

Our Position in Doctrine and Practice

L e c t u r e

delivered

before the 1893 Synod of Delegates of the Synod of Missouri,
Ohio and other States

by

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**Translation, translator's preface and introduction © 2004, Kenneth
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Translator's Preface

This is a translation of a lecture delivered by Pieper at the Synodical Convention of 1893, then edited by him and delivered into print in 1896. The book was in German. It is a short and vigorous polemic of LCMS doctrine against numerous doctrinal errors, followed by a short statement of the LCMS view of church discipline, unionism, and finally of membership in lodges and other clubs.

This presentation was prepared in the format of presenting first the German text, then the English, on a paragraph by paragraph basis. The point of doing that was twofold: 1. A reader who in fact does read German can look at a text and fairly readily identify what German expression is translated with the English words used; 2. German readers who came of age after about 1950 have the German text before them, but not in the old print that has become hard even for younger Germans to read, as it has ceased to be current even in German-speaking countries. The introduction immediately following is mine; again, for German readers, I felt it would be helpful to their understanding to have, in their language the same explanation of things that appears in the English introduction. I have left his 19th century orthography intact.

For the English translation of Scripture from the German, the text used is, unless otherwise noted, the King James. All more recent versions have their partisans; but the King James was the universally accepted English text of the Scriptures for centuries. There were a couple of Scripture quotations where I wanted a translation that not only was an authoritative translation into English but also conveyed the same sense in English that the Luther text, used in the German original of this book, conveyed. For that purpose, the English translation of the Bible most suitable was quite often that of Tyndale, whose translation was, like Luther's, from Erasmus's Greek text, who no doubt communicated with Luther, and whose work is actually the foundation from which those who prepared the Coverdale (familiar to Anglicans as the Bible used in the preparation of the Book of Common Prayer) and King James Bibles worked. Where I used Tyndale rather than the King James, I have so noted.

For translation of passages from the Book of Concord, I have used the Concordia Triglotta, which was for many years the standard for use by Lutheran pastors and theologians; the Dau/Bente translation therein is still doubtless in broader use than any other; I also, after working with it and with the Tappert translation, find Dau to be a better translation.

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Einleitung

Introduction

Unter den letzten zwei Jahren ist es mir klar geworden, wieviele Klassike unserer evangelisch-lutherischen Theologie immer noch nie auf Englisch übersetzt worden sind. Gewiß, einige Fundamentaldokumente sind längst auf Englisch zu haben, oft bei Verlust des deutschen Urtexts. Franz Pieper schrieb viel, und alles was er schrieb ist doch habenswert, gewisslich vorzüglich für alle Pastoren und zwar für jeden Lutheraner, der wirklich verstehen will, was die Lehre der Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod ist. Und das ist im großen Theil nicht vorhanden, außer man Deutsch lesen kann.

In the last two years, it has become clear to me how many classics of our Evangelical Lutheran theology have still not been translated into English. Certainly, a few fundamental documents have long been available in English, often along with the loss of the German originals. Franz Pieper wrote much, and all he wrote is worth having, really excellent for all pastors and to be sure for every Lutheran who really wants to understand what the doctrine of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is. And most of it is not available, unless one can read German.

Unsere Synode hat praktisch alles auf Deutsch gehandelt bis zum Ende des II. Weltkriegs. Ganz plötzlich gingen wir von unseren deutschen Wurzeln weg. Innerhalb der Zeit einer einzigen Generation, bis 1970, mehr oder weniger, waren nicht nur die meisten Lutheraner, sondern auch die meisten Pastoren, nicht mehr Deutsch-kundig. Und da standen die überwiegende Mehrheit unserer Theologie-Bücher immer noch auf Deutsch. Diese bleiben ein verborgener Schatz.

Our Synod conducted almost everything entirely in German until the end of the Second World War. Very suddenly, we walked away from our German roots. Within the time of a single generation, by 1970, more or less, not only most Lutherans but most pastors were no longer knowledgeable of German. And there stood the overwhelming majority of our theological books, still in German. These remain a buried treasure.

Dieselben sind auch nicht, wie Pieper zu einer Stelle in diesem Buch sagt, "Documente die etwa irgendwo im Archiv liegen." Insbesondere dieses Buch, erst von Pieper als Vortrag gegeben, dann von ihm selbst für Druckedition redaktiert, ist auch heute sehr Zeitgemäß. Was er zu sagen hat, erkannt man immer wieder in den jetzigen Streiten am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts. Höhere Kritizismus; Unionismus; eine übertriebene, halbrömische Lehre des öffentlichen Predigtamts; auch, indirekt, die sogenannte Contemporary Worship, welche er bestimmt für Unionismus halten würde.

The same are not, as Pieper says at one point in this book, "documents that are more or less lying somewhere in the archives." Particularly this book, first delivered by Pieper as a lecture, then edited by himself for a print edition, is also quite relevant today. What he has to say, one recognizes over and over again in the present struggles at the beginning of the 21st century. Higher Criticism; unionism; an exaggerated, quasi-Roman view of the public office of preaching; also, indirectly, the so-called contemporary worship, which he would certainly hold to be unionism.

Wie er so oft bemerkt, wir kommen immer wieder auf die Beschwerden von anderen, besonders von anderen Protestanten, warum wir nicht gleich zu unierten Zielen mitmachen. Diese Beschwerden sind auf Geschrei gewachsen in den letzten 30 Jahren.

As he so often remarks, we are constantly coming up against the complaints of others, especially of other Protestants, why we don't join immediately to unionistic goals. These complaints have grown to a scream in the last 30 years.

Man weiß ja von der großen Spaltung innerhalb unserer lieben Synode in den Jahren 1969-1977. Etwas mehr als 1.000 Pastoren, mehr als 100.000 Mitglieder unserer Gemeinden, traten aus unserer Synode. Und sie haben sich, nach einem 10-jährigen Interregnum, an die große vereinigte, angeblich lutherische, Kirche, die ELCA angegliedert. Diese letzte hat sich die Kanzeln und Altaren zu welchen geöffnet die die Anwesenheit Christi im Sacrament des Altars leugnen; auch zu welchen, die Frauen als angeblich "Priester" oder "Pastoren" und sogar Bischöfe "konsecrieren", die tatsächlich versagen die Göttlichkeit Christi und Seine Auferstehung aus dem Reich der Toten, oder stur, stolz und trotzig, überhaupt nicht bußwillig, in unaussprechlichen Todsünde leben.

Everyone familiar with the recent history of LCMS knows of the great division within our dear Synod in the years 1969-1977. Something more than 1,000 pastors, more than 100,000 members of our congregations, withdrew from our Synod. And they have, after a 10-year interregnum, joined the large, united, supposedly Lutheran church, the ELCA. The latter has opened its pulpits and altars to some who deny the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar; also to some, who "ordain" women as supposed "priests" or "pastors", and even consecrate bishops who actually deny the divinity of Christ and His Resurrection from the kingdom of the dead, or stubbornly, proudly and absolutely unwilling to repent, live in unspeakable deadly sin.

Doch man wirft uns vor, wir seien lieblos, pharisäisch, legalistisch, usw. indem wir keine Union mit solchen Kirchen wollen, überhaupt nicht mit einer angeblich lutherischen Kirche die so was treibt und fördert. Franz Pieper sah lange im voraus diese Triebe, die uns zu einer näheren Gemeinschaft mit solchen Irrgemeinschaften treiben möchten. Dieses Buch erinnert uns, wer wir sind und wo wir stehen—oder stehen sollen!

But we are accused that we are loveless, Pharisaical, legalistic, etc. in that we do not wish union with such churches, and certainly not with a supposedly Lutheran church that does and furthers such things. Franz Pieper saw long in advance the forces that would want to push us to a closer association with such heterodox church communities. The book serves as a reminder of who we are and where we stand—or should be standing. --KH

Vorbemerkung

Preface

Der hier im Broschürenform erscheinende Vortrag ist von dem Unterzeichneten vor der Delegatensynode, die im Frühjahr 1893 in St. Louis tagte, gehalten worden. Die Synode beschloß, daß der Vortrag im "Lutheraner", im Synodalbericht und als Pamphlet gedruckt werde. Wenn das Concordia Publishing House den letzten Theil des Synodalbeschlusses erst jetzt zur Ausführung bringt, so hat das seinen Grund darin, daß der Vortrag nach der Veröffentlichung im "Lutheraner" von einer Anzahl Zeitschriften *in extenso* abgedruckt wurde.

The lecture that here appears in brochure form was delivered by the undersigned before the Synod of Delegates which convened in the spring of 1893 in St. Louis. The Synod decided that the lecture would be printed in *Der Lutheraner*, in the Synodical Report, and as a pamphlet. If the Concordia Publishing House is only now carrying out the last part of the synodical decision, that has as its reason that the lecture, after the publication in *Der Lutheraner*, was reproduced further in a number of other magazines.

Bei der Ausarbeitung des Vortrages schwebte dem Unterzeichneten das Ziel vor, einen kurzen, aber zugleich möglichst vollständigen Überblick über unsere Stellung und Praxis zu geben. Eine ausführliche Begründung wird man in einem Vortrage nicht erwarten. Dagegen war das Bestreben darauf gerichtet, die Grundsätze, welche der Synode für ihre Stellung maßgebend sind, möglichst klar ins Licht zu stellen.

In the preparation of the lecture by the undersigned, the goal stood before him of giving a short, but at the same time as complete as possible overview of our position and practice. One will not expect an exhaustive explanation in a lecture. On the other hand, the effort was given, to put the principles which are definitive for the Synod in its position as clearly into the light as possible.

Wir sogenannten Missourier sind uns sehr wohl des principiellen Gegensatzes bewußt, in welchem wir zu den Bestrebungen der modernen Theologie stehen. Es ist uns auch nicht verborgen, daß wir bei dem größten Theil des kirchlichen Publicums *persona ingrata* sind. Wir haben aber auch immer die Erfahrung gemacht, daß einzelne Christen und Theologen ihr Urtheil über unsere Synode wesentlich änderten, wenn sie deren wirkliche Stellung in Lehre und Praxis kennen lernten. Vielleicht dient auch dieser Überblick über "Unsere Stellung in Lehre und Praxis" dazu, daß sich der Eine oder Andere ein sachliches Urtheil über die Synode von Missouri habe.

We so-called Missourians are very well aware of the fundamental opposition in which we stand to the efforts of modern theology. It is also not hidden from us that we are *persona non grata* with the greater part of the ecclesiastical public. We have however always had the experience, that individual Christians and theologians changed their view of our Synod, when they became acquainted with its actual position in doctrine and practice. Perhaps this overview of "Our Position in Doctrine and Practice" will serve, that somebody will form an objective view of the Missouri Synod.

F. Pieper