



HALF A CENTURY
OF
TRUE LUTHERANISM.

A BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

History of the Missouri Synod.

BY

A. GRAEBNER,

PROFESSOR IN CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS, MO.

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A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD.

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Conspicuous among the thousands of strangers assembled at Worms in the days of the Diet, when the monk of Wittenburg stood before the Emperor and the princes and prelates of the empire, was an "embassy from the new island but lately discovered, who wore costly silks and was veiled about the head like the Gypsy woman," as the report of an eye-witness gives it. Little was then known of the "new island" in the far west. In a folio edition by Strabo, a copy of which found its way from the Jesuit college of Ingolstadt, where it rested in 1588, to the library of the writer, there is also a map of the Western Hemisphere, presenting the continent of "America or New India," and here a huge mountain-range is made to separate the valley of the St. Lawrence River, extending from what is now Utah or Arizona to the neighborhood of Newfoundland, from the source of a nameless river which flows southward and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Little did that veiled Mexican or his ermined emperor, or any one else at his first Diet, think that the time would come when hundreds and thousands of adherents of that monk would set their faces toward the "new Island" and stud the valley of that nameless river with hundreds of churches and as many schools in which Luther's Bible and Catechism are read and expounded in the tongue which Charles termed a "language for horses." And as little did Luther himself dream that in the year of the four-hundredth anniversary of his birth, in the heart of that continent beyond the western seas, a school of Lutheran theology,

erected without a farthing from state or crown, would be dedicated in the presence of 20,000 Lutherans convened from the various regions of a country of more than ten times the area of Germany, a land of freedom where neither king nor emperor nor pope may call them to account for their faith or issue bulls and edicts before which the silent solitude of a Wartburg-Patmos must shield from persecution the antagonists of Rome. And even the Pilgrim pioneers of this vast body of Lutherans were far from looking forward to so rich a harvest when fifty years ago they first set foot on the soil to which they had been driven by the deplorably desolate state into which round about Luther's tomb the church of the Reformation had sunk in those days of rankest rationalism.

At the university of Leipzig, one of those high seats of German theology where rationalism was enthroned and ruled supreme, there existed toward the close of the third decade of the present century a small circle of students whom their academic fellow-citizens termed Mystics or Pietists or, less charitably, Hypocrites and Obscurants, who, though they were regular in their attendance on lectures, would spend the hours which others devoted to the loud pleasures of the beer mug, in the seclusion of some quiet room, where they might have been found closeted with some obscure volume, the writings of Arndt, Francke, Spener, Rambach, Fresenius, or some other theologian of like character. A theological candidate of riper years and spiritual experience, named Kuehn, was the leader of this little band, and the path he endeavored to point out to his associates was a *via dolorosa* through dark depths of anguish and contrition, a series of experiences like those through which *he* had passed before he found peace and rest in the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

In the Fall of 1829 this circle welcomed a young man of eighteen years,* the son of a clergyman at Langenchursdorf in Saxony, a youth with a good classical education, who had until recently "felt himself born for music only," an art in which he had already become proficient. But when his father had declared that he would set him adrift without a farthing if he should "turn musician," but promised him a thaler a week if he would study theology, the son set his face

*He was born Oct. 25, 1811, the eighth of twelve children.

toward Leipzig and theology, and there we find him, young in years, slender of stature, in delicate health, shifting as best he could with his thaler a week, but turning to every advantage his rare talents and the opportunities for gaining treasures of knowledge offered at the university. At the outset, he had not even a Bible of his own, and when he purchased one from his allowance, he was left penniless, until, the following day, he received a letter from his father containing the only extra thaler which ever came to him from that source at such a time.

The young student was *Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther*. An elder brother, who was also a student at the university, introduced the youth to that circle of Pietists mentioned above. Soon the younger Walther was far gone in the direction in which the influence of Kuehn and others was exerted; his soul was filled with anguish under the pangs of a troubled conscience; sighs and sobs and tears gave evidence of the storm that raged in his bosom and threatened to engulf every hope and to shut out every ray of consoling light which had dawned in his soul. While he was struggling with despair, God used the gentle hand of a woman to draw him from the precipice. The wife of a revenue officer at Leipzig, whose home had been opened to young Walther, perceived the trouble of the pious youth, and from her lips came words of comfort drawn from that ever flowing fountain, the Gospel of Christ, and from her heart many a fervent prayer rose to a throne of grace that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, might be granted to that troubled soul; and her words and her prayers were abundantly blessed.

Yet God in his wise providence led young Walth to seek spiritual advice and consolation also from another, from a man who was in future years to be instrumental in leading him across the ocean. Martin Stephan was the pastor of a Bohemian congregation which worshiped in St. John's church at Dresden, a preacher who had for years preached to vast multitudes that flocked to his pulpit not for the purpose of hearing words of polished eloquence—for such they would have sought in vain in that unostentatious church in the suburbs—but because Stephan preached what was then very rarely heard from German pulpits, Christ, and him cruci-

fied. Besides, Stephan was renowned far and wide as a spiritual adviser who had a profound knowledge of the human heart and was ever ready to minister what each individual soul required. This man one day received a letter from a stranger, a student of Leipzig, who disclosed to him his innermost heart and solicited an answer. In due time the answer came, and when Walther held the letter in his hands, and before he broke the seal and read the contents, he prayed to God that he would keep him from accepting vain counsels and consolations, if such should be contained in the pages before him. But after he had read Stephan's letter, he was like one who had been lifted from hell into paradise, and his tears of anguish were changed into tears of joy.

A year and another year passed away, and then young Walther's days seemed nearly numbered; pulmonary disease was doing its work and forced him to relinquish his studies and seek rest and relief at home. During these weary months he found in his father's library the works of Luther, and here he laid the foundation of the intimate acquaintance with the writings of the great Reformer which distinguished him in later years. In the spring of 1832 he returned to the university, improved in health, but without hope of ever becoming physically able to work in the ministry. He completed his studies, passed his first examination, and was then a private tutor from 1834 to 1836. In 1837 he was ordained to the ministry in the village church of Braeunsdorf in Saxony, in the midst of a congregation which for forty years and more had not heard the Gospel of Christ preached from its pulpit and had sunk deep in intellectual, moral and religious depravity. The form of public service, the hymn-book, the school books were, like the school-teacher and the superintendent, steeped in rationalism, and when Walther, true to his vow and the symbols of the Lutheran Church, which he had sworn to follow and maintain, endeavored to work a change toward sound Lutheranism, stumbling blocks without number were thrown in his way, until his troubled conscience was beset on every side, and in several cases his orthodoxy led to litigations, of which he was held to pay the costs.

But Walther was not the only Lutheran in Saxony who

suffered under the rod of a rationalistic and unionistic regime, and when in those days Stephan, who had as early as 1811 entertained the thought of leading his followers to distant lands, looked toward the United States of America as an asylum of true Lutheranism, to which his attention had been directed by Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, of Baltimore, and finally came forth with a definite plan of emigration, Walther with others caught up the signal given by a man who stood so high in their estimation. In September, 1838, as many as 707 persons had entered their names upon the rolls; ministers, school-teachers, lawyers, physicians and artists gave up their positions; parents left their children, children their parents; a part of their joint possessions was turned over to a common treasury; four ships were chartered at Bremen, and a fifth, the *Amalia*, was also occupied by members of the company and three other passengers. All of these ships left Bremerhafen in November, 1838. The *Copernicus* arrived at New Orleans on the last day of the same year, the *Johann Georg*, the *Republic*, and the *Olbers*, in January, 1839; the *Amalia*, with her crew and passengers, disappeared and has never been heard of since.

The passengers of the four ships continued their pilgrimage to St. Louis, then a city of about 16,000 inhabitants. Stephan had prevailed upon his followers to make him their bishop and to sign a document in which they pledged themselves to allegiance and obedience toward their hierarchical leader. He surrounded himself with every kind of luxury, and during the few months of his rule he drew from the common treasury more than 4,000 thalers for his own sustenance and comfort. But to secure a still more unlimited exercise of his power, he aimed at isolating the community under his sway. A tract of land was purchased on the right bank of the Mississippi river in Perry county, Mo., comprising 4,440 acres, and here the emigrants went into camp and amid untold hardships began to build up a number of Saxon colonies, Wittenberg, Altenburg, Frohna, etc., names which to this day remind the surviving pioneers and their children of the tearful experiences of those times of half a century ago. A small flock of little more than a hundred souls remained in St. Louis and soon after chose elder Walther for their pastor.

Stephan, who had also repaired to Perry county, ruled like a Pasha. A magnificent episcopal palace had been planned and was in process of construction. Then there came a revelation which fell like a thunderbolt among the colonists. One dark night, the younger Walther, of whose tribulations at the university we have spoken above, arrived with a steamer from St. Louis. He came ostensibly to consult with Stephan concerning a number of Lutheran emigrants who had come chiefly from Berlin by way of New



Concordia Seminary, Erected 1883, at St. Louis, Mo.

York, and were now ready to join the Saxons in the colonies. But to a young theological candidate who had come from New York with the "Berliners," he confided his secret. It was in one of the dormitories of the colonists, and though all of the men seemed fast asleep, the conversation was carried on in Latin, and the Latin sounds attracted the attention of the physician Dr. B., who was lying on the straw not far away, and he heard, what he and others had suspected before, that Stephan had been leading a life of shameful im-

morality and had now been found out through the confessions of several of his victims. Soon after, a considerable number of emigrants who had remained at St. Louis, arrived on the steamers *Prairie* and *Toledo*; a formal council was held, and Stephan was solemnly deposed from his office. Provided with ample means of sustenance, he was taken across the Mississippi River and landed near Devil's Bakeoven, a grotesque rock at the water's edge. He afterwards found his way into the interior of the State, and in 1846 he died in a log cabin a few miles from Red Bud, Illinois.

At first the colonists were stunned and bewildered and knew not what to do. Such had been Stephan's extrava-



Concordia College, Erected 1839, in Perry Co., Mo.

gance and mismanagement that the funds of the emigrants were far spent, and abject poverty stared them in the face. The ministers, of whom there were six, and the several candidates, were troubled by the question whether the colonists constituted Christian congregations with authority to call ministers, and many of the laymen entertained similar doubts concerning the right of the ministers to hold their office here after having left their charges beyond the sea. Walther, too, was for a time tossed about by doubts and fears. But better counsels prevailed, and soon things gained a more favorable aspect. In the midst of all their hardships and poverty, the

candidates Fuerbringer, Brohm and Buenger, with the aid of the ministers Walther, Loeber and Keyl, had organized a school of learning, in which Religion, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French and English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Mental Philosophy, Music, and Drawing were to be taught, and in a log cabin erected by the professors and their friends, the school was opened, which has since developed into two distinct institutions, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., and Concordia College at Fort Wayne, Ind., both of which are flourishing to-day, and have educated hundreds of young men for the ministry in the Lutheran Church. The first Faculty consisted of Ottomar Fuerbringer, Th. Jul. Brohm, and Joh. Fr. Buenger, and the log cabin has been preserved to this day.

The younger Walther was soon the acknowledged leader in the colonies. Stephan had never been quite at ease on Walther's account and had even stigmatized him as a Judas, and when Stephan had been unmasked, it was Walther who fought down the doctrinal errors which that hierarch had taught, that the Lutheran Church was *the* Church, without which there was no salvation; that the ministry was a mediatorship between God and man, and entitled to unconditional obedience in all things not in conflict with the word of God; that questions of doctrine were to be decided by the clergy alone, in whose hands also rested the power of the Keys. With these and similar Romanizing tenets, Stephan had imbued his followers; but with convincing clearness Walther set forth the truth, until it held the field victorious, and at a later day the weapons tried and found true against Stephanism were again drawn and wielded with like success in the encounters with Grabau and the Buffalo Synod.

In January, 1841, the elder Walther was called to his rest, and his brother was chosen to succeed him as pastor of the "Saxons" at St. Louis, who were then still worshipping in the basement of the Episcopal church. A parochial school was kept in a house on Poplar street. Both the congregation and the school increased rapidly, and in 1842, Trinity church was erected, with a basement for school rooms. In 1844, Cand. Buenger, who since 1841 had been in charge of the

school, was made assistant minister to Walther. In the same year a branch school was opened in another part of the city, and this school was the germ of Immanuel's Church, which was organized in 1847 and erected a house of worship in 1848, where henceforth to the end of his days Buenger officiated as pastor.

But while thus the trowel had been busy, the sword had not rusted in its scabbard. Separatistic elements had caused much trouble in the congregation, until their leader was removed by the mighty hand of God.

And another conflict, of greater dimensions and of longer duration, had sprung up. In 1839 another band of German Lutheran emigrants had landed on American soil. They had come under the leadership of Past. Grabau, who had suffered persecution and imprisonment in Prussia for his refusal to submit to the unionistic policy of the Prussian Government. At Buffalo, where he had settled with most of his followers, Grabau in 1840 issued a "Pastoral Letter," of which he sent a copy to the Saxon ministers in Missouri with a request for their opinion. The request was granted, but the opinion, though given in the most gentle terms, proved offensive to Grabau, since it expressed dissent as to various points of doctrine. In his Pastoral Letter and the correspondence to which it gave rise, Grabau maintained that a minister not called in accordance with the ancient "Kirchenordnungen" was not properly called; that ordination by other clergymen was by divine ordinance essential to the validity of the ministerial office; that God would deal with us only through the ministerial office; that a minister arbitrarily elevated by the congregation was unable to pronounce absolution, and what he distributed at the altar was not the body and blood of Christ, but mere bread and wine; that through her Symbols and Constitutions and Synods the Church at large must decide what is in accordance or at variance with the word of God; that the congregation is not the supreme tribunal in the church, but the Synod as representing the church at large; that the congregation is not authorized to pronounce excommunication; that Christians are bound to obey their minister in all things not contrary to the word of God. In all these points the Saxons differed from

Grabau,—denying what he affirmed, and affirming what he denied. But Grabau, in reply, drew up a list of seventeen charges of error against them and declared that he could no longer consider them Lutheran ministers who adhered to the word of God and the Symbols of the Church. Thus the long-continued controversy which was afterwards carried on between the Synods of Buffalo and Missouri had sprung up years before either of these bodies had entered into existence.

The doctrines which the Saxons maintained against Grabau and his followers were not only taught but practiced in Perry county and St. Louis; the congregation not only claimed but exercised what by divine right a Christian congregation should claim and practice, instead of leaving it to the ministry. Church discipline was exercised in accordance with Matt. 18; doctrinal matters were discussed; the college at Altenburg was formally adopted and considerably treated as the foster-child of the congregations, though the means from which the contributions flowed were slender enough.

In 1844, the congregation at St. Louis resolved on the publication of a religious periodical which had been planned by Walther, and in September of that year, the "Lutheraner" made its first appearance. To secure the publication of this and the following numbers, many members had subscribed for two copies, and the congregation had agreed that if the expenses should exceed the receipts, the deficit should be covered from the common treasury or by free contributions. From its very beginning, the "Lutheraner" gave forth a clear and decided, uncompromising ring, and the type of Lutheranism which it advocated was to the generation of those days a strange phenomenon, so strange that by many it was not even recognized as Lutheranism at all, and chiefly for this reason Walther made it his object to show from the writings of the Fathers of the Lutheran Church that he was not promulgating new tenets, but the doctrines of our Church as laid down in her confessions and in the writings of her best representative teachers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially of Luther, the prophet of the latter days. This, not an undue, unlutheran reverence of the Fathers, prompted Walther to introduce into his doctrinal expositions numerous extracts from the works of those earlier theo-

logians; not as authorities, but as witnesses he called them forth from the dust of oblivion, and before many years Germany was being ransacked for those old parchment-bound volumes, covered with mould and cobwebs, and Jewish dealers wondered what people wanted with those mummies in the American backwoods whence came the growing demand, and by and by astonishing prices were paid for what had long lain unnoticed as unmarketable dross.

Among the few who hailed with joy the first number of the "Lutheraner," was another pioneer of western Lutheranism, a man whose name will be pronounced with reverence as long as a Lutheran church remains in America: Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken, who landed at Baltimore about half a year before the Saxons trod the banks of the Mississippi. He was a man of powerful frame and a well educated mind, fiery and energetic,—filled with a burning zeal to carry the Gospel of Christ to his countrymen in the western solitudes, of whose wants he had learned through missionary magazines in the old world. After a brief sojourn among the Methodists, whose prayer-meetings he had witnessed with wonder and doubt, he found the Rev. Mr. Haesbaert, who, after an acquaintance of a week, left him in charge of his congregation, while he retired to the country in search of health. After his return, he recommended Wyneken to the missionary committee of the Synod of Pennsylvania, and soon we find the young missionary laboring amid hardships and privations in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, traversing the forests and prairies on foot and on horseback in fair and in foul weather, by day and by night, and sowing the seeds of life in a spiritual wilderness.

Fort Wayne, Ind., was then a small country-town. The first German, and at the same time the first Lutheran who had settled here, was Henry Rudisill, who, with his wife, a daughter of the Henkel family, had arrived in this community of Frenchmen and Indians in 1829. But a Lutheran he would remain, and by his endeavors a current of German immigration was led to Fort Wayne and vicinity. In 1837, a congregation was organized with Rev. Jesse Hoover, a member of the Pennsylvania Synod, as its pastor. Hoovers too, was a young man of fair talents, a zealous and restless

missionary, and with his young wife, who took boarders for a living, he cheerfully shared the poverty of his people in those days when at times there was not a pinch of flour in all Fort Wayne. But when in the fall of 1838 Wyneken first set his foot into the town, the Germans were without a minister; for in May young pastor Hoover had been laid to rest. At the urgent request of the orphaned congregation, Wyneken established his headquarters at Fort Wayne. The Lutherans had neither church nor parsonage; they worshiped in the court-house until the building threatened to fall, then here and there, until the little frame church, erected in 1839, afforded them rest and shelter from wind and weather. From Fort Wayne Wyneken continued his extended missionary excursions, until a painful disease of the throat interrupted his labors. In 1841 he went to Germany for treatment. But even before this he had contemplated a voyage to the Old World, and for a purpose which he now carried out. As soon as his health was sufficiently restored, he started out to agitate the cause of the church in America; by personal solicitations he engaged the sympathies of a number of prominent men, and by public addresses as well as through a brilliant pamphlet he inspired into thousands of hearts a feeling of responsibility for the brethren in the New World. Dr. Sihler, Ernst, Buerger, Biewend and others were among the first fruits of the harvest which Wyneken thus garnered for America. Wucherer began the publication of a periodical for the promotion of the American cause; and when, a few years later, W. Loehe circulated through Germany a fraternal call to the German Lutheran Church in America, nearly a thousand men of various ranks and stations gave it their signatures.

But Wyneken had also profited largely by what he had heard and seen and done in Germany. When he returned in 1843, he had ripened into a man of matured powers and of confirmed Lutheran convictions. •The "Synod of the West," of which he was a member, he now felt convinced was not in truth a Lutheran body, and he was not the man to conceal what was in his heart. When at the meeting of 1844, which took place in Fort Wayne, Rudisill, encouraged by Wyneken himself, impeached his pastor, whom he had been led to sus-

pect of Romanizing tendencies, the result was a complete vindication of Wyneken's Lutherism in the eyes of his congregation.

It was in those troubled days that the first number of the "Lutheraner" appeared, and when Wyneken had perused it, he joyfully exclaimed; "Thank God! There are other Lutherans in America!" Soon Wyneken and the "Lutheraner" were companions in arms, both being violently assailed by the Methodists, the "Lutheraner" for its articles, Wyneken for his portraiture of Methodism in his German pamphlet, which had been reprinted in America.

Great joy was also awakened by the first number of the "Lutheraner" at Pomeroy, O., where Dr. Sihler was then stationed, one of the men whom Wyneken had drawn westward. He was then an ordained minister, a member of the Synod of Ohio, and was endeavoring in various ways to exert his influence against certain features of doctrine and practice which claimed his attention. One day, early in 1845, while Sihler was instructing his catechumens, a horseman alighted at his door, and a moment later Wyneken introduced himself to personal acquaintance. He was on his way to Baltimore, whither he had been called to succeed his friend Haesbaert, and he had now come to behold the face of the man who was to be his successor at Fort Wayne.

Soon after the Doctor's arrival at this place, where he was to serve the Master, for forty years to come, another fruit of Wyneken's sojourn in Germany was planted in American soil and entrusted to the care of Wyneken's successor in the pastorate of St. Paul's.

Among the men whom Wyneken had won to the American cause, was Wilhelm Loehe, a clergyman of Neuendettelsau, in Franconia, and Loehe not only gathered about him a number of young men whom he gave a practical preparation for the ministry in America, but he also conceived and executed the plan of opening a seminary for the same purpose in the New World. For the site of this nursery he selected Fort Wayne, and in 1846 he sent over eleven young men, together with a talented candidate of theology by the name of Roebbelen, who, with Dr. Sihler, was to give these young men, and others who might be recruited in America, a train-

ing which would in a few years fit them for missionary and pastoral work among the Germans in this country. This was the beginning of the "Practical Seminary," which was at a later date combined with the "Theoretical Seminary" at St. Louis and, still later, transplanted to Springfield, Ill., where it is flourishing to-day. In this seminary, one of the emissaries of W. Loehe and one of the founders of the Missouri Synod, Prof. A. Craemer with his colleagues, was more than forty years successfully engaged in educating young men for the service of the Lord's vineyard.

We have dwelt at some length upon those pioneer days because, in portraying to the reader those early events and the ways and means employed by the men who have hitherto held the foreground in our narrative, we have presented what is on a more extended scale and in a wider field going on to-day in the Synod of Missouri. Still the voices of preachers are heard in the wildernesses; scores of traveling missionaries are traversing the forests and prairies of the North, South, East and West; congregations are gathered, and where the word is being preached to the old, schools are opened for the young; small churches are built at first, which, in time, give place to larger ones; and, when the means of the congregation permit, a school-master is called to the minister's side, both ministers and teachers coming from the colleges and seminaries (a teacher's seminary is sustained by the Synod at Addison, Ill.) the humble beginnings of which we have witnessed, and those schools are still the cherished foster-children of the churches. Purity and unity of doctrine are still being guarded and propagated and defended, while brotherly fellowship with others who hold the same ground in doctrine and practice is still sought and cherished as it was sought and cherished by Walther and Wyneken and their brethren in the colonial period which we have endeavored to sketch.

In the spring of 1846, Dr. Sihler and two other ministers, Ernst and Lochner, had a conference with Walther and other Saxon Ministers at St. Louis. Sihler and Ernst had severed their connection with the Synod of Ohio. Wyneken had given strength to the movement at a conference held at Cleveland in 1845. The formation of a new synod was now

taken into consideration by the congregation at St. Louis and the clergymen there assembled. In nine meetings the draft of a constitution, in which every vestige of hierarchical leaven had been carefully avoided, was discussed, and in the last of these meetings it was resolved that a similar conference be held in the same year at Fort Wayne. This conference met in July; sixteen ministers were present. Six others had signified their full sympathy with the object in view. The constitution, with a few modifications, being approved, it was resolved to complete the formal organization of the synod at Chicago in April, 1847. There the "German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States" was formed by twelve congregations, twenty-two ministers and two candidates. Under the constitution, which was adopted and signed at this meeting and, with a few alterations, is in force to-day, only those ministers whose congregations had entered into membership with the synod and the lay delegates by whom some of these congregations were represented, were entitled to suffrage, other ministers being only advisory members. The first permanent officers were Walther, president; Dr. Sihler, vice president; Husmann, secretary; F. W. Barthel, treasurer. The "Lutheraner" was made the official organ of the Synod, with Walther as editor. A missionary committee was chosen, and various other measures gave evidence of the earnestness with which the assembly entered upon the task of building up Zion in the land of their pilgrimage.

Here, then, was a Lutheran synod which declared in its constitution that the acceptance of all the symbols of the Lutheran Church without exception or reserve, abstinence from every kind of syncretism, from mixed congregations and mixed services and communions, permanent, not temporary or licensed ministry, the use of purely Lutheran books in churches and schools, should be and remain conditions of membership with this body, but which, on the other hand, claimed no authority over the congregations connected with it, thus leaving intact the freedom of the churches, a feature which led Grabau to prophesy that within ten years this body so constituted would be shattered into a thousand fragments. When in 1866 the Buffalo Synod and even Grabau's own con-

gregation went to pieces, and only three ministers adhered to their leader, the number of ministers in the Missouri Synod was little short of three hundred, larger than that of any other synod in America at that time.

On the last day of the first meeting at Chicago, a resolution was passed to invite pastor Loehe, of Neuendettelsau, to attend the meeting of the coming year, which was to be held at St. Louis. Loehe did not come to that meeting, but letters had arrived which announced that another wish expressed at Chicago had been fulfilled; Loehe had made over to the Synod the Seminary at Fort Wayne. The cordial friendship between him and Missouri continued for several years. But doctrinal difficulties arose. In a pamphlet which Loehe published in 1849 he spoke of the ministerial office in terms very much like those of Grabau. About the same time letters to Loehe from America presented in an unfavorable light the doings of the Missourians, and Loehe soon entertained thoughts of gaining a new basis for his operations in America. In the Saginaw valley, in Michigan, several Franconian colonies had been planted under his guidance and were still in communication with him, and in 1850 he had matured a plan of erecting what he termed a "Pilgerhaus" at Saginaw, a peculiar combination of a temporary home for colonists, a hospital, a theological seminary for Michigan, all united in a little commonwealth which was to be regulated by a liturgical rule which would give it the character of "a kind of protestant cloister." For the management of this invention and the leadership of the work of which it was to be the centre, Loehe had singled out a talented young theologian who had from early boyhood been under his influence, and after completing his theological studies at the University of Erlangen, had gained renown as a teacher and preacher. This man was Gottlieb Schaller; him Loehe had in 1848 directed to America, and although Schaller had in 1849 become a member of the Missouri Synod, Loehe still hoped to see his Timothy in the position which he now held out to him. But when in 1850 the Synod of Missouri met at St. Louis, Schaller was, after a warm discussion which extended through several sessions, fully convinced by Walther's arguments that Loehe erred, and Loehe's Timothy afterwards labored for many years by

Walther's side as minister of Trinity church and Professor of Theology in Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, where they were both laid to rest in 1887.

The "Pilgerhaus," however, was opened in 1852. Its leader was not a "Missourian." It was afterwards removed to Iowa, and with it went Loehe's heart, who thus virtually became the founder of the Iowa Synod, whose present president was the first principal of the "Pilgerhaus."

Before things had taken this course, the Synod had spared no endeavors to prevent the impending rupture between Missouri and the man who had done so much for the Lutheran Church in the West. In 1851 the matter was laid before the Synod convened at Milwaukee, and so important did the continuation of friendship and fraternal co-operation with Loehe appear to the Missouriians, that it was decided to send a delegation to Germany on a mission of peace. One of the delegates chosen was Walther, then Professor of Theology and President of Concordia College, for which position he had been elected in 1849, when the institution at Altenburg was removed to St. Louis. The other delegate was Wyneken, one of Loehe's dearest friends and a man eminently fitted for this task, whom at the previous meeting the Synod had called to the presidency. But though many difficulties were overcome, a complete understanding was not reached by the series of interviews between Loehe and the American delegates; the kind of feelings which were renewed were but of brief duration; and, what was even more deplorable, the new synod which grew up under the influence of Neuendettelsau shared Loehe's doctrinal positions and his antagonism to Missouri, and was soon in open warfare with this body.

Among the points at issue between the Synods of Iowa and Missouri during the strife, the end of which is not yet, were the doctrine of the Church, Missouri holding that the Church of Christ is invisible, while Iowa recognized a visible and an invisible side; "open questions," with which Iowa classed the doctrines of the Ministry, the Church, Chiliasm, Antichrist, while Missouri maintained that these doctrines are clearly set forth in Scriptures and are therefore open questions in no sense; the doctrine that the Roman pontiff is the Anti-

christ foretold Dan. 11 and 2 Thess. 2, which Missouri affirmed, while Iowa holds that the Antichrist, in the strictest sense of the word, is an individual person to be expected before the end of the world; Chiliasm, which Missouri rejected in its subtle as well as its crass forms, holding that the resurrection of all the dead will take place at the second coming of Christ on the day of judgment, while Iowa held that not every form of Chiliasm must be rejected, that some first fruits of the dead may be expected to rise before the judgment day; the question to what extent subscription to the symbols of the Church enjoins the acceptance of the doctrines laid down in such symbols, concerning which Missouri held that one who subscribes the symbols unconditionally thereby declares acceptance of all the doctrines laid down in such symbols, while Iowa claimed that to be of binding force a doctrine must be stated in the symbols *ex professo*, not only occasionally, and that, therefore, a distinction must be made between the doctrines contained in the symbolical books. These points were discussed in a colloquy by representatives of both synods who met at Milwaukee in 1867: but no satisfactory result was reached.

A similar "colloquium" had in 1866 been brought about between representatives of the Buffalo Synod and that of Missouri. While Grabau had been at the helm, he had thwarted all endeavors in this direction; he had in his "Informatorium" branded Walther and his followers as heretics. Walther had in 1852 published his book on "the Church and the Ministerial Office," which had previously been laid before and approved by the Synod. In this book Walther showed by numerous extracts from the symbols of the Lutheran Church and from the writings of her orthodox teachers what former centuries had voiced forth as the Lutheran doctrine on these subjects. Now, shortly after Grabau's exodus, three ministers and as many laymen of each synod met at Buffalo, and with one exception all of the representatives of the Buffalo Synod were brought into full harmony with the Missourians, so that, when in February, 1867, twelve ministers and five lay delegates of the Buffalo Synod were assembled at Buffalo with five Missourians, a formal recognition of fraternal unity was sealed, and the near future saw eleven of the twelve min-

isters as members of the Synod of Missouri.

In 1872 the synod celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its first organization. The meetings were held in Mercantile Library Hall at St. Louis, and here it appeared to all eyes that conventions of all the ministers and school-teachers and of lay delegates from all the congregations of the synod were no longer practicable. The Synod then numbered 428 ministers and 251 school-teachers, and the numbers were fast increasing. It was, therefore, decided that thenceforth from two to seven congregations should delegate one minister and one layman to the triennial meetings of the general body, which had years ago been divided into four District Synods.

At this jubilee meeting was also discussed the draft of the constitution of the *Synodical Conference*, a union of Lutheran Synods, which was soon after, in July, 1872, completed at Milwaukee. As early as 1856, Walther had in "Lehre und Wehre," the theological monthly which appeared under his editorship since January, 1855, given the first impulse to a movement which before the close of the year resulted in a convention of fifty-four clerical and nineteen lay representatives of four synods, those of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Missouri. Similar meetings followed in 1857 and 1858, but no permanent organization was effected. When in 1866 the General Council was organized, the Synod of Missouri was prevented from entering into union by obstacles, some of which contributed toward causing Ohio and Iowa to stand aloof, the former entirely, the latter in theory though not in practice, and which are the substance of the "four points" which have driven the Synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan from the ranks of the Council.

The synods which were represented at the first meeting of the Synodical Conference were those of Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and the Norwegian Synod, which had previously by colloquia between representatives convinced themselves of each other's orthodoxy. Of these synods the Synod of Illinois was afterward merged into that of Missouri. For a number of years the remaining synods wroked together in harmony of faith, until the great "predes-

tinarian 'controversy' led to a rupture which has not yet been healed.

This controversy did not come unforeseen. On the floor of the jubilee synod in 1872, a hard struggle had been predicted, and when the new decade was ushered in, the struggle had begun. It was Prof. Schmidt, formerly Professor of the Norwegian Synod in Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, then Professor in the Norwegian Seminary at Madison, Wis., who first within the Synodical Conference raised his voice in public against the doctrine of predestination as set forth in the reports of 1877 and 1879 of the Western District of the Missouri Synod. He directed his attacks especially against the position held by Walther and the Synod that God's predestination is a cause of our salvation, and of everything thereto pertaining, faith and perseverance in faith not excepted, that in the decree of predestination the faith of the elect was not presupposed, but included. Soon the contest waxed very hot; members of the Missouri Synod contributed articles to the periodical which Prof. Schmidt published as the organ of his warfare. Walther and the Missourians were desirous of bringing about an understanding, and in January, 1881, the theological Faculties and the presidents of Synods and District Synods in the Synodical Conference responded to a call by the acting president of this body to join in a colloquium at Milwaukee. When five days of earnest debate had brought the dissenting parties no nearer to each other, and the representatives of Ohio could remain no longer, the colloquium was closed. The proposal to meet for a similar colloquy at a future date and to refrain from polemical articles meanwhile, was rejected by Prof. Schmidt, and the challenge was taken up by the other side. As the controversy proceeded, the doctrine of conversion came to the foreground. Here Missouri maintained that conversion is the work of divine grace alone, wrought through the means of grace, which, though they come with equal power and earnestness to all, do not attain the same results in all; but that this mystery must not be explained away by denying with Calvin the earnest will of God to convert all, nor by denying the same utter depravity in all men, that spiritual death which incapacitates all alike to concur in their own con-

version ; that the conversion of sinners rests in God's grace alone, and they can in no way or measure be credited with their own conversion ; that the non-conversion of sinners rests in their own hardness of heart alone, and God is in no wise the cause of their non-conversion. The other side held that the effect wrought in the work of conversion depended not on God's grace alone, but also in a measure on man's conduct toward the means of grace. This explanation Missouri rejects as synergistic, while Ohio denounces Missouri's position as Calvinistic.

The controversy led to the separation of Ohio and the Norwegians from the Synodical Conference, the Norwegian Synod severing its connection with the Germans because thus they hoped to meet with less difficulty in overcoming the commotion created in their midst by this controversy, in which their professor played so prominent a part.

The inward profit which came to the Synod of Missouri and the synods still connected with it in the Synodical Conference from this controversy was great. Hundreds and thousands of its members were led to a deeper and clearer understanding of the truths at issue, and a habit of careful and extended research in the Scriptures and the Symbols was deepened and strengthened in many, both ministers and laymen.

Nor was the outward progress of the Synod stayed by the great controversy. From 1878 to 1888 the Synod has well nigh doubled the number of its ministers. The joint Synod at present consists of thirteen District Synods, the Western; the Middle, the Eastern, the Illinois, the Iowa, the Canada, the Wisconsin, the Minnesota and Dakota, the Nebraska, the Southern, the California and Oregon, and the Kansas Districts. The number of ministers, including the professors in the colleges and the seminaries, according to the statistics of 1890 was 1,140; the number of school-teachers, 642; that of congregations, not including unorganized missions, 1,631; that of communicant members, at a low estimate, 305,350. The missions of the Synod are the Home Missions carried on among the Germans of this country by the District Synods; Emigrant Missions in New York and Baltimore, Missions among the Jews, English Mission and, conjointly with other

Synods of the Synodical Conference, Negro Missions. The higher institutions of learning for the education of ministers and school-teachers are, besides those mentioned in the narrative and still in operation, a college at Milwaukee, Wis., a preparatory collegiate institute at Concordia, Mo., and another in New York. In these schools 1,088 students were in 1890 instructed by forty-five professors. Of benevolent institutions there are within the Synod an institute for the deaf and dumb at Norris, Mich., ten asylums for orphans and the aged, and several hospitals. The periodicals published of the synod are "Der Lutheraner," "Lehre and Wehre," a homiletical magazine, and an educational monthly; of the Synodical Conference, the "Missionstaube" and the "Lutheran Pioneer;" besides, eight religious periodicals published by conferences, societies and individuals within the Synod of Missouri. The Synod publishes its own hymn-books, school-books, Bibles, prayer-books, almanacs; etc., all which, together with the periodicals and a voluminous theological literature contained in the Synodical reports and other publications in the form of books and pamphlets, issue from the Synod's Concordia Publishing House.

Of the patriarchs of the Missouri Synod, but few are now among the living here below. Wyneken, the venerable father, was president of the Joint Synod from 1850 to 1864, when Walther was again elected to this office. In 1876, Wyneken, after a protracted illness, fell peacefully asleep in Jesus at San Francisco, Cal. Walther, who had received the title of Doctor Theologiae from Capital University of Columbus, O., was relieved of the presidency in 1878, when the present incumbent, Rev. H. C. Schwan, of Cleveland, O., was chosen. Yet the eve of Walther's life was a time of vigorous activity in the service of the Master. He wrote copiously for the press; he presented theses at synodical meetings, at which he was eminently the theological teacher; he was regular in his lectures to the students of the seminary from which hundreds of his pupils have gone forth into the ministry. When at the meeting of the Western District in 1886, he had completed a series of eloquent theological discussions, each of which had lasted several hours, he closed with tears and in faltering accents; he felt that his work was

done. His physical energies were fast failing, and the Synod unanimously resolved that he should rest. During the feeble months which followed, the congregations at St. Louis and many of his brethren from various parts of the Synod joined in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the ministry. Time passed on, and the venerable Doctor was slowly, but steadily, sinking; and while, in the spring of 1887, the Joint Synod was in session at Fort Wayne, on the 7th of May, the Lord called His weary servant to his eternal rest. Thousands of members of the Missouri Synod and of sister Synods, from all parts of the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to the Gulf, formed the greatest funeral procession St. Louis has witnessed, as they followed the precious dust of this great man in Israel to its last repose.