

4-1-1968

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### Recommended Citation

Gerdes, Egon W. (1968) "Pietism: Classical and Modern-A Comparison of Two Representative Descriptions," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 39, Article 24.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol39/iss1/24>

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# Pietism: Classical and Modern

## A Comparison of Two Representative Descriptions

EGON W. GERDES

Only a few years after Philipp Jacob Spener in 1675 published his famous *Pia Desideria*,<sup>1</sup> his followers were labeled "Pietists."<sup>2</sup> The new name spread to Leipzig, where under the leadership of August Hermann Francke a group of students met in the *Collegium Philobiblicum*. They also were nicknamed "Pietists."<sup>3</sup> Then one of the students suddenly died. His funeral was the occasion for the Leipzig professor of poetry, Joachim Feller, to say a word about the new movement with which he was in sympathy. And so he became the first man to identify himself with Pietism in a positive sense. He wrote a poem on

<sup>1</sup> For a critical edition see Philipp Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. Kurt Aland, 2d ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955). This edition is the basis for the English translation, *Pia Desideria by Philipp Jacob Spener*, translated, edited, and with an Introduction by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). The introduction is very helpful for the historical context of the document.

<sup>2</sup> For the rise of the name "Pietists" see Martin Schmidt's valuable introduction to the source book *Das Zeitalter des Pietismus*, ed. Martin Schmidt and Wilhelm Jannasch (Bremen: Schönemann, 1965), particularly pp. 32 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The events at Leipzig have been discussed most recently by Erich Beyreuther, *August Hermann Francke, Zeuge des lebendigen Gottes*, 2d ed. (Marburg: Francke-Buchhandlung, 1961), pp. 61 ff.

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the death of the pietistic student in 1689.<sup>4</sup> Still in the same year he followed this up with a short poem on the Pietists in general.<sup>5</sup> These two poems taken together form the first document of our consideration.

The forms of Pietism as they developed around Spener and Francke and for which Feller speaks are most adequately summarized as classical Pietism. Perhaps one should also include in this its Wuerttemberg manifestation as best represented by Johann Albrecht Bengel. It is this type of Pietism that we take as the one side of our comparison. What is excluded then are, first, the various forms of radical Pietism that also influenced to some degree Nikolaus Graf von Zinzendorf and the Moravians. The related semipietistic movements of Methodism and the Great Awakening are also excluded.<sup>6</sup> All these

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in full by Johann Georg Walch, *Einleitung in die Religionsstreitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchen, von der Reformation an bis auf ietzige Zeiten ausgeführt*, 1st ed., 1730; 2d ed., 1733 (Jena: Meyer), I, 548 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Also quoted in full *ibid.*, p. 579.

<sup>6</sup> As to the various pietistic groups, their differences and relations, the following articles in dictionaries give the necessary basic information: Martin Schmidt, "Pietismus" in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: Mohr, 1961), V, coll. 370—81. This article recently appeared in English translation in *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965). Cf. Ernst Beyreuther, "Pietismus" in *Evangelisches*

early forms of Pietism of the late 17th and early 18th centuries were revived, though in different forms, in the 19th century, even in various manifestations of revivalism or Neopietism.<sup>7</sup> Wherever Pietism is prevalent today, it is this 19th-century type that determines its life rather than classical Pietism. But we do not want to discuss the 19th century in its own right either. We rather wish to look at Pietism in its modern form, although it may be dependent on 19th-century developments.

In 1965 a Methodist minister, Charles Merrill Smith, became the spokesman for the anti-pietist party of the church. In his book *How to Become a Bishop without Being Religious*<sup>8</sup> he gives an equally classic definition of modern Pietism as Feller did for classical Pietism. The main difference between the two is that Feller is pro-pietistic whereas Smith attacks Pietism. But this takes us into the actual comparison, which we will defer until we have looked at the documents themselves.

In order to make the comparison mean-

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*Kirchenlexikon*, ed. Heinz Brunotte and Otto Weber (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), III, coll. 216—21. Kurt Aland, "Pietismus" in *Weltkirchenlexikon*, ed. Franklin H. Littell and Hans Hermann Walz (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1960), coll. 1151—56. A modern and extensive discussion of the history and theology of Pietism has not yet been written, but the present writer is preparing *A History of Pietism* for both a German and an American publisher.

<sup>7</sup> For the revival movements of Neopietism see Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Die Erweckungsbewegung* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1957), and Ernst Beyreuther, *Die Erweckungsbewegung*, Fascicle R., xxxl, in Vol. 4 of *Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte*, ed. Kurt Dietrich Schmidt and Ernst Wolf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> Charles Merrill Smith, *How to Become a Bishop without Being Religious* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1965).

ingful, let us present our documents in full. The 1689 poems by Joachim Feller run as follows in a rather literal and non-rhyming English translation:

The name of the Pietists is now known all over town.

Who is a Pietist? He who studies the Word of God

And leads also a holy life according to it.

That is well done, well for every Christian. For this amounts to nothing if after the manner of rhetoricians

And disputants one puts on airs in the pulpit

And does not live holy as one ought to, according to the teaching.

Piety must previously nest in the heart.

It also builds ten times more than well-put words,

Even all scholarship, it also is of profit here and there.

Thus, because the deceased was, in addition to several fine gifts,

And never-ceasing diligence, a good Pietist,

Therefore he is now also a good Quietist.

The soul rests well in God, the body equally well in the grave.

I have recently thought of the Pietists here,

And that in its basic meaning and apart from heresy.

And where is heresy? The name is not new, either,

And useful, as one names the lawyers after law.

I myself will herewith admit without shyness

That I am a Pietist without disgrace and hypocrisy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The German original is given by Walch as follows:

Es ist jetzt Stadt-bekannt der Nahm der Pietisten,  
Was ist ein Pietist? der Gottes Wort studirt,

The 1965 discussion of piety by Charles Merrill Smith is for our purposes summarized in the following statements of his:

Perhaps the best single word to describe the flavor of personality one must strive to achieve is "pious." This implies that the preacher will gather up in himself a host of qualities and characteristics and distill them into an essence which he exudes at all times, and which advertizes unmistakably that there is a man of much prayer and meditation and lofty thoughts, a man who has disentangled himself from the secular, soiling concerns which obsess men—in short, a clergyman.

. . . . .

Here we must pause to make a distinction between "religious" and "pious."

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und nach demselben auch ein heilig Leben führt.  
 Das ist ia wohl gethan! ia wohl von ieden Christen.  
 Denn dieses machts nicht aus, wenn man nach Rhetoristen  
 Und Disputanten Art sich auf der Canzel ziert,  
 Und nach der Lehre nicht lebt heilig, wie gebührt.  
 Die Pietät die muss voraus im Herzen nisten.  
 Die baut auch zehmal mehr, als wohlgesetzte Wort,  
 Ia alle Wissenschaft, sie nutzt auch hier und dort.  
 Drum weil der Seelge war bey mancher schönen Gabe,  
 Und nimmer müdden Fleis, ein guter Pietist,  
 So ist er nunmehr auch ein guter Quietist.  
 Die Seel ruht wohl in Gott, der Leib auch wohl im Grabe.  
 Ich habe iüngst gedacht der hiesgen Pietisten,  
 Und zwar im Grund Verstand und sonder Ketzerey.  
 Und wo ist Ketzerey? der Nahm ist auch nicht neu,  
 Und brauchbar, wie man nennt von Jure die Juristen:  
 Ich selbstn wil hiemit gestehen ohne Scheu,  
 Dass ich ein Pietist ohn Schmach und heucheln sey.

A genuinely religious man is, as the sociologists would say, inner-directed. He has deep and abiding convictions usually derived from his faith in God and what he believes to be God's will. Thus he is likely to be socially irresponsible, largely uninterested in the kind of impression he makes on people, often involved in unpopular causes. He tends to be a crusader, frequently intolerant of what he conceives to be injustice or evil. Unfortunately he is usually tactless, making enemies unnecessarily and thus becoming an embarrassment to the church.

. . . He is the fellow who gives rise to the suspicion that the church is socialistic and brings the whole clerical profession into disrepute. . . .

The pious man, on the other hand, seems more religious to the layman than the religious man because he tries very hard to fit the image that laymen conjure up when they think of "preacher." . . .

. . . . .

You see, as ourselves we have tastes, prejudices, habits, manners, idiosyncrasies which often are directly opposed to the pious image we must strive to create, and if we permit their expression, they will ruin the image. No one is naturally pious. It has to be learned. . . .<sup>10</sup>

In the following comparison of classical and modern Pietism we want to restrict ourselves to a consideration of the documents offered. It must be granted that such a procedure involves the great danger of eisegesis. On the other hand, it can, however, also be legitimate if the documents are indeed summary statements. A word of explanation may therefore be in order. Although we shall concentrate on the actual wording of the documents, we will be interpreting them out of an

<sup>10</sup> Smith, pp. 2—4 passim.

assumed and presupposed wider context. Thus when saying "Feller," we actually have the overall labors of Spener, Francke, and Bengel before our eyes. And when we speak of "Smith," we really do not only mean the whole of his book but all his sympathetic readers as well, who mostly agree with the author's analysis though perhaps not with his results. In each case where an assertion is made, not only one but many "proof-texts" could be cited in substantiation of the points in question. A cumbersome listing of them is dispensed with because it is felt that both authors, whether by choice or by chance, have indeed succeeded in focusing on the issues at stake, in comprising them in the form of nutshells, in establishing in the offered texts prisms through which all the light that can be shed on the subject must pass. Thus both the assumed context and the representative character of the documents encourage us to think that we are still dealing with proper exegesis.

In comparing the two documents, we shall first pay attention to the general outlook and then comment on particular observations. To begin with the general outlook, what makes a comparison of the two descriptions interesting is that, in the first place, both of them do raise the question of piety. They even use the same terms. There is only one slight difference between them, which is however of no consequence, in that Feller prefers the nouns. He speaks of "piety" and "the pietist" or "the pietists." Smith on the other hand limits himself to a discussion of the adjective "pious," be it with or without quotation marks. Fundamentally, however, they work with the same concept. Therefore, we have thus a basis for comparison.

Beyond the use of terms, however, we have to ask for their meaning. Thus we have to say, in the second place, that neither Feller nor Smith created the term "pious." They both inherited the concept together with the derogatory meaning it already carried. Both have to reckon with the fact that the term "pious" is used as a label meant to create an image. Granted, it is Smith who introduces the idea of "image" into his definition of pietism. Feller does not have the word, but he certainly has the thing. Furthermore, only two years after the publication of Feller's poem, even the term as such appeared. The Halle pastor Albrecht Christian Roth (it is believed that he is the author) published anonymously in Latin and German his accusations against Pietism under the very title *Imago Pietismi*.<sup>11</sup> So we do have classical Pietism struggling with the image problem as well. This means for our comparison that actually both Feller and Smith are aware of the label and image quality the concept of Pietism carries. They further agree in that both of them attempt to get rid of the derogatory label and the misconception the image carries. They differ, however, in the procedures with which they go about their tasks. Feller on the one hand does not see anything wrong

<sup>11</sup> The Latin title is: *Imago Pietismi, hoc est, Brevis delineatio abusum et errorum, qui Pietismum, barbaram quidem, sed fortassis jure sic dictum, constituere dicuntur . . .*, [sine loco] 1691. The German title is: *Ebenbild der Pietisterei, das ist: Ein kurtzer Abriss der Mißbräuche und Irrthümer, auff welche sich der Pietismus gründen soll*, 1691. Klaus Deppermann, *Der hallesche Pietismus und der preussische Staat unter Friedrich III.* (I.) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), apparently quotes from another German edition which has in its main title: *Imago Pietismi: Ebenbild des heutigen Pietismi*. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 180.

with "the name" as such. He thinks it is useful just "as one names the lawyers after law." Thus he can find it easy to identify himself as a Pietist and give this term a positive interpretation. For Smith, however, the term is far too negatively loaded. He cannot embrace it any longer in a positive sense. Thus he has to introduce an alternative. The alternative, he hopes, will help him get rid of "the flavor" of the term "pious." Thus we can summarize our findings at this stage by saying that neither Feller nor Smith shut their eyes to the fact that "pietism" or "piety" are mocking words. But to the questions raised thereby Feller answers: Let us not subscribe to the derogatory meaning of pietism, but define piety positively. And for the negative alternative, let us introduce a new term. Smith's answer, however, is: Let us subscribe to the derogatory meaning of piety and define piety negatively. It is for the positive alternative that we should introduce a new term. This difference reflects the dilemma in which every student of Pietism finds himself. In the attempt to preserve the good points and throw out the evil ones, can we still accept the terminology of tradition?<sup>12</sup>

Thus far only the surface has been touched. Both Feller and Smith want to dig deeper. They do this, in the third place, by giving their distinctions between the "good guy" on the one hand and the "bad guy" on the other. It may be advisable to introduce here a third term that neither one of them employed: the

<sup>12</sup> For a modern discussion see, for instance, the two articles by Kenneth J. Foreman in *The Presbyterian Outlook*, "What We Lost When We Ditched Pietism" (Jan. 18, 1965), p. 9, and "More We Lost When We Ditched Pietism" (Feb. 15, 1965), p. 9.

spiritual man. What is meant is the genuine spiritual man, who as such is to be distinguished from the "phony" nonspiritual man. That this is what both authors have in mind is indicated when Smith says that he is concerned "to make a distinction between 'pious'" and its contrary. Feller puts it in the form that he had "thought of the Pietists" and that "in its basic meaning."

The last point leads us now to the basic orientation of the two authors which, in the fourth place, has to be spelled out. We have seen that both are aware of the image quality of Pietism as it is presented to them. Both think that the picture drawn is wrong. Feller opposes the *Imago Pietismi* as presented by orthodoxy. Smith opposes "the pious image" of what to the layman "seems more religious" than true religion itself. Both are working to supplant the wrong image by the right thing. The genuine spiritual man is in Feller's definition "a Pietist without disgrace and hypocrisy"; he is in Smith's eyes "a genuinely religious man." Thus for Feller the piety of the Pietist is positive. The negative opposite is seen as "orthodox." The specific historical connotations given to this term are those of a dead, stiffening, and stifling Protestant scholasticism that has abstracted doctrine from life.<sup>13</sup> It is

<sup>13</sup> The most recent study of the relationship between Orthodoxy and Pietism is the work by Hans-Martin Rotermond, *Orthodoxie und Pietismus, Valentin Ernst Löschers "Timotheus verinus" in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Schule August Hermann Franckes* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1959). See particularly pp. 7 f. and 12—16. Since Rotermond deals primarily with the Halle type of Pietism, he may be regarded as implicitly also speaking for Joachim Feller and vice versa.

through these glasses that the classical Pietist looks.

For Smith the term pietist, whether with or without quotation marks, is always on the negative side. The positive opposite is the concept of "religious." This carries with it, naturally, specific contemporary connotations. It is meant in the positive sense in which it is generally applied in the English-speaking world.<sup>14</sup> That means it does not carry the flavor of the Neoorthodox negative understanding of religion.<sup>15</sup> Both authors subscribe to their concerns also personally. Feller confesses very bluntly "that I am a Pietist" and not an orthodox. In Smith the personal confession is more implicit than explicit, but

<sup>14</sup> Thus Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1961), defines "religious" as "relating to that which is acknowledged as ultimate reality: manifesting devotion to and reflecting the nature of the divine or that which one holds to be of ultimate importance." Similarly "religion" is defined as "the personal commitment to and serving of God or a God with worshipful devotion: conduct in accord with divine commands . . . : a way of life recognized as incumbent on true believers, and typically the relating of oneself to an organized body of believers." Smith is obviously in agreement with these definitions.

<sup>15</sup> Although Barth and Bonhoeffer are usually cited for this view (see, for example, Milton D. Hunnek, "Religionless Christianity: Is It a New Form of Gnosticism?" in *Christianity Today*, X [Jan. 7, 1965], 7—9), Hendrik Kraemer is for this purpose much more representative since he discusses the religion-versus-faith question from within the more immediately relevant context of the missionary situation. See, for example, his books *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 1st ed. 1938, 2d ed. 1956 (London: International Missionary Council); *The Commemoration of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), particularly pp. 418—25; *Why Christianity of all Religions?* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), particularly pp. 11—16.

it is there. He would say, "I am no Pietist but a religious man."

The difference in the understanding of terms makes us raise, in the fifth place, the question of the elements of comparison. For when one wants to compare, for example, two dogs, one cannot compare the head of the one dog with the tail of the other. This would be the case if we compared Feller's positive understanding with Smith's negative understanding of piety. One must, therefore, rearrange and compare first the positive elements with each other, that is, Feller's positive concept of piety with Smith's positive concept of religiosity. Then, second, one can compare the negative elements if that is possible. This would entail a contrast between Feller's negative concept of orthodoxy and Smith's negative concept of piety. A further word of clarification is necessary. When comparing spirituality or positive piety and positive religiosity, one must proceed from the claim that such a comparison of the positive concepts is absolutely necessary. The case is more complex when we compare the descriptions of the nonspiritual man, be he orthodox or pious, in their negative meanings. In this case proper care must be taken that the comparison between the negative elements is not pressed too hard or carried too far. It is not always fruitful.

From the comparison of the general outlook we now proceed to a comparison of particular observations. In the first place we should like to know what is concretely meant when the spiritual man and his opposite are characterized. Both Feller and Smith have first of all the clergy in mind. Smith discusses expressively the "preacher," "the clergyman," and the whole "clerical

profession." Also Feller thinks of the man "in the pulpit." Only secondarily the general believer comes into the picture. Feller draws the line from the man in the pulpit to "every Christian." Smith not only discusses the "laymen" but also the "church" at large. But as we have said, the first concern is the pastor, the second his flock. As far as classical Pietism is concerned, this reflects indeed its historical genesis. For Pietism, though involving lay people in a completely new way, did originate from pastors and especially their work with theological students.<sup>16</sup> For modern Pietism we have to postulate the different situation of a conflict. For in most cases the active church members are still soaked in Pietism whereas the clergy, whether masters or apprentices, try to get away from it.

To understand the true spiritual man, the ideal of our authors, our next two questions are: What is incompatible with true spirituality? And, What is the content of true spirituality? Thus we are interested, in the second place, in the opposite of the spiritual man, his behavior as well as his values. How does he act:

<sup>16</sup> Both Spener and Francke were primarily pastors. Spener, probably because he was the head of the Pietist party, was never called to an academic position, and Francke, at a critical juncture of his life, left the academic career for the pastorate. That does not mean that these men were not interested in the academic world. Quite the contrary. Large sections of Spener's *Pia Desideria* discuss the low state of university theology and give suggestions for its improvement (*Pia Desideria*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert, pp. 44—57, 103—15). Furthermore, it was Spener in his Berlin years who was decisively instrumental in establishing Halle University and having Francke called there. Before that Francke's type of Pietism had originated as an awakening among students in Leipzig, which naturally colored the later work at Halle University. For all this see Erich Beyreuther, *August Hermann Francke*, pp. 61—78, 207—18.

the orthodox man in the eyes of Feller; the pious man in the eyes of Smith? Both answer that he is always busy creating an atmosphere. Feller says he "puts on airs." And Smith feels there is a certain "flavor" about his personality. This attitude can be accounted for by the fact that both Feller's orthodox man and Smith's pious man are merely externally motivated, so to speak, by publicity reasons. They are interested in staging shows. Thus the orthodox man works with "well-put words." He has learned those from "rhetoricians and disputants." The pious man constantly "advertises." He does so by "exuding" a "distilled essence" of his being. Is the motivation external, so is the result activist. Smith spells this out most clearly. The whole attitude of what he calls the pious man is a willed one. He is constantly engaged in promoting a program. He "strives to achieve." He "strives to create." This type of attitude is somewhat artificial, it does not come naturally, it has "to be learned."

The question of the behavior of the nonspiritual man with its motivations and results is most clearly illuminated by looking at the values this man embraces. Both authors indicate that the nonspiritual man worships idols. And they are certainly not too far apart. The highest goal for the orthodox theologian, says Feller, is "scholarship." One might even add, it is pure scholarship. For the pious preacher the greatest achievement consists in "lofty thoughts." For these indicate, Smith tells us, that he "has disentangled himself" from all the lower things of this life. Feller and Smith agree, therefore, that the idolatry of the nonspiritual man consists in the fact that he turns to something supposedly



higher than ordinary, be it scholarship or lofty thoughts. In so doing he embraces an attitude of a neutral observer concerning mundane matters. He is interested in "pure" scholarship rather than the "applied" science of caring for people. He is "disentangled" rather than "involved." He really has no relationship to what Feller calls "life" and what Smith specifies as "secular concerns."

What can be said, in the third place, about the genuine spiritual man? What is his character, how is he motivated, and how does his conduct result from this? When discussing the character of the spiritual man, Feller speaks of his "name," whereas Smith refers to his "personality." This should not mislead us, for both the name and the personality point back to man as a person. It is this man as a person of whom both authors depict individual traits of his character. Here, however, they differ. Feller sees the genuine Pietist as a man of natural endowments who over and above is also "a good Pietist." In other words, his spirituality does not conflict with his "several fine gifts" and his "never ceasing diligence." With Smith it is different. To him religiosity, because of its later-to-be-discussed motivation, puts man into a conflict situation. His nature is not seen, as in Feller, in essentially positive terms. It is rather negatively described as "tastes, prejudices, habits, manners, idiosyncrasies." Religiosity exists in spite of these adjectives. We see that the orientation for the description of the character is different. Feller speaks of nature in its fine aspects, Smith sees its irritating points. Feller sees the harmony between nature and spirituality, Smith sees the clash. Is Feller more Roman Catholic, Smith more Protestant?

In discussing the motivations underlying the conduct of the spiritual man, Feller and Smith agree on one score and disagree on another. They agree in that both of them claim for the spiritual man an inward motivation for his outward behavior. This is precisely the distinguishing mark from the orthodox or pious man in the negative sense of the word who was motivated only externally. What Smith calls "inner-directed," Feller describes in flowery words: "Piety must previously nest in the heart." So both see for genuine spirituality a process from the inner man to the outer. Neither the outer man nor the inner man can be dealt with in isolation from each other. Nor should the one-way road from the inner man to the outer man be turned upside down so as to make man in his decisions dependent on his surroundings.

But one other question remains. Given the great importance of the inner motivation, how can one describe it more closely? It is here that the authors differ. Feller reiterates the Lutheran, even orthodox stand, of *sola Scriptura*, which developed into the kind of Biblicism that became so typical of Pietism.<sup>17</sup> For Feller the genuine Pietist proceeds from "studying the Word of God." This Word of God, we may interpret in the light of classical Pietism, is understood as the living Christ as witnessed to by the writers of the New

<sup>17</sup> The most prominent fruit of this branch of Pietism is Johann Albrecht Bengel, the father of Württemberg Pietism, not only with his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* of 1742 but with an impressive list of other exegetical works that are still consulted by Biblical scholars. For a list of his works see Ernst Ludwig, *Schriftverständnis und Schriftauslegung bei Johann Albrecht Bengel* (Stuttgart: Scheufele, 1952), pp. 7 f.

Testament and then elaborated in the confessions of the church. Feller himself undergirds this definition by his reference to "the teaching" at large. This indicates that he shares the stand of Lutheran Pietism, that Luther's reformation of doctrine cannot be abrogated. It is the first reformation on which now the second reformation, namely, the reformation of life, should be built.<sup>18</sup> Together with Luther, however, the authority of the Word of God, in the understanding outlined, is taken to be an objective starting point for the Christian.<sup>19</sup> Here we hear the different voice of Smith enter. For he sides more with an American Free Church persuasion as it is based on subjectivism and individualism. Smith defines the motivation of the spiritual man as "deep and abiding convictions," a favorite subjectivistic expression of the Anabaptist tradition. He describes the spiritual man's motive of "faith in God" as "what he believes to be God's will." In this he seems to be close to radical Pietism as it builds on a spiritualism of a direct instruction by the Divine. Thus we may be left with the contrast between objective Word versus subjective faith. Natur-

<sup>18</sup> The foundations for this attitude have been laid by Spener himself in various writings and further developed by Francke. For a general orientation see Martin Schmidt, "Spener und Luther," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, XXIV (1957), 102 to 129; and Erhard Peschke, *Studien zur Theologie August Hermann Franckes* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1964), pp. 142—44.

<sup>19</sup> This argument shows how much classical Pietism owes to Luther and subsequent Lutheran Orthodoxy with its *sola Scriptura* principle. Although this type of Pietism may not be as consciously confessional as Lutheran Orthodoxy, it is yet as consciously Lutheran. In its course it reinterprets the Lutheran stand in nonconfessional terms, a praxis that became typical for all forms of Pietism and their doctrinal flexibility.

ally, the short quotations given are not sufficient to substantiate these claims. One might therefore ask one critical question, namely, whether or not each of the authors would not somehow imply the stance of the other. Does Feller, for instance, in insisting on the Word of God think of the subjective way in which the individual believer claims it for himself? Does Smith, on the other hand, perhaps ground his concept of faith in the objective proclamation of the Word of God?

Motivation leads to conduct. And conduct is indeed the core of the interest of the Pietist Feller and the anti-Pietist Smith. Here they join hands again. But to say it once more, neither mere externalism nor mere internalism are advocated, but the proper relationship from the inner to the outer man. To the actions in which the religious man is involved, he is led by his motives. Or, as Feller says, he lives "according" to his motives. Now, what is the resulting conduct? Feller has one summarizing term for it. He calls it "holiness." The spiritual man "leads also a holy life" just as much as his opposite "does not live holy as one ought to." Smith has no one word to describe the attitude of the spiritual man. But we could summarize his various statements by defining the true spiritual man as "an unpopular crusader for justice and the good." In the way Smith puts it, the spiritual man is "often involved in unpopular causes," he tends to be a "crusader," he is "frequently intolerant of what he conceives to be injustice or evil." The question we have to ask is whether or not Feller's "holiness" may correspond to or at least imply Smith's "unpopular crusader for justice and the good."

This is indeed the case. Although Feller does not discuss in his poems the disagreement of the classical Pietists with the world, yet he stands in a tradition that is very critical of the world to which the Christian has to stand in contrast precisely because of his unpopular stand for justice. To turn the argument upside down, one would assume that Smith, a Methodist, would not hesitate to adopt Wesley's term "holiness," correctly understood, as a description of the conduct of the religious man. Thus we may have succeeded in establishing a correlation between Feller and Smith so far as the aspect of a spiritual man's conduct is concerned. As to another aspect, however, namely that of the effect of spirituality, their views are incompatible. For Feller thinks with late 17th-century Protestant theologians of spirituality in its constructive, or as the Pietists would say, "edifying" quality.<sup>20</sup> Thus he claims that the genuine Pietist "builds ten times more than" his counterpart, namely, precisely through his piety. Smith on the other hand cannot see any immediate positive result of the attitude of the religious man. Quite the contrary. To him genuine religiosity proves to be a stumbling block. For the religious man is "socially irresponsible," he is "uninterested in the kind of impression he makes." Yes, he is even "making enemies unnecessarily." In order to understand this difference more deeply, we have to go beyond a characterization of the spiritual man in isolation.

<sup>20</sup> This is such a widespread term in Pietism that it would be too much even to begin to quote examples. But let it be noted that the German equivalent of "edifying," *erbaulich*, is perpetuated in the German word for "devotional literature," *Erbauungsliteratur*, the type of literature in which all kinds of Pietism abound.

We therefore ask, in the fourth place, for the various relationships of the spiritual man. How does he relate to other Christians, to the official church, and to the world at large? As far as other Christians are concerned, Feller sees the spiritual man in a positive relationship to them. As a matter of fact, he thinks of the genuine Pietist as a pattern for others. What he does "is well done, well for every Christian." Smith disagrees. For him the religious man is precisely he who does not fit the pattern set by others. He does not "fit the image that laymen conjure up." He not only is "opposed to the pious image," he "will ruin the image." How can one reconcile these opposing views? The key lies in different uses of the pattern idea. Feller looks forward from the conduct of the spiritual man to the possible conduct of others. And thus he would accept a pattern relationship. Smith, however, looks backward from the conduct of the spiritual man to the actual conduct of others. This is why he cannot accept a pattern relationship. From this, however, we may deduce that were these two working on the same level they would probably agree. For both could say that the Christian disagrees with patterns set but creates new patterns to be followed.

Pietism was never more than one party among others in the church. This holds true for classical Pietism as well as modern Pietism.<sup>21</sup> Thus it is understandable that both Feller and Smith in their appreciation of the derogatory application of the term pietism proceed from a critical atti-

<sup>21</sup> This is pointed out especially by Kurt Dietrich Schmidt, *Grundriss der Kirchengeschichte*, 3d ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), p. 408.

tude toward the existing church. Both authors realize that the genuine spiritual man is for wide stretches out of touch with the official, organized, institutional church. One may even call this a conflict situation. Where Feller and Smith disagree is at the point of whether the conflict between the spiritual man and the official church should be or not. Feller seems to indicate that the conflict should not be. At a time when Pietism was accused of heresy he likes to discuss it "apart from heresy." For he feels the essential church-relatedness of the religious man. This is why he asks, "And where is heresy?" In other words, the classical Pietist wants to live within the official church. This is what distinguishes him from the radical Pietist. Smith on the other hand seems to accept the fact that the conflict between the official church and the religious man is unavoidable. The spiritual man, he claims, is an "embarrassment to the church." He "gives rise to suspicion" on the side of the church. And the conflict even extends to those who hold offices in the church, for the spiritual man "brings the whole clerical profession into disrepute." May these latter statements again reflect more of a Free Church stand that thinks from the individual toward the church, rather than something of the corporate character of the church concept as the Pietists inherited it and tried to retain it albeit blending it with other elements? For what is at stake here is indeed a completely different understanding of the church, the institutional church redeemable on the one hand and the church totally alienated from reality on the other.

The relationship of the spiritual man to the world at large is mentioned only in passing. We should be careful not to over-

interpret these few statements. It seems, however, that Smith's interest is in this regard greater than Feller's. Feller saw the spiritual man primarily in his own being and in the context of the church. Smith sees him in the context of social questions. Not only does Smith consult "sociologists" and speak of the "social irresponsibility" of the spiritual man; he also can think of a "socialistic church." All this points to the modern conception that the spiritual man has to live his life as an apostolate among the "secular soiling concerns" of the people of this world. Feller would probably also subscribe to this, although he would not use such strong language. He rather refers to the life of the Pietist only as one being led "here," but he hastens to add that it has implications also for "there." And this leads us to our final observation.

In the fifth place the dimension of hope must be mentioned. Feller comments on this in a more detailed way than Smith does because of the historical occasion for his poems. He speaks of "there" because he has to speak of "the deceased," who is "now" changed into a "Quietist." Let us remark at this place that there are indeed historical connections between Roman Catholic "Quietism" and Protestant "Pietism."<sup>22</sup> And the opponents and critics accused Pietism of Roman Catholic leanings, possibly of a heretical nature, not without justification.<sup>23</sup> Here Feller takes

<sup>22</sup> For a summary of these connections see Schmidt-Jannasch, pp. 30 f.

<sup>23</sup> The various arguments in this direction have been collected and elaborated by Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, 3 vols. (Bonn: Marcus, 1880, 1884, 1886). His understanding and critique of Pietism is built on the concept of its essential return to Roman Catholic elements.

the sting out of this accusation by taking the concept of quietism out of a life situation and putting it into a death situation. The Pietist is a Quietist because "the soul rests well in God, the body equally well in the grave." Thus Pietism, rightly understood, leads for Feller to Quietism rightly understood. Genuine Pietism, Feller would say, is not only an *ars vivendi* but also an *ars moriendi*, or it "is of profit here and there." This is indeed a Pietistic commonplace.

The profit motif implies the all-too-familiar question, "What do I get out of it?" And Feller is indeed serious that genuine piety "amounts" to something. Smith, on the other hand, cannot see any reward for genuine religiosity as such. For him it is indeed only false piety that has any reward, however questionable this reward may be because it is success only here and now. Who is right and who is wrong? Does it pay or not, we would say, to live ethically? One may not be able to answer this question, but one can clearly see that Feller's attitude is much closer to the Roman Catholic stand that salvation depends not only on faith but on a faith formed by love. Thus ethics do enter the realm of eschatology: works are the basis of the final judgment. For Smith, however, the Protestant principle is still valid that we are justified by faith only. Works have to follow spontaneously and do not enter into the question of our salvation. Thus ethics do not contribute to a life after death.

Let us make some final statements. The first thing our study has shown is that whenever the phenomenon of Pietism is

studied, one should make clear in which sense one applies the term, positively or negatively. But beyond this formal point there is a material point at stake. In its quest for spirituality any type of Pietism has a twofold concern. It wants to separate the "genuine" from the "phony" by insisting on a proper relationship between motive and conduct. These are indeed the elements of what we would call a theology of spirituality. Thus spirituality is characterized both as principle and attitude. It is a concept of transition forming the link between dogmatics and ethics. It is, so to speak, the great transformer from the vertical into the horizontal line. We cannot be satisfied with a discussion of the God-man and man-God relationship. Nor is it sufficient to discuss the man-man relationship. We like to see how the God-man and man-God relationship is genuinely transposed into a divine man-man relationship. This is precisely the concern of Pietism. And therefore, whether we like the name or not, its concern will stay with us though we may have to change the wording. Is not our case study a proof of this? The very necessity that we had to compare Feller's concept of piety with its contrast in Smith's understanding and Smith's concept of piety to Feller's understanding of its contrary shows that the problem of Pietism may to a large extent be a semantic one. So Charles Merrill Smith has fought modern Pietism with weapons that he took out of the arsenal of classical Pietism. Is this not a commonly accepted practice today?

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