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Abstract

Living faith and knowledge in early eighteenth century German theology, philosophy and medicine

In his *Lebenslauf* the German theologian Hermann Francke describes his own conversion in terms of a transition from a state of faithlessness and dead book learning to a condition of living faith, knowledge and experience of God. Far from being original Francke's conversion story reflected perfectly well the theological idea of the conversion as a more or less sudden and thoroughgoing transformation of the human being. What was more original, however, was that he after his conversion would channel his energy into the foundation of a large-scale institution known as the Orphanage, where thousands of students were systematically taught not only theology but also philosophy, science and craft. Moreover, in the wake of Francke's endeavour a number of parallel and partly overlapping discourses on how to obtain living knowledge emerged as Francke engaged philosophers, scientists and physicians at the Orphanage. This paper explores living faith and knowledge in the intersection between theology, philosophy, science and medicine in early modern Germany.

Keywords: Early modern Germany; theology, philosophy, science and medicine; living faith and knowledge