FRANCKESCHE STIFTUNGEN

DFG

# 7. Sekundärliteratur

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

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**Göttingen, 1993**

## 2. Boehm's Perception of the Church of England

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## 2. Boehm's Perception of the Church of England

*Predestination, Holy Communion, and Episcopacy*

One of the keenest anxieties of Boehm's Lutheran compatriots in Germany was the question of Church union, in particular the celebrated proposal of Jablonski to base a union between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on the liturgy and episcopate of the Anglican Church. Meanwhile, the question of the relationship of the Church of England to the Lutheran Church was forced upon Anglican churchmen not so much by Jablonski's proposals (which soon faded from memory) but by the succession of a German Lutheran to the throne of England as head of the established Church.

As a prominent German Lutheran on the edge of Court circles and with access to Anglican leaders lay and clerical, Boehm was naturally seen as a valuable source of information on matters connected with the Church of England. Enquiries addressed to him from Germany tended to be heavily influenced by the preoccupations of Continental Lutherans, rather than by those intrinsic to Anglicanism. In particular, queries focused on those issues currently dividing the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany, above all predestination and the nature of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. On the first issue, Boehm admitted that on the evidence of the thirty-nine Articles Anglican dogma favoured the Reformed Churches in Holland and Germany, though he added that English theologians were very free in their explanations of these articles and in interpretation often concurred more with the Lutheran than the Reformed confessions.[40] In an "Open Letter to a Friend in Germany", written in 1717, Boehm deals at length with the Anglican understandings of predestination and the Holy Communion.[41] With regard to predestination he reaffirmed that Anglican doctrine was Reformed, but provided a brief historical account of how the Church shifted from its Calvinist view to an Arminian one (though that name is not used). To examine predestination theologically Boehm quoted extensively from numerous divines, many, but not all of them Anglican,[42] and ended by citing Gilbert Burnet's view that the question of predestination need no longer divide and alienate members of the Church of England, to which Boehm added rather cryptically: "It could be desired that one could say something similar of other things, especially those

40 Boehm to Neubauer, London, 23 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 380.

41 "Send-Schreiben an einen Freund in Deutschland: Worinn gezeiget wird, Was die Lehre der Kirche von England, in denen zwischen den Lutheranern und Reformirten schwebenden Religions-Streitigkeiten sey: Sonderlich im Punct der Praedestination, and Der Gegenwart Christi im heiligen Abendmahl", 14 Nov. 1717, in: *ErSchrift*, ii.341-476.

42 Among those cited were John Goodwin, Henry More, Richard Baxter, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, John Worthington, Edward Fowler, William Nichols, and Gilbert Burnet.

which are of a far lesser importance."[43] Despite the fact that most English theologians were by now in broad agreement with the Lutheran Church, Boehm felt that on the whole this issue, so important to Lutheran-Reformed debates, was no longer a vital one in the Church of England.

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper was, Boehm realized, a much more difficult question.[44] Devoting surprisingly little space to the Anglican understanding of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, the divisive issue in Germany, he concentrated instead on Anglican perceptions of Lutheran thinking. The common indictment against the Lutheran Church was that it held a doctrine of consubstantiation and ubiquity, by which, though transubstantiation was vehemently denied, the conception of the bodily presence of Christ within the Sacrament was upheld. Not only had Boehm frequently heard English lay people, who knew little of the Lutheran Church, criticize Lutherans for this dangerous dogma, but he knew that even the broad-minded Gilbert Burnet had fallen victim to prejudice in accepting that this was the Lutheran view (which it was not), though he did not consider the Lutheran doctrine hazardous to practice and had declared that Anglicans could well join with Lutherans in receiving the Sacrament.

Since Lutherans in Germany regarded both Anglicans and Presbyterians in England as Reformed in doctrine, Boehm felt the need to point out their differences.[45] The Presbyterians in England, he explained, had gone farther in rejecting the ceremonial than the Reformed Church in Germany, largely as a result of more than a century of conflict with Anglicans over vestments, ritual, and forms of Church government. In the eyes of Presbyterians and Dissenters, the Anglican clergy were still tainted with "Popery" in their liturgical and ritual practices, while Anglicans charged their opponents with groundless separatism from the national Church. In Boehm's opinion, both sides were not without blame. The differences between the parties, though largely minor, were enhanced by the fact that each side had its extremists, exaggerating secondary divergencies, rather as the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany had done. In recent times it had been Anglican extremists who had brought to the fore the issue which would prove most troublesome for both the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany and elsewhere: episcopacy.

Boehm had no sympathy for an understanding of episcopacy which did not recognize the orders of those not ordained by a bishop in the Apostolic succession and thereby dismissed as fundamentally invalid the ministry of all other Protestants, English and foreign. The case of Benjamin Reed, a young man designed for a Dissenting ministry who, after converting to the established

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43 "Es wäre zu wünschen, daß man von andern Dingen, sonderlich denen, die von weit geringerer Importantz sind, ein gleiches sagen könte." (Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.429)

44 Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.430-63.

45 *Ibid.*, ii.453-63.

Church, was re-baptized by an episcopally ordained priest,[46] was frequently mentioned by Boehm to point out the extremes of High Churchmanship.[47] The issue of episcopal ordination was faced by Boehm in 1710 with his efforts to secure a minister for the Palatines[48] and in 1720 when he stridently opposed Grundler becoming an English missionary because he feared that High Church clergy would insist that he conform to the Church of England.[49] He was even drawn into the controversy over the Lutheranism of George I which revolved around the High Church (later, Nonjuring) controversialist Thomas Brett,[50] a lively controversy whose main issues can only be discussed briefly here.

George I was welcomed as head of the Church of England by Archbishop Tenison of Canterbury and publicly greeted in a tract by Archbishop Dawes of York, one of Queen Anne's last Tory appointments.[51] Prudently avoiding their doctrinal disparities, Dawes emphasized the similarity between the Lutheran and Anglican liturgies, commenting that "we vary little from them in the Exercise of our Publick Devotion". Lutherans, in Dawes' opinion, differed far more from Presbyterians and Dissenters than they did from the Church of England. He rejoiced that the new King had shown himself, "as Defender of the Faith, to be the Support and Nursing Father of the Church Establish'd".[52]

In the same year Theophilus Dorrington, rector of Wittresham in Kent, republished his translation of a book by Baron Samuel Pufendorf, which, though written to bring about a union in Germany between the Lutheran and Reformed Church, Dorrington felt might be useful to enable Anglicans better to understand Lutherans.[53] The irenical intention of this book was severely compromised when the Nonjuror Brett decided to reply to it, penning *A Review of the Lutheran Principles* (1714). Brett had been provoked into print by a correspondent who suggested to him that since the Church of England was close to Lutheranism with respect to the liturgy and since Lutherans hated the Reformed Church as much as Anglicans did Scottish Presbyterians, perhaps

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46 See [John Withers?], *A Caveat against the New Sect of Anabaptists, Lately sprung up at Exon* (London, 1714); Benjamin Reed, *A Reply to a Pamphlet entituled, A Caveat against the New Sect of Anabaptists* (Exon, 1714); Hubert Stogdon, *A Defence of the Caveat against the New Sect of Anabaptists, &c. In Answer to Mr. Reed's Reply* (Exon, 1714).

47 Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.461ff; Boehm to Urlsperger, London, 29 Jan. 1714, and to Mr. S. in Pennsylvania, London, 18 Aug. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 318f, 365ff.

48 Boehm to Canstein, London, 29 Aug. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 160f; see pp. 64f above.

49 Boehm to Neubauer, London, 16 Aug. 1720 (ArFrSt C 229:12); see pp. 115–16 above.

50 Brett (1667-1744) was rector of Betshanger and Ruckinge in Kent until on the accession of George I he refused to take the oaths; he was welcomed as a Nonjuror and in 1716 consecrated a Nonjuring bishop. (*DNB* [ii.1193-94])

51 Archbishop of York [Sir William Dawes], *An Exact Account of King George's Religion* (London, 1714).

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7. This same tact of comparing liturgies was taken up by a Gentleman-Commoner at Magdalen College in *The Lutheran Liturgy* (London, 1715).

53 *A View of the Lutheran Principles* (London, 1714); originally published as *The Divine Feudal Law* (London, 1703).

the King's subjects in Brunswick and England could unite under one monarch and one religion along the lines of some proposal like Pufendorf's. Brett retorted that reconciliation between the Church of England and foreign Protestants was "altogether impracticable", because they would not acquiesce in the restoration of episcopacy, the "great controverted Point ... betwixt them and us". Since Lutherans have "meer Presbyters" or superintendents, "if we do allow their Ordinations, then *we obliquely overthrow the whole Episcopal Church to allow any for lawful Pastors, who are not Episcopally ordain'd*". Furthermore, Brett insisted that the doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, by which Luther claimed that Christ remained bodily omnipresent after his Ascension, and the related doctrine of consubstantiation, were incompatible with Anglican doctrine, which did not confuse substance in affirming two inseparable natures. Though he admitted that Lutherans agreed with Anglicans in rejecting predestination and had similarities in their ritual, Brett maintained that Lutherans "are nevertheless strict and rigid Presbyterians, and have as little agreement with the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, as the most zealous Calvinist".[54]

This tract was given to Boehm by Peter Allix, the French Reformed theologian, who suggested that a Lutheran minister should pen a response to Brett's accusations. Brett's attack confirmed Boehm's fear (generally concealed) of High Church polemists:

> The Tory or High Church party, of whom one believed (and perhaps not quite without reason) that they favoured Popery and sought underhandedly to build a bridge for it in England, has now (or at least many in it) suddenly turned around and wants to be regarded as the pillar of Protestantism; however, the poor Lutherans are accused in the ugliest terms and presented to the people in public writings as half-Papists.[55]

Boehm was distressed by Brett's attempt to link Lutherans and Roman Catholics in order to denigrate the doctrine of consubstantiation, and to disbar Lutherans from church union for failure to maintain historic episcopacy. But Boehm declined to engage himself in such a dispute, for, as he explained, by entering the lists "I could easily be diverted from edifying things and involved in all kinds of superficialities". He noted that an English moderate priest, who had already written one tract against Brett, had asked him for some material to use in another.[56]

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54 Thomas Brett, *A Review of the Lutheran Principles*, pp. 8,15,17,43.

55 "Die Torische oder Hoch-Kirchliche Partei, von welcher man vor dem (und vieleicht nicht ohn allen Grund) glaubte, daß sie dem Pabstthum favorisirten und selbigen [sic] unter der Hand eine Brücke in Engeland zu bauen suchten, hat sich nun (oder doch viele derselben) auf einmal umgewandt, und wollen als Seulen des Protestantismi angesehen seyn. Hingegen werden die armen Lutheraner aufs heßlichste beschuldiget, und als halbe Papisten in öffentlichen Schriften [*sic*] dem Volcke vorgestellet."

56 "... als wodurch ich leicht von erbaulichen Dingen abgezogen und in allerley Weitläufigkeit

The "moderate" to whom Boehm referred was undoubtedly Robert Watts of St. John's College, Oxford, someone distrusted by Nonjurors as a friend of Dissenters and "a Son of a Profess'd Presbyterian".[57] In his first tract, *Two Letters to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Townshend* (1714), Watts had included a letter from two former Lutheran chaplains of the Electress Sophia of Brunswick, the mother of George I. They had observed "the strange conduct" of some of the English in Germany since the enactment of the Occasional Conformity Bill, which had been designed to prevent the practice of many Nonconformists in receiving the Sacrament in the established Church to qualify themselves for office under the Test Acts. The effect of the Occasional Conformity controversy on the English community in Hanover had been considerable: it had encouraged them to "think they should commit an unpardonable Sin, should they receive the holy Sacrament from a Minister on this Side of the Water". The chaplains were grieved that the law was held by some to extend to persons "that profess the Protestant Religion in foreign Countries", for thereby the solidarity of Protestantism was weakened and the cause of Popery strengthened. It was hoped that the law would only be applied to England. The two chaplains assured their readers that they themselves recognized the Church of England as a true Church:

> Whenever we beseech God in our Congregations to advance the Protestant Religion, we do not exclude the Church of England, but on the contrary we have always, and do still, look upon it as the surest and firmest Bulwark against Popery.[58]

By use of this letter Robert Watts stressed that the Church of England was being dangerously isolated from the Continental Protestants (who looked to it for support) through a law intended to reinforce the established Church.

Watts was almost certainly the author of a second tract opposing Brett, for some of the material in it echoes the sentiments of Boehm, who was several times quoted.[59] Like Boehm, so too Watts emphasized the importance of moderation and argued that both Lutherans and Anglicans need "forbearance". While acknowledging that the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament was in conflict with the Anglican, even though "our Church has not nicely defin'd or declar'd for any particular Modus of the Presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament", he held this issue not to be fundamental to the Christian faith.

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verwickelt werden könte." (Boehm to Urlsperger, London, 26 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 383-85)

57 See C.E. Doble, ed., *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, 11 vols. (Oxford, 1885-1921), 21 Apr. 1708 (ii.103). According to Hearne (21 Oct. 1709 [ii.291]), Watts authored a small tract titled: *A Discourse concerning the Lawfullness and Right manner of keeping Christmass, and other Christian Holy-days, by way of Question and Answer. Intended for the Use of a Charity-School* (London, 1708). I have not found a copy of this piece.

58 La Bergerie and M. Noltenius to?, Hanover, 6 Aug. 1714, printed in: Watts, *Two Letters*, pp. 7-11.

59 [Robert Watts?,] *A Second Review of the Lutheran Principles* (London, 1714), pp. 17ff,33, makes reference to the Prefaces to both *Pietas Hallensis* and *True Christianity*.

"The Principles of Catholick Unity" should not be breached by denying Communion with Lutherans. Had not the King himself provided an example of "preserving a Unity of Communion, notwithstanding a Variety of Opinion"?[60]

Brett and Watts were not the only principals in this war of words; John Lewis, later master of Eastbridge Hospital in Canterbury,[61] also took up the assault against Brett. He attributed Brett's censure of Lutheran orders and his illegitimatizing of their churches "to the Rashness of some Modern Innovators in the Doctrines of the Church of England". Following Gilbert Burnet, Lewis held that the framers of the 39 Articles were not of the opinion that "*Episcopal Ordination is necessary for a legitimate Priest; and that there cannot be a Church without Bishops, who have their Ordination and Succession from the Apostles*". Anglican theologians had shown, in Lewis' opinion, that

> ... the Things which of all other, are most proper to Bishops, are *Singularity in Succeeding, and Superiority in Ordaining*; and that therefore in the Foreign Reformed Churches, they have the *Substance* of the Episcopal Office.[62]

In turn Brett charged Lewis with endeavouring "to overthrow *the Divine Right of Episcopacy, and the Necessity of an Episcopal Commission to the Valid Administration of the Sacraments*",[63] to which Lewis replied that he did not believe government by bishops to be *jure divino*, if that meant "a clear, express, and peremptory Command of *God in his Word*". He granted that "*ordinarily* and *regularly*" ordination by a bishop is necessary for valid administration of the Sacraments, but a defect in the commission or authority did not nullify performance of the office, as in the Lutheran Reformation, when presbyters exercised the powers of episcopacy by necessity when the bishops fell into heresy. Foreign Protestants, Lewis argued, have "all the Essentials of Episcopacy", even if they do not have the name.[64] Lewis' sentiments sound similar to what Norman Sykes has called the *via media* with regard to episcopacy in the Church of England at the end of the seventeenth century, which states that episcopacy was necessary, where it could be had, for the perfection of the Church but not for its essence, and that the restoration of the historic episcopate was desired for foreign reformed Churches, though their ordinations were not considered invalid. Although Sykes claims that this view was "generally upheld by the majority of representative theologians",[65] the pre-

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60 *Ibid.*, pp. 28,30,34,37.

61 *DNB* (xi.1065-67).

62 [John Lewis,] *The Agreement of the Lutheran Churches with the Church of England* (London, 1715), pp. 19,22,23.

63 Thomas Brett, *Dr. Brett's Vindication of Himself* (London, 1715), p. 70.

64 John Lewis, *An Answer to some Exceptions in Dr. Brett's late Vindication* (London, 1715), pp. 10-13.

65 Sykes, *Old Priest, New Presbyter*, pp. 81-83; cf. A.L. Peck, *Anglicanism and Episcopacy* (London, 1958), pp. 47f.

sence of High Churchmen like Brett and the uncertainty and hesitancy in the SPCK relating to the East India mission show that perhaps the alleged consensus on episcopacy was not universally accepted and that some confusion still existed.

What then are we to make of this controversy over the religion of George I? The debate itself had revolved around three things: liturgy, theology, and ecclesiology. Liturgically, there seemed considerable agreement that the Church of England stood closer to Lutherans than to Presbyterians; theologically, notwithstanding the protests of Brett that "our Reformation was ... founded on the Scriptures and the Doctrine and Practice of the truly Primitive Church",[66] Anglican *doctrine*, as set out in the Articles, more closely resembled the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition, especially with regard to the issue of Christ's presence in the Sacrament; ecclesiologically, the Church of England stood clearly apart from both Lutherans and Presbyterians who lacked the historic episcopate. The controversy seems to have alarmed irenic persons of divergent doctrinal views: it was not simply a question of High Church versus Low Church, but, as Boehm described it, of extremists versus moderates. Those whom Boehm deemed extreme High Churchmen, advanced Nonjurors like Brett and his comrades, would not compromise on any issue. With regard to the liturgy, for example, they held that "the point in Dispute is not whether they [the Lutherans] have a Liturgy, but whether the Prayers contained in that Liturgy are express'd in such Terms as are agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church". They saw the errors of consubstantiation and ubiquity not as divergent expressions of the same profound mystery, but as implying that "we cannot receive the Sacrament in their Churches without eating and drinking our own Damnation". The lack of the historic Episcopate in Germany was not seen as a sad historical accident but as an unacceptable deviation from Catholic tradition and truth: as one High Churchman put it, "we are to avoid all Forms of Episcopacy and Episcopal Ordinations differing from ours, as deviating from Truth".[67] On the other hand, individuals like Robert Watts and John Lewis interpreted differently the points of conflict between Lutherans and Anglicans: moderates, whether High Church Hanoverians or Low Churchmen, preferred to look on the external similarities between the respective liturgies; they acknowledged the disagreement over ubiquity and consubstantiation but did not consider it fundamental to the Christian faith; though affirming the necessity of episcopal ordination in England they refused to invalidate the ordinations of foreign Protestants, seeing the historic episcopate as of the *bene* esse but not the *esse* of a Christian Church.

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66 *Review of Lutheran Principles*, pp. 13f.

67 *An Answer to Two Letters to the Right Honourable the Ld Viscount Townshend* (London, 1715), pp. 7-8,29.

Moderates tended to recognize, unlike many High Churchmen, the anomalous nature of established religion in Britain, in which episcopacy was the state religion south of the border (where Presbyterians were Dissenters), but the situation was reversed in Scotland, where the kirk was established and the Episcopalians not. In this situation, the Lutheranism of the new King did not seem extraordinary, but perhaps a portent of a more irenical future. Since the King was a Lutheran in Hanover, a Presbyterian in Scotland, and an Anglican in England, he was well placed to lead all three systems into closer concert: as a 1715 tract put it, it was the King's desire

> ... that all his Subjects may live in Unity and godly Love; and, pray, why mayn't this be, without an Union (strictly speaking) of National Religions? Fact already, in South and North Britain shews it may; and why not in that and Brunswick too?[68]

To many High Churchmen this latitudinarian hope seemed impious; an incitement to ecclesiological indifferentism. It was impossible to subscribe to two contradictory faiths at the same time. The King was now no longer a Lutheran; to imply that he was, was to suggest "invidiously ... that he halteth between two Opinions".[69] As Prince George, Elector of Brunswick and Prince of Hanover, he had once been a Lutheran, but now as King George of England he

> ... is a Defender of the Faith of the Church of England as by Law Established; this is the Religion he is bound by the Act of Settlement to profess, joyn in Communion with, and maintain against all Religions whatsoever that are opposite to it; this, and this only, is the Religion he is bound by his Coronation Oath to preserve ... .His present Majesty is not a Lutheran, but a Member of the Church of England.[70]

What was Boehm's perception of this debate? Though he provided Watts with the requested material he still felt convinced that

> ... it would do little to get rid of the strife, which has as its basis not the love of truth but the hatred of certain persons. Meanwhile, one can see from such things into what kind of a chaos the Church and religion in this land has fallen.[71]

As a foreign Protestant living in England Boehm expressed clear sympathies for the moderate stance. He could not accept the "either-or" mentality of the extremists who declared flatly:

Either the Lutheran Church is agreeable with ours, or it is not: If it is agreeable with

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68 Ezekiel Standfast [pseud.], *A Letter of Advice to Thomas Brett* (London, 1715), p. 61.

69 *Answer to Two Letters*, p. 17.

70 *A Letter to the Author of the History of the Lutheran Church* (London, 1714), pp. 22f.

71 "Es wird aber wol zu Hebung des Streits wenig thun; als welcher nicht die Liebe zur Wahrheit, sondern den Haß gewisser Personen zum Grunde hat. Unterdes kan man aus solchen Dingen sehen, in was für ein Chaos die Kirche und Religion in diesem Lande verfallen sey." (Boehm to Urlsperger, 26 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 385)

ours, we may go promiscuously to the Churches of either side; for then we are no more two but one Church, and there is an end of the Controversy.[72]

By some who had been convinced of the "myth" [Sage] that there was no difference between the English and Lutheran Church constitutions, Boehm himself had been frequently asked, "Why do you not come over to our Church?"[73] But in his mind no good would be served by conforming to another party. Freely acknowledging the important but not fundamental differences between the Churches he was interested in promoting a common Christianity while himself remaining a Lutheran.

*Church Union and Common Christianity*

Boehm saw the root of the ecclesiastical conflicts of the day as lying not so much in the formularies of the Church as in the political extremism of its members. A common theme in his correspondence, especially during the polemical latter years of Queen Anne's reign and the early years of George I's, was the "bitter sectarian spirit" [*der bittere Secten-Geist*] in the Anglican Church.[74] Any foreigner, he complained, who wished to avoid being labelled as a partisan, had to be careful to maintain friendships with people in all parties.[75] As a result, Boehm found that he could not dedicate a book to a person or a Society because he would be seen as declaring for the party with which the person or Society was associated and so the opposing side would have nothing to do with his work.[76] So acrimonious had divisions in the Church of England become that husband and wife often took opposite sides, while servants and even children (a possible reference to charity schools?) had to choose a party.[77]

Boehm called these divisions "un-Christian", because they hindered the mission of the Church. In their struggle for power the participants did not take delight "that some more room will be won for the kingdom of God, but rather that their Party has found more protection and assistance".[78] He found this particularly frustrating since so many good projects, such as the East India mission, were stifled by the diversion of religious zeal into sterile partisanship.[79] When William Wake was promoted to the Archbishopric of Canterbury Boehm commented, "He will not lack work if he tries to do nothing other

72 *Answer to Two Letters*, p. 12.

73 "Warum kommt er nicht zu unser[er] Kirche, indem ja gar kein Unterscheid ist." (Boehm to Neubauer, 23 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 378f)

74 Boehm to Mr. S. in Pennsylvania, London, 18 Aug. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 364.

75 Boehm to Mr. N.N., London, 30 Sept. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 374; Boehm, "Historischer Bericht", in: *ErSchrift*, iii.496.

76 Boehm to Prof. Lange in Halle, London, 28 May 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 347f.

77 Boehm to Mr. N.N., 30 Sept. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 373.

78 "... ich sehe aber nicht, daß sie sich in der Hofnung freuen, daß etwa das Reich GOttes mehr Raum gewinnen werde, sondern nur daß ihre Partei mehr Schutz und Beystand gefunden hat." (*Ibid.*, pp. 373,375f)

79 Boehm to Mr. C.V. in W[aldeck], London, 26 Nov. 1715, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 467.

than bring today's clergy into a God-pleasing order and build them up with his teaching and life."[80] Since Wake was well versed in the Apostolic Fathers Boehm was hopeful "that he would also have absorbed something of the spirit of those first witnesses".[81] Anglican interest in primitive Christianity was shared by Boehm, but not for the same reasons; many in the Church of England turned to the early Church to support its ecclesiology and liturgy, while Boehm was attracted to primitive spirituality. He was critical of the extraordinary interest in Patristic studies at Oxford, in which the thought was often conducted out of a polemical intent.[82]

In its present fractured condition, Boehm felt that there was no way in which the Church of England could mediate between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany; the proposers of such a project – including Jablonski – had no idea "how much in ruins our shattered ecclesiastical ship has lain for several years now".[83] He saw the only hope for the future in the conciliatory – and generally Low Church – attitudes of people like Burnet, who did not abandon the truths of their Church, but expounded them within the limits of love and moderation. Boehm had little expectation that a reunion of parties could be engineered by the command of human authorities:

> How would it profit the kingdom of God if one would push people into a so-called union with human or official chains and inducements, while the evil root of self-love, pride, selfishness, fear of one another, and flattery kept ruling in the soul?[84]

It should not be assumed that Boehm saw the Church of England as particularly guilty of fractiousness; he cared little for any party or "sect". The very title of most religious bodies, he observed, reflected their partiality and particularity; Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, or Roman Catholic: "All sectarian Churches are impregnated with this dreadful leaven."[85]

In England some active churchmen associated with the SPCK and SPG took an interest in Protestant union along the lines proposed by Jablonski.

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80 "An Arbeit wird es ihn [sic] nicht fehlen, wenn er anders die heutige Clerisey in eine GOTT gefällige Ordnung zubringen, und mit Lehr und Leben an ihnen zu bauen gedencket."

81 "... daher man einige Hofnung schöpfen möchte, daß er auch von dem Geist solcher ersten Zeugen etwas eingesogen habe." (Boehm to von Canstein, London, 26 Dec. 1715, printed in: ErBrief, p. 476)

82 [Boehm,] Preface to *Short Introduction to Christian Religion*, by A.H. Francke, p. iii; Boehm to von Canstein, London, 29 Aug. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 157.

83 "... in wie viele Trümmern unser Kirchen-Schiff nun mehrere Jahre her zerbrochen gelegen." (Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.463f)

84 "Was würde auch dem Reich GOttes damit gerathen seyn, wenn man mit menschlichen oder Obrigkeitlichen Vinculis und Beredungen, die Menschen in eine sogenandte Union treiben wolte; und die böse Wurtzel der Eigenliebe, des Hoffarts, Eigen-Nutzen, Menschen-Furcht und Menschen-Gefälligkeit behielten die Herrschaft in der Sele?" (Boehm to Urlsperger, 26 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 387)

85 "Alle sectirische Kirchen sind mit diesem schrecklichen Sauerteige durchdrungen ... " (Boehm, "Historischer Bericht", in: *ErSchrift*, iii.518-21)

Chamberlayne informed Francke of the interest taken by the Swiss in Protestant union based on the Anglican liturgy, certain that the English prayer book would soon prove attractive to Protestant brethren in Germany.[86] In recommending *Pietas Hallensis* Woodward had hoped that in addition to encouraging the work of the voluntary societies in England the tract would further the endeavour for "Protestant union".[87] In 1713 Henry Newman told a correspondent that he hoped Jablonski's scheme at Berlin would one day "be reviv'd and find better encouragement here than it did".[88]

In spite of the respect Boehm held for these his fellow workers in the SPCK, he would have nothing to do with any official projects for structural union. He offered instead a common, transconfessional Christianity based on spiritual rebirth and void of denominational labels.[89] Boehm envisaged Protestant Churches which would unite by teaching common people – not theologians – the fundamental truths of Christianity: repentance and faith, rebirth and daily renewal to the image of God, love of God and neighbour.[90] As early as 1707 he was convinced

> ... that the best method for union is true conversion from darkness to light, whereby souls are united with Christ and consequently with all those living members from whatever sect or party they might be.[91]

He believed that time would prove him right:

> ... a couple hundred years should convince us that these union projects, through which a horde of unconverted people is brought into one and the same confession and church form, will have little blessing. Usually they soon crumble away and the breach becomes more severe. In a word: people should first become pious in heart, thus would follow unity in spirit.[92]

During his 1709 visit to Germany Boehm had seen members of both Lutheran and Reformed Churches coming together out of love and forgetting controversies and distinctions based on names.[93] Boehm was not trying to

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86 Chamberlayne to Francke, Westminster, 29 July 1701 (*Nachlaß* 30.XXVI.847-49).

87 Woodward, Preface to *Abstract of the Marvellous Footsteps*, by A.H. Francke, n.p.

88 Newman to Rev. Mr. Ayerst, Whitehall, 27 Jan 1713 (ArSPCK, Soc Lett [CS2/2:3-7]).

89 Boehm, "Historischer Bericht", in: *ErSchrift*, iii.548.

90 Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.464-68.

91 "... daß die beste Methode zur Vereinigung sey die wahre Bekehrung von der Finsternis zum Licht, wodurch die Seelen mit Christo und folglich mit allen dessen lebendigen Gliedern, von welcher Secte oder Partey sie auch seyn mögen, [sich] vereinigen." (Boehm to Miss S[lare], W[estminster?], 11 July 1707, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 26)

92 "Ich meyne ja, daß ein paar hundert Jahre uns endlich überzeugen solten, daß dergleichen Vereinigungs-Projecte, durch welche man einen Hauffen unbekehrter Menschen zu einer und derselben Confeßion und Kirchen-Form bringen will, wenig Segen haben. Insgemein zerfallen sie bald, und der Riß wird ärger. Mit einem Worte: Die Menschen solten erstlich von Hertzen fromm werden, so würde die Einigkeit im Geiste bald folgen." (Boehm, "Send-Schreiben", in: *ErSchrift*, ii.468f)

93 Boehm to Mr. J.T. in New York, London, 16 Jan. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 74.

promote a "Universal Church" – this was Ludolf's language[94] – but rather a common, non-sectarian Christianity centred in the love of God and neighbour: very close to the ideal later set out in Wesley's famous sermon on "Catholic Spirit". In Boehm's mind, Christians should remain in their own churches "in order to play their part in doing something good in them by the grace of God".[95] Separatism, even if it was provoked by a corrupt clergy, was not justified;[96] he remained a committed Lutheran. When Boehm learned that some Lutheran ministers in Germany had announced that people could conform to the Church of England because there was little difference between it and Lutheranism, he exclaimed, "What kind of Lutherans are these!"[97] Yet, on another occasion he testified:

> And since I have hitherto held all kinds of spiritual exercises on the Scriptures among the English, so I am certain that not a single one could say that I have led them to Luther or sought to spread Lutheranism among them.[98]

Though he propagated a transconfessional Christianity, it is not accurate to portray Boehm as confessionally indifferent; he dispersed his own brand of Lutheran Pietism but did not call it such.

Instead of promoting official church unions, Boehm looked hard for signs of the free winds of the spirit, as they blew into the hearts of individuals. It is therefore significant that he attached himself to the SPCK. But was this for spiritual reasons or for administrative and philanthropic support for Hallensian enterprises? Both factors were probably present and both could promote a common Christianity. If he had not felt spiritual kinship with some members of the Society it is unlikely that he would have invested so much time and care upon it. He believed that such associations, by bringing people together in common works of love, would lead to unity and true Christianity. Noting that both the Presbyterian and the Anglican churches had contributed to the relief of the suffering Palatines, Boehm wrote:

> Would to God, that these two important parties, which until now have not been willing to come to a unanimous religious constitution, by such a precious basis of love, of which they have here layed down a sample, might be united more truly.[99]

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94 See Ludolf, *Reliquiai Ludolfianae*, pp. 125-42.

95 "... um in derselben, nach ihrem Theil, durch die Gnade GOttes etwas Gutes zuthun." (Boehm to Mr. J.U., London, 26 May 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 142)

96 Boehm to Urlsperger, London, 6 Nov. 1713, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 282-84.

97 "Was sind mir dieses für Lutheraner!" (Boehm to Neubauer, 23 Nov. 1714, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 378f)

98 "Und da ich bishero unter den Engländern allerley geistliche Uebungen über die Schrifft gehalten habe, so bin ich gewiß, daß kein eintziger sagen könne, ich habe sie auf Lutherum geführet, oder das Lutherthum unter ihnen auszubreiten gesuchet." (Boehm, "Historischer Bericht", printed in: *ErSchrift*, iii.548)

99 "Wolte GOtt, daß diese zwo wichtige Parteien, die bis dato noch zu keiner einstimmigen Religions-Verfassung kommen wollen, in solchem theuren Liebes-Grunde, davon sie hier eine

He could therefore encourage the promotion of Christian unity by two strategies: first, from the inside out, through the conversion of hearts, and second, from the outside in, through an association in works of love.

It was primarily Boehm's – and not Francke's – transconfessional attitude which made involvement with the SPCK possible and fruitful. His own brand of "ecumenism" helped to lower confessional barriers. He spread Halle Pietism not primarily as its accredited ambassador, or propagandist, but because its spirit best expressed his own convictions and piety. By bringing Halle and the SPCK together in acts of love and charity he hoped to further the common Christian cause.

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Probe abgeleget, sich genauer vereinigen möchten." (Boehm to Canstein, London, 18 Nov. 1709, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 44)