

Selected Letters



**SELECTED WRITINGS
OF C.F.W. WALTHER**

Selected Letters

† Roy A. Suelflow, Translator
Aug. R. Suelflow, Series Editor



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Introduction

It is an ambitious project to permit C. F. W. Walther (1811—87) to address English readers. Efforts to do so have occurred in the past from time to time. But this English edition constitutes one of the most significant contributions made to the study of the theology of Lutheranism in America within past years. The stereotype of Walther heretofore imposed upon him by those who were unable to read his German writings will now be significantly altered! It is to be regretted that a rich treasury of many other works from Walther's pen still await a future project.

Dr. Henry E. Jacobs (1844—1932), late president of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa., said of Walther:

He is as orthodox as John Gerhard, but as fervent as a pietist, as correct in form as a university or court preacher, and yet as popular as Luther himself. If the Lutheran Church will bring its doctrines again to the people, it must be as faithful and as definite in its doctrine and as interesting and thoroughly adapted to the times in form, as is the case in Walther. He is a model preacher in the Lutheran Church ("Dr. Walther as a Preacher, *Lutheran Church Review*, III [October 1889], 319).

In each of the volumes a special effort was made to select the most significant and relevant materials and to have Walther speak contemporary English. We have further endeavored, wherever possible, to quote from the American Edition of *Luther's Works* and to utilize the Revised Standard Version of the Bible for Scriptural references. Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions were keyed to the Tappert edition of the *Book of Concord*. It was helpful to be able to consult some resources which Walther had in his own library.

Walther was an exceedingly involved church leader. A founding father of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, he served as its first president 1847—50 and 1864—78. He was Concordia Seminary's (St. Louis) foremost instructor from 1849 until his death in 1887, and served as its president 1850—87.

His concern for Lutheran unity is demonstrative. He conceived the "Free Conferences" in the aftermath of the confessional crisis in 1855. Later, in 1872, he was elected the first president of a new pan-Lutheran federation, the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

The project to translate Walther into English received support from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1962, when a special committee was formed. When funds were not available, the project was transferred to Concordia Publishing House. It has now become a pioneer in publishing both Luther's and Walther's select works in English.

Walther's classic *Law and Gospel*, generally considered one of the most important books produced within American Lutheranism, deserves a volume of its own. In it we see him as theological professor, with his students gathered around him.

Another volume acquaints us with Walther the preacher. He made a great impact on his hearers, and much of his sermonic and homiletical material was published in German during his lifetime and in the years following his death. In spite of this, several thousand sermon manuscripts still remain untouched.

In a further volume we see Walther the convention essayist. None of these essays, presented to Western District conventions between 1873 and 1886, with their ever-recurring theme "To God All Glory!" have seen the English light of day until now.

Of particular importance were Walther's writings on the church, and one of our volumes brings a condensation of these. *Church and Ministry* (1852), *The Proper Form* (1863), and *The True Visible Church* (1866) give the theological foundation for the Missouri Synod's strong emphasis on the congregation and on lay involvement.

We include a volume of Walther's correspondence. It lets us see him in his intense and complex relationships with many different people. Concordia Historical Institute, with funds provided by the Aid Association for Lutherans, has in recent years transcribed several hundred original *Fraktur* letters. Only a few have been published in English heretofore, and we too can bring only a selection.

Finally we take a look at Walther the editor—one of his most important functions. Through *Lehre und Wehre* (from which we bring articles never before presented in English) and *Der Lutheraner* Walther exerted a strong influence toward orthodox Lutheranism.

The translators of this edition hope that readers and users will develop a new appreciation for this 19th-century hero of faith, but above all, that Walther, as the preceptor of Luther in America, will direct the readers to the very cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, his and our only hope.

Aug. R. Suelflow, *Series Editor*



Translator's Preface

In the 1830s a small group of students at the University of Leipzig in Saxony, Germany, became convinced that the only hope for their personal salvation and for their church, long devastated by rationalism, lay in the rediscovery of their Christian roots in the Lutheran reformation. They were by no means the only Germans to experience a thoroughgoing religious awakening in those years. But they became the carriers of this religious awakening to America, where in a few years it was to take organizational form in the shape of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. But this did not come to pass except through a most unusual sequence of developments. In these developments C. F. W. Walther played a very significant role.

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811—87) was a man with unusual talents and ability who, like Carlyle's "heroes" or great men, appeared in history precisely at the time when his talents carried him to greatness on the cross-currents of history.

In his letters many facets of Walther's greatness are evident. His commitment to Biblical truth and to the Lutheran Confessions, his keen ability to apply this to pastoral problems, his Gospel-oriented approach—these are some of Walther's qualities evidenced in his letters. But he was also a devoted husband, a loving father, and a devoted and respected friend among his peers.

Walther produced an enormous amount of correspondence in an age when every letter was written in longhand in German script. At one time he mentioned that he was receiving five or six letters a day which required serious responses. At that rate he might have produced tens of thousands of letters. He had no way of keeping carbons, of course. Only in a very rare case or two does a copy of a letter survive which he had a student secretary make before mailing the original.

Walther's son-in-law, J. H. Niemann (1848—1910), began the first larger collection of Walther's letters, which Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer (1864—1947) added to those he himself had been collecting, making over 500 in all. When the Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) was organized in the 1920s, this collection became the core of the Walther correspondence in the official archives of Synod. Other churchmen collected additional

letters and deposited them with the CHI, unfortunately not always depositing the original but often handwritten copies made by unidentified individuals. The copies are often in very neat handwriting—much more legible than Walther’s own hurried script—but the copyists did not always know the people or places mentioned, and thus there are serious problems with spellings with which a translator and editor has to cope.

The first serious attempt at publishing a collection of Walther’s letters was by Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer in his *Briefe von C. F. W. Walther an seine Freunde, Synodalgenossen und Familienglieder* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915—1916). This two-volume collection in German contained 225 letters, none of them later than 1871. Fuerbringer frequently deleted the names of people Walther was discussing. This makes it mandatory for a serious study to undertake time-consuming comparisons with the very-hard-to-read Gothic-script originals in the CHI. Fuerbringer’s work is particularly valuable because he often made editorial notations or filled in complete names in cases where Walther used only initials—even on letters which Fuerbringer excluded from the published edition. Where a letter in this volume can be found in Fuerbringer’s collection, we give the reference right under the heading. A number of Walther’s letters in German can also be found in *Dr. C. F. W. Walther* by Martin Guenther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1890), both in an appendix and scattered throughout the book.

Carl S. Meyer (1907—72) published two collections of Walther’s letters in English. They are *Letters of C. F. W. Walther: A Selection* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) and *Walther Speaks to the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973).

Prof. Werner Karl Wadewitz of Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Ind., some years ago undertook the massive task of transcribing into typescript all the letters of Walther in the CHI collection. This proved very helpful for this present project. But certain difficulties still remained, especially in the case where Wadewitz had only copies to work with and where the original copyist had copied names incorrectly. In some cases the task of annotating these letters proved to be extremely time-consuming.

We have made changes in Walther’s paragraphing, breaking up the extremely long paragraphs he often wrote.

It is regretted that not more of Walther’s letters could be included in this volume. Severe limitations of space permit us to bring only a sampling of letters showing Walther as a family man and friend, as a pastor, as a churchman, and as an educator and schoolman.

† Roy A. Suefflow



Walther in His Personal Letters

To His Brother Otto Hermann

Kloesterlein, Germany

Chursdorf, Germany, August 1833

Dear brother,¹

Even though I haven't much time, yet since Wilhelm² is going back now, I must impart a few things to you in writing.

The most important of these for me is that last Thursday I received the citation for my examination. The *written* examinations are to take place on the 13th and 14th of September, the *oral* examination on the 19th of September. It is up to you whether you want to come on the 19th, which I indeed would appreciate very much. You will, however, take consideration of your circumstances; I do not demand a sacrifice.

Furthermore, with the citation I also received the text for my sermon and catechization, which I am to submit next Thursday. The text for the sermon is Acts 26:24-29. I am yet undecided between the two themes: I. The Preaching of the Word of God to Those Who Are Not Obedient to Its Effects

(Exposition:)

- 1) according to its nature
 - a) uncompromising in regard to purity of doctrine
 - b) but with consideration for the particular spiritual condition of the hearers when it comes to the choice of material and the manner of presentation.
- 2) according to its result
 - a) either it is slandered as nonsense,
 - b) or the working of grace is restricted

II. The Results of Witnessing to Jesus in Those Who Refuse to Be Obedient to the Power of the Divine Word.—The text for the catechization is 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11, with the prescribed theme: Faith in the Divine Support of Human Life Does Not Release Us from the Duty to Work for Our Support Ourselves.—Sound advice is now scarce: I cannot make any progress in working it out. Please back me up with your prayers. I rely on this.

You would like to have the recipe for those suffering from lung disease. It is as follows: Take fresh unsalted goat's butter, 6 spoonfuls; melt this and mix it with 3 spoonfuls of honey. Stir this well, until the butter is well mixed. Take one tablespoon twice daily, mornings before breakfast, and evenings shortly before retiring. Continue this for a few months. Avoid anything sour. Pray God for His blessing, and in a short time you will be cured from tuberculosis.

Have you read in the paper the proposal of Minister Dr. Mueller for the establishment of an ecclesiastical board which would in the future formulate the doctrine of the Saxon Church, with the prescription and the good advice to formulate it so "as it will be best received *by the educated people*"? It seems as if God would inflict a severe judgment on the Saxon Church. Under these conditions we would probably never be able to enter the ministry, at least not in Saxony, including Schoenburg. Who can bind himself to symbols like that without jeopardizing his salvation?

It seems that in the investigation of orthodox teachers they want to start with Keyl.³ Already he has received a notice from the supreme council in which he is forbidden to teach the doctrine of the natural depravity of man and is accused of Manichean, Schwenkfeldian, and Donatistic errors. He is said to have led two people astray by his crass teachings about the impending punishment in hell. He was therefore put on trial. He is supposed to pay a fine of more than 80 thaler. He does not yet have an answer to his appeal to the highest secular Court of Appeals, in reference to the oath he took on the Symbolical Books at that same place where they tried to force him to retract that oath.

God be with you, even as He was with me yesterday when I preached in Chursdorf and in Langenberg. Let us praise Him, fear Him, and always plead for grace.

Greetings from many.

Farewell, and answer soon,

Your distressed brother,
[C.] F. W. [Walther]

To Emilie Buenger

Perry County, Mo.

(Fuerbringer, 1, 1—3)¹

St. Louis, Aug. 10, 1841

Dear, heartily beloved Emilie,²

As little as I have till now had the right to write to you, and

particularly with such a greeting, yet I cannot do otherwise if I am to be honest with you. Nearly two years have gone by, as you will perhaps recall, since through your dear brother Fritz³ I at least indicated from afar a precious, sublime wish of my heart which no one in the world but you can fulfill. But how wonderful have been the ways on which our heavenly Father has led me during the past two years! I do not need to tell you anything of this; my life has been an open book for you.⁴ Only this much I must confess, that I often, with deep misery of soul, felt forced to believe that God's dark leadings were a sign that it was not His holy will to grant me the fulfillment of the dearest wish I have in this world.

However, also in me the promise of Psalm 103 has been fulfilled: "He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever." God has turned His friendly countenance toward me once more, and trustfully I have therefore again laid my old wish down at the feet of my God and Savior. I have also today poured out my heart to your dear mother.⁵ So you alone remain, whose yes or no will reveal to me the will of my gracious God.

Therefore I cannot wait any longer to express this my wish frankly also to you. It is this: Will you, dearest Emilie, become my life's companion? Can you return, at least in some degree, the love which, as I now confidently hope, God has enkindled in my heart for you? Do you believe that you can live with me happily, contentedly, and God-pleasingly in a union as intimate and inseparable unto death as the holy estate of matrimony is?

I do not believe that any explanations on my part are necessary, as if you first had to become acquainted with me. You know me, my character, my faith, my failings and weaknesses, my outward position; you know that you will find no temporal fortune, no honor before the world, no assured future with me. I can therefore only add my pledge that you will have in me a spouse who will love you dearly and by God's grace faithfully. I have no one whom I could ask to speak for me to you; I have therefore prayed the dear Lord Himself to be my Eliezer⁶ and to direct your heart according to His holy will and to our mutual temporal and eternal welfare. Follow His guidance and then inform me by return messenger of your God-directed decision.

As communication between here and Perry County is often long interrupted, you will not, as I hope for your love, think ill of me for making the following suggestion. If you can, in God's name, say yes to my question, then we shall look upon your declaration as the completion of our betrothal, since your dear mother today and my good mother already in Germany in advance have given their parental consent thereto. I would therefore in this event not come to Perry County before our marriage. If

this is agreeable to you, I should like to have the publication of the banns of marriage made in Frohna and here on the 13th, 14th and 15th Sundays after Trinity (5th, 12th, and 19th of September) and the marriage ensue perhaps on the Monday after the last date, namely Sept. 20, in the church at Frohna. The day of my arrival and that of your dear mother would be, if you accept my suggestion, God willing, on the 15th or 16th of September. The enclosed letter, addressed to my dear brother-in-law,⁷ contains the request to publish the banns on the suggested days and to perform the marriage ceremony;⁸ I beg you, therefore, not to deliver this letter to my dear brother-in-law before you can also announce to him that you have given me your dear yes.

I am almost surprised at myself for daring, in this first letter, to speak so freely of betrothal, of publishing the banns, of marriage, etc.; how much more will you perhaps be astonished! May you, however, recognize this as nothing else than my wholehearted confidence in you, that you will, even if you could not give me your hand, certainly grant me the privilege of having at least vividly imagined myself out of pure grace, without my merit or worthiness, in the position of seeing you as my God-given, dearly beloved bride!

Now, may all my wishing and hoping be commended to the Lord and to the guidance of His love and grace! May He give you a joyous decision and then make your heart firm, sure, and certain that you rest in His grace and under His holy benevolence; and if God brings us together, we will mutually serve Him day and night, without ceasing, faithfully, until death, by the power of His omnipotent grace in Christ Jesus, your and my Savior. Amen.

Please give my hearty greetings to dear Ernst⁹ and Lyddie¹⁰ and tell them that I hope to see them very soon if God wills.

Your daily intercessor with God,
Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther

To Emilie Buenger

Perry County, Mo.

(Fuerbringer, I, 4—5)

St. Louis, Aug. 25, 1841

In Christ Jesus, my dearly beloved bride,

After a long, yearning wait, your¹ precious answer is finally in my hands. As I see with great joy from your answer, God has assured you of His gracious will, that we should together journey through this earthly life

toward heaven. May His holy name be praised eternally! Let us now daily beseech our good and gracious God for His Holy Spirit that we may enter into the estate of marriage in His grace and fear. A chief purpose of matrimony is that thereby the Christian church is expanded and edified. Oh, join me in praying in the name of Jesus, that our Lord would grant grace that on the day of our wedding we may lay the first cornerstone for a little house-church (Romans 16:5). How I long to see our home as a true model for a genuinely Christian family, in which God dwells and all God's children are stirred up to praise our Father in heaven! (Matthew 5:16).

But the more I feel inadequate for this, the more I hope for from you, my precious Emilie. May God continue to adorn you with the true beauty of a bride of Christ, with humility, faith, confidence, praise of God, with a heavenly attitude and a joyful denial of all things earthly. Oh, how happy we will be then!

Last Sunday I delivered a short engagement address for the betrothal of our dear little Clementine,² in which I tried to visualize for her how God Himself is encouraging her and her bridegroom, who is a very respectable, Godfearing, and likeable man, at the very threshold of their new life, with the words of Ps. 128: "You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you." You can well imagine that I was also thinking of *us*, and I hope that also in your heart the lively realization may increase as to how comforting it is that God Himself tells us in that Biblical betrothal and wedding hymn, Ps. 128, not "You poor people, you are bad off," but rather: "You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you." Let us therefore gladly cast all our cares on the Lord and cling to this precious Word of promise with firm confidence. Then God will also fulfill this promise for us, and we by His grace will be blessed not only in good days but also in bad.

It would be good for you now in this time of preparation if you could read something good about marriage, that estate which we shall so soon be entering. I would recommend the wedding sermons which that dear man of God, Dr. Luther, included in his Epistle sermons. My brother-in-law³ has this volume. Besides this, the reading of the fine apocryphal Book of Tobit would certainly be helpful and enlightening for you.

It was a great joy for me that you accepted the proposed dates. I have nothing to change in this matter. Only one thing I have come to understand, and that is that it will not be practical to perform the ceremony in Frohna. Could we not possibly settle on the Dresden church? My brother-in-law has proposed the college, but I fear there would be too many disturbing memories.⁴

Because Mr. Schubert is in a sudden hurry to leave, I need to break off here.⁵

Cordially greet our dear Dr. Ernst and Lyddie⁶ and please ask Ernst not to be angry with me because I am intending to take you away from him. Tell him that my heart's desire is that God might soon open a way for him that he could follow my example, and then he won't need to be concerned about being without a housekeeper.

Now, may God be with you, my heartily beloved bride! May He preserve your love for me, even as I will remain therein with the help of God even unto death.

Your
Ferdinand

To His Wife

St. Louis, Mo.

(Fuerbringer, I, 73—82)

Erlangen, Germany,¹ Oct. 11, 1851

My dear, precious wife,

Finally I am with my dear old friend Delitzsch,² as you see from the return address, and I make haste to send you a sign of life. My last letter, from Verden, has reached you by now, I hope. May our faithful God grant that also these lines may find you and our dear little ones well and healthy. As far as I am concerned, the Lord has graciously led me and my travel companion³ on all our ways, and has sent His holy angel so that I did not dash my foot against a stone. In spite of the many mental and physical exertions, I have become constantly more energetic.

From Verden we traveled to Halle. There we looked up our dear Dr. Guericke⁴ and stayed with him two days with great enjoyment. For in him we found the first believing theologian in Germany with whom we soon saw eye to eye on everything. He also expressed great joy to recognize and feel himself completely one with us. From Halle we made a diversion to Nordhausen, by request of our neighbor Mr. Rudloff,⁵ to look up his relative there. We found the friendliest reception there. Rudloff's sister did not give any indication that she has become a really heartfelt believer, much less so her husband. But we observed with joy that their two daughters belong to the congregation of separated Lutherans in Nordhausen and attended services there whenever these are conducted by Pastor Wermelskirch of Erfurt. Please tell Rudloff that.

From Nordhausen we went back over Halle to Leipzig. Although there we learned to know many dear, believing men and were both spiritually and physically refreshed by them (although almost always through hard disputations), the biggest joy was accorded me by the

renewed acquaintance with Dr. Marbach⁶ and his dear wife. During the first hour of our meeting our attitude to each other was restrained and full of evidence of mutual distrust, but we soon had a deep mutual exchange of ideas from which I learned that the Marbach family, although under totally different circumstances and under totally different divine guidance, has come to the same understanding and outlook as we Lutherans in America as far as matters of the church and Christianity are concerned. God be praised that with Marbach the old love has not only been rekindled but is burning in much brighter and purer flames than ever before. Although with the other believing scholars in Leipzig (Master Schneider, Professor Kahnis, Candidate von Zezschwitz,⁷ and others) I had to fight a hard battle against the Loehe⁸ errors, at Marbach's home I found a glad "Yea and Amen" to all our present convictions which I presented to them, with thanks and praise to God.

We also visited Mr. Doederlein's⁹ father and brother here; they are all well. To my joy I saw that they had taken the believing and gifted preacher Ahlfeld (who of course ought to be more decisive on the doctrine of the church) as their pastor and thus, as I hope, are instructed and live in the true Gospel. From Leipzig I made a detour to Langenschursdorf.¹⁰ You can well imagine how joy and nostalgia contended within my heart. My dear mother was no longer there, and of my father I found only his grave mound. But I thanked God that I again saw my sister with her large family.¹¹ It had just barely become known that I was there and the rooms were full of former acquaintances to see me and speak to me. One of the first was old mother Nagel.

Most of the time I spent in the Muldental, however, I had to use for conferences, which were held in Waldenburg. There I met the pastors Pasig and Wilhelm¹² from the city, Fuellkruss from Kaufungen, Kranichfeld from Wolkenburg, Niedner from Chursdorf, Gotsch from Ziegelheim, Spiegelhauer from Altstadt-Waldenburg, Meurer from Callenberg, Schnabel from Tettau, and a number of schoolteachers. May God grant that our witness here has not remained fruitless, for it was not a very hopeful situation among those gentlemen. We like Pasig, Schnabel, and Gotsch the best. The others gave evidence not only of great confusion in the pure evangelical doctrine, combined with great insolence, but they did not seem to be very zealous in their pastoral office. At least one hears nothing of any awakening to repentance, nor of any responses of hatred which might have arisen in their congregations through them.

I was in Kaufungen twice and found "Cousin" Fuellkruss¹³ doing quite well. I also spoke with his mother for just a bit in Wolkenburg. Pastor Fuellkruss made me the proposition to urge his brother, the fiance of our

Emma,¹⁴ to emigrate to America, but the brother was not inclined to leave the fatherland since he hoped to find a good position in Saxony. Pastor Fuellkruss explained to me that sympathy had pretty well disappeared for us in Germany after people heard about the free congregational constitutions and democratic principles of the American church. Fuellkruss, though the same old good-natured man, showed as far as doctrine is concerned the most stubborn resistance of all the pastors in the Muldental. I have to confess that I did not find again the old beautiful Muldental, where once such a mighty fire was going for the Lord.¹⁵ Indeed under the umbrella of a believing church administration more and more believing pastors have been appointed but they are worn out, paralyzed, lukewarm, and lazy, and although the future of Germany looks very threatening, they dream only of improvement and glory, and their confident and reckless motto is "Peace, peace! There is no danger." After we had unburdened ourselves of the most earnest testimony, we departed with a heavy heart.

Our way took us back over Leipzig, where Marbach, obviously the most active of men, urgently prevailed on us and finally persuaded us to go also to Dresden to visit Harless. And I must say, though we did not expect much of Harless, yet we found the most open entree with this highly placed man. He received us like brothers, and soon it came out that our American Lutheran church with its doctrine and practice is the joy of his heart. In all the points discussed we were fully agreed. Harless was deeply interested in our experiences, and he gave us a letter of introduction to the queen of Bavaria, through whom he hoped to provide us with significant support for our college building plans. Harless explained to us, and he has already told others in Germany, that the German church needed a hand from the healthily blossoming church in America as well as vice versa. He complained that neither pastors nor congregations in Saxony were sufficiently utilizing the legal protection which was now available to Lutheran doctrine and practice because he had been called to head the state church.

In Dresden I also met Emma, who was invited by a letter to come there. As she stepped into the room, I thought I saw a younger Agnes.¹⁶ She is an extremely lovely and, I believe, pious child. In the 10 hours we had together she wept many tears of joy and nostalgia. As much as she would like to be with us, she sees herself as exiled here, since her fiance will in no way leave Germany. She takes part in the Old Lutheran services in Goerlitz with her aunt. I tried to strengthen her in the faith and to exhort her to seriousness of life and of confession, as much as God gave me grace. Besides that I could not do anything. The description of Hennig Fuellkruss which I got unanimously from all sides moved me

not to spend another day in order to speak to him. He is seeking a quiet and comfortable area of work for his “orthodoxy.”

On the way from Dresden, after I had paid a short visit to my sister¹⁷ in Kleinhartmannsdorf, I hurried to Leulitz, where I visited Herman Hasse¹⁸ and his very dear wife, our cousin, whom I both found standing much nearer to our position than I had believed before; then I returned to Leipzig and from there traveled with Wyneken via Zwickau to Nuernberg. We arrived there last Sunday, Oct. 5, and were received in the most friendly way by Mr. Volk.

Here in Bavaria we found the Lutherans in great commotion. For there was a report that Pastor Loehe was about to separate himself from the state church, and this had really heated up the feelings of both pastors and people especially in this area of Bavaria. Early on Tuesday we drove to Neuendettelsau with Mr. Volk. Pastor Loehe received us heartily and fraternally. We very soon got to serious discussion on the prevailing differences between us. As to the outcome of this, I can only say this much at the present time: Many mutual reservations have been eliminated, and Loehe has now stated his position better than hitherto on several significant points; but we have not come to a complete understanding. Whether we will ever get to that, only God knows; my hope is rather weak in this respect. To many a person, if they had heard the discussions, it would have seemed as if all the differences were mere subtleties; but anyone who could look deeper would soon see that Loehe has a thoroughly different viewpoint on church and ministry in his total outlook compared to us, that is, to our Lutheran church. Pastors Wucherer in Noerdlingen, Stirner in Fuerth, Volk (another pastor), Fischer, Semm in Memmingen, the prep school professor Bauer in Nuernberg, the lawyer Hommel in Erlangen, and some other pastors whom I have gotten to know but whose names I have forgotten—these all side with Loehe. But even outside of Bavaria Loehe has a large following among the preachers, especially in Saxony, Prussia, and Hanover, although one could hardly find any two who would agree on doctrine, if one were to go into greater detail.

Only one thing one always finds among all the hollering about “Lutheran church,” and that is a reluctance to sit at the feet of our old teachers in a childlike simple way, before one tries to ferret everything out of the Scriptures for oneself. There is *no* willingness to sit and hear the teachers who spoke to us the Word of God, to consider the outcome of their life, and to imitate their faith (Hebrews 13:7).

It is true, Germany is not the same anymore as it was 13 years ago when we left. All over one sees that the orthodox confession has formally found friends, but there is also the most frightful expansion of the kingdom

of darkness and of enmity against God. Yet everywhere there are people who say they want to be strictly Lutheran. Even the church consistories in the main provinces of Protestant Germany declare the legal rights of the Lutheran confession to exist and state that it should again be legally protected. But there are few who faithfully utilize this time of visitation. There is no serious return to the Reformation. Some talk of nothing but the need for ongoing development; the others are lazy and want to wait till God does what He wants to do through them and for which He has called them. It seems indeed that the morning is dawning here, but under a heavy cloud of fog and rain.

But I want to return to my travel narrative. On Thursday, Oct. 9, there was a special conference of the Loehe followers (*Löheaner*, if I may speak thus) in Schwabach, where we were also present. Upon the initiative of this conference a rescript has been presented to the Supreme Consistory which would acknowledge the right of all strict Lutherans to appeal to the Lutheran Confessions. It is promised that the Lutheran Church of Bavaria is supposed to receive its proper constitution. Therefore Loehe and his followers resolved, and that with our complete and joyful assent, that they would remain in the state church complex and wait for improvement, with the proviso that one should publicly and formally reject all syncretistic altar fellowship, which one still finds in the state church, and also carry this separation through in a practical way.

In the response to the Supreme Consistory it says verbatim: "As much as we are willing to look to the Royal Supreme Consistory with confidence for the further development of our true Lutheran Church in Bavaria, even so decisively we have to declare to our superiors, that (1) we will not recognize any altar fellowship with the Reformed and with the United, (2) we cannot consider any pastor or other Christian who knowingly remains in such altar fellowship as truly Lutheran, and (3) we have to follow this conviction of ours in all our official practical relationships, as difficult and sorrowful as this may become for us here and there."

I hope this way will lead to a better goal than an overhasty separation from the state church. Indeed, the better we have come to know the German state churches, the more clearly we have come to see that what would now most offend one's conscience would not be remaining in them but separating from them, for in them the orthodox are only very little restricted and threatened in the conduct of their office. Even the practical application of their confession is no longer impossible, to say nothing of the confession itself. In any case, the decisively Lutheran preachers first have to see what will happen to them when they carry out their office in faithfulness to their church.

Wyneken has returned from Schwabach to Neuendettelsau to preach there tomorrow. I came here to Erlangen to complete my book.¹⁹ Here in Bavaria the so-called strict Lutherans are divided into two sharply opposed camps, namely the Loehe people and the Erlangen people. The Nuernberg preachers hold with the latter. What the Loehe people *add* to the Confessions, when they allege that they make the latter's determinations more distinct and develop them further, that in almost the same measure the Erlangen people²⁰ *take away* from the Confessions, although both claim to be justified in doing what they do. In Erlangen I made the acquaintance of Professors Thomasius, Hofmann, Schmid, and Hoefling, who received me with unusual, unexpected love and friendliness. They all speak with one voice. Although on the doctrine of the church and church authority they agree with our position, yet they all deny that the office of the ministry is of immediate divine establishment. They rather see it as being developed from an ethical necessity and from a merely insinuated will of the Lord. I have already had many a hard brush with these scholarly gentlemen on that account, but up to now the only result has been that they moved slightly closer to us, yet without becoming fully one with us. On this point Delitzsch is in harmony with us, but on other points all the more differences have become evident. There is a mighty ferment here. God is obviously planning to do a great work here. May men through their unfaithfulness not dampen it or trifle it away!

Next Monday Wyneken will come here. He is well and healthy. We will probably stay here another 14 days and then return to Loehe to inaugurate a second discussion with him. May God grant victory! Please help us in praying for this to God. The blessing of our delegation for the church here as well as in America is evident. Many prejudices against our American church and its condition have been dropped, many hearts have again been won for it, and a refining fire has been kindled.

My dear Emilie, you see from this letter that it is indeed addressed first of all to you but that it is drawn up in such a way that it may interest others more than you, although I know that also in your heart there is concern and love for the church. So I would ask you to share this letter, which I am sending via the hands of Pastor Brohm,²¹ with all the dear fellow pastors and brothers in the faith in St. Louis of whom you know that they will consider the news contained herein to be of importance. I must indeed ask them to be forbearing with my miserable scribbling and to consider how difficult it is to gather one's wits for letter writing with all the thousands of sense impressions that impinge on one's eyes and heart on this kind of a trip. Up to now I have not been able to bring Wyneken to the point where he would write the second official report for the *Lutheraner*, although it is

his turn to do so. I hope that he will take care of this next week. Since I had time right now, I did not want to delay any longer with the writing of a personal letter. Soon I shall be writing more.

I do not have to reassure you how much I yearn for America and to be with you again, with my precious family and those fellow believers and fellow soldiers of the Lord closest to me. As much good as we see and enjoy here, it is still my wish to live in America and to die there and nowhere else, and this resolve has grown not weaker but ever stronger. As *much* as God has done here toward improvement, yet I have to say after observing many things in Germany that induce me to praise God: The *greatest* thing God has done for us is in America. Please greet all relatives and brothers and sisters in Christ over there with the greeting of my fervent love. On the 28th of November we intend to sail from Bremen if at all possible, for that is the last sailing from Germany to America before the onset of winter. Thus if everything goes according to my wish, we will celebrate the joyous Christmas holidays together with you and edify ourselves again in beholding the lovely Christ Child.

I commend you and our dear little ones, whom I ask you to kiss in my name, together with our dear Marie,²² to the grace and protection of God our Savior. In the innermost, most tender love, always yours,

Your
Ferdinand

To Adolf Marbach

Leipzig, Germany
(Fuerbringer, I, 83—85)

St. Louis, July 1, 1853

Honored, faithful friend,¹

Immediately after I returned from Germany I wanted to write you to express also in writing that the brief hours which I was permitted to experience with you and your dear wife were among the best, the most enjoyable, and the most unforgettable which we spent in Germany. But the thought that there was insufficient time for a really extensive letter always kept me from writing up to this time. But now a situation has arisen which compels me to write to you anyway, although I have only a few moments available. The occasion is the following. A Bible society has been organized here among Lutherans, which has as its objective to distribute well done, complete Bibles, of the kind we cannot obtain here in America. As far as the German Bible editions are known to us here, that of Teubner

in Leipzig is the best. In the enclosed letter, therefore, the agent for our Bible society addresses himself to that publishing house to order a number of Bibles from it. The need of Bibles is great, but our financial resources are still modest, since our society has just been organized. We would therefore desire that Mr. Teubner for a short time send us perhaps twice as many Bibles on credit as we are able to pay for. But since we are unknown to the publisher, we thought we could establish credit through your good offices and by your guarantee. Therefore in the name of this society, which now consists of about 250 regular, dues-paying members, and of which I have been elected president, I now direct the request to you to forward the enclosed letter and the draft of \$110 to Mr. Teubner and to intercede with him that he might grant us credit. The payment will follow assuredly and quickly, since not only do the members continue to make payments into our society treasury, but also since no doubt most of the Bibles ordered will very quickly be sold. Please forgive my openness. But I must confess to you that our visit to Germany has not increased our friends but rather has diminished them. The witness for truth, especially against Romanizing tendencies and hierarchies, which we had to make has almost everywhere aroused considerable opposition. You are almost the only one with whom we recognized and felt ourselves to be totally at one in the truth. You are therefore also the one in Germany whom we feel freest to ask for deeds of love.

The report which I brought along from Germany to the effect that we, that is you and I, after going our separate ways for a long time, have now with inexpressible joy found ourselves again walking together toward one objective, this has been a matter of exceptional joy for your old brethren in the faith and former companions in misfortune. Upon this news the former great love for you, which had only been covered with ashes but was by no means extinguished, now flamed up brightly in everyone. All of your old friends here wish only one thing, that you will come over once more and, since God has so graciously given to all of us a clear evangelical certitude after those horrible days of conscience scruples, that you will now spend better days with us, take part with us in a more blessed struggle against the world, and in our midst die and enter the church triumphant.

It is my firm determination to write to you very soon in much greater detail. Right now this is impossible because official duties which cannot be put off flow in upon me like the tides of the sea. Please, therefore, cordially accept this preliminary letter as only that.

I commend you to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ at the same time that I express my most heartfelt thanks to you for the great love which you and your dear wife expressed to me, and I ask you to greet your wife from

me and to tell her that I remember with profound joy that in her I have found a faithful sister in Christ in Germany. May the Lord also in the future be your salvation and strength.

Your,
C.F.W. Walther

As a postscript I permit myself also to ask you heartily to greet your dear son Victor from me.

To His Nephew Johannes Walther

(Fuerbringer, I, 136—37)

New Orleans,¹ Feb. 24, 1860

My much-beloved Johannes,²

I received your welcome letter of the sixth of this month and heartily rejoiced over its content. It is our nature that even when we have no reason to doubt the continuing love of a person for us, we still gladly receive evidence of the same. Therefore it felt very good to me to receive such an indication from you, although I have been always assured of your sincere love for me. Possibly things go with you as with me; therefore I cannot but send at least a few lines to reciprocate your love.

I have really nothing to tell you. A trip within America offers so little that is interesting that it is difficult to write a description of such a trip that would be reasonably interesting. Accidents are as a rule the only notable things on American trips, so that under the word “accidents” we always understand cases of misfortune. But God has graciously protected me against such events.

You know that for my entertainment I took along a few volumes of the dramatic works of Shakespeare. After I had read a little bit, I thought that I had received suitable literature to supplement my edifying reading matter. But I have to admit that on the way I have come to a different conviction. There are a few pieces that one can read, as for example *Coriolanus*, without polluting one’s nature and having all kinds of unclean images fill one’s mind. I hold therefore that you students and scholars should be very careful in this matter and read only what has been recommended as being harmless. It is true that the newer novels and theater dramas are even more poisonous because they usually put a veil over their immoral imagery and thus inflame one’s fantasy all the more and arouse a hellish lust, and because they easily pursue youths in all directions, even during prayer and divine services, where they pop up as

heavenly images which invite one to the highest enjoyment whereas they really are messengers from hell which want to drag their victim down into the netherworld with ropes made of flowers. Oh, how many have lost their spiritual treasure through intoxicating literature, have lost their love for Christ and for His grace and communion, and have become slaves of sinful sensuality, often behind the most innocent-looking masks. Be warned! Satan is clever, the world is deceiving, the flesh is weak. After one has fallen, recovery is very difficult and therefore very rare; and repentance is always too late, for the time, energy, and grace that are lost are irretrievable.

Among the so called classicists, it seems to me, Schiller³ is still the most harmless, and as far as attractive form is concerned, one may learn much from him. But also in Schiller's dramatic works the overarching theme of sexual love plays a main role, for the world just doesn't have anything more intellectual than this refined flesh. But he who loves Jesus will soon see and shun the idolatry that manifests itself in it. Next to Schiller possibly Jean Paul⁴ is also one of the less dangerous writers among the German classicists (his name is really Friedrich Richter). The best of those who at the same time were Christians are people like the author of the "Wandsbecker Bote"⁵ and Hamann,⁶ who is usually called the "Magus of the North," as even Gottfried Herder,⁷ who was reared a Christian but became a pagan, called him.

May God lead you, my dear Johannes, that you may not lose the crown which you through His grace still wear, and that your soul may safely pass from the turbulent and foamy period of youth into maturity.

In asking you to continue to think of me and to extend my sincere greetings to all your dear, unforgettable fellow students, I assure you that I will constantly remain,

Your faithful uncle and friend,
C.F.W. Walther

To F.C.D. Wyneken
Ft. Wayne, Ind.

New Orleans, March 8, 1860

My dear Wyneken,¹

I cannot possibly leave America without writing you a few lines. Tomorrow the *Oder*, the ship on which I will make my journey, will leave for Hamburg. Thus I make haste to bid you adieu. That I only now get to

writing you is due to my intention of writing you an enriched epistle. But since I could not get my spirit into the mood, since it was dampened down or not present at all, therefore I now must decide to prepare a few intellectually empty lines for you.

On Feb. 6 I left St. Louis and arrived in New Orleans on the 13th. Metz,² who was supposed to make arrangements at a boarding house for me, insisted that I stay in his home. I accepted because otherwise I would have insulted his love for me. I stayed with him two weeks, till the 27th. Thereupon I moved to Hoppe's³ home, upon his invitation, and stayed with him till today. The doctors whom I consulted here have stated that I would be foolish to undertake this sea journey immediately without first enjoying about one month of the summer climate here, which they call spring. I followed this advice and have discovered that the doctors advised me well. I felt better day by day, except that I could not sleep well at night and thus am not able to do anything intellectual during the day. My throat is almost completely restored. Metz and Hoppe have done everything imaginable for me to nurse me and to make me a real bum who does nothing but eat and drink, go out on strolls, or lounge around even more, who flops down on the bed and occasionally smokes a good cigar.

I have especially found joy with Hoppe, for he studies Luther very zealously and in his sermons does hardly anything but reproduce Luther with warmth, albeit not always with full clarity or with a strictly observed sequence. Therefore he also has a lovely evangelical relationship with his congregation. Not so Metz. He is somewhat bitter, and he brings up too many personal things. But he is very zealous and diligent, self-sacrificing, and very insistent on uprightness. He is much concerned with a certain emphasis on science, although he is pure in doctrine and sincerely devoted to it in all points. Theory and practice are for him very far apart. But he is basically well gifted, and so God will no doubt enable him to make progress. I believe it would be good if a different place would be found for him. He is by nature not suited for the south as is Hoppe. If he cannot transfer to the north, I am afraid he will soon be worn out.

I now see more and more that it was no doubt the right thing to do, if I am at all to continue living⁴ (which is very unnecessary), to get out of St. Louis. I notice that I am more exhausted in spirit than I thought. May God reward you for your faithful love! I have always thanked God that in you we have a faithful watchman of the sound doctrine and of the proper evangelical spirit in our synod. Now I see, what I actually already knew before, that we have a real father in you who like Paul with his Timothy does not forget to encourage care for the stomach also, because truly the

stomach plays an important role in the case of servants of the church and can easily spoil everything.

That you refuse to give me a letter of introduction to the Prussian General Synod⁵ I see as your playing the role of a grandfather, who often deals with the grandchildren more tenderly than with the children. But basically you are correct. And I will not write it behind my ears, but in front of them, that I am on this trip only for physical recuperation and for that purpose am spending the money of God's children. I do not intend to look for any kind of work except the buying of good books and, if possible, the recruiting of a Lutheran theological professor for Concordia. I am in a mood which could not be worse for Germany. I am full of malediction, yes malediction and bitterness about the shameful trend among the theologians there, among whom I don't even care to visit anyone except possibly Stroebel.⁶

Stephanus⁷ [Keyl] is carrying out his duties as my nurse only too well. He has secretly gotten his hand on some money as an above-budget fund, with which he buys all kinds of delicacies such as oranges, good cigars, and the like. And with all this he provides me very generously, in spite of all my protests. Your eyes are going to pop when I return home or when you see the expense accounts. I am fearful that you and Craemer⁸ are going to feel a terrible regret at that time. I am also concerned that I'm going to be returning as a complete lazybones, since idleness and an easy life are already now starting to appeal to me, which I would hardly have believed before. Pray for me that God may not only grant me my life but also permit me to work again, because this I have determined, to show in Germany how well off a Missourian is and how noble the Missourian laity are. But in the end I'm going to pull myself out of the sling and put all the blame on you, and I will declare that this is what I learned in a three-day oral examination which you together with an official of presidential rank had with me.⁹

But enough of the jokes, my dear Wyneken. May God be "your shield and your exceeding great reward."¹⁰ May He grant you that to which you have helped me, namely a lightening of your official duties and the burdens of your family. May God make all your journeys into pleasure trips amid full crops, whose gathering you must teach more than their planting. May God's blessings sprout up like a sycamore tree next to your hut and spread its sweet shady branches out over it, under which you may take your ease and rest.

Heartily greet your honored wife from me, little Louise, Henry, and Martin,¹¹ my little beloved sponsor for whom I promise to bring something

nice from Germany as well as all your olive branches.¹² Greetings in the Lord also to your parents-in-law as well as brother Jaebker.¹³

When you pray the fourth to the seventh petition, please think of me occasionally, not to exclude the first three petitions.

Now, I commend you to God.
Your eternal debtor in Christ,
Carl Ferd. Wilh. Walther

To His Wife

St. Louis, Mo.

(Fuerbringer I, 138—43)

On board the ship *Oder* off Helgoland, May 2, 1860

My precious, heartily beloved Emilie,

Just now we have come to the last port before reaching Germany. Therefore I make haste to record our anticipated safe arrival, so I can mail it off to you immediately upon landing.

As you can see from the above date, we have had a fairly long journey. Today is the 52nd day on board ship. But we have nothing to complain about. Indeed we have reason only to be filled with thanks and praise to our Lord God. He has not only graciously protected us against all danger, but has blessed our trip more than we asked and can comprehend. My throat ailment has completely disappeared, and my whole constitution is strengthened. I have always had the best appetite and was able to endure even the heavy shipboard cuisine, since I never had even a hint of seasickness. Even the crew and passengers congratulated me for looking so much better—people who know me only from the time we boarded. I have even been able to do a little intellectual work now and then. To be able to do this on board *ship* is by itself significant. Even the bitter cold during the storms we often encountered did not hurt me, even though I was daily exposed to it when I would take my walks on the upper deck above the cabin and the stove in the cabin was not lit because of lack of firewood.

For disobeying the doctor's orders not to go over the North Sea but to go to Havre, we have been severely punished, and as you will have seen in my travel account sent to Ferdinand¹ we were whipped by icy winds precisely in the North Sea and at the entrance to the English Channel. But as I stated, all this seems only to have strengthened my nerves and tuned my whole system. Without doubt God turned our foolishness into good, for cold weather on land would not have been as kind to me as on the sea,

where the coldest wind not only lays hold of one but also hardens a person. After I have this year experienced two winters, between which the New Orleans spring intervened, so I am now also approaching my second spring, which I can now (on 2 May) already feel wafting out on the breezes from Germany.

But the ocean trip has not only had a beneficial effect on me, but also on Constantin.² In New Orleans the boy gave me great concern, since he simply did not improve any at all. In fact in the first weeks on shipboard he seemed visibly to be going downhill. He coughed and wheezed much, and became constantly thinner and paler. His brief seasickness really affected him. He thus gave me great concern and drove me to prayer. But behold! After about the first four weeks things turned for the better also for Constantin. In spite of the inhospitable weather, his coughing and congestion abated, and with that, his whole appearance soon improved, so that I think he hasn't been as robust for years as he is now. I am thinking of having him stay with your sister in the country if it is at all possible to arrange this, so that he can there go on a goat's milk diet and by God's blessing be strengthened by the fresh country air.

Oh my precious Emilie, let us thank the Lord fervently because He has done great things for us, and let us rejoice in Him. I am unworthy of all the mercy and steadfast love which He has shown me, this most miserable sinner. May He grant me His Holy Spirit to make me grateful. I so much want to be just that.

When I write this, you should not think that we had a trip that was physically *comfortable*. Not only was it uncomfortable to endure a number of storms as we did and to be beset day and night by bitter cold, but a journey on a sailing ship is for the most part uncomfortable. I had difficulty getting used to the relatively good but very heavy ship's fare; it was also the cause of a rather painful swelling of the finger joints, which I have not gotten rid of yet. In all that, we often wished we could eat your cooking at least once a week and be able to enjoy your tasty and wholesome dishes.

Our ship's crew and fellow passengers were certainly not the worst of people, yet to be cooped up with non-Christians for almost two months in such a tight space as the ship's cabin was certainly nothing to enjoy. How often didn't we (Stephanus, Constantin, and I) speak of you and imagine ourselves back in your midst, in order to forget about our prison. How often did we say to each other, "Now they are getting up, now they are at table, now they will still be sleeping, now they will be going to church." The most painful was our realization that we could not go to church on Sundays, and everything about us was so unlike Sunday. How much we