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## **NOTES TO GENERAL THEOLOGICAL TERMS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF FILIP MELANCHTON, COMPOSED BY L. STÖCKEL**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Autor is in your work personality Leonard Stöckela, he was Rector of humanistic school, which under his leadership has achieved a high level of just. Around the year 1540 wrote the laws, which are among the oldest school law school bardejovskej. of particular importance to its comments on the General principles of the Christian teachings of Philip Melanchtona (published in Basel in 1560) and public Confessia of Pentapolite from 1548). Bardejovskú humanistic school (later gymnázium) just for its good renown in the 16th century. century visited students from northern parts of Hungary. Bardejov will then become the center of education, theater, arts and culture. Bardejovská humanistic school under the direction of l. Stöckela had an excellent reputation, which developed into a secular education. The school fell under the Urban Council, which approved the regulations and control and various documents. According to this school have been developed for other schools as well as schools in Hungary, so for the territory, which now forms.*

**KEY WORDS:** *F. Melanchton, L. Stöckel, pedagogy, education*

The top piece of work is: *Postilla* (Bardejov 1596). Stöckel was working on this work for the whole life; it contains 1064 pages of a big format. The preface includes 13 pages; there are two pages by Severin Škultéty (a note about Palestine) at the end of the book. In terms of the extent and content it is a unique piece of work for us and it has been remaining so till the present time. The book was published with the support of aristocrats Štefan Hommonai, Ostrošič, Štefan Petróczy, Šimon Jesenský, Krištof Kubíny and evangelical ministers of Liptov, Turiec and Bojnice surroundings. This publication was certainly a matter of a heart for Stöckel's son Leonard, jr. who dedicated the book to František Révai, jr. and to his son Gabriel. Leonard, jr. says in the preface of *Postilla* that this work is the evidence of truth, religion and the doctrine of his father. It is of the dogmatic, catechetical, educational nature. There are also fulminations against those who teach in another way and bring confusions to the church. The outcome from the preface is information about Stöckel's staying in Wittenberg where he was listening to Luther, Melanchton, Bugenhagen and the others and he was a kind member of the Luther's family. The work was enriched by valuable notes of Martin Wagner, Severin Škultéty, Tomáš Faber and Mikulas Dalhemius.

Stöckel created disciplines, in *Postilla*, based on an oldreligious epistle text and an evangelical one as well. The disciplines are quite extensive, including 5 or 6 big pages, clearly divided, dogmatic and ethical, catechetical organized. He states questions and answered them. He continued likewise Luther or Melanchton in their disciplines. In its core *Postilla* is a catechetical collection of disciplines in Latin designated for priests and

students. Obviously, it is a clue for priests – this is demonstrated by various statements of ancient authors. Each discipline is organized in a transparent way, divided into sections and the content is covered quite precisely.

Some questions are almost regularly repeated: What is the main idea of a text? What are arguments in the text? How do we achieve something in matters of religious belief? What advice is emerged from the text for us? Answers are adapted logically to these matters in several points. Postilla recollects also anniversary ceremonies that were celebrated for three days in the 16th century.

In the second part of Postilla there are disciplines about memorial days of Apostles. Other unique points are: speeches about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Ascension of Christ, and two speeches about the Holy Spirit, as well as a speech about all the Saints which deals with the idea: not to invoke the saints but to follow their good deeds and bright examples. In terms of the content it is necessary to notice that except textual disciplines Stöckel is also concerned with topics of: the person of Jesus Christ, His real presence at the Lord's Supper, omnipresence of God, Christ's ubiquity (Christ's being in the heaven and his presence at the Supper), predestination, church. In terms of topics he spoke about law, Gospel, christening, a community of Saints. In some parts he reminds rules for the city council which were mentioned before in Šariš and Prešov articles. There are various objections and attacks against Turkish people, Mohammed and Islam itself; that is understandable with regard to the danger from Turkish at that time. We can find here also apologetic arguments against sacramental protagonists, Zwingilians, Anabaptists, Calvin, Oecolampad, Stenckfeld and other doctrines different from Luther's theory. A word against the pope and the Church of Rome appears as well. Stöckel quotes Luther, Melancton and also ancient authors for several times in order to support his ideas, even though he presents some reservations against them as well.

When talking about a formal organization of disciplines he is very close to ancient models, to Cicero whose rhetorical rule was to divide a speech into exordium, argumentatio, refutatio and epilogus (an introduction, content, argumentation, a conclusion).

He observes the introduction to disciplines, deals with the content of a topic, main ideas of a text and he makes a short summary in the conclusion (conclusio)<sup>1</sup>.

## APOLOGETIC WORKS

Stöckel was assumed also to defend a doctrine of Reformation. We speak about his apologetic works. Stöckel's work: *Dealing with...* comes from 1558 and it contains a defence of the church of Bardejov against insulation from barbarians who accused it of heresy and protecting of idols. This reaction is focused against radical supporters of Calvinism in Košice who were under Gregor Szegedy's influence. They were supported by Martin Kálmáncsehi and want to remove decorations from churches. The author considers this to be a heathenish act. The work is not maintained. Another unknown work belongs to the apologetic works: *A work about Antichrist (Opus de Anichristo)*. It is said he fought, using this work, against those who had different opinions about the doctrine of Reformation<sup>2</sup>.

The greatest Stöckel's dogmatic work is: *Notes to general theological terms of Christian doctrine of Filip Melancton*, composed by L. Stöckel, the school chancellor in Bardejov (in short - *Annotationes*). It is a unique work in Slovakia in the 16th century. It is overall interpretation of evangelical reformation doctrine, about the basic religious topics and personal Stöckel's theory coincident with Melancton's work. It is remarkable that the work was published and printed as one book together with Melancton's *Loci communes*

<sup>1</sup> Por. A. Hajduk, *Leonard Stöckel*, Bratislava 1999, s.142.

<sup>2</sup> Por. ibidem.

(General theological terms) in Basle in 1561 (286 pages); after the death of both authors. This thing represents symbolism and unity of doctrine of the teacher and his follower.

Stöckel is concerned not just with the notes to Melancton's work; he does not particularly deal with any supplements, because he develops Melancton's propositions and makes big independent units. At this place he argues against doctrines different from reformation restored church. He uses examples from antique, in terms of his humanistically education, to support his ideas and for illustration. The significant attention should be paid to his introduction which deals with the need of education for the church. He says: "Nothing contains less of Christianity than the enormous unawareness of arts which the real culture is based on". This is Stöckel's reaction to Anabaptists and the uneducated who denied the need of general education for the faithful. These people propagated the idea of education damaging the church and they also claimed that the unenlightenment is healthy and right for religiousness. Stöckel considered education and art to be extraordinary gifts from the God to a human. He did not overvalue the education; it was not beyond the Gospel. Teaching and art should serve the Christian doctrine but it should not be its overlord.

In the stated Notes he deals with these segments of religious belief: the God, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, a creation, a reason for the sin, a free will, a sin, a law, the Gospel, compassion and apology, sacraments, sacrifice, Old and New Testament, a letter and a spirit, Christian freedom, the church, predestination, Christ's ministry, resurrection; disproving reasons, that the apology is made for good acts and not arisen from the faith; appalling, a cross and sorrow of the God church, invoking the God, an organization and direction of a society, using of theological terms.

The Notes represent Stöckel's dogma. He devoted himself to questions that were actual or problematic. It is not surprising that his focus was on christening of children and refusing arguments of Anabaptists. He ends his opinions on christening of children with these words: "It is necessary to christen also the children who were born from the sin in order to be integrated to the church and to be saved; it can be realized just in case they are christened." Stöckel proclaims the same ideas and teaching about the sacraments as he formulated in a letter to city council of Košice in 1557, where he fought against the sacramental protagonists who made darkness from a simple confirmation and Christ's words. He says: "They move from one explanation to another one in order to make a deep dark night from a bright afternoon".

Reformation churches of 16th century were dealing with the topic of the letter and the spirit. There is an independent article of Helvetian creed. Stöckel focuses on this topic in the work of Annotations. He summarizes his ideas at the end of his interpretation: "The statement – a letter is killing but the spirit is reviving- has to be understood in the way that it is the case of the letter without the spirit. However when the spirit joins the letter his big benefits can be obvious. This is confirmed by examples of the Saints and real religious people".

In the part about the church he emphasizes that the church is the God's creation, the work of the Holy Spirit not of a human-beings. He says about a membership to the church: "In order to be real, alive and eternal members of the God's church it is necessary not just to listen to the Gospel's words and accepting of the sacraments but we have to add also our spirit". In the chapter he focused on God's invocation (*De invocatione Dei*), the author explains the Lord's Prayer. This is the oldest interpretation in Slovakia overall. In this chapter it is stated: "It is necessary to make difference between the right invocation of the God and the false one. The God is not invocated either by Homer's priest who is praying to Apollo in order to punish all Greek soldiers because of defiance of one Agamemnon neither those who invoke the right God and come to Him with doubts about mortgaging that were given for Christ and bring a light to the misdoubt. Invoking the god means to know and grasp the God who appeared through his words and gave promises. Psalms represent

evidence of the real and right invoked God.” He reminds to join the invoking of the God with the word of thanks. The author stated that we know praising and invoking as well as prayers from the old church<sup>3</sup>.

Three prayers by Stöckel were saved. He did not compile any prayer book, any agenda prayers as Michal Radašín, he did not even add prayers to his disciplines in Postilla as it was done by Luther. His prayers belong to the oldest sustentative prayers in our society. When talking about these prayers we have chance to know his humility, his deep spirit and real surrender to God’s things and the Lord.

## RELIGIOUS POETRY

Stöckel was also the author of religious poetry that was connected to humanistic spirit in Europe in the 16th century. It served the church everywhere it was arisen at the place of the church. In Slovakia the religious poetry of the 16th century was created in Latin, German, Slovak and Hungarian. The author wrote rhymed morals in German to “Declarations of famous men”, as well as German verses in a theatre play “The story about Susan”. A unique poem *Vox Christi Patientis* was saved as a handwriting. It was labelled as *Epitaphium Christi* and contains 12 verses<sup>4</sup>.

## LETTERS WRITTEN BY L. STÖCKEL

Letters represent an important part of Stöckel’s literary work. They enable us to take a look inside personal questions, problems, fights. Based on the letters we can see Stöckel as a person of not strong health. He seemed to be of a small figure, slim, strict enjoying a school and the church, fighting against attacks of dogs in the manger, meeting lack of understanding; he presented everything in a tone of patience and amicability. He was adamant in faith-teaching questions, mainly in teaching about the Lord’s Supper. He, as a person of great authority, answered the dogmatic questions when he had been asked to. His letters tell us about friendly relations and pedagogic questions. There is an interest about his followers when he was looking for a support to study for them.

Fifty letters written by Stöckel were saved. The letters are written in Latin and German and they include 26 years of life (1534- 1560). He wrote to various people. He wrote fourteen letters to František Révai, four letters to Phillip Melanchton (that were saved), one letter to Juraj Rákovský, Juraj Werner, bishop Matej Hebler and other people. He wrote to city councils of Levoča, Košice, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica in the concern of his followers; letters to city council in Bardejov are unique – he was dealing with personal matters there.

He mentioned important data about himself in his letters. We learnt from the letter addressed to Révai from September/October 1542, that Melanchton had approved his translation of Joachim II. of Brandenburg Clerical Order. In his another letter, addressed to František Révai (23rd July, 1540) he remembers Matej Devai, a Hungarian reformer, who dissociated from Luther’s doctrine regarding to the Lord’s Supper. Because of these different doctrines it came to an argument between him and Peter Perenyi, a monarch, and that is why Devai had to leave Satoralujhely and had to go to Miskolc. He informed about cause of enmity developed between Devai and Perenyi. He wrote Révai also about a smaller document, which had been brought by Devai directly from Luther together with his signature, which caught his interest (the letter from 2nd February, 1544).

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<sup>3</sup> Por. ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Por. ibidem.

Letters sent to F. Melanchton make a special part of correspondence. We can recognize their bilateral friendly relationships by means of those letters – Stöckel's childish attachment and gratitude to his teacher. He considered as the biggest gift received from God the fact, that he had found in Melanchton not only his teacher but also his friend. By his mind and heart as he was day and night near his teacher in Wittenberg. He wrote to Melanchton: "I cannot find anything nicer in this life as to look at you as to be present, although you are not and to have a rest a little bit in dialogue with you".

Except preserved two letters from F. Melanchton to Stöckel and four letters from Stöckel to Melanchton we know, that their correspondence was much richer. We came to that conclusion from traces in other letters. Stöckel asked Melanchton to conform him with his letters, which he likes to read. He wrote to Melanchton (25th August, 1544), that he lived in Bardejov as in "a tiny little nest". Melanchton's letter was not preserved<sup>5</sup>.

Melanchton wrote to Stöckel in spring 1545 – he had mentioned M. Devai's death. That letter was not preserved. In 1551 Melanchton wrote to Stöckel about his stay in Vratislav. Stöckel answered with his letter on 21st November, 1551 and used following words: "Your letter inflamed in me an outright unpronounceable desire after that place..." Either this letter was not preserved<sup>6</sup>.

Friendship between Melanchton and Stöckel was in existence until their death. There was a remarkable letter from L. Stöckel sent to the Town Council in Košice (13th August 1557). Local people from Košice asked Leonard Stöckel and Michal Radašín about non-Luther doctrine regarding to the Lord's Supper, declared by Gregor Szegedy. Szegedy came back from Wittenberg in 1557 and by means of his preaches in Hungarian language in Košice he departed from Ausburg denomination and especially from Luther's understanding the Lord's Supper. He extended his doctrines in word and writing. People from Košice asked for a clear standpoint to that issue. Radašín and Stöckel answered them. Preserved Stöckel's letter is really a tract, treatise of dogmatic issues<sup>7</sup>.

Probably the last letter comes back to beginning of the year 1560 addressed to Michal and Frantisek Révai, considered to be a dedicated letter to Stöckel's document *Formulae tractandarum...* He appreciates here the invention of typography, but he reveals its harmfulness as well. He regards highly reformation as big God's kindness. But that reformation was met with a big cruelty. He considers the above-mentioned Révais as fighters for a real religion and the Augsburg denomination. He wishes the light of doctrine on their dominion outlasted as long as possible.

## SUMMARY

Stöckel came back to his native town Bardejov after a 9-years stay in Germany. He came back as a man of unflinching opinion, definitely formed from the point of view of religion, devoted to school as well as church. He saw in Luther's reformation the big God's kindness and a new light, which had been missing for centuries since the time of apostles. He became a direct witness of various reformation events, led by both reformers Luther and Melanchton. A particular acceptance of these fights penetrated into Slovakia, too. Almost from the very beginning in Slovakia Stöckel had to face different doctrines far from Luther's teaching concerning either anabaptisms, zwinglianism or unitarism. He fought against superstitions extended in church and led a renovated church to a healthy biblical doctrine. He appointed further development and evolution of reformation related to organization of

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<sup>5</sup> Por. ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Por. ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Por. D. Čaplovič, *Problematika cirkevných dejín 1517-1681 na Slovensku (v Uhorsku)*, Bratislava 2001, s. 148.

church choirs and evangelic teaching. He was a person with a big authority. One of reasons was also the fact, that he had been a long-time direct pupil of both M. Luther and F. Melancton. There was nobody else like him in a service of school and church in the half of the 16th century. He was the right man on the right place. His personal sample, modesty, industry and animation, all these qualities had influence on life of church and pupils.

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**POZNÁMKY K VŠEOBECNÝM TEOLOGICKÝM POJMOM  
KREŠŤANSKEJ DOKTRÍNY FILIPA MELANCHTONA,  
SKOMPONOVANÉ L. STÖCKELOM**

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**ABSTRAKT:** Autor predstavuje v svojej práci osobnosť Leonarda Stöckela, bol rektorom humanistickej školy, ktorá práve pod jeho vedením dosiahla vysokú úroveň. Okolo roku 1540 napísal zákony bardejovskej školy, ktoré patria k najstarším školským poriadkom na Slovensku. Osobitný význam majú jeho *Poznámky ku všeobecným zásadám kresťanskej náuky Filipa Melanctona* (vydané v Bazileji v roku 1560) a verejná *Confessia o Pentapolite* z roku 1548). Bardejovskú humanistickú školu (neskoršie gymnázium) práve pre jej dobrý chýr v 16. storočí navštevovali študenti zo severných častí Uhorska. Bardejov sa vtedy stal centrom vzdelávania, divadelníctva, kultúry a umenia. Bardejovská humanistická škola pod vedením L. Stöckela mala vynikajúcu povest', v ktorej sa rozvíjalo svetské vzdelávanie. Škola patrila pod mestskú radu, ktorá ju kontrolovala a schvaľovala predpisy a rôzne dokumenty. Podľa tejto školy boli vypracované školské poriadky aj pre iné školy v Uhorsku, čiže pre územie, ktoré dnes tvorí Slovensko.

**KLÚČOVÉ SLOVÁ:** Melancton, L. Stöckel, pedagogika, edukácia.