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I.

From the home-land of Luther two theologians have come who have prominently aided in the building up of the Lutheran Church in America in the nineteenth century. Their work has left on the particular organization with which they cast their lot an impress that will not soon be effaced, though in the onward rush of years the memory of their names and personalities may become dimmed.

Walther's work in the Missouri Synod was nearly done when Stoeckhardt arrived. Between the landing of the Stephanists and Stoeckhardt's election to the chair of Exegesis at Concordia Seminary there lies a full half century. The Missouri Synod's battle for existence among the older Lutheran bodies in America had been fought, its *raison d'être* established.

1) Born February 17, 1842, at Chemnitz, Saxony; preparatory education in a private *Lateinschule* at Tharandt; 1857—62 at *Fuerstenschule* at Meissen; 1862—66 studies theology at universities of Erlangen and Leipzig; 1866—70 tutor at Ladies' Seminary at Tharandt; 1870—71 assistant pastor at the German Lutheran Church des Billettes at Paris, and, temporarily, at the Sedan Hospital; 1871—73 private tutor in Old and New Testament Exegesis at University of Erlangen, and instructor at Gymnasium of that city; 1873—76 pastor of a state church at Planitz, near Zwickau, Saxony; 1876—78 pastor of the independent St. John's congregation of same city; 1878—1887 pastor of Holy Cross Church, St. Louis, and lecturer on Old and New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary; 1887—1913 Professor of Old and New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary; 1903 created Doctor of Divinity by the theological faculty of Luther Seminary, Hamline, Minn.; died January 9, 1913.

At home and abroad the why and wherefore of the Missouri Synod was understood, and acquiesced in, as a pleasing fact by some, as a deplorable fact by others.

Upon the work of organization and establishment there now followed the work of conservation. For ten years the activity of Walther and Stoeckhardt in the Missouri Synod overlap. It was in the years of their contemporaneous ministry among us that the fiercest onslaught was made upon our organization. In the light of after-events it is easy to see that the predestinarian controversy was the ultimate test of the strength of the Missouri Synod's doctrinal position, viewed as a whole. No intelligent observer of the ramifications of this controversy will say to-day that the whole discussion was about the *decretum praedestinationis* and its mystery. The entire domain of the *gratia applicatrix* was traversed by the combatants during the progress and development of the controversy, and the *causa impulsiva* in Soteriology, *sola gratia*, became the recognized *κρίνονμενον* in the strife. The essential elements of Law and Gospel, the legitimate and exclusive effects of either upon the human heart, were drawn into the discussion, and the true *causa instrumentalis* for every saving act of the Spirit, the "word of reconciliation," had to be explained in its exclusiveness, and the workings of the Law carefully and properly limited to its particular province. Free will, and the powers of the natural man when applied to spiritual things, were re-examined, and battles had to be waged on the territory of Biblical anthropology. The immediate effects of the atoning work of Christ and the general, or objective, justification of the sinner-world in, and by, His resurrection had to be upheld, and the Office of the Redeemer became a battle-ground. Bibliological subjects like the *analogia fidei*, the fundamental question, Who establishes a doctrine of faith, Scripture or the theologian? had to be taken up, when the particular decree of election was paralleled with universal grace and efficacious vocation. Lastly, such immensely practical issues as the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and of assurance, like-

wise the requirements for true union among the believers, and the destructive character of syncretism had to be debated. All this can be shown, by the literature which the parties to the controversy have produced since 1880, to have flown from the original attack upon Walther's statement, that the same God who wants all to be saved has elected few to salvation, or, that the same God who has elected few to salvation is not willing that any should perish.

It was a controversy—and still is—of the first magnitude, a giant struggle for the maintenance of the distinct theological position in the world, which the Missouri Synod had gained by half a century of arduous work. On the side of the Missouri Synod it was a heroic effort to conserve the fruits of past labors and the spoils of former victories of the truth.

Into this struggle Stoeckhardt entered almost with his arrival; for the beginning of his St. Louis pastorate and the beginning of the predestinarian controversy are nearly coincident. His close and cooperative connection as *professor extraordinarius* with Walther and the St. Louis Faculty at once merged him into the public, literary strife which the controversy necessitated. He came to be known and appreciated as a theological leader even before his congregation had had time to fully discover his fine qualities as a pastor and preacher.²⁾

2) Stoeckhardt's contributions to *Lehre und Wehre*, during the years when the controversy was raging, are numerous, and show with what zest he entered into the discussion. We have from his pen during those years the following articles: 1) "Does the Form of Concord teach an election in the wider sense?" May, 1880. (By request of the Pastoral Conference of St. Louis.) 2) "Scriptural proof for the doctrine of election." June—October, 1880. 3) "As regards the correct understanding of Eph. 1." April, 1881. 4) "In defense of the Eleventh Article of the Form of Concord." May, 1881. (Against Prof. Loy's article in the *Columbus Theological Magazine*.) 5) "The mystery in election." August, 1881. 6) "In defense of the Eleventh Article of the Form of Concord." September, 1881. (Reply to Prof. Loy; see No. 4.) 7) "A few annotations to *Alles und Neues*." September, 1881. (Against the claim of Prof. Schmidt that the Missouri Synod teaches salvation without faith.) 8) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto

And when, after a few years, Walther passed away, it fell to him, with others, to continue his work, and that meant conservation.

Stoeckhardt has foreshadowed the character of his own activity in the closing words of his address at the bier of Walther, when Walther's remains were transferred from the Seminary to Trinity Church. "What is the lesson that we glean from the life and death of this man? We glean from it fresh assurance that the grace wherein we stand, and which was testified unto us by our departed teacher, is the true grace. We are in possession of the truth,—the entire, undiminished truth,—because we know Christ crucified, and desire to hear of nothing beside Him. Our departed teacher calls to us: 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'"³⁾ The first article contributed by Stoeckhardt to the official organ of the Synod after the death of Walther, and his own election

him, neither can he know them; for they are spiritually discerned." November, 1881. 9) "Si duo idem faciunt, non est idem." April, 1882. (On the dogmatists of the 17th century.) 10) "Faith a gift of God." June, 1882. (On passivity in conversion.) 11) "What does Holy Scripture teach concerning the 'resistance of man,' and concerning 'overcoming this resistance'?" July, 1882. 12) "Augustine's teaching on conversion." August, 1882. 13) "A few sayings of Luther on free-will and conversion." September, 1882. 14) "Martin Chemnitz' teaching on conversion." October, 1882. 15) "Vindication of the old Lutheran doctrine of election and conversion over and against the exceptions and attacks of modern German theologians." January—July, 1883. 16) "Lutheranism and hybrid Lutheranism." November—December, 1883. 17) "Against a recent effort to corrupt the Lutheran principle of *sola Scriptura*." October—December, 1884. ("A doctrine is not Scriptural teaching unless it is based on express statements of Scripture.") 18) "The Scriptural concept of saving grace." January—May, 1885. (By request of the Pastoral Conference of Missouri.) 19) "Thy silver is become dross, Is. 1, 22." February, 1885. (Against an attack on the divinity of Christ in *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenz.*) 20) "The self-testimony of Scripture." June—December, 1886. (Against neological attacks on the doctrine of the plenary inspiration. By request of the Pastoral Conference of Missouri.) 21) "Law and Gospel as to their distinctive effects." June—October, 1887.—Parallel with these polemical articles runs the long series of articles on "Prophecy and Fulfillment" in 1885—86.

3) *Lutheraner*, 1887, p. 86.

to the chair of Exegesis, bears the inscription: "In what way can and should each individual Lutheran lend his aid, in order that the pure doctrine may be preserved to his Church?" The article is retrospective and prospective. It is filled with the solemn sentiments which recent events had begotten in the writer's mind, and, perhaps unwittingly, betrays the view which Stoeckhardt took of the mission which, he believed, was plainly assigned to himself and his colleagues in view of those events. "The Lutheran Christians belonging to the circle of readers of *Der Lutheraner*, who have for years, perhaps for decades, followed with their thoughts, wishes, and prayers the progress of the Lutheran Church in this country, especially of that Synod which this periodical seeks to serve, *will not conceal from themselves the fact that their Church, their Synod, has arrived at a critical turning-point.*⁴⁾ The memory of the sad events⁵⁾ of the recent past is still fresh among us. One by one, the founders and former leaders of our Synod have gone to their eternal home, and rest from their labors. Only a few of our early witnesses are still in their places. In general, the old generation, which lived to see the beginnings of our work, is dying. A new generation has grown up. Such a turning-point, such a change in our affairs, such an alteration in our personnel, invites serious reflection.

"*Any person who is mindful of the events of the past years sees at once what it is that God would have us American Lutherans do now and in the future. What is the sum total, and the result, of the past history of our Synod?*" Stoeckhardt now proceeds to review the formative period of the Missouri Synod, from the Saxon immigration to the formal close of the predestinarian controversy. He is aware that the grace of God has been bestowed upon his Synod in exceedingly great measure. "It is manifest, then, that *in the present and future all depends on our keeping that which we have.* We

4) Italics, throughout this article, ours.

5) Prof. G. Schaller, another member of the St. Louis Faculty, had died November 19, six months after Dr. Walther.

have been enriched every way, in all doctrine and in all knowledge, so as not to fall behind in any gift. *Let our concern now be not to lose any of the blessings which we have received.* Oh, surely, that is the fervent wish and the ardent prayer of every Lutheran who has known the gift of God, has examined, and understands, our times and the signs of the times, and loves his Church: 'In these last days of sore distress grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness, that pure we keep — till life is spent — Thy holy Word and Sacrament!' And not only till life is spent, nay! help us, Lord God, that our Church in this country may never lose this treasure of hers; grant that this blessed light may shine for our children and children's children to the last day!"

We remarked before that these sentiments of Stoeckhardt were born from out of the sensations which recent events had caused to his reflective mind. Thus viewed, the sentiments appear quite natural and opportune. Probably most Missourians then felt as Stoeckhardt felt.⁶⁾ But this view is not sufficient. Stoeckhardt followed his sentiments with a series of actions which can be explained only by the fact that it had become a settled conviction with him that his allotted task as a public teacher in the Missouri Synod was to preach conservation. The sentiment was not transitory, but permanent. In the article from which we have quoted, Stoeckhardt shows what a real and live issue conservation is with him, by proceeding as follows: "Those Lutherans who know what has been bestowed on them also know well the enemies which would wrest from them their precious heritage; they know the dangers which threaten them and their Church. . . . When the pure doctrine vanishes from a place where it had found a home, it is men who must bear the blame. This much is within the power and disposition of men, *viz.*, that they can lose what they have received. And it is, indeed, the ingratitude of men that forfeits the gift of God. This is the greatest danger which

6) See the opening addresses of district presidents of the Missouri Synod in 1888, and the following years.

we have to fear — ingratitude. And this somber, uncanny guest is even now making his appearance in our circles and among our constituency. He is two-faced. Ingratitude is revealed especially by surfeit and satiety of the accustomed purity of teaching, hence, by lukewarmness, and indifference in regard to spiritual affairs. As a consequence of this, worldliness is gaining ground. A person who no longer finds the joy and delight of his heart in the Word of God will look for other and less worthy pasture-grounds and joys. And, ultimately, love of the world and its pleasures will smother completely the very last spark of spiritual life in a person.

“Lutheran Christians who are concerned about the salvation of their souls and the welfare of their Church recognize, and do not slight, this one great danger, ingratitude, or this twofold danger, coldness and worldliness. However, when they perceive that this danger is rapidly spreading in their own locality, they may resort to lamentations and regrets, and bewail the fact that the good old times are gone, and they may paint the good old times in rosy colors,—as though even in those times practice had not been in arrears to preaching,—while they paint the present and future in dark colors. They may think that a single individual, or only a few, cannot stem the tide of time, and that *new and extraordinary means and methods are required to avert greater damage, loss and defection.*

“But, my dear Lutheran, examine well conditions as they exist, and decide upon the proper redress and remedy. We still have the pure Word and sacraments—thanks be to God! We are even now holding in our hands the full and entire blessing of God. Many are rejoicing with us because of this blessing. The Word of God is still the ruling element in our Church. What we produce from this Word in our sermons and writings still makes an impression and takes effect among men.

“Now, then, if each individual Lutheran who glories in the pure doctrine will do his share in his locality, and show faithfulness, diligence, and zeal in keeping what he has, he will aid in keeping the Church in possession of the blessings en-

trusted to her. *There is no need of any new wisdom, any extraordinary exertion.*"

This cardinal thought of the article in question is expanded through two sequels, and applied to well-nigh every manifestation of the spiritual life in a Lutheran congregation.⁷⁾ Dr. Schwan's sermon on Rev. 2, 4. 5 ("Forsaking the first love"), at the convention at Schaumburg, Ill., on May 23, 1888, we are inclined to regard as an echo of these articles of Stoeckhardt.⁸⁾

Indoctrination is the means for conservation. Accordingly, Stoeckhardt, soon after Walther's death, applies himself, with great assiduity, to writing plain, popular articles on the leading doctrines for the synodical organ. This plan was taken up in later years by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, and nearly every member of the Faculty, in rotation, contributed to this doctrinal series.⁹⁾

The close reader of Stoeckhardt's articles on the "Pastoral Directions in the Epistle to Titus,"¹⁰⁾ of his doctrinal paper at the convention at Waverly, Iowa, on "Directions Bearing on Congregational Life, in the Epistles to the Corinthians,"¹¹⁾ of his paper on the "Seven Letters of Jesus in Revelation," at the convention at Alta, Iowa,¹²⁾ of his paper at Omaha, Nebr., on "The First Christian Congregations mentioned in Acts, as

7) *Lutheraner*, 1888, pp. 2 ff. 11 ff. 19 f.

8) *Lutheraner*, 1889, pp. 9 ff. See also Dr. Schwan's sermon on Rev. 3, 11, in *Lutheraner*, 1892, p. 207.

9) There were published over Stoeckhardt's signature the following articles: "On justification by faith," 1888, pp. 43 ff. "A word regarding the communion of saints," p. 131. "On the right use of the divine Word," 1889, pp. 2 ff. "The resurrection of the dead," 1890, pp. 61 ff. "Faith a product of divine grace," pp. 117 ff. "Faith the mainspring of sanctification," pp. 157 ff. "The incarnation of the Son of God," pp. 197 ff. "The Bible the infallible Word of God," 1892, pp. 133 ff. "The divinity of Christ," 1893, pp. 49 ff. "Christ, the God-man," 1896, p. 77. "Conversion," p. 203. "Sanctification and preservation," 1899, p. 23.

10) *Lehre und Wehre*, 1889, passim. Cf. his article on "The theologian's study of the Scriptures," *L. u. W.*, 1885, December.

11) Proceedings of Iowa District, 1889.

12) Proceedings of Iowa District, 1894.

Patterns and Models for Our Congregations,"¹³⁾ will be impressed with the earnestness of the author of these spirited essays, and will feel that throughout he is combating the evil of spiritual retrogression.¹⁴⁾ And down to quite recent times Stoeckhardt, in his contributions to the organ of the Synod, usually treats some practical issue of congregational life and activity (saloons, theater, lodges, bazaars, etc.), and ever reiterates and enforces the old position of the Missouri Synod. We wish to speak of Stoeckhardt's polemics at greater length in a later paper, but it is proper to mention, even in this connection, that he was actuated also in his polemical writings by the single motive of retaining, reaffirming, strengthening the position which the Missouri Synod had occupied.

Reading, and interpreting, the signs of the times is a necessary task of the churchman, the pastor, the theologian. But it is not an easy task, nor without its peculiar perils. "Discerning the spirits" ranks among the special graces with which the Church is furnished by her Head. One may make mistakes in reading signs, and one may be misunderstood in his interpretation of particular signs. Stoeckhardt, too, misunderstood and was misunderstood, occasionally. He had come into

13) Proceedings of Nebraska District, 1895.

14) See his articles: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." *Lutheraner*, 1889, pp. 105 ff. 114 ff. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate!" 1889, pp. 129 ff. 137 ff. "On the Christian's intercourse with the world," 1890, pp. 2 ff. 10 ff. 18 ff.; also his Preface to *Der Lutheraner*, on the policy of that periodical, 1896, p. 1: "How should a Christian congregation regard itself?" pp. 88. 178 ff. 186 ff. 195. "What should a Lutheran congregation demand before receiving into membership such as have been members of sectarian churches?" 1893, p. 145. "Of congregational meetings," 1895, p. 103. "Of church discipline," 1895, p. 167. "Our foreign brethren in the faith," 1891, p. 163. "German state-church Lutheranism in America," 1890, pp. 85 ff. (Against the General Council, especially the Canada Synod.) "Conditions prevailing in our Church in the old country," 1891, p. 2; 1892, p. 61. (This article, which was printed in fifteen installments, is valuable, besides, because of the historical information which it offers. It was elicited, no doubt, by the charge that the conditions of the Lutheran Church in Saxony had not been reported truthfully by Stoeckhardt. See: "For my vindication," 1889, p. 186.

the American Lutheran Church a thorough German, and remained such to the end of his life. To him the specific phenomena which make their appearance in a church-body that is passing through a transition as regards language, and, perhaps, methods of church-work, seemed strange at first, even startling. The passing of the time-honored "Christenlehre," or "Kinderlehre," the advent of the Sunday-school, *e. g.*, appeared rather ominous to him. He was decisive in expressing his unfavorable opinion of such things, probably more so than many of us who try to do the next best when we find that we cannot do the best. But also in these matters Stoeckhardt's attitude was fully understood, by those who had an opportunity to observe him at close range, to flow from his confirmed view of the paramount necessity of conservation. He was, however, an intelligent observer of men and affairs, and readily accommodated himself to needs which he had recognized to be real, not imaginary. Many of us remember the lively interest and part which he took at the convention at Detroit in 1905 on the question whether English congregations were to be received into the German Missouri Synod. His arguments, coming from such a source, made quite an impression, and besides, they were very much to the point, and aided materially in bringing about that change in the policy of the Synod by which it became a German-English body. From personal knowledge the present writer is able to say that for his commentaries, which have won him just renown, Stoeckhardt compared faithfully the standard English commentaries. That he has diligently studied Hodge, his beloved "Romans" reveals. He frequently consulted the *International Critical Commentary*, which was acquired for the Seminary library partly upon his urging. He had read Haldane, Stewart, Shedd, Chalmers, Plumer (on Romans), Moule, and others (on Ephesians). In his own English work at the Seminary the present writer is gratefully conscious of having received a valuable suggestion occasionally from his German colleague,—suggestions which revealed Stoeckhardt as an open-eyed student of the times and their

needs, who could be strongly impressed and impelled to action by what he observed.

The silent undercurrent, however, in his life was the one which we have tried to indicate: conservation, firm attachment to the old truths and the old ways. In hardly any instance does a single characteristic of a great man explain his every act; but we are persuaded that conservation will explain very many of the public acts of our departed colleague. And we would prize him just for this reason. Firmness in maintaining the old truth is an inspiring example. Conservation, as well as adaptation, are ever-present needs amid the shifting scenes and varying issues of the *ecclesia militans*. Iron and granite are fine building materials also in the building of the temple of God. The Master Builder quarries and shapes them for His wise and sovereign purposes. They are one of the products of His grace. Stoekhardt will continue to preach, through his writings, stability and perseverance, as he preached these virtues to the generation among which he lived, and moved, and had his being.

(To be continued.)