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THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed we confess with the whole Christian Church: "I believe the resurrection of the body." Luther's Small Catechism explains this clause as follows: "I believe . . . that the Holy Ghost, at the latter day, shall raise up me and all the dead." The resurrection of the dead is one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It is the presupposition and mainspring of Christian faith and life, marking the end of the world's history and the consummation of the Kingdom of God on earth. The denial of this fact involves the ruin of all true faith. Whoever becomes regardless of it, and does not keep in mind a correct view of it, will be lacking in vigor of doctrine and morals. Any preacher of Christianity neglecting to preach this doctrine intelligently, to ground his hearers in the knowledge of the same, or who obscures its truth and does not preach faith in view of it, does not bring forth true faith and righteousness. He deviates from his calling. For the resurrection to the life eternal is the seasoned fruit of Christian faith and life, as the resurrection to eternal perdition is the outgrowth of sin and the rejection of grace.

The resurrection of the body is in no way taught by human reason. If man should know it, God must reveal it to him. The doctrine is found nowhere among the nations of the Gentile world. No ethnic creed has a notion of it. It cannot be deduced from any of the sciences. Neither logical nor mathematical formulas, nor the "laws" of physicists and chemists

Dr. GEORGE STOECKHARDT.

III.

Dr. Stoeckhardt's theological *metier* was exegesis. He is mentioned for the first time among the teachers at Concordia Seminary as a lecturer in the catalogue for 1878—79 and the two years following, and is credited with a Hebrew exegeticum. The catalogue for 1881—82, and for four years thereafter, mentions him as assistant professor,¹⁾ and from outside sources we learn that he was lecturing on Old and New Testament exegesis during those years. He was elected professor in ordinary in 1887.²⁾ Deducing about a semester during which he was absent from the Seminary on account of illness, Dr. Stoeckhardt has devoted thirty-five years, more or less, to Bible exposition at Concordia Seminary and to writing exegetical books. A generation of the pastors of the Missouri Synod has sat at his feet. That is a sufficiently long time to give to the chair of Old and New Testament exegesis, as it has existed at Concordia Seminary for a generation, individual character, and this long tenure of office has made the

1) See on the creation of this office Minutes of General Convention, 1881, p. 49, and *Lutheraner*, 1881, pp. 88 ff.

2) See Minutes of General Convention, 1887, p. 30.

tenant a solid and telling factor in the training of the theologians who are serving our Synod at the present time.

Published data on the details of his work of Bible exposition in his classes at the Seminary are not available between 1878 and 1893. After that the records inform us that he lectured to the Junior classes on Genesis (first half) in 1893—'94, '95—'96, '97—'98, '99—1900, 1900—'01, '03—'04, '05—'06, '07—'08, '09—'10, '11—'12; (second half) in '94—'95, '96—'97, '98—'99, 1901—'02, '02—'03, '04—'05, '06—'07, '08—'09, '10—'11, '12—'13; on Luke, '93—'94, '95—'96, '97—'98, '99—1900, 1901—'02, '03—'04, '05—'06, '07—'08, '09—'10, '11—'12; on John, '94—'95, '96—'97, '98—'99, 1900—'01, '02—'03, '04—'05, '06—'07, '08—'09, '10—'11, '12—'13. To the combined middle and Senior classes he expounded selections from the Psalms in '93—'94, '95—'96, '97—'98, '99—1900, 1901—'02, '03—'04, '05—'06, '07—'08, '09—'10, '11—'12; selections from Isaiah in '94—'95, '98—'99, 1902—'03, '04—'05, '06—'07, '10—'11, '12—'13; selections from the Prophets in '96—'97; the Messianic prophecies in 1900—'01, and '08—'09; Romans in '93—'94, '95—'96, '97—'98, '99—1900, '01—'02, '03—'04, '05—'06, '07—'08, '09—'10, '11—'12; Ephesians in '94—'95, '98—'99, 1900—'01, '04—'05, '12—'13; Philippians in '94—'95, '98—'99, 1904—'05, '08—'09; Colossians in 1904—'05 and '08—'09; First and Second Thessalonians in '94—'95; First Timothy in '98—'99; Hebrews in 1908—'09; First Peter in '96—'97, 1902—'03, '06—'07, '10—'11; Second Peter in '96—'97, 1902—'03, '06—'07; First John in '96—'97, 1902—'03, '06—'07, '10—'11; Second and Third John in '96—'97, 1902—'03, '06—'07.

This conspectus of the academic work of Stoeckhardt shows a centripetal tendency. He follows the sound method of leading the Bible student into a comprehensive and penetrating knowledge of the principal writings of the divine revelation, and of making them thoroughly familiar with those books of

the Bible which embody in the most striking form the marrow and essence of the saving doctrine. It is like taking the classes to the great mountain ranges of God's Book, and leading them to the lofty summits, whence commanding views can be had of all the surrounding plains and valleys, rivers and rivulets of the prophetic and apostolic records. Thorough mastery of even one book of the Bible means very much for the general understanding of the entire Bible. How much more a good exposition of the principal portions, or writings, of both Testaments!

In his *Biblische Geschichte*³⁾ Stoeckhardt has in the Prefaces explained his conception of the general character of either Testament. As regards the Old Testament, he says: "Biblical History, and each larger section of the same, is a nicely articulated unit, composed of many separate parts, of separate stories." "In explaining these, the author's aim and purpose has been to present the main features of the respective story in brief outlines, and, at the same time, to preserve the connection with the whole." (p. III.) In his Preface to the volume on the History of the New Testament he says: "In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit has adapted Himself to the peculiar character of the people of Israel, who were at that time like children under their guardians, and has in a very childlike, simple, and circumstantial manner related what God had done for their pious forefathers and their posterity. However, in the New Testament He has handed over to the Church of the New Covenant the great things which have transpired in the fullness of time, the acts of God in Christ, in a compact and nervous style, though here, too, His language is clear and simple. Accordingly, in explaining the history of the Old Testament, it appeared proper in many cases to briefly sum-

3) *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*. Kurze Auslegung der alttestamentlichen Geschichtsbuecher. This work was published in 1896. It had grown out of the brief talks of the author to the students at Concordia Seminary at the morning chapel-exercises.—*Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*. Kurze Auslegung der Evangelien und Apostelgeschichte. Published in 1898.

marize and elucidate the main points of the story. However, in treating the history of the New Testament exegesis proper, the unfolding of the rich contents of the Biblical text was demanded." "The Biblical History of the New Testament is, like that of the Old Testament, composed of separate stories. However, the trend and progress of the history is clearly recognized throughout. The author has sought to do justice to both features: he has, on the one hand, tried to present those matters which each section contains, taken by itself, and on the other hand, he has endeavored to place each separate story in its proper connection with the whole, and thus to show the course of New Testament history." (p. III f.)

Stoeckhardt's power of concentration accounts for much of his unquestioned success as a teacher of exegesis. There is a laborious method of exegesis which works its way inchwise into and through a book, from verse to verse, section to section, and chapter to chapter, tabulates its progress by its exegetical surveyor's chain, and lands you ultimately on some slight elevation of a discovered *scopus specialis* or *specialissimus*. The process is somewhat like this: you begin by adjusting your path by the critical apparatus, you level linguistic difficulties by means of etymology and syntax, you bridge a logical chasm by discovering a context, and forge through an embankment of mostly assumed obscurity by means of a Scriptural parallelism. When you finally emerge from the dense forests of the text, you look about in a bewildered sort of way and ask, Now, where are we at? We shall not quarrel with the advocates of most minute synthesis in exegesis. It has its charms and advantages to the advanced scholar. But we believe that the short and direct method of going at the great matters in the text benefits the exegetical tiro more.

It goes without saying that the application of this method not only presupposes, on the part of the instructor, a comprehensive grasp of the entire contents of his text, but it also imposes great self-restraint on him. But it is self-restraint that reveals the master in any pursuit.

The *opus palmare* of Stoeckhardt's exegetical labors, no doubt, is his *Romans*.⁴⁾ In the Preface to this commentary Stoeckhardt enters at some length upon an explanation and justification of his exegetical method. "The Epistle to the Romans is acknowledged to be the principal doctrinal writing of the New Testament. Accordingly, the main business of the exegete who expounds this Epistle surely is to present its doctrinal contents. True, this is not possible without an exact investigation of the text and context. In the present work the author has endeavored, first, to do justice to the language of the Epistle. He has, however, chiefly tried to bring to the full consciousness of himself and his readers the eternal thoughts of God that have been expressed in this apostolic missive. The historical interest which guides some modern exegetes in their exposition of Biblical books, and especially of the Epistles of the Apostles, cannot claim the glory of being a particularly scientific effort. Every writing must be judged by its peculiarity and its tendency. It is self-evident what is the tendency of the Holy Scriptures, and moreover, this tendency is plainly declared in 2 Tim. 3, 16. — The method adopted in this commentary, *viz.*, to offer a continuous and connected explanation and development of the text, such as is found in the writings of Hofmann, Godet, and, in its essential features, also in Philippi, seemed to me to suit best to the aforementioned end of exegesis. When the so-called glossatory method is employed, which attaches to the separate component parts of a text remarks concerning the language or the facts of the text, the trend of thought and the connection is easily lost. On the other hand, if the method of some modern commentators is followed, by which the grammatical, lexicographical, historical, and archeological material is treated in footnotes, and the exegetical treatise proper is confined to a free reproduction of the contents of the Epistle, materials which belong closely together,

4) *Kommentar ueber den Brief Pauli an die Roemer*. Published in 1907.

as regards diction and fact, form and content, are torn apart. After all, in labors of this kind the Biblical text is the given quantity, and must ever remain the central point of the meditation. It is the business of exegesis to evolve the meaning and contents from the words which are written. Hence the exposition must not soar above the text like an independent product of the exegete. Nor has any exegete to our knowledge succeeded in eliminating altogether discussions regarding the language from the coherent development of the thought of a text. Wherever this method has been adopted, the exegete has had to anxiously ponder how much of the material relating to language he must take over into his expository remarks, and how much he must relegate to the footnotes. And the reader is constantly compelled to look up and down." (p. III f.)

This method of Stoeckhardt was foreshadowed in his earliest exegetical contributions to *Lehre und Wehre*,⁵⁾ and in his appeal to the pastors of our Synod to study the Bible.⁶⁾ Those who have read his late commentaries⁷⁾ know that with his method he succeeds, not only to make the text of Scripture plain, even to men who are not extraordinarily proficient in the mastery of the original languages of the Bible text, but also in laying hold with a powerful grasp on the conscience and heart of his readers by his eminent ability to exhibit the practical bearing of Scripture on all sorts and conditions of men and affairs. His commentaries can be read with relish. All that is necessary, perhaps, is to have the open Bible alongside of his commentary, and occasionally glance into it, as one reads along. But for the most part he has embodied both the text and his own translation of the text in his commentaries,

5) *Weissagung und Erfuellung*, 1884, pp. 42 ff. *Die pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrief*, 1889, pp. 6 ff.

6) *Vom Schriftstudium der Theologen*. *L. u. W.*, 1885, p. 361.

7) Besides the one on Romans he published one on Ephesians, in 1910, and one on First Peter, in 1912. See also Review of his Ephesians in *THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY*, 1911, pp. 41—44, and the reproduction of a portion of his exegesis, by way of sample, on pp. 1—15 of the same volume.

and wherever he deviates from Luther's rendering, he gives his reason. There are no references to works accessible only to a few favored scholars, and the Bible references, which, of course, are unavoidable, have been selected and compiled with such exquisite care that the reader is amply repaid for his trouble by verifying them.

Stoeckhardt's commentaries were all written with an eye to their immediate use by pastors and theologians in the work of the Church. His summing up of the contents of a division or subdivision of the text he has expounded is always a valuable hint to the homilist or preacher how to present the contents properly and effectually in a discourse before the congregation. Frequently there comes into the current of his expository remarks a pious reflection, a devotional thought, that cools and refreshes, and relieves the mental tension created by the intricate argument which had preceded it, and makes the student see and feel the point of an *excursus* by direct self-application to his own spiritual life. There are also polemical sections in these commentaries, drawn from the author by the state of the Church for which, and out of whose pale, he is writing. If our memory serves us correctly, we have seen a reviewer of Stoeckhardt's *Romans* criticise the commentary for these features. They were considered irrelevant and out of place in an expository composition. However, in the judgment of Stoeckhardt such homiletical hints, devotional and hortatory remarks, and polemical detours are part and parcel of the true and legitimate work of a Scriptural theologian. He stated what was to him a matter of principle when in his Preface to the History of the New Testament he wrote: "Finally it may be remarked that the references to the present generation of Christians which have been woven into this presentation of history, and its application to conditions and relations existing at this day, are not accidental, but they are in accordance with the canon of interpretation laid down by Scripture itself in Rom. 15, 4; 1 Cor. 10, 16; 2 Tim. 3, 16. An exposition of Scripture which stops at a review of the past, and totally

ignores the saying: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," does not meet the intention of the Holy Spirit. What Scripture has recorded regarding the living, suffering, dying, and rising of Jesus, and of the first Christian Church, is written with the aim that the Christians of all ages should know what they have in their Christ, and what the Christian Church means." Stoeckhardt is a theologian of the old school, to whom theology in all its manifestations is "*habitus practicus theosdotos.*"

The learned side of his treatises suffers nothing because of these practical features. He works with critical acumen, and pays his respect to, or voices his dissent from, all the leading commentators who have written before him. Let any one try to prepare a table of authors quoted, or referred to, in his *Romans*, and he will see what an immense amount of reading the author must have accomplished before he addressed himself to write down the contents of the various pages in this commentary.

There is no infallible human interpreter of Scripture, and it would be misusing a *bonum ministrans* with which the Holy Spirit furnishes and adorns His Church when He gives it able exegetes, to read the commentary of any exegete without the proper *granum salis*. Dissent will rise here and there from particular explanations. But the grand effect which any unbiased reader receives from a perusal of Stoeckhardt's exegetical writings is, that in these writings we have one of the most earnest efforts put forth in modern times to allow the Spirit to speak His real thought to the reader of God's Book.
