

Concordia Theological Monthly

Volume 2

Article 77

10-1-1931

Dr. Francis Pieper the Churchman

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Recommended Citation

Dau, W H. (1931) "Dr. Francis Pieper the Churchman," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 2 , Article 77.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol2/iss1/77>

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eingegeben, ist. Die göttliche Autorität der Schrift leugnet Rom durch die Behauptung, daß die Schrift nur durch das Zeugnis der Kirche göttliche Autorität habe. Daß der Schrift um ihrer selbst willen Glaube und Gehorsam zukomme, leugnen ferner die Schwärmer aller Zeiten, die der Schrift nur insofern göttliche Autorität zugestehen, als die Schrift mit der angeblich unmittelbaren Geistesoffenbarung stimme. Dieselbe kritische Stellung zur Schrift nehmen endlich auch alle neueren Theologen ein, die die Inspiration der Schrift leugnen, über Wahrheit und Irrtum in der Schrift nach ihrem „Glaubensbewußtsein“, „Erlebnis“ usw. entscheiden wollen und daher auch mit den Schwärmern von „Buchstabenknechtschaft“, einem „papiernen Papst“ usw. reden, idenn ihnen zugemutet wird, die Heilige Schrift als unverbrüchliche göttliche Autorität anzuerkennen.

„Nun erhebt sich aber die Frage, wie die Göttlichkeit der Heiligen Schrift von uns Menschen erkannt wird oder, was dasselbe ist, wie die Schrift für uns Menschen göttliche Autorität wird. Bei der Beantwortung dieser Frage müssen wir zwischen christlicher Gewißheit (Glaubensgewißheit, fides divina) und menschlicher Überzeugung (natürlicher Gewißheit, wissenschaftlicher Gewißheit, fides humana) unterscheiden. Daß diese Unterscheidung sowohl schriftgemäß als auch nötig und praktisch sehr wichtig ist, wird sich aus der folgenden Darstellung ergeben.“ (68, 161 ff.)

So könnten wir fortfahren und D. Piepers Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift nach allen Seiten hin darstellen und mit seinen eigenen Worten als richtig erweisen.

A. Fürbringer.

Dr. Francis Pieper the Churchman.

“There is no such thing in the Christian Church as mere teaching; all teaching is to be reduced to practise. The Christian Church is not a philosophers' school, where only teaching is done, but a society of people who by faith in the Gospel and mortification of the flesh are traveling on the way to everlasting life and are commissioned to lead others into this way. True, there is also teaching done in the Christian Church, and this is done first and ever continued. Doctrine is the basis for every activity of the Church. However, teaching is not the end, but only a means to the end. For the Word of God which is proclaimed in the Church must bring about the doing of that which each particular word requires of the hearers. The Gospel is to be received believingly and held fast by the individual hearers, and the Law, too, is to be applied by them in its threefold use. Moreover, not only each person for himself is to see to it that he yield obedience to the Word, but in accordance with God's arrangement the Christians are to lend a helping hand to one another in this task.

Every one is to be his brother's keeper. In particular the pastor, by reason of his office, must see to it that his entire congregation and its individual members not only hear the Word, but also reduce it to practise. Briefly, since only *that* person is saved who with his heart believes the Gospel and does not cast out faith by living in sin, it is incumbent on the Church—on each member, according to his capacity and in the divinely established order—to see to it that the Word of God is practised. In the Church nothing is mere theory. The Church is the most practical institution in the world.”¹⁾

This conviction was voiced, with the plerophory of tried faith, on the floor of the Delegate Convention of the Missouri Synod in 1893. It filled the hearts of the delegates with grateful satisfaction; for, together with the entire paper which the speaker had for days read before the convention, it showed plainly the continuity of confessional attitude which for half a century was to mark the administration of Dr. Pieper as it had marked that of Dr. Walther, whom Pieper had succeeded, in 1887, in the presidency of the Synod's foremost school at St. Louis. Six years later, in 1899, the Synod put an emphatic approval on the above sentiment by electing the speaker President of the Missouri Synod, as his predecessor at Concordia Seminary also had been for many years.

In the view of both Walther and Pieper teaching theology in a professional school and administering the practical affairs of a great and growing church-body were not really two offices of a conflicting character, except as far as the laborious and time-consuming duties connected with both offices might overtax the strength of a single individual; but they were regarded as two intrinsically coherent and harmonious phases of the activity of a leader in Lutheran church-work. The theologian, even when he held no other office in the Church, was to be a practical man of affairs, not merely a theological savant and learned theorizer; and the administrator of the externals of the Synod's work with its ramifying interests and the determining of its policies in given instances, even when that was his sole occupation, was nevertheless to be a man fully trained in the Scriptures and the confessions of the Church and capable of discerning false and questionable trends in doctrine and practise and of maintaining his ground over against them. Such was—and, I trust, still is—the sound persuasion of the entire ministerium of the Missouri Synod, of the teachers in its congregational and synodical schools, and of its well-informed laymen. It has been expressed innumerable times, thetically and antithetically, in the literature of the Synod and orally at great official or casual gatherings of its members.

In their definition of theology the great teachers of the Missouri

1) *Unsere Stellung in Lehre und Praxis*, p. 42.

Synod, without a single exception, for nearly a century, have harked back to the old Lutheran view, *viz.*, that theology is the "practical, God-given aptitude" (*habitus practicus theologicus*) of believingly accepting, expounding, and applying Holy Scripture for the creation, clarification, invigoration, and preservation of genuine Christian faith in the individual believer and for the upbuilding jointly in truth and love of the entire body of believers, the one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. The effort of defining theology thus began with Walther's epochal series of articles in the early volumes of *Lehre und Wehre* on the subject *Was ist Theologie?* (What is theology?) and in his annotated edition of Baier's *Compend of Positive Theology* Walther's annotations in the chapter on the definition of theology culminated a significant and epochal antithesis which was directed against the philosophical concept of theology embraced by modern scientific theologians. All subsequent utterances on this topic within the Missouri Synod—specific treatises, critical remarks, and controversial references to phenomenal evolutions and vagaries in the theology of our times that are scattered throughout the literature of the Missouri Synod—are but faithful echoes of the clarion call that Walther raised on the Western border of American civilization in days that were dark indeed for the Lutheran Church. Pieper, with his remarkable clarity of perception and his concise and pregnant style, has been the most forceful, eloquent, and convincing champion of the time-honored, Scripturally oriented view of theology that is part of the badge of honor and an heirloom of the Church of the Reformation. In inculcating this view upon their students, both Walther and Pieper impressed a distinct character and gave definite tone to the church-work of nearly four generations of the Missouri Synod's workmen. Though well aware of the hostility which they faced in the theological world of their day with their "repristinating" theology, they were conscious also of the fact that the best minds among their theological contemporaries were with them. Repeatedly I have heard both Walther and Pieper cite with relish Rudelbach's dictum (quoted from memory): "*Praktisch ist die Theologie durch und durch, praktisch in ihrem Anfang, Mittel und Bezuegen.*" (Theology is practical through and through, practical as regards its origin, means, and relationships.)

It used to be customary in theological circles in Germany, and to some extent in America, to denounce Missourians as *Wissenschaftsverächter* (contemners of science). A few well-disposed critics of the unscientific attitude of Missouri Synod theologians were inclined to apologize for the lack of appreciation which our theologians showed towards the theological labors of university men by pointing to the immense amount of intensely practical church-work which was demanded, not only of our pastors and schoolteachers, but also of the

professors at the colleges and seminaries of our Synod. A great Lutheran church organization doctrinally trained and confessionally conscious of its denominational identity amidst the multitude of American sects had to be built up out of the rough from ignorant masses of immigrants who had flocked to our shores without any previous training in the management of the affairs of a soundly Lutheran congregation independent of the state. Incessant preaching and catechizing on the fundamentals of Christianity, patient and persistent explanation of doctrinal differences for the purpose of retaining the divine means of grace pure and unadulterated, an untiring zeal in bringing church practise into ever greater harmony with church doctrine, a clear and convincing presentation from the Scriptures of the divinely bestowed rights and spiritual authority of every local congregation and the duties resulting therefrom, the definition of what constitutes the Church and of the qualifications for church-membership, the explanation of why we may and must speak of the Church invisible and visible—these and a host of cognate discussions characterize the work of the churchmen who built up the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference in the North American Republic and amazed the Lutherans of the world by the success of their enterprise, unparalleled even in the days of Luther himself. For the first time in the history of the Church it was shown by the work of these churchmen that the principles of Christian church-work for which the Reformation had battled could really be carried out on a large scale.

Naturally, labors of this kind left little time and energy for the pursuit of mere learned studies, for academic disquisitions, and intellectual feats of evolution in scientific theology. But this does not explain adequately the Missourian aversion to mere theological learning for learning's sake. One reason for this aversion has been stated at the head of this article in Dr. Pieper's own words. True Christianity, in the belief of Missourians, represents a life, not a system of creedal formulas or a compend of religious teaching. Even orthodoxy, which Missourians have always valued as the only permissible form of teaching in the Church, is regarded as worthless, yea, as the more damnatory to the possessor, if it is not lived. There is no room in the Missouri Synod for dead orthodoxy, though she is again and again charged with it. Faith is viewed by Missourians as that lively, energetic, ever-active and productive thing in men as which Luther characterized it in his Introduction to Romans. With what joy and power Dr. Pieper taught this fact is evidenced not only by many tracts and papers which he read at synodical conventions and articles which he contributed as editor to the periodical literature of the Synod, but most emphatically by the soteriological section in his *Christliche Dogmatik*. All the contents of the preceding sections of Bibliology,

Theology Proper, Christology, are exhibited in their practical bearing on Christian life in the individual believer and in any community of believers. The dogma assumes a marvelous shape and form in the conversation of those who have sincerely accepted it by a genuine faith of the heart. When you lay aside this volume you say to yourself: "These Missourians certainly are not satisfied with intellectual attainments, oratorical feats, and solemn declarations of their church councils; like the proverbial Missourian they want to be 'shown' that the faith professed is actually lived."

The period beginning with Dr. Pieper's presidency of the Seminary at St. Louis in 1887 is marked by a wonderfully intensified activity along every line of church-work throughout the Synod. One might call it an era of aggressive work and expansion. The Synod's statistics will bear this out fully. After the last great controversy on election was practically closed, the Synod, undismayed by predictions of its speedy discomfiture, quietly settled down to the enlarging of its mission-fields and colleges and seminaries and began something like systematized charity work on a larger scale. These things did not simply happen in accordance with some mystic law of cycles, but they were the normal outworking of genuine faith. After the principles of correct teaching and proper church practise had been patiently inculcated and intelligently grasped, the believers in the Missouri Synod proceeded to work them out in the form of endeavors which were the fruits of their faith. These endeavors are not claimed as the exclusive merit of Dr. Pieper, but he was the enthusiastic and optimistic leader of the Synod during this period of expansion, and his word and personal example cheered the people in their enlarged task. Above all, this period of the Synod's work has shown, I think, that it is, again, a wise method, first to be sure that you are right and then to go ahead, also that a church-body which stands four-square on a sound doctrinal basis need not worry, even in a hostile world, whether Christ will have enough work for it to do.

To churchmen who hold views such as these and are determined to regulate their church activities in accordance with them the aspect of a professional theologian who is content with ransacking libraries in research work to establish an abstruse thesis or who sits in his study philosophizing on religious relativities, spinning religious theories from his reflecting mind, starting new "trends" of theological thought, and building up a new "school" in theology, is a wearisome object of contemplation. He exemplifies to them that labored futility of "ever learning and never being able to come to the knowledge of the truth" against which Paul warned Timothy, 2 Tim. 3, 7. When such men speak in terms of depreciation, and even disgust, about "learning," they do not despise the acquisition of real knowledge, a liberal education, or special training, but only that inane quality of "the bookful

blockhead, ignorantly read, with loads of learned lumber in his head," that "noisy jargon of the schools, and idle nonsense of laborious fools who fetter reason with perplexing rules," which has been satirized *ad nauseam* in the world's literature.

True learning has always been highly esteemed and eagerly cultivated by Missouri Synod churchmen. Not a few of the founders of the Synod had received university training. Their writings show the wide range of their reading and their scholarly skill in assertion and argument. Men like Walther and Pieper accumulated very respectable private libraries, were enthusiastic book-lovers, and made their homes dwellings of culture and Christian refinement. To listen to Pieper in his genial and spirited conversation was an intellectual feast. From their teachers at the seminaries the pastors and school-teachers of the Missouri Synod derive, amongst other things, their love of learning, their desire for ever wider and profounder knowledge, and their studious habits. Even the humblest parsonage and teacherage in the Synod has always boasted a study with a library within the means of the owner and honest studying has been done in these sanctums. Pieper's desk and table were constantly littered with the evidence of his varied literary pursuits. It is a marvel that he accomplished what he did without the aid of a regular secretary and with a simple filing system all his own. On any important theological matter his memory rarely failed him. All the knowledge and erudition, however, which he and his pupils acquired was at the service of the Church and was put to work immediately in the upbuilding of the Church.

There is, however, another reason for the legendary Missourian aversion to learning. Dr. Pieper touched on this in the opening remarks of his paper at the Delegate Convention in 1893, when he said: "We Missourians, so-called, are well aware that we are opposed in principle to the aims of modern theology. Nor is the fact hidden from us that we are *persona ingrata* with the greater part of the ecclesiastical public."²) The principle to which Dr. Pieper refers is this: Theology is not a science in the strict sense of the term. Some Lutheran theologians have classified theology as a science; but whenever this was done by a gnesio-Lutheran teacher, the term "science" was used in a wide sense. Science is derived from *scire*, to know. Inasmuch as theology operates with the revelation of God, or with what God wants men to *know*, it deserves to be called science. In that sense anything else that men know, even most trivial facts, could be called science. But when science is defined as the sum total of facts which the human mind has discovered by research and established by correct reasoning, it is plain that theology does not be-

2) *Unsere Stellung*, etc., p. 3.

long in the same category with philosophy, jurisprudence, and medicine, which have created systems of thought and methods of ratiocination in certain domains of human knowledge. Theology is absolutely *sui generis*, in a class by itself, because, in the first place, it does not create its facts by processes of thinking and drawing conclusions from discovered facts, but receives them on the authority of God in the Holy Scriptures. Reason has no other function with regard to these facts than to apprehend the meaning of the terms in which God in His Book has chosen to express them. (*Usus ancillariorum* or *ministerialis* of reason.) It does not determine the validity of the facts by exhibiting their reasonableness. (*Usus magisterialis* of reason.) Even an incomprehensible mystery is a theological fact if it has been revealed as such. In the second place, the manner and method employed in theological work is by accepting unquestioningly the statements of Holy Scripture, not by testing them against other known facts outside of theology or by universal laws governing the existence of things. In other words, the standard and exclusive instrument for any genuine theological activity is faith, while every science strictly so called must operate only with the logically correct and established convictions of human reason. In the third place, all scientific work terminates when the knowledge sought has been attained by experiment and logical deduction. What is to be done with the knowledge obtained is more or less a side-issue to pure science, and is now relegated to what is called applied science. The end of every theological labor, however, is the glory of God, which is magnified as fact upon fact is exhibited and believingly grasped from the divine revelation.

Trouble for the Church, most serious trouble, arose when the old *triga academica* of the pure sciences was increased to a *quadriga* by hitching theology as the fourth horse to the academic chariot and making it run a race with philosophy and the other sciences under the whip of the charioteer, Magister Reason, Ph. D., LL. D., M. D., and now also D. D. What became of theology in this unwarranted yoking together of incongruents and disparates became apparent through the rise of rationalism, first at Halle and thereafter gradually at every other university. Theology had allowed itself to be stripped of its distinct quality, and by making itself the equal had become the inferior of the other sciences because it simply could not, in fact, was never meant to, do its God-appointed tasks on the basis, by the method, and for the end which were proper to the sciences properly so called.

Dr. Pieper took up Walther's critique of the theology of such men as Kahnis, Hofmann, Luthardt, and others, whose rationalistic tendencies were dominating the Lutheran Church. The able polemics in which he, together with his older colleagues, engaged against this

hybrid theology have stamped him a churchman of exceptional valor to his age. The labor which he performed directly for the Missouri Synod, and indirectly for the entire Church, is a perennial task for loyal churchmen. How much we in the Missouri Synod really love Dr. Pieper will have to be shown in the years to come by the use we shall make of the literary heritage which he and his theological forebears have left us.

Valparaiso, Ind.

W. H. T. DAU.

Paul as Citizen.

Does the subject need an apology? Paul stands before us as the evangelizer of the Greco-Roman world, the greatest missionary that ever lived, as the preacher of righteousness by faith, as the great champion of the doctrine of grace, as the inspired penman of a great part of our New Testament, and to treat of him in the rôle of citizen might seem a descent from the sublime to the commonplace. But there are passages in the Bible in which he is depicted in this rôle. You cannot ignore them; they are there for a purpose and certainly must receive some attention. Besides, there is the important consideration that a study of Paul's life from this particular point of view may help to throw some light on the New Testament and aid in grasping its full import. Some of Paul's letters are intensely personal. To understand them, you must know something about the man. The better you are informed on all the various relations he sustained to the outside world, the world about him, the more will you be able to uncover fully the intended sense of his statements, and frequently by much study you will be led to see shades of meaning, niceties of thought, and indirect allusions which had escaped you before. And, finally, we ourselves are citizens and as such have our problems and perplexities. Whatever light we can obtain to guide us in the performance of our civic duties, we shall be grateful for.

Paul as citizen — some people may think that this subject will lead us to speculate whether Paul, if he were living to-day, would be in favor of a strong centralized government, so that he might be classed as a first-century Republican, or whether he would be in sympathy rather with the theory of local self-government, with the idea of States' rights and freedom from restraint by a central government, an attitude which all good Democrats are supposed to defend. What would he think of the injection of moral and religious issues into a political campaign? What would be his view of our Prohibition tangle? Would he vote for a Catholic as President of the United States? etc. Some of these questions are pertinent, while others border on the absurd, and the less said about them, the better.