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STUDY OF PIEPER'S PRINCIPUM IN ITS HISTORICAL-
SHORT TITLE
PIEPER'S PRINCIPUM

Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of St. Louis
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

Author: John F. Pieper
Date: 1955

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PIEPER'S PRINCIPIUM IN ITS HISTORICAL-
THEOLOGICAL SETTING



A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology



by

David Paul Meyer

June 1963

24433

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The writing of a theological work does not take place in a vacuum. The problems to which the theologian addresses himself are those raised by his immediate circumstances. The Scripture demands and compels the Christian and theologian to apply God's wisdom to the world. Though the content of the true theologian's testimony remains such the same in positive witness and polemic, the form and shape of that testimony is created to a great extent by the circumstances.

Dr. Francis Pieper was both a theologian and dogmatist. He lived in a concrete world of people, ideas and experiences. Simply to divorce Pieper's contributions from their context would be doing an injustice. It is to avoid such a mistake that this investigation was undertaken.

My purpose is not solely to seek a critical and objective analysis of Pieper's understanding of Scripture as the present-day principles theology, but my purpose is to reproduce Pieper's theology of the principles against the backdrop of his theological world as he saw it.

The divisions of the investigation are not strictly Pieper's, since he does not treat the subject of the principles in just this manner. However, there is much to be said for the divisions as they are. Though Pieper may classify and place his opponents into one or two, he will at other times indicate that his opponents must be distinguished from one another. Pieper does not intentionally seek to blur the true image of his opponents. For that reason it is fair to distinguish traditional

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Study

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and then modern opponents of the Scriptural principle. Pieper does not identify the position of Roman Catholicism with that of the Reformed, though he will point out parallel elements found in each. This pointing out of parallel elements at times gives the impression that Pieper is indiscriminate; for this reason the reader is always in danger of gaining the impression that Pieper paints the picture of his opponents only in black. If the divisions serve to vitiate such a faulty impression, they have served their purpose well.

The divisions as such aid in showing the charitable concern of Pieper for his opponents, but they also serve to show his concern for the preservation of the Gospel. Once one has an understanding of the relationship between the Gospel and Scripture as Pieper presents it, he can better understand the vehement defense Pieper makes of the Scriptural principle. By their very nature polemics create difficulties in presenting the Gospel, and Pieper encountered those same difficulties. Failure to understand the nature of the enemy produces an euphoric view of the actual situation. In the same way, failure to understand the nature of Pieper's opponents produces euphoria and insensitivity to Pieper's concerns.

Comparison of Article IV of the Augsburg Confession with Article IV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession reveals the way in which the opponent shaped the repetition of the doctrine. All of Lutheranism would have been content with the simple clarity of Article IV of the Augsburg Confession, but Roman theology would not permit the Article to stand as it was. Defense had to be made so as to preserve the doctrine of justification. Article VIII of the "Solid Declaration," which treats of the person of Christ, is an article which might have remained unwritten if

circumstances had not demanded such a defense. It would be a mistake to expect Article VIII to be producing Article IV of the Augsburg Confession, but it would be a mistake not to see how Article VIII relates to the Gospel and Article IV. In the same way, it would be unfair to expect Pieper's theology of the principium to be an exact reproduction of his theology of justification. It would be an oversight not to see that Pieper does relate the Gospel, justification and its central importance in theology, and the Christian life to his theology of Scripture.

The Scope of the Investigation

Two main concerns predominate throughout the study: (1) Does Pieper's tendency to erase lines of distinction when addressing opponents reveal an injustice?; (2) Does Pieper isolate his doctrine on the source of theology from the Gospel? When there is evidence of oversimplification on Pieper's part, it will be indicated. Where there is not clear evidence of injustice, the question will not be raised. The second concern dictates that isolated statements cannot be the test. Only those references which link the Gospel and the principium theologiae are worthy of consideration.

Pieper tended to lump units of thought and ideas together. The result is that many statements appear without exposition and elaboration. His judgments assume that the reader is already conversant with the subject. The candid observations demand very often that the reader know almost as much on the subject as Pieper himself. The present-day reader may see this as unpardonable, but the fault is perhaps not so much with Pieper as with our inability to place ourselves in his thought world and to see things as he saw them. This gap of space and time which separates

us from vivid appreciation of Pieper's theology of Scripture should be narrowed by this investigation.

The Organization of the Thesis

The thesis first takes up Pieper's principium theologiae as it stood in the historic stream of Lutheranism. Comparison with dogmaticians in general as well as with C. F. W. Walther, J. A. Quenstedt, and J. Gerhard comprise the first division.

The third chapter treats in brief Pieper's analysis of traditional Calvinism, Roman Catholicism, and classic liberals such as Adolf Harnack, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Albrecht Ritschl.

Chapter Four takes up the then-current opponents of the Scriptural principle. Positive theology as Pieper called it had a position by itself and deserved special consideration. Positive theology had its chief representatives in Germany and called itself Lutheran. Luther was claimed by these theologians as their patron. Pieper was not in agreement with such use of Luther and for this reason a section is included which treats of Pieper's defense of Luther. Pieper cited Luther more times than he cited any other theologian. Pieper's quotations from Luther concerning Scripture are often couched in polemic material directed against German Positive theology. Pieper's defense of Luther indicates that Pieper did not think of himself as saying more or less than Luther said.

The relationship of the Gnadenwahlstreit and the source of theology is properly included in the fourth chapter since Pieper considered the underlying presuppositions of German theology and those opposed to Missouri to be the same.

Each chapter is purposely designed so that Pieper might have opportunity to express himself positively and polemically. Chapter Two is purposely limited in references to opponents so as to provide opportunity to see Pieper's principium theologiae in relationship to the dogmaticians. Chapter Three is a summary of Pieper's characteristic evaluation with some questions raised. Chapter Four provides a view of Pieper not easily accessible, because Pieper does not exhaust his view of Positive theology's understanding of Scripture at any one sitting. The chapter closes with Pieper's candid observation of what was the basic problem in the Gnadenwahlstreit.

The Results of the Investigation

The objectives were to see if Pieper was fair in his evaluations and if he defended the principium theologiae in isolation from the Gospel itself.

Projecting Pieper's theology against the backdrop of historic Lutheranism indicated that he did attempt to fit his thought to the earlier patterns. His areas of investigation do not always agree precisely with those of the dogmaticians. His treatment of supernatural revelation existing prior to Scripture is not as extensive as it could have been. The cause for this may have been the pressing need to preserve Scripture as the only source of theology in an age insensitive to this principle. Pieper does not take up the purpose and effects of the two principia available to men in the manner of the dogmaticians.

Chapter Two revealed that Pieper did not use extensively the terminology of the dogmaticians, but he was aware of the meaning conveyed by such terminology. He recognized nature as source of revelation but was

quick to add that limitations prevent it from showing man the true way of salvation. For Pieper man of today can learn of his salvation only from Scripture, for it and it alone is the only source of theology. When Pieper described Scripture as the only source of theology, he desired to point out that Christian theology has its ultimate origin and source in Scripture. By that Pieper did not mean to make Scripture the creator of theology for he distinguished God and Scripture. The chief thing about Scripture is its meaning and content, for it is that which makes it God's Word. Only Scripture can communicate God's Law in its perfection and depth and Scripture alone communicates the Gospel and can assure life and salvation. This is what is meant when Scripture is called the principium theologiae. To express the dynamic and living character of God's Word, Pieper pointed out that man can come to faith without ever seeing a Bible or reading it. Pieper went on to say that a sermon can express God's message of the Gospel without quoting a single passage from Scripture. The thing to be understood and communicated in Pieper's thought is God's message and thought which now is clothed in human language.

The third observation concerning the second chapter is that Pieper did not borrow in a wholesale manner from Walther, Quenstedt, or Gerhard, but used each with discrimination. He did not build his own theology simply on the basis of what they had said, but used their testimony to substantiate his own expression.

Pieper consistently lumped together Calvinism, Calvin, and Zwingli. This does not mean that Pieper held them to be identical. He shows that he was aware of distinctions between Zwingli and Calvin, Calvin and Calvinism. He recognized the concern of American Calvinism to preserve Scripture as God's Word. Pieper's estimation that the Westminster

Confession established another source of theology with its teaching of the immediate working of the Spirit is one which deserves re-examination. It is not an open and shut case that mention of the immediate working of the Spirit denotes a second source or a source at all. There is little question as to the validity of Pieper's judgment that the doctrine of the limited atonement is the product of human reason and not Scripture. Pieper's evaluation shows itself charitable when he points out the blessed inconsistencies of Calvinism. Secondly, Pieper shows himself concerned for the Gospel and not merely Scripture in isolation.

Roman Catholicism is often ranked with the Schwaermer when it comes to speaking of the source of theology. The danger inherent in Papal Infallibility and Rome's doctrine of tradition is that the content of Scriptural revelation be changed and another source take its place. Pieper did not accept praise of Scripture as constituting formal recognition of it as the true source of theology.

Adolf Harnack received extensive investigation by Pieper, though Pieper did not think he was offering anything particularly significant. Harnack, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Albrecht Ritschl received evaluation strictly from a theologian's point of view. Scripture was the test of their theology and thought. When their doctrine contradicted Scripture, Pieper simply stated the same and dismissed them without treating their philosophical premises implicit in their doctrine. Harnack received the most thorough treatment from Pieper and in the polemics Pieper reveals much insight and elaboration not afforded many other opponents.

Pieper's view of Positive theology, as represented chiefly by German Lutheranism, shows that he read widely and was acquainted with the various rejections of the Scriptural principle. The one element lacking,

which would have greatly increased the impact of Pieper's polemic, was a survey of the presuppositions which set the stage of Positive theology. Adolf Hoenecke's dogmatics provides such a treatment. Even without such a survey Pieper shows himself capable of keen insight into the basically sceptical nature of German Positive theology. He was well aware of the dialectical nature of setting the person of Christ in opposition to Scripture. His evaluation shows itself to be linked with the Gospel and its desired results in the lives of Christians. German Positive theology prided itself on being free from restrictions of Scripture so that it could proclaim the true Gospel. Pieper's defense of necessity had to be one which intimately linked the doctrine of Scripture with the Gospel.

The Gnadenwahlstreit in Pieper's estimation centered not so much in Walther or his statements on predestination, but centered on Scripture as the source of divine revelation for the Church. Like Calvinism, American Lutheranism was in danger of making a rational system, a harmonic whole, or the analogy of faith a norm and source above Scripture.

Pieper's defense of the Missouri Synod held up the chief principle that Scripture offers no solution to the question of cur alii, alii non? The predestination doctrine of intuitu fidei or the praevisa fides could not solve the problem if Scripture did not. The Christian can only comprehend Scripture by faith, its medium cognoscendi. To apply reason to the question was to apply a means which pertained only to the realm of nature. Pieper did not put the opponents of Missouri outside the Church, but he attacked their doctrine. For the most part the opponents of Missouri were inconsistent and for this Pieper was thankful. If those opposed to Missouri were consistent, they would be synergists and outside the pale of Lutheranism. The results of the Gnadenwahlstreit came not

of themselves, but out of a mixture of reason and faith, philosophy and Scripture. Though rebuttals were sharp, Pieper held concern for the Gospel to be the motivation for his defense of Scripture as the only source of theology for today.

The Principles

The Christian religion has its own unique source of truth and means of apprehending that truth. This truth is not truth for its own sake but has purposes and goals of independent conception. On the other hand, nature has its own source and means for apprehending and, therefore, nature presents its own purposes and goals through its distinct source. For this reason a natural separation exists between the two principles and is not as well as the principle of Pieper.¹

To avoid confusion of the two principles, Lutheran theologians have carefully distinguished the source of natural knowledge, the world of facts and experience, from the Scripture with its unique purposes and effects. The equation of natural revelation and man's world of experience is by no means improper.² Pieper calls the realm of nature the source of our natural knowledge and revelation of God because here God also remains Himself.³ This revelation in nature is a true source. This source can be divided into facts of nature and inward experience.⁴ Reason and

¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, translated and edited under the supervision of Theodore Engelder, W. F. Albrecht, and John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1950-1957), I, 19.

² *Ibid.*, I, 371.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 58.

⁴ Friedrich B. Bate, "Wie unterscheiden sich die Erkenntnis auf natuerlichem und geistlichem Gebiet?" *Lehre und Leben*, XLII (July and August, 1907), 201.

CHAPTER II

PROLOGOMENA

The Principia

The Christian religion has its own unique source of truth and means of comprehending that truth. This truth is not truth for its own sake but has purposes and goals of independent character. On the other hand, nature has its own source and means for comprehension and, therefore, nature presents its own purposes and goals through its distinct source. For this reason careful separation exists between the two principia cognoscendi as well as the media cognoscendi for Pieper.¹

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² Ibid., I, 371.

³ Ibid., I, 58.

⁴ F [riedrich] B [ente], "Wie unterscheidet sich die Erkenntnis auf naturlichem und geistlichem Gebiet?," Lehre und Wehre, XLIX (July and August, 1903), 201.

inward experience serve then as the medium cognoscendi which derives knowledge from the things given. To reach a degree of reliability, man employs the methods of observation, research and investigation. The knowledge gained is always one of limited accuracy because observation and experience of facts can only reach so far. When conjectures, hypothesis and speculation begin, there science stops; consequently, knowledge and hypothesis stand in opposition to one another.⁵ That which does not proceed from observation and experience of the facts, Pieper removes from the area of science.

Natural Revelation

This leads one to ask exactly what the nature and purpose of natural revelation is. Theologically, the purpose is that man comes to know God even through creation and His creatures. His eternal Godhead and power are to be discovered by the things that are made. This knowledge Pieper calls a posteriori knowledge, that is, by beholding His works and government one can learn something of the Creator as one learns something of the builder through the completed construction.⁶ Along with the eternal Godhead and power revealed in nature a posteriori, man still lives with inward experience, the conscience which serves not only as norm for man but also as a judge which condemns.⁷ This experience of nature within and without should convince man of the existence of God and place him under

⁵F. P[ieper], "Ueber die Grenzen der menschlichen Wissenschaft," Lehre und Wehre, XLVII (October, 1901), 289-95.

⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 379.

⁷F. P[ieper], "Die Kraft des Evangeliums," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (November, 1927), 332-33.

the law which still is known as God's law.⁸ The effect should be that of driving man from security within himself; though the work is carried out, man still remains extra ecclesiam Dei.⁹ The effect can never be man's keeping of the law, but man can only be made aware of his sin and hopelessness.

The purpose and effect desired for the principium naturae remains positive even in this life.¹⁰ This is true particularly in the area of civil righteousness or civil affairs and government. In civil affairs reason is not to be disregarded and set aside, but is an essential part of government. Pieper says, "The State permits, yes, requires, men to speak according to their reason; reason must be the standard according to which the civic community must be taught to distinguish between good and evil."¹¹

Besides knowledge of one's sin, the establishment of civil government and domestic tranquility, the world of experience affords men mediate knowledge which can be applied in the control and use of the universe around him.

Unfortunately, the results are not always positive, though positive results can be ascertained and discovered in the present day. Pieper does not disregard the positive effects of God's revelation in nature.

⁸Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 19.

⁹Ibid., p. 374.

¹⁰Joh. Guilielmi Baieri, Compendium Theologiae Positivae, edited by Carol. Ferd. Guil. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879), I, 5.

¹¹Francis Pieper, "The Holy Bible," What is Christianity? And Other Essays, translated by John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 237.

He quotes at length from Chemnitz's Loci (II, 103f., ed. Viteb.).¹² Here Chemnitz points out that according to Scripture, God's manifestation, His truth, and judgment are revealed in nature; this manifestation provides an environment for the Church, a political society in which God now gathers His Church. Comparison between the Law of Scripture and natural law shows agreement at times; where such exists, natural man merits our respect. But such comparison also spells out the gaps between the two.

Natural Revelation's Limitations

The principium naturae provides a useful point of contact for the Church, a society in which the Church might grow, meanwhile providing man with knowledge of the world around him. But God's purpose can be thwarted, thereby producing a negative result. This comes under the classification of the materialistische Fleisch.¹³ The result of this upheaval of God's purposes in natural revelation is that man affirms that there is no God; religion is regarded as pure foolishness. Regarding such an individual, Pieper says,

By nature they are not atheists, but they become such when God in His justice forsakes them and the devil blinds them; not by a total eradication of the light of nature, but by the suppression of its function and exercise; nor is man even an atheist throughout life and permanently, but only when the paroxysm comes upon him. For the law of nature will never permit anyone to entertain as his deliberate and settled conviction the conclusion that there is no God.¹⁴

¹²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 375.

¹³F. Pieper, "Das Wesen des Christentums," an address delivered before the Synodical Convention of Missouri and Ohio in 1902 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1903), p. 6.

¹⁴Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 373.

The companion of the atheistic view is natural religion which regards man as the source of true religion. The law is constructed to fit the fabrication of man's mind; the law is consequently regarded as the means to achieve status and merit with God.

Natural man cannot rid himself of the notion that since his evil conduct under the Law has separated him from God, his good conduct under the same Law, his moral improvement, his good works, will bring him back into communion with God.¹⁵

Though man then resolves to make himself presentable and able to stand before God, transgression and sin upon his evil conscience remain and he is compelled to flee God.¹⁶

Though compelled to flee, man is still aware of works; they are obvious and reason admires them, concluding therefrom that works can gain merit, forgiveness and justification.¹⁷ Man is torn then between satisfaction under the law and dissatisfaction with himself.

The result of man's impoverishment under the law revealed to him in nature is what is designated as the religion of works, but its strict limitations must never be forgotten. The man who settles on works and is satisfied therein has not yet learned of the law's limitation in giving complete peace or complete devastation. ✕

But while this knowledge suffices to give man an evil conscience, it is not sufficient to effect a complete collapse of man before God and to cause him to despair of all self-help. Natural man rather turns from one form of self-help to another, even to suicide.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁶ Ibid., II, 483.

¹⁷ F. P[ieper], "Die Kraft des Evangeliums," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (November, 1927), 327.

¹⁸ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 316.

Pieper and Chemnitz point out that natural man has little knowledge of the First Table of the Law.¹⁹ At the most, the philosopher can give instruction concerning outward conduct. Such knowledge remains relatively inactive, for although the knowledge of a God and His prescription to obedience might exist, man's response to that knowledge is not only weak but often suppressed entirely by horrible doubt.

Outward conformity to the material of the law leaves man still in natural theology.

Non-Christians can do works which conform externally ("in materia," says Luther) to God's Law, but the motives behind these works are at best only those that come natural (the natural inclination of work, the natural love toward parents, wife, children, natural sympathy), or in many cases the love of fame, or even the desire to make amends for sins and to merit salvation by their works.²⁰

Natural theology at its best is unable to learn anything about the specific content of the Christian doctrine of the Gospel.²¹ Natural knowledge or religion is severely limited, then, to this life, civil righteousness, and science.

The Principium Theologiae

Theology proper for Pieper deals with a separate principium; this principium is assumed a priori in the prologomenon of traditional Lutheran dogmatics. Pieper finds himself compelled at the very start to spell out his principium theologiae in his dogmatics.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 375.

²⁰Ibid., III, 42.

²¹Ibid., I, 106.

Prevailing conditions in the Church make it necessary for the author of a treatise on Christian dogmatics to state clearly and emphatically where he stands on the question of the source and nature of Christian Theology.²²

He goes on to say, "We take the position that Holy Scripture, in contradistinction to all other books in the world, is God's own infallible Word and therefore the only source and norm of Christian doctrine."²³

His position is one of thorough practicality; he would completely subscribe to the axiom of Quenstedt, "Quicquid Scriptura sacra dicit, illud est infallibiliter verum."²⁴

Though Pieper does discuss the question of revelation, he is always compelled by the immediate situation to designate the principium cognoscendi for today to be the Word of Christ given through His apostles and prophets.²⁵ The principium cognoscendi is always sola, a solum principium for Pieper.²⁶ Pieper's principium, like the dogmaticians', is a principium unicum et primum theologiae. "If something is added to a principium, if something is made to condition it in any way, it ceases to be a principium."²⁷

²²Ibid., p. 3.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Aug. Schuessler, "Theologische Spruechwoerter," Lehre und Wehre XLV (May, 1899), 145. Here Schuessler quotes directly Quenstedt's Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum. P. I, c. 3, s. 2, fol. 48.

²⁵Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 22.

²⁶F. P [ieper], "Christliche Dogmatik von D. Franz Pieper," Lehre und Wehre, XLIII (September, 1917), 387-94.

²⁷Robert Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the 17th Century Lutheran Dogmaticians (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1955), 7ff.

According to the very nature of a principium and Scripture, Pieper can say without reservation that the whole Scripture of the Old and New Testaments are to remain the single fountain of Christian faith until judgment day.²⁸ It is this same conviction which articulated the verbum Dei scriptum in A Brief Statement which was principally the work of Pieper. In view of Pieper's conviction, L. Fuerbringer wrote in reflection upon Pieper's life,

Er bekennt sich rueckhaltlos und unzweideutig zu dem obersten Prinzip der Theologie, das die Heilige Schrift Gottes Wort ist, unfehlbar und irrtumslos in Sachen der Lehre und des Lebens, aber auch in sogenannten Nebensachen, in historischen, archaologischen, geographischen, astronomischen und andern Dingen, die absolute und einzige Quelle und Norm aller Lehre.²⁹

There is to be no misunderstanding that somehow the two principia fuse and operate in a cooperative manner after conversion; also the media cognoscendi do not unite to form a single principium and a totally new medium. Before and after conversion, knowledge of natural things continues to be one built upon the reasonable development of cognition and right conclusions from visible nature as well as the course of history.³⁰ For the Christian, natural knowledge is always something worked out or developed. The principium naturae remains a fact a priori, bearing a stamp of unchangeable character of sorts, while the medium continues to be one of purely human origin. The result is that knowledge is uncertain and fluctuating and opinionated in relation to the actual truth of the matter. The problem is as Pieper says,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Dr. F. Pieper als Theolog," Concordia Theological Monthly, II (October, 1931), 724.

³⁰ F [riedrich] B [ente], op. cit., p. 201.

Man acquires his knowledge mediately, for he can learn the nature of things only by process of perception, induction, deduction, based on a study of observable characteristics and actions of the objects.³¹

The next consideration is whether the theologian over against the laity has at his disposal, because of his greater intellectual capabilities and specialized training, a better medium cognoscendi. But the theologian possesses only more philological, philosophical and historical learning as a part of the external theological apparatus; it does not essentially serve the knowledge of faith.³²

The simple fact is that the theologian, with all his learning, cannot acquire more knowledge of spiritual things than the revelation of Holy Scripture provides. There is but one organ for apprehending things spiritual (medium cognoscendi) and that is faith, the simple faith of the Christian man.³³

The organ and medium is faith which grasps the forma, that which is not understood and comprehended by the natural man, while natural man is able to deal with and understand the materia.

The qualification which speaks of the principium cognoscendi for the present day is useful since it does not make the source of theology today the source for all time.

Principium cognoscendi, seu objectum formale theologiae revelatae, est divina revelatio, et quidem pro hodierno ecclesiae statu revelatio mediata, quae Scripturis s. tanquam signis sensibilibus continetur.³⁴

³¹Christian Dogmatics, I, 448.

³²Ibid., p. 107.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Joh. Guilielmi Baieri, op. cit., I, 79.

Formal and Material Principle

Scripture viewed as special revelation for present-day theology has both a formal and material principle. Though time has tended to reverse the understanding and use of the two terms, the more ancient use still has much to commend it. Divine revelation is the object, the infallible source for theology; for today it is mediate and comprehended in the writings of prophets and apostles. It is divine revelation or the forma which makes Scripture what it is, the wisdom, the counsel, or more accurately stated, the divine meaning revealed in Scripture.³⁵ This can be designated the internal forma, the inspired meaning, the divine thoughts of God's mind concerning His mysteries and those thoughts conceived in eternity for our salvation. These thoughts are those communicated to us in Scripture.³⁶ These divine mysteries are made known therein that salvation might be known, giving as much as is sufficient unto salvation.

The forma externa has been understood by Koenig to designate the character of the language, idiom and style and thereby having reference to the original character of the primogenic texts of Hebrew and Greek.³⁷

The grammatical and outward meaning of the Word of God can be called the forma as it is a word.³⁸ The forma externa can be grasped and understood by any man and communicated, in contrast to Pietism which asserted

³⁵Preus, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁶Ibid., p. 14.

³⁷Adolf Hoenecke, Ev. Luth.-Dogmatik (Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), I, 13.

³⁸Preus, op. cit., p. 15.

that only the regenerate could communicate the same. As for the forma interna, only the truly regenerate can comprehend the meaning and embrace it. This is not to divorce the interna and externa so that each operates in exclusive independence of the other. In stressing this fact, Pieper says that the Gospel and God's Word as the proper object of theology should be studied with this axiom in mind: οὐδέὲν ἄτερον γραφῆς. ³⁹

To communicate God's truth accurately, the theologian should grasp both the forma interna and the forma externa of God's revealed Word, though the designation Word of God refers more properly to the inner or spiritual meaning. This inspired sense makes Scripture what it is, the Word of God. ⁴⁰

The apparent indiscriminate use of Scripture and supernatural revelation is not a radical contradiction. This is because Scripture is regarded as a species of the genus revelation. ⁴¹ Supernatural revelation has been narrowed to Scripture as a result of the completion of the canon and cessation of immediate revelation. Objective revelation, that which has been revealed, is to be sought only in Scripture today. ⁴² For this reason Pieper can say that heaven and earth are bound together through Scripture which we can then hold fast as God's own Word; the result of this binding together is that when Scripture speaks, God also speaks. ⁴³

³⁹F. P[ieper], "Drei Merkmale der rechten Theologie," Lehre und Wehre, LXXV (October, 1929), 291.

⁴⁰Preus, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 2.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 219.

The materia of Scripture is understood in two ways. First, the materia ex qua refers to the letters, syllables, words and phrases which together constitute Scripture.⁴⁴ Secondly, the materia circa quam refers to the precepts and doctrines contained in Scripture in general. In more popular usage it appears that the materia circa quam and the forma interna have been identified. And again, the materia ex qua has been popularly identified with the forma externa; thus the material principle is understood commonly to refer to the centrality of the doctrine of justification. The Scripture is called the formal principle. No matter which set of definitions is employed, this fact should be borne in mind when reference is made to Scripture:

"By the term Scripture," he [Gerhard] says, "we do not mean the outer form or sign, that is, the particular letters, the act of writing the words with which the divine revelation has been written down, so much as the matter itself and the thing signified, as that which is meant and designated by the writing, namely, the Word of God which informs us about His essence and will."⁴⁵

It is clear from Gerhard's emphasis that only in an improper sense does the term materia designate the Word of God.⁴⁶ The term "Scripture" necessarily includes the materia but refers especially to the internal forma. There is a method of solving the apparent confusion existing between the more ancient understanding and the more recent. In precise terms the modern use is not speaking of Scripture per se, but of Christianity. The formal principle of Christianity would be the sola scriptura, and the sola gratia the material principle. The more ancient usage defines

⁴⁴Preus, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 16.

Scripture according to its form and material; the more current usage defines the Christian faith according to its form and material. For this reason our discussion will be using the more ancient terminology and will be referring to Scripture primarily.

The forma of Scripture remains constant while the materia, the outward mode of expression, may change, even as a stamp on a coin may communicate the same image while the material of the coin may vary from copper to gold. With this emphasis in mind Pieper can properly say, "Whatever is God's Word in Greek, is God's Word also in German and English if only the German or the English is a faithful translation of the Greek."⁴⁷

Naturally, the forma must remain subject to the original texts.⁴⁸

Purpose of Supernatural Revelation

The purpose of revelation both according to its species as the written Word of God and its genus is the same.

The purpose which theology is to accomplish in man after the Fall is to save men from eternal damnation, incurred by every member of the human race, or to state it positively, to lead men to eternal salvation ($\sigma\omega\tau\epsilon\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ salus aeterna).⁴⁹

A second reason for God's revelation in the Word of the Apostles and Prophets is to deliver us from the bondage of our own false notions in matters pertaining to our salvation.⁵⁰ Though the purpose here

⁴⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 346.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 345.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 103.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 5.

specified seems to be totally "other worldly," Pieper rebukes such adverse criticism as voiced by Ingersoll and Voltaire, saying that only the Church is concerned for the other world.⁵¹ False notions concerning the depth and extent of the will and law of God are dispelled; these can only be erased by revelation.⁵²

With the further revelation of the law, particularly the First Table, the Gospel is set forth, something which could never have been conceived by the greatest of minds.⁵³ The spiritual meaning of Scripture can be communicated according to its forma, in the spoken absolution, the preaching of the Gospel, and the sign of the expressed Word.⁵⁴ For this reason it can be said that revelation stood central in Pieper's thought and inspiration remained subordinate. Therefore, to charge Pieper with a faulty fundamentalistic understanding of Scripture would be a disregard of the facts.

The results of God's revelation in His Word are enjoyed by the Christian already in this life. One theme emphasized by Pieper is the certainty and abiding nature of the Christian faith. Faith to be certain and enduring must by its very nature be saving faith.

According to Scripture, saving faith is faith in the remission of sins for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, faith in the grace of God, who justifies the sinner without the deeds of the Law, by faith.⁵⁵

⁵¹F. P [ieper], "Das Christentum als Jenseitsreligion," Lehre und Wehre, LXVII (January, 1921), 1-7.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 21.

⁵⁴F. P [ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (April, 1925), 129.

⁵⁵Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 81.

Faith and understanding are correlative to God's revealed Word; Christian understanding always presupposes divine revelation. The Christian is dependent on such revelation and able to progress only as far as the revealed Word leads him.⁵⁶ With faith and understanding there is conviction wrought by the Word itself (fides divina); the result is sure and absolute certainty.⁵⁷ Such understanding closely approximates that of Gerhard who describes the finis internus as informatio hominum ad salutem aeternam.⁵⁸ "Intermedius ac proximus finis est vel internus, informatio hominum ad salutem aeternam vel externus, ipsa beatitudinis sive vitae aeternae consecutio. . . ."

The security and certainty of faith which results from one's appropriating for himself the forgiveness of sins is an important God-given product and result. This certainty can only result from the Gospel. Pieper points out that though man can come to a limited knowledge of the Law apart from mediate revelation, the Law's demands and accusations are not human inventions, but God's demands and judgment.⁵⁹ An act of the will can remove these demands as little as man can erase the universe which impinges upon him. The Gospel is not human thought but rather God's Word. In the Gospel God speaks of Christ's fulfilling the Law, redeeming man from the curse of the Law. By the Gospel God takes out of our hearts and consciences the condemnation and writes in its place the proclamation

⁵⁶F. P[ieper], "Der Stand der christlichen Kirche am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (April, 1902), 98.

⁵⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 108.

⁵⁸Joh. Guilielmi Baieri, op. cit., p. 37. Gerhard's Exeges locc. th. Proem. par. 26.

⁵⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 332-33.

of release, sealing it in our hearts and consciences.⁶⁰ This sealing is the assurance of salvation. The result of revealed theology is radically different from the uncertainty of humanly-generated religions.⁶¹

Inspiration

The causa efficiens of Scripture and the causalitas causae are two great concerns of Pieper. His stress on the latter is an even more recurrent theme. Gerhard states that the author of Scripture, the causa efficiens scripturae principalis, is the true God in one essence and three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.⁶² Pieper sees a proof of this in the Messiah who fulfilled the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament.⁶³ If the Old Testament needed to be fulfilled, as Jesus claimed, then it is not merely the word of man but God's Word, the very Word of the omnipotent and omniscient, great and majestic Lord Himself.

As Scripture has but one originator, so also theology has God as its principium essendi, the first cause of theology.⁶⁴ God is the fountainhead, the beginning and end. Commenting on this fact, Friedrich Bente remarks that the mouth or word of God Himself is the source out of which the Christian receives doctrine.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶² Preus, op. cit., p. 28.

⁶³ Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 224.

⁶⁴ Preus, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶⁵ F [riedrich] B [ente], op. cit., XLVIII (December, 1902), 361.

The causalitas causae as a term denotes the manner by which God chose to be author of Scripture. If one insists that only the man who writes out by hand each and every word is an author, then it can be said that God did not write a book. But if one can remain author, though the act of writing is not performed by his hand, then God can truly be the author of Scripture. It is inspiration which gives Scripture its forma or divine character. Inspiration meant for Pieper three chief concerns as contained in the following definition:

It [inspiration] connotes a communication of the content of Scripture (suggestio rerum), a communication of the words (suggestio verborum) and the urge (impulsus), or, which is the same thing, the command, to write (mandatum scribendi).⁶⁶

In Pieper's estimation any understanding of inspiration which did not embrace the suggestio rerum, the suggestio verborum, and mandatum scribendi was not only illogical but foolish.

Inspiration must of necessity include the communication of the content and subject matter; reduction of inspiration to this aspect alone, Realinspiration or Personalinspiration, does not consider the predication of θεός πνεύματος, which is not man, nor things, but γράφει.⁶⁷ The suggestio rerum must also include the suggestio verborum since Scripture itself consists of words.

The very words of Holy Writ are of such extraordinary weight that St. Paul insists: "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting." 1 Tim. 6:3f.
[sic].⁶⁸

As for the third element, the mandatum scribendi, Pieper believes

⁶⁶Preus, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 217.

⁶⁸Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 235.

this to be a self-evident fact and with the dogmaticians is of one accord when they say, "Inspiration itself, by which the things were suggested that were to be set down in writing, implies the impulse of executing the act of writing."⁶⁹

Verbal and Plenary Inspiration

Pieper sees the continued usefulness in the expressions "verbal" and "plenary" inspiration. The term "verbal" is useful in countering false notions concerning inspiration. As for the limitation of inspiration to the suggestio rerum or people, Pieper says,

But all these ideas are stupid as they are anti-Scriptural. In 2 Tim. 3:16 (sic) it is expressly stated: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." But Scripture does not consist of "persons" or "things," [in contrast to Realinspiration] but of words, as every one must admit. For this reason we must stoutly maintain the verbal inspiration of the Bible. The same proof is supplied by 2 Pet. 1:21, where we are told that the "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." From this passage we conclude that the holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost not only to think and meditate, but also to speak, that is, to express themselves in words.⁷⁰

This does not express a mechanical idea of inspiration as has been conjectured and stated in the 1926 edition of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: "[verbal inspiration] extends the inspiration to every word, which is held to have been dictated by the Holy Spirit."⁷¹

In view of this improper usage, James Oliver Buswell gathered data

⁶⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 225.

⁷⁰Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 234.

⁷¹James Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, c. 1962), I, 187. Buswell accurately quoted the Webster reference.

showing that apart from a few who attach a mechanical theory to the term, good authorities avoided such implication.⁷² The data was then submitted to C. and C. Merriam Company and as a result, direct or indirect, the objectionable phrase was omitted in the 1934 publication. For Buswell, "verbal" refers to the extent of inspiration, not the mode; that is, every word is the Word of God and every word is true.

Pieper must reject, as does Buswell, the idea of Woerterinspiration or pure mechanical inspiration. Pieper recognizes full well that the materia is previous to inspiration. Because Scripture is made up of human language, letters, and syllables, it is in this respect no different from any other book.

God could not have used his own divine style to speak to us; for we should not have been able to comprehend it. This truth is made evident in 2 Cor. 12:4, [sic] where the Apostle tells us that he "was caught up into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter," that is to say, among men here on earth.⁷³

Scripture on this account does not consist of thoughts suspended in the air, but rather of words, written words or $\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\hat{\eta}$. With Reu's statement Pieper is in complete agreement.

Only by means of the word does it [the thought] [sic] receive its value for others, for whom the thoughts do not exist until they have been expressed in words. Thus also the operation of the Holy Spirit only upon the thoughts of the prophets and apostles would have been insufficient; it must also include the word in order to be inerrant reproduction of the inspired thoughts.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 244.

⁷⁴F. P[ieper], "Warum glauben wir der Heiligen Schrift? oder: Wie wird uns die Heilige Schrift eine goettliche Autoritaet?," Lehre und Wehre, LXVIII (June, 1922), 166. Pieper quotes from Lehre und Wehre, LXVII (1921), p. 307. Here the original source is Dau's Book of Life.

Both Reu and Pieper would give no place to such a position as this: "It is not their words that are inspired--as one might say perhaps of 'automatic writing'--it is the men who are inspired."⁷⁵

The primary thing for Pieper, as for the dogmaticians, is that the forma, the divine sense expressed in human language, be truly God's meaning, the meaning God wished to be communicated. This must be preserved at all costs; reduction of inspiration to mere things or men would not insure that the sense be divine; in fact, the sense would remain purely human as a result. With Quenstedt Pieper adds,

The Apostle does not say: "Everything in Scripture, πάντα ἐν γραφῇ, θεόπνευστος, but "All Scripture, πάντα γραφῆ, θεόπνευστος." in order to show that not only the things written about, but also the writing itself is θεόπνευστος. And whatever is said of the whole Scripture must of necessity be understood also of the words, not the most insignificant part of Scripture. For if one little word occurred in Scripture that is not suggested or divinely inspired, it could not be said that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."⁷⁶

Because of this emphasis Scripture's inspiration for Pieper always remained a "Word inspiration," never a words inspiration.⁷⁷ To such a mechanical theory as implied in Woerter inspiration, Pieper answers in the words of Ebeling, "The Bible does not contain 'Woerter' (disconnected words) like a dictionary, but 'Worte' in a certain connection and sense."⁷⁸

Clearly plenary inspiration as well as verbal is saying that the forma is truly God's Word. Plenary inspiration denotes the extent of

⁷⁵C. H. Dodd, The Authority of the Bible (New York: Harper & Brothers, c. 1929), p. 30.

⁷⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 218.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 223-34.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 234

inspiration. "If the question is asked, 'How far does the inspiration of the Bible extend?' We emphasize the word all and declare without reservation: 'All Scripture is given by divine inspiration.'⁷⁹

Holy Spirit as Author

For Pieper whatever is a part of Scripture is eo ipso divinely inspired. It is violence to exempt portions of Scripture from the act of inspiration because historical accounts are interwoven with the geographical and scientific data as are events known to the writers.⁸⁰ Scripture is not partly human and partly divine.⁸¹ One must say that Scripture is not merely Isianic, Johannine, Petrine, or Pauline, but God's Word and God's doctrine. Scriptural doctrine and Christian doctrine cover one another completely and are coextensive throughout. With Quenstedt he says,

Certainly not only first-class matter, but also second- and third-class matters were in the very act of writing immediately dictated and breathed into the holy amanuenses by the Holy Spirit, so that they would be attested by these and no other circumstances, in this and no other mode or order.⁸²

It is clear that for Pieper inspiration included the facts of experience known to the authors of Scripture. If inspiration did not include these matters, inspiration in such cases would be reduced to mere

⁷⁹Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 238.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 237-38.

⁸¹F. P[ieper], "Welche Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl passt in die Einheit der christlichen Lehre hinein?," Lehre und Wehre, I (November, 1904), 481-82.

⁸²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 220-21. Quenstedt's Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum (I, 98).

guidance or direction. Pieper agrees with the dogmaticians that mere guidance in such cases would merely produce inerrant human word, but never could it be regarded as divine.⁸³

Since Pieper includes in inspiration those matters known to the authors by experience, it is clear that Pieper would not equate inspiration with revelation. An equation would result in a bifurcation of Scripture into previously unknown matters and known data; that which was not previously known to the author is inspired and that only if revelation and inspiration are equated. Revelation in Biblical use is the making known of a truth; in this sense it may take the form of a propositional truth or it may be communicated in an experience from which propositional truth can be derived and inferred.⁸⁴ This can be illustrated by the person of Christ, who was not hated for His physical appearance and stature; only when He uttered propositional truth about Himself, making Messianic claims in acts or words, did Christ gain for Himself disciples or enemies. Quenstedt points to the difference between revelation and inspiration when he says that revelation can come before writing while inspiration is concomitant with writing and part of the writing itself.⁸⁵ Divine inspiration could be called revelation in circumstances when it is also a manifestation by which the facts were written down and again revelation and inspiration concur and coincide in the same writing.⁸⁶ From these observations it can be said that Scripture can be called

⁸³Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., pp. 236-37.

⁸⁴Buswell, op. cit., p. 183.

⁸⁵Preus, op. cit., p. 30.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 31.

revelation but revelation cannot be equated with Scripture as if this is the only revelation ever given.

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the author and writer of Scripture is one consideration which is the most controversial. It is controversial because for many there are but two alternatives in this regard, either one must accept a "mechanical view" of inspiration or completely abandon Scripture as a reliable and truthful source of revelation. Pieper rejects both of these as false alternatives, the former having never been taught by the Lutheran dogmaticians and the latter completely untheological.

Just as the Holy Spirit employed the style of the various writers, so also He made use of the historical knowledge, which they had acquired through their own experiences, their own research, or through instruction given them by others.⁸⁷

There should be no rejection of the terms recorders, notaries, scribes, amanuenses, so long as the point of comparison remains, namely, that these men were God's instruments in composing Holy Scripture, that is, the writers did not write their own Word but God's Word.⁸⁸ Christoph Luthardt constructs a false point of comparison when he states that the old doctrine of inspiration meant that all mental activity of the writers was excluded so that only their hands were active in writing.⁸⁹ This problem proposed by Luthardt could not have been invented if the predicative use of the word "inspiration" was continually borne in mind. The word θεόπνευστος has as its object Scriptures and not men, showing

⁸⁷Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., 246.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 242.

⁸⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 232.

thereby that Scripture as God-breathed is the very Word of God, the product of His creative action.⁹⁰ As God's Word and not merely human, Scripture is as God's Word an organ of understanding, creating faith and testifying of its own truth.⁹¹ Because Scripture is God's Word, it is also infallible, inerrant and unable to be broken. Though Pieper often refers to John 10:35 to prove this assertion, it is not an improper usage since the divine activity of inspiration continued in the New Testament times forming with the Old Testament a unity; the consequence of that unity is that God's Word and Scripture are identical.⁹² This identification is not a reversal of the distinction made between revelation and inspiration; revelation beyond that recorded includes personal encounters, Urim and Thummin, dreams, riddles, immediate illumination and the hypostatic revelation in Christ.⁹³

Doctrine of Inspiration is Scriptural

It is important now to see where Pieper has led us and to see if he has departed from his first separation of the two principia. Is the division of the principia according to their individual purposes and effects merely a task unrelated to the rest of theology proper?

It is consistent for Pieper to derive, as did the dogmaticians, his doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture from Scripture itself and it

⁹⁰ Ibid., 218.

⁹¹ F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (May, 1925), 129ff.

⁹² F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (August, 1925), 282ff.

⁹³ Preus, op. cit., p. 31.

alone. Pieper remarks that Walther was also aware that the investigation of philosophical questions has no part in the consideration of theology, since theology is concerned only with the contents of Holy Scripture in its own sense.⁹⁴ In contrast to science, theology operates only with a verbal principle, the mouth and Word of God being the source from which the Christian receives doctrinal content.⁹⁵ Doctrine does not then come from one's own experience but rather from the searching of Scripture to see what Christ commanded. The inerrant character of Scripture is not the result of a theological conclusion but a Scriptural one. The outsider might charge that this is an argument in a circle or a begging of the question. Scripture says it is God's inerrant Word and that proposition can only be true if Scripture tells the truth. But this is no logical non sequitur for Pieper, because such questioning is to apply the medium of the principium naturae to a principium to which it has no reference. Scripture must be permitted to testify of itself because it is the principium.

It is because Pieper carefully distinguishes the principia that he could simply set forth the Scriptural doctrine concerning that principium theologiae without feeling apologetic or illogical. Rather than being uncomfortable in formulating the doctrine of Scripture from Scripture, he is content and consistent with the principium itself.

The Scriptural references are traditional in Lutheran dogmatics. II Timothy 3:15 shows that it is inspiration which gives Scripture its

⁹⁴F. P[ieper], "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXIV (April, 1888), 100.

⁹⁵F[riedrich] B[ente], op. cit., XLVIII (December, 1902), 361.

properties. Pieper can then say that Scripture is $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ because of its being $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\pi\upsilon\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$.⁹⁶ II Peter 1:21 shows that the Spirit moved men not merely to think and cogitate, but to write, showing the presence of the mandatum Dei. Pieper recognizes that the writers may not have been aware at all that their writing would ultimately become the source and norm of doctrine for the Christian Church for all times.⁹⁷

This requirement would be as little necessary as Caiaphas' recognition of his prophetic utterance or Balaam's ass understanding what it spoke.⁹⁸

The promises of Christ concerning Pentecost gave the Apostles and Paul absolute authority and the promise that the Spirit would guide them into all truth. This did not mean they could not err in practice or sin, as did Elias, Jonah, Paul and Barnabas, but it did mean their doctrine was not human but God's Word.

Christ's example in the temptation experience is of vital importance, for not only does it show how temptation is to be averted but how every controversy ought to be settled.⁹⁹

Christ places His disciples and all Christians on solid footing and sure ground when He says,

"So ihr bleiben werdet an meiner Rede ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\hat{\omega}\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega\ \tau\hat{\omega}\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\hat{\omega}$). . . so werdet ihr die Wahrheit erkennen." In dieser Aussage Christi ist ein Doppeltes ausgesprochen. Erstens, das es eine Wahrheitsgewissheit gibt. Dies est ausgesagt in den Worten: "Ihr werdet Wahrheit erkennen." Wahrheitsgewissheit bei uns Menschen,

⁹⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 307.

⁹⁷F. P [ieper], "Die Lehre von der Inspiration unter den Baptisten," Lehre und Wehre, XXXII (May, 1886), 145-49.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 234-35.

kommt, naemlich so, das wir an Christi Wort bleiben, εἰς ὑμῶν
 μένῃτε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ.¹⁰⁰

The consequence of this promise of Christ is that Scripture is a sure, firm and indestructible foundation of Christian faith. This is extremely practical and not merely theoretical in that no error or weak point exists therein.¹⁰¹ Secondly, only a firm foundation can produce subjective certainty.

Pieper saw in the High Priestly prayer a blessing and stamp on the Words of the Apostles as well as reference to the coming closing of the canon.¹⁰² The promise is that all men who come to faith until judgment day will come to faith through the Word of the Apostles.

The question is asked if Pieper would discount tradition. In this regard Pieper is thoroughly practical, replying that authentic tradition can only be found in the Word of the Apostles and Prophets.¹⁰³ The true and certain source of theology can only be found in Scripture; it is God's authentic letter to mankind, not only the Word spoken in the Old and New Testament but also the Written Word.¹⁰⁴ Like nature, Scripture is a divine fact in the world; like the sun, moon, and stars, Scripture makes no accommodation to suit our theories.¹⁰⁵ It is to be considered

¹⁰⁰F. Pieper, "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 3.

¹⁰¹F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (August, 1925), 282.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁰³F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (January, 1926), 1ff.

¹⁰⁴F. P[ieper], "Rede zur Eröffnung des neuen Studienjahrs," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (November, 1926), 321ff.

¹⁰⁵F. P[ieper], "Schriftauslegung und Analogie des Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LII (November, 1906), 483.

on its own grounds and terms because it is such a divinely-given fact; whatever will be learned concerning that given fact must logically come from the given fact itself. This basic distinction with the necessary limiting of the principium naturae shows Pieper's understanding of the principium theologiae.

Pieper and Walther's Principium

For approximately nine years from 1878, when Pieper was called to the Seminary, to 1887 when Pieper became president, Walther and Pieper were engaged in joint service at the Seminary in St. Louis. Both men were frequent contributors to Lehre und Wehre, with Pieper's first general contribution in approximately July, 1880.¹⁰⁶

In connection with the sesquicentennial of Walther's birth there appeared a great many commendatory articles on the theology and contributions of Walther to Lutheranism and the Church. Articles of this nature appeared previously under the authorship of Francis Pieper. These articles appeared chiefly in Lehre und Wehre with the title, "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe." The articles not only exhibited Walther's contributions but defended Walther against the unfair criticism leveled at him due to his prominence in the Gnadenwahlstreit.

Concerning the two principia cognoscendi Walther's "Vier Thesen über Das Schriftprincip" present his position in this respect, treating therein the limits of the principium naturae and the reason for the existence

¹⁰⁶F. P[ieper], "Antikritisches, nebst einigen Eroerterungen ueber die Frage, welche Schriftstuecke von Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen und Melanchthon dem Kurfuersten von Sachsen zu Torgau ueberreicht worden seien," Lehre und Wehre, XXVI (July, 1880), 208-14.

of a separate and distinct principium theologiae.¹⁰⁷ Though Walther operates with a more current use of terminology, regarding the formal principle of theology as being Scripture and the material being the doctrine of justification, he still holds that the principium theologiae is πεῶγον, ἄμεσον, ἀναπόδεικτον, ἀυτόπικτον, ἀνυπεύθυνον, and ἀνατίρητον. Gerhard's dictum remains for Walther, Unicum theologiae principium est verbum Dei. Implicit as well as explicit doctrine is truly the Word of God.

For Walther false principia having no relation to theology are reason, tradition, new revelations and even enlightened reason. Scripture is not to be made coordinate with the consensus of the Fathers, the first four centuries of theology, or the symbols. Such coordination is nothing but subordination for Walther. Theology's Erkenntnisprincip is to be understood as being Holy Scripture. This principium is necessarily perfect and sufficient to bring one to the knowledge of salvation and to faith. The grammatical sense of Scripture is clear so that even the unbeliever can understand Scripture, that is, according to its externa forma.

Though Walther's edition of Baieri's Compendium reveals that Walther was thoroughly at home with the dogmaticians, he did not adopt for his own the classic use of the terms forma and materia. This does not place Walther in the camp of the Fundamentalists. Walther's theological roots reached further than the dogmaticians. Pieper quotes Walther as saying,

Moreover they do not know us, who call our theology the theology of the seventeenth century. As highly as we treasure the immense

¹⁰⁷ Lehre und Wehre, XIII (April, 1867), 97ff.

work, which the great Lutheran dogmaticians of this period accomplished, it is not really they to whom we returned, but above all it is our precious Book of Concord and Luther, in whom we have recognized that man whom God chose to be the Moses of His Church of the New Covenant. . . . [translated]¹⁰⁸

Pieper joins with Walther in saying that for the present day there is no other source of theology than the Written Word of God as contained in Scripture.

Der Theolog muss sich, sagt Luther, so an das blosse Schriftwort haengen, wie eine Schling pflanze sich am Baum festhaengt. So stellte sich auch Walther, trotz der vielen Zitate aus den Schriften der alten Theologen, in seinem Herzen und Gewissen auf das blosse Schriftwort ohne Auslegung.¹⁰⁹

In reply to those accusing Walther of being a mere repristination theologian, Pieper calls him simply a Scriptural theologian.¹¹⁰ For Pieper the measure of a theologian is his being only and thoroughly Scriptural; any departure from the principium to accommodate reason, scientific theology, or tradition, negated Pieper's calling him a theologian. Though Walther's prestige in the world of theologians, commentaries and systematic works did not elevate him above his contemporaries, Pieper saw him as being pre-eminent in that he remained a true theologian. With such an individual as Franz Delitzsch Walther could be compared without hesitation. The reason Pieper could compare Walther with Delitzsch was that, although Walther had not written a single commentary, he did not subtract from the principium as Delitzsch did in the doctrine of

¹⁰⁸"Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXIV (September, 1888), 267. Translated by author.

¹⁰⁹F. Pieper, Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913), p. 66.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

inspiration, creation, the person of Christ, and the doctrine of the Church.¹¹¹

With both Walther and Pieper inspiration is a "touch-stone." It is inspiration which makes Scripture what it is, God's Word. Pieper in agreement with Walther says that the doctrine of inspiration must stand, or else the truth will fall and with it the divinity of Holy Scripture and consequently the whole Christian religion and the Church.¹¹² When the doctrine of inspiration falls, then all certainty falls. The replacement of certainty with the doctrine of Selbstbewusstsein would bring only disaster to the Church.

For Walther the principium must remain inviolate and unmolested, else another ruler like that of the Papacy would arise in the Church.¹¹³ Because the principium is God's Word, it necessarily becomes the judge in all matters of doctrine. It is a source and norm as well. Pieper writes that for Walther only the canonical Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets could be the single source of all saving truth and, therefore, the only judge in all doctrinal controversies.¹¹⁴

Not only does inspiration make Scripture what it is, but what it is remains unique, distinct and radical in its content. As Walther writes in his Evangelienpostille, only in the Revelation of God do we learn of

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 66.

¹¹²"Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXVI (January, 1890), 11.

¹¹³F. P [ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVI (February, 1900), 35.

¹¹⁴"Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXIV (September, 1888), 265.

the justification whereby man can be saved and learn of redemption.¹¹⁵ The principium naturae reveals nothing of the Gospel, pointing only to the way of works. For Walther as Pieper the principia remain distinct, both as to purpose and as to result. When matters of science and theology overlap, when historical and scientific data overlap the Scriptural data, then for Walther the Biblical data must remain true and therefore incontestable. Human reason must remain within the limits of science and work with its given, the realm of nature and human experience. Because Scripture is God's Word, it bears the attributes of divinity; that is, it is without error even as Christ was without error.¹¹⁶ This accent Pieper stresses as well when considering the "human side" of Scripture.

Walther's Vorlesung on the doctrine of inspiration, given in December of 1885, occasioned the comparison of Scripture with the incarnation. As Christ was human without sin, so Scripture has human language without sin. The positing of error makes Scripture mere norma normata; Walther considers such charges the natural result of employing the rational principle in theology.¹¹⁷

All doctrine from Scripture is theological and God's Word. Whatever Scripture teaches is not an "open question" for Walther. It stopped being an "open question" when Scripture taught it.¹¹⁸ Genuinely "open questions" were those to which Scripture offered no solution. Such

¹¹⁵ Ibid., XXXVI (January, 1890), 11.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., XXXIV (July and August, 1888), 195-96.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 199-202.

questions would be the question of traducianism, the semper virgo and the complete destruction of creation at judgment according to its attributes or essence.¹¹⁹ These questions could in no way be compared with the Romanist doctrine of the immaculate conception, those evolved from the consensus of the Church or from the scientific principium of modern theology.

Pieper saw Walther as a champion of the doctrine of inspiration and a right understanding of the principium theologiae. Yet it cannot be said that Pieper simply borrowed Walther indiscriminately and inserted Walther's contribution into his own dogmatic endeavors. Pieper does not develop the defining of the principium naturae or theologiae as Walther does. Walther said that a principium cognoscendi is anything from which further knowledge proceeds.¹²⁰ Pieper does not develop the thought particularly that every discipline has a chief principle, be it metaphysics, physics, or naturalistic ethics. Though such development does not appear, Pieper draws just as rigidly the line of demarcation which separates the principium theologiae from the principium naturae.

Pieper and Quenstedt's Principium

Of the dogmaticians Quenstedt was by far the most frequently cited and employed by Pieper. The precision, lucidity, and unequivocal manner of Quenstedt must have appealed very much to Pieper. With Walther Pieper was combating a tendency and hypothesis that posited a progress in doctrine; progress in doctrine fit with the current emphasis on scientific,

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Walther, op. cit., p. 97.

historical, and political progress.¹²¹ The Church's doctrine had to wait for modern science and its method to formulate and establish new doctrine through the consensus of the Church or theologians. To both Walther and Pieper this was nothing but a Roman tendency which denied that the Church of the first century possessed all Biblical doctrine.¹²² In defense of the Scripture as the principium theologiae, Quenstedt said everything Pieper would say; and perhaps in view of Pieper's frequent citing of him, Pieper thought Quenstedt said it better when Quenstedt said:

In the canonical Scriptures there is found no falsehood, no misstatement, no error, not even the least, neither in the subject itself nor in the words, but in whole and part they are completely true in whatever they teach, whether this concern the doctrines of faith or of moral, history, or chronology, geography or genealogy; no want of information, no thoughtlessness or forgetfulness, no lapse of memory, can or may be ascribed to the penmen of the Holy Ghost as they wrote the Scriptures.¹²³

Pieper says this goes not one step beyond what Christ Himself said. A Brief Statement, a document for which Pieper was largely responsible, reveals many concerns which were once Quenstedt's. Pieper endorses Quenstedt when he says again, "quicquid s. Scriptura dicit, illud est infallibiliter verum, reverenter credendum et amplectendum."¹²⁴

A statement of Calov parallels very much the previous statement of Quenstedt.

¹²¹F. P [ieper], "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXIV (July and August, 1888), 196-98.

¹²²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 163.

¹²³Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., 241. Pieper quotes the Theologia Didactica-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum, I, 112.

¹²⁴Baieri, op. cit., p. 80. Theologia Didactica-Polemica sive Theologicum, P.I. c.3. s.2 f.48.

The principle of knowledge (principium cognoscendi), from which theological conclusions are to be deduced, is only this: whatever the Lord has said (dixit) or whatever God has proposed, ought to be believed reverently.¹²⁵

It is questionable if Calov has not departed somewhat from the position of Quenstedt or Pieper, but Hoenecke comments that Calov does not contradict either position. Though Calov speaks of the principium cognoscendi as that which is proposed and spoken, while Quenstedt speaks of the principium as being that which has been committed to writing, Quenstedt remains primarily concerned with the forma or the formal concept of revelation as does Calov.¹²⁶ Hoenecke concludes that no essential difference exists; both Calov and Quenstedt stood firm in testimony that Scripture was the only source and principium theologiae.

Pieper believed that Luther and Quenstedt were alike in regard to the principium, the only difference being that Luther was more earnest in his polemic than the mild-mannered Quenstedt.¹²⁷ Like Quenstedt, Luther held that every detail of geographical reference or historical data was correct.

In upholding the principium theologiae, Quenstedt rejects reason, enlightened or otherwise, tradition and new revelations, though willing to grant the possibility of revelations concerning matters of social life or conditions of Church or state.¹²⁸ For Quenstedt there was no dropping down from heaven of a Sacred Book. For Quenstedt and Pieper revelation

¹²⁵Hoenecke, op. cit., I, 216-17. Translated by author. Source is L. c., p. 68. Calov.

¹²⁶Ibid., I, 217.

¹²⁷"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 8.

¹²⁸Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 211.

did exist without a written record of the same.¹²⁹ Because an equation of inspiration and revelation would do Quenstedt an injustice, Pieper vindicates Quenstedt by stressing Quenstedt's emphasis on the "human side" of Scripture.

The relationship of the writer to the Spirit in Quenstedt's understanding was one of willingness and voluntariness. This relationship could not be equated with ecstasy nor could it be equated with a mechanical theory. Quenstedt expressly rejects the same. Though Quenstedt has been charged with setting forth a mechanical theory, implying the use of the writers was only a stenographic one, Pieper defends Quenstedt, saying one must bear in mind the point of comparison, namely, that any analogy has but one applied point of comparison.

Quenstedt says of the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New Testament: "Just as the Prophets and the Apostles were the mouth of God in speaking or preaching, so they also were the hands and pens of the Holy Ghost in writing. For, as the Holy Spirit spoke through them, so He wrote through them. For there is no difference as to the foundation of spoken Word and written Word. For this reason they were also called the amanuenses, the hands of Christ, the letterwriters, or clerks, or actuaries, of the Holy Ghost."¹³⁰

If all aspects of the comparison were applied, the picture would be one of simple mechanical inspiration; but faulty analysis and criticism has often beclouded and misrepresented Quenstedt and the dogmaticians, rejecting them without as much as an unbiased hearing. Faulty analysis of Quenstedt's point of comparison, if applied to Scripture in other instances, could yield strange results. Full application would be nothing

¹²⁹Ibid., I, 194.

¹³⁰Ibid., I, 231-32. Pieper quotes from Quenstedt's Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum, I, 80.

more than identity; the disciples who were to be like doves, would have to take up laying and hatching eggs in order to agree in all points of comparison in the picture of a dove.

To show that the writers were not robots but men, Quenstedt says:

As the holy writers spoke or wrote according to training or habit, either in simple language or in a more lofty style, so the Holy Spirit used them, for He wished to accommodate Himself to them and condescend to them.¹³¹

Quenstedt aided not only in the positive formulation and distinction of the two principia, but in thoroughness had done much of the groundwork for Pieper's polemic against the modern antithetical positions assumed in Pieper's day.

Pieper and Gerhard's Principium

Though not playing such a prominent role as Quenstedt or Walther, Gerhard deserves a place, nevertheless. Pieper notes the difference in method on the part of Gerhard and Quenstedt, the former being synthetic and the latter analytical, but Pieper believes this in no way changed their view of the principium.¹³²

The source of theology for Gerhard and Pieper is the same. One dictum of Gerhard Pieper used with such frequency that often Pieper did not bother to cite the author. The reference is that Scripture and God's Word ought not to be distinguished. To counter the modern positions, this refrain from Gerhard is used again and again: "Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum. Unicum theologiae principium est verbum

¹³¹Pieper, "The Holy Bible," op. cit., p. 244. Pieper quotes from Quenstedt's Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum, I, 109.

¹³²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 149.

Dei; quod ergo in verbo Dei non est revelatum, non est theologicum."¹³³

Walther adds to Gerhard's theses the fact that the principium theologiae is μόνον καὶ οὐκ ἐπίον, unicum, proprium, adaequatum et ordinarium, and that divine revelation comprehended in Sacred Scripture is the principium incomplexum.¹³⁴

The relationship of faith and Scripture is of like emphasis in Gerhard as in Pieper. Hoenecke's remark is relevant, saying that Gerhard proceeded from Scripture to the certainty of faith while Schleiermacher for one proceeded from Glaubensbewusstsein to the recognition of the divinity of Scripture.¹³⁵ Gerhard has not committed the error of making Scripture a depository or treasury which if taken in hand can be equated with faith, thereby denying the necessity of the same. Pieper counters that such as accuse Gerhard of this forget that the holding of an objective source does not mean a denial of faith.¹³⁶ For Gerhard as for Quenstedt the objective source of theology is a thoroughly practical thing which leads and confirms men in the faith which rests on the merit of Christ.

For Gerhard the quality that marks Scripture as God's Word alone is its inspiration; the word "Scripture" designates not so much the externa forma as the content or thing signified therein.

¹³³Schuessler, op. cit., p. 147. Gerhard is quoted from De Scriptura S., par. 7.

¹³⁴Walther, op. cit., 98.

¹³⁵Hoenecke, op. cit., I, 6.

¹³⁶"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVIII (February, 1892), 33-34.

By the term Scripture, . . . we do not mean the outer form or sign, that is, the particular letters, the act of writing and the words with which the divine revelation has been written down, so much as the matter itself and the thing signified, as that which is meant and designated by the writing, namely, the Word of God which informs us about His essence and will.¹³⁷

The important thing of Scripture is its message and content, its purpose and desired result. For this reason Gerhard can say that it is not of necessity that faith be based on a direct cognizance or reading of Scripture itself.¹³⁸

In defining what a principium is, Gerhard says,

A principium is believed on account of itself, not because of something else. A principium can be demonstrated a posteriori, but it cannot be proved by means of something older. In such a case it would not adhere to Scripture, that is, the Word of God. We do not believe Scripture because of the Church, that is, the witness of men, but because of itself, because it is the voice of God.¹³⁹

This is of like character to Walther's remarks that the principium be πρώτον , ἄμεσον , ἀναπόδεικτον , αὐτόπιστον , ἀνυπέσθονον , and ἀναρρέπνον , as Aristotle sets forth. Though Pieper never disagrees with this and adheres to what is being said by such definition, he never specifically adopts and expands on these explanations. The omission may be an intentional effort to avoid philosophical-like definitions, preferring Scriptural definition though both in this regard correspond to one another. Like Walther, Pieper saw the danger of a principium outside Scripture such as the analogia fide improperly used. Though Gerhard's

¹³⁷Preus, op. cit., p. 15.

¹³⁸Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 344.

¹³⁹Preus, op. cit., p. 104-05. Preus quotes from Gerhard's Loci Theologici, I, II.

contribution may sound philosophical in tone, Pieper says that Gerhard derived his doctrine of inspiration and all doctrine from Scripture alone.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 159.

CHAPTER III

TRADITIONAL ANTITHESES

Pieper and Traditional Calvinism

Though reference in detail to Calvin does not play a vital role in Pieper's defense of the principium, Luther's polemics do.

Though Calvinism produced firm defenders of the inspiration of Scripture in this country, a fact for which Pieper was thankful, he attacked the principium cognoscendi substituted in Calvinism. For Pieper Calvinism was inconsistent, setting forth Scripture as the principium cognoscendi and yet operating in the area of gratia universalis with a rational principle, making the true principium subject to reason.

In theory Calvinism upheld the Scriptural principle, but in practice was teaching the findings of a rational principle, the limitation of the gratia universalis. Scripture as the sole principium is not defended for its own sake but out of zeal for what it reveals, namely, the way of salvation and complete salvation in Christ. Calvinism not only was distorting the purpose and desired effect of Scripture, but was making it subject to another norm.

A simple explanation of the distance between Lutheranism and Calvinism such as Luthardt offered did not satisfy Pieper.

It has become the fashion to say that the difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran Church consists in this, that the Reformed Church "more exclusively" makes Scripture the source of the Christian doctrine, while the Lutheran Church, being more deeply "rooted in the past" and of a more "conservative" nature,

accepts not only Scripture, but also tradition as authoritative.¹

Such an understanding is but a fable and inaccurate. Not only is conformity to reason predicated in Reformed theology, but another principium is operative in immediate revelation.

In a sense Pieper did not radically differ from Calvin, who not only designates the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be "oracles," but expressly goes on to say that the Scriptures, including the historical matters, were given by the dictation of the Holy Spirit.² But Pieper felt Calvin to be self-contradictory in saying that sometimes the Evangelists misquoted the Old Testament.

Though Calvin openly embraced Scripture as the principium theologiae, Pieper believes that testing of this avowal of the principium will reveal the prominence given reason. The testing of the principium of Calvin consisted in seeing if Calvin's doctrine could be preached, prayed and lived.³

When one prays that the gracious will of God be done among us, he is praying that God's revealed will be done; when doctrine could not be earnestly prayed, it had ceased to be God's doctrine. In Pieper's estimation the doctrine of the limited atonement could never be earnestly prayed. Though Calvin confesses Scripture to be the principium, Calvin has departed from the doctrine of God's Word to the doctrine of limited

¹Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated and edited under the supervision of Theodore Engelder, W. F. Albrecht, and John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1950-1957), I, 25.

²Ibid., I, 274. Pieper gives as reference the Institutes, IV, 8, 6.

³Ibid., II, 48.

atonement. To pray that the limited atonement be fulfilled would mean that the Christian would be praying that men be damned that God's sovereignty may be exalted.⁴ This would be a thwarting of Scripture's purpose of enlightening, instructing, converting and sanctifying men. The purpose of God's gracious revelation in Scripture is to bring faith and comfort. It is this basic purpose that is in danger in the Calvinistic limited atonement. Pieper quoted Dr. Stahl, who writes in The Lutheran Church and Union: ". . . the Lutheran Church derives faith and comfort concerning the dispensation of Grace through the means and instruments, and the Reformed Church disputes them."⁵

The function and office of revelation is what is at stake with the employment of a rational principle. The function of Scripture is enlightening and bringing the gracious will of God to bear on the heart of man. This function is not entirely destroyed by Calvin, Pieper admits. For Pieper, the inconsistency lies in the preached Gospel. The first part of the inconsistency is that it is "preached." Official doctrine says saving revelation and the operation of the Spirit takes place apart from the outward Word and Gospel, the means of grace. The danger is that one be not grounded in faith and certainty, but that doubt may arise as a result of one's being placed on the sandy ground of self-determination, natural determination, one's own sensitivity concerning the grace of God.⁶

⁴F. P[ieper], "Die Dogmatik, die gebetet werden kann," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (May, 1927), 133-35. As references Pieper lists the Institutes, III, 24, 17, 15.

⁵F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (July, 1925), 254-55. Pieper quoted Stahl in German, which is then translated by author.

⁶F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (August, 1925), 288.

The separation of the Spirit from means touches the Sacraments and Scripture as well. Concerning the enthusiasts' inclination to separate Spirit and means,

Luther told them that they would have to desist from their own pratings and writings, unless, indeed, they were puffed up with the thought that "the Spirit could not come through the writings and spoken Word of the Apostles, but through their (the enthusiasts) writings and words He must come."⁷

The second inconsistency Pieper notes is that there is "Gospel." Calvin was not consistent with his doctrine of the limited atonement for he could neither proclaim it as Gospel nor pray it.

The Calvinistic restriction of the satisfactio vicaria to a part of mankind tends to make the rise of a congregation impossible. Still the Church is found among the Calvinists, for in practice the dire distress of souls struck down by the divine Law leaves the Calvinists no choice but to point these terrified souls to the universal promises of grace for peace and to abandon their self-devised gratia particularis.⁸

If Calvin were consistent in his separation of Spirit and Scripture, he would do well to keep silent and allow the Spirit to work lest he get into the way of the Spirit by his own bungling. But Calvin counsels in the Institutiones:

If we seek the paternal clemency and propitious heart of God, our eyes must be directed to Christ, in whom alone the Father is well pleased (Matt. 3:17). . . . Christ then, is the Mirror in which we should, and in which, without deception, we may, contemplate our election.⁹

Pieper is aware of the evil consequences following on the heels of preaching the gratia particularis.

⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 122. Pieper quotes from the Smalcald Articles, Concordia Triglotta, 495, 6.

⁸Ibid., III, 406.

⁹Ibid., II, 46. Reference is quoted in footnote as Institutiones, III, 24, 5.

Wherever the doctrine is taught that the grace of God does not exist for the greater part of mankind, every hearer, particularly the sinner convicted by the Law, must remain in doubt whether there is grace for him. But such doubt absolutely destroys faith.¹⁰

The overthrow of the gratia universalis according to a principium outside Scripture, namely, history and experience, completely undermines the purpose and effect of Scripture, that of bringing men to faith. It is experience that brought Calvin to the conviction that about twenty per cent would be saved; it is experience that says that God does not really desire the salvation of the lost.¹¹ Because such doctrine destroys faith, there should not be one Calvinist in faith nor a Reformed Church, but Pieper says the inconsistency is that the Gospel is preached.

Calvin's doctrine of the gratia particularis came not from Scripture, his avowed sola principium, but from exterior experience.¹² This rational principium belonged properly to the realm of nature and had no business serving as a source of theology. The axiom of experience is brought to bear in the new world by Charles Hodge. Though God shows Himself gracious toward all men, Hodge reached into the world of nature and experience to set forth the doctrine of gratia particularis. Charles Hodge can say then, "We must assume that the result is the interpretation of the purpose of God."¹³

¹⁰Ibid., p. 50.

¹¹Ibid., III, 499.

¹²F. Pieper, Zur Einigung der amerikanischen-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1923), p. 87.

¹³Ibid., p. 86. Quotation is taken from Hodge's Systematic Theology, II, 323.

Only improperly could Scripture be called the principium theologiae for the Calvinists since Scripture was made subordinate to reason. The depreciation of the means of grace is clear in Hodge's statement, "Efficacious grace acts immediately; Nothing intervenes between the volition of the Spirit and the regeneration of the soul; There is here no place for the use of means."¹⁴

Pieper felt that Charles Hodge had subdued the Calvinistic picture of the vindictiveness of God. Calvin would have God presented in the Gospel as merely a means of increasing the punishment and sorrow of the lost. Hodge does present to some degree a God with a more general gracious will. The position of Hodge remains basically that of Calvin in limiting the will and redemption of Christ. Hodge is not as crude as Calvin, who spoke about the colossal ignorance, childishness, and dullness of those who teach a gracious God in Christ for all men.¹⁵ Pieper sees in Hodge a soft-pedaled rejection of the gratia universalis.

Pieper leaves the problem presented by the gratia universalis and the sola fides unsolved. Hodge says there is a time when the Lutheran should stand with his hands over his mouth, but Pieper suggests that the order has been reversed in Calvinism.¹⁶ The Calvinist keeps silent when he should be proclaiming the Gospel and then speaks when Scripture is

¹⁴F. P[ieper], "Der Kraft des Evangeliums," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (March, 1928), 71. Pieper quotes Charles Hodge's Systematic Theology, II, 684, 685.

¹⁵F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (March, 1928), 71-72.

¹⁶"Gerathen Lutheraner angesichts der Schriftstellen, welche von der Praedestination handeln, in Verlegenheit?," Lehre und Wehre, XLIV (June, 1898), 161-62.

silent, contradicting Scripture left and right with his own constructions concerning the particular redemption and particular activity of the Spirit.

Though in many passages it [Scripture] teaches the gratia universalis (John 1:29; 3:16ff.; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4-6, etc.), they find the answer in the historical "result" or the historical "experience." Hodge: "We must assume that the result is the interpretation of the purpose of God."¹⁷

Though Hodge is not as caustic as Calvin, he must still call the gratia universalis illogical and untenable.¹⁸

It cannot be supposed that God intends what is never accomplished; that He purposes what He does not intend to effect; that He adopts means for an end which is never to be attained. This cannot be affirmed of any rational being who has the wisdom and power to secure the execution of his purposes. Much less can it be said of Him whose power and wisdom are infinite. If all men are not saved, God never purposed their salvation and never devised and put into operation means designed to accomplish that end.¹⁹

The principium theologiae is made subject to a human pattern and logic; reason and human experience are projected into the Revealed Word so that the Scripture is made subject to a pattern outside itself, making it less than a principium.

Another representative of the Calvinistic orientation in the United States is William Shedd. Though Shedd would divide Protestantism into two camps, Calvinism and Arminianism, such division is altogether logical; but it does not agree with the facts. The Formula of Concord, Article II,

¹⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 28. Pieper quotes Hodge's Systematic Theology, II, 323.

¹⁸F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (April, 1925), p. 97.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 98. Hodge's Systematic Theology, II, 323, is quoted.

sets forth both the sola gratia and the sola fide without granting the consequences.²⁰ Though illogical the principium cognoscendi must remain inviolate to any attempt to make it conform to the rules of logic. Pieper considers Shedd's problem with the Scripture's teaching the result of his earnestness to achieve harmony, an earnestness which exists a priori to Scripture.

Concerning Scripture itself Shedd is one of the few holding the doctrine of inspiration and the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Shedd compares Scripture's human character with the incarnation in which there was no necessity of sin or error. In spite of this commendable position, Pieper considers it still impractical when it comes to the doctrine of God's universal grace and will for man. Shedd's praise of Scripture is inconsequential when compared with his subverting its value in teaching a limited atonement. For Pieper even the synergist can teach the doctrine of inspiration. Though a theologian hold the doctrine, it is of little value if he in turn rejects the clear words of Scripture in favor of an extra-Biblical principium. There can be no claim of latent Fundamentalism in Pieper in this regard. He did not measure a theologian simply on the basis of a few brief formulations: the virgin birth, six-day creation, and inspiration. The fundamental article of faith is the center, the doctrine around which all others orbit and have their being.

Though Shedd says the Spirit is not bound to the Word of God, Pieper calls it fortunate that the Spirit is not bound to the words of Shedd, rather binding Himself to the Word whenever it is proclaimed.²¹ So it is

²⁰F. P [ieper], "Einige Tagebuchnotizen ueber alte und neue Lehrstreitigkeiten," Lehre und Wehre, L (July and August, 1904), 295-97.

²¹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III, 160ff.

that when the Reformed write, preach and proclaim the mercy of God in Christ, His reconciling sacrifice, the Spirit works in spite of their official doctrines. Those doctrines they must forsake in practice when troubled consciences demand the comfort of God's grace.

Pieper and the Westminster Confession

The Westminster Confession and the Thirty-Nine Articles enjoy a level of confessional status in much of Protestantism. The subscription may be quia or quatenus, but interpretation of the Westminster Confession and the Thirty-Nine Articles is a problem in itself.

The Presbyterian Church in America undertook revision of the articles in 1880 under the leadership of such men as Philip Schaff, William Shedd, and Charles Hodge. Hodge held that there should be no revision, allowing the articles to stand as they were. Shedd maintained a strict Calvinistic position, while Schaff tended to be Arminian.²² Though no revision took place, unrest continued within the Presbyterian Church. This was exemplified in the General Assembly of the Presbyterians which met in May of 1893 to reverse an earlier decision of the Presbytery of New York which had sanctioned the position of Charles Briggs. The General Assembly overruled the Presbytery's decision and suspended Charles A. Briggs from the Presbyterian ministry until he give satisfactory evidence of repentance. The question centered in the Church's principium and Scripture. Brigg's higher criticism had alienated him from the General Assembly. The application of the scientific norm had reduced Scripture to the position that

²²F. P[ieper], "Wie koennte die lutherische Kirche den Presbyterianern bei ihrem Streit ueber die Revision des Westminster Bekenntnisses zu Huelfe kommen?," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (June, 1893), 161-62.

it was no longer the source of theology. In defense of Scripture a certain Pastor Young of the General Assembly said,

The Bible as we now have it, in its various translations and versions, when freed from all errors and mistakes of translators, copyists and printers, is the very Word of God, and consequently, without error.²³

The position of the General Assembly was basically fruitless as far as Briggs was concerned, since he continued at Union Seminary because the Assembly had no control over the Seminary.

Pieper was generally enthusiastic over the General Assembly's action, its rejection of Briggs' position. Briggs held that Scripture contained errors but nevertheless was the infallible norm of faith and life.²⁴ In Pieper's estimation the General Assembly was better than most other sects. Pieper praised Dr. Joseph H. Lampe, a member of the prosecuting committee, for his brilliant defense of the doctrine of inspiration.

Though Pieper praised the Presbyterians for their efforts in stemming the tide of scientific theology, he still would address the vigilant element, saying,

You stand for the infallible divine authority of Scripture. But the infallible Scripture teaches also clearly and meaningfully what you deny, namely, the general grace of God and the general redemption through the merit of Christ.²⁵

In general, the Presbyterians adhere to the Westminster Confession which still says,

²³Ibid., p. 162. Pieper quotes Young's proposed resolution which he set before the General Assembly, but Pieper gives no source.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 165-66.

²⁵"Eine Einteilung der Amerikanischen Presbyterianer in drei Klassen," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (July, 1925), 277. Translated by author.

The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by or to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.²⁶

At the 1880 Assembly meeting a declaratory statement was set forth which for Pieper gave place to Arminian and Calvinist alike. Of historical worth is the fact that in 1938 further revision saw the omission of two references concerning the predestination of man to damnation.²⁷

An Evaluation

It can be said, if Pieper's analysis is correct, that Presbyterianism may not only have in its numbers Calvinists and Arminians, but theologians attempting to find some defensible ground between Arminianism and strict Calvinism. This multiplication is the result of the human element when it enters as a source, catalyst, and norm of doctrine. The complaint which prompted the recent revision was not that Scripture taught a gratia universalis per se. The revision grew out of a need to save Calvinism from the embarrassment of defending its own Gospel proclamation.²⁸

Earlier it was mentioned that there was variance in subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles as well as interpretation. Pieper saw the divorcement of the Spirit from the Word to be a simple creation of another source of theology, another principium. It is proposed that there are those adhering to the Thirty-Nine Articles who do not understand them in

²⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, II, 25. The footnote quotes the Westminster Confession.

²⁷Ibid., III, 495.

²⁸Ibid.

that manner. Current emphasis on dialectic logic has produced both equivocation and confusion among theologians and laity as to the source from which Christian doctrine is derived. Just where can one find God's Word? Taking one step from Calvin and one step from the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Westminster Confession, one can find various answers.

A recent comment is:

On the one hand, therefore, Calvin did not scruple to describe the Bible as "such written proof of the heavenly doctrine, that it should neither perish through forgetfulness nor vanish through error nor be corrupted by the audacity of men," with the result that for many of his disciples "truth came to be regarded as static and fixed, capable of being put into the pages of a book and handed down from generation to generation." On the other hand, Calvin was evidently not tied to a literalist view of Scripture, and for all his veneration of the letter of Scripture, he never regarded the Bible as a merely external standard of truth. As the Westminster Confession declares (article 5): "Full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority (of the Scriptures) is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."²⁹

Though John Huxtable seems to be affirming the objection of Pieper that Calvin was critical of Scripture, it is a question whether Huxtable legitimately equates the Confessional statement with what Calvin was attempting to say. The Westminster Confession talks of the Scripture as the infallible truth and therefore divine authority, affirmation of the same being made possible by the work of the Spirit. Huxtable would be more inclined toward an interpretation of John K. S. Reid, who says,

"The seat of their authority [Scripture] is outside themselves, in him to whom they are the attestation. Such authority as the Holy Scriptures possess is therefore a derivative and

²⁹John Huxtable, The Bible Says: What is the Authority of the Bible and How was it Inspired? (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1962), pp. 46-47.

conceded authority, imparted to them by him to whom they witness."³⁰

There is clearly more being said than the obvious; it is obvious that none would desire the "deification of Scripture," the equation of the principium cognoscendi and the principium essendi. But the emphasis on authority outside Scripture is to establish a faulty thesis which permits error and mistake in the principium cognoscendi. Both Reid and Huxtable have used the testimony of Calvin and the Westminster Confession to camouflage their own predilections. The Westminster Confession is not universally understood as Huxtable and Reid interpret it. James Oliver Buswell writes:

A warning must be given at this point. There have been those who have sought to distort these words from the Westminster Confession into a doctrine of nothing but the "inner light." I must insist that an honest study of the syntax of the sentence should make it clear that that to which the Holy Spirit bears witness in the collective spiritual consciousness of God's people is the authority and canonicity of the Scriptures. That of which we are said to be persuaded by the Holy Spirit is "the infallible truth and divine authority thereof." This same thought is borne out by paragraph ten of the same chapter of the Confession. "The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture."³¹

Buswell and Huxtable have a different appreciation of the Westminster Confession's article on Scripture. Buswell does not do injustice to the grammar of the Westminster Confession; perhaps Pieper could have exercised more charity before simply discounting it as a repetition of the "inner

³⁰ Ibid., p. 47. Huxtable quotes J. K. S. Reid's The Authority of Scripture, pp. 47, 54.

³¹ James Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), I, 198.

light." The question of Calvin's and Luther's understanding of the testimony of the Spirit and the means of grace poses no easy problem. Though Pieper tends to equate Calvin and the Zwinglian Schwaermer, such equation is far too easy a solution. John Theodore Mueller writes, "Luther therefore agreed with Calvin in rejecting 'heavenly prophets' and other 'swarmers' (as Luther called them) who boasted special revelations from God outside and apart from Scriptures."³²

Mueller says concerning Calvin's apparent separation of the Spirit from the Word, "Whereas Luther might be accused of 'mechanizing' the Word, Calvin might be charged with separating the Spirit from the Word. Against such misinterpretation of their doctrines both, however, protested."³³

Concluding his discussion of the individual accents of each, Mueller says, "Despite their differences, both Calvin and Luther firmly held to the canonical Scriptures as God's inspired Word to which everyone desiring to be saved must submit in willing and consecrated obedience."³⁴

Though the separation between Calvin and Luther may not have been as great as Pieper pictured it to be at times, the appreciation of the means of grace is still far greater in Lutheran theology than in the Reformed. The assertion that the testimony of the Spirit constitutes a second source of theology is one deserving more examination than has been

³²"The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures," Revelation and the Bible, edited by Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, c. 1958), p. 278.

³³Ibid., p. 277.

³⁴Ibid.

given it by Pieper. It is clear that a crass, blanket condemnation of the Reformed is an unfair criticism in view of the various interpretations placed on the Westminster Confession of today and the shift in doctrinal emphasis since 1880.

Pieper and Traditional Romanism

Two chief matters stressed by Pieper in his consideration of Roman Catholicism were: (1) its understanding and communicating of the Biblical forma or content; and (2) its substituting of another principium in place of Scripture. The question is in another sense the sola fide and sola scriptura principles of the Reformation.

A mere espousal of Scripture as being infallible, inspired, God's Word, is not enough if Scripture is not the one and sole principium theologiae. If Scripture is not alone, in Pieper's estimation it is no longer principium. Though Pieper was aware of various manners of regarding the manifold approaches to principium in Roman Catholicism, Pieper tended to reduce everything to its most common denominator, at the same time aware of the loss in communication resulting from such reduction.

Though Rome would grant that Scripture was infallible, Pieper saw the most serious threat to the Scripture in the fact that Rome called it a dark and obscure work.³⁵ This was nothing but pagan scepticism to grant an infallible source and then turn around and say it is dark at the same time. Rome's respect for Scripture does not hide the fact that it remains hostile to the full satisfaction of Christ. Bellarmine and other Jesuits readily admitted that Scripture was given by inspiration, yet

³⁵"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIII (January, 1887), 1-3.

felt compelled to deny that there was any compulsion or mandatum scribendi.³⁶ This confused thinking concerning Scripture is revealed in the aftermath of the famous Scopes trial. A certain anonymous Roman Catholic priest in a St. Louis paper criticized Bryan for understanding the Bible as the Word of God.³⁷ Apparently the priest was attacking Bryan's understanding which equated the Word of God with the King's English, the materia. Pieper restates the fact that the Roman Catholic priest is no less blameworthy for he is bound to a human translation as being "authentic," the Vulgate. Pieper says that the priest is not only inconsistent but more to be compared with the Jews and their Rabbinical traditions.

Though Rome denies the clarity of Scripture, it must go even further in saying that Scripture has no ability to authenticate itself, to nurture, and to produce faith. Pieper does not fault Rome for declaring Scripture to be infallible and God's Word. But Scripture as principium must have these attributes and be able to function as source and power. Pieper accents the fact that Scripture of itself without the Church can truly bring men to faith because it is God's Word, a living Word, sharper than a two-edged sword. It is a Word which the Spirit accompanies, as Dannhauer expresses it: "Derselbe Heilige Geist, der die Schrift eingehaucht hat (inspiravit), haucht sie wieder (respirat), so oft sie

³⁶F. Pieper, "The Holy Bible," What is Christianity? And Other Essays (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 238.

³⁷F. P[ieper], "Zur Evolution als 'feststehender Tatsache!'," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (September, 1925), 324ff. Pieper quotes briefly the anonymous priest but gives no mention of which St. Louis paper originally carried the article.

gehört, gelesen und in Gedanken bewegt wird."³⁸

Pieper cites the examples of John Gerson and Franz Junius (d.1602) as men coming to faith by reading and studying Scripture.³⁹

The real problem arises when Rome does not consider Scripture to be sufficient for the Church, making it insufficient for life and faith.

It is insufficient and in need of supplement and completion by oral tra-

dition.⁴⁰ Though this may be expressed as being but one source and not two, Pieper says it is really the Papacy that decides whether a tradition is to be regarded as Apostolic or not.⁴¹ This actually places the principle in the Papacy, making the Papacy the norm of doctrine and making Scripture subject to it.

Though Scripture is viewed as insufficient and dark, the traditional view of Scripture as God's Word is set forth in the Providentissimus Deus of Leo XIII, which says in part,

All the books and the whole of each book which the Church receives as sacred and canonical were written at the dictation of the Holy Spirit; and so far as it is from being possible that any error can co-exist with divine inspiration that not only does the latter in itself exclude all error, but excludes and rejects it with the same necessity as attaches to the impossibility that God Himself, who is the supreme truth, should be the author of any error whatsoever.⁴²

³⁸F. P[ieper], "Warum glauben wir der Heiligen Schrift? oder: Wie wird uns die Heilige Schrift eine goettliche Autoritaet?," Lehre und Wehre, LXVIII (June, 1922), 168. Pieper quotes the Baieri-Walther Compendium, I, 95.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 198-99.

⁴⁰F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 4-5.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 1ff.

⁴²Huxtable, op. cit., p. 32. Huxtable quotes from H. Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, p. 365 (79-83).

As for the relationship of tradition and Scripture, A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture says:

We must not, however, imagine Scripture and Tradition to be like two distinct reservoirs receiving the waters of divine truth from distinct and separate springs. There is in a sense but one source of revealed truth, viz., divine Tradition, by which is meant the body of truth handed down from the Apostles through the ages and contained in the doctrine, teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. Yet since a large and important part of that revelation was committed to writing both before and after the time of Christ, the Church is accustomed to speak of two sources of revelation, oral Tradition and Scripture--the written part of this Tradition--derives solely from the fact that it is the inspired word of God. . . . The two streams of oral Tradition and Scripture happily mix, for in the living magisterium of the Church these are living waters springing up into life everlasting. It is the Church, the holder of Tradition, that gives life to the dead letter of Scripture.⁴³

Further reading reveals that the one volume work has not basically departed from Rome's "traditional" view of Scripture. Scripture still remains a dumb book apart from the Church; it alone is the living voice, the infallible guide and teacher into Scripture which according to the Providentissimus Deus is wrapped in religious obscurity.⁴⁴

Pieper considers that in view of limitations on interpretation, its necessary agreement with the consensus of the Fathers, Tradition and the sancta mater ecclesia, Scripture cannot be considered Rome's source of theology. The living magisterium possesses the gift of interpretation; but Pieper notes that a certain Cardinal Gibbons in the book, Faith of Our Fathers, states that only the Pope has the true gift of interpretation

⁴³Ibid., pp. 33-34. Huxtable quotes A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, para. 1, p. 1., edited by Dom Bernard Orchard, et al.

⁴⁴W. Leonard and B. Orchard, "The Place of the Bible in the Church," A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, edited by Dom Bernard Orchard, et al. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953), p. 10.

and only he is an infallible interpreter.⁴⁵

It goes without saying that the Romish theologians, too, completely destroy the practical value of their profession of the inspiration of Scripture by assigning the authoritative interpretation of the Scripture to the Pope. The result of this exegetical method is that it is no longer God who through His Word, the Holy Scriptures, speaks to men, instructs, and rules them, but that the Pope--pretending to speak in the name of Scripture--subjects the Church and the State to his papal Ego.⁴⁶

Pieper shares one common element with B. Orchard and that is that there is only one tradition and that there is no real breach between Apostolic Word and oral tradition.⁴⁷ The Apostle Paul constructs no duality between his written and oral word, for each is the same as the other. Paul points out that there is to be no distinction, saying that the Thessalonian congregation ought to stand firm and hold the traditions they had been taught, orally or by epistle. John also states that that which he has seen and heard is the same as that which he has preached and written. Pieper's accent is that there is no essential difference between the contents of oral or preached or written Word as we have it in Scripture. Rome has created the difference, made the duality, in Pieper's estimation. Due to human weakness reliable and authentic oral tradition has not been passed on to us, but the written Word of the Apostles has; therefore only it can be the principium theologiae for today.

The rejection of the sola scriptura leads ultimately to the rejection of the sola gratia, the fundamental article of Scripture. The

⁴⁵"Schriftauslegung und Analogie des Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LII (November, 1906), 483-86.

⁴⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 276.

⁴⁷F. P [ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (August, 1925), 284.

Tridentine Council attacked the Lutheran doctrine of justification and made itself an enemy of the Church.⁴⁸ Disagreement on the doctrine of justification makes all other points of agreement between Lutheranism and Romanism meaningless. Though Scripture is greatly exalted, though grace is frequently mentioned, this does not mean for Pieper that Rome has suddenly turned Lutheran. Grace still means a gratia infusa, a quality placed into man so that grace is nothing more than sanctification and good works.⁴⁹ The doctrine of the Mass is also a denial of the sola gratia, though Pieper says that many believe in the Mass while still clinging to the sola gratia.⁵⁰

It is a question of great debate whether Pieper misread Romanism; a pointing to individual Roman theologians who seemingly deviate from the pattern set by Pieper proves nothing in this regard. A Catholic Commentary is actually a more apologetic work than many; yet it still places its feet in the mainstream of Roman Catholic tradition. Theoretical adherence is not enough for Pieper; theology is practical and whatever is not Biblical is not theological.

Pieper and Traditional Enthusiasts

The chief enthusiast of the Reformation was Zwingli. His rejection of the sacraments as means was coupled with a rejection of the Word of Scripture.⁵¹ Historic Zwinglian doctrine disappeared, but the tendency

⁴⁸Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 25.

⁴⁹F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (July, 1925), 256.

⁵⁰Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 87.

⁵¹Ibid., III, 127.

to shape the meaning of Scripture to fit human predisposition did not. Zwingli could reject the clear and obvious meaning of Scripture, labeling it as being merely figurative or tropological; this he could do so that Scripture would agree with what his faith demanded.⁵² This human element changed not only the doctrine of Christ and of the Sacraments, but even the doctrine of justification, the latter being held as long as possible. In the doctrine of the Lord's Supper the doctrine of the incarnation is at stake as well as the blessing of the Sacrament. Clear passages on the Sacrament were rejected for obscure ones. The resultant confusion Pieper describes by saying:

Even if we disregard the fact that it amounts to the demand that the Christians give up all of Scripture as source and norm of doctrine, since all pertinent Scripture passages in every doctrine have been contested, just imagine a number of theologians wanting to ascertain the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but from the outset binding themselves not to adduce as proof for the correct doctrine those texts of Scripture which treat of the Lord's Supper!⁵³

Consistent and radical Zwinglianism lives in Quakerism as fostered by Robert Barclay. Pieper indicated that the result or desired end of Quakerism was the true indication of what its principium really was. The result, the doctrine, the effect of Quakerism's principium was simply a religion for this life, a religion of works. Pieper could not even speak of fortunate inconsistencies in Quakerism. He mentions W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's Church in London, as claiming that Quakerism is the best religion in the world, the best of modern Christianity.⁵⁴ According

⁵²Ibid., I, 361.

⁵³Ibid., III, 335.

⁵⁴F. P[ieper], "Zeitgeschichtliche Notizen und Antworten auf Fragen von allgemeinem Interesse," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (March, 1928), 96.

to Inge's criterion he is correct, for Pieper considers that Inge himself had no more than a religion of moral instruction and ethics. Since this is Inge's religion, he can rightfully praise Quakerism.

Guenther's Symbolik supplied the bulk of polemic material employed by Pieper. Barclay's regard for the principium theologiae as it ought to be was strictly negative; Scripture was even less than irrelevant. When elements comparable with Christianity were generated within the Quaker setting, Pieper said these were still of human origin. To allow such humanly-generated doctrine means nothing less than an out and out rejection of the Scripture as the principium. This hard-as-flint stand is very much in keeping with Walther's understanding of the principium as that of the dogmaticians and Luther. Quakerism is unscientific in the sense that it rejects the one source, the only source of divine knowledge; secondly, it invalidates the whole purpose and goal of Scripture by strictly limiting its ability to speak divine truth and speak theologically.

Pieper and Traditional Liberalism

Harnack and Schleiermacher embodied the two main thrusts of modern liberalism which confronted Pieper. Harnack for one could not be classified with the then-current trend of theology because he rejected all the basic doctrines, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, and the vicarious satisfaction.⁵⁵

These open rejections were nothing but the results of Harnack's relentless search to discover the true kernel and center, the irreducible

⁵⁵F. Pieper], "Die Lehre vom freien Willen und von der Bekehrung innerhalb der Generalsynode," Lehre und Wehre, L (May, 1904), 193-95.

nucleus of the Christian faith. But having found what he thought to be the center, Harnack said:

I imagine that a few hundred years hence there will be found to exist in the intellectual ideas which we shall have left behind us much that is contradictory; people will wonder how we put up with it. They will find much to be hard and dry husks in what we took for the kernel; they will be unable to understand how we could be so shortsighted and fail to get a sound grasp of what was essential and separate it from the rest.⁵⁶

Pieper compares this endless quest to that undertaken by Lessing, who also had no understanding of the guilt of sin and redemption of this guilt; both proceeded to investigate the truth in an effort to possess it.⁵⁷

The dry husks that Harnack cleared away managed to carry away the heart of Christianity as well. The Johannine Gospel, the birth history of Jesus, the prophetic words of Jesus concerning His suffering and death are to be disregarded as meaningless and as mere insertions. St. Paul was mistaken in ascribing to Christ not only a human but a divine nature and in making the redemption of the human family somehow dependent on the person of Christ and His work.⁵⁸

Pieper sees Harnack's rejection of the atonement as being on the same plane as that of Rome, contending that such a doctrine would not make good and pious people. Harnack went even further than Rome in criticising Luther; Luther ultimately re-established the Church on the

⁵⁶ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 37. Pieper quotes Das Wesen des Christentums, 3rd ed., p. 35.

⁵⁷ F. Pieper, "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 3.

⁵⁸ F. Pieper, "Adolf Harnack," Concordia Theological Monthly, I (September, 1930), 654.

completely fatal basis of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.⁵⁹

In Harnack's theology the only gospel is the gospel of the Father who expresses love, mercy, grace, patience, and longsuffering. This gospel is to bring all men to the realization that they are God's children without the redemption.⁶⁰ Though the word "gospel" occupies a large portion of Harnack's works, Pieper rejects it without reservation as invalid because the central purpose and message of Scripture is destroyed and trampled on.

It seems almost superfluous to treat Harnack's principium in view of the rejection of God's message, but Pieper takes special care to treat of the matter because Harnack's influence demanded it.

The results have indicated that Harnack's principium was not Scripture; an examination of Harnack's methodology and a priori assumptions reveals that Scripture had no genuine importance for Harnack. Pieper was not alone in his attack on Harnack but some criticisms were not as direct as they should have been. Such an instance was Gussmann who writes in Alten Glauben, "Zum Kampfe wider Harnack," that in contrast to Harnack the Church is to be bound to the authority of the Son.⁶¹ Pieper is compelled to ask just where and how Christ exercises that authority in this world. Certainly such authority cannot be found outside the authority of His Word as Scripture states.

From where did Harnack find his essential and indestructible kernel? Though Harnack claims to have arrived at his doctrine out of unbiased

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 654-55.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 654.

⁶¹F. P [Pieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (February, 1902), 37-38. Pieper quotes Gussmann verbatim but gives no source reference.

historical research, Pieper considers it a mere deception for the Apostolic letters and Gospels were never given even the status of historical documents, which they truly were.⁶² Out of his a priori assumptions Harnack rejected anything Christological in character. Pieper is correct when he says that not history, but a previously formed concept created Harnack's kernel.

The formed concept which dictates Harnack's results is that Christianity is essentially moralism. Scientific investigation of any sort, be it astronomical or historical, must deal with the phenomenon at its disposal; to be historical Harnack would have had to deal only with the documents. This was not done because his own ideas rejected the historical data, making him in Pieper's eyes unscientific.⁶³

Edward von Hartmann judged that Harnack selected only that which of Christ's Weltanschauung could be accepted today, leaving the rest to lie silent in the past.⁶⁴ Franz Mehring saw in Harnack's construction a reiteration and usage of the basic fundamentals of Strauss and Bauer. Mehring goes on to say that at least Strauss and Bauer were more easy to understand. His own subjective appetites or person constructed a dogmatics and ethic.⁶⁵

⁶²F. P[ieper], "Das Wesen des Christenthums nach Professor Harnack," Lehre und Wehre, XLVII (November, 1901), 324-35.

⁶³"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (March, 1902), 65-66.

⁶⁴F. P[ieper], "Das Wesen des Christenthums nach Professor Harnack," op. cit., XLVII (December, 1901), 353. Pieper gives no source reference but places von Hartmann's remarks in quotation marks.

⁶⁵Ibid. Pieper conjectures that Mehring may be a then-known Social Democrat, but Pieper gives no source.

Fredrick Bente marked Harnack's greatest contribution as being that now Jews, Buddhists, Unitarians and Free-Protestants could pick up Harnack's works and read them with delight, since now a famous professor of theology had given them ease of conscience, setting forth proof that one no longer needed to believe on the crucified and risen Lord in order to be saved.⁶⁶

Criticism that Harnack's theology is taken from his own self and no other principium is a criticism not merely confined to Pieper. An even more scathing evaluation came from an individual mentioned only as Rupprecht ? who called Harnack's doctrine the result of devil-exegesis.⁶⁷ Zoeckler was sympathetic with the judgment, but being a positive theologian, could not accept such harsh words as devil-exegesis, anti-Christian science, and sophistry of Satan. Pieper did not find such evaluation too harsh in view of what Harnack had done to the Gospel. The blistering words of Rupprecht are rarely expressed by Pieper, but Pieper did call Harnack a lucus a non lucendo.⁶⁸

Schleiermacher was to break through the wall of cold rationalism, but in Pieper's estimation left the Church in no better position than it was before. Like the drunken man set upon a horse, the Church fell off the other side and fell into the trap of subjectivism, attempting to flee

⁶⁶F. P[ieper], "Adolf Harnack," op. cit., p. 653. Pieper quotes from F. Bente's article in Lehre und Wehre, XLVII (December, 1901), 370. Here Bente condemns the optimistic appraisal given Harnack in the Quarterly of 1901.

⁶⁷F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (January, 1902), 4. Pieper apparently uses as source for comment a long statement of Zoeckler in Beweis des Glaubens, 1901, 204, where Zoeckler comments on Rupprecht's evaluation of Harnack.

⁶⁸"Adolf Harnack," op. cit., p. 655.

rationalism. The source of doctrine is the Gefuehl of the Christian, the Church, which basically was nothing more than the vague pantheistic feeling of dependency.⁶⁹ Schleiermacher convinced the theological world that the principium is the Gefuehl which leads to "self-assurance."⁷⁰ A similar judgment of Schleiermacher is expressed by Walther in Lehre und Wehre (XXI, XXII, XXIV, XIII).⁷¹

Pieper's evaluation of the principium of Schleiermacher does not agree with that of previous Positive theologians. Reinhold Seeberg called Schleiermacher the "grandfather of self-consciousness theology."⁷² Nitzsch-Stephan acclaimed the Glaubenslehre a "reformatory deed," an "achievement of the utmost spiritual importance, by far the most important dogmatics in recent theology."⁷³ Seeberg does judge rightly in saying that the Church of the nineteenth century followed the guidelines laid down by Schleiermacher and the Erlangen theology.⁷⁴

Schleiermacher's chief impact was the emphasis on the "whole of Scripture" as a principium. This procedure was to call on a higher principium than individual passages could communicate, so that Scripture

⁶⁹ F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (March, 1902), 66-67.

⁷⁰ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 113.

⁷¹ F. P[ieper], "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe," op. cit., XXXIV (November and December, 1888), 326. Walther's articles referred to are Lehre und Wehre: XXI, 225ff; XIII, 99; XVIII, 127; XXI, 161.

⁷² F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 3. Pieper cites R. Seeberg's Die Kirche Deutschlands im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, 1903, pp. 90, 84.

⁷³ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 113. The reference given is Ev. Glaubenslehre, p. 43ff.

⁷⁴ Ibid., I, 114. R. Seeberg's Die Kirche Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert, p. 84, is the reference given.

became a secondary norm subject to the true principium and norm, the "whole of Scripture." Schleiermacher can according to his principium say that individual Scriptural passages as references are not only dangerous but unsatisfactory.⁷⁵ The method is suspect for permitting the psychological make-up of the individual, his depth of perception, and imagination to determine what shall be settled on as legitimate doctrine, doctrine supposedly taken from the higher principium, the "whole of Scripture." For this reason Pieper calls Schleiermacher the worst heretic of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Man is then left to rely only on his own appreciation and experience of reality, having set aside Scripture as a source of theology.⁷⁷

Ritschl, like Schleiermacher, receives no evaluation in depth concerning his view of Scripture in itself, its character and attributes. This would be for Pieper merely an academic exercise in view of their rejection of the truth of God's revelation in Christ. Both made it clear that their theology is one of human origin, based on their own cognition and invention, following the principium naturae. This leads them to reject the seriousness of sin, God's wrath, the significance of Christ's atoning work and life, the complete revelation of God's wrath and God's Gospel.⁷⁸

But the principium naturae brings no comfort, only uneasiness and terror of conscience, being unable to offer man any comfort at death

⁷⁵Ibid., I, 201.

⁷⁶Ibid., II, 117.

⁷⁷Ibid., II, 367.

⁷⁸Ibid., I, 76.

when the Law strikes hard.⁷⁹ Ritschl's deathbed experience was proof that man can find no assurance apart from God's revelation given in Scripture. Though Ritschl regarded guilt as mere illusion to be dispelled by Christ, his conscience continued to work, so that after some fifty years of preaching that Christ's atonement was not needed to gain God's favor, he found himself begging to be informed of that same truth on his deathbed.⁸⁰ Ritschl's contribution to theology was not merely an echo of Harnack's position but he contributed an increasingly popular, two-story theology with one level for the laity and another for the more profound and intellectual theologians.⁸¹

⁷⁹Ibid., I, 404.

⁸⁰Ibid., II, 368ff.

⁸¹F. Pieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIV (January, 1888), 5-6.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN ANTITHESES

Nature of Positive Theology

For want of a better term, "Positive" will be the adjective describing German Lutheran theologians who have adopted a new view and appreciation of theology, employing in such adoption a new principium cognoscendi. German Lutherans of the Positive orientation constitute a division in themselves. Pieper did not set forth a systematic treatment of German Positive theology's principium; he did not present a thorough treatment of one individual as exemplary of Positive theology's position. His references to Positive theology were candid and brief and to the point. Allusions and references to Positive theology are found throughout Pieper's works; such references are related to the subject matter under discussion. The references are objections to what Pieper considers to be the Biblical view and understanding. Because Positive theology is presented in Pieper's works according to its objectionable features, fairness to Pieper demands that his evaluation be studied in the same way.

The gap that separates traditional liberal theologians such as Harnack, Ritschl and Schleiermacher is not so much one of kind as degree.¹

According to its nature and character, it could be said that the modern theology of Pieper's day was more conducive to Reformed theology than that of Lutheran theology. The reason is that in true Lutheran theology there is an appreciation of the means of grace not found in

¹F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (February, 1902), 36.

Reformed theology. But German Positive theologians echo a typical confusion of the Reformed when they reiterate the classic affirmation that saving faith is founded on Christ and not on the means of grace.² Ludwig Ihmels presents such thinking when he says, "Today also only that is real faith in Christ which is thrust upon man through the appearance of Christ Himself."³

If a difference is to be discovered upon further investigation of the various individuals of Positive theology, the difference will only be that of greater or lesser application of the disregard of the means of grace. This understanding is basic to understanding Pieper's apparent indiscriminate classification of all the positions under one heading. The reason for such classification is that all have one chief aim, that is, to by-pass Scripture as the only source and norm of theology.⁴

The problem which results from such an aim is that it desires to hold in one hand an absolute theology, a Christian theology, and at the same time stand critically above a fallible, secondary norm, Scripture.⁵ Because of Positive theology's aim and basic view of Scripture, it has constructed a self-contradictory position.

Positive theology believed that it could construct a theology which would be a perfect science, disregarding the basic limitation of human experience in discovering God's true will and justice. The Positive

²Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated and edited under the supervision of Theodore Engelder, W. F. Albrecht, and John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1905-57), III, 152.

³Ibid., III, 165.

⁴Ibid., III, p. 74.

⁵Ibid., I, 38.

theologian believed a given-scientific object or datum was present in Christian experience. The deception is that Christian reality rests on faith and without faith that reality immediately disappears. Thus by its very nature faith can only rest on Scripture; faith viewed as an independent given immediately becomes non-existent. The fact of the matter is that tools of empirical science are limited to this existence and are unable to deal with Christian faith as datum or given.⁶ Inasmuch as being truly scientific demands that one apply the correct tools to the right object to be considered, Pieper emphatically declares that one should be scientific and critical in the right sense, that we do not mix human thoughts gained from the realm of experience with thoughts gained from our consideration of Scripture.⁷ But modern theology demanded that theology be removed from the realm of objective truth into the sphere of subjective opinion, considering subjective human opinion more of a datum than the former.⁸ This subjectivism does not mean that modern Positive theology wants to become completely subjective, but nevertheless Positive theology stands on the same oblique plain as Harnack.⁹

Pieper did not wish to throw the Positive theologians outside the Church; he did sympathize with the difficulties confronting them, knowing the difficulties of his own position. Germany was on the defensive so long because the doctrine of inspiration had been so shaken that the new

⁶ Adolf Hoenecke, Ev. Luth. Dogmatik (Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), II, 13.

⁷ F. Pieper, "Das rechte Interesse fuer das Studium der Theologie," Lehre und Wehre, XLIII (September, 1897), 270.

⁸ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 212.

⁹ F. Pieper, "Adolf Harnack," Concordia Theological Monthly, I (September, 1930), 656.

theory seemed most welcome, a kind of rescue.¹⁰ Positive theology attempted to be scientific in line with the current world view, thinking that they did not need to give up Scripture as a rule and norm of Christian faith.

The first premise was that a scientific, historical and developmental approach must be taken in regard to doctrine just as in other areas of learning. Already in such an approach something is assumed which is not given in Scripture. In such an approach not derived from Scripture the danger is present that the premise itself become an oberst or "super" source to which Scripture is then made subject. This principle is then really outside Scripture and for this reason belongs to the exercise of reason, regenerate, illumined or reborn.¹¹ Reason is then the creator and shaper of its product rather than being subject and captive to the revelation given in Scripture.

D. Zollner traces modern thought in theology to its ancient predecessor in the maxim, "I think; therefore I am."¹² The consequence of the scientific approach is that man becomes the measure of all things, for his reason creates and sustains the products coming from his mind. There is a reversal of the old objective-subjective relationship so that the subjective becomes objective. There is much to be said for Zollner's analysis of thought which overtook Lutheran Biblical understanding. Sceptical thought had reduced the world of experience to such an

¹⁰F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVIII (January, 1892), 4-7.

¹¹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 212.

¹²F. P[ieper], "Das Trachten nach der lutherischen Lehre auf der Konferenz in Oslo," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (December, 1925), 410-13.

imperceptible minimum that at last the only thing certain was that man perceived a "stream of consciousness." Converging on the sceptical world was an evolutionary hypothesis which shaped man's view of history, the social sciences, literature and the arts, and natural science. Religion was merely another phenomenon among others to be examined with the same tools applied to any other object of study. The empirically minded negated any metaphysic so that the test of existence was an object's ability to be examined with the tools of empirical science. Inability to be examined proved that the object in question was non-existent. Scripture became a book meriting the same a priori assumptions applied to any work of history. The final step was that theology must divorce itself from its traditional medium cognoscendi and its unique principium. Theology should have demanded that its datum was not natural but supernatural and had its own medium cognoscendi, but the Positive theologians were unable to make such stringent demands.

Besides the influence of the scientific world on theology, there was a distinct attempt on the part of German theologians to grant quite readily scientific a priori assumptions and apply them to theology in order to present a more palatable apologetic. As if the enemy could not destroy Christianity's principium quickly enough, the Positive theologians began destroying it in order to be free to shake the hand of the victor when he arrived. Unduly influenced from without and weak within, Positive theology thought it had bridged the gap separating it from the scientific world. This weakening from within to present an apologetic Pieper considered a most dangerous practice. Pieper considered Dwight Moody right when he said that the best apologetic was to "give the Gospel a

chance."¹³ This apologetic of simple testimony and proclamation of the Gospel, the vicarious atonement, is the best because it is the power of God unto salvation.

Now Pieper does not rule out apologetics as such, but apologetics of a certain kind, the concessive kind. There is the testimony of human faith; there are very natural reasons why Christianity is unique and can be distinguished as such by humana gignencia. With the dogmaticians Pieper agrees, "Argumenta, quae divinam Scripturae originem humana fide agnoscednam seu credibilem declarant."¹⁴

The divine character of Scripture can be seen by comparing Scripture with the works of Rousseau according to content and style.¹⁵ Even reading Polycarp of Smyrna reveals a distinction between his works and Scripture. In this regard Pieper agrees with the examples used by Luthardt in Apologetische Vortrage, I, 263f. and II, 146. The point, the fundamentum dividendi, is that the way of salvation is radically different from the understanding of the world, but such a comparison remains only human proof or testimony. Even Mohammedism has borrowed much from Scripture, but has destroyed this essential and distinguishable mark of Scripture. This destruction is clearly pointed out in Baieri's examination. Pieper was well aware of the dangers in apologetics, but he goes on to say that there is a danger in underestimating them also. Quenstedt asserts that

¹³F. P[ieper], "Eine Apologie des Christentums, wie sie nicht sein soll," Lehre und Wehre, LXVII (April, 1921), 124. Pieper quotes Moody without making reference to his source of information.

¹⁴F. P[ieper], "Warum glauben wir der Heiligen Schrift? oder: Wie wird uns die Heilige Schrift eine goettliche autoritaet?," Lehre und Wehre, LXVIII (July, 1922), 193. Pieper quotes Baieri-Walther Compendium, I, 121.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 194-95.

many a doubting Christian can be aided by useful and reasonable proof concerning the divinity of Scripture. With Quenstedt Pieper views such apologetics much like the proclamation given by church bells: such proclamation never can convert but can invite one to hear the Word and come to faith.¹⁶

But though apologetics can be useful, the limitations should be recognized. Positive theology forgot those limitations in attempting to accommodate itself to the current world view. Pieper points to the discoveries at Tell el-Amarna. A. H. Sayce in the Contemporary Review said that for years people had ridiculed the idea of Moses ever writing anything and now the Tell el-Amarna reveals that the critics were wrong. Pieper says this type of testimony is dangerous in that it infers that Scripture needed some Assyrian proof for what it said openly. Christ's testimony was enough for Pieper in this regard.¹⁷ Scripture needed no extra Biblical evidence to prove justification or the atonement. There was also the danger that one would forget the original purpose of Scripture in such historical investigation, that is, that Scripture's purpose is strictly theological. In asserting this fact Pieper keeps Scripture "theocentric."

When historical and scientific evidence seemingly point in another direction from what Scripture declares, trouble arises for the apologist. Then apologetics can undermine the source of theology; for Pieper this very thing happened with Adolf Schlatter of Tuebingen. Schlatter's apologetic accommodation was clear when he had to reject the six-day

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 196-97.

¹⁷F. P[ieper], "Ein Wort der Warnung vor Ueberschaetzung der Alterthumsforschung," Lehre und Wehre, XLII (November, 1896), 322-29.

creation account as well as the preservation of Israel in the wilderness wanderings and the general historical accuracy of the Old Testament narrative.¹⁸ The excuse for this was that the people did not know of the infinity of space or the greatness of the universe. They imagined that birds flew in the heavens; the earth rested on the unfathomable depths of the sea. In Schlatter's estimation the Mosaic account was geared for the then-current world view and therefore is unfit for the world view of today.

For Pieper Schlatter's approach was on dangerous ground when it began to divide saving truth from extraneous material. Pieper agreed with H. Cornelius, who believed that there could be no separation since the world view undergirded and underlay the Biblical narrative.¹⁹ Though Scripture was not a science book but a book of theology, Cornelius said it must be presented as it is, for to give up its divine character would mean that the Christian would have nothing to stand on. Obviously not all German Lutherans had embraced the new view of Scripture.

The next consideration is how the scientific world view changed the Positive theologian's regard for Scripture. Schlatter was on the defensive against the radical opponents of Scripture's truth, though willing to sacrifice much. Of a different spirit were those who rejoiced to see Scripture as a principium overthrown, asserting that the Church has gained something by having this done. In contrast to Schlatter who believed he was still reproducing God's message, many theologians believed that once

¹⁸F. Pieper, "Zeitgeschichtliche Notizen und Antworten auf Fragen von allgemeinem Interesse," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (August, 1928), 255-56.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 253-54.

rid of Scripture as an infallible source the Church could step into a new dimension of faith. Schlatter would be salvaging from Scripture what he could, whereas many would be giving silent thanks that Scripture had fallen.

One emphasis was that for once the Church saw Scripture according to its "human" side. In this Pieper says they thought they had a donum which the old Lutheran theologians did not have.²⁰ This discovery was based on the fact that Christ did not write but let men write the Scripture; this was evidence enough that Scripture was human and not God's Word. Pieper saw in this nothing more than the kind of unbelief manifested in the days of Christ.²¹ If it is foolish to see Scripture as divine, it should be equally foolish to view a carpenter's son as the very Son of God and without sin. Because human beings have written Scripture, the Positive theologian concluded that it must have error. The result of this donum was to be that Christ was made the seat of authority, and the "paper-Pope" was once and for all overthrown. Absolutism was to be put to death and the experience of Christ exalted. But Pieper answers to such theologians that this is unscientific in that they give up the only true source and replace it with "faith," which rests on nothing and is therefore only self-deception. The question of authority and experience or faith brings Pieper's observation that for the Positive theologian there really is none.

Pieper considers the Positive theologian's replacing Scripture with faith to be as foolish as the citizen who decides to obey the laws of

²⁰"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 9.

²¹"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (January, 1893), 2.

the land according to his own experience of them. The result is that he does not rest on something outside himself as authority, but on his own experience. Experience then dictates what he should retain and what he should not retain.²² He as citizen is then above the law, having no authority outside himself. The experience extolled by the Positive theologian is not faith but mere a posteriori knowledge. Scripture is not something to be believed a priori but only a posteriori. Pieper says that those who erfahren nicht are truly among the blessed.

The next danger is that the Positive theologian is constantly called on to change his theology because of the so-called progressive understanding of man.²³ Like Harnack Positive theologians would have to leave in the past that which did not agree with the present. The Positive theologian would have a difficult time making an excuse for the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation, and election, and must eventually give up his faith.²⁴ Pieper observed that already the Positive theologian was having trouble with these very doctrines, already labeling them as problems.

Defense of Scripture as infallible had only one goal, in Pieper's estimation; that was to preserve the one objective and certain source upon which the Christian certainty and faith were founded.

²²F. P[ieper], "Die 'angelsaechsische' Diesseitsreligion auf dem 'ethischen Konzil' zu Stockholm," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (November, 1925), 385.

²³F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (January, 1926), 4.

²⁴F. P[ieper], "Der Stand der christlichen Kirche am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (April, 1902), 98.

Positive Theology and Luther

The common charge of the Positive theologians was that, for the most part, Lutherans have misunderstood and misinterpreted Luther. The charge is strikingly similar to that made by the freer Calvinists against the stricter brethren. Positive theology's rallying around Luther as its patron Pieper considers a false reprimination in which the present is read into the past. In order to make Luther its patron, Positive theology had to be selective in its reading from Luther, giving their work an undergirding of intellectual respectability. Luther's manner of speaking hyperbole, exaggeration to the extreme, and overemphasis, became a tool whereby Luther could be read literally and atomistically. Those who accused others of interpreting Scripture without knowledge of tropes, hyperbole, metonymy, metaphors and simile turned around and did the same thing to Luther.

For Pieper the German Positive theologian operated on the hypothesis that the dogmatists had departed from Luther in understanding what the principium of theology was. This was almost an a priori to be accepted without proof. But those who go to Luther to find the principium of "faith experience" in contradistinction to Scripture have to reckon with one of their own, Harnack, who accused Luther of rejecting that very thing, the "faith experience," which Harnack viewed as vital to Christian faith.²⁵ For Harnack Luther lived through personal union with God which he experienced in Christ and not by the means of grace. For Harnack Luther's error was exalting the means of grace to the destruction of the

²⁵F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LXXI (April, 1925), 132.

faith principium; for the Positive theologian Luther is to be praised for his exalting the faith principium. To say the least, the situation was one of paradox.

In Pieper's estimation Harnack was more correct than Positive theology in viewing Luther as one upholding the means of grace. For Pieper the principium of faith contradicted not only the means of grace but Scripture as the principium of theology.

Luther maintains emphatically and strongly that man-made religions are all the same, based on good works, consequently leaving man in despair and darkness.²⁶ The Christian religion in contrast brings not a religion of works, but it brings a religion of grace and forgiveness, giving peace and assurance. Luther divides divine, true religious knowledge into Law and Gospel, each one having its own office and function. Natural law drives man from carnal security and serves as a contact point for the pure proclamation of law.²⁷

Luther continues that to understand religious things man must leave his own religion behind and become a true son of the prophets.²⁸ The medium cognoscendi is not human reason, human investigation, the search for truth and intellectual discrimination, but rather it is faith, and only the Holy Spirit can make one a Christian or theologian.²⁹ Only the Verbum Dei is certain and secure and powerful; only it can make one's heart firm, certain and secure.³⁰

²⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 10.

²⁷Ibid., I, 374.

²⁸Ibid., I, 195.

²⁹Ibid., I, 47.

³⁰Ibid., I, 111ff.

Positive theologians would agree with Pieper's estimation of Luther up to this point, but they would say that Luther had a more liberal view of Scripture. Also the question of the Verbum Dei must be viewed on the basis of the two principles of Law and Gospel and Luther's test of the Word which marks the Word as that which urges Christ. These two accents were picked up by Positive theology and used to further its own ends. Whatever in Scripture did not bring an individual into a personal encounter with Christ was not God's Word and was not to be believed as such. With this as central premise, such men as K. F. A. Kahnis could say that Luther freely granted that Scripture contained error and mistakes.³¹ For this reason C. E. Luthardt could say that Luther knew of the fallible character of Scripture and yet could call it God's Word. The Scripture contains hay and straw, as Kahnis understood Luther; Scripture was not a pure objective source, so truth must be discovered elsewhere, according to the Positive theologians.

This is where Positive theology believed it had found the solution in the human ego; none could distinguish hay from the Word of God who had not experienced Christ; so logically faith is the source over corrupt Scripture. A strange situation arose when Luther spoke of verbal and plenary inspiration. Those statements on inspiration had to be rejected; Seeberg was completely oblivious to the fact that Luther spoke of verbal inspiration.³² Nitzsch-Stephan believed that Luther merely substituted Scripture for the authority of the Pope, though Luther did speak more

³¹F. P[ieper], "Zu Luthers Lehre von der Inspiration," Lehre und Wehre, XXXI (November, 1885), 329-30.

³²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 277.

liberally. It is clear that interpretation of Luther depended very much on the selectivity of the commentator.

It is noted that Luther was aware of chronological disorder and the fact that no two apostles reported the same event in the same way. This was Luther's way of pointing to the errors on the part of the Scriptural recorders, according to the Positive theologian.³³ The writers were truly free to express themselves without being hindered by the Holy Spirit. They were able to express their illumination.³⁴ The more inspired expressed their faith the better, thus one must speak of degrees of inspiration, according to Kahnis. Also the Positive theologians pointed universally to Luther's free attitude toward the Epistle of St. James and his free criticism of the disorderly chronological accounts in the Old Testament.³⁵

An a priori not reckoned by the Biblicist was the fact that Luther considered it necessary that one be illumined to understand Scripture.³⁶ Luther in Seeberg's estimation accepted Scripture because he had experienced it himself and not because of anything else. Understanding means for the Positive theologian that one see readily the errors of the three synoptic accounts in their chronological data. As far as the Positive theologian was concerned, Luther's enlightened spirit saw the errors of Scripture and could therefore say:

³³ Ibid., pp. 282-83.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 283ff.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 291.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 296ff.

Whatever does not teach Christ, that is not Apostolic even though St. Peter or Paul taught it; again, what preaches Christ would be Apostolic, even though Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod did it.³⁷

Positive Theology's Luther and Pieper

Fredrick Tholuck's faulty interpretation of Luther's preface to the Link's Annotations on the Five Books of Moses has interesting historical value. Pieper sought to correct this faulty understanding already in a Lehre und Wehre article in 1885. Luthardt and Cremer repeat the same error, though Luthardt corrected his mistake.³⁸ In 1912, in Nitzsch-Stephan's Ev. Dogmatik, third edition, Kahnis' error is repeated. The blame for this mistake is placed not so much on the individuals mentioned as on Tholuck, who began the misunderstanding in Das Alte Testament im Neuen Testament. Walther comments on the problem in this manner:

They commit, in the first place, a grave sin against the dear man of God, Luther, in ascribing to him, without looking up the reference, an opinion which would, if one compares a hundred other statements of his, make him out to be the most confused brain in all the world, yes, an opinion that he would condemn to the abyss of hell.³⁹

In Pieper's estimation Luther cannot be accused of having taught degrees of inspiration.⁴⁰ The choice for Luther was either taking the whole of Scripture as the Word of God and the Apostles' doctrine, or letting the Church be afflicted with the vagus spiritus, inevitably casting the Church into doubt and despair. The citations used by the critics

³⁷Ibid., p. 293. Pieper quotes from the St. L. edition of Luther's works, XIV, 129.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 287ff.

³⁹Ibid., p. 290.

⁴⁰"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 10-11.

Pieper believed to be for the most part references having nothing to do with inspiration or Scripture.⁴¹ The unshakable and certain creative power of the Word of God naturally leads to the conclusion that Luther identified Scripture with the Word of God. Verbal inspiration was clearly advocated by Luther's emphasis on the buchstabischen Worte of Scripture.⁴² Why else would Luther read and read again the words of Scripture to understand what the Holy Spirit means? This final statement summarizes Luther's concern that one understand both the forma and materia of Scripture. One studies language and grammar; pours himself into the study of buchstabischen Worte that he might learn the divine meaning and message therein (forma).

The Positive theologian concludes that since the materia is human, since Scripture is made up of human language, it must contain error. Pieper said that Luther would not have been guilty of such empty thinking. Luther never placed Paul's teachings, though made up of human language, on the same level as the teachings of men.⁴³ Christ was a man also; if one held His teaching, that would be holding the teachings of men as well. Luther says that if one doubts the words of Paul or Peter, that is, what they have written, the believer should be silent before such a person and let him go. As Christ used human language, so God in

⁴¹Ibid., p. 9.

⁴²Ibid., p. 7.

⁴³Ibid., p. 10. Pieper quotes Luther from the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, IX, 1238, "Du predigst, man solle nicht Menschenlehre halten, so doch St. Peter und Paulus, ja Christus selbst Menschen sind gewest: wenn du solche Leute hoerst, die so gar verblendet und verstockt sind, das sie leugnen, das dies Gottes Wort sei, was Christus und die Apostel geredet und geschrieben haben, oder daran zweifeln, so schweige nur stille, rede kein Wort mit ihnen und lass sie fahren. . . ."

Scripture takes on human form.⁴⁴ Luther was not charmed into thinking that because Christ was man He had to sin any more than he believed that Scripture had to err because it was made up of human language.⁴⁵ Pieper notes that for Luther disrespect for the materia of Scripture because it was simple human language would be like despising baptism because the water is the same as that which flows in the Elbe.⁴⁶ One should neither despise preaching or the Word because the same language is used by a farmer in the tavern. The materia in the proper sense for Luther and Pieper was the Greek and Hebrew. In Luther's estimation there should be no doubt that Scripture is God's Word, His judgments, His words which set forth His majesty, omnipotence and wisdom, no matter how ordinary they appear.⁴⁷

Luther is not the true patron of those Positive theologians who place faith in antithesis to Scripture. First Pieper would emphasize that Luther never had the Spirit working without means.⁴⁸ Faith was not a gratia infusa, but rather it rested on the objective and certain Word of Scripture as source of personal certainty. Anything else would be faith in the air or clouds. Christ bound personal faith and understanding

⁴⁴Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, II, 37ff. St. Louis edition of Luther's works quoted, IX, 1238.

⁴⁵Ibid., I, 69.

⁴⁶F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (July, 1925), 251. Pieper quotes the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, III, 924ff.

⁴⁷F. Pieper, "The Holy Bible," What is Christianity? And Other Essays, translated by J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), pp. 227-29. Pieper quotes from the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, XIV, 3ff.

⁴⁸"Die Lutherstatue vor unserm theologischen Seminar," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (October, 1927), 291.

to one's remaining in His own Word, as we have it handed down to us in Scripture.⁴⁹ This fact, Pieper believed, could not be erased from Luther's writings. The outward source of Scripture negated the possibility of becoming an enthusiast.

They all have something to sell. Their aim is not to reveal Christ and His Mystery but their own mystery. They think more of that than of the mystery of Christ. Their own beautiful thoughts must not go to waste. Through them they hope to convert even the devils, while they have never yet converted a gnat. And the worst of it is, all they do is pervert the truth.⁵⁰

But the Positive theologian would reply that Luther shifted or changed his position. At the beginning Luther had a scholastic understanding but later revised it. "Whatever teaches or urges Christ" was to be the canon within the canon. The Positive theologians thought that Luther with the axiom was establishing a new principium, the selecting activity of faith. Pieper called this kind of thinking completely illogical.

Everyone will admit that an argument of this kind: Since Holy Scripture can be understood or experienced only through the Holy Ghost, therefore the words of Scripture cannot be inspired by the Holy Ghost, has no basis in logic whatever.⁵¹

The point that Luther wished to bring out with his expression was not that experience should be set over against Scripture, but that Scripture should not be used to contradict Christ and the Gospel.⁵²

⁴⁹F. P[ieper], "Ist die Heilige Schrift direktes oder nur 'abgeleitetes' Wort Gottes?," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (July, 1926), 193.

⁵⁰Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 60. Pieper quotes from the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, XIV, 397.

⁵¹Ibid., I, 296.

⁵²Ibid., I, 293ff.

If Luther would not set faith in opposition to Scripture, the Positive theologian would still emphasize that Luther was well aware of the errors of Scripture in chronological and exegetical matters. Pieper says such problems are the interpreter's and not Scripture's fault. Luther expresses it more simply.

The Holy Ghost has been blamed for not speaking correctly; He speaks like a drunkard or fool, He so mixes up things, and uses wild, queer words and statements. But it is our fault, who have not understood the language nor known the manner of the Prophets. For it cannot be otherwise; the Holy Ghost is wise and makes the Prophets also wise. A wise man must be able to speak correctly; that holds true without fail.⁵³

Pieper held that Luther throughout his life viewed the chronology of Scripture to be correct, a priori, and that contradictions were impossible.⁵⁴

Next, Positive theology emphasizes that Luther held degrees of inspiration for various books of the canon. Pieper divides the assertion into two parts: (1) the relative importance of a book for the generation and preservation of the faith; and (2) the question of canon.

Though Luther would praise John above the other Gospels, he does not mean to distinguish kinds of inspiration, but only their relative importance in regard to the stimulation and growth of faith.⁵⁵ Though the style of a book may be more lofty or profound, Luther would not concede that therefore it was less divine, for the very mode of expression was divine, in Luther's estimation.⁵⁶

⁵³Ibid., I, 293. Pieper quotes Luther from the St. Louis edition of Luther's works, XIV, 1418.

⁵⁴Ibid., I, 282.

⁵⁵Ibid., I, 285.

⁵⁶Ibid., I, 286.

The question of canon must not be confused with inspiration. For Pieper inspiration is concerned not so much with the extent of the canon, that is, whether the Epistle of James, the General Epistle of Jude, or the Revelation of St. John belong to the canon, but with those books of the Bible which beyond doubt are God's infallible Word.⁵⁷

Canonicity is not synonymous with inspiration, but the two areas are precisely co-terminous. Those books which are inspired are canonical and those books which are canonical are inspired books.⁵⁸

Walther commented on the use of Luther to disprove inspiration:

Even the weakest mind can see without much reflection how foolish it is to conclude from an adverse verdict of Luther on a book which he did not regard as canonical that he held liberal views on inspiration of those books which he regarded as canonical; just the opposite ought to be concluded from his verdict.⁵⁹

An Evaluation of Pieper

It is clear that Pieper was not blind to the problems created by Luther in his comments on Scripture, interpretation and inspiration. If some statement of Luther seemed incongruous with Luther's general position, Pieper viewed it from Luther's total perspective as well as the context of the remark. For this reason Pieper was aware of Luther's two sides. As master of the overstatement Luther presented not only problems to Pieper, but to those who attempted to use those overstatements for their own purpose as did Harnack and the Positive theologians.

⁵⁷ Ibid., I, 291.

⁵⁸ James Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), I, 363-64.

⁵⁹ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 292. Pieper quotes Walther's article titled, "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXII, (1886), 8.

Franz Delitzsch defended Luther against misuse as did Pieper.⁶⁰

Delitzsch called it mere flattery for the Positive theologians to boast that Luther was their patron, for Luther never understood the Word of God as being different from the words of Scripture. Also, the Word of God could never be equated with inspiration or the inner light, converted sentiment, but was the written Word according to its simple literal sense, its clear meaning. For Delitzsch Luther stood simply on Scripture as the only source of Christian knowledge and theology.

Pastor Karl Matthiesen, then rector of the Ev. Lutheran Deaconess Association, remarked at the sixtieth session of the General Ev. Lutheran Conference in Hamburg that the current slogan was "justification by faith."⁶¹ Matthiesen saw this being used as a false principle which stood above Scripture; but he countered that a key is no good without a house to enter. The old and new Luther alike saw Scripture as the Word of God as a clinched and riveted-down fact, which was to settle all controversy and contention.

As for the other misuse of Luther in the axiom, "Was Christum Treibet," Karl Matthiesen goes on to describe how the Positive theologians were using it in connection with the Old Testament.⁶² The same individuals

⁶⁰F. P[ieper], "Ein Besuch eines amerikanisch-lutherischen Pastors in der Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg," Lehre und Wehre, LXXV (December, 1929), 363-64.

⁶¹F. P[ieper], "Ein Bekenntnis zur niet-und nagelfesten Bible aus deutschlandischen Kreisen," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (November, 1928), 331. Pieper quotes from the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, which gave the text of Matthiesen's address at the sixtieth commemoration of the General Ev. Luth. Conference in Hamburg on August 28, 1928. The title of the address is the same as Pieper's title.

⁶²Ibid.

who claimed this maxim for their own with fire and sword drove Christ out of the Old Testament where Luther found Him on every page. They made the Old Testament so narrow that Luther could scarcely have defended himself against his wise disciples. The applicability of Matthiesen's remarks is most relevant for our day as well.

Pieper knew the difficult and the clear passages of Luther. His willingness to grapple with the difficult citations of Luther not only reveals a willingness to search for the truth, but also a concern that Luther be not misused by Positive theologians. Though Pieper is thoroughly positive with respect to Luther, it would have enhanced his presentation if he would have pointed out where Luther had run over the bounds of hyperbole and departed from the truth. But since Positive theology needed no help in its cause to distort Luther, Pieper was not willing to give them an inch. From a purely editorial view Pieper's criticism of Positive theology as being enthusiastic when they were attempting to use Luther as their own must have been a devastating criticism.

Positive Theology's Presuppositions

A common assertion of Positive theologians is that God's Word is certain but one must maintain a keen sense of realities and see the errors therein. The problem for the theologian is that of separating truth from error, a situation described by George Park Fisher as one devoid of objectivity and reliant on private judgment.⁶³

There is an apparent duality of the divine and human in Scripture, the incomprehensible and the totally human and fallible; these two then

⁶³F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XLVIII (February, 1902), 36-37.

have their synthesis in the believer. Thomasius and Zoekler advocated such a duality which was comparable to Christologies which had no communicatio idiomatum.⁶⁴ Volck (of Dorpat) advocated a solving of this problem by merely dispensing with the old idea of revelation; this would leave only a report of revelation relatively free from error. E. F. Wyneken held that the modern scientific world view made it impossible to hold an inspired, unerring source of Christian knowledge. Wyneken went on to say that it was to the credit of the Lutheran Symbols that they said nothing about inspiration of Scripture; for this fact he thanked God. A certain D. Ruperti noted in this connection that the Confessions call the Word of Scripture the Spirit's Word.⁶⁵

Zoekler offered two alternatives for the theologian: either he must accept the doctrine of inspiration according to the seventeenth century, which was impossible to resurrect in his estimation, or he must assume a true doctrine of inspiration which included healthy historical appreciation. The seventeenth century doctrine would mean returning to the yoke of Judaic-scholasticism. He lamented the fact that the Free Church had not yet rid itself of the yoke. As editor of the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung Zoekler did much to shape opinion and at the same time echoed the trend of his day.⁶⁶

⁶⁴F. P[ieper], "Der Synergismus in der Lehre von der Inspiration," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVIII (July, 1892), 195ff.

⁶⁵F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVII (August, 1891), 229.

⁶⁶F. P[ieper], "Ein Bekenntniss zur Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift und eine Gegenerklaerung eines Vertreters der 'theologischen Wissenschaft,'" Lehre und Wehre, XXXVII (December, 1891), 359ff.

For Pieper the position of most Positive theologians was no different from that of Ludovicus Capellus who held that Scripture erred because of the poor citations in the New Testament. Kahnis said he could not possibly agree that the Holy Spirit had anything to do with such inaccurate citations.⁶⁷ Like Philippi, Positive theology could not grant a priori that there were no errors in Scripture; like the Arminians and Socinians, Positive theology had to make room for the "inner life" or "immediate revelation."⁶⁸ To make room, Scripture had to be eliminated as the Word of God. Certainty could not rest on Holy Scripture but only on the "immediate truth itself." Consequently man had constructed an "impregnable fortress," which no critic could attack. This goal, which was to be achieved by making Scripture an erring book, compared very much with the goal of loneliness, the experience of having no sign of outward support, found in Quakerism and Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard rejected questions of history as having anything to do with faith.⁶⁹ For Positive theology the thought of a prop which did not err was repulsive; man must operate with faith as an a priori from which rational experience proceeds. Faith goes before Scripture, which is only a record or formulation created out of faith by the Apostles and Prophets. Certainty then is for the Positive theologian a kind of struggling certainty which needs constantly to re-examine its experience and re-interpret theology.

⁶⁷F. P[ieper], "Die Form der alttestamentlichen Citate im Neuen Testament," Lehre und Wehre, XXXII (March, 1886), 79.

⁶⁸Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 280ff.

⁶⁹Edwin Ewart Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c. 1936), p. 72.

It is then not such an obvious blunder on Pieper's part to label the Positive theologian an enthusiast or Schwaermer, an Arminian or Quaker.

Positive Theology's Rejection of Scripture as Revelation

Scripture must be only response to revelation itself; Philip Bachmann went on to explain this fact by saying that only Christ is the physical and corporate Word of God. Christ is alone the bringer of revelation. Only once did He write something, and that was in the sand. It is only the recipient of revelation who takes up pen and ink, in Bachmann's estimation. Scripture is only an echo of the Word of God, an echo proceeding from the human heart and spirit. In true existential and dialectical fashion, Bachmann removes the objective source of revelation so that one might fall into despair and confront the absolute in Christ.⁷⁰

E. Wyneken followed the same path as Bachmann, rejecting the doctrine of an inspired and errorless Scripture as something harmful.⁷¹ To consider Scripture as such is nothing more than the result of the Old Adam's search for outward certainty and security in place of true inward security. For that reason Wyneken accused the Church of clinging to a "paper pope." The proclamation of the Word is all important in Wyneken's estimation, as it was for F. H. R. Frank. Only preaching could bring forth spiritual life. The true center and essence of Christian certainty

⁷⁰F. P[ieper], "Ist die Heilige Schrift direktes oder nur 'abgeleitetes' Wort Gottes?," op. cit., 195.

⁷¹F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (September, 1891), 257-58.

was to be within the Christian and it is he who determines the ground and validity of certainty.⁷² J. C. K. Hofmann asserted that one should neither look to the Church nor Scripture, but within himself for here he has assurance of certainty, an immediate certainty from the Spirit of God.⁷³ Because an objective certainty is denied, man remains the interpreter and creator of doctrine, shaping doctrine according to ongoing experience; the result is that there is progression in doctrine.⁷⁴ Progression expresses dissatisfaction with the present, which is to be one of struggle and doubting faith; for Hofmann this doubting-faith is really an optimistic program for progress. This doubting-faith is not limited just to Christians but extends even to non-Christians who will be saved through that striving.⁷⁵ Like Harnack, Hofmann used the essence of Christianity to destroy the significance and meaning of individual Scripture passages.⁷⁶ The result was that the incarnation as well as the vicarious satisfaction was destroyed.⁷⁷ Clearly the Bible was disregarded altogether and the human ego made to be the source of theology, producing nothing more than man is able to produce, a doctrine of work righteousness.⁷⁸

Frank also rejected an exterior authority as being unable to serve

⁷²Ibid., pp. 258-59.

⁷³Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 114.

⁷⁴Ibid., I, 129.

⁷⁵Ibid., II, 392.

⁷⁶Ibid., II, 116.

⁷⁷Ibid., III, 127.

⁷⁸Ibid., III, 446.

the Christian faith.⁷⁹ Frank found himself disregarding the meager efforts of Philippi, who presents an objective act of redemption and the Word of God in contrast to Frank's subjective starting point. Frank could find no time for this position because Philippi didn't understand Frank's position, unfortunately.

Ihmels follows the same stream of negation, proclaiming that all objective certainty should be destroyed. He said one could excuse the early Church for deriving doctrine from an objective source, but it was a mistake nonetheless.⁸⁰ The Reformation repeated the same mistake as the Roman Catholic Church. Revelation to Ihmels did not impart doctrine, but religion or, more currently expressed, Christ.⁸¹ Ihmels doesn't know what to do with individual Scriptural passages so he places himself with the "whole of Scripture."⁸² This he finds a much more profitable and less dangerous method. The result is that Ihmels remained insecure and vascillating in his position from start to finish.⁸³ This did not surprise Pieper because subjectivity could not yield certain results. But subjectivity was a mark of greatness for the Positive theologian. D. Ihlen of Oslo repeated the slogan that there was no outward objectivity, but only inward experience; the content of Scripture was to be authoritative but, in view of the previous remark, it must be content to

⁷⁹Ibid., I, 114.

⁸⁰Ibid., I, 64.

⁸¹Ibid., I, 69.

⁸²Ibid., I, 201.

⁸³Ibid., II, 366.

be apprehended in experience.⁸⁴ Luthardt and Richard Gruetzmacher assumed the same position as Ihlen.

The one thing supposedly offered by the Positive theologian is Christ. E. W. Wyneken best described the Positive position when he spoke these words:

Unserer Zeit ist jetzt die Aufgabe gestellt, noch mehr als bislang wieder den persoelichen Christus sich und der Welt zu eigen zu machen. Und deshalb werden uns die aeusseren Stuetzen "(die inspirirte heilige Schrift)" genommen, damit der christliche Glaube in uns desto mehr seine ewige Herrlichkeit beweise, ja, damit der lebendige Christus, der ein-geborne Gottessohn, widerum auf's neue in uns Mensch werde, auf das wir sein lebendiger Leib seien, und jedes Glied durch sein Christenleben von Ihm immer deutlicher zeuge bis zum Tage der Vollenung.⁸⁵

Such a position is maintained because one's sense of realities permits nothing but this position; the living Christ is to be preferred to Scripture since it isn't a law code fallen from heaven. To make Scripture a law code is to make intellectualism take the predominant place and leave living Christianity in the background.⁸⁶ The accent is on one's return to the inspiration experienced by the Apostles, on which was the immediate impression of Christ, and this immediate impression is what constituted the whole apostolic office.⁸⁷ If the impression of

⁸⁴F. P[ieper], "Ist die Heilige Schrift direktest oder nur 'abgeleitetes' Wort Gottes?" op. cit., 194.

⁸⁵F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (September, 1891), 257. Pieper quotes from the Pastoral-Correspondenz (July 25, 1891) remarks of E. W. Wyneken, Pastor at Edesheim near Northheim in Hannover, Germany, and then editor of the Pastoral-Correspondenz.

⁸⁶F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 6.

⁸⁷F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (September, 1891), 261-3.

Christ constituted the whole apostolic office, the function of that office is obviously more legitimate today than then and any contemporary theologian is to be preferred to Paul or John. It is clear that logically Positive theology has swung wide the gate of subjectivism.

One of Wyneken's complaints was that few esteemed the body of Christ as the living testimony of Christ.⁸⁸ The practical application was that one listen to the "living testimony of the Church" rather than Scripture. We believe Scripture, in Wyneken's estimation, because it does present Christ, who then wins us with His own person.

Christ's use of Scripture in the wilderness temptation presented a problem, but not for long. This was immediately described as a "fleshly" beginning. One must gradually do away with the inspired Scripture to make room for the person of Christ and His Church. Kahnis wasn't even keen about the idea of a fleshly beginning but rather viewed the abandonment of the Scriptural principle and inspiration as the only salvation of the Church.⁸⁹ The result would be that one truly believe and live life in Christ.

Pieper's Critique of the New Doctrine of Revelation

It is clear that Positive theology places man on the Christ-experience, the faith experience as the source of theology. Man is then the only source of revelation. But Pieper meets this position with the argument that this is really nothing more than a repetition of the Roman error that equates saving faith with the whole Word of God.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 258-60.

⁸⁹F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXV (January, 1889), 3.

⁹⁰"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVIII (February, 1892), 34ff.

Pieper adds that one could be saved without knowing all the doctrines of Scripture; in fact one could be saved without knowing there ever was such a thing as Holy Scripture. But the modern theologian attempts to turn Scripture into an enemy of Christ; it is turning the forma against Christ. This is obviously fallacious. The same dialectic thinking comes to light in P. Lieberknecht's statement that the spirit of a sermon is really in antithesis to the outward Word, making the only source of faith the experience of the Church, which then certifies the true articles of faith.⁹¹ This disregard of the outward Word in order to certify the true experience of Christ agrees with Harnack himself who contended that the means of grace were in opposition to the true personal experience of God.⁹² To achieve true personal communion with God in Christ, one must immediately shun the thought that the means of grace convey anything to the Christian. Pieper said that Lieberknecht's objections carry no more weight than those of the Zwinglians to Luther, who finally was compelled to say, "They have no text."⁹³

Pieper went on to remark that Lieberknecht should not deceive himself into thinking that because he doesn't use a single quotation from Scripture he is not or may not be communicating God's Word.⁹⁴ Even

⁹¹F. P[ieper], "Das Schriftwort als Quelle und Norm aller christlichen Lehre, festgehalten gegen die Kritik Herrn P. Lieberknechts und die Grundsätze der modernen Theologie," Lehre und Wehre, XXXV (September and October, 1889), 265ff.

⁹²Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III, 132.

⁹³F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (August, 1891), 228. No source for Luther's comment to Zwingli is given.

⁹⁴F. P[ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (September, 1891), 258-59.

though a sermon may be made up of human words and thoughts, in so far as it expresses God's Word and thought, it is truly dependent on Scripture and not in contradiction to it. In saying this Pieper reveals a true Lutheran insight into the dynamic character of the Word of God, dispelling any false notion that he was a Fundamentalist.

Pieper goes on to say that not only Christ is to dwell within us but, as our Confessions say, the whole Trinity as well.⁹⁵ However, Christ does not dwell alone, but dwells through His Word: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23).

The Positive theologian who exalts Christ so much in Pieper's estimation destroys Him in order to make Him more "human." Pieper links the humanization of Scripture with the kenotic emphasis on emptying Christ of His divinity.⁹⁶ One would not be too critical to see this clearly latent in Wyneken's saying that Christ in the wilderness temptation was "fleshly" in His beginning. To accuse a Christian of being "fleshly" for warding off temptation with Scripture is to accuse Christ of the same thing.⁹⁷ Christology and Scripture as principium have a relationship which is interdependent and joined with the central doctrine of justification.

Though E. W. Wyneken seems to be elusive in his position, he remained basically consistent. Christ is revelation known only in experience; doctrine is only a response to that revelation. Of necessity

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 258.

⁹⁶ "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 9.

⁹⁷ F. P [ieper], "Der neueste Angriff auf die Inspirationslehre in der hannoverschen Landeskirche," op. cit., XXXVII (September, 1891), 258.

response cannot communicate the reality; therefore, propositional truth is immediately ruled out as impossible. Reality is incommunicable a priori. Pieper corrects any notion that Wyneken is talking about the "experience of the Church" as something which could be communicated in propositional form when he charges that for Wyneken the Apostles' Word was no more God's Word than Matthesius' work on Luther was Luther's word. As for the testimony of the Church Pieper asks just how Wyneken could be sure he had found it and asks what difference would there be between what it testifies and what Scripture says.⁹⁸

Positive Theology Destroys the Certainty of Faith

God's revelation wherein He discloses His justice and will for man makes known His gracious act in Christ that all men might believe on Him and be brought to salvation. The immediate result and effect is that one is made certain of his relationship to God and is secure within God's promises. The principium naturae does not bring such certainty, but only doubt and uncertainty; yet that insecurity can serve as the Church's contact point when it proclaims the Law in its purity. However, the principium naturae always remains law and is never able to communicate God's grace in Christ, but can communicate insecurity which drives man to take flight into work-righteousness or to deny God or even to commit suicide. For this reason Positive theology is at fault, for it takes pride in such insecurity, making insecurity strange partner to the proclamation of the Gospel.

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 259-60.

Because Positive theology does not operate with Scripture as its principium theologiae, Pieper expects its fruit to be insecurity and doubt. Some deny the principle, but still retain Christian doctrine.⁹⁹ The security spoken of by the Positive theologian is always based on "self-certainty," which Pieper considers a contradiction in terms, for the man bent on earning his salvation operates with self-certainty as well.

The fault which results is a synergistic tendency. This denial of the sola gratia places one ultimately in danger of losing all hope of the grace of God because man is made dependent in a real sense on himself.¹⁰⁰ Zoekler not only rejected the principium but made man the more dependent on self by rejecting the testimonium Spiritus Sancti, making room for the free act from which certainty is supposedly created.¹⁰¹ The situation is that those who traditionally exalt the work of the Spirit, saying He is not bound, end up by being synergistic. The emphasis on the deprecation of the Spirit was so strong that He was considered only a meddler and an insufficient participant, harmful to the free act.¹⁰²

The free act was to be performed in the vacuum of uncertainty, where one must distinguish truth from error in the fallible and derivative Word of God. Theology is to draw doctrine from its own inwardness.¹⁰³ The

⁹⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 154.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., I, 115ff.

¹⁰¹Ibid., I, 116.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³F. P[ieper], "Die Lutherstatue vor unserm theologischen Seminar," op. cit., p. 291.

Christian becomes Scripture's critic, trimming it to suit his own inward opinions.¹⁰⁴ When opinion parallels the text of Scripture, one runs the danger of being censured. J. C. K. Hofmann was censured by Horst Stephan for using Schriftbeweis.¹⁰⁵ But Hofmann was consistent for the most part, able to allow any adjustment, revision or correction of Scripture according to his own principium, his ego operating independently of Scripture.¹⁰⁶

Pieper sees Hofmann as being consistent according to the principium naturae; Hofmann had to keep his reason and self apart from Scripture, but supernatural revelation stands above reason and even contradicts it.¹⁰⁷ The medium cognoscendi remains faith; reason sees supernatural revelation as unbelievable and unreasonable. Whether the assertion is made that Scripture contains the Word of God or that the theologian must completely dissociate himself from Scripture, the emphasis remains that the theologian must be the infallible subject. Either he must stand above Scripture as a measure to distinguish the Word of God from the rest or he must be given immediate revelation which would become the measure.¹⁰⁸ The theologian can never be certain whether he has grasped the Word of God or not. He can never be sure he is communicating it, and especially can he never be sure of the grace of God because Scripture is only a fallible reflection of another's reaction to direct encounter,

¹⁰⁴Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 152.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., I, 61.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., I, 62.

¹⁰⁷F. P[ieper], "Ist der Synergismus vernuenftig?", Lehre und Wehre, XLV (September, 1899), 258.

¹⁰⁸Hoenecke, op. cit., I, 333.

encounter to be repeated in the theologian and of more value doctrinally than the former.

Positive Theology Destroys the Absolute Character
of the Christian Faith

The absolute character of the Christian faith is threatened whenever reason is applied to the discovery of God's will. Reason has shown itself inadequate in discovering God's grace in Christ, apart from which there is no certainty, hope, and salvation. When reason is brought into theology, it brings its limitations and restrictions. It destroys certainty and then the absolute character of the Christian faith over against the religion of works, the product of man's reason and fabrication.

There is unanimity in the use and application of the extra-biblical principium; all liberals from Harnack, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl applied reason and concluded that Scripture could not be the principium.

The first attack on the principium is subtle; this attack denies that Scripture is clear, as Rome continues to emphasize. A certain Pastor Lieberknecht says that Scripture is unclear because there is no unity on the doctrine of the Church, and history was needed to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, the order of salvation, the atonement and justification. Lieberknecht went on to say that men do not come to faith because God didn't want them to do so.¹⁰⁹ The lack of unanimity in doctrine, which touches all Christendom, is not because Scripture is unclear but because of men. "There are uncounted divergencies, these divergencies

¹⁰⁹F. P[ieper], "Das Schriftwort als Quelle und Norm aller christlichen Lehre, festgehalten gegen die Kritik Herrn P. Lieberknechts und die Grundsätze der modernen Theologie," op. cit., pp. 265ff.

being due to the differences in the religious individualities of the dogmaticians or in the degree of their scientific consistency."¹¹⁰

The result of the divergency in doctrine is that Christian theology is nebulous and in contrast the doctrine of works remains firm and secure. The divergent character of doctrine resulting from abandonment of the Scriptural principle produces a disregard of doctrine. Unionism is no problem at all, for the one consistent religious element remains firm, the religion of works. Such an example was the Ethical Council in Stockholm which for Pieper spelled out the natural consequence of abandoning the Scriptural principle. A certain Bishop of Winchester said that society must become a Christian congregation; the whole world is made up of the children of God. Charles Wishart believes the goal to be that peace will reign on the earth as a result of working on that premise that all are the children of God.¹¹¹ Consequently, men need no redemption since the wrath of God is only illusionary.

The World Unity Conference in Chicago has a Jewish Rabbi declaring that his sentiments are those of the Conference when he says, "We find that we are all in the same boat and we will either freely and understandably work together in that same boat or together therein we will go under and will merit such drowning."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 31. Pieper quotes from Nitzsch-Stephan Ev. Dogmatics, p. 9.

¹¹¹ "Die 'angelsaechsische' Diesseitsreligion auf dem 'ethischen Konzil' zu Stockholm," op. cit., pp. 381-89.

¹¹² F. P[ieper], "Die grosse 'Einkreisungsbewegung' gegen die christliche Kirche," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (April, 1927), 99. Pieper quotes Rabbi Mann, who addressed the World Unity Congress in Chicago in the year 1927. No sources are given other than the mention that two anonymous political newspapers reported it. Translated by author.

Pieper comments that the program for world rescue was built around the universal sonship of all men. That was to be the starting point or principium cognoscendi as Pieper called it. The result of such a view is the flattening of the vertical into the horizontal, a simple religion of this life with quasi-supernatural overtones. One anonymous commentator made this observation:

Another Babylon more portentous, more mysteriously potent for evil, more daring in blasphemy, more impotent of power to reach up into heaven, is looming large on the horizon, and the Church moves on to its predicted apostasy.¹¹³

Union movements of this kind were no accident in Pieper's estimation but rather the direct result of the abandonment by the Church of its source of theology. Confusion was the result and the natural inclination of man toward works eventually took over, so that the absolute character of Christianity was lost.

Positive Theology's Attack on Justification

The article of justification suffers the most in Positive theology through the abandonment of the Scriptural principle. This is done in Positive theology when it elevates faith to knowledge. The result is the monster, a mixtum compositum, of theology and philosophy.¹¹⁴ This results in the denial of vicarious satisfaction and the authority of Scripture. The synergistic tinge is never absent from Positive theology

¹¹³F. P[ieper], "Das Christentum als Jenseitsreligion," Lehre und Wehre, LXXVII (February, 1921), 36. The author is identified only as a member of one of the sects; the individual quoted stood in opposition to the Inter-Church World Movement.

¹¹⁴Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, 19. Pieper cites Quenstedt, I, 57.

for it must respect the free human personality, the free human act, which is subtraction from the vicarious satisfaction. Pieper remarked that almost without fail the Positive theologians opposed Missouri in the Gnadenwahlstreit.¹¹⁵ They solved the problem of faith and reduced it to knowledge, producing a mixtum compositum on the thesis that Scripture is unclear and fallible. "Die moderne Theologie steht wesentlich auf roemischen Standpunkt, was die Klarheit der Schrift betrifft."¹¹⁶

The mixture reaped the fruit which Karl Matthiesen described with these words:

With the theoretical energy, which belongs only to the German, we have so studied and compared the Bible with all heathenism to find in every line so many counterparts that the holy amazement and the holy fear of our fathers has been softened in respect to ourselves, but also therewith the depth of repentance and the rejoicing of faith and inclination of new obedience.¹¹⁷

Pieper asks how one can hold to the central article of justification through faith in conjunction with the article that Scripture is not the Word of God.¹¹⁸ Hofmann and Kahnis were consistent in finally

¹¹⁵F. P[ieper], "Einige Antworten auf einige Fragen," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (September, 1928), 270-71.

¹¹⁶F. Pieper, Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913), p. 67.

¹¹⁷F. P[ieper], "Ein Bekenntniss zur niet-und nagelfesten Bibel aus deutschlaendischen Kreisen," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (November, 1928), 331. Pieper quotes from the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung in which is printed the address of P. Karl Matthiesen, who spoke at the Sixtieth Anniversary of the General Ev. Luth. Conference in Hamburg on August 28, 1928. Translated by author.

¹¹⁸"Ein Besuch eines amerikanisch-lutherischen Pastors in der Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg," op. cit., p. 362.

denying the substitutionary satisfaction and in terms of modern orthodoxy remained "orthodox."¹¹⁹

Thomasius charged J. C. K. Hofmann with departure from Christian doctrine, but Pieper marvels how Thomasius could do this in view of his own kenoticism.¹²⁰ Hofmann was amazed at the controversy over the central doctrine after he had abandoned Scripture as principium theologiae.¹²¹ "Th. Kliefoth klagt auch, das von Hofmann mit seinen exegetischen und geschichtlichen praetensionen die Geister, namentlich der juengeren Generation, unheilbar zu verwirren drohe."¹²²

As for Hofmann's true principium, Theodor Kliefoth went on to say,

Ein theosophisches System, das unter Vergewaltigung der Schrift die Heilsgeschichte durch phantasiereiche, aber unwahre Kombinationen entstellt und das kirchliche Lehrgebäude in der doppelten Richtung zersetzt, das es die mehr theoretischen von Gott, der Trinitaet, der Schoepfung, dem Menschen, der Person und den Naturen und den Staenden Christi durch eingewobene theosophische Elemente entstellt und in den mehr praktischen Dogmen von der Suende, der Erloesung und Versoehnung, dem Werk der Gnade, der Aneignung des Heils alles abschwächt.¹²³

To reject divine revelation as revealed in Scripture is to deny consequently the vicarious satisfaction and the article around which all else revolves.

¹¹⁹F. P[ieper], "Etwas Antikritisches," Lehre und Wehre, XXIX (December, 1883), 416-19.

¹²⁰"Vermischtes: Theodosius Harnack's 'Luther's Theology,'" Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (September, 1928), 301.

¹²¹F. P[ieper], "Das Fundament des Christlichen Glaubens," op. cit., LXXI (February, 1925), 33-37.

¹²²F. Pieper, Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl, p. 67.

¹²³Ibid. Pieper quotes Kliefoth from Kritik des Schriftbeweises von Hofmanns (Schwerin, 1859), p. 559.

The Gnadenwahlstreit and the Principium Theologiae

The chief fundamental article of the Christian faith is the doctrine of justification. The controversy which raged in American Lutheranism over the doctrine of election and predestination was one that involved one central question for Pieper: Could the Lutheran Church in all its manifestations continue to give all glory to God (Sola Gloria Dei)? Any aberration in doctrine which subtracted from God's glory was one which had departed from what Scripture revealed.

To show that the Gnadenwahlstreit had its roots in presupposing a false principium theologiae, Pieper pointed out that as late as the Intersynodical Conferences between the Iowa Synod and Ohio Synod and Missouri, the question of Scripture as the only rule, source and norm was still predominant.¹²⁴ At Detroit, with A. C. Stelhorn heading the committee for Iowa and Ohio and Pieper heading the committee for Missouri, it became clear that though all accepted Scripture as principium, there was no agreement as to what was meant thereby. The Detroit conference was a preconference to the conference to be held in Chicago, but it was unsuccessful, for Pieper believed Scripture was still being qualified by the misuse of the analogy of faith or the thesis that Scripture's doctrine was a harmonic whole.

Individuals within the General Council revealed open rejection of Scripture, much like that expressed by the German Positive theologians.

H. E. Jacobs spoke his sentiments, saying,

¹²⁴"Die Vertheidigung falscher Lehre zieht die Faelschung des Schriftprinzips nach sich," Lehre und Wehre, LI (January, 1905), 9-10.

There are few theorists who would assign the same degree of inspiration to the statistics and rolls in Ezra or Chronicles as to those parts of the New Testament for whose reading the dying ask when all other earthly words have lost their interest. Even the distinction between the Petrine and Pauline theology, which the Tuebingen school so greatly exaggerated, contains within it an element of truth, when the difference is found to be one of degree, but not one of kind.¹²⁵

Dr. J[oseph] Stump wrote in the Lutheran Church Review of January, 1904: "One cannot speak of a confessional Lutheran doctrine of inspiration. Quenstedt's doctrine of verbal inspiration is mechanical and in conflict with all that we know of the Holy Ghost's activity. . . ."¹²⁶

Stump said,

The holy writers were not inspired, however, to be "teachers of astronomy, or geology, or physics," and no number of contradictions in this sphere would shake our confidence in the absolute authority of Holy Scripture as the infallible test of theological truth, and inerrant guide in all matters of faith and practice.¹²⁷

These three men of the General Council clearly separated themselves from plenary and verbal inspiration, regarding the dogmatists as departing from the Confessions.¹²⁸

Pieper believed that with a qualification of the principium man is moved into God's act of salvation, contributing in some way to justification. Qualification placed one above doctrine, in that the Christian determined for himself what was concerned with faith and life and what

¹²⁵F [riedrich] B [ente], American Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), II, 220. Quoted from Jacob's introduction to J. A. W. Haas' Biblical Criticism (1903), p. 21.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 221. Bente apparently quoted from Lehre und Wehre (1904), 85. The quotation is Bente's own summary.

¹²⁷Ibid. Bente here quotes verbatim the words of Stump from Lehre und Wehre (1904), 85.

¹²⁸Ibid., pp. 221-22.

was not. For this reason Pieper went on to point to an example of an individual who set aside the principium and as a result left the door open to synergism.¹²⁹ H. E. Jacobs rejected Quenstedt's doctrine of inspiration. He carried his position to its logical conclusion that conversion is dependent on the freedom and moral responsibility of the individual. "According to Jacobs, then, Predestination depends on the divine foreknowledge of the use that man will make of his freedom with which God has entrusted him. Plainly synergistic doctrine."¹³⁰

Jacobs found the solution to divine monergism in man's salvation by speaking of the freedom entrusted to man and man's willingness to carry out that same entrusted freedom to its correct conclusion, but Pieper agrees with Walther when he says,

True Lutheranism never draws such a conclusion, but declares: If men are saved, this is due to God's free grace alone; but if men are lost, this is caused solely by their own sin and guilt. . . . Both these truths are taught in God's Word, namely, that God has predestinated the elect from all eternity according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, and that the lost are condemned solely on account of their own guilt and sin, for God desires the salvation of all. . . .¹³¹

The Lutheran on May 5, 1927, reported that the president of the seminary [Southern Lutheran Theological Seminary?] went on record as saying that the seminary stood on the proposition that Scripture was not to be identified with the Word of God.¹³² For this unmistakable

¹²⁹"Der Synergismus in der Lehre von der Inspiration," Lehre und Wehre, XXXVIII (July, 1892), 195ff.

¹³⁰Bente, op. cit., II, 219.

¹³¹F. Pieper, "The Open Heaven," What is Christianity? And Other Essays (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), pp. 281-82. Pieper's source is Lehre und Wehre, IX, p. 298f.

¹³²F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (January, 1928), 14.

denial, Pieper believed Dr. [John?] Morehead ought to have confessed and retracted his mistake.¹³³ Pieper considered the entrance of the "Melancthonian blight" an easy consequence of abandoning the Scriptural principle in view of current theology. The emphasis on man was totally in keeping with modern Positive theology. K. F. A. Kahnis felt that a new doctrine on the freedom of man was nothing but the inevitable result of the new theology.¹³⁴

With the setting aside of the principium, Lutheranism was thoroughly prepared for a new view of man and his role in conversion. Man had found a new role as interpreter, bringing Scripture into a harmonic whole, separating truth from error, selecting matters for life and faith, and allowing the analogy of faith to be the oberst principle. He could now find a new freedom in conversion and salvation. One then current proposition was the use of Melancthon's facultas applicandi se ad gratiam; in Pieper's estimation this was more the position of Erasmus than of Luther, for Luther considered his own polemic against such a thought almost as important as his own Small Catechism.¹³⁵ Like Melancthon, Dr. H. E. Jacobs had to find a solution to the Scriptural problem, saying, "The efficacy of the Word and call is constant, the difference in results is determined by a difference in man's attitude towards the call."¹³⁶

¹³³"Wird aus Veranlassung der vierhundertjaehrigen Gedaechnisfeier des Katechismus Luthers in Deutschland eine neue Zeit fuer die 'evangelische' Christenheit anbrechen?," Lehre und Wehre, LXXV (March, 1929), 70.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (January and February, 1927), 4-9.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 9. Pieper quotes D. H. E. Jacobs' A Summary of Christian Faith, p. 217.

Dr. T. B. Schmauk said that the subtle synergistic spirit operative in Melancthon flows into every doctrine and the very foundation of Lutheranism.¹³⁷ Schmauk did not agree with his own General Council brethren, but Bente considered a man like Schmauk to be a rare bird in the Council.¹³⁸ Pieper considered Jacob's position nothing more than a repetition of Kahnis' doctrine of various dispositions, as also held by Luthardt, Thomasius, Frank, and A. W. Dieckhoff.¹³⁹ Though Melancthon's error was resurrected, Pieper goes on to say that his followers forget that Melancthon's synergism was suspect and rejected even before the Herzberg Colloquy of 1578.¹⁴⁰

The Iowa Synod conferences revealed that the problem of the principium remained; individuals of the General Council spoke openly of their rejection of Scripture as principium. But the Iowa and Ohio Synods revealed just what they meant by Scripture as the only rule, source, and norm in the Gnadenwahlstreit. Their improper use of the analogy of faith meant that all doctrines had to coordinate and have a synthesis according to the rule of harmony.¹⁴¹ Pieper disagrees with this position, stressing the fact that Scripture says at no time that it must be harmonic or reasonable. Proper use of the analogy of faith meant that it embodied nothing more or less than the expressed doctrines of Scripture. The

¹³⁷F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (March, 1926), 72.

¹³⁸Bente, op. cit., II, 217.

¹³⁹"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (January and February), 9.

¹⁴⁰"Die Christliche Religion in ihrem Verhaeltnis zu allen andern Religionen," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (November, 1926), 326-29.

¹⁴¹F. P[ieper], "Nebenbei," Lehre und Wehre, LI (April, 1905), 148.

analogy of faith is expressed in the clear portions of Scripture, which in turn give light to the dark portions. This misuse of the analogy of faith is operating with a norm above Scripture which interprets it, whereas it should be a norm within Scripture.¹⁴² The misuse results in blending and solving what Scripture purposely left unsolved and unresolved.

The synods opposing Missouri in the controversy were in great danger of abandoning the Scriptural principle by establishing an oberst principle; Ohio accused Missouri of being Calvinistic, but these synods in turn embraced the Erklaerungsgrund in the doctrine of divine election.¹⁴³ A. C. Stelhorn, who stood for a harmonization of Scripture, logically spoke of verschiedenes Verhaltenen in explaining election. Leander S. Keyser in Election and Conversion concluded that only after God has offered salvation to man is his choice decisive and in this man's free moral agency respecting the gracious overtones comes into play.¹⁴⁴ Keyser thought that anything else would be irresistible grace and Calvinism.¹⁴⁵ Not content that Scripture gave no explanation, Lutheranism had to find one; not content that Missouri could operate without a solution, others accused her of Calvinism. The fault was in the rational character of the misused analogy of faith. Pieper rejects such use in the thesis:

Was wir hiermit abweisen: a. die Herleitung einer Lehre aus dem sogenannten Schriftganzen oder aus Stellen, welche nicht von

¹⁴²F. P[ieper], "Schriftauslegung und Analogie des Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, LIII (January, 1907), 11.

¹⁴³F. P[ieper], "Das Verhaeltniss zwischen den Synoden von Missouri und Ohio," Lehre und Wehre, XXXV (June, 1889), 185-86.

¹⁴⁴F. P[ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (February, 1928), 37.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

dieser Lehre handeln; b. die Verwerfung oder Modulierung einer in dem Schriftwort klar ausgedruckten Lehre um sogenannter notwendiger Folgerungen willen oder im Interesse eines sogenannten Systems.¹⁴⁶

The unwillingness to let Scripture stand unqualified struck the chief article of faith at its center. American Lutheranism could not simply be equated with the German Positive theologians and Pieper did not equate them.

In America the denial of the inspiration of Scripture is generally not open; secondly, all give allegiance to the Old Theologians, even to the thesis that doctrine should be derived from the clear portions of Scripture.¹⁴⁷

Everything expressed in theological or ecclesiastical language must conform with everything expressed with the letters of Scripture, that is, expressed openly in the Words of Scripture.

The chief thing presented in Scripture is the doctrine of God's pure, redeeming grace in Christ. That meant for Pieper that salvation from start to finish was God's act; any diminution of that monergism meant synergism. The purpose of the doctrines was totally in keeping with the purpose of the principium theologiae, that of confirming and impressing the Christian with the sola gratia.¹⁴⁸ The work performed by the doctrine of the sola gratia was to be the casting out of any thought of merit or distinction on the part of the believer as well as placing

¹⁴⁶ L. Fuerbringer, "Dr. F. Pieper als Theolog," Concordia Theological Monthly, II (October, 1931), 71. Fuerbringer quotes from the referendum presented by Pieper at the 1884 Synodical Convention in St. Louis.

¹⁴⁷ "Schriftauslegung und Analogie des Glaubens," op. cit., LIII (February, 1907), 71. Translated by author.

¹⁴⁸ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III, 490.

him solely in God's hands.¹⁴⁹ The Confessions agreed with what Pieper considered to be simply Biblical teaching.

It [the doctrine of election] establishes very effectually the article that we are justified and saved without all works and merits of ours, purely out of grace alone, for Christ's sake. For before the time of the world, before we existed, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when, of course, we could do nothing good, we were according to God's purpose chosen by grace in Christ to salvation, Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9. Moreover, all opiniones (opinions) and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in His counsel, before the time of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself, by the power of His Holy Ghost, would procure and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion.¹⁵⁰

For Pieper there is no "necessary reverse," "no other side of the coin." Election is always properly limited to the election of grace. In Scripture it only refers to those actually saved.¹⁵¹

Clearly and emphatically Scripture teaches that Christians owe their whole Christian state in time, specifically also their faith, to their eternal election; but with the same clarity and emphasis Scripture also excludes the thought that the unbelief of the lost can be traced to predestination to damnation.¹⁵²

The mystery is left unexplained as Pieper is forced to say, "Why, with the same divine grace for all and the same total depravity in all men, not all mankind, but only a part, is saved is beyond our limited ken in this life."¹⁵³

With the problem unresolved, Pieper concludes election with the

¹⁴⁹Ibid., III, 490ff.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., III, 491-92. Pieper quotes the Concordia Triglotta, p. 1077, par. 43ff. verbatim.

¹⁵¹Ibid., III, 479.

¹⁵²Ibid., III, 495.

¹⁵³Ibid., III, 501.

observation that the Reformed solve the problem by amputating universal grace and, on the other hand, the synergist amputates the other side, the sola gratia.¹⁵⁴ An unsolvable situation can only be arrived at if one lets the primum principium speak without applying it to a higher or more reasoning principium or norma normans.¹⁵⁵

The final area of consideration is the relationship of faith and divine election. With Chemnitz Pieper agreed that election did not follow on one's faith and righteousness, but truly precedes everything as one of its causes.¹⁵⁶ Exegetical solutions were proposed; Aegidius Hunnius attempted to solve the problem of election in Romans 8:29 by altering the object "whom" and substituting "whose constant faith He foresaw and foreknew," an explanation adopted by Philippi.¹⁵⁷ The teaching would be that God chose those from eternity whom He foresaw would remain in faith to the end or at least come to faith before the end. The germ for this can be traced in Gerhard, Hollaz, Baieri and others who used the term intuitu fidei praevisae, which usage set them against the Confessions and Luther.¹⁵⁸

Faith qualified as persevering could not be exegetically defended in Pieper's estimation; it was no more defensible than substituting for

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXIX (January, 1883), 1ff.

¹⁵⁶ Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III, 486.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., III, 487. Pieper gives no immediate reference for Philippi's substitution.

¹⁵⁸ Robert Preus, The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the 17th Century Lutheran Dogmaticians (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, c. 1957), p. 211.

"faith" good works or love.¹⁵⁹ The intuitu fidei finalis for Pieper solved nothing if divine monergism was preserved in regard to salvation and faith was viewed as the work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁰

G. A. Gullixson in searching for the explanation of the Gnadenwahlstreit stated:

I admit that I cannot understand the working of that Christian's mind who, having seen in faith the Christ of God with Paul, with Luther, and yet still feels the need of a half-way station for faith in Christ in the matter of "election" and must cling to "intuitu fidei," "man's good conduct," or (the latest invention) "man's feeling of responsibility for the acceptance of grace" as an explanation of why they are chosen. Would you dare to leave any part of your salvation in any other hands than in those of the crucified Savior?¹⁶¹

Pieper's Assessment of the Gnadenwahlstreit

Pieper was not completely negative in his comments on the status of American Lutheran theology. For him it had come a long way from its earliest beginning. The formal position of the synods in regard to the Book of Concord had greatly improved, though practise did not always reach the high level of the formal statements.¹⁶² Though there was inconsistency between the controversial statements of the synods, inconsistency in preaching and teaching, both Walther and Pieper remained hard

¹⁵⁹Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III, 487.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., III, 489.

¹⁶¹F. Pieper, "Was kann und soll die amerikanisch-lutherische Kirche von Andreae, Chemnitz und andern Gottesmaennern jener Zeit lernen?," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (July, 1928), 207-9. P. G. A. Gullixson's sermon on Hebrew 11:27 is the source given.

¹⁶²"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (January and February, 1927), 1-3.

as flint in judging and condemning the error that grace in some way was dependent on man's own conduct.¹⁶³

Positive theology, as Pieper earlier pointed out, for the most part was allied against Missouri. Philippi considered the controversy quite useless and senseless as long as one held fast that faith was a gift of God. Just how much of a gap separated Pieper's analysis that the intuitu fidei was useless as long as everything depended on God and F. A. Philippi's analysis could be a matter of discussion. But Philippi exposed his hand clearly when he conjectured that the Formula of Concord taught an implicit doctrine of the intuitu fidei. For F. A. Philippi the controversy was nothing more than a war of words; Missouri expressed its doctrine in terms of the Formula and others according to the dogmatists. But Philippi didn't grasp the real problem which was expressed in the humanly-devised harmonic whole which was to disregard the clear words of Scripture and supply a solution not in Scripture.¹⁶⁴

L. S. Keyser, C. E. Luthardt, and Erasmus joined together in the common effort to find a solution; they reasoned from the imperatives of Scripture that man must have the ability to carry out the imperative.¹⁶⁵ Pieper considered this exegesis mere "eisegesis"; Luther and Quenstedt had long settled the question, indicating that such imperatives could only be explained as invitations and offers of God to enter into forgiveness.

¹⁶³Pieper, "The Open Heaven," op. cit., p. 284.

¹⁶⁴F. P[ieper], "Herr Pastor Dr. Philippi und unsere Lehre von der Gnadenwahl," Lehre und Wehre, XXXI (May, 1885), 134-49.

¹⁶⁵F. P[ieper], "Zur rechten Auffassung der Imperative in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und der Erlangung der Seligkeit," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (September, 1928), 257ff.

A. W. Dieckhoff in the Lutheran Standard of February 28, 1891, wrote that

According to the revealed order of salvation the actual final result of the means of grace depends not on the sufficiency and efficacy of the means themselves, but also upon the conduct of man in regard to the necessary condition of passiveness and submissiveness under the Gospel call.¹⁶⁶

Though effort is often made to avoid using the adjective "good" in such descriptions, Pieper points out that with every discrimination between two individuals, the Pharisee and Publican, Saul and David, one makes a distinction Scripture never makes, for all men are under like guilt. C. Blecher could not rank all men in the same guiltiness. Any distinction implies that one is different (actio dissimilis); in terms of conduct, one of necessity would have to be better or worse than the other, else there would be no difference in conduct. Pieper considered it completely useless on the part of the synergists to defend themselves by saying that they had never said "good" conduct, but only conduct.

The results which Lutheranism reaped in the Gnadenwahlstreit had their germination not so much in Walther's theses as in the departure from the principium cognoscendi, which departure resulted in denial of the sola gratia. Iowa could not rid itself of this notion that all articles of faith had to stand in harmony with one another.¹⁶⁷ The solution of the problem with Melancthon's synergism implied as well that Scripture is not clear and the clear portions of Scripture can be denied

¹⁶⁶F. P[ieper], "Gnade," Lehre und Wehre, L (October, 1904), 436. Direct quotation from the Lutheran Standard, February 28, 1891, with A. W. Dieckhoff as author.

¹⁶⁷F. P[ieper], "Ueber die Analogie oder Regel des Glaubens," Lehre und Wehre, L (September, 1904), 405-6.

by other clear portions. Such regard for Scripture Pieper saw to be more Roman than Lutheran. The conclusions drawn by those opposing Missouri Pieper marks as mathematical conclusions but not Scriptural.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸"Die Vertheidigung falscher Lehre zieht die Faelschung des Schriftprinzips nach sich," op. cit., p. 10.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF PIEPER'S CONTRIBUTION TO LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

The chief emphasis for Pieper was a Gospel emphasis. Though in isolated remarks and in limited cases Pieper does not reflect this emphasis as brilliantly as he does at other times, his concern was chiefly that of a practical theologian. This emphasis on the practical nature of theology is clear in his treatment of the principium and its opponents. Methodology was secondary to one's setting forth the true doctrine of Scripture. Though Pieper did not employ the same tools of expression employed by the dogmaticians, he does express the same appreciation for Scripture.

He adapted his presentation of doctrine to his audience. He felt free to include mention of false views as they occurred to him because he felt it his duty to instruct and point out false doctrine as well as present the true doctrines. The formula most often used by Pieper was that Scripture must be identified with the Word of God. It was the test by which he judged the opponents. This does not mean that a formula had been made the test of orthodoxy; a mere subscription to a truth did not satisfy Pieper. Scripture stood in dynamic relationship to justification through faith and the Gospel. Preaching as it expressed the content and message of Scripture was God's Word. The ultimate source for that Gospel, as well as for Law proclamation, was always Scripture. God was the originator and source of Scripture and God continued His relationship to that God-breathed Word so that the Word did not exist apart and independently of God.

In polemical writings Pieper showed himself charitable concerning the inconsistencies of men and at the same time unyielding when it came to true doctrine. When an individual or scheme of thought remained consistent throughout, then Pieper rejected the same as pagan and heathen. There was no compromise with error. There is ample evidence that this kind of sharp dividing grew out of a clear understanding of the two principia and their proper media cognoscendi.

Modern Positive theology and the opponents of Missouri did not stand in identical positions, but Pieper saw only a difference in degree separating them. American Lutheranism was more subtle in its rejection of the Scripture principle, holding openly that Scripture was the only source but saying that Scripture is in harmony with itself. The qualification of Scripture reduced it to a secondary norm. Proclamation and practise were the real tests of formal subscription to Scripture as the only source of theology. When much of American Lutheranism fell into synergistic doctrine, it showed that it had departed from the Scriptural principle. The fact remained that clear passages of Scripture could not be made to contradict other clear passages nor could they be harmonized if Scripture itself did not harmonize them.

It can be concluded that Pieper got to the heart of the controversy when he defined the Gnadenwahlstreit as the result of forsaking the Scripture principle. His tendency to avoid some of the fine distinctions made by the dogmaticians may have colored his presentation. The classic Lutheran dogmaticians dwelt much on the purpose and effect of nature as revelation and supernatural revelation's purpose and effect. Such precise treatment Pieper does not give, though he is aware of the purpose and effect of each. He simply does not see fit to carefully elaborate

on each in orderly fashion. Such a presentation might have enriched both his dogmatics and his polemics.

The student acquainting himself for the first time with the individuals and movements of which Pieper speaks may find himself lost in a totally new world. The student's unfamiliarity with Pieper's thought-world may from the start lessen his appreciation for Pieper. Adolf Hoenecke's Ev. Luth. Dogmatik presents philosophic movements and individuals in units, giving an historical survey of the movement. The historic significance and implications of an individual's position is made more obvious by the latter approach. Pieper's theological references carried far more relevance to the average reader of his day than they bring today. But Pieper's relevance does not cease for this reason. The assumptions and premises set forth by Positive theology are still operative today though the names as well as the theological shorthand have changed. Just as history does not draw an exact blueprint or schedule of events to take place in our day, so also Pieper's relevance does not lie in his ability to predict the counter-movements of today. His relevance lies in the insights he expressed which can be applied to our day.

It must be asked if Pieper's use of Quenstedt as representative of the dogmaticians could have limited the richness of variety and expression found in other dogmaticians. Some explanation of this more or less exclusive use of Quenstedt in regard to Scripture lies in the availability of sources, a desire not to duplicate the Baieri-Walther Compendium or Hoenecke's own Ev. Luth. Dogmatik, or a desire to find that which spoke most aptly to Pieper's day.

Pieper's appreciation of the dogmaticians must have prompted his vigorous defense when they were employed by those opposed to Missouri in

the Gnadenwahlstreit. The test of the dogmaticians was whether they taught synergistic doctrine or not. Pieper concluded that they did not and, therefore, attempted to show that they did not teach the intuitu fidei as much of American Lutheranism understood the doctrine. Perhaps it would have been better to allow the opponents the privilege of employing the dogmaticians in this regard and to move to Luther and the Scripture. However, Pieper's defense of the dogmaticians was tempered by a concern for their integrity as true theologians. If they could be made to conform to synergism, then their value was negated and the voice of traditional Lutheranism stilled. This frightening consequence Pieper could not allow.

Though not every statement of Pieper concerning the principium theologiae relates directly to justification through faith, neither does every statement in Article VIII of the "Solid Declaration" in the Formula of Concord. Pieper does expressly spell out the relationship of Scripture and the Gospel. Though he appears to lump his opponents into one heap, he does distinguish shades of grey in treating his opponents individually. Oversimplification of Calvinism as represented in the United States may detract from the validity of Pieper's evaluation.

Together with Walther, Pieper must be classed as one of the chief dogmaticians of our Synod. His articles on Scripture and justification are outstanding. The references included in the Bibliography are not exhaustive, but each reference is given because it has something to add regarding the material treated in the thesis. Sometimes the references are brief and all too candid; but the very frequency of such mention shows Pieper's concern that the Church hold to Scripture as the only

source of theology. There are many articles and works not cited which treat of the general area. These works do not always treat expressly the subject of Scripture as the source of theology.

Though not orientated to philosophic thinking or methods of argument or refutation, Pieper as a Scriptural theologian reveals himself a slayer of giants. His remarks are often devastating by their very simplicity of expression. For Pieper, if Scripture could not refute his opponent, nothing could. Scripture and it alone was sufficient to convince any Christian of error.

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