FRANCKESCHE STIFTUNGEN

DFG

7. Sekundärliteratur

Halle Pietists in England. Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Brunner, Daniel L.

Göttingen, 1993

Early Perceptions of "Pietism" in England

Nutzungsbedingungen
Die Digitalisate des Francke-Portals sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Sie dürfen für wissenschaftliche und private Zwecke heruntergeladen und ausgedruckt werden. Vorhandene Herkunftsbezeichnungen dürfen dabei nicht entfernt werden.
Eine kommerzielle oder institutionelle Nutzung oder Veröffentlichung dieser Inhalte ist ohne vorheriges schriftliches Einverständnis des Studienzentrums August Hermann Francke der Franckeschen Stiftungen nicht gestattet, das ggf. auf weitere Institutionen als Rechteinhaber verweist. Für die Veröffentlichung der Digitalisate können gemäß der Gebührenordnung der Franckeschen Stiftungen Entgelte erhoben werden.
Zur Erteilung einer Veröffentlichungsgenehmigung wenden Sie sich bitte an die Leiterin des Studienzentrums, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Terms of use
All digital documents of the Francke-Portal are protected by copyright. They may be downloaded and printed only for non-commercial educational, research and private purposes. Attached provenance marks may not be removed.
Commercial or institutional use or publication of these digital documents in printed or digital form is not allowed without obtaining prior written permission by the Study Center August Hermann Francke of the Francke Foundations which can refer to other institutions as right holders. If digital documents are published, the Study Center is entitled to charge a fee in accordance with the scale of charges of the Francke Foundations.
For reproduction requests and permissions, please contact the head of the Study Center, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Visual Library

2. Halle Pietism

Early Perceptions of "Pietism" in England

"Pietism" was not a common word in late seventeenth-century literary England; nor would its first mention in 1697 arouse a favourable impression among Anglican readers. Francis Lee, the Nonjuror who attached himself to Jane Leade's theosophical and pan-confessional Philadelphian Society and married her daughter, in giving an account of that Society, stated:

> The numbers of this Society in other Countries may be more Considerable, then is at first easie to be believ'd. The first Motion or Eruption of it may be said to have been in *Germany*, where it has spread it self chiefly through the indefatigable Zeal of some of the Clergy; under the Name of PIETISM.[74]

That same year in his *Theosophical Transactions* Lee described the "Miraculous" rise and the teaching methods of a "College in Germany", which, though he does not mention it by name, was undoubtedly that of the Pietist A.H. Francke.[75] These links to the dubious Philadelphians, with their eccentricities and theosophical speculations,[76] could not have endeared Pietism to an Anglican readership.

In the second edition of *The Snake in the Grass*, also published in 1697, Charles Leslie, another Nonjuror but unlike Lee a fiery controversialist, in an effort to connect both "Enthusiasm" and "Quakerism" to Rome, made reference to the "great Fraction" caused in Catholicism by some Quietists in Italy, adding, "There is a *Sect* like unto these rose up in *Germany*, call'd *Pietists*; some of whom I am told have been in *London*, and own'd as Brethren by the *Quakers*, and gone many of them to *Pensylvania*".[77] Leslie's informant was not leading him astray; in 1693 one Nicholas Rüst, a Continental member of the Society of Friends, told a Friends' meeting in London that "there is a people raised up in Germany, and severall other places, who call themselves Pietists, but are by the world called Qwakers". When forty of these Pietists who "separate themselves from the Lutherans" found their way to England and were in a "poor Condition", over £86 was collected for them at various Friends' meetings.[78]

---

74 [Francis Lee,] *The State of the Philadelphia Society* (London, 1697), p. 11.

75 *Theosophical Transactions* 4 (1697), 218-25; 5 (1697), 238-47; for further details, see pp. 98f below.

76 On the Philadelphian Society, see N. Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians* (Uppsala, 1948).

77 [Charles Leslie,] *The Snake in the Grass*, 2nd edn. (London, 1697 [1696]), p. 185.

78 Nicholas Rüst to?, London, 3 June 1693, and "Minute Book of the Six Weeks Meeting", 26 Oct. 1693, printed in: "Friends and Pietists in Germany", *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* 7 (1910), pp. 136-39; cf. G.F. Nuttall, "Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain", in: *Pietismus und Reveil*, ed. J. van den Berg and J.P. van Dooren (Leiden, 1978), pp. 233-35; W. Beck and T.F. Bull, *The London Friends' Meetings* (London, 1869), p. 131.

Leslie's critique and Lee's praises linked Pietism to two things abhorrent to the late seventeenth-century Anglican churchman: separatism and enthusiasm. An early supporter of Halle Pietism in England noted that most people had an adverse concept of Pietism, considering it a sub-species of Quakerism.[79] What most English men and women did not realize – indeed what most German opponents of Pietism refused to recognize – was that not all manifestations of German Pietism were schismatic and fanatical. Even today Pietism remains a misunderstood movement among modern historians and one which still stirs up controversy and disagreement: one scholar has called Pietism "undoubtedly the most significant inner-church movement within Protestantism since the Reformation",[80] while another says that it "was one of the major strides of retreat from responsibility as it had been viewed in the past".[81] In 1705 A.W. Boehm wanted to clear the air about Pietism, so he translated into English and published in London an account of Francke's work in Halle called *Pietas Hallensis*;[82] in the Preface he included a twenty-five page history of Pietism, the first in English.[83] This had exceptional importance as a major source of information for the English on the nature and aspirations of Pietism, and shaped their perceptions more than any other source.

English interest in Germany was considerable in the early eighteenth century. Boehm noted that Pietism came from a nation

> ... from whom we derive both our Pedigree and Religion, together with many of our Ancient Laws and Political Establishments, and with whom also our Alliances at this Instant are such, as ought to make us now or never somewhat inquisitive for certain into their Affairs and Acts.[84]

The European wars, into which William of Orange had dragged the English nation, reached their climax in the war of Spanish succession, in which Hanover was a major ally; the 1702 Act of Succession, ensuring that a German Protestant would one day sit on the English throne, heightened English curiosity in German matters. Though by the end of the eighteenth century England had become much more isolated from Continental affairs, circumstances early in the century created an atmosphere conducive to cultural exchange. Boehm's history of Pietism was a significant early piece of what W.R. Ward has called

---

79 H.W. Ludolf to Francke, London, 6 Dec. 1700 (ArFrSt D71:64-65).

80 K. Aland, "Pietismus", in: *Weltkirchenlexicon*, ed. F.H. Littell and H.H. Walz (Stuttgart, 1960), col. 1151.

81 Martin Marty, *A Short History of Christianity*, 2nd edn. (Philadelphia, 1987 [1959]), p. 225.

82 The content and context of the book itself will be discussed on pp. 83–87 below.

83 [A.W. Boehm,] Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, by A.H. Francke, [trans. A.W. Boehm] (London, 1705), pp. xvi-xl. Boehm's work was based on a previous history by P.J. Spener and was elaborated stylistically by Lee. (Boehm to G.H. Neubauer, Windsor, 20 June 1705, printed in: Sames, pp. 180f)

84 Boehm, Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, p. ii.

... the complex of early eighteenth-century forces which were uniting England to Germany closer than ever before, to its politics and piety, to its theology, and to the private comforts and overt terrors of the German religious mind.[85]

The account of Francke's work was aimed, in the words of its Preface, especially at those "Inspired with a Zeal for the Promotion of solid Piety and Charity, by the Societies for that end set up lately within these Kingdoms".[86] Boehm was well aware of the voluntary societies in England and of their concerns; in his history of Pietism he hoped to point out in the German context "the Principal Persons and Springs, that have been set on Work in the Propagating Christian Piety, and promoting a *solid Reformation of Manners*, among all Orders both of the Clergy and Laity".[87] His choice of words like "Propagating", "promoting", and "*Reformation of Manners*" was not accidental; his conscious objective was to legitimize Pietism by linking it to the Anglican voluntary societies.

Though Boehm mentions many names, three "Principal Persons" dominate his history: Johann Arndt (1555-1621), Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), and August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). Arndt, general superintendent of the Lutheran churches in Celle, was depicted by Boehm as one of those in the century after Luther's Reformation who promoted "another Reformation ... which did not respect so much Opinion as Practice" and who,

... laying deeply to heart the *Decay of Christian Piety*, were wholly taken up with the thoughts of Reviving the Spirit and Life of Christianity among those of the *Augustan Confession* in particular, as among all professed Christians in general.

The main means used by Arndt to revive Christianity in Germany was the publication of *True Christianity* (1605,1610), "an Instrument of the Divine Blessing in the Conversion of many Souls into the true and Interior Christianity".[88] The most popular devotional work in German Protestantism, it went through twenty editions prior to Arndt's death and 125 printings before the end of the eighteenth century.[89] Arndt stated that the main scope of his work was

... to lay open, on one hand, the secret and abominable depth of original corruption which cleaves to mankind; and on the other, to set forth Jesus Christ as the sole beginning, medium, and end of our whole conversion to God. This twofold consideration ... runs through the whole book.[90]

---

85 "Power and Piety", p. 231.

86 Boehm, Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, p. iii.

87 *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

88 *Ibid.*, pp. xvi-xvii.

89 Wilhelm Koepp, *Johann Arndt* (Berlin, 1912), pp. 302-05.

90 Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, 2 vols., trans. A.W. Boehm, ed. W. Jacques (London, 1815), i.xxii.

True Christianity showed Arndt's affinity to medieval and mystical sources, and Boehm freely allowed that he "had imbibed chiefly his Doctrine and Living way of Practice from *Thauler* and *Kempis*".[91] This mysticism, however, was not one of personal ascent along the *scala perfectionis* but a spirituality which stressed the practical in opposition to the perceived dogmatical rigidity and dryness of some Orthodox Protestant theologians on the Continent.[92] The practice of the Christian life was Arndt's passion and that which he passed on to Pietism.

Important as Arndt was as a forerunner to Pietism, it was Spener whom Boehm saw as "the very Soul in this cause", being "chosen of God for a *Peculiar Instrument* of a more Practical Reformation". In 1662 he had begun to examine with others "the causes of the Abuses in the Administration of the Word and Sacraments, and consequently of the little Edification of the Laity; together with the Remedies fit to be applied". Spener brought to light again some "*Mystical* and Spiritual Books of the best note", including *Theologia Germanica*, *Imitatio Christi*, and works by Johann Tauler and Johann Arndt.[93] Tauler's sermons and *Theologia Germanica* had been particularly important to the young Luther; these spiritual and devotional – indeed mystical – treatises now formed the devotional backbone to the spiritual side of Pietism. It is symbolic that Spener's *Pia Desideria* (1675), which more than any other work touched off the historical movement of Pietism, first appeared as a Preface to a new edition of Arndt's sermons. In *Pia Desideria*, according to Boehm, Spener

> ... shews evidently the *Apostacy* of the Spouse of Christ from her first Love, with the Abuses and Corruptions consequent hereof, and then proposes such *Methods*, by which the same might be in some manner redressed.[94]

The six methods Spener proposes to combat the abuses and the lethargy in the Lutheran Church provide the best characterization of the objectives of Pietism:

1. a more extensive use of the Word of God among us,
2. the establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood,
3. to awaken a fervent love among our Christians and to put this love into practice,
4. to beware how we conduct ourselves in religious controversies,
5. that schools and universities would pay attention to the life as well as the studies of the students entrusted to them,
6. that sermons may be so prepared by all that their purpose (faith and its fruits) may be achieved in the hearers to the greatest possible degree.[95]

Even before he published *Pia Desideria* Spener had initiated his *collegia pietatis*, or, as Boehm describes them, "exercises of Piety". Started in 1670 and in many

---

91 Boehm, Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, p. xviii.

92 See P. Erb, Introduction to *True Christianity*, by Johann Arndt, trans. P. Erb (New York, 1979), pp. 6-16.

93 Boehm, Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, pp. xx-xxii.

94 *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

95 P.J. Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. and ed. T.G. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 87-122.

ways similar to the religious societies founded in England eight years later,[96] these small groups were intended for "private Devotion"; in them Spener allowed laity "whose Mind and Senses were exercised in the Word of God, tho' not Divines by Profession, to bring forth any Experience or Spiritual Meditation, that was upon their Spirits".[97] Johannes Wallmann, who has examined in depth the origins of the first *collegia pietatis* under Spener, suggests that they were started at the instigation of prominent lay leaders in Spener's Frankfurt congregation. The first group gathered in Spener's home to avoid suspicions and studied among other devotional books Bayly's *Praxis Pietatis*. As interest increased, Spener opened the *collegia pietatis* to the whole church and himself lectured exclusively from the Bible. The original group then formed their own conventicle outside Spener's leadership; when this group came under the influence of William Penn, in Germany on a recruiting tour for his new colony, and other charismatic figures in Germany, they decided to separate from Spener's congregation and expressed the desire to go to Pennsylvania.[98] From this group came those Pietists to whom Leslie and Rüst referred in the 1690s.

From Frankfurt Spener went to Dresden, seeing "that a new Period of a more Universal Reformation in the Church of God in General, as well as in the Lutheran in Particular was at Hand". There he set up a house for catechizing young children, recognizing that "the Basis and Ground-work of Reformation was to be laid in little Children; Old People being grown for the most part inflexible, and unwilling to Forsake the darling of their accustomed Formalities or Opinions". But Spener's work in Dresden, where his adversaries derisively called him "*The Patriarch of the Pietists*", was not appreciated by the Elector of Saxony, so he accepted a call from Elector Frederick of Brandenburg to Berlin. The Elector was erecting a new university at Halle by which "it pleased God to encrease and enlarge the new Reformation of *Pietism*". Halle became the seedbed of the Pietist movement, for Spener was able to bring some of his principal supporters to the new university and continued to support it until his death in 1705.[99]

The most influential figure drawn to the new university was A.H. Francke. In the late 1680s Francke had helped establish in Leipzig a *Collegium Philobiblicum*, a small group originally intended more for learning and the study of the Scriptures than for piety. This initiative was observed and welcomed by Spener, who also sent suggestions for better directing things "for Christian Edification, and the Advancement of solid Piety"; following his example

96 For a comparison, see pp. 198f below.

97 [Boehm,] Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, p. xxii.

98 J. Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen, 1970), pp. 253-82.

99 [Boehm,] Preface to *Pietas Hallensis*, pp. xxiv-xxvii.

Francke resolved to extend the aims of his group, "uniting with the Research of Scripture the *Study of Piety*". Working with divinity students at Leipzig who had been "bred up to a superficial smattering in Divine Matters, and to an empty and fallacious Oratory", Francke and his associates sought to turn them back to "the Original Books". In so doing the Pietists were charged by members of the theology faculty with heresy; a storm arose and, though the dean seemed content with Francke's defence, Boehm reported that "the new name of *Pietism* is by the Heretick-Mongers inserted into their Black List, and the first Instruments of *Pietism* were Banish'd".[100] Despite being surrounded by controversy, Boehm stressed that the Pietists were primarily concerned for pastoral matters and for the Church at large:

> They saw Raw, unexperienced, unexercised Students in the Cross of Christ, entrusted with the *Pastoral Care* of Souls, while they themselves were often stupidly ignorant of the state of their own Souls, and destitute of all the requisite Qualifications of a true Christian Pastor.

Commissions were appointed to examine Pietism after charges of heterodoxy were raised by Orthodox opponents; but they duly found Pietist teaching "to be perfectly conformable to the Symbolical Books, and the *Augustan Confession* of Faith".[101]

Boehm, then, saw Pietism as a "new Reformation" within the Lutheran Church of Germany, which sought to revive the practice of Christianity through inward and personal spiritual renewal. Far from being a separatistic sect, Pietism, despite the opposition it faced, aimed to revive the established Church in Germany. One way to summarize the first concerns of Pietism – besides the six methods Spener produced in *Pia Desideria* – is to observe what its opponents considered to be so heretical in its teaching. Describing the rumpus in the theological faculty at Leipzig, Boehm writes:

> To speak of Abuses crept in, was presently interpreted a *Contempt* of the Holy Institutions themselves: To inculcate Holiness of Life was look'd as an asserting *our Salvation by Works*: And to press after a Vital Knowledge of God, as Distinct from a Dead one, was represented as altogether *Fanatical*.[102]

First, Pietists attacked what they regarded as "abuses" in the Lutheran Church, including pulpit logomachy (overly theological and unedifying sermons, or "vain Rhetorick"), the lack of proper preparation for and control of access to the Eucharist, and failure to catechize the children.[103] Second, they strove after personal holiness and practical godliness as the necessary fruit of justification, though distinct from it; Pietists were charged with theological indifference,

---

100 *Ibid.*, pp. xxviii-xxxvi.
101 *Ibid.*, pp. xxxvii-xl.
102 *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.
103 See D.W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Grand Rapids, 1978), pp. 24f.

but they in turn condemned their Orthodox opponents as morally indifferent. Finally, Pietists pressed after spiritual regeneration, or new birth, and sought an experiential faith which touched the heart as well as the head.

Current Pietist Scholarship

So far we have been summarizing Boehm's influential account of Pietist history, its aims and methods. How does Boehm's history fare in light of modern Pietist research? It is not our purpose to give a survey of the history of interpretations of Pietism or of the current state of Pietist scholarship,[104] but to examine a few of the important questions raised by Boehm's history and those issues pertinent to Anglican-Halle connections.

A striking feature of Boehm's account is his frequent reference to Pietism as a "new Reformation", "another Reformation", "a more Practical Reformation", and even "a more Universal Reformation". This usage comes in part from his desire to link Pietism to the voluntary societies, but, when added to Pietism's critique of Orthodoxy and the Church, it raises the question of the relationship of Pietism to Luther and Lutheran Orthodoxy. The main roots of Lutheran Pietism can be found in the Reformation and in Luther himself,[105] particularly the young Luther, whose favourable response to Tauler, St. Bernard, and *Theologia Germanica* was revived by Pietism. Pietists frequently cited Luther's "Introduction to Romans" with its description of faith – to which Wesley was listening when his heart was strangely warmed.[106] In spite of the basic agreement between Lutheran Pietists and Luther, one can find differences in emphasis.[107] Luther held onto *simul justus et peccator*, while Pietism stressed new birth; Luther said the greatness of faith was more important than the greatness of works, but Pietists put emphasis on a living faith active in works.

The relation of Lutheran Pietism to Lutheran Orthodoxy is more compli-

---

104 For bibliographies on Pietist research, see *Pietismus und Neuzeit. Jahrbuch zur Geschichte des neueren Protestantismus* (from 1974). For surveys of literature and interpretations, see E. McKenzie, "British Devotional Literature and the Rise of German Pietism", 2 vols. (Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1984), i.1-35; M. Schmidt, "Epochen der Pietismusforschung", in: *Pietismus und Reveil*, ed. J. van den Berg and J.P. van Dooren (Leiden, 1978), pp. 22-79; M. Brecht, "Der Pietismus als Epoche der Neuzeit", *Verkündigung und Forschung* 21 (1976), 46-84; M. Greschat, "Zur neueren Pietismusforschung. Ein Literaturbericht", *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Westfälische Kirchengeschichte* 65 (1972), 220-268; H. Lehmann, "Der Pietismus im alten Reich", *Historische Zeitschrift* 214 (1972), 58-96; J. Wallmann, "Reformation, Orthodoxie, Pietismus", *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1972), 179-200.

105 F.E. Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden, 1965), pp. 190ff; M. Schmidt, *Pietismus* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 16-19; E. Peschke, ed., *August Hermann Francke Werke in Auswahl* (Berlin, 1969), p. 393.

106 See M. Schmidt, "Luthers Vorrede zum Römerbrief im Pietismus" (1967), repr. and expanded in: *idem.*, *Wiedergeburt und Neuer Mensch. Gesammelte Studien zur Geschichte des Pietismus* (Witten, 1969), 299-330.

107 See Schmidt, *Pietismus*, pp. 17-19.