaves very little for the layman in the way of rights and priesthood of all believers. A spiritual priesthood of all believers for Rome is something rather remote and abstract, if held at all by them. Walther, on the other hand, with the glory of the universal priesthood of believers before him, showed that the office of the ministry was an office of service. If that is true, then, the ministry in abstracto is the point to be stressed, not the composite group of pastors. Walther quoted from the Formula of Concord:

"Ministerium ecclesiasticum, hoc est, verbum Dei praedicatum et auditum (der Kirchendienst) das ist, das gepredigte und gehoerte Wort... Verbum illud, quo vocamur, ministerium Spiritus est", das Wort, dadurch wir berufen werden, ist ein Amt des Geistes." 187)

Walther, as we have observed, had a deep insight into the fundamental characteristic of the ministry, namely, service. Many contemporaneous errors made this peculiar emphasis of Walther very timely and important. We might add that the views of Erbau and Loche regarding the administration of the means of grace made this clear statement necessary. Walther had to combat a trend of his time which dangerously ap-

187) Walther: op. cit., p. 195;

y) We do not deny that there is a ministerium in abstracto concrete which is a part of the locus, but: "in the concrete (in concreto), or as it (the office) is vested in called and ordained pastors." Dr. J. Th. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, p. 563; This author makes a clear distinction between the two 'ministeria'.

preaching the sacerdotalism of Rome, that the sacraments were not valid and efficacious unless administered by a properly ordained clergyman.

The other theologian, Loche, has much in his writings which inspire the student as well as the pastor, which calls forth our praise. Nevertheless, he expressed a view that manifested a type of clericalism, though milder in form than Stephan's or Grabau's position. He seemed to elevate the clergy above the laity in many respects. He stated the difference between the clergy and the congregation very emphatically:

"Der Unterschied zwischen Amt und Gemeinde ist ein schriftmaessiger. Die Presbyter sind geweiht und ordinirt. Wer zum Amte ordinirt ist, ist kein Laie mehr. Daraus folgt, dass es 'Laiensaelteste, Laien-presbyter' nicht geben kann. Entweder sind sie Laien, dann sind sie keine Presbyter; ~~dann sind~~ oder sie sind Presbyter, dann sind sie keine Laien. Die Ordination macht den Unterschied zwischen ihnen und der Gemeinde (dem Volke--den Laien), den niemand durch die ganze richtige Behauptung, dass alle Christen (sacerdotes) seien, aufheben kann. Denn das Amt des Neuen Testament und das allgemeine Priesterthum der Christen sind verschiedene Dinge. Die Presbyter haben und ueben das allgemeine Priesterthum, aber die Christen, welche Gottes Priester sind, sind deshalb keine Aeltesten. Presbyterium und Priesterthum fallen nicht zusammen. Man vermenge nicht, was der Herr unterscheidet. Es hat in neuerer Zeit grosse Verwirrung angerichtet, dass man jene beiden Begriffe nicht auseinander gehalten hat, und welche eine lange Klage koennte deshalb erhoben werden!" 188)

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188) Loche: Aphorismen, usw., p. 79; (Cfr. also: Loche: Kirche und Amt, p. 38f.)

While there is, as Loche points out, a danger in confusing the priesthood of all believers with the office of the ministry, as has been done by the enthusiasts, yet we notice that Loche extends this distinction farther than Walther did. Statements by Loche are not as extreme as those made by Grabau, but from later sections, especially in connection with the question of calling a pastor, or of 'transferring' the office to an individual, we shall see that Loche restricted the area and extent of the lay privileges by attributing more importance to the ministry as a separate rank. In Loche's concept of the congregation, as we have tried to sketch in Unit I, is another evidence for his Romanizing tendency, namely, of regarding the laity as subordinate to the clergy. He states: "Befand ich nun im Falle, meinen Bruedern in Missouri nicht beistimmen zu koennen, weil sie den Gemeinden zu viel einraeumen." 189) In treating his theory of the manner in which the ministry is transmitted or preserved, Loche very strikingly sets the laity into a different category, as follows:

"Das allgemeine Priesterthum gibt, wenn die Befae-  
hung da ist, wohl das Recht das Bischofsamt zu be-  
gehren, (ereggestal), aber es ertheilt nicht das  
Bischofsamt, sondern das Bischofsamt ertheilt sich  
selbst mit - im Einklang mit den Gemeinden, denen  
es dienen will, - und die Bischoefe setzen ist, wie  
es auch faktisch allenthalben steht, jus episcopale.  
Die Gemeinde soll nicht theilnahelos zusehen, im  
Eigentheil, sie nimmt und hat groszen Anteil, sie  
bestaetigt sich durch Zeugnis, Wunsch, Bitte," usw.  
190)

189) Loche: Unsere Kirchl. Lage, p. 106;

190) Loche: op. cit., p. 102;



Even though Loche attempts to give the laity and the local congregation a place by using the terms 'dienen' and 'sie nimmt un hat groszen Anteil', he nevertheless places the laity into a rather unimportant role. The function of the laity is very passive: to request, to wish, to desire, to testify that they wish to have a pastor. (These terms are rather weak, considering the excellent treatment Loche gives of Gospel-preaching in his other works.) Such terms are very unfortunate, for they reflect a view which subordinates the laity to the clergy. They have no right to grant, but they must ask. Loche seems to express a longing for a strong centralized power, to be vested in the clergy. As we stated in the introduction, while we cannot adhere to Loche's view, inasmuch as these expressions do not flow from Scripture, we can understand his approach, for he was in the midst of a State-Church polity. Church government was very important to Loche's thinking, and hence, he stressed the clergy above the laity, which one regrets very much.

#### The View of Grabau

The proper distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the ministry becomes very important in the question of the public administration of the Office of the Keys and the means of grace. A clerica-

listic view of the ministry will reflect itself especially here, when we deal with the ministry, with the authority of the pastor to administer the Office of the Keys and the means of grace publicly, (in the stead of the congregation). Grabau's view contends for a separate rank for the pastors, when he states:

"Die Gewalt aber des Predigens, Bindens und Loesens geht durch ordentliche Mittel aus dem Evangelio des Mundes Christi in den Mund der Apostel, Propheten, Hirten, und Lehrer ueber. Und so tritt es als ein Amt oder Kirchengewalt hervor in die taegliche Ausuebung, und wird dann der Name 'Kirchengewalt' in keinem andern Verstande gebraucht, denn als ein Amtsname gewisser Personen 'in' der Kirche." 191)

Forgiveness of sin can be declared only by the ministry, according to Grabau. He states:

"Wir wissen, dass alle rechtglacubigen Gatechismen so lehren, dass Christus unser Herr die Macht in seinem Namen die Suende zu vergebendem Predigtamt ausschliesslich zugesprochen wird." 192)

Thus Grabau ascribes this right alone and exclusively to the clergy. This is a definitely Romanizing view, for as we shall see, Rome's sacerdotalism was such a power, because if the ban were imposed, the people were said to be without any possibility of forgiveness. Grabau stated that the ministry per se had the right to administer the Sacraments and to exercise the Office of the Keys. The fact that one is a clergyman does not in itself give one this right.

191) Grabau: Informatorium, vol. I, p. 85;  
192) Grabau: 2. Synodalbrief, p. 88;

This view was different from the view of Walther, although Walther maintained that the pastor had a right to administer the Sacraments publicly.

The View of Walther:

Walther, well aware of the dangers of enthusiasm, also maintained that the pastor alone had the authority <sup>publicly</sup> to administer the means of grace and to exercise the right of the Office of the Keys. He states: "The ministry of preaching has the authority to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments and the authority of a spiritual tribunal." 193) It is relatively easy to fall into the Romanizing error, for our flesh is eager to become authoritative and dominate over others. (The difference between Walther's and Grabau's position is this: Grabau felt that the ministry per se had the right to administer the means of grace, while Walther showed that the ministry received this authority from the congregation.) Walther formulated his thesis only after a thorough study of such passages as indicate the type of authority which Christ gave to the ministry of preaching when He established this office. Christ says in Matth. 28, 19, 20: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the 193) Walther and the Church, p. 74; Thesis V;

son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you." Christ gave the servants of the Word the right to exercise the Office of the Keys: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you...Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." John 20,21,23. Jesus also said: "Feed My lambs..feed My sheep." John 21, 15,16. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." I Cor. 4,1.

Walther also shows from the Confessions that his position is the truly Lutheran view, as well as the correct one. He selects Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession:

"Nun Lehren die Unsern also, dass die Gewalt der Schluessel oder der Bischoefen sei laut des Evangeliums ein Gewalt und Befehl Gottes, das Evangelium zu predigen, die Sünde zu vergeben, und zu behalten, und die Sakrament zu reichen und zu handeln. Denn Christus hat die Apostel mit dem Befehl ausgesandt: Gleichwie mich mein Vater gesandt hat, also sende ich euch; nehmet hin den Heiligen Geist, usw..Denselben Gewalt der Schluessel oder Bischoefen uebet und treibet man allein mit der Lehre und Predigt Gottes Worte und mit der Handreichung der Sakrament, gegen vielen oder einzelnen Personen, darnach der Beruf ist." 194)

Accordingly, the Augsburg Confession points out that there are two parts in the duties of a pastor or bishops first, 194) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 238 and 239;

the potestas ordinis, preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Second, the potestas jurisdictionis. He quotes from the 28th Article of the Augsburg Confession again:

"So hat ein jeder christlicher Bischof potestatem ordinis, das ist das Evangelium zu predigen, Sakrament zu reichen, auch hat er Gewalt eines geistlichen Gerichtszwangs in der Kirchen, das ist Macht und Gewalt, aus der christlichen Gemeinde zu schliessen, diejenigen, so nun oeffentlichen Lastern funden werden, und dieselbigen, wenn sie sich bekehren, wieder anzunehmen, und ihnen die Absolution mitzuthellen." 195)

Hee also cites a paragraph from the Smalcald Articles on the Power of the Bishops:

"Denn das Evangelium gebueht denen, so den Kirchen sollen fuerstehen, dasz sie das Evangelium predigen, Sünde Vergeben, und sakramente reichen sollen, und ueber das giebt es ihnen die Jurisdiktion, dasz man die, so in oeffentlichen Lastern liegen, bannen, und die sich bessern wollen, entbinden und absolvieren soll. Nun muss es jedermann, auch unsere Widersacher, bekennen, dasz diesen Befehl zugleich alle haben, die den Kirchen fuerstehen, sie heissen gleich Pastores oder Presbyteri oder Bischoefe." 196)

Walther's writings are also in agreement with the private works of the leading theologians of the Lutheran Church in the past. He quotes a statement from Luther:

"Denn der Haufen ganz kann sozliches nicht thun, sondern müssen es Einem befehlen oder lassen befehlen

195) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 238 and 239;

196) Walther: op. cit., p. 240;

Was wollt sonst werden, wenn ein jeglicher reden oder reichen wollte, und keiner dem andern weichen. Es muss Einem allein befohlen werden, und ihn allein lassen predigen, taufen, absolvieren und Sakrament reichen, die andern all des zufrieden sein," usw. 197)

In the same vein, Gerhard writes:

"Dass es aber ausser jener unbeschränkten und politischen Gewalt noch eine andere dem Kirchenamt zukommende gebe, wird erwiesen: 1. Durch die Aussprüche der Schrift; 2. Durch die ehrenvollen Titel der Kirchendiener; 3. Durch Beispiele; 4. Durch Gründe; Ohne eine kirchliche Gewalt kann das Kirchenamt die Stücke der damit verbundenen Verpflichtung nicht vollbringen, noch die Zusammenfassung des mystischen Leibes Christi bestehen. Also hat Gott dem Kirchenamt eine solche Gewalt gegeben." 198)

Walther's thesis, that to the pastors is given the right to administer the Office of the Keys, is well established. However, we shall see in a later section that this thesis of Walther is correctly qualified and explained by his sixth thesis on the doctrine of the ministry. He did not propose the statement that this prerogative was limited to the incumbent of the office of the ministry at all times.

This thesis, however, was not the point at issue, and yet we do find statements in Grabau's writings, expressing dissatisfaction with the position of Walther's body of theses as a whole. Grabau states: (cfr. prev. q.)

197) Walther: op. cit., p. 240;

198) Walther: op. cit., p. 242 and 243;

"Mithin sind wir ueberzeugt, dass ein von der Gemeinde willkuerlich aufgeworfener Mann weder die Absolution geben, noch den Leib und das Blut Christi austheilen koenne, sondern dass er eitel Brot und Wein gibt...Was die einzelne Gemeinde betrifft, so wolt unsere Theologen in den schmal-kaldischen Artikeln keineswegs sagen, dass sie fuer sich allein willkuerlich aus ihrer Mitte einen ungelahrten, ungeprueften und unvorbereiteten Mann zum oeffentlichen Kirchenamt, durch die blosse Kraft der Stimmenmehrheit herausgreifen und aufwerfen solle und duerfe. Denn solches hat vor Gott nicht die geringste Gueltigkeit, sondern ist eitel Unfug." 199).

This statement shows that Grabau did not concede to a lay administration of the Keys and the means of grace at any time. He felt that the Sacraments thus administered were not valid. Grabau thus leaned very heavily to Rome's sacerdotalism.

Summarizing Walther's reply to this, we may say that the one extreme; namely, of those who believe that there is to be no ministry at all, is wrong. The middle course, then, is to maintain the authority of the pastor who is to perform what the congregation has entrusted to him. Walther, who was instrumental in the answering of Grabau's Hirtenbrief, was one of the co-signers of the Critique of the Hirtenbrief. Together with other Missourians, Walther makes clear that the validity of the Sacraments must not depend upon the authority of the pastor. 200)=- The further implications of Grabau's theory, will be treated in the sec-

199) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, pp. 15 and 16;  
 200) Cfr. Critique, p. 28 and 29 ff.

tion dealing with the relationship of the ministry to the administration of the means of grace.

The View of Loehle:

Loehle, while resembling the general point of view of Grabau, approaches the matter somewhat differently. While he does not make the Sacraments dependent upon the person or call of the pastor, he insists that the office of the ministry was instituted together with the means of grace. He states:

"Was waere das Amt und was waeren die Diener ohne die Gnadenmittel? - und was haelfen die Gnadenmittel ohne das Amt und die Diener? Die beiden sind unzertrennlich mit einander gegeben und vereinigt. Die Gnadenmittel sind nicht um des Amtes willen gegeben, wohl aber dieses leicht zu erkennen ist, was groessere, was kleiner ist. Dennoch haben beide einerlei Loos. Auf der Schwelle zwischen sichtbarer und unsichtbarer Kirche steht das heilige Amt mit dem Schatze der Gnadenmittel, nig diesen ein Bindemittel zwischen Heils- und Kirchenordnung, aber eine fuer die sichtbare notwendige, von Gott gewollte und befohlene, von hoher Bedeutung, fuer Sammlung, Erhaltung, und Vollendung der unsichtbaren wie der sichtbaren Kirche." 201)

This opinion of Loehle is also evident in his attitude over against the congregation, as we have sketched previously. From this, one can readily see that he would not easily countenance a layman administering the Lord's Supper even in an exceptional case, although he does not express himself as emphatically as one would imagine. In 201) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 22;



fact, Loehc says that the Keys do not belong to the laity, for they do not use them. His argument is: there is no possession without use. Loehc says: "Oder sollen sie das Amt haben ohne es auszuueben, ohne Moeglichkeit, es irgend auf dem Wege der Ordnung (denn vom Auszerordentlichen von Not-taufe ist hier keine Rede) erlangen zu koennen?" 202)

While Loehc conceded the validity of emergency baptism, he insisted again and again, on the one hand, upon the authority of the clergy in the matter of the administration of the means of grace. While Walther stated the importance of pastors performing these functions, he always allowed for the extreme cases for the full exercise of lay rights. 203)

II: The Manner in which God confers the Office of the Ministry:

Our subject of the ministry finally resolves itself into this one question: how does God give the office of preaching to His Church? In the history of the Church there have been several answers to this question. The following theories constitute the main opinions expressed in the Church on this particular problem.

The Roman Catholic theory, briefly stated, is the following: The office has been conferred by Christ

202) Loehc: Kirche und Amt, p.38;  
 203) Cfr. Loehc: Kirche und Amt, pp. 25; cfr. also, p. 181;

upon his substitute, the Pope, who in turn transfers it to the bishops, by whom, in the interest of the individual communicants, it is transferred to the priests.

The Episcopal theory: The office has been transferred by Christ upon the bishops, the successors of the apostles, and by them is transferred to the presbyters in the interest of the individual communicants. 204) The Buffalo Synod theory: The office has been conferred Christ upon the whole Church through the ministry, and is passed on by the ministers in the interest of the congregation by ordination.

Loehe's theory: The office of the ministry has been conferred by Christ upon the Church as such, and is given to individual ministers by the call of the congregation and by ordination, which is the liturgical form of its transference.

Hoeflings: The office is an institution of the Christian Church in the interest of orderliness. Walther: The office has been conferred upon the Church in the spiritual priesthood of all believers; the ordination is merely the confirmation of the congregational call. 205)

The Theory of Grabau:

Grabau viewed the ministerial office as the office ordained by God and conferred by Him upon the entire Church through the ministry. Accordingly, then, the

204) Gfr. The theory of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, discussed in detail in Jenkins and Mackenzie; Episcopacy, Ancient and Modern, 1930, New York, Macmillan, p. 324 ff.

205) Verbatim from Neve: A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 293 and 294;

Church received and still receives the office of the ministry mediately, through the ministerium. He states:

✓ Almost a Successor Ordination in a way

"Die Gemeinde hat die Schluesel nicht unmittelbar, sondern mittelbar im Worte Gottes und im heiligen Predigtamt." 206) .."Wenn nun gesagt wird, dass diese sonderbare Kirchengewalt seiner Kirche auf Erden von Christo gegeben sei, so ist nichts anderes gesagt, als dass die im Evangelio eingesetzt und in der Kirche durch ordentliche Mittel aus Kraft des Evangelii aufgerichtet sei in der Gestalt des Bischofsamts oder Predigtamts." 207)

Comparing this with Rome's view, there seems to be a great similarity between the Roman theory of apostolic succession and that of Grabau. 208) Although Grabau does not refer to bishops, yet he does speak of the ministerial office as being transmitted, 209) and passed on to another pastor by an assembly of pastors. It is definitely the idea of succession that is described. The, the congregation, in Grabau's theory, recedes into the background. True, the congregation members are the beneficiaries of this office and its being transmitted. But this places the congregation into a secondary position. This thought goes back to the fundamental idea of Grabau, namely, that the clergy has the Office of the Keys, and, hence, they alone can transmit the office of the ministry. The clergy, possessing these treasures, is the means by which God perpetuates and continues the office

206) Grabau: Informatorium, vol. II, p.23;

207) Grabau: Informatorium, vol. I, pp. 85 and 86;

208) For sake of comparison, note how the Church of England endorses the theory of succession as taught by the Lutheran Church of Sweden, Cfr. Jenkins and Mackenzie, Episcopacy, Ancient and Modern, loc. cit.

209) German: 'Fortpflanzen';

the office of the ministry. While God, according to Grabau, has conferred the office of the ministry upon the whole Church, nevertheless He uses the ministerium to perpetuate and preserve this office. In the last analysis, however, the phrase, 'upon the whole Church' is not very significant, for, Grabau, as we have seen in Unit I, practically identifies the clergy with the Church. Ultimately, there is nothing left but the clergy as the sole functionary in the transmission and the administration of the Office of the Keys.

The View of Walther:

In Walther's theses there is an entirely different approach, as well as a different concept of the entire subject of the preservation of the office of the ministry. Walther states his view, which one might advisedly call the 'transference' theory, in Thesis VI, the first part of which reads: "The ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of all church power, or of the keys, and by its call, as ordained by God." 210) Walther developed this view from such Scriptural passages as Matth. 18, 15-20, which shows very clearly that the congregation, or church, the local congregation, 210) Walther and the Church, p. 74;

of Christ, possesses the keys and the priestly office immediately. 210) Walther also cites I Pet. 2, 5-10. In this connection, Walther also directs our attention to his fourth thesis, in which he shows that the ministry is not a distinct rank, but an office of service. In developing this thesis, he showed that the New Testament believers were all priests and possessed the powers and rights granted them by God through faith. Bearing this thesis in mind, we can see that the congregation, inasmuch as it is a group of true believers, has the rights of the priesthood of all believers. The congregation receives the Office of the Keys immediately from God, as it also does the Gospel, without any intermediary or sacerdotal intervention.

While the congregation possesses the Office of the Keys and receives the office immediately, it transfers this office publicly to one particular person, who meets the requirements of Scripture. He receives the power of the Keys mediately, that is, through the congregation, and thus becomes a pastor. The congregation does this, as Walther states, through its call as prescribed by God. The call which a congregation issues to an individual is the "voice of God," giving the right to administer the means of grace and to exercise the Office of the Keys publicly in their stead, and transferring to that recipient all the rights and privileges of this office. Walther says:

"Daher wir denn auch lesen, dass der Apostel Matthias nicht von Elfen allein, sondern von der ganzen Schar der versammelten Glaebigen, deren bei hundert und zwanzig gegenwaertig waeren, zu einem hohen Amte gewaehlt wurde, (Apostgesch. 6, 1-6." 211)

Walther is insistent upon the participation of all eligible members of the congregation in the issuance of a call to one who is to be their future pastor, and to whom they are to 'transfer' 212) the Office of the Keys. He emphasizes this in order to show that each and every individual has and possesses the right, together with fellow-Christians, to call the pastor. Walther cites an unusual situation, in which a minister belongs to the congregation. A minister, by virtue of the fact that he is a member of the local congregation, not because he is a pastor, should also have the right to vote in the calling of a pastor. Walther says:

"Gehoeren zu der berufenden Gemeinde auch schon das Amt verwaltende Kirchendiener, so gehoeren natuerlich auch diese und zwar sie, nach dem Amte, das sie in der Kirche bereits tragen, vor allen zu den Berufenden, so dass, wenn ihnen die ihfem Amte angemessene Mitwirkung hierbei versagt wird, der Beruf 'der Menge' in solchem Falle keine Gueltigkeit hat; weil derselbe denn eben nicht von der Gemeinde, die, wenn gehoerig geordnet, aus Predigern und Zukoerern besteht, ergangen ist." 213)

Perhaps here it may appear as though Walther follows Loehle's theory that, after all, the clergy makes the call valid. We recall that Loehle insisted upon the ministerium casting

211) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 245;

212) 'Transfer' may have other connotations which would not be correct, but a better word is 'delegate'; there is no idea of 'Fortpflanzung', etc.

213) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 245;

their votes together with the congregation to make the call valid before God. However, this is only an apparent resemblance. For one thing, Loehe does not ascribe to the local congregation such powers as Walther indicated. The preceding statement of Walther will be clarified by his next statement on this point:

"Gehoren jedoch keine bereits Amtierenden zu der berufenden Gemeinde, so hat zwar der Beruf der Menge auch ohne Mitwirkung ersterer seine Gueltigkeit, doch erfordert es 1. die Liebe und Binnigkeit, welche nach Christi Willen unter allen Gliedern seines Leibes stattfinden und sich bezeugen soll. 2. Die Ehre, welche die Glaebigen den treuen Traegern des Amtes schuldig sind, und 3. die Heiligkeit und Wichtigkeit der Sache selbst; dass auch eine allein stehende Gemeinde hier nicht allein nach ihrer Einsucht handle, sondern bereits vorhandene Kirchendiener, wenn sie solche zusiehen kann, auch wirklich zusiehe, ihres Rates und Unterrichts sich hierbei bediene und ihnen insonderheit die Pruefung und ordentliche oeffentliche feierliche Einsetzung des Gewaehlten ueberlasse. Das Vorbild hierzu ist u. a. das Apostgeschichte 6, 1-6 fuer alle Zeiten der Kirche vorgestellte Beispiel." 214)

From this statement we see that Walther did not believe that the clergy's vote was necessary to validate a call, but that the value of their advice and experience should not be disregarded. Walther clearly indicates that even without the participation of the clergy, the call is nevertheless valid. ✓

Walther shows his full agreement with the Confessions again by quoting from the various creedal state-

214) Walther: Kirche und Amt: p. 246;

ments of the Lutheran Church. He cites the seventh article of the Apology:

"Die Sakrament, Taufe, usw. sind darum nicht ohne Wirkung oder Kraft, dass sie durch Unwuerdige oder Gottlose gereicht werden, denn um des Beruf's willen der Kirchen sind solche da nicht fuer ihre eigene Person, sondern als Christus, wie Christus zeuget." 215)

He quotes a very pertinent section from the Smalcald Articles, on the Power and Government of the Pope:

"Ueber das muss man bekennen, dass die Schluessel nicht Einem Menschen allein, sondern der ganzen Kirchen gehoeren und gegeben sind, wie denn solches mit hellen und gewissen Ursachen genugsam kann erwiesen werden." 216)

He cites another section from the same Confession, stating:

"Denn wo die Kirche ist, da ist je der Befehl, Evangelium zu predigen; darum muessen die Kirchen die Gewalt behalten, dass sie Kirchendiener fordern, waelen und ordinieren; und solche Gewalt ist ein Geschenk, welches der Kirchen eigentlich von Gott gegeben und von keiner menschlichen Gewalt der Kirchen kann genommen werden, wie St. Paulus zeuget Eph. 4, da er sagt: 'Er ist in die Hoehle gefahren und hat Gaben gegeben den Menschen.' Und unter solchen Gaben, die der Kirchen zeigen sind, zaehlet er Pfarrherrn und Lehrer, und haenget daran, dass solche gegeben werden zu Erbauung des Leibes Christi. Darum folget: wo eine rechte Kirche sei, dass auch da die Macht sei, Kirchendiener zu waelen und zu ordinieren; wie denn in der Not auch ein schlechter Laie einen andern absolvieren und sein Pfarrer werden kann; wie St. Augustin ein Historien schreibt, dass zween Christen in einem Schiffe beisammen gewesen, der einer den andern getauft und darnach von ihm absolviert sei. Hierher gehoeren die Sprueche Christi, welche zeugen, dass die

215) Walther: op. cit., p. 246; Note: Anticipating Loehle's theory, there may be an apparent similarity between Loehle's idea that the congregation is the organ which God employs to contain the office, and Walther's view that God gave the office to the congregation. On the other hand, as we shall see later, this similarity is only a superficial one. Their theories are diverse.

216) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 246;



Schlüssel der ganzen Kirchen und nicht etlichen sondern Personen gegeben sind, wie der Text sagt: 'Wo Zween oder Drei in meinem Namen versammelt sind, bin ich mitten unter ihnen' usw. Zum letzten wird soãhhes auch durch den Spruch Petri bekræftigt, da er spricht: 'Ihr seid das koenigliche Priestertum.' Diese Worte betreffen eigentlich die rechte Kirchen, welche weil sie allein das Priestertum hat, muss sie auch die Macht haben, Kirchendiener zu wæhlen und ordinieren. Solches zeuget auch der gemeine Gebrauch der Kirchen; denn vor Zeiten wæhlet das Volk Pfarrherrn und Bischoefe, dazu kam der Bischof am selben Ort oder in der Nahe gesessen, und bestaetigt den gewæhlten Bischof." 217)

Walther also selects one of Luther's writings to give evidence that his view has been held in the Lutheran Church from the very beginning.

"Den ersten Artikel, das sie begehren, das Evangelium zu hoeren, und Recht, einen Pfarrherrn zu erwæhlen, koennt ihr nicht abschlagen mit einigem Schein; wiewohl der eigene Nutzen mit unterlaeuft, dasz sie vorgeben, solchen Pfarrherrn mit dem Zehenden zu erhalten, der nicht ihr ist, so ist doch das die Summa, man solle ihnen das Evangelium lassen predigen, dawider kann und soll keine Oberkeit." 218)

Grabau's Objections to Walther's View:

Grabau, however, was not satisfied with the position taken by Walther, and insisted that the congregation receives the office of the ministry and the Office of the Keys mediately, through the ministerium. He stated:

"In diesem Hause Gottes nun gehen die Schluessel Christi, vermittelt des Evangelii und Predigtants,

217) Walther: op. cit., p. 247;

218) Walther: op. cit., p. 248; Luther: Ermahnung zum Frieden, etc.

nicht dass sie da (aus diesem Hause) ihren Ursprung haetten, sondern dass sie die geordnete geistliche Staette sind, da sie ihre Kraft zum Trost und Heil der Seelen erzeigen und im Gebrauche stehen. Und in diesem Verstande sagen die schmalkaldischen Artikel, dass die Schluessel der ganzen Kirche gegeben seien, nicht dass jedes Kirchenglied eine quelle der Kirchengewalt sei." 219)

Walther's Rebuttal:

In writing his rebuttal, Walther showed that the Office of the Keys was given to the entire Church, as she is the distributor of heavenly gifts, Ps. 68,13. Cfr. Matth. 18,18. According to John 20,23, as Luther also agrees, Scripture indicates that the power of the Keys belongs to all the persons who have been anointed with the Holy Ghost. Since all Christians have received the Holy Ghost, they have this authority. 220)

Grabau's Reply:

Grabau, on the other hand, writing in his Informatorium, regards the view of Walther as utterly untenable. He says: "Dies ist Enthusiasmus, der in dem roemischen Pabst steckt." 221) Furthermore, he misapplies the entire text of the anointing by the Holy Spirit and places it on the same level with the anointing of bishops. 222) He says:

"Wir wissen, dass alle rechtglaebigen Catechismen

- 219) Grabau: Informatorium, vol. I, 22;  
220) Cf. Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 15 of the series;  
221) Grabau: op. cit., p. 37;  
222) Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 16ff., of the series;

so lehren, dass Christus unser Herr die Macht in seinem Namen die Sünde zu vergebendem Predigtamt ausschliesslich zugesprochen wird." 223)

#### Walther's Reply:

Walther, on the other hand, showed that the thesis of the Church and the Ministry which he had drawn from Scripture was the correct one, in spite of all the objections to the contrary. Walther has a long quotation from Luther, as he defends his explanation of John 20,22,23, stating that no one has the Keys unless he possesses the Holy Spirit. 224) Luther makes the remarkable statement that a child in the cradle, who has been blessed by the Sacrament of Baptism, has more rights to this Office of the Keys than the Pope himself.

#### The Antithesis:

In order to understand this entire discussion, one must understand that fundamentally, all were agreed that the office of the ministry was a divine institution. That was not the point at issue. The point was: how does the Lord confer the office upon His Church and make this office function? Grabau, however, peculiarly placed this false dilemma: either the Ministry is from the congregation, or it is from God. He states:

"Das heilige Predigtamt gibt oder uebertraegt nicht die Gemeinde, sondern der Sohn Gottes, sammt dem Vater und heiligem Geist." 225)... "Hier behaupten

223) Grabau: 2. Synodalbrief, p. 88;

224) Cfr. Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 16 of series;

225) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, Widerlegung, p. 39;

sie wieder, die Gemeinde habe ein Recht vom Gott, ihren Prediger das Amt zu uebertragen..Demnach werden die Kirchenglieder zur zweiten wirkenden Ursache gemacht, denn wer das Amt uebertraeget, der wirket, usw. Wir wissen aber, dass die Kirchenglieder, sofern sie in goettlicher Ordnung tuechtige Personen berufen, das Amt nicht uebertragen und wirken, sondern dass Gott durch die Ordnung, in der sie bleiben, treue Kirchendiener selbst gibt und setzet, das uebertraegt und wirket. So ist und bleibt Gott ueberhaupt, und auch in der Welt und Ordination causa efficiens oder die einzige wirkende Ursache des Amtes." 226)

While Walther does not enter upon this question as thoroughly as one would desire, he has given sufficient proof from Scripture for his position in the preceding sections of the discussion. However, he does give some pertinent remarks from the pen of the dogmatician Polycarp Leyser, who sheds much light on this point. The passage which this writer emphasizes particularly is Matth. 16,18.

Leyser writes:

"Wie das oeffentliche Kirchenamt ordentlicher Weise nur von der Kirche rechtmessig berufenen Personen gehoert, welche im Namen Gottes und der Kirche die Macht haben, ihre Zuhorer zu loesen und zu binden, so faellt im Nothfall diese Gewalt auf den ersten besten Christen wieder zurueck; denn wie die Macht zu loesen und zu binden, Matth. 16, 19 dem Petrus versprochen, und Joh. 20,23 allen Aposteln uebertragen ist, so ist diese Gewalt Matth. 18,18 von Christo der Kirche gegeben, welche dieselbe ordentlicher Weise rechtmessig dazu berufenen Personen uebertragen kann." 227)

Walther shows from the writings of Balduinus and other theologians the agreement with this view: the congregation pos-

226) Grabau: 2.Synodalbrief, p. 107;

227) Walther: Lutheraner, vol.9, par. 32;

sesses the Keys and transfers them to the individual pastor.

The View of Pastor Loehe:

During the years, 1848 till 1854, Wilhelm Loehe had observed this controversy between Grabau and the Saxons. 228) Loehe, who had sent many of his students as missionaries (upon completion of their theological studies) to the Lutheran centers of Michigan, Wisconsin, and elsewhere, was very hesitant to voice his views in contrast to Walther's. After the appearance of Walther's Kirche und Amt, and after the crystallization of the controversy in the 50's, Loehe expressed his views more vigorously and more clearly. Like Grabau, he attacked the so-called 'transference' theory of Walther by setting up the same dilemma: the ministry is either from God or from the congregation. Although many of his thoughts coincide with Grabau's, the approach of Loehe is somewhat different. In Loehe's view, we find the congregation looked upon as an organ which God uses to perpetuate the ministry. God, not the congregation, says Loehe, confers the office of the ministry. He develops this very thoroughly in a paragraph entitled: Gemeinde vom Ante? Amt von der Gemeinde? In considering this, namely, the

228) The controversy began already in 1841, but the later developments crystallized the differences more and more.

position of Loche, we might follow the same sequence of thought as he does.

Loche's sketch of the manner in which God establishes and perpetuates the ministry, is one of the most interesting sections of his Kirche und Amt. There is one thing a just oberwerer of Loche's writings cannot deny, and that is this: he does inspire one with the glory and the privilege of spreading the Word of the Gospel. Furthermore, his stress upon the grace of God is refreshing and emphatic at the same time. While these may be thoughts a bit removed from our main discussion, it will serve to give a balanced judgment of a man who has done very much for the Missouri Synod. His faithfulness to these other truths is the verything which makes it difficult to draw conclusions from, and to speculate about the implications of his theory. Fortunately enough, in many respects, he was inconsistent. 229)

First of all, Loche states that the congregation is from the Word:

"Man zweifelt niemand, dass die Gemeinde aus dem Wort geboren wird, und dass das Wort Kraft habe bei denen, die es ohne das Amt reden. 230)

- 229) His inconsistency, fortunate as it is, manifests itself in this that he did not go the full length of sacerdotalism, but told the sinners to rely upon the free grace of God. Here one, to be objective and just, should admit that Loche stressed the sola gratia.
- 230) This is an excellent statement, in view of what Graubau, on the other hand, says concerning the validity of lay administration.

Gott bekennt sich zu seinem Worte, es komme, durch wen es will. Man koennte daher die Frage in ihrem ersten Theile abweisen, indem man sagt: Die Gemeinde kommt aus dem Wort, es rede, wer da will." 231)

From this he proceeds to say that in Christ the ministry and the Word are united. Christ is not only the Cause and the Content of the ministry, but He is also the first Possessor (Inhaber) of the ministry as God's apostle. Loehle says:

"Sehen wir aber auf die Ordnung, welche Gott eingehalten und offenbart hat; so ist es diese: Christus ist der grosse Apostel seines Vaters (Heb.3,1)... Er ist nicht bloss des Amtes Ursaeher und Inhalt, sondern der erste Inhaber des Amtes. In Ihm ist Wort und Amt vereinigt. Aus seinem Wort und Dienst entstand die erste Gemeinde, und aus dieser Gemeinde wachlte er selbst wieder seine Apostel und vertraute sie mit dem Wort so vor, wie nach seiner Auferstehung. Zu ihnen insonderheit sagte er am Auferstehungsabend; John.20,21. Zu ihnen insonderheit sagte er, Matth. 28,18, die grossen Worte der Sendung." 232)

Loehle's thought is this: From Christ's Word and service the first congregation was established and developed. Out of this particular congregation, He Himself elected His apostles and entrusted them with His Word. Christ, the Apostle of the heavenly Father, was not of the congregation, but from God. 233) This point he explains by the analogy that Adam was not created from Eve, but Eve was created from Adam.

231) Loehle, Kirche und Amt, p.40;

232) Loehle, Kirche und Amt, p.40;

233) Note: We believe that Loehle has interesting analogy, but that he stresses it too much, inasmuch as Christ is an Apostle in a much deeper sense than the ministers of the Gospel. The parallelism seems exaggerated.

He says:

"Nimmt man diesen Verlauf zusammen, so koennte man vielleicht die Doppelfrage in folgender Weise loesen: Gleichwie Adam nicht von Eva, sondern Eva von Adam genommen ist; so ist der Herr, der Apostel seines Vaters, nicht von der Gemeinde, sondern tau theou (Luc. 3, 38) und die Gemeinde ist von ihm also, von Amt." 234)

The congregation, then is from Him, Christ, and, therefore, from the ministry, according to Loehle's contention. One can readily see how this view, if consistently carried out to its final conclusions, leads to the notions of the Roman Church that the ministry is passed on to succeeding generations through the clergy, especially the higher clergy. This, to be sure, brings us back again to the definition of the Church as the visible group of those who gather about the clergy. While Loehle undoubtedly had in mind the necessity of a well-instructed Church, of a condition of order and decency, yet we know that, as Rome, he seemed to believe that the ministry was possible without a congregation. 235) He states: "Es koennen Faelle gedacht werden, wo das Ministerium ohne eine vorhandene oder zu befragende Gemeinde einen Hirten beruft." 236)

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234) Loehle, op. cit. p. 41;

235) Note: Whether Loehle had in mind here the call of a missionary to a foreign field, that one cannot say. However, it is still issued by a congregation, though a number of congregations issue the call through a mission board. In a later section, when we treat of the issuance of the call, we shall see that Loehle had very peculiar views about the congregation. He even insisted that there would be a possibility in some localities that no congregation would exist and that the minister might be sent there without consulting a congregation.

236) Loehle, Kirche und Amt, p. 74;



One might object that this is not really the view taken by Loehle, for he does say that the congregation possesses the Office of the Ministry. In point of fact, however, he consistently maintains that only the incumbents of the ministerial office have the Office of the Keys and that it is not merely transferred to them by the call. He writes:

"Gott gibt das Amt. Ermacht nicht zuerst die Gemeinde zur Traegerin und Inhaberin des Amtes, dass sie es weiter gaebe und die eigentlichen Amtstraeger es also dann von ihr und seconar haetten; denn ein Gemeindeamt, das die ganze Gemeinde und alle ihre Glieder haetten, ist und bleibt ein Widerspruch, usw.... Als Gemeindeamt, aber kann das Amt immer nur wenigen gegeben sein, weil die Gabe und Faehigkeit, die Gott, wenn er gewollt haette, allen haette geben koennen, keineswegs noch das Amt ist, das unter vielen nur eine Anzahl ueben kann, das auch ohne Ausuebung kein Amt waere." 237)

In another place Loehle writes in a similar vein:

"Ist das Amt von der Gemeinde, so kann ihm die Gemeinde eine Stelle geben, sie wird es auch in Zeiten, wie die unsrige, nicht lassen. Ist es aber von dem Herrn, so muss ihm die Stelle, die Befugnis und Ausdehnung bleiben, die ihm der Herr gab, und alle Glaebigen fuegen sich seiner Ordnung." 238)

Other statements of Loehle give one the same impression:

"Kaem kann etwas unhaltbarer sein, als die Behauptung, dass die Amtstraeger des Neuen Testaments ihre Befugnis von der Gemeinde haben. Nicht die Gemeinde uebertraegt ihnen ihre Befugnisse - wo faende sich eine Stelle des N. Testaments, um dies zu rechtfertigen? Im Gegenteil, die amtlichen Befugnisse stammen von Dem, welcher seine Gemeinde durch

237) Loehle: op. cit. p.51; (Loehle forgets that there is a Script. distinction between the possession and the use of this office.

238) Aphorism, Loehle, p. 17;

sein heiliges Amt gesammelt und fuer sie, ihre Erzeugung und Erziehung dies Amt gestiftet hat. Nicht das Amt stammt aus der Gemeinde, sondern es ist viel richtiger zu sagen, die Gemeinde stammt aus dem Amt." 239)

In his writing concerning the controversy between Grabau and Walther, he stated:

"Die Behauptung, dass das heilige Amt ein Ausfluss der Gemeinde sie, beruht, so viel ich erkennen kann, auf keinem einzigen klaren Worte der Schrift, - und wird sich deshalb in der lutherischen Kirche auf die Laenge kaum halten koennen." 240)

Thus Loche definitely opposed the transference theory of Walther, for he viewed with alarm any position which might cause the laity to ride in authority over the pastor.

If Loche rejected the transference view of Walther, he certainly must have had some place for the congregation, will be the objection of some. Here Loche presents a great problem. The Lord employs the congregation, but only as they are His servants. We can best illustrate Loche's view by drawing from his own analogy. The theory is that the subsequent possessors of the ministry are from Christ, but out of the congregation. The congregation is the organ or medium through which God transmits His Office of the Ministry. The analogy is this: Adam's children were not taken from Adam as Eve, but were born of Eve. In other words, the congregation is the means, the agency of bringing about and

239) Loche, op. cit. p. 12;

240) Loche, Unsere Lage aus Bayern, p. 101; Cf. Loche: Kirche und Amt, p. 56;

Loeche also wished to show from the writings of the earlier theologians that his view was truly Lutheran. However, inasmuch as Walther had been employing many of Luther's statements as evidence, Loeche questioned the thesis and doubted very much that Luther had held such a view of 'transference'. Loeche's main objection was this: Walther appeals to Luther, especially to his writings to the Bohemians. Loeche said: Perhaps Luther gave the congregation certain rights, but Luther lived in times of emergency, and not in our normal times. He admits: "So fest Luther im Grundgedanken: 'das Amt stammt von der Gemeinde' - steht und den Boehmen danach raeth," usw. 244). Yet he does not ~~accede~~ accede to Walther's position, when he states:

"Aber, und das will ich eben sagen, - in der Praxis stimmt Luther mit den Sachsen nicht ... so gibt er doch ziemlich zu, dass die aus dem Grundsatz kommende Praxis, gemaess welcher eine Gemeinde sich selbst Lehrer setzte, ein, wenn gleich nicht ohne Beispiel das Alterthums, zu setzen Novum sei; es ist ihm die Wahl eines Bischofs durch die Gemeinde etwas Groszes; er will von der Gemeinde allein nur im hoechsten Notfall wachlen und alsbald nach beseitigtem Nothstand das Ministerium an die Spitze treten und - allerdings im Einklang mit der Gemeinde - handlen lassen." 245)

In a later section, however, we shall see how Walther very easily makes this view insignificant as an objection, for Luther even chided \*) other congregations for not taking

244) Loeche, Unsere Lage aus Bayern, p. 99;

245) Loeche, op. cit. p. 99;

\*) Cf. Die Rechte Gestalt, p.73;

continuing the ministry. It is not, however, conceived of as the cause, not even as the secondary cause of the office. In the entire matter, the congregation plays a very passive role. Loehle remarks:

"Der Herr selbst gibt das Amt, bedient sich aber dazu der ganzen Gemeinde als seines Organs. Nicht ihre Rechte und Befugnisse gibt die Gemeinde, verzichtet nicht fuer etliche wenige auf Rechte aller, die sie nicht haben; sondern sie gibt des Herrn Amt nur diakonisch, indem sie des Herrn Ordnung zur Amtsbestellung einhaelt und der Herr also durch sie seine Werke mittelbar wirkt. Gleichwie ein Koenig seine Landesgemeinde beauftragen kann, ihn aus ihrer Mitte Raethe und Diener zu bestellen, ohne dass deshalb alle Glieder der bestellenden Gemeinde Raethe oder Diener des Koenigs sind oder werden; also hat der Herr bescholzen, denen Sein Amt zu geben, welche von der Gemeinde in Seiner Ordnung bestellt werden, ohne dass deshalb alle Glieder der Gemeinde das Amt haben muessten." 241)

Loehle's position looks upon the ministry as coming from Christ, and not from the congregation. Here we are reminded of the Roman teaching that the teaching office is the Church, 242), as being the possessor of the Office of the Keys, as the essence of the Church.

"In the interest of its formal principle Rome has perverted the doctrine of the Church, teaching that the essence of the Church is the teaching office. Wilmers: 'Christ founded the Church by creating an office of authority. Father Hull: 'The Church's essential constitution lay in the existence of that teaching body authorized and guaranteed by Christ .... And it is natural to suppose that the Church should always continue to exist according to its original constitution.'" 243)

241) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p.51; (Cf. Unit I, what Loehle conceives of as 'congregation'. Cf. op.cit.p.51: "Unter Gemeinde aber sind".

243) In the Lutheraner Articles, Walther takes up the charge that he taught that the congregation is secondary cause, but giving no Bible passages, merely citations of L. dogm.

243) Concordia Theol. Monthly, vol.VIII, p.262.

advantage of the privilege of calling their own pastor in their own right.

Loeche seems to base his thesis on I Corinthians, 12,28, stressing the phrase 'en tee ekkleesia'. "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Instead of taking this to mean that God gave unto the Church, the sum total of all believers, Loeche stresses the 'en' to such an extent as to convey the idea that God selects some individuals from the group of believers to possess that Office. This, says Loeche, does not imply that the members of the Church possess the Office of the Ministry.

The congregation, according to Loeche, is the medium of God to perpetuate His ministry. But it is more than that, according to his theory. Loeche visualizes in the activity of the congregation a presbyterial or congregational succession. While he denies that it is reminiscent of Rome, the tendency is not Lutheran, to say the least.

"Es hat sich auch diese Fuersorge der Hirten ihre Nachfolger allenthalben von selbst ergeben und sich eine successio presbyterorum erzeugt, deren Dasein und Naturwuechtigkeit, ja sociale Nothwendigkeit niemand leugnen kann. Diese Succession nicht wollen, heiszt

die Fuersorge des Ministeriums fuer seine Nachfolger, die Bemuehung des abgehenden Geschlechts der Amtstraeger um Gewinnung eines neuen Geschlechts nicht wollen; es heisst nichts anders als das Amt aufheben, und, soviel, an Menschen liegt, unmoeglich machen. - Es ist von keiner roemisch- oder anglicanisch-bischoeflichen Succession die Rede. Die roemische Succession ist eine wesentliche bischoefliche, waehrend bei uns die umgekehrte Ansicht zu Grunde liegt. Waehrend der Roemische die Amtsgewalt des Presbyters aus der Machtvollkommenheit des Bischofs ableitet und bei ihm alle geistliche Gewalt ein Ausfluss der bischoeflichen ist; wissen wir nur von einem Amte, welches der Gemeinde allein von Gott durch ihre eigene Mitwirkung zukommt, dessen Uebertragung nicht an Personen und Haende, sondern allein an die Handlung des ordentlichen Berufens und Ordinierens gebunden ist." 246)

Loeche, however, has not sufficient Scriptural proof for his theory of 'congregational succession'. Yet he says:

"Man kann auch gar nicht sagen, dass fuer eine Succession der Art gar kein Schriftheleg vorhanden sei, da ja Paulus die Sorge fuer weitere Amtstraeger dem Titus, Timotheus, auferlegt und diese auch den Befehl des Apostols zur Aus- und Durchfuehrung uebernehmen." 247)

Moreover, Loeche does not clarify his position by his distinction between the presbyterial or congregational succession and the episcopal succession. He does not feel that this would have any Romanizing appearance:

"Haette man recht ins Auge gefasst, was fuer ein grosser Unterschied zwischen successio episcopalis und presbyterialis ist, man haette das anlangend eher einen Differenzpunkt gegenueber der roemischen Kirche, als eine Annaeherung zu ihr in einer successio presbyterialis gefunden. Diese Succession ist ueberwacht von der Gemeinde, und Misbrauch koennte, wenn ueberhaupt ein roemischer hier

246) Loeche, Kirche und Amt, pp.67 &68;

247) Loeche, op. cit. p.68;

\*) Loeche, Aphorismen, p. 76;

moeglich waere, schnell entdeckt und duer die Zukunft beseitigt werden." 248)

Loeche feels that there is sufficient material in the writings of Gerhard and Luther to show that this is a Lutheran teaching. He cites the quotation from Gerhard:

"Qué jam ante versantur in ministerio et profitentur sanam doctrinam, omnium rectissime de eorum, qui ad docendi munus vocandi sunt, qualitatibus judicare possunt; nemo igitur dixerit eos a vocatione mediata excludendos esse." 249)

From this statement Loeche concludes: "So ist das eine Art manifesta ratio fuer die Successio der Lehrer, so wenig es gleich das Aussehen haben mag." 250). Another statement of Loeche's indicates his high regard for the ministry, but at the same time reflects a tendency to place the clergy above the laity, especially in the question of the 'perpetuation' of the Office of the ministry. The emphasis upon the role of the clergy in 'transmitting' the ministerial office comes very near the idea of Rome, for it attaches something to the ordained persons which is not characteristic of laymen. Loeche states:

"Die 'Techniker' sorgen am meisten und besten fuer ihre Nachfolger. Dieser Gedanke lebt aber auch in der apostolischen Praxis und Ordnung. Luther sagt daher: 'Hernachmals haben die Apostel ihre Juenger berufen, wie St. Paulus seinen Timotheum und Titum usw., welche darnach weiter die Bischoefe berufen haben, wie Tit. 1,5 geschrieben. Die Bischoefe aber haben ihre Nachkommen berufen, so fuer und fuer bisz zu unseren Zeiten, und wird also muessen bisz zu unseren zum Ende der Welt bleiben und gehalten werden.'

248) Loeche, op. cit. p. 68;

249) Loeche, loc. cit.

250) Loeche, loc. cit.

Ist's nicht wahr? Liegt's nicht eben so in dem goettlichen Wort ausgesprochen, wie sich von selbst versteht? Und ist denn das etwas anders als Succession?" 251)

Loeche says that Luther's objection to the idea of a succession was merely antithetical to Roman succession. He felt that Luther, as well as many of the early leaders, maintained the doctrine of a certain type of succession. However, in this connection, while we admit that Luther did utter these objections, we have no clear proof for the claim that he supported the idea of any other type of succession. In Luther's works, we find particularly a very vehement objection to any notion of a succession. Rather pertinent is his discussion concerning Gideon, who stated that he would not be a lord over his people, but the Lord would rule over them. 252) How this succession functions and manifests itself, Loeche explains in connection with his discussion of ordination, which will be discussed in the following section. 253)

#### The View of Grabau on Ordination

Foremost among the proponents for the idea of 'transmitting' the ministerial office was Grabau, who connected it with the rite of ordination. Grabau held that Christ

251) Loeche, Kirche und Amt, p. 69;

252) Luther: Vol. XIV, par. 600, St. L. ed.

253) Loeche: Aphorismen, p. 112ff;



transmits and perpetuates the office of the ministry through the ministerium by means of the ordination. He says that the rite of ordination is of divine institution:

"Was ist nun insonderheit die Ordination? Nicht eine blosse apostolische Generalsceremonie, die man blosz beibehaelt, um in der aeusserlichen Form mit der alten Kirche eins zu sein; sondern eine solche priesterliche Handlung der Kirche, da sie nach der Apostel Befehl erwaelte Personen durch vorhandene Kirchendiener zur Ausuebung des Amtes befiehlt, bestaetigt und segnet, wobei sie glaubet, dass Gott selber dadurch befiehlt, bestaetigt, und segnet. Als wir sehen 2 Tim.2,2. Cf. I Petr. 5,1; 2Tim. 1,5. Acts 14,23; Acts 1,26 usw." 254) "Nachdem die Ordination nach goettlicher Ordnung so geschehen, ist noch uebrig, dass der Ordinierte, bei derjenigen Gemeinde, welcher er dienen soll, oeffentlich eingefuehrt werde. Da wird er investirt oder confirmirt, d.h. er wird der Gemeinde als ein wirklich von Gott berufener Hirte vorgesetzt, und die Gemeinde wird ihm als eine Heere Christi, die er zu versorgen hat, uebergeben." 255) ✓

In his answer to the attack upon the Hirtenbrief, Grabau appealed to the commissioning of the apostles by Christ as a proof for the divinity of ordination as well as for the thesis that ordination transmits the office to the individual. He states: "Unser Herr Christus hat seine Apostel erstlich erwaelhet und berufen, hernach ordinaert oder befiehlt zur Ausuebung des Amtes unter allen Heiden. Joh. 20; Matth.28; Marc.16; Luc.24,50... Dies war ordiniren, oder das Amt befehlen, wie 2Tim.2,2 lehret." 256) He refuses to classify the ordination rite as an adiaphoron,

254) Loche, Unsere Kirchliche Lage, p. 110;

255) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 14;

256) Grabau: Widerlegung des Hirtenbrief. pp.40&41;

as he states:

"Die Ordination ist kein Adiaphoron, indem sie ein wesentliches Stueck des rite vocatum esse ist. Es ist zwar ein Adiaphoron, ob der Erwählte von einem Bischof oder von einem gemeinen Pfarrherrn ordinirt wird, auch; ob der Ordinirende fuer seine Person gut oder boese sei, ob er die Haende oder eine Hand, oder keine dem Erwählten auflege, aber die Ordination selbst ist kein Adiaphoron und unwesentlich Ding. Sie Erdaung-und. gehoert zu der gebotenen goettlichen Ordnung und hat goettlichen und apostolischen Befehl." 257)

Thus Grabau looked upon the ordination as the essence of the right call of a pastor. If he was not ordained, he was not rightly called. In that case, the official acts which he would perform would not be true means of grace, but only empty rites. That is the extent to which Grabau stressed his opinion that the ordination was of divine ordinance.

#### Walther's View of Ordination and the Call

To Walther, however, the matter was entirely different. He states in Thesis VI:

"The ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of all church power, or of the keys, and by its call, as prescribed by God. The ordination of those called, with the laying on of hands, is not by divine institution but is an apostolic church ordinance and merely a public, solemn confirmation of the call." 258)

257) Grabau; Widerlegung zum Hirtenbrief, p.41;

258) Walther and the Church, p.74;

Since the matter of the right of the local congregation to call its own pastor will be treated in the last section of this unit, we now deal mainly with Walther's view of the call itself and the question of ordination. In the first part of his thesis VI, part A, Walther refers to the call: "The ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of all church power or, or of the keys, and by its call, as prescribed by God." 259) It is through the call that the congregation, according to Walther, delegates its power of the Keys to one individual, who is administer of the Office of the Keys, publicly, in their stead. Walther states:

"Da die Gemeinde oder Kirche Christi, d.i. die Versammlung der Glaubigen, die Schluessel und das Priestertum unmittelbar hat (Matth.18,15-20; 1 Petr.2,5-10. Vergl. das oben unter Thesis IV des I. Teils Gesagte-) so ist sie es auch und kann nur sie sein, durch welche, naemlich durch deren Wahl, Beruf und Sendung, das Predigtamt, welches das Amt der Schluessel und alle priesterliche Aemter in der Gemeinde oeffentlich verwaltet, gewissen dazu tuechtigen Personen uebertragen wird." 260)

In a previous section (261) we have listed Walther's proof for this contention that the congregation issues the call. Through this call the congregation singles out one individual as their pastor. This call is divine, for "All things are yours", they have been given the right to call

pastors. Also, the Great Commission

259) Walther and the Church, p. 74;

260) Walther, Kirche und Amt, p. 245;

261) GF. discussion of Thesis VI on the doctrine of the ministry. p.116ff.

by Christ is a command to each Christian to proclaim the Gospel.

The moment that the pastor accepts such a call,<sup>262</sup> he becomes their pastor. However, to declare and confirm publicly that such a person is to administer the means of grace, he is publicly ordained or installed in their midst. Walther also here differs from the Romanizing Lutherans, when he says: "The ordination of those called, with the laying on of hands, is not by divine institution, but is an apostolic church ordinance and merely a public, solemn confirmation of the call." 262) Walther very emphatically states that no Scriptural proof can be cited for the thesis that ordination is a divine institution.

He says:

"Wovon Gottes Einsetzung in Gottes Wort nicht nachgewiesen werden kann, dies kann ohne Abgötterei nicht fuer Gottes eigene Stiftung erklart und angenommen werden; von einer goettlichen Einsetzung der Ordination schweigt aber die Schrift, und bezeugt uns allein, dass die heiligen Apostel dieselbe gebraucht und dass damals mit der Handauflegung die Mitteilung herrlicher Gaben verbunden gewesen sie." 263)

Thus Walther looks upon ordination as an apostolic custom.

In order to show that this view was not a new opinion in the Church, Walther quotes from the Confessions, which

262) Walther and the Church, p. 76; Thesis VI B;

263) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 289

treat of ordination as a solemn confirmation of the call, but, at the same time, as an adiaphoron; the Smalcald Articles, Part II states:

"Diese Worte betreffen eigentlich die rechte Kirchen, welche, weil sie allein das Priestertum hat, muss sie auch die Macht haben, Kirchendiener zu wahlen und zu ordinieren. Solches zeuget auch der gemeine Gebrauch der Kirche; denn vorzeiten wahlet das Volk Pfarrherrn und Bischoefe; dazu kam der Bischof an selben Ort, oder in der Nahe gesessen, bestaetigt den gewahlten Bischof durch Auflegen der Haende, und ist allzumal die Ordination nichts anderst (nisi nisi) gewesen, denn solche Bestaetigung." 264)

Here Walther sets forth, as the Confessions had done, that the public ministry is continually reestablished in the congregation's midst not by ordination, but by the election and call by the congregation. Walther says:

"Hier bezeugen unsere Vaeter, dass die goettliche Ordnung des oeffentlichen Predigtamts eigentlich durch den Beruf und die Wahl der Kirche verwirklicht werde, dass die Ordination dieses Gotteswerk nicht erst schaffe, wo es bereits geschehen, nur oeffentlich anerkenne, bezeuge und bestaetige." 265)

To clarify matters, Walther showed that only in a limited sense can the rite of ordination be termed a divine institution. He cites the section from the Apology, Article 13:

"Wo man aber das Sakrament des Ordens wollte nennen ein Sakrament von dem Predigtamt und Evangelio, so haette es keine Beschwerung, die Ordination ein Sakrament zu nennen. Denn das Sakrament hat Gott eingesetzt und geboten, und hat herrliche Zusage Gottes. Roem. 1,16; Jes. 55. Wenn man das Sakrament des Ordens also verstehen wollt, so moechte man auch das

264) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 289;

265) Walther: op. cit., p. 289;

Auflegen der Haende ein Sakrament nennen. Denn die Kirche hat Gottes Befehl, dass sie soll Prediger und Diakonos bestellen." 266)

The Apology states that ordination can be called a divine ordinance, only insofar as it is meant to convey the idea that the office of the ministry is divinely instituted. A sacrament is something commanded by God. Thus, if by the word 'ordination', the office of the ministry is meant, one would call the ministry a sacrament and the ordination a divine institution. That is merely a figure of speech, however. But this cannot be said of the ceremony of the ordination. Walther comments on this point, and says:

"Unsere Kirche bekennt hiermit, dass nur dann die Ordination fuer goettlich anzuerkennen sei, wenn man darunter die Wahl zum Predigtamt per synecdochen versteht, also nicht, was man gemeinlich darunter versteht, eine den Beruf erst gueltig machende Handlung Gottes. Gerhard sagt von dieser Stelle: 'Ein jeder sieht ein, dass die Apostel nicht sowohl von der Ceremonie der Ordination, als von dem Amte des Wortes und der Sakramente selbst handle.'" 267)

Thus, by synecdoche, 'ordination' conveys the idea of the office of the ministry, ordination then can be viewed as a divine ordinance.

For his view, Walther appeals to the statements of the various theologians to point out that his position is truly Lutheran in character. Ordination has been generally looked upon as an adiaphoron by the Lutheran the-

266) Walther: Kirche und Amt, pp. 289 and 290;

267) Walther: loc. cit.

ologians. He cites the following statement from Luther:

"Auflegung der Haende, die segnen, bestaetigen und bezeugen solches, wie ein Notarius und Zeugen eine weltliche Sache bezeugen, und wie der Pfarrherr, so Braut und Braeutigam segnet, ihre Ehe bestaetigt, oder bezeuget, dass sie zuvor sich genommen haben und oeffentlich bekannt; es sei nun der Pfarrherr ein Engel oder Teufel, weil das Amt geschehen, so ist die Braut gesegnet." 268)

Walther selects several other remarks from Luther, in particular the writing in which he discusses the exhortation of Paul to Titus. It shows that ordination was done with the consent of, and in the presence of the people. 269)

Luther, whom Walther quotes several times, indicates the correct relation between the rite of ordination and 'divine ordinances', that is, between ordination and the call.

He writes:

"Wer gerufen ist, der ist geweiht, und soll predigen dem, der ihn berufen; das ist unsers Herrn Weihe und rechter Chrisam." 270)

Luther felt that, according to Scripture, ordination was not absolutely necessary. In fact, he remarked that it was not wrong to perform the office of the ministry, as long as one has been called to do so. Luther wrote: "Wiewohl solches (Ordination) nicht der Beruf noch Lehen, sondern Bestaetigung solches Berufes, und nicht von noeten gewesen ist. Denn der berufene Pfarrherr wohl ohne solche Bestaetigung haette koenne sein Pfarramt ausrichten." 271)

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268) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 290;

269) Walther: op. cit., p. 291;

270) Walther: loc. cit.

271) Walther: op. cit., p. 293;

The Reformer was so insistent upon the call, in contrast to the Romanist aberration in connection with ordination, that he officially defined ordination: issuing a call and establishing the ministerial office. He said: "Denn ordnieren soll heissen und sein: berufen und befehlen das Pfarramt, welches Macht hat und musz haben Christus seine Kirche, ohne alle Chresen und Platten...sowohl als sie das Wort, Sakrament, Geist und Glauben haben musz." 272) On the other hand, Luther shows that no person, who has no call, cannot be ordained:

"Kann jemand zur Ordination zugelassen werden, welcher noch nicht zu einem gewissen kirchlichen Amt berufen ist? Keineswegs, denn die Ordination ist die Bestaetigung der Berufung, wenn also die Berufung fehlt, so kann die Ordination nicht statthaben. ..Denn kein Kirchendiener hat Macht, Kirchendiener an eine andere zu senden, welche nicht in die Berufung derselben einstimmt, damit nicht jemand denen gegeben werde, die ihn nicht wollen." 273)

Yet, Walther repeats his positive statement: the rite of ordination is only an adiaphoron. He states: "Und die unbedinte Nothwendigkeit der Ordination festhalten zu koennen, weist haeufig darauf hin, dasz freilich die Mandauflegung ein indifferanter Gebrauch, und nur eine Zugabe zur Ordination sei, die Ordination selbst aber sei jedenfalls nothwendig." 274) Walther discusses briefly the answer of Gerhard against the Romanists on the necessity of ordination. If the Romanists say that the laying on of hands belongs to ✓

272) Walther: op. cit., p. 295;

273) Walther: op. cit., p. 304;

274) Walther: op. cit., p. 305;



the essence of ordination, and that this laying on of hands is an adiaphoron, then, the rite of ordination is an adiaphoron. 275) Walther says: "Aus obigem Zeugnis unsers Gerhard ist aber zu ersehen, dass, wenn die Handauflegung unterlassen wird, das Wesen der Ordination aufgehoben ist, dass also wenn die Handauflegung, wie zugegeben wird, ein Adiaphoron ist, dies die Ordination selbst ist." 276)

Walther likewise opposes any thought of attaching some magical influence to ordination. Rome teaches that in ordination the ordinand receives an indelible character. Walther cites the statement of Gerhard:

"Wir leugnen jedoch, dass die Ordination nothwendig sei vermoege eines besonderen goettlichen Befehls, dergleichen nicht gezeigt werden kann, oder wegen einer gewissen Wirkung, wie sie von den Papisten derselben zugeschrieben wird, gleich als ob durch dieselbe ein unaus tilgbarer Charakter aufgedrueket wuerde; oder gleich als ob sie an sich, wenn sie nur vollzogen wird." 277)

For Walther, then, ordination is merely an apostolic rite, not a divine institution. It is an adiaphoron, not an absolutely binding and necessary ceremony. It is merely the confirmation of the call, which has been issued to the congregation. 278) There is nothing significant about the ordination rite, except its particular and important connection with the call. Without the call it cannot occur.

275) It is interesting to note here that Grabau, who stresses ordination as a divine institution, and stresses the passages on the laying on of hands, does not go the full length of the Romanist argument. Hence, he cannot be refuted by the above. Cfr. Hirtenbrief, p. 41ff.

276) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 308;

277) Walther: op. cit., p. 307;

278) Some Lutheran bodies ordain the theol. students upon graduation, looking upon ordination as the ceremony in which the church presents men eligible for the office. Cf. Augustana, U.L.C.

The Position of Grabau:

As one might well imagine, the view of Grabau is quite diverse from the position of Walther. His Romanizing tendency, in distinction from Walther, becomes apparent in his statement: "Die Ordination ist kein Adiaphoron (Mittelding) indem sie ein wesentliches Stueck des rite vocatum esse (des ordentlichen Berufes) ist." 279) Grabau, then, considers ordination as essential to the right call. To this Walther replies with a remark from Balduin, showing how John 20 testifies against the idea of divine institutions: "Das Predigtamt hat zwar gewissen Befehl und Einsetzung, Joh. 20, von der Ordination aber zum Amt liest man so etwas nicht, sie ist daher immer in der orthodoxen (rechtglaubigen) Kirche unter die Adiaphora (Mitteldinge) gerednet worden." 280) Grabau insists again and again upon the divine institution of ordination, especially combining the institution of the office of the ministry by Christ, and the commissioning with the origin of ordination. He says: "Haben sie nicht gelesen Joh. 20 u. Matth. 28? Hat da der Herr Seinen erwahlten Aposteln das Amt nicht befohlen und aufgebunden? War nicht diese erste Ordination u. Befehl zugleich die Einsetzung des Amts fuer alle Zeiten und Laender?" 281)

Walther's Rebuttal:

The refutation of this argument by Walther is one

- 279) Grabau: Widerlegung, Hirtenbrief, p. 41;  
 280) Walther: Lutheraner, series, par. 27;  
 281) Grabau: Loc. cit.

of the masterful strokes of a Bible theologian. With unusual clarity, Walther brushes aside any attempt to bring this idea into the text:

"Dasz der Herr den Aposteln die Haende aufgelegt habe, wird mit Unwahrheit hervorgehoben. Er hob nur die Haende segnend in die Hoehc. Hier ~~her~~ bietet Pastor Grabau selbst die Roemischen, welche so ehrlich sind, zuzugeben: 'es stehe geschrieben, dasz die Apostel von Christo durch Handauflegung ordiniert worden seien.' So schrieb Bellarmin in seinem Buch von der Ordination, Cap. 2, im letzten. Unsere luth. Theologen aber machen gerade darauf aufmerksam, dasz die Apostel bei der Ordination die bei ihrer Berufung von Christo gebrauchte Ceremonie, die Anhauchung, mit Absicht nicht gebraucht, sondern die Handauflegung von den Vaetern entlehnt haetten, damit niemand meine, diese Ceremonie sei von Gott selbst eingesetzt und die Gnade daran gebunden." 282)

The point in Walther's argument is this: the opponents cannot use John 20 to prove the divine institution of ordination, for the simple reason that the raising of Christ's hands had a different significance. It designated the blessing which Jesus was pronouncing upon them. From the context, we learn that the 'breathing upon them' was the more important part of the incident. Therefore, as many theologians have suggested, this is perhaps the reason why the act of 'breathing upon an ordinand' was not used in ordination, in order to show that the ceremony was not divinely instituted. Furthermore, the objection can be raised against the use of this passage for the Romanizing view: can we confer the Holy Ghost? The N. T. apostles were called

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282) Walther: Lutheraner, vol. 9, p. 129;

immediately to be the inspired preachers and teachers of the entire N.T. Church. Grabau had continually stressed the fact that Jesus raised His hands above the disciples, as a proof for the divine institution of ordination.

In spite of the convincing argument of Walther, Grabau did not change or modify his view of ordination. He emphasized more and more that it was ordained by God, as the means whereby He conferred the office of the ministry upon an individual. He states:

"Wiewohl die Kirche das heil. Predigtamt der Person nicht gibt, so gibt's doch Gott, nicht anders, als durch die Wahl und Ordination der Kirche; denn dies ist seine Ordnung. Apostg. 1,23-26. II Tim. 2,2." 283). "Dem allerweisesten Herrn und Meister hat es also gefallen, durch eine zweifache kirchliche Handlung seine Diener des göttlichen Berufs zu versichern und seiner Kirche zu helfen, namentlich durch ordentliche Erwählung und durch Ordination." 284)

To Grabau, ordination was the determining factor of one's assurance that the call was right and that it was from God.

#### Walther's Reply:

This position of Grabau, particularly the view that ordination conferred the office of the ministry upon an individual, met with opposition from Walther and the Saxon leaders: "Bei Nro. 4 finden wir den Ausdruck nicht richtig, dass die Ordination die 'Zulassung zum Amte sei', da die Ordination nur die öffentliche Bestätigung der Vocation zum

283) Grabau: Widerlegung, Hirtenbrief, p. 39;

284) Grabau: op. cit., p. 60;

*Ordination, Walther's view*

Ante ist." 285) The previous quotation of Grabau, however, caused Walther to point out the clear distinction between the various usages of the term 'ordination'. He answers the objections of Grabau very accurately and logically. 286) Paraphrasing Walther's statements, we might express them thus: First of all, ordination is not a divine institution. Furthermore, it does not belong to the essence of the ministry. The term 'ordination' is employed in the wider sense and in the narrower sense. In the wider sense, the term indicates the call itself; in the narrower sense, it denotes the cere-monial confirmation of the call in the presence of the congregation. On the one hand, the call is necessary, while the rite of ordination is an adiaphoron.

Grabau's Objections:

Apparently, Grabau did not countenance the term 'confirmation of a call', and objected to it very emphatically: "Leider machen Sie aus der confirmatio electi oder talis comprobatio seu testificatio vocationis,' das heisst, aus der Bestaetigung des Erwahlten eine blosze Bestaetigung der Erwaelung." 285) He felt that the Saxons erred in their view, for he visualized ordination as a confirmation of the called individual, but not a confirmation of the call itself. 288) Grabau, however, objected and stated

285) Critique of Hirtenbrief, p. 27;  
 286) Lutheraner vol. 9, par. 29;  
 287) Grabau: cf. Lutheraner, par. 30 of series, vol. 9;  
 288) Pastor Brohm had stated that, according to the Smalc. Articles, ordination was merely a confirmation of the call. Cf. Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 30 of series;

that ordination confirmed the person called, not the call.

"Die electio (Wahl) oder vocatio der Ortsgemeinde ist an sich juris divini (goettlichen Rechts) und bedarf keiner testificatio (Bezeugung), auch keiner comprobatio (Gutheisung), noch confirmatio (Bestaetigung), aber der electus und vocatus bedarf nach Gottes Ordnung solcher comprobatio und confirmatio." 289)

In a similar manner, Grabau repeatedly insists upon the distinction between the confirmation of the call and that of the person called. He says:

"Was ist nun die Ordination? Nicht eine blosze apostolische General-ceremonie, die man bloss beibehaelt, um in der aeußerlichen Form mit der alten Kirche eins zu sein; sondern eine solche priestertliche Handlung der Kirche, da sie nach der Apostel Befehl erwählte Personen durch vorhandene Kirchendiener zur Ausuebung des Amtes befehligt, bestaetigt und segnet." 290)

Walther, in refuting this, regards this distinction as sophistry. It is extremely difficult to differentiate between the confirmation of the abstract call and the confirmation of the person called. Scripture does not make this distinction. Grabau himself has given no convincing proof from Scripture for his contention. 291)

The Appeal to Luther's Writings:

In order to understand more thoroughly the approach of Walther to this entire question of ordination, we can also examine the appeal of Grabau, as well as of Loche, to the authority of Luther's writings on this subject. In

289) Grabau; op. cit.

290) Grabau; Widerlegung des Hirtenbriefs, p. 40;

291) In tracing the ideas of Grabau, there is one thought, the continual attempt to elevate the clergy, that is dominant. It is quite natural, then, that he would stress the rite of ordination as absolutely necessary, in which only the clergy have the active part.

other words, these men claimed that Luther taught that ordination is a divine institution.

Loeche's Particular Emphasis on Luther:

Loeche, claiming to have the authority of Luther for his view, maintained that ordination was essential.

"Es ist nicht genug, dass ein Aeltester richtig gewaehlt und berufen sei; die vor ihm Aelteste waren, muessen ihn als tuechtig erkennen, und seine Wahl gut heissen, ihm unter Gebet und Handauflegung ihr Amt uebertragen. Erst dann ist er, was er soll." 292)

While Loeche seems to have taken a mediating position, 293) calling this a 'noch nicht abgeschlossene Frage', he favors the view that ordination is not an adiaphoron, thus definitely leaning toward Grabau's position. He states:

"Mir scheint die Ordination kein Adiaphoron, Im Zusammenhang des ganzen Lebens der ersten Zeit ist der Ordinationsbefehl generell und ganze allgemein zu verstehen, er wurde auch so verstanden. Die symbolischen Stellen sind zusammen zu fassen, nicht vereinzelt zu betrachten, dann klingen sie zusammen," usw. 294)

On the other hand, the appeal to Luther must be understood correctly. Loeche admitted 295) that Luther and Melancthon differed very much on this question, but Loeche defends Luther's position, which gives so much right and authority to the congregation, 'because of the extreme emergency of the times'. He admits: "Luther war in Betreff der Prediger fuer seine neuenstehenden Gemeinden in groszer Verlegenheit. Bi-

292) Loeche: Aphorismen, p.72;  
293) Loeche: Unsere Kirchl. Lage, p. 114;  
294) Loeche: Unsere Kirchl. Lage, p. 115;  
295) Loeche: op. cit., p. 113 ff.,

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schoefe, durch welche die Ordination ferner ertheilt worden waere, waren nicht vorhanden," usw. 296) Since there was, however, no unanimity in the writings of the fathers, Loehle said that he agreed with the conclusions of the Synod at Freistatt:

"Dasz darueber nicht bei allen Lehrern der Kirche eine gleiche Entschiedenheit gefunden wird, deshalb man sich stracks an Gottes Wort halten muesze nach Vorgang der Symbole, welch letztere sie also mit ihrer, der Grabauischen Ansicht, fuer ganz vereinbar erkennt." 297)

Walther's Reply:

While the claim had been made by Loehle and other theologians that Luther had changed his views on ordination, Walther very ably brought forth statements from Luther to show how he kept his former view on ordination, the idea that ordination is but an adiaphoron. Walther quotes: "So das Sakrament der Weihung etwas ist, so mag es doch nicht anders sein, denn ein gewoehnlicher Gebrauch, jemand zu berufen in den Dienst der Kirchen." 298) Here Walther adds also that evidently Luther was employing the synecdoche here in trying to defend the divine institution of the office of the ministry. Walther explains this as follows:

"So erkluert sich heraus die oben gebrauchte Rede-weise. Dieselbe ist naemlich offenbar eine synekdochische. Indem Luther sagt, das Auflegen der Haende

296) Loehle: Op. cit., p. 113;

297) Loehle: op. cit., p. 112;

298) Walther: op. cit., p. 197;



ist eine Menschensatzung, so will er damit nur dem mittelbarem Beruf zum Kirchenamt, welcher eben gewöhnlich durch Haendeauflegung geschieht, die goetliche Einsetzung vindizieren." 299)

We grant that Luther's statement may be misunderstood. On the other hand, Luther merely stresses the mediate call to the ministry, which ordinarily occurs through the laying on of hands. He wishes to establish the fact that the office is divinely instituted.

Part III: The Ministry and the Administration of the Means of Grace:

The position taken by Walther on the doctrine of the ministry is especially connected with the administration of the means of grace. In his fourth thesis, Walther stated: "The ministry is not a peculiar order, set up over and against the common estate of Christians, and holier than the latter, like the priesthood of the Levites, but it is an office of service." 300) From such passages as I Pet. 2,9 and Rev. 1,6 Walther had observed that all believing Christians constitute a priestly estate. When we discussed the ministry according to its distinctive marks, we saw how ably Walther substantiated his view by the various Scripture passages and by the evidence he furnished from the writings of the leading Lutheran theologians.

299) Walther: op. cit., p. 197;

300) Walther and the Church, p. 73;

Inasmuch as the ministry is not an office of rank, nor a Levitical priesthood, it is subordinate to the means of grace. It is extremely important to bear in mind that the pastor administers these means of grace not in their own right, as though the mere fact of ordination gave them this prerogative, but the pastor does this by the consent and request of the congregation, which empowers him to do so. The congregation confers and transfers this authority of hers by its call. Walther stated in Thesis VI; "The ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of all church power, or of the keys, and by its call, as prescribed by God." 301) Moreover, the office of the ministry is an office established for the public administration of the means of grace, but does not determine the validity or efficacy of the means of grace. He quotes the statement of Balth. Menzer, who explained the Augsburg Confession:

"Hieraus erhellt, dass daher die Kraft, Wuerde, und Wirksamkeit, die demselben zugeschrieben wird, nicht eine Beschaffenheit in den Kreaturen oder Menschen, sondern eine wahrhaft goettliche ist (sei), und dass sie daher Gott selbst beigelegt werden muesse, in dessen Namen und Autoritaet alles geschieht, was zu dem Amte gehoeret." 302)

One might well regard this whole problem as centering about the failure to distinguish between the ministerium in concreto and the ministerium in abstracto. Walther also urged that some err in coordinating the ministry with the means of grace:

301) Walther and the Church, p. 74;  
302) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 208;

"Es ist un derjenigen willen wichtig, welche das Pfarramt zu einem Gnadenmittel machen und es dem Wort und Sakramenten koordinieren und behaupten, dass dasselbe jedem Menschen zur Seligkeit unbedingt nothwendig sei, so dass ein Mensch ohne den Dienst eines ordinierten Pfarrers weder zum Glauben kommen, noch Absolution seiner Sunden erlangen koenne; waehrend unsere Kirche dies nur von dem muendlichen oder leiblichen Wort im Gegensatz zu einem angeblichen innerlichen Worte und zu jeder Art von Enthusiasterei lehrt." 303)

Walther thus preserved the distinction, and consistently followed his view that the ministry of preaching is not a Levitical priesthood. In order that the individuals might find the truth, God has given to the Church Universal, to the believers, the Office of the Keys. To expedite the matter of executing these divine promises of salvation, the ministry of preaching has been established. God, therefore, through the congregation's call, selects individuals to execute His divine command publicly and in the stead of the congregation.

From the Augsburg Confession Walther had seen:

"That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for their own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake." 304)

Walther, despising every form of clericalism, refused to identify the office of preaching with the persons of the mi-  
303) Walther: op. cit., p. 195;  
304) Concordia Triglotta, p. 45; (Art. V, Augs. Confession)

nistry. He insisted upon this, for the principle that the believer holds this office in himself was very vital to Walther. The public use of this right, however, is 'transferred' by the believers to one individual called for that purpose. Finally, as we have seen, Walther refused to countenance any clericalism in connection with the administration of the means of grace: neither ordination nor the person of the ministrant had any relation to the efficacy or validity of the Sacraments.

Grabau: Coordination of the Ministry with the Means of Grace

In contrast to the high regard of Walther for the rights of the layman, Grabau elevated the person and function of a pastor to such an extent that the layman was placed in the background. He places the office of the ministry into a coordinate relationship with the means of grace. He really makes the ministry a secondary means of grace. In his Hirtenbrief he writes: "Gott will mit uns durch das Amt handeln." 305)

It is interesting to note that this statement met with considerable objection from the Saxons, led by Walther. They answered the Hirtenbrief:

"Denn moechten wir nicht sagen, dass Gott durch das oeffentliche Kirchenamt mit uns handeln wolle, sondern durch das Wort; das Amt aber ist die Ordnung, die Er zur Verkuendigung seines Worts eingesetzt

305) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 14;

hat, welches aber auch ausser dem oeffentlichen Amte kraeftig sein kann, so dass wir aus Schrift und Erfahrung wissen, wie Er sich in Faellen der Noth, um durch sein Wort mit den Menschen zu handeln, auch solcher Menschen bedienen will, die nicht im oeffentlichen Amte stehen." 306)

Thus Walther and his colleagues clearly distinguished between the office of the ministry and the means of grace. The emphasis which they made was upon the subordinate relation of the ministry to the means of grace.

Loehe: The Idea of the Ministry as a Bindemittel

Loehe, while not as extreme as Gräbau, held a similar view concerning the office of the ministry. He viewed it as a connecting link, or 'Bindemittel' between the plan of salvation and the means of grace. There are several statements in his writings, though, upon superficial examination give one the impression of a correct view, yet give definite evidence for a Romanizing tendency. He seems to coordinate the office of the ministry and the means of grace. He writes:

"Er will den Menschen seine Gnade durch Menschen theilen. Und wie er daher theils vor seinem Sterben, theils vor seiner Auffahrt den Predigtbefehl gab und die Sacramente stiftete; so berief er gleichzeitig auch Menschen zur Verwaltung und gab ihnen die Verheissung seines Beistandes bis ans Ende der Tage. Er gab also nicht bloss den logos tees katallagees (2 Cor, 5, 19), sondern auch die diakonia tees katallagees (2 Cor. 5, 18); er stiftete mit den Gnademitteln und fuer sie das Amt, nicht bloss das mandatum, sondern auch das ministerium praedicandi et sacr. porrigendi." 307)

306) Critique of Hirtenbrief, p. 28;

307) Loehe: Kirche und Amt, p. 22;

This prompted his biographer, Hebart, to take up the defense for Loehle's view and deny that he ever viewed the office of ministry in a coordinate relation with the means of grace. 308) We admit that Loehle does not go so far as to make the sacraments and their efficacy dependent upon the office of the ministry, and yet we must object to Loehle's own remarks:

"Was waere das Amt und was waeren die Gnadenmittel ohne das Amt und die Diener? Die beiden sind unzertrennlich mit einander gegeben und vereinigt. Die Gnadenmittel sind nicht um des Amtes willen gegeben, wohl aber das leicht zu erkennen ist, was groeszer, was kleiner ist. Dennoch haben beiderlei Loos. Auf der Schwelle zwischen sichtbarer und unsichtbarer Kirche steht das heil. Amt mit dem Schatze der Gnadenmittel, mit diesen ein Bindemittel zwischen Heils- und Kirchenordnung, selbst eine Kirchenordnung, aber eine fuer die sichtbare," usw. 309)

Dr. W. H. T. Dau, in an article entitled 'Loehle's Entartung', says the following concerning Loehle's coordination of the ministry and the means of grace:

"Die Erneuerung des Menschen geschieht vornehmlich durch die dem Amt geschenkten, ungeheuren goettlichen Gaben und Verheissungen. Die Gnadenmittel bekommen bei dieser Anschauung nicht mehr ihre volle lutherische Wuerdigung. Sie 'erheischen gebietend Menschen, welche sie verwalten; weder Wort noch Sakrament verwaltet sich selbst.'" 310)

Thus Loehle, like Grabau, places the ministry practically on the same level with the means of grace.

Grabau and Loehle: The 'Priestly Part' of the Ministry:

In coordinating these two diverse concepts,

- 308) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p.22; cfr. Hebart: Loehle's Lehre von der Kirche, ihr Amt u. Regiment, p. 158;
- 309) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 22;
- 310) Dau: Lehre u. Wehre, vol. 71, p. 12

of the ministry and of the means of the divine grace, both Loche and Grabau stress what they term the 'priestly function' of the pastor's office. Grabau especially urged this particular point:

"Hieraus bewisst sich, dass Gott ordentlicher Weise nur durch das heilige Predigtamt im Worte und Sakramente mit uns handeln wolle. So glaubet die Lutherische Kirche nicht bloss, dass das Amt eine Ordnung sei, die Gott zur Verkuendigung seines Wortes eingesetzt, sondern, dass es auch, ein goettliches kraeftiges Dienstmittel sei, den heiligen Sinn und Verstand des Wortes und seine Gnadenfuelle in unsere Herzen einzugieszen und einzupflanzen." 311)

Loche leans toward an emphasis upon the 'priestly function' of the pastoral office, when he says: "Doch gestaltet sich auch das Amt auf jeder Stufe des Hirtenamtes, bei welchem neben der sacramentalen Seite der amtlichen Taethigkeit auch die sacrificielle besonders hervortritt." 312)

The criticism of Grabau's view on the part of the Saxons is pertinent to this point. They showed how he overemphasized the administration of the Lord's Supper in making it a part of the 'priestly part' of the ministerial office. This one can readily recognize as Romanizing. 313)

The Saxons stated:

"Indem wir aber nun der Ordnung Ihres Briefes folgen, worin Sie den Sinn des 14ten Artikels des Augsb. Confession nachweisen und namentlich zeigen wollten, was zu dem 'rite vocatus' gehoere, stossen wir zunaechst bei Erwaechnung der Veranlassung Ihres Hirtenbriefes auf einen bedenklichen Ausdruck, worin sie vielleicht jedoch miszverstehen werden, und uns nicht lange auf-

311) Grabau: Widerlegung des Hirtenbriefes, p. 45;

312) Loche: Kirche und Amt, p. 32;

313) On the role of the priest in the mass, cfr. Pohle-Preuss: The Sacraments, also The Eucharist;

zuhalten brauchen. Sie sagen naemlich dass Ihre dortigen Rottirer zwar die Nothwendigkeit des Berufs zum oeffentlichen Lehramt, aber nicht zu dem priesterlichen Teil desselben anerkennen wollen, da es auf die Verwaltung der Sakramente aufkomme..Daraus scheint hervorzuhelien, dass Sie die Verwaltung der heil. Sakramente, als das Charakteristische des priesterlichen Amtes, von dem Lehramt sich gleichsams getrennt denken. Ja, wenn Sie sub nro. 1 der aufgestellten Requisita eines rite vocatus vornehmlich nur von der noethigen Tuechtigkeit zur Verwaltung der Sakramente reden und sub nro. 3 sagen: 'Darnach lasse man sie dienen, d.h. Sakramente verwalten und in der Seelsorge helfen!' -Sp scheint es sogar, als ob Sie die Verwaltung der Sakramente als den Hauptteil des geistlichen Amtes noch ueber das Lehren stellen." 314)

While the approach of Loehle to this question of the relation between the ministry and the administration of the means of grace is somewhat different from that of Grabau, the views incline toward a common view of elevating the clergy above the laity. The peculiar approach and conception that characterizes Loehle's doctrine, is apparent in his treatment of ordination. Apparently, to him, ordination invests the right to administer the Sacraments and places the ordinand apart from the laity. He uses such expressions as 'abgesondert', 'nicht mehr Laie', etc, giving evidence, so it seems, that there is to be an indelible character in the ordinand. Loehle, however, does not go this far, although he expresses himself in vague terms at times. 315) The essence of ordination, says Loehle, is the conferring of ministerial

314) Critique of Hirtenbrief, p. 22;  
 315) Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 36ff.  
 x) Cfr. Loehle: Aphorismen, p. 79;



graces. 316) This is definitely Romanizing, for Rome looks upon ordination as granting specific grace upon the ordinand.

Loeche states:

"Wer berufen ist, muss sich erst von andern Geschaef-ten des Lebens sondern, kommen, sich dem Herrn dar- stellen mit willigem Geiste; dann nimmt ihn Gott seinerseits von den andern Lebensgeschaef-ten und uebertraegt ihm feierlich Vollmacht und Gnade, Seine Werke zu wirken, in Seinem Namen des heiligen Amtes zu walten. Und diese Aussonderung, Uebergabe des Amtes und der zu demselben noethigen Gnade und Voll- macht heisst Ordination. Der Berufene wird durch die Ordination seiner Gabe, Tuechtigkeit, und Beruf ge- wiss, und auch die Gemeinde erhaelt des ein oeffent- liches Zeugnis; aber dies mit der Ordination nur mit mit der Ordination verbunden, und ob es wohl nie fehlt, so liegt das Wesen der Ordination nicht darin; sondern ihr Wesen ist Amtsuebergabe, Vollmacht, Amts- gnade. Auch die Gaben zum heil. Amte koennen durch Ordination gelaeutert werden, gehoben, und gemehrt werden, aber nicht ists noethwendig, sondern gefaehlig, und was der Herr in der Ordination dem berufenen Die- ner schenke, das ist bereits gesagt." 317)

Loeche, in emphasizing the ministerial grace, maintains that the view that ordination is the confirmation of the call is inadequate; he apparently believes that the gifts of mini-sterial grace come as an answer to the prayer which is said at the rite of ordination. He states this untenable position:

"Diese Lehrer nennen zuweilen die Ordination eine feierliche Erklaerung und Bekanntmachung der erhal- tenen Berufung (solemnem declarationem vocationis), was gewiss zu wenig ist. Sie leugnen die Amtsgnade nicht weg, auch nicht, dass sie bei der Ordination gegeben werde; sie behaupten dabei, dass sie nicht durch die Handauflegung, sondern durch Erhoerung des Gebets gegeben werde. Allein das Gebet ist eben ein Ordinationsgebet, von ordinierenden Presbytern gesprochen, und es wird nicht behauptet, dass Amts- gnade auch als Erhoerung anderer, usw...Man wird

316) The Rom. Cath. view of ordination: "Moses, the Levites, the Prophets, and the Apostles were mediators by grace. So is every Catholic priest by virtue of his ordination. Pohle-Preuss: Soteriology, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1933, p. 7; Also: same auth. The Sacram., I, p. 164 ff.

317) Loeche: Kirche und Amt, p. 36ff.

eben doch zugestehen muessen, dass die Ordination mehr ist und mehr gilt, als man gewoehnlich annimmt, dass die Faehigkeit und Befugnisse zur Amtsverwaltung von allgemeiner Art gibt, dass ein charisma, ein Amts-gnade und Gabe durch sie komme, dass der Satz: sine titulo ne quis ordinetur." 318)

Other remarks from his writings show that this view of Loehle was rather consistent. 319)

Loehle bases his position on such passages as I Tim. 4, 14: Hee amelei tou en soi charismatos, he edothee soi dia propheteias meta epithesechs tohn cheirown tou presbyterious He cites the statement from Leyserus on this passage. 320) From this view one can readily see that Loehle and other leaders would attach much importance to the rite of ordination.

The peculiar emphasis on ordination, however, was linked with the importance which they attached to the validity of the call. Grabau, particularly, insisted that ordination made the call valid. To him, ordination was the essence of the call. He consistently carried out this theory when he said that the validity of the Sacraments is contingent upon the right call. The call, in turn, was dependent upon ordination. Concerning the validity of the Sacraments in connection with the right call, he writes:

"Daher hat auch die Kirche seit den aeltesten Zeiten geglaubt, dass zur rechten Verwaltung der heil.Sakra-

318) Loehle: Aphorismen, pp. 75 and 76;

319) Cfr. Loehle: Kirche und Amt, pp. 107-109 particularly;

320) Cfr. Loehle: Kirche und Amt, p. 109, statement of Leys.

mente, zur Ertheilung der Absolution, nicht allein das Wort der Einsetzung an sich gehoere, sondern auch der rechte goettliche Beruf und Befehl; und gesetzt auch, die Antsperson waere boese, so sind die Worte der Einsetzung doch kraeftig wegen des Amtes, zu welchem der Herr bekennt." 321)

Evidently, Grabau had begun to attack the notion that any one could publicly administer the Sacraments without a call. However, he became extreme in this error and fell into sacerdotalism. 322) One part of his thesis was correct: there should be no confusion in the Church, but an established order for the administration of the Sacraments. On the other hand, he failed to distinguish between the possession and the use of the Office of the Keys, which accrued to the believers in a case of emergency. He ascribed too much to the rite of ordination, which was supposed to give the Sacraments validity.

If ordination determines the validity of the Sacraments, then, according to Grabau, the Sacraments administered by a layman or one not ordained, are mere ceremonies. He charged this against the Lutherans in Wisconsin and elsewhere, who wished to have elders perform these functions, until they could have a pastor of their own. He wrote: "Wer Seelen zum Sakrament des Altars annehmen soll, der muss in der ganzen Kirchenlehre wohl gegruendet sein." 323) He concludes that, if an unordained person administers the Sacra-

321) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 15;

322) That Grabau was Romanizing, can be seen from Rome's view expressed by the following: "If any one saith that all Christians have power to administer the word and all the sacraments, let him be anathema." Pohle-Preuss: Sacraments, I, p. 164. citing the Tridentine Council, Sess. VII, can. 10. Cfr. op. cit., p. 176;

323) Grabau: op. cit., p. 12;

ments, the elements are only bread and wine, 'eitel Brot und Wein'. He stated: "Es bleibt auch dabei, dass die Worte des Sakraments des Altars nur in dienender Ordnung des Amtes kraeftig sind, in welcher der Herr sie will gebraucht haben."

324) He based this thesis that the clergy alone should administer the Sacrament of the Altar upon I Cor. 10, 16: "The cup of blessing which we bless." However, this view is not supported by this verse by any means, for the original does not have hemeis, but the pronoun 'we' is contained in the word eucharistoumen. 325)

A closer similarity between Grabau's view and the view of Rome is seen in his unwarranted distinction between the administration of Baptism and that of the Sacrament of the Altar. 326) He says that in emergency it is conceivable that a layman could baptize, but such an emergency in the case of the Sacrament of the Altar, he said, is not conceivable, in which a layman would be obliged to administer the bread and the wine. Thus he stressed the necessity of having an ordained person for the administration of the Sacraments. 327) The advice, therefore, which Grabau gave to his congregations, or rather to those under his direct influence at the time, was consistent with his entire theory of the doctrine of the ministry. All official acts were to

be suspended until the coming of a duly ordained pastor:

324) Grabau: Widerlegung, p. 45; 327) Hirtenbrief, p. 45; of 325) Loc.cit., for discussion of this point;

326) The Roman doctrine differentiates between the administration of Baptism and that of the Lord's Supper: "For administering the Baptism validly no special ordination is required. Any one, even a pagan, can baptize, provided that he use the proper matter and pronounce the the words of the essential form..For the validity of the other five sacraments, the minister must be duly ordained.The C. of Trent anam. those who said that all Christians could adm. all the Sacraments." Cath.En., XIII,<sup>362</sup>  
327) cf. no. 322;

"Dass Ihr eure Kinder, so sie gesund sind, ungetauft lasset bis zur von Gott erbetenen Ankunft eines Kirchendiener; kommen sie aber in bedenklicher Krankheit und Todesgefahr, dass Ihr als Vaeter sie selbst taufet, oder wo sich ein Vater dazu zu schwach fuehlet, dass er einen der Brueder darum bitte, es zu thun. Dass Ihr die Feier des heil. Nachtmahls anstehen lasset bis zur Ankunft eines rechten Kirchendiener und Euren Glauben allein durch das Wort staerket." 328)

In these statements we can see a great contrast between the view which Grabau held and that which Walther expressed in this entire matter. This also shows that Grabau evidently did not clearly understand the real essence of the Sacraments. The Word and the Sacraments are essentially the same. We can see that, in accordance with the Scriptural proofs which the Augsburg Confession employs, a sacrament is the visible Word. Grabau's misconception manifests itself in this: if the layman can administer the Word, then, why can he not rightly administer the Sacraments, which are the verbum visibile?

Walther's Answer:

Walther definitely opposed any tendency which made the office of the ministry a means of grace without which one could not be saved. He constantly returns to the fact that all Christians are priests, and this holds for laymen as well. Moreover, faith must rest upon the Word, not upon the person or upon the call of the administrant. 329)

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328) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 18;  
329) Cfr. Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 3;

He also shows that, according to Phil. 1, 18, the Word is effective, whether administered by believer or unbeliever. Neither the call nor the character of the administrant adds to, or detracts from the Word and Sacraments. 330) Walther very aptly cites the famous quotation of Luther's own words: "Wenn der Teufel selbst kaeme, dasz er's thun wollte,..... so mueszten wir dennoch bekennen, dasz die Sakrament recht waren," usw. 331)

From the differences expressed in the previous discussion of the administration of the means of grace, it is very evident that the leaders whom Walther was opposing held exceedingly dangerous views on the doctrine of the ministry. These tendencies were alarming, particularly because they led back the laity to a subserviency similar to that which existed before the Reformation. That is the reason why Walther sought every possible statement from Luther's writing to show the real treasures Luther had won under God for the Lutheran Church. By giving the many statements from Luther, Walther pointed out the rights of laymen as true priests of God and also the dignity of the ministry.

330) Lutheraner, par. 4, vol. 9;  
331) Luther: Walch ed., Vol. X, p. 1818;

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**Part IV: The Relation of the Authority of the Pastor, or of  
the Ministry, to the Rights of the Congregations:**

**The View of Stephan:**

In practical church-life, the question of supremacy of the laity and the supremacy of the clergy often becomes a very live issue. Who is supreme, the pastor, or the congregation? For Pastor Stephan, the ideal form of church government was the episcopacy. Stephan's ideas, however, proved to be a source of great disturbance for the conscience of every devout member of the Saxon settlement in Missouri. 332) He insisted upon the episcopal form of church polity and stressed the supremacy of the clergy. 333) Thus, on the way to America, Stephan insisted upon this supremacy. Pastor Keyl, one of the passengers on the ship, recalled how he also signed his name to an oath of allegiance to Stephan as their superior in matters of doctrine and of life. Even in matters of adiaphora, they pledged to serve and obey the episcopacy in life and in death. Even in the public service, the term 'bishop' was employed in the prayers. Schieferdecker remarks that there was a definite effort on Stephan's part to restore the old episcopacy of former days. 334) The subservience of the laity under this setup was such that no layman had any

332) It is stated that Stephan set himself up as bishop of the colony even before the Saxons landed in America.

333) Schieferdecker: Die Saechsische Auswanderung, p. 11;

334) Op. cit., p. 11;

genuine privileges. Such was the extreme view of Stephan.

The View of Grabau:

This clericalism, however, was to return in a slightly different form in the thought and practise of the theologian, Pastor Grabau. He had insisted that the congregation must obey the pastor in matters of doctrine and respect him for his work's sake, as Christ's ambassador. However, with unusual force, Grabau underestimates the rights of the laity by stating: "Er (der Prediger) sagt sich der Gemeinde mit seiner Treue in Lehre und Wandel zu, und die Gemeinde verbindet sich ihm mit ihrer Treue und ihrem Gehorsam in allen Dingen, die nicht wider Gottes Wort sind." 335) For proof he appealed to Hebrews 13, 17: "Obey them which have rule over you, for they watch for your souls," etc. On the other hand, as the context clearly shows, this passage teaches that absolute obedience is demanded only in a matter of a clearly revealed Biblical doctrine. He stated:

"Sie leugnen irrig, dasz die Gemeinde ihrem Seelsorger Gehorsam schuldig sei, in allen Dingen, die Gottes Wort nicht zuwider sind; denn schuldig bleibt sie ihm, nach Hebr. 13,17...Die gehorsame Ausfuehrung einer Sache kann wohl aufgeschoben werden muessen, deshalb ist der Gehorsam selbst noch nicht aufgehoben." 336)

Then the question arises, How shall a member know what is an adiaphoron? Very consistently, Grabau ascribes the right of

335) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 14;

336) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p. 55;



determining what is against the Word of God and what is not, exclusively to the ~~Magis~~: "Was aber wider und nicht wider Gottes Wort sei, das entscheidet kein einzelnes Glied der Kirche, sondern die Kirche selbst in ihren Symbolen, Kirchenordnungen und Synoden." 337) Though some may regard this as including the laymen, other statements of Grabau prove the contrary. In matters of doctrine, the laymen have very little to say, but it is the pastor, the clergy who have the ultimate authority:

"Kaeme ein Pastor auf Irrthuerer in der Lehre,.. so wird es der ganzen Gemeinde nicht verborgen bleiben, und in dem Falle soll doch 'die Gemeinde', nich nicht das Urtheil sprechen, sondern sich durch Schrift an einen oder mehrere Pastoren der Kirche wenden und die Sache der Wahrheit gemaesz vorstellen; diese sollen..Ihr wollet das Urtheilen denen uebergessen, denen nach 28. Art. der Augs. Conf. zukommt." 338)

The view of Grabau becomes more manifestly Romanizing, when one considers the right of the congregation to judge matters of practise, namely, in the exercise of the ban. The ban is an instance in which 'judging' becomes a matter of great practical importance. For Grabau, the matter is simple. The clergy alone has the right of final appeal and decision in the matter of excommunication and the ban. He de-

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337) Grabau: op. cit., p. 14;  
 338) Grabau: op. cit., p. 18ff.

definitely denies this right to the laymen:

"Die Gemeinde hat also nicht zu richten und zugebieten oder zu erklären, dass er (der Suender) dafür (für einen Heiden und Zoellnar) gehalten werden soll...Ebenso irrig ist es, dass die Gemeinde in streitigen Fällen die Entscheidung ueber den Gebrauch des Binde- und Loese Schliessels habe."339)

There was much disagreement upon this point, and consequently was attacked by the Saxons. 340)

Walther's Reply:

There followed a lengthy exchange of letters and documents during this controversy, especially on this previous point of judging doctrine. Particularly Grabau's view on the ban met with the reply of Walther, who showed the Romanizing tendency of Grabau by a quotation from the Roman Church theologians: "Die stete Praxis der apostolischen Kirche, in welchen das Urtheil, das Gericht und die Gewalt des Bannes immer bei Einem, Praelaten, Pastor oder Bischof gewesen sei, nicht aber bei der Gemeinde." 341)

The View of Wilhelm Loche:

The theology of Loche also treated this subject of the supremacy of the clergy, as did the theology of Grabau. Loche, on several occasions, expressed himself as agree-

339) Grabau: 2. Synodalbrief, pp. 28 and 16;

340) Grabau: Hirtenbrief, p.16ff. (Discusses also counter-charges)

341) Walther: Lutheraner, vol. 9, par. 18 of series, citing the Rom. Cath. theologian Stapleton;

ing with Grabau, though with certain qualifications. He objected strenuously to the power which both Walther and Grabau, in his opinion, ascribed to the local congregation.

342) Loehe expressed his view in this matter:

"Beide ueberlassen die Wahl der Ortsgemeinde, waehrend die Apostel und ihre Schueler die Presbyter setzen und der Gemeinde nur so viel Anteil an der Wahl der Person gestatten, als sie haben musz, wenn sie aus ihrer Mitte genommenen Geistlichen geben soll, das ihr gebuehrt." 343)

Restated his disapproval of both the view of Walther and that of Grabau: "Beide Theile scheinen mir insofern zu irren, als sie der Ortsgemeinde das Recht, ihren Pastor zu waehlen und zu berufen, ohne weiteres zusprechen." 344)

On the other hand, Loehe agreed with the view of Grabau and clearly expressed his opinion that the clergy must have an active part in the call. He notes that Grabau distinguished between the election and the call, thus endeavoring to uphold the authority and right of the clergy. Loehe emphasizes the role of the clergy:

"Pastor Grabau schwebte ohne Zweifel der richtige organisirende Gedanke vor, den Gemeinden bei ihrem Waehlen und Berufen wenigstens das orthodoxe Ministerium aus der Nachbarschaft zur Seite stellen, - oder etwas der Art; er fuehrt aber den heilsamen Gedanken nicht durch, und trotz vieler Anhaltspunkte, welche seine Aeuszerungen denen darbieten, die ihm voelliges Licht in Sachen kirchlicher Organization

342) In the Hirtenbrief, p. 39, we have seen that Grabau did not view the election as identical with the call, but included ordination in the concept of the call.

343) Loehe: Unsere Kirche. Lage, p. 97;

344) Loehe: op. cit., p. 95;

zutrauen moechten, bringt man am Ende doch immer weiter, als zu der Ueberzeugung, dass er gehehmt ist, dass die vorhandene Hemmung ihn nicht zu dem einfachen Sache kommen laeszt: 'Ohne Beistand eines orthodoxen Ministeriums soll keine Wahl und Berufung geschehen.' Und doch waere dies das Wenigste, was man dem Ministerium zuthellen misz." 345)

In spite of Loeche's attempt to explain away the statement of Luther's letter to the Bohemians, Loeche has failed to remove the Romanizing marks of his doctrine of the ministry. 346) Stephan, Loeche, and Grabau, though in varying degrees, did not believe in the full exercise of lay rights as Walther visualized them. These three men, then, represent the theory of clericalism withing the Lutheran Church from 1840-1860, against whom Walther directed his remarks again and again.

345) Loeche: Unsere Kirchl. Lage, p. 95; cfr. Unit I, Loeche's definition of a congregation, and reg. the calling of a pastor.

346) Loeche says that Luther gave the right to the congregation only in cases of emergency. But other remarks from Luther, quoted in Walther's Rechte Gestalt, make these objections rather unimportant.

The View that the Congregation is Supreme: Walther

Walther emphasized the fact that the office of the ministry flows from the priesthood of all believers. Therefore, he also pointed to the fact that the local congregation, as possessor of the Office of the Keys, has the right to call its own pastor and to 'transfer' to him their divinely given prerogatives. This is the high regard in which Walther held the local congregation.

Some one has said that Walther's view is a balanced and conservative position: it not only ascribes the proper rights to the laity, but preserves the proper respect for the ministry. In formulating his ninth thesis on the doctrine of the ministry, Walther stressed the proper attitude which a congregation should manifest to its pastor, to whom they have entrusted the office of the public ministry: "Reverence and unconditional obedience is due to the ministry of preaching when the pastor is ministering the Word of God." 347) While the incumbents of the ministerial office do not constitute a distinct order, yet they are not servants of men. They exercise the universal right of Christians, yet they have been commissioned with an office by God. Walther says:

347) Walther and the Church, p. 79;

"Obgleich die Traeger des oeffentlichen Predigtamtes keinen von dem gemeinen Christenstande verschiedenen, heiligeren Stand bilden, sondern allein die ihnen zu oeffentlicher geordneter Verwaltung uebertragenen allgemeinen Christenrechte ausueben; so sind sie doch darum nicht Menschenknechte. Die prinzipale wirkende Ursache der Ordnung des oeffentlichen Predigtamts ist Gott, der Allerhoechste, selbst. Dieselbe ist nicht eine um der Schicklichkeit und Heilsamkeit willen von Menschen getroffene weise Einrichtung, sondern eine Stiftung des dreieinigen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes." 348)

The pastor, though called through the congregation, is not merely a servant of the congregation, but of God, acting in Christ's stead. Walther cites I Cor. 12, 28 and Eph. 4, 11 as Scriptural proof that God 'transfers' the ministerial office through the congregation to the pastor. Furthermore, since, according to I Cor. 4, 1 and II Cor. 5, 18-20, God admonishes the congregation through the pastor, the pastor is laboring in Christ's stead, and, therefore, the congregation owes him obedience. Of course, this is true only when he deals with the Word of God. Walther states:

"Wenn daher ein Prediger in seiner Gemeinde Gottes Wort fuehrt, sei es lehrend oder ermahnend, strafend oder troestend, sei es oeffentlich oder sonderlich, so hoert die Gemeinde aus seinem Munde Jesum Christum selbst, so ist sie ihm bedingten Gehorsam schuldig als dem, durch welchen Gott ihr seinen Willen kund thun und sie zum ewigen Leben leiten will; und je treuer der Prediger sein Amt verwaltet, je grosser Ehre soll die Gemeinde ihn wert halten." 349)

348) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 360 and 361;

349) Walther: op. cit., p. 361;

The congregation had no right to deprive him of his office, without just cause. Walther states:

"Sie hat auch kein Recht, einem solchen treuen Diener Jesu Christi sein Amt wieder zu nehmen; thut sie das, so stoestz sie damit Jesum Christum selbst, in dessen Namen er ihr vorstand, von sich. Erst dann kann die Gemeinde einen Traeger des Amts von seinem Amte entfernen, wenn es aus Gottes Wort offenbar ist, dass der Herr selbst ihn als einen Wolf oder Mietling entsetzt habe." 350)

Walther applied such passages as Luke 10, 16: "He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you," etc. He also applied Hebrews 13,17; II Thessal. 5, 12,13; I Tim. 5, 17-19; Gal. 6, 6-10; Matth. 10, 12-15. Inasmuch as this particular part of the thesis did not provoke much opposition, it is very evident that he (W.) would not need much testimony.

The second part of the thesis, however, definitely stressed the point of debate, namely, the scope of the pastor's jurisdiction over the members of his flock. While Walther clearly showed that the laity is to obey unconditionally everything the pastor says when dealing with the words of Scripture and demanding something which Scripture demands, he maintained that this would hardly argue for the pastor's supremacy in all matters. Bearing in mind the Christian liberty which Luther had recaptured for the Church,

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350) Walther: op. cit., p. 361;

by the grace of God, Walther consistently stressed the supremacy of the congregation, the communion of true believers. No power or office had the right to lord over their conscience in matters in which Scripture had not spoken. He, therefore, safeguarded the lay rights as follows: "The preacher may not dominate over the Church; he has accordingly no right to make new laws and to arrange indifferent matters and ceremonies arbitrarily." 351) While Grabau demanded absolute obedience in all matters, Walther kept in mind the principle of Christian liberty. In matters of adiaphora, he stated, no one, no pastor can demand obedience of his lay member. This is very evident from such passages as: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." Matth. 20, 25.26. "Be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and ye are brethren." John 18, 36.

In these passages Walther indicates that the kingdom of Christ does not consist of subjected people, but of people who are equals, brethren, for all are priests. He says:

"Hieraus sehen wir, dass die Kirche Jesu Christi nicht ein Reich von Gebietenden und Gehorchenden, sondern Eine grosse heilige Bruderschaft ist, in welcher keiner herrschen und Gewalt üben kann. So

351) Walther and the Church, p. 81, Thesis IX, B;



wenig nun diese nothwendige Gleichheit unter den Christen durch den Gehorsam aufgehoben wird, welchen dieselben den Predigern leisten, wo diese das Wort Christi ihnen vorhalten; denn dann gehorchen sie ja in den Predigern nicht Menschen, sondern Christo selbst: so gewiss aber wuerde jene Gleichheit der Glaebigen aufgehoben und die Kirche in einen weltlichen Staat verwandelt, wenn ein Prediger Gehorsam auch da verlangte, wo er nicht Christi, seines und aller Christen Herrn und Hauptes, Wort, sondern, was nur er nach seiner Einsicht und Erfahrung fuer gut und zweckmaessig haelt, dem christlichen Volke vorhaelt." 352)

Walther aptly remarks that, as soon as the matter becomes an adiaphoron, it is then no longer a matter for the pastor to decide, but a matter of the congregation: "Sobald es sich daher in der Kirche um Dinge handelt, welche indifferent sind -d.h. welche in Gottes Wort weder geboten noch verboten sind, so darf der Prediger fuer das, was gerade ihm das Beste sein scheint, nie unbedingten Gehorsam fordern; vielmehr ist es dann Sache der ganzen Gemeinde." 353)

Here again it is evident that Walther based his thesis upon Scriptural foundation. Such passages as "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock," I Pet. 5, 1-3. "I speak not by commandment but by occasion of the frowardness of others and to prove the sincerity of your love," II Cor. 8, 8. "This I speak for your profit: not that I may cast a snare upon you." I Cor. 7, 35. Also: I Cor. 11, 34. Walther showed from the

352) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 371;

353) Walther: loc. cit.

Bible that the pastor has no right to lord over the laity in matters of indifference.

On this point Walther also shows his full agreement with the Lutheran Confessions. He cites continually from them, particularly from the Augsburg Confession, Article 28: "Denselben Gewalt der Schlüssel oder Bischoefen uebet und treibet man allein mit der Lehre und Predigt Gottes Worts und mit Handreichung der Sakrament gegen vielen oder einzelnen Personen, darnach der Beruf ist." 354) He adds another statement, taken from the Apology, Article 7, concerning the abuses:

"So ist es auch gewisz, dasz dieses Wort des Herrn Christi, Luk. 10: 'Wer euch hoeret, der hoeret mich', nicht von Menschensatzungen redet, sondern ist stracks dawider,,. Denn er giebt den Bischoefen nicht eigne Herrschaft oder Herren-Gewalt auszer dem Evangelio, so sollen auch die Bischoefe nicht wider das Evangelium Satzung machen, noch ihre Satzungen wider das Evangelium auslegen." 355)

He also quotes from the Smalcald Articles, which emphasize the fact that the Church is more than the ministerium, and that clerical dictatorship is anti-Scriptural:

"I Kor. 3 macht Paulus alle Kirchendiener gleich, und lehret, dasz die Kirche mehr sei denn die Diener (supra ministros). Darum kann man mit keiner Wahrheit sagen, dasz Petrus einige Obrigkeit oder Gewalt fuer andern Aposteln ueber die Kirchen und alle andern Kirchendiener gehabt habe. Denn so spricht er: 'Es ist alles euer, es sei Paulus oder Apollo oder Cephas,' d.i. es darf jeder Peter noch andere Diener des Worts ihnen nimmessen einigen Gewalt oder Obrigkeit

354) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 372;

355) Walther: op. cit., p. 372;

ueber die Kirchen." 356)

The view which Walther held is really reminiscent of the position taken by Luther. Walther, therefore, selected many of Luther's statements which shed light on this great fact of the Christian liberty in matters of indifference:

"Das geistliche Regiment ist allein auf die Suende gestellt. Wo die Suende angehet, da soll dieses Regiment auch angehen, und sonst nicht. Wir reden aber hier von Sunden, das rechte und wahrhaftige Sunden sind, die kein Mensch erdacht hat, sondern darin wir geboren sind; die wider Gottes Gebot sind und dawider Gottes Gebot zeuget, nicht allein der Menschen Gebot." 357)

Walther also shows from Luther that the pastor is not to introduce new ceremonies arbitrarily without the consent of the congregation and thus make it binding. 358) Walther also quotes from other theologians, among them also Tertullian, of the earlier period of the Christian Church: "Domini enim, non famuli est jus et arbitrium (delicta donandi); Dei ipsius, non sacerdotis." 359) It is interesting to note that Walther selects the statement of Tertullian, who, in spite of this fine statement against clericalism, inadvertently paved the way for a hierarchy through his peculiar conception of the Church otherwise. Walther, however, consistently upheld the equality of all believers: no one was to dominate over the Christian's liberty in matters of indifference.

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356) Walther: op. cit., p. 373;

357) Walther: op. cit., p. 374;

358) Cfr. Loc. cit.

359) Walther: op. cit., p. 382;

On the one hand, Walther did not want the 'mob spirit' of enthusiasm, nor the fanatical excommunications so characteristic of pietistic sects. On the other hand, he did not feel that the clergy should domineer over the laity in any matter. He said: "The preacher has no right to impose and execute excommunication alone, without a previous verdict of the congregation." 360) Although Walther had stressed the fact that the office of public ministry and the office of the keys is committed to the pastor, the public loosing and binding of the keys, yet the final verdict does not rest with the pastor alone. 361) The verdict must be decided by the congregation. 362) Walther says:

"Obgleich daher die oeffentliche Vollziehung des Bannes den Traegern des oeffentlichen Predigantes nach dem Worte des Herrn und seiner heiligen Ordnung gehoert und verblieben muss, so soll doch nach desselben Herrn ausdruecklich Vorschrift und Ordnung das der Vollstreckung des Bannes vorhergehende Erkenntnis und die letzte richterliche Entscheidung durch die ganze Gemeinde, das ist Lehrer und Zuhoeer geschehen," usw. 363)

Walther proved conclusively from the Bible that the verdict of excommunication shall not be pronounced except by the consent of the congregation. He states that this right of passing a verdict is a matter for the Christian congregation to decide. He writes as follows:

360) Walther and the Church, p. 83; Thesis II, C, 363) op. cit.

361) The pastor pronounces the ban publicly, stating the minutes of the congregational meeting, cf. Fritz: Pastoral Theology, p. 242; (p. 383)

362) Grabau felt that this power rested with the pastor, for he is to have this power by right of his ordination. Informatorium, II, pp. 5 and 6: "Also soll das hoechste und letzte Gericht nicht der Haufe einer Ortsge-meinde, sondern der Haufe der Apostel, und die jetzt im Amt stehenden haben."

"Denn hier handelt es sich nicht allein um eine klare Lehre goettlichen Wortes, sondern um das Urteil ueber den Seelen Zustand eines Menschen, und zwar um solches Urteil, durch welches einem bestimmten Menschen der Himmel zugeschlossen und ihm die bruederliche Gemeinschaft mit den Christen und diesen mit jenem untersagt wird. Obgleich daher,"usw. 364)

The specific passage which Walther uses to prove his thesis is: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matth. 18, 15-20. 365) Christ here gives the highest powers to the congregation, to the church, namely, to expel from their fellowship a person who has refused to heed re-

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364) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 383;

365) This passage, particularly verse 20, is not to be employed discriminately. It does not justify a view common in some circles that wherever there happen to be two or three Christians together by chance, these can exercise the ban. This is a misapplication. First: it is against the context, for a difference is made between the 'two or three' and the 'church'. Second, this passage merely stresses God's activity in the deliberations of the Christians' exercise of the ban.

peated admonitions. In the presence of, and by the action of the congregation, the individual is publicly excommunicated from Christian communion and fellowship. This, however, must be observed with propriety. 366)

Walther also had in mind the example of St. Paul, who would not excommunicate the person guilty of incest in the Christian congregation at Corinth. To his own mind, the person ought to have been excommunicated, says the apostle. However, he leaves it for the congregation to pass the verdict of excommunication. He advised very strongly for the excommunication, but farther than this he did not go; He says that the congregation should do this "when they were gathered together", I Cor. 5,4. In their assembly, with all members taking part, they were to expel the erring brother who had become persistent in his refusal to repent. Also John, in his third epistle, verses 9 and 10, pointedly re-proves the bishop Diotrephes, who took upon himself the right (philoprohteohn) in the congregation, and, without their consent, expelled sincere Christians who attacked his arrogance and high-handedness. 367) The Christian congregations

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366) This must be done with the unanimous approval of the congregation, Walther and the Church, p. 84;

367) Walther and the Church, p. 84 ff.

368) "All" is to be qualified, for women were not to speak in the assembly. In another way, "all" can be used in the absolute sense, when we consider the right of women members to protest, as is also the custom in the Lutheran Church, though they do not speak in the congregational meeting.

performed this function of excommunicating through many and before all. Walther clearly sets forth this fact: all the members have a part in this exercise of the ban.

Walther's thesis agrees with what the Confessions stated as to the place of the congregation in the ban. He cites extensively from the Smalcald Articles:

"Dies ist gewisz, dasz die gemeine Jurisdiction, die, so in oeffentlichen Lastern liegen, zu bannen, alle Pfarrherrn haben sollen und dasz die Bischoefe, als Tyrannen, sie zu sich gezogen und zu ihrem Geniezz schaedlich miszbraucht haben. Denn die Official haben unleidlichen Mutwillen damit getrieben und die Leute entweder aus Geiz oder andern Mutwillen geplagt und....Dasz sie ordentlicherweise den Leuten zu Besserung des Lebens und zu Mehrung der Ehre Gottes gebraucht werde." 369)

This section of the Smalcald Articles thus definitely condemns and denies the validity of a ban exercised in tyranny over the congregation. Hence, it emphasizes the role of the congregation in the matter of excommunication, as Walther did years later in the controversy on the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry.

Luther also agreed that the cases of excommunication are to be examined and judged by the congregation. We find that Walther has several quotations noted in his works on this point. 370) Chemnitz and Gerhard also view it this 371)

369) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 384 and 385;  
370) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 386;  
371) Walther: op. cit., p. 390-392;

way. Thus Walther's writing concerning the ban finds full agreement with the Confessions as well as the writings of the teachers of the Lutheran Church.

The opponents of Walther manifest their Romanizing tendencies by their insistence upon the authority of the clergy above the laity. The Romanizing Lutherans insist that the congregation plays only a minor role, while the clergy occupies the position of power. However, any view which does not elevate the congregation, is definitely leaning toward Romanism. This can be shown by objections from the Romanist Stapletonus, who raises the same points which the Romanizing Lutherans emphasized, namely, the supremacy of the clergy over the laity. The first objection is that the example and authority of the Christian Church tend to prove that the pastor alone is to issue the ban. The opponents appeal to I Cor. 5,3: "I (Paul) have already judged." The second objection is that the ancient Church let the verdict, judgment, and power rest in one prelate, pastor, or bishop, and not with the congregation, for Jesus speaks to Peter alone. Paul consigns Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan. Walther's answer to these objections are well-founded. Grabau and Loche, in 372) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 397;



restricting the rights of the congregation and the laity, very clearly expressed this Romanizing view, as pointed out by Walther through the words of Stapletonus.

The Right to Judge Doctrines:

According to Walther's view, however, the congregation not only has the right to judge the conduct of its fellow-members and to remove them from Christian fellowship, if necessary, but the congregation has also the right to judge the doctrine of its pastor. Walther emphasizes this remarkable truth in his tenth thesis on the doctrine of the ministry: "According to divine right the function of passing judgment on doctrine belongs indeed to the ministry of preaching. However, also the laymen have this right, and for this reason they also have a seat and vote with the preachers in church courts and councils." 373) While no one denies that the duty of passing judgment on doctrine is part of the pastor's work, there is also the evidence of Scripture that the right to judge doctrine has been the right of the laymen as well, and remains their distinct privilege to do so. Walther says:

"Dasz aber nach Gottes Wort durch Aufrichtung des besondern oeffentlichen Amtes ueber die Lehre zu richten das Recht hierzu den Laien keineswegs abgenommen,

373) Walther and the Church, p. 85;

sondern die Uebung desselben vielmehr dennoch zur heiligsten Pflicht gemacht sei," usw. 374)

Walther proves his thesis from the pertinent passages of Scripture. First of all, all passages which encourage and command the Christians to examine and to judge the doctrines which they hear, are to be noted here. Especially such passages are fitting as: "I speak to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless," etc. These passages stress the truth that ordinary Christians have the right to weigh, examine, and pass judgment upon the teachings which they hear and learn. Cfr. I Cor. 10, 15. 16. Also: "Try the spirits whether they are of God", I John 4,1. Compare also II John 10,11. I Thessal. 5, 21.

Walther also draws his thesis from those passages which exhort the Christians to hold back from and to beware of the false prophets about them. Passages of warning and admonition like the following are pertinent: Matth. 7, 15 and 16; John 10, 5. Also passages which praise the Christians for testing the doctrines, are equally forceful: "These (the Breans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. " Acts 17, 11.

374) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 398;

Finally, Walther points to the fact that in the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15, not only the apostles, but also the laity took part in the deliberations of the meeting. He states:

"Endlich wird uns aber auch in der Geschichte der Apostel berichtet, dass auf dem ersten apostolischen Konzil Laien nicht nur gegenwaertig gewesen sind, sondern auch mit gesprochen haben, und dass hiere die Beschluesse ebenso von ihnen, wie von den Aposteln und Aeltesten gefasst und in ihrem, wie in dieser Namen ausgefertigt worden sind; daher es keinem Zweifel unterliegt, dass in den Kirchen-gerichten und Synoden mit den oeffentlichen Kirchen-dienern auch die Laien Sitz und Stimme haben, (Apostg. 15.)." 375)

Thus Walther was convinced by Scripture that the laity were really capable and duty-bound to judge the doctrine of the pastors and teachers of the Church. They were to have a definite part in the doctrinal decisions of the Church in the assembly and synod. Here there is a very noticeable difference between Walther and the Romanizing Lutherans. Grabau and Loehs both restricted the judgments of doctrine to the clergy. 376)

Inasmuch as the opponents, especially Grabau, had charged Walther with the error of the enthusiasts who underestimate the office of the ministry, we have pointed out the respect which Walther held for the office of the ministry. Equally important it is to see that also in respect to the

375) Walther: op. cit., p. 399;

376) Cfr. Grabau; Hirtenbrief, p. 18 and 19; Loehs: Kirche und Amt, the section dealing with the distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the ministry.

functions of the laymen as true priests of God, Walther did not raise the authority of doctrinal judgment above the authority of Scripture, for he says: "Sollte es geschehen, dass etwas von der Gemeinde wider Gottes Wort entschieden und festgesetzt wuerde, so ist solche Entscheidung null und nichtig, dafuer auch zu erklaren, und zu widerrufen." 377) Thus Walther escaped the error of Congregationalism by keeping the authority of Scripture uppermost in his mind. 378) "The Christians judge doctrinal matters in accordance with Scripture. The right of private judgment does not empower them to sit in judgment on Scripture." 379) When Scripture speaks, all debate comes to a halt. 380)

Walther's position on the right of private judgment is in full agreement with the Confessions of our Church. He quotes from the Smalcald Articles:

"Also handelt der Pabst auf beiden Seiten wie ein Tyrann, dass er solche Irrthuemer mit Gewalt und Wuetererei verteidiget, und will keine Richter leiden. Und dies ander Stueck thut mehr Schadens, denn alle Wuetererei; denn alsbald der Kirchen das rechte Urteil und Erkenntnis genommen ist, kann nicht moeglich

377) Walther: Die Rechte Gestalt, p. 61;

378) Cfr. Unit I.

379) Dr. Th. Engelder: Dogmatical Notes on the Doctrine of the Church, p. 13;

380) Grabau, Hirtenbrief, p. 16, had charged that Walther's view placed the congregation and the laity over the authority of Scripture, but failed to prove his contention.

sein, dass man falscher Lehre oder unrechtem Gottesdienst koennte steuern, und messen derhalben viel Seelen verloren werden...Weil aber die Urteile in Konzilien der Kirchen und nicht des Pabstes Urteil sind, will es je den Fuersten und Koenigen gebuehren, dass sie dem Pabst solchen Mitwillen nicht einraeumen, sondern schaffen, dass der Kirchen die Macht zu richten nicht genommen und alles nach der heiligen Schriftbund Wort Gottes geurtheilet werde. Und gleichwie die Christen alle anderen Irrthuener des Pabstes zu strafen schuldig sind, also sind sie auch schuldig, den Pabst selbst zu strafen, wenn er fliehen oder wehren will das rechte Urteil und wahre Erkenntnis der Kirche." 381)

Walther has also shown his full agreement with the private writings of the leaders of the Lutheran Church. Luther's statement on the right of private judgment is fitting: "Ueber der Lehre zu erkennen und zu richten, gehoeret vor alle und jede Christen, und zwar so, dass der verflucht ist, der solches Recht um ein Haerlein kraenket ....Wie koennen sie aber dieselben (falschen Propheten) meiden, ohne sie zu erkennen? Und wie erkennen, wo sie nicht Macht haben, zu urteilen?" 382) As the opponents charged 383) that Walther's view would lead to confusion, particularly if the laity would judge doctrine, it is well to show how Luther removed this objection, which was already expressed by the Romanists in his day. He writes:

"Aber hier werden sie sagen: 'Wenn ein jeder Macht hat, zu richten und zu pruefen, wie wird man denn aus der Sache kommen, wenn die Richter nicht eins sind und jeder nach seinem Kopf richtet? Darum muss

381) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 399;

382) Walther: op. cit., p. 400;

383) Cfr. Series in Lutheraner, vol. 9, and Grabau: Hirtenbr.

nothwendiger Einer sein, bei dessen Urteil es die andern bewenden lassen und zufrieden sind, damit der Kirchen Einigkeit erhalten werde.' Antwort: Diese Schwaetzerel schickt sich fuer niemand besser, als die Thomisten. Denn un frage auch ich; wie kommt man heutiges Tages zu Rechte, da alles unter des Pabstes Urteil steht? Wo wird die Einigkeit erhalten? Ist das Einigkeit unverletzt erhalten, wenn man sich mit dem acuszerlichen Namen des Pabstes vereiniget? Wo bleibt denn die Einigkeit der Herzen?" 384)

Luther then shows how the Christians, in their judging, nevertheless remain a unit and keep the bond of faith. This statement of the Reformer, which follows, is particularly valuable in considering the charges which Walther's opponents, particularly Grabau, had made against Walther's position. They failed to recognize that a higher power preserves this unity. Luther writes:

"Muss man also einen andern Weg zur Einigkeit der Kirchen suchen. Und das ist der, welchen Christus Joh. 6 angiebt: 'Sie werden alle Gott gelchrig sein. Ein jeglicher, der es von meinem Vater hoeret, kommt zu mir.' Der innerliche Geist, sage ich, macht allein, dasz man einmuethig im Hause zusammenwohne, der lehret einerlei glaeben, einerlei richten, einerlei erkennen, einerlei pruefen, einerlei lehren, einerlei bekennen, und einerlei Dingen folgen. Wo der nicht ist, da ist unmoeglich, dasz Einigkeit sei." 385)

This thought, as Luther also expresses it, that the Christians are taught of God, so fittingly climaxes the entire body of Walther's body of theses. Who shall doubt, deny, withhold, limit, or underestimate the right of private judgment? The laity are the doctors and teachers of the Word. Like the

384) Walther: Kirche und Amt, p. 402;

385) Walther: op. cit., pp. 402 and 403;

Bereaus, they are to examine the doctrines taught by the persons whom they under God have placed into their service. In fact, as Luther also remarks, they have not only the right of judging doctrine, but have also the authority to remove and to root out all false prophets from their midst. Luther says: "Also schlieszen wir nun, dasz, wo eine christliche Gemeinde ist, die das Evangelium hat, sondern schuldig ist, bei der Seelen Seligkeit, ihrer Pflicht nach, die sie Christo in der Taufe gethan hat, zu meiden, zu fliehen, abzusetzen." 386)

Thus Walther's final thesis centers about this glorious verse: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." John 6,45. God, in a remarkable way, has promised that He will abide by the judgments which the Church makes by virtue of and in accordance with His Word. y)

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386) Walther: op. cit., p. 405;

y)

CONCLUSION:

Thus the glory of the una sancta, which consists in having the treasures of God's redeeming grace and His sanctifying power, culminates in Walther's thesis that the members of His Body are taught of God and judge Christian doctrine. Moreover, God says that He will be bound by the decision of the believers, the members of the una sancta.

A re-evaluation of Walther's theses is particularly in place in our times. The human nature has a tendency to delight in forms of human glory. A pastor is not immune from this human frailty. He is apt to strive toward autocratic ideals, as men often term them, when he should be humble in his service to Christ. Again, a study of Walther's view of the Church is in place, for we always have with us a misconception of the real nature of the Church. A misconception of the nature of the Church often involves also a wrong notion regarding the functions of the Church. The result often is, then, that the Church is locked upon as a visible society and the true work of Christ is not really carried out. Then, in order to realize the duty which we as pastors, and we as congregations have unto the Christ Who is Our Head, we study the theses of Walther with greater appreciation and growing admiration for the leader whom God raised up for His people in a time of great need.



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