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Walther and Church Polity

By AUGUST R. SUELFLOW

WHEN the Saxon immigrants of 1839 elected their spiritual leader, Martin Stephan, their bishop, they adopted the episcopal form of polity. They pledged full obedience to him in a document which reads in part as follows:

Therefore, also we and the three candidates subscribing with us, herewith promise solemnly and before God that we will at all times and with unqualified confidence follow your paternal leadership, for which we plead, as well as comply with childlike, willing obedience with your episcopal ordinances in all things.¹

A series of unfortunate circumstances resulted in charges against the newly created bishop and in his expulsion from the colony. Extreme chaos prevailed. Consciences were shaken and soul-searching questions were raised, such as "Are we the church? Could there be a church without a bishop?" Compelling voices urged that all return to their former homes in Ger-

many and seek forgiveness. Because of their close association with the bishop, the clergy were somewhat discredited. However, relief from these miserable conditions of confusion and self-accusation came when Walther met the lawyer F. W. Marbach in an open debate in April 1841 in Altenburg. Some of the basic principles enunciated by Walther are as follows:

The true Church, in the most perfect sense, is the totality (*Gesamtheit*) of all true believers, who from the beginning to the end of the world, from among all peoples and tongues, have been called and sanctified by the Spirit through the Word. And since God alone knows these true believers (2 Tim. 2:19), the Church is also called invisible. No one belongs to this true Church who is not spiritually united with Christ, for it is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

The name of the true Church also belongs to all those visible societies in whose midst the Word of God is purely taught and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. True, in this Church there are also godless men, hypocrites, and heretics, but they are not true members of the church, nor do they constitute the Church.

The name *Church*, and in a certain sense the name *real Church*, also belongs to such visible societies as are united in the confession of a falsified faith and therefore are guilty of a partial falling away from the truth, provided they retain in its purity so much of the Word of God and the holy Sacraments as is necessary that children of God may thereby be born. When such societies are called true Churches, the intention is not to state that they are

¹ Cf. Walter Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: CPH, 1953), p. 300. The passengers on the *Olbers* had already on Jan. 14, 1839, given such pledges as: "In consequence of all this, therefore, we approach you with the reverent, urgent plea: Accept, Reverend Father, also for the future the office of bishop among us, bestowed upon you by God, and grant that we may now already express with this name our unqualified confidence in your fatherly love and pastoral faithfulness toward us, and the assurance of our sincere, complete and childlike obedience toward you." (*Ibid.*, p. 289.) This document does not contain Walther's signature since it was signed on the *Olbers* and Walther was a passenger on the *Johann Georg*. However, Walther did sign the so-called "Confirmation of Stephan's Investiture," from which our first quotation is taken.

faithful, but merely that they are real Churches as opposed to secular organizations (*Gemeinschaften*). . . .

Even heterodox societies have church power; even among them, the treasures of the Church may be validly dispensed, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys to the kingdom of heaven exercised.

Even heterodox societies are not to be dissolved, but reformed.

The orthodox Church is to be judged principally by the common, orthodox, and public confession to which the members acknowledge themselves to have been pledged and which they profess.²

² *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: CPH, 1954), p. 21. The theses which Walther prepared in answer to an American contemporary, J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod, are strikingly similar. We quote a few for the sake of comparison:

1. 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 His faith and incorporated into Christ.
2. 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.
3. The Church, in the proper sense of the term, is invisible.
4. This true Church of believers and saints it is to which Christ has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore this Church is the real and sole holder and bearer of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly blessings, rights, powers, offices, etc., which Christ has gained and which are available in His Church.
5. 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.

This presentation by Walther clarified the issue. His opponent returned to Germany, perhaps still unconvinced. However, the colonies were saved, and order was restored.

Walther also expressed his convictions regarding church polity in the negotiations which led to the organization of the Missouri Synod. In a letter to Pastor J. A. Ernst, a Loehe emissary and member of the Ohio Synod, Walther wrote on Aug. 21, 1845:

My wishes concerning the matters at hand [basic principles of organizing a Synod] are chiefly these:

1. That the synod, in addition to the
6. In an improper sense the term "Church," according to Holy Scripture, is applied also to the visible sum total of all who have been called, that is, to all who profess allegiance to the Word of God that is preached and make use of the holy Sacraments. This Church (the universal [catholic] Church) is made up of good and evil persons. Particular divisions of it, namely, the congregations found here and there, in which the Word of God is preached and the holy Sacraments are administered, are called churches (particular churches), for the reason, namely, that in these visible groups the invisible, true Church of the believers, saints, and children of God is concealed, and because no elect persons are to be looked for outside of the group of those who have been called.
7. 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 believers 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. [Quoted from *Walther and the Church*, edited by Wm. Dallmann, W. H. T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (St. Louis: CPH, 1938), pp. 56—64].

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Word of God, pledge itself to all the Symbols of our church, and where possible, include also the Saxon Visitation Articles. However, I shall not insist upon the acceptance and binding nature of the latter.³

2. I wish that all syncretistic elements of synodical members be effectively prohibited and banned by a special paragraph in the Constitution.
3. That the chief function of the Synod should be the maintenance and furtherance and the guarding of the unity and the purity of Lutheran doctrine.
4. That the Synod should not be so constructed or constituted as to serve as an empowered legislative body, but rather as an advisory body to which a congregation in need of advice may come and take refuge. The Synod ought to steer clear especially of usurping the congregation's prerogative of calling [a pastor].
5. I wish that the lay delegates who are members of Synod, receive a seat and vote in the Convention precisely as the clergymen. However, the chairman should be elected from among the clergy. (Cf. Acts 15:23)
6. Finally, I think that the right of appeal to the decision of Synod ought never be denied any congregation.⁴

Some differences of opinion on church

³ It is interesting to note that Walther was successful in having his parish, Trinity, St. Louis, Mo., subscribe to these articles of 1592. Largely the product of Aegidius Hunnius (1516—1603), they were designed to overcome the Reformed influences in Saxony. The articles may be found in *Concordia Triglossa* (St. Louis: CPH, 1921), pp. 1150 ff. The Missouri Synod did not include them in its confessional paragraph, and Trinity deleted them from its Constitution with the major revisions of 1888.

⁴ L. Fuerbringer, *Walthers Briefe* (St. Louis: CPH, 1915), I, 16.

polity were apparent between Walther and W. Sihler, another Loehe emissary and former member of the Ohio Synod. In a series of articles printed in *Die Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* Sihler favored the organization of a "Synod" with permanent delegates, similar to the United States Senate.⁵ All clergymen and the laymen elected by their congregations would constitute the Synod. It would be empowered to regulate, direct, and administer all matters of doctrine, life, worship, and discipline in the church. In discussing the matter by letter with Sihler, Walther observed:

I must confess that I have a kind of horror of a real representative Constitution. I do not find it in Holy Scripture. Now, it is true that we Christians may exercise our liberty as regards our constitution, but I cannot rid myself of this opinion: The more freedom a church government in a free State like ours affords, the more efficient it will be, provided that the Word is preached in all its power in the congregations. On the other hand, everything coercive that does not flow immediately from the Word easily causes opposition by refusal to comply and lays the foundation for frequent separations. Hitherto I have not viewed a synodical organization as a concentration of ecclesiastical power. I thought that it was only to exhibit the ecclesiastical union of the separate congregations, unite its resources and forces in a war upon the oncoming ruin in doctrine and life, and for carrying on operations for the common welfare of the Church, for preserving and advancing unity in faith and love, for aiming by

⁵ *Die Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, VII (Nov. 27, 1845), 153 ff.; (Dec. 18, 1845), 161 f.; *Der Lutheraner*, II (Dec. 13, 1845), 29; (Dec. 27, 1845), 33, 34; (March 7, 1846), 55, 56.

way of commendation for the greatest uniformity possible in liturgy, for making a well-ordered disposition of the ministry possible, for setting up a court of arbitration for preachers and congregations to which recourse might be had, or not, etc. I was of the opinion that all matters pertaining to the internal administration of individual congregations should not be subject to the disposing and judicial power of the Synod.⁶

The differences between Sihler and Walther were reconciled when the constitution of the Synod was ratified in 1847. In fact, later in life Sihler observed:

He [Walther] manifested his unusual organizational talent of which I had significantly little. In particular I was deeply impressed with how he emphasized at each point the Scripturally pure Lutheran doctrine of the essence of the church, of the public office of the ministry, and of the ecclesiastical power and order.⁷

In a meeting at St. Louis in May 1846 a draft for a synodical constitution was drawn up essentially in the form in which it was adopted in 1847, when The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was organized. The reasons listed for forming a synodical organization are significant in view of the polity which was established. These reasons included:

1. The example of the apostolic church. (Acts 15:1-31)
2. The preservation and furthering of the unity of pure confession (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and provision for a common defense against separatism and sectarianism. (Rom. 16:17)

⁶ Quoted from THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, II (May 1922), 129.

⁷ W. Sihler, *Lebenslauf* (St. Louis: CPH, 1880), II, 53.

3. The protection and preservation of the rights and duties of pastors and congregations.
4. The establishment of the largest possible uniformity in church government.
5. The will of the Lord that the diversity of gifts be used for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:4-31)
6. The unified spread of the kingdom of God and the enabling of the promotion of special church projects. (Seminary, agenda, hymnal, Book of Concord, schoolbooks, Bible distribution, mission projects within and outside the church.)

The functions of the Synod, as envisioned and defined, again are significant in revealing the emerging polity. Among the activities in which the Synod was to engage the following are enumerated:

1. To stand guard over the purity and unity of doctrine within the synodical circle and to oppose false doctrine.
2. To supervise the performance of the official duties of the pastors and teachers of Synod.
3. To protect and extend the church.
4. To publish and distribute a church periodical.
5. To conscientiously examine candidates for the ministry and teaching profession.
6. To provide for ecclesiastical ordination and induction into office.
7. To prepare future pastors and teachers for service in the church.
8. To provide for congregations without pastors if the former apply to Synod.
9. To give theological opinions, also to

settle disputes between single persons or between parties in the congregations. The latter is to take place only in cases where all persons involved have applied to Synod for arbitration.

10. To strive for the greatest possible uniformity in ceremonies.
11. To have concern for the faithful execution of all the duties of the ministry, especially of the truly evangelical cure of souls in all its branches; in this respect also to help advance sound catechumen instruction above all, and especially with reference to the false doctrines of the prominent sects; also to institute and maintain catechisations every Sunday for the confirmed youth.
12. To support indigent congregations that are members of Synod, that they may obtain the regular service of a pastor.
13. To gather church statistics within Synod and also to start a chronicle of American Lutheranism.
14. To establish connections with the Lutheran Church in foreign countries, especially Germany.⁸

One congregation in particular—and it need not be amazing to learn that this was Walther's own parish in St. Louis—objected to the constitution in its original form. Undoubtedly members of this parish were suspicious of any form of ecclesiastical authority which many of them had come to know by sad experience. In ad-

⁸ *Der Lutheraner*, III (Sept. 5, 1846), 2—4. An English translation appeared in the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XVI (April 1943), 1—18.

dition—and Walther had also expressed this—there was a fear of eventual clergy domination. The proposed constitution did not include a paragraph properly delineating the authority of the synod and its relationship to the member congregations. Therefore Trinity, St. Louis, presented the following amendment to the constitution which was designed to safeguard the rights and privileges of member congregations:

Synod is only an advisory body in regard to the self-government (*Selbstregierung*) of the individual congregations. Accordingly, no resolution of the former, if it imposes (*auserlegt*) something upon the individual congregations as a synodical resolution, is of binding force for the latter. Such a synodical resolution can have binding force only when the individual congregation has voluntarily (*freiwillig*) accepted it and itself has ratified it (*bestaetigt*) by a formal resolution of the congregation. Should a congregation find a synodical resolution not in accordance with the Word of God, or inexpedient (*ungeeignet*) for its local situation, it has the privilege (*Recht*) not to take the resolution into consideration and reject it.⁹

This paragraph was adopted at the 1847 convention, but it did not automatically become a part of the synodical Constitution till 1853. At that time the Constitution required the unanimous vote of all member congregations for the adoption of an amendment. For some unknown reason, perhaps lack of interest or neglect, this paragraph failed to be ratified unanimously. No time limits for such congregational approval had been set. Consequently the conventions of 1848 and 1849 (the Synod met annually at that time) do not reflect a report of the votes of the member con-

⁹ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1847, p. 6.

gregations. It was not until 1850 that the President announced that this amendment, among others, had failed to be ratified. Either the congregations did not unanimously favor the adoption and inclusion of the amendment, or one or more congregations failed to register their votes. Trinity, however, did not withdraw its membership after the failure and its pastor continued to serve the Synod as its President.

A second attempt to include the paragraph was made a few years later when a committee was appointed to draft an entirely new constitution providing adequately for geographical Districts within the Synod. The revised constitution was adopted by the convention in 1853. Congregational referendum and approval followed. The announcement was made the following year that the revised constitution was now in effect. The paragraph recommended for adoption by Trinity, St. Louis, was incorporated into the new constitution as Art. IV, par. 9. In 1917 it was slightly revised and today appears as Article VII in the constitution.

Precisely what did Trinity, St. Louis, and the Synod have in mind when they incorporated this definition of polity into the constitution? To some it appears to advocate an extreme "congregationalism." In fact, critics of the synodical organization and its constitution predicted the early demise and self-destruction of the Synod as a result of it. It was considered *Poebelherrschaft* (mob rule) and impossible of self-perpetuation. But what did the framers specifically intend to say? Perhaps Walther, who undoubtedly helped in the formulation of the article may be called upon to give the answer. In his presidential ad-

dress to the 1848 convention he emphasized:

Perhaps all of us, the one more, the other less, are filled with concern by the thought that our deliberations might easily be unproductive; I mean the thought that, according to the constitution under which our synodical union exists, we have merely the power to *advise* one another, that we have only the *power of the Word*, and of *convincing*. According to our constitution, we have no right to formulate decrees, to pass laws and regulations, and to make a judicial decision, to which our congregations would have to submit unconditionally in any matter involving the imposing of something upon them. Our constitution by no means makes us a consistory, by no means a supreme court of our congregations. It rather grants them the most perfect liberty in everything, excepting nothing but the Word of God, faith, and charity. According to our constitution we are not *above* our congregations, but in them and at their side. Have we not thereby been deprived almost entirely of the possibility of exercising an energetic, salutary influence upon our congregations? Have we not perhaps, by adopting a constitution as ours is, made ourselves a mere shadow of a synod? The relationship into which we have entered being what it is, shall we not exhaust ourselves with labors which may easily be lost entirely, since nobody is forced to submit to our resolutions? . . .

Accordingly there can be no doubt, venerable brethren in office and respected delegates, that we are not renouncing any right belonging to us if we as servants of the church and as members of an ecclesiastical synod claim no other power than the power of the Word; for in the church, where Christ alone rules, there dare and can be no other power to which all must submit. To be sure, there are matters

which the Word of God does not regulate, but which must be arranged in the church; but all such matters are not to be arranged by any power above the congregation, but the congregation, that is, pastors and hearers, arranges them, free of every compulsion, as it is necessary and appears salutary. . . .

Can we, therefore, my brethren, be depressed because we in our American pastorates are endowed with no other power than the power of the Word and especially because no other power has been granted to this assembly? Most assuredly not. This very fact must arouse us to perform the duties of our office and to carry on our present labors with great joy; for in this manner the church also among us preserves its true character, its character of a kingdom of heaven; in this matter Christ remains among us as what He is, the only Lord, the only Head, the only Master; and our office and labor preserves the true apostolic form. How could we lust for a power which Christ has denied us, which no apostle has claimed, and which would deprive our congregations of the character of a true church and of the true apostolic form? ¹⁰

In determining what the "Fathers" meant when they said that Synod "is an advisory body" it is also profitable to examine the convention *Proceedings*. If it was Walther's and the Synod's intention that no resolution was binding upon the parishes unless the parish itself formally adopted it, one would expect to find reports from the parishes to this effect. No mention is made of such action at any convention. In fact, it is doubtful whether congregations took time to vote on the convention resolutions

¹⁰ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1848, pp. 5—10. A translation appeared in *CHIQ*, XXXIII (April 1960), 12—20.

except on rare occasions, although they were thoroughly discussed in the voters' assemblies.

Self-government therefore did not include the right of the individual congregation to ignore a resolution adopted by a convention. Such an interpretation would nullify the very purpose in organizing a synod, namely, to do jointly what individual congregations could not do adequately.¹¹

Discussions at conventions centered occasionally in the question whether a resolution might be "imposing" something on the parishes. A resolution was not to be so regarded as long as it did not attempt to regulate and prescribe internal affairs of the congregations, such as calling a pastor or teacher, establishing the time of services, local construction projects, etc.¹² When, in 1860, the Synod resolved to amalgamate the Fort Wayne and St. Louis Seminaries, a delegate asked whether this action could be taken without ratification by all congregations according to the advisory paragraph. The convention answered

¹¹ See the original English text of the present Article VII in the *Lutheran Witness*, XXXVI (Oct. 2, 1917), 312. The terminology employed assumed the "contract theory" of government, namely, that the congregations, through their subscription to the synodical constitution, have pledged mutual help and assistance. The choice whether or not to do it is no longer left to the parish, only the how. However, when matters pertaining to "self-government" or "internal affairs" are involved, then the Synod only advises. The specific duties ascribed to the congregations by Walther (known as internal matters) are defined in his *The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the State*, especially paragraphs 6—66. *Walther and the Church*, pp. 91—115.

¹² Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1852, pp. 26, 27.

that it certainly had the authority to pass this resolution, since the resolution had no bearing whatsoever on the autonomy of the local congregations (did not involve internal congregational matters). To satisfy the questioner, however, the congregations were urged to register their reactions to the Vice-President of the Synod by mail.¹³ The subsequent convention did not bother to report this vote. The action taken was therefore regarded as consistent with the basic assumption that the congregations had a voice in formulating policy through their membership in Synod and consequent participation in conventions.

The relation of synodical officers to the congregations was defined as purely advisory. This principle applied both in cases of disputes and in the calling of pastors and teachers. However, when heresy or an immoral life of a pastor or teacher became apparent, the synodical President was given the power to suspend him temporarily from membership.¹⁴

The congregation also exercised exclusive jurisdiction in matters pertaining to the Office of the Keys. Synod could be called on only to counsel and advise. However, the convention of 1867 encouraged the congregations to consult the District presidents more frequently in cases involving excommunication. In fact, the presidents were directed to inquire about such cases in their visitations.¹⁵

Was the Synod also advisory with reference to doctrinal and confessional issues, according to Walther's principles? A severe test case came in 1881 during the

throes of the predestinarian controversy. Although Walther was no longer President he was present when the following practical application was made. After the "Thirteen Theses"¹⁶ had been adopted, the question was asked what the proper procedure would be in relation to those who refused to give assent to them. The convention's answer was simple:

As long as they do not repent . . . there can be no talk of further co-operation and walking together. . . . The Districts, respectively their presidents, now must take the matter in hand and must deal further with such proponents. . . . Whoever opposes the doctrine which we teach according to Scripture and the Confessions and declares such a doctrine heretical, must be taken into church discipline. If he does not listen to private admonition, but much more stubbornly adheres to his mistaken notion, then eventually, after unfruitful admonition by the District President, further church discipline must be practiced and must, step by step, proceed eventually to suspend or exclude such a one as a manifest and stubborn false teacher and to expel him from synodical fellowship.¹⁷

The congregation's role in adopting such a doctrinal statement was further expressed as the Secretary recorded the consensus of the convention:

We are assembled here by authority of all our congregations. Every one of our congregations is decidedly represented here, and this includes also each one's confessional position. No one has the right to insist on the contrary unless he can present uncontroverted facts in his favor. No individual members of the Synod for their

¹³ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1860, p. 62.

¹⁴ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1850, p. 15.

¹⁵ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1867, p. 89.

¹⁶ For the text see *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, pp. 1057, 1058.

¹⁷ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1881, pp. 42, 43.

persons have given a confession, but the Synod itself has rendered its confession. If, later on, it should appear that the confession of this or that delegate in this matter is not the confession of this or that parish which he represented, this still does not alter the circumstances in the least that here the Missouri Synod as such was assembled and rendered a confession. All the congregations of our synodical fellowship also knew what the doctrine of Synod on predestination was. If our congregations did not acknowledge this, then, through their properly constituted boards, they would have stepped into the matter and would have expelled those who, according to their conviction, had been publicly defending false doctrine. Our congregations will neither tolerate nor retain false teachers in their educational institutions. Instead of demanding that our teachers remain silent, our congregations have rather encouraged them to speak openly before the world.¹⁸

Sometimes it has been averred that the "real decision" or decisions of ecclesiastical authority must be made within the environment of the local congregation, and that the further removed such decisions are from the local church, the more advisory they become. It has been stated that this was the original intention of the Walther-Trinity Article IV, par. 9. The argumentation runs something like this. Since only the congregation is divinely established and Synod is a human organization, therefore the decisions of a divinely instituted congregation are more binding upon its membership than the resolutions of a synodical (human) organization. That this was never the intent of Dr. Walther becomes clear as one peruses the minutes of

the voters' meetings of Trinity, St. Louis, and other congregations. In fact, it becomes clear that Walther applied the same basic principles to congregational and synodical resolutions in determining their authority. Repeatedly the statement is made that no man-made rule is binding upon members of the congregation or the Synod. However, if a resolution has the authority of Christ or the Scriptures, then compliance should follow automatically. Only Christ is the Head of the Church. Man-made rules and regulations are binding only when they have been accepted by common consent. Even majority rule does not provide absolute authority in such cases. For at times the minority bows to the majority, and at other times the majority, in Christian love, subjects itself to the minority.¹⁹

Walther laid down these principles in a number of theses. We quote the following:

5. The churches and their servants have received from Christ no other authority (*Gewalt*) than the authority of the Word, and it teaches to observe everything that Christ has commanded them.
6. Neither through this, that Christians gather in a congregation, do the majority of its members or the pastor receive divine power to prescribe to the minority or any single member anything that has not already been commanded by God.
7. Even the whole church on earth has no power to give one or more Christians a law that binds them.
8. The divine law "let everything be done decently and in order" imposes on all

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁹ *Missouri Synod Proceedings*, 1874, p. 41.

- Christians order but does not give the majority or any members or officials in a congregation, or in a complex of churches, or in the church in general, the power to impose its order as such upon other members of the church as a law which the latter from the debt of obedience or for conscience' sake would have to keep.
9. Every Christian and every Christian church has the power to impose upon itself orders and either to change freely, improve, or cancel them.
 10. The Christian is and remains, according to his faith and conscience, free in all adiaphora under all circumstances.
 11. According to love, a Christian is servant of all people, especially his brother.
 12. A Christian should forego the use of his freedom willingly where the welfare of his neighbor or the brethren demands it, so long as it can happen without injury to the faith.
 13. Neglect in keeping human church ordinance is not in itself sin for the believing Christian. It becomes sin

only when it transgresses the law of love.

14. No Christian should keep a human church ordinance when keeping it is demanded from him as a work of necessary obedience to be rendered for the sake of *God*.²⁰

Congregational autonomy was therefore protected against synodical dictation. By joining the Synod the congregation, however, entered into a compact or solemn agreement to co-operate in the objectives set forth in the constitution. The responsibility and supervision in achieving these purposes were committed to conventions, boards, commissions, and executives. Thus autonomy was not to be interpreted as "nonco-operation," nor was it to be lost in the co-operative efforts of the Synod. St. Louis, Mo.

²⁰ Walther, *Grundlegende Sätze über die Kirchenordnungs- und Kirchenregimentsfrage nebst einigen Zeugnissen alt-lutherischer Theologen zu denselben* (Leipzig und Dresden: Justus Naumann Buchhandlung, 1864). English translation in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XXXIV (July 1961), 33, 34.