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Frederick August Craemer

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das Forschen in der Schrift ist unbedingt geboten, das fortwährende Vergleichen der verschiedenen Texte, die dieselbe Lehre behandeln, das gründliche Untersuchen der Formen, der grammatischen Konstruktion und aller andern in Betracht kommenden Tatsachen. Robertson hat mit Recht einige Kapitel seines ausgezeichneten Buches *The Minister and His Greek New Testament* mit den Überschriften versehen: "Pictures in Prepositions", "Sermons in Greek Tenses" und dergleichen mehr. Und vergessen wir hierbei auch nicht das alte lateinische Wort: *Nulla dies sine linea*. Was man beim Studium mit der Feder in der Hand figiert, wird in der Regel zweimal so leicht im Gedächtnis haften. Und hat man es erst einmal so weit gebracht, dann werden auch die andern Studien auf dem Gebiete der Jagogik, der Geschichte, der Archäologie keine unüberwindlichen Schwierigkeiten bieten.

B. E. Frensmann.

Frederick August Craemer.

(1812—1891.)

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently. 1) — *Jer. 48, 10.*

Some time ago, in conversation with one of our retired ministers who had received his theological training under Craemer at Springfield, Craemer was referred to as the "forgotten man of the Missouri Synod." Of course, this is not true of those who knew the man who served as the head of our Practical Seminary for over forty years. They have not forgotten him, especially not those who were trained for the ministry by "Onkel" Craemer. Their eyes light up when they think of him, and what they say of him is spoken in a tone of profound love and admiration. This fact alone bespeaks the greatness of the man and the power of his unique personality. But forty-five years have elapsed since Craemer was gathered to his fathers, and the number of those who knew him has grown very small and is dwindling from year to year. When these have all passed on, shall Craemer be forgotten? Shall he be only a name to most of us? Is there nothing in the life and activity of this man, who stood in the front ranks of the fathers with Walther, Wyneken, and Sihler, that may benefit the present generation and those that are yet to come?

As the golden anniversary of our esteemed colleague Dr. E. Engelder falls in the same year in which our Practical Seminary is celebrating its ninetieth anniversary, and as Dr. Engelder also served as professor of that institution for a number of years, we felt that we could honor our colleague in no better way than by writing

1) Marginal reading.

a brief appreciation of Frederick August Craemer and thus make at least a small contribution toward keeping his memory alive among us. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation," Heb. 13, 7.

In Dr. W. Sihler's memorial²⁾ to Prof. A. Wolter,³⁾ who had died of the cholera, we are informed that Wolter had pasted on his standing-desk a paper inscribed with the words of Jer. 48, 10: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." Dr. L. Fuerbringer writes⁴⁾ that Craemer had the same sentence written on his desk.⁵⁾ Other great lights in the Church have had similar mottoes. Martin of Tours labored according to the sentence "*Non recuso laborem*"; David Brainerd, "There is no greater satisfaction on earth than joy in God and a life in the service of the Master"; John Eliot, "Prayer and pains through faith in Christ will do anything." Craemer's motto certainly characterizes his career most strikingly.

True, not at the outset. Though brought up by a strict father and a godly mother in his native Kleinlangheim, Bavaria, and matriculating at the University of Erlangen as a *studiosus theologiae et philologiae*, Craemer at first was not a true Christian, but a rationalist; and at the university he became so deeply involved in the patriotic movement of his day to restore the old "Holy Roman Empire of German Nations" that he was arrested and imprisoned for six years for participation in the famous *Frankfurter Attentat*, and remained under police surveillance even after obtaining his freedom in 1839. This experience, as trying as it was, had no visible effect upon his inner life. But when, upon continuing his studies at the philological seminary of Professor Thiersch in Munich, the Lord laid him low with sickness, that proved to be his "road to Damascus." The seed sown by his pious mother bore fruitage. He became a devout and consecrated follower of Jesus Christ.

He was twenty-nine years old and eager to devote his life to the service of his Master, but there was as yet no indication of what his future field of labor would be. He was first engaged as tutor in a nobleman's family and had the opportunity to travel to Bohemia and Italy. He then received an appointment as tutor in England in the home of Lord Lovelace, in Devonshire, whose wife was the

2) *Lutheraner*, Sept. 18, 1849.

3) Professor at the Practical Seminary in Fort Wayne, from Nov., 1846, to Aug., 1849.

4) *Lehre und Wehre*, 68, 35.

5) It may have been the same desk, as Craemer was Wolter's real successor. A. Biewend, who had been called from his pastorate in Washington, D. C., to succeed Wolter, served only from Nov. 20, 1849, to Sept. 25, 1850, and then went to St. Louis to become professor of philosophy at our Seminary there. Biewend died April 10, 1858.

daughter of the famous Lord Byron. In this family he had occasion to witness for his faith; he refused to agree with the liberal religious principles of Lady Lovelace, a Unitarian. He resigned his place and planned to return to Germany. However, he had in the mean time won the favor of Sir Henry Drummond, cofounder and patron of the Irvingites, who got him an appointment as private tutor at the University of Oxford, with prospects of a professorship at that institution. Craemer might have become a renowned professor at this world-famous school because of his extraordinary linguistic ability; but his staunch Lutheran faith and his intense devotion to his Savior forced him to testify against the Oxford Movement, which, under the leadership of Pusey, Newman, and others, was disturbing the Anglican Church at the time. The result of his outspoken criticism was that nothing came of a professorship. Oxford did not get the services of Craemer because the Lord of the Church had need of him elsewhere.

To Craemer in England had come the news of a movement that was to be of great importance to the Lutheran Church in America and especially for our own Synod. Wm. Loehe of Neuendettelsau,⁶⁾ in response to Wyneken's *Notschrei*, had laid the foundation of a training-school for spiritual workers among the scattered German immigrants in the Middle West of the United States. The first missionaries⁷⁾ had been sent to America. Others were being prepared to follow.⁸⁾ Loehe needed still more, particularly men thoroughly trained theologically and able to take the lead in the work. Friends had advised Craemer to offer his services to Loehe, who gratefully accepted him and, recognizing Craemer's ability, decided to use him for the establishment of a heathen mission among the American Indians. Loehe's plan in this respect, though not original with him,⁹⁾ was a thoroughly practical one. He intended to combine colonization and heathen missions by planting a colony of Christians in close proximity to the Indian reservations so that the pastor of the Christian congregation would serve also as missionary to the red men and the members of his flock would by their Christian life give to the barbarians a continuous practical demonstration of the worth of the Christian faith.

It would take us far beyond the limits set for this article to

6) "*Dessen Name gerade in der Springfielder Anstalt stets in Ehren gehalten werden soll, der die allergroessten Verdienste um unsre Kirche und Synode in ihren Anfangszeiten hatte.*" L. Fuerbringer, in *Lehre und Wehre*, 68, 7.

7) Adam Ernst and George Burger in 1842.

8) O. Hattstaedt and A. Saupert followed in 1843.

9) The Moravians of Herrnhut had employed similar methods in their foreign mission-work.

go into detail to describe the events that ensued, the careful preparations, Craemer's call and ordination to serve the emigrant colony as pastor, the voyage to America,¹⁰⁾ his marriage,¹¹⁾ the journey up the Hudson to Albany by sailing vessel, from Albany to Buffalo by railroad,¹²⁾ thence to Michigan, and the planting of the Frankenmuth colony, about fifteen miles from Saginaw, not far from the reservation of the Ojibwa Indians.

Craemer in all the activities connected with as difficult a task as this is an inspiring example of self-sacrificing devotion to his Master and to his high purpose not to do the work of his Lord negligently. Much praise has been given to F. C. D. Wyneken for his unselfish labors in behalf of the spiritual and temporal needs of the scattered Germans in Northern Indiana, Western Ohio, and Southern Michigan,—and we would not detract one iota from the credit that belongs to Wyneken, by the grace of God,—but the task that confronted Craemer was a greater one. To organize a colony in the forest primeval of the Saginaw Valley, a colony composed of young Bavarian men and women who had no conception of what confronted them, whose first and most natural reaction was an intense homesickness for the Fatherland and a longing to return when they found themselves forced to construct the rudest, most primitive huts for shelter and to hew down the giants of the forest for clearings on which to raise a few vegetables for food, when they fell a prey to thirst and fever for lack of proper food and water, when they suffered from the bitter cold of a Michigan winter and other privations,—that was a task of no mean proportions. Craemer, however, animated by his intrepid zeal for the Lord's work, went at it undeterred. He was at once leader, pastor, father, physician, counselor, and comforter. Within nine months a colony was at least primitively organized.¹³⁾ Then, in addition to his manifold labors, he turned his attention to the neighboring heathen Indians. Soon he was preach-

10) In the spring of 1845.

11) To Dorothea Benthien of Achim, June 10, in St. Matthew's Church, New York, by Rev. Stohlmann.

12) With a narrow escape from injury and death in a collision that occurred about a mile from Buffalo.

13) "No one," wrote a colonist, "can have an adequate conception of the appearance of a North American landscape. No path through the forests. Through brush and extensive morasses, over fallen trees, which form the only passageways through the swampy land, the path leads to the settlement. A dead silence reigns in these woods, broken only now and then by the weird screeching of the owls, the barking of the squirrels, or the cry of wild four-footed beasts. After one has waded, climbed, stumbled, almost to exhaustion, one comes in view of the colony. And the settlement—what a doleful sight! A cleared space, surrounded by a rough rail fence. In the center of it a miserable cabin, built of rough-hewn logs. The most poverty-stricken village in Germany contains palaces compared with this."

ing to them by means of an interpreter, sometimes traveling fifty to seventy miles on foot. He learned their language. He translated Luther's Catechism into Ojibwa. He took a score of Indian children into his own home in order to civilize them and to have them attend his Christian day-school. The work grew apace. There were converts, young and old. Edward Baierlein¹⁴⁾ was sent over to assist. A Christian Indian village, Bethany, was founded. The future looked promising. That this mission, for various reasons, did not reach the proportions of, nor endure as long as, those established by Eliot, Brainerd, Zeisberger, and others, was no fault of Craemer's and Baierlein's, and their work will always remain as one of the bright spots in the rather tragic annals of Christian missions among the American Indians.

During this time Craemer had other problems to solve and other labors to perform. The Michigan Synod, which he and others had joined, proved to be Lutheran in name only. The connection had to be severed.¹⁵⁾ A new synod was in process of organization among the Saxons in Missouri and the other Loche missionaries, who had withdrawn from the Ohio Synod.¹⁶⁾ Craemer had not attended the first meeting between the Saxons and the Loche men,¹⁷⁾ as he was still a member of the Michigan Synod; but he did attend the second¹⁸⁾ and the organization meeting¹⁹⁾ and became a charter member of the Missouri Synod and the secretary of its first mission board.

His Synod soon called him to serve in another capacity, to the position of professor at the Practical Seminary²⁰⁾ in Fort Wayne, which institution he served most faithfully until his death.²¹⁾

Craemer's service at this theological school naturally divides itself into three periods according to its location: at Fort Wayne, Ind., 1850—1861;²²⁾ at St. Louis, Mo., 1861—1874, in conjunction with the Theoretical Seminary; at Springfield, Ill., 1875—1891.

14) In 1847. Baierlein labored until 1853, when he left to become a missionary in India for the Leipzig Mission Society. He had been sent to America only as a temporary supply.

15) June 25, 1846.

16) At a meeting in Cleveland, O., Sept., 1845.

17) At St. Louis, May, 1846.

18) At Fort Wayne, July, 1846.

19) At Chicago, April 25, 1847.

20) Founded by Loche and Wucherer through Dr. Wm. Sihler in the fall of 1846 and presented to the Missouri Synod by Loche on Sept. 8, 1847.

21) St. Lorenz Church in Frankenmuth set a fine example by allowing its beloved pastor to accept the call to Fort Wayne. Seventy families escorted Craemer for seven miles, from Frankenmuth to Bridgeport, before they took a tearful farewell.

22) During which time the Teachers' Seminary and the English Academy were added to the institution.

During these forty-one years, Craemer devoted his many talents whole-heartedly to the training of men for the ministry. It was self-evident that his strong character should impress itself upon the entire seminary. Having disciplined himself, he knew how to exercise a judicious discipline among his students. Strict in exacting obedience to the *Hausordnung*, he was nevertheless not legalistic, but truly evangelical in his dealings with those who had transgressed the rules. It was an incalculable blessing to our Synod that it had at the head of its Practical Seminary a man who, like Walther in St. Louis, loved the pure Gospel as embodied in the great Confessions of the Lutheran Church and who was able to instil in his pupils a burning zeal for the preaching and defense of the *reine Lehre*. Though he was no outstanding pulpit orator, and though his sermons were perhaps somewhat stereotyped in his later years,²³⁾ yet he knew how to develop men for the pulpit who could preach the Word with power. His diligence in office was extreme. He was ever ready to take on more work if it would result in sending out more well-trained workers into the Lord's vineyard. Long after he should have been relieved of his duties because of increasing age and failing health, he carried on, forcing his weakened body by sheer will-power to obey, until he broke down after having installed the successor²⁴⁾ whom Synod had finally called to take his place. His end came soon afterwards, on May 3, 1891. He had performed the work of the Lord diligently to the last.

Let us not forget Craemer. May his memory live among us and his example of diligent, painstaking devotion to sound Lutheranism spur us on to greater zeal and fidelity in our own spheres!

It may not be on the mountain's height
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if in His wisdom He will call
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
"I'll go where Thou will'st me to go."
I'll go where Thou will'st me to go, dear Lord,
O'er mountain or plain or sea;
I'll say what Thou want'st me to say, dear Lord;
I'll be what Thou want'st me to be.

W. G. POLACK.

23) At the right time he did rise to the heights of true oratory. Of his address at Walther's funeral in 1887, Dr. Fuerbringer writes: "*Eine fast unuebersehbar Menge fuellte das grosse Gotteshaus bis auf den letzten Stehplatz. Totenstille herrschte. Da steht Craemer vor dem Sarge am Altar, und mit hoeherbobenen Haenden bringt er seinen ganzen, ich moechte sagen, heilig-leidenschaftlichen Schmerz zum Ausdruck in den Worten, die durch die Versammlung ertoenen: 'Mein Vater, mein Vater, Wagen Israels und seine Reiter!'*" *Lehre und Wehre*, 68, 38.

24) Prof. R. Pieper was installed on April 8, 1891.