

German Pietism and the Pedagogic Reformation of Human Nature

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In recent years, interest in the origins and influence of German educational thought has focused attention on the pedagogic innovations developed by August Herman Francke at the University of Halle. In line with the theological reforms promoted by Jacob Spener, Francke developed a program of clerical and teacher training designed to initiate a new era of religious piety. The centerpiece of his energetic and ever-expanding mission was the Halle Foundation, a “Godly City,” where students could perfect the instructional skills necessary to promote spiritual conversion and practical Christianity. Following Comenius, Francke adhered to a Biblically based account of nature. But his focus went beyond the rational understanding of Creation to the perfection of the soul through the transformative power of the Holy Word. The emotionally evocative passages of Scripture had to be employed to sculpt and secure a person’s love of God and their neighbor. The result was a powerful pedagogy of psychological control with obvious political implications for the management of an inherently volatile population.

Any systematic approach to education must incorporate some understanding of human nature and a vision of the social good. Oftentimes such ideas are tacit, implicitly defined by received practices and intellectual traditions. But during periods of radical reform they emerge as animating norms that guide new approaches to schooling. Pietism, one of the most influential movements in the history of education, illustrates the productive role of these foundational conceptions. Driven by the religious ambition to construct a Godly society, the pietists campaigned for mass instruction so that all could understand and embrace the imperatives of Scripture. This demanded a fundamental change in the mission of the Church and a new form of clerical training. Centered at the University of Halle, theology students originally tutored on points of orthodox doctrine were trained in the use of the Revealed Word for religious edification and spiritual rebirth (Shantz, 2014). Armed with a pedagogy of psychological control, they not only brought literacy to the population, but a practical Christianity infused with the ethos of obedience, industry, and community service. According to Richard Gawthrop (2006), while initially embraced by the Calvinist king Frederick I as a means to further toleration in the predominantly Lutheran

Prussia, under his successor Frederick William pietism evolved into a powerful political ideology that furthered the efficiency of Prussia’s centralized government, transforming a fragmented regional state into the most economically and militarily powerful nation in Germany. In what follows I examine the ideas about mind and society at the heart of this revolutionary movement. My focus is the program of clerical reform envisioned by Philipp Jakob Spener (1653-1705) and its implementation at Halle by August Hermann Francke (1663–1727). It was here, at Germany’s first pedagogic seminary, that Francke forged the instructional methods which would shape the educational thought of the Eighteenth Century, and beyond.

True Christianity

The German Pietist movement of the late Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries arose from the ashes of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). Squeezed between two superpowers—Catholic France to the west, Muslim Turkey to the east—Protestant states such as Brandenburg-Prussia struggled to support a strong military with limited resources. Continuing conflicts combined with poor harvests and plague brought famine, poverty,

and an inevitable train of social ills. Given the religious and political convulsions of the past, the Lutheran Church naturally sought to secure order by establishing the authority of its basic doctrines and sacramental practices. Scholarly orthodoxy and strict ritual under strong hierarchical control became the antidote to the volatile enthusiasm and prophetic spiritualism that had stirred antebellum divisions (Stoeffler, 1965). Yet for many theologians this focus on doctrine generated a destructive divide between the Church and the people. Preoccupied with the sanctity of their creed, the clergy had abrogated the fundamental duty of pastoral care. Rising levels of crime and poverty were readily interpreted as divine punishments; clear signs that the Church must reinvigorate its practical mandate and take a more active role in regulating the life of the population. Fueled by an emerging book trade that popularized the devotional tracts of English and Dutch Puritans, a new religious sensibility took shape, emphasizing the apostolic mission of the early Christians (Shantz, 2013). Spener (1675/1964) captured this growing imperative in what would become the foundational text of the Pietistic movement, *Pia Desidra*. First published in 1675 as a Preface to a volume of Johann Arndt's sermons (1590/1979), it laid out a program of sweeping reforms the Church must undergo to combat the causes of social corruption and create a community of true Christians.

Raised a consistent disciple of Luther in a devout, well-paced family, Spener entered the University of Strasburg at age 16 with a deep interest in Biblical study and a strong commitment to pious living. Earning his masters in just two years, he embarked on a three-year sojourn through southern Germany and Switzerland. While in Geneva he came under the orbit of Jean de Labadie, the charismatic proponent of Christian communities, translating two of his works before returning to Strasburg to complete his doctorate in 1664. On a path to academia, Spener's life changed to one of service two years later with his appointment as senior minister of the Lutheran Church in Frankfort. Over the next two decades his

writings, teaching, and pastoral work gained wide recognition, ultimately earning him, in 1686, the prestigious appointment as head chaplain to the Elector of Saxony.

In concert with Labadie's teachings, Spener's overriding concern was improving the religious character of the population through adherence to the practical lessons of Scripture (Shantz, 2013). To this end, he initiated catechism programs for the young, combined workhouse relief with religious instruction, and initiated study groups designed to encourage leading citizens and earnest theology students in the discussion of devotional texts (Sattler, 1989). Their spiritual growth, he reasoned, would help spread the ethic of brotherly love throughout the community, teaching Christ's message by example and solving social problems through works of Christian charity. The idea caught light. Starting in 1670 with intimate gatherings in his own home, by 1677 Spener, was offering Church meetings with a hundred or more in attendance. Many were uneducated tradespeople, and shockingly for the times, many were female. For Spener this extension of Scriptural education into the community answered Luther's call for a priesthood of all believers. But it also brought a dangerous mutation. Animated by the emotional power of conversion, a few of Spener's more radical followers established alternative conventicles, often without ministerial supervision, that embraced the efficacy of personal experience over sacramental ritual (Stoeffler, 1965). With similar groups popping up across the region, orthodox leaders naturally viewed this energetic and expansive movement as existential threat to the integrity of the Lutheran faith. Spener was sympathetic to the goals of those seeking the truly pious life but remained firmly committed to the established order. Reform, he insisted, had to occur within the Church. In fact, Biblical prophecy, the subject of his doctoral study, suggested the vital work of the clergy in preparation for Christ's second coming.

Tensions came to a boil in 1687 when Spener's most committed disciple, August Francke

set up a series of private lectures in opposition to the theological instruction offered at the University of Leipzig. Where his former professors taught the philosophical basis of dogma in Latin, Francke provided a guide to practical Christianity in the vernacular. Students fled the university lecture halls in droves. Many started their own conventicles, generating much excitement among the wider population. The situation was further exacerbated, Gawthorp (2006) explains, by “the interjection of enthusiasm” as spiritual visionaries and would-be prophets sought to share their experiences (p. 118). This dangerous dynamic was more than the orthodox establishment could bear. Francke was expelled from the city and all conventicles banned. Spener’s position also became untenable. Out of favor with Saxony’s elector, in 1691, he accepted the appointment as Provost of St Nicholas Church and a member of the state’s Lutheran Consistory in the more tolerant Brandenburg-Prussia. This was a pivotal turning point in the history of pietism. When radicals sought to establish separate Christian communities across Europe, the Americas, and Asia, Spener and Francke pursued their instructional project internally, aligning pietism’s religious goals with the economic and political ambitions of the Prussian state (Gawthorp, 2006).

Gaining the trust of officials in Frederick’s court, Spener successfully engineered numerous clerical and academic placements for his followers. The appointment of faculty to the University of Halle proved key. A counterbalance to the more orthodox Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig, it was established in 1694 under the twin principles of intellectual tolerance and social utility. The crown needed skilled professionals dedicated to the economic interests and political harmony of the state. Spener’s practical theology proved a perfect fit. Pietism would replace the divisional scholasticism of traditional Lutheran schooling with pragmatic lessons in orderly, cooperative, and productive Christian life. Francke was appointed professor of Greek and Oriental Languages and assigned the ministry of St George’s Church in the nearby slum of Glaucha, thus setting up a

theoretical and practical axis with which demonstrate the effectiveness of pietistic reform.

The extraordinary support Francke and his associates received in this experiment as they struggled to overcome opposition from local Church and civic leaders vividly demonstrates the royal court’s investment in this inherently political project. Indeed, the dynamics of regional and centralized power struggles are key to understanding Francke’s work at Halle and the profound influence his pedagogic reforms played in the formation of the increasingly absolutist state.

Historically, Brandenburg-Prussia was divided into numerous local serfdoms, each administered by noble lords. The royal court mediated between these estates. Its authority rested upon ties of blood and patronage that knit the country’s elites into a kind of national family presided over, father-like, by the elector. His role was to balance competing interests and establish common purpose through the prestige of the station and the support of the Church. To this end, under Fredrick William (1640 to 1688) and Frederick I (1688 to 1713), Berlin began to emulate the elegance and culture of Paris. But the taxes necessary to support such extravagances generated resentment among those who drew wealth from the land. Religion was also a concern. The Hohenzollern rulers were staunchly Calvinist in a predominately Lutheran state. Preaching tolerance—nobody would be compelled to worship in a church that opposed the dictates of their conscience—they nonetheless looked to religious reunification in the hope of social and spiritual harmony. Orthodox Lutherans, whose status was tied to the noble estates, naturally opposed the rising influence of the Reformed in increasingly Francophile Berlin—especially after Frederick permitted the immigration of some 40,000 Huguenots displaced by the repeal of the Edict of Nantes (1598). Healing confessional divisions thus became politically expedient, especially at Halle, in the staunchly independent Duchy of the Magdeburg (Clark, 2006).

Also important for understanding the pietist-state alliance was a parallel quest for the

unification of knowledge spearheaded by a coterie of theologians and philosophers who gathered under the patronage of Frederick's erudite and sophisticated wife Sophia Charlotte, herself an avowed disciple of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Antognazza, 2008). Much as Comenius had argued, Leibniz hoped to heal sectarian divisions through the establishment of an evangelical church committed to a broad understanding of Christian truth. Minimizing the importance of sacramental and dogmatic disputes, he turned to Natural Theology confident that knowledge of God's creation would justify the religious imperatives of life. It would also promote the scientific advancement and useful learning promised by Bacon—a prayer that dovetailed perfectly with the political and economic goals of the monarchy.

With the promise of new discoveries in medicine, agriculture, and other practical fields Leibniz helped found the Berlin Society of Sciences in 1700. Francke followed a similar track at Halle. As Kelly Whitmer (2015) explains, the development of scientific reasoning became a central plank of pietist pedagogy, both as a devotional tool and a means to technological advancement. Francke's physico-theology thus cohered with the larger irenic program masterminded by Leibniz and Frederick's court preacher, Comenius' grandson, Daniel Ernst Jablonski. Given Francke's own Comenian schooling, Whitmer makes the important claim that education at Halle realized many of the instructional principles developed by Comenius, although it should be noted, with much greater attention to the training of the heart rather than the head.

The Pietistic Manifesto

Christopher Clarke (2006) argues that the unique convergence of religious and political interests transformed the pietists into a veritable "fifth column" of the Prussian state (p. 127). Certainly, Francke and Spener were adept in promoting the social value of their reforms, but they had a larger goal than to be servants of the crown. No less than Comenius, they envisioned a

second *educational* reformation. Empowered with the pedagogic skills to awaken Mankind's spiritual nature, the teachers and clergy trained at Halle would spread across the nation and then the world creating the global community of practicing believers prophesized in Scripture. The blueprint for this overarching mission is set out in the compact three-part argument of Spener's *Pia Desidra*. The first section analyzes the Church's failings, the second expands on its duty to reform human nature, and the third details the means it must embrace to fulfil its true purpose.

The living body of Christ lay on its deathbed, riddled with sin. The nobility looked upon the Church as a political instrument for preserving power and privilege; the clergy, more interested in the temporal well-being than the teachings of Christ, performed their office without spiritual meaning; and, deprived of religious guidance, the common people had fallen into lives consumed by selfish and depraved pleasures. Drawing upon Revelations and the teachings of Arndt, Spener pictured a reborn Church energized by the Holy Spirit. Luther had ensured the purity of doctrine; it was now time to secure the purity of faith. If the Church could not create a heaven on Earth, it could at least bring men and women closer to the image of God within, able to enjoy the fruits of Christian life rather than suffering the disorder that flows from the base passions of the Old Adam. This demanded the reinvigoration of the apostolic mission and the religious life exemplified by the early Christians. The priesthood, he concluded, must become a teaching estate committed to sharing the transformative power of the Divine Word.

"As the old birth is propagated carnally from Adam," Arndt (1979) explained in *True Christianity*, "so the new birth is spiritually propagated from Christ, through the word of God. This word is the seed of the new creature" (p. 52). Given the majority of the population only knew the Scriptures through Sunday sermons, Spener demanded a system of instruction that would enable everyone to access the profound messages of the Bible firsthand. But simple knowledge of

God's Word was not sufficient. Christianity was a religion of the faith, not dogma. It required the kind of guided inquiry discussed by Paul in Corinthians. "Every Christian," he insisted, must study

industriously . . . in the Word of the Lord, [and] with the grace that is given him to teach others, especially those under his own roof, to chastise, exhort, convert, and edify them, to observe their life, pray for all, and insofar as possible be concerned about their salvation. (p. 94)

Only through critical interrogation and admonishment could the pure sentiments of Christian love be implanted in the heart.

Spener's reformed Church required a new kind of priest, a true Christian who could serve as a living example of God's love. He would admit none to the ministry who were unwilling to "die unto the world. . . Study without piety was worthless" (1675/1964, p. 104). Certainly, scholars were required to protect the Church from the polemical attacks of other denominations. But the majority only needed to explain the basic truths of Christianity to their congregation. Determined that the university become a "workshop of the Holy Spirit," he even cautioned professors to avoid "unnecessary argumentation" and counteract the "curiosity of lustful intellects" (p. 110). Theology was the practical discipline teaching how the Divine Word could be employed to fashion a believer's soul—skills which drew upon the individual's own heartfelt religious experience. Students required "concrete suggestions on how to institute pious meditations, how to know themselves better through self-examination, [and] how to resist the lusts of the flesh" (p. 112). Expanding upon the conventicle, he suggested they "admonish one another to put what they have heard into practice" and explain in a public confessional "how, in this or that situation, they have acquitted themselves" (p. 112-113).

Of course, putting such intimate knowledge to work demanded more than personal piety. Students had to master the rhetorical and soft skills

necessary for the conversion of others. There had to be exercises in how to counsel the wayward, comfort the infirm, and lead the congregation in the teachings of Christ. This last task involved the delivery of effective sermons, a central concern of the theology student's training. The typical pulpit oration was meaningless to the average parishioner. Steeped in abstract and technical points of doctrine, it addressed the ear rather than the heart. Spener was not interested in such intellectual gymnastics; the Word of the Lord had to be communicated plainly and powerfully to excite religious feelings and instill Christian love. Church attendance was not sufficient, the minister had to enter the inner temple of the soul and cultivate a sincere faith in God through the transformative power of the Holy Word.

August Francke

August Francke was the living epitome of Spener's reformed minister (Yoder, 2020). Under Spener's support and tutelage, his intense conversion experience during the fall of 1687 became the fuel of a "burning piety" that propelled him to the leadership of an energetic movement bent on enacting the educational reforms outlined in *Pia Desidra*. Indeed, as his vocal disdain for the Lutheran establishment demonstrates, Francke's religiosity had an even more radical edge than that of his mentor. Certainly, both believed that "children of the world" must become "children of God," but his own emotional rebirth revealed the profound psychological change this entailed. Becoming a true Christian necessitated the complete denial of all selfish impulses and total submission to the will of God. But what joy conversion would bring! Free from base desires, the *imago Dei* would be resurrected and the individual transformed into a spiritual being able to enjoy the higher delights of life promised by the Almighty.

Like Spener, Francke (1663–1727) was raised in a devout Lutheran family where, next to the Bible, *True Christianity* was the prime source of spiritual guidance (Sattler, 1989). His father served as a counselor at the court of Saxe-Gotha,

advising Duke Ernst “the Pious” in his effort to improve the religious condition of the population through a system of compulsory schooling based upon the teachings of Comenius. Every child was to learn the catechism in the vernacular and understand basic facts about the design of God’s Cosmos. At Halle, Francke (1727) would use the “small Treatise” Ernst published, laying out “in a most compendious Way the Principles of the chief and most useful Sciences” (p. 153). In his *Autobiography*, Francke (cited in Erb, 1983), also speaks of the role played by his elder sister, who after the death of their father, sought to curb his boyish ways with daily lectures from Arndt (Erb, 1983). Evidently, the germ of piety took root. For while he made easy progress through academia, Francke was troubled by the shallowness of his faith and the irrelevance of his training for the practical tasks of the ministry. “I had no other concept of theological studies” he confesses, “than that they consisted of having theological lectures and theological books firmly in one’s head and could carry on an erudite discussion about them” (quoted in Sattler 1989, p. 26). Indeed, he graduated from Leipzig in 1685 hopeful that his skills in Biblical exegesis would secure him a comfortable university or ecclesiastical appointment. The following year—while supporting himself through tutoring and private lectures—he helped form the *Collegium Philobiblicum*, a study group dedicated to exploring the sacred word in its original Greek and Hebrew. Given the rising interest in conventicles, membership quickly expanded, and discussions turned from the meaning of scripture to its implication for Christian life. Yet, he reports, determined to “become a distinguished and learned man, to become rich, and to live an easy life,” both “inwardly and outwardly” he remained “a man of the world” (quoted in Sattler 1989, p. 28). All this changed when he was asked to deliver a sermon on the nature of a living faith. Thrown into a crisis of conscience over the superficiality of his own convictions, his atheistic head did battle with his contrite heart, until the night before the scheduled oration he sank to his knees and prayed for God’s

forgiveness. In that moment, his plea was answered. Overwhelmed by the experience of a father’s love, he rose completely assured “of the grace of God in Christ Jesus” (Erb, p. 105). “Reason stood away; victory was torn from its hands, for the power of God had made it subservient to faith” (p. 105). This foretaste of the Lord’s goodness released him from all material interests. “From this time on,” he reports, “I held contentiously to God, and I cared nothing for promotion, honor, and visibility in the world, riches, good days, and exterior worldly pomp” (p. 106). Faith, he declared, brought the gift of a “new birth from God.” It “makes us completely other men in our hearts, minds, thoughts, and all our powers and brings the Holy Spirit with it” (p. 106).

These powers soon became evident at Halle. Expanding his ministry from the steps of St George’s Church, Francke took the promise of pietism to the squalid and sordid streets of Glaucha. From catechism classes to stirring emotional sermons, the religion of the heart energized the community; hundreds were drawn from neighboring churches to his daily prayers and readings from Arndt. Recognizing Francke’s blatant disregard for doctrine as a threat to their authority, city and Church leaders were quick to react. Particularly troubling was his use of the confessional. Where other priests absolved sins as a matter of course, Francke demanded sincere contrition and repentance. To make matters worse, it was reported he was hosting conventicles that encouraged religious visionaries. Charging heresy and enthusiasm, complaints were submitted to Berlin and a commission established to review his conduct. Headed by the University of Halle’s Chancellor, the result inevitably weighed in his favor. But this did little to heal divisions. Indeed, Francke became increasingly strident in his criticism of the orthodox. For example, expanding on Luther’s Doctrine of the Cross in a 1694 sermon, he attacked those who believed in the historical accuracy of the Bible hoping “to attain eternal life through the death of Christ” but were unwilling to “die to sin and mortify the matters of the flesh” (Sattler, 1982, pp. 125-126). “The mere

knowledge of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is fruitless” (p. 127). A true Christian had to endure the crucifixion of bodily desires so that they might be born again with Christ, a new creature with a divine nature. Most galling for Francke were the clergy who placed their own temporal ends before the duty of the ministry. In a volcanic 1698 sermon he compared his orthodox critics to wolves in sheep’s clothing, warning the congregation against false prophets who served up religion as mere dogma and ritual. Their pure theology was only the husk of faith, not its kernel (Sattler, 1982). Jesus, he later noted, had given up “honors, pleasures, and riches . . . entirely spending the days of his humiliation on procuring our salvation and happiness” (Francke, 1831, p. vii). This was the lesson priests must follow. Yet most had no “living experience of the work of conversion in their own souls, which they are to preach to others” (p. xi). Why? The “Fear of Man” had undermined the “Fear of God.” Future clergy had to understand and conquer their own nature if they were to be servants of Christ. This was to be the central goal of his educational project at Halle.

A Christian Community

Spener had not envisioned a sudden change in society; correcting human nature was a task for the ages. But he was hopeful that the Holy Word would elevate personal piety and infuse the positive ethic of neighborly love within the population. Those of the true faith would follow the example of Christ and embrace the duty to care for the poor and needy. But Christian charity meant more than simply distributing relief to the destitute, it implied attending to the root causes of their distress. The pauper, for example, had to be taught control over the bodily desires that drove them into a life of debauchery, drunkenness, and beggary. The slums of Glaucha, recently devastated by fire and plague, was the perfect site to demonstrate the efficacy of Spener’s pietistic pedagogy (Gawthrop, 2006). It would also provide proof of God’s sanction for the reformation of Mankind. As Francke (1727) explained in *Pietas Hallensis*, his 1701 “*account of the marvelous foot-steps of*

Divine Providence,” the Almighty always rewarded good works.

Uniting material support with religious instruction, Francke set about curing the social ills of the city through education. Relying mainly on philanthropic bequests, in just four years he established an expansive Foundation that included an orphanage, several schools, and even a home for destitute widows. His scheme had a simple beginning. Starting in 1695, he restricted the weekly distribution of alms to those who accepted lessons on the Lutheran catechism. While this brought little change in the behavior of adults, his interactions with children convinced him that the vice and ignorance of the population could only be conquered by shaping the minds and morals of future generations. With this end in view, he employed the church collection to subsidize a charity school run by financially strapped theology students. Yet even with four hours of daily teaching “those good Impressions, which perhaps during their Stay in the school were Stamped on their Mind, were obliterated again, whilst they were abroad, and so the intended reflection of their ill Habits was much obstructed” (p. 20). Confident that God’s bounty would stream “down more and more plentifully, to Shew us he was ready to do still greater Things, if we could but believe,” Francke resolved to extend religious control over the child’s entire environment (p. 19-20). His first step was to board orphans with respected members of the community. As donations from the “well-disposed” flowed in, the number under his care soon swelled. Charity bred charity. The promise of Christian transformation ensured funds not only for the children’s upkeep and instruction, but also the purchase a common house and the establishment of an orphanage. Confident in the workings of Providence, Francke committed to the construction of a grand, five story brick building that would house over a hundred children.

A second, unexpected consequence of his initiative, was the request from better-placed townspeople that educational opportunities be provided for their children. Before long, his charity school expanded to accommodate 50 or 60

students, with gendered classes for the young and old, the poor and the well-to-do. In addition, although not mentioned in *Pietas Hallensis*, he also opened a school for the sons of the nobility and upper classes, what would later become known as the *Paedagogium*.

Over the next a decade Francke's Foundation expanded into a veritable school city. By the time of his death in 1727, Gawthrop (2006) reports 170 teachers were engaged in the instruction of over 2200 German, Latin, and elite students. There was a seminary to train future teachers, a hospital, a workhouse, and a home for widowed women. There were also numerous workshops, a grocery, an apothecary, and a print shop. More than simply supporting the needs and the instructional goals of the community, the various trades—especially through the sale of books and medicine—had brought substantial profits to fuel building and growth. Francke even envisioned investments in mining, agriculture, and shipping! Complemented by a museum, a library, and elaborate gardens, the whole enterprise conjured up images of Johann Valentin Andrea's (1999) *Christianopolis*.

How are we to understand this expansive foundation with its seemingly incongruous mix of projects? Perhaps the best guide is Francke's unpublished *Der Grosse Aufsatz*, written and rewritten over the years to explain the importance of his work and solicit funds from supporters (Menck, 2009). Like *Pia Desidra* it explains how vice and ignorance can be overcome by teachers and clergy empowered to redeem the unregenerate. Two tasks loomed large: the instruction of children and the care of the poor. Given that only those who have experienced the inner emotions of conversion could hope to shape other souls, theology students had to be carefully mentored through their own religious struggles. They also needed a practical apprenticeship in the employment of the Holy Word within a Christian community that exemplified the essential values of faith, love, and industry. The pietist faculty at Halle and the associated Orphanage met these twin needs. Here was a city on a hill, a model of Christian life that

would help prepare disciples of Christ to spread God's word across the nation and then the world.

Francke devoted much time and effort to raising the money necessary for his expansive plans. His chief argument, reiterated throughout *Pietas Hallensis*, was that Halle served as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, furthering the work of Christ. The wealthy could play their part through financial donations. He also promised material rewards for those willing to invest in the Foundation's businesses, which had a competitive edge thanks to the lower labor costs. True Christians and their student helpers, he explained, did not work for profit, only God's glory (Gawthrop, 2006). Initially Francke attempted to fund his teaching corps by setting orphans to work in a stocking factory. But the poor quality of workmanship, even after long hours of labor, rendered the venture unprofitable.

The *Paedagogium* was far more successful. In addition to handsome fees, many of the children's parents exercised influence at the Berlin Court, helping to build royal support for his efforts. This came first with the supply of building materials for the Orphanage then, in subsequent years, legal charters and tax exemptions for his business projects. Turning from child labor to commerce, Francke could now employ his entrepreneurial skills to help further the Foundation's philanthropic mission. Most important was the publication of schoolbooks, devotional works, and cheap Bibles necessary for the Pietist crusade. By 1727 some 80,000 copies of the Bible had been sold. Equally lucrative was the sale of *essentia dulcis*, an elixir recognized across the Continent as a treatment for gout. By 1710 revenues had matched donations. In 1727, at over 30,000 talers per year (though difficult to ascertain equivalent value, the taler had about 1.5 times the silver as the later US silver dollar (German Silver Coins, 2022)), they constituted more than 90% of the Foundations income, funding the construction of classrooms, dormitories, a library, a hospital, a lecture hall, and a host of other buildings (Gawthrop, 2006).

With the resources to match his zeal for reform, Francke had no problem attracting students. By 1727 Halle had grown into Germany's largest university, with 1500 students, two thirds of whom were under the theology faculty. In 1710 some 500 were attending his dinner tables, many in the hope of securing board and lodging in exchange for work in one of the institution's schools. For those with limited means, earning a scholarship was a way to meet the crippling cost of university education. It also offered a golden opportunity to develop professional skills—a passport to future employment. But none could advance unless they demonstrated the right motives. Accordingly, a special seminar was established for those deemed spiritually fit to teach in the Latin school or the *Paedagogium*. Committing to a multi-year year contract, those enrolled in the *seminarium selectum praeceptorium* worked under the supervision of the institution's inspector, joined, it was hoped, through bonds of mutual admonition, in the perfection of the pedagogic skills necessary for the spiritualization of the child's soul.

Theology and Praxis

Close to Arndt on original sin, Francke's anthropology cast human nature in a slightly different light to Comenius. In his *Naturall Philosophie* (1651) Comenius expands on the unique station of men and women within God's creation. Like other creatures we are composed of matter and animated by spirit. But God went further with Mankind. Breathing life into Adam, he produced a more refined spirit, a rational soul with the power to understand the world and exercise free will. Able to grasp the cause of events, we can know good and evil and choose between virtue and vice. Certainly, Comenius recognized the many emotions inherent in our animal nature—more intense and varied than any other creature—but he believed that human beings would always follow the dictates of reason. Francke's (1813) theory of the affections revealed the need for a more intense struggle with the passions. "A good man," he quoted Christ, "out of the treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of

the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." What was this treasure "but those internal emotions which inform and actuate the human soul?" (p. 125).

Francke's analysis identified three levels of emotions; appetites (shared with animals) necessary to meet basic needs, affections informed by intelligence that express human desires, and the higher feelings of a sanctified soul. The "Carnal Man" of the second tier was very different to the "Spiritual Man" of the third. Guided by self-love, the unregenerate sought temporal pleasure and sensual gratification. By contrast those awakened by the Holy Spirit looked to the eternal and the glory of God. Rejecting bodily desires, they enjoyed a life of peace and love in the face of worldly turmoil. Killing the Old Adam was not an all or nothing affair; Spiritual Man had to do battle with Carnal Man every day. The inspired writers of the Bible led the way. Productive, daily engagement with Scripture demanded prayer, meditation, and personal examination in the face of the Almighty's judgment (Bayer, 2011). Naturally, there would be earnest tears and pleas for guidance. "The reading of Holy Scripture," Francke (Franke & Strom, 2011) explained, had to "*be carried out with loud prayer and sighing as well as with praise and thanks to God*" (p. 377). This was the only way the Holy Spirit could enter the heart and cultivate the soul. It was through this "*dear cross*" of suffering that "we here become akin to his only born son." We must "never neglect *our self-examination*," Francke insisted, for it is "from the divine word we *will learn to recognize properly the corruption of our heart*" (p. 379). Fortunately, the Bible also provided the means to escape torment and experience the sweet joy of God's redeeming grace. It abounded with passages to elevate the soul. All "thoughts of external affliction" could be remedied by pondering uplifting passages "devoutly in your heart" (p. 380). Armed with a comprehensive knowledge of Scripture—the who, what, and why of each circumstance—the priest could utilize this pedagogy of fear and love to engage the entire range of human affections. The subtle use of voice and gesture was also important.

The closer a person came to emulating the feelings of the inspired author, the greater its effect on their emotions. Given the diversity of character, this demanded an intimate knowledge of the individual's inner state. Best achieved through confessional interrogation, checked by the careful observation, a person's motives could then be compared with those of exemplary figures to promote imitation of the Godly.

Given the notoriously riotous behavior of university students, the theology faculty at Halle put great stress on the care of the soul. Their standing in Berlin, no less than the greater pietist mission, depended upon it. The discipline of the enclosed Foundation provided constraints upon behavior, but more telling was the internal surveillance of the heart. To this end, students were directed to keep a diary chronicling their emotional struggles. Writing was seen as an effective means to promote reflection; it also provided mentors a tool with which to explore inner motives and encourage progress toward conversion. Sincerity was key.

Francke bemoaned those who would ape the emotions of the devout for personal gain. He also bristled at clever students who put human learning before the teachings of God. Philosophy's office was to be the handmaiden of theology. His greatest hope was that students would embrace the overarching goal of the seminar by observing, reporting, and encouraging one another in the mutual search for atonement. To steel them to their future task, he delivered weekly moral lectures on the mission of the early Christians. Titus and Timothy were to be their example; the epistles of Paul the guide to their pastoral duties (Yoder, 2020).

The Foundation's various institutions provided the essential spaces in which theology students could translate Francke's teachings into religious *praxis*. Under the supervision of faculty and staff they would engage in the work of Christian charity, providing spiritual edification as they attended to the needs of the poor and dependent. Most important however, was the education of children. Like Comenius, Francke

compared the young mind to softened wax and counselled that the deepest impressions were made in early age. The overarching goal was to implant the central lessons of Scripture as the basis of all learning and free the soul from the base impulses inherited from Adam. But this natural willfulness could not be subdued by "Severity and sharp discipline" as many Puritan divines advocated—the rod would excite the very passions that had to be overcome! Nor should the child be motivated by praise and shame. All rewards and punishments had to come from the Almighty. Relying on a "condescending Christian Meekness," Francke's (1727) teacher was to wield the love and fear of God using "the most pathetick and sweet expressions" (p. 194). The joys of heaven were to be emphasized over the eternal pains of hell. In extreme cases, when physical correction was necessary, the offender would join with the master in an earnest prayer of forgiveness, while those that excelled would be told they were coming closer to the example of Christ.

Gawthrop (2006) provides a vivid account of how this regimen of moral discipline pervaded every aspect of the Foundation's highly controlled environment. Children were never be left to themselves. Under the continuous eye of their masters every action became a measure of their soul. Teachers even keep a register detailing each pupil's background, temperament, and evolving frame of mind. Those who lived within the compound were supervised day and night to ensure they didn't engage in competitive sports, boisterous play, or read books that excited inappropriate passions. Their leisure time had to be spent in cooperative, community-focused activities, such as helping in the gardens or workshops. As for the children who returned home after long hours of schooling, their behavior was monitored with the support of parents.

Francke repeatedly explained in his sermons that education must begin in the home (Sattler, 1982). The pious family had to engage in daily prayer, devotional reading, and joint reflection on the text covered in the Sunday service. The Bible was to be read cover to cover

every two years; the Lutheran Catechism reviewed every four weeks. The same expectations structured life within the Foundation. Irrespective of the educational track, the school day began and ended with prayer and hymns. Periods in-between were dedicated to study of the Holy Word. Far from the recitation of memorized passages, children would be tested on the meaning of Scripture and their ability to apply Christian principles to the practical problems of life. They were even encouraged to pray in their own words (Shantz, 2013). For those of the lower orders who attended the German School, Francke confessed this comprised the bulk of their instruction, with additional time devoted to practical arts and the pupil's future trade. Throughout, emphasis was placed upon neighborly love so that all understood and embraced the part they were to play within the community.

The Latin School and the *Paedagogium* had deeper and broader curriculums that prepared students from the Burgher class for university, and those from elite and wealthy families for leadership roles in the military and government. Here the twin goals of social service and individual piety were fused with Christian wisdom. Science played an important role. Much as Leibniz argued, the wondrous order and beauty of Creation provided proof of God's power and goodness. It also promised to reveal properties of nature that could be employed for the improvement of human life. No one doubted that the book of nature was in complete harmony with the revealed word. The complex economy of the world and the intricate adaptations of its innumerable parts bore the signature of God's workmanship; a source of awe proudly displayed for its instructional purposes in the Foundation's famed museum of artifacts, objects, and animals collected from around the globe.

God had gifted Mankind rational powers to understand and govern the Earth. But the mind had its limits. Human wisdom could not be placed above that of the Almighty. Men and women might seek practical knowledge of nature but such discoveries had to comply with the larger truths

contained in the Bible. According to Ann Blair (2000), Comenius' reconciliation of sense, reason, and Scripture provided the most influential statement of this Christian Philosophy. His sense-based curriculum also illuminates the pedagogic methods employed at Halle. As Whitmir (2015) shows, students at the Latin School and the *Paedagogium* were engaged in hands-on activities designed to teach the implicit order of the world and reveal how its inherent forces could be harnessed. These vivid experiences were designed to make deep impressions on the developing mind. Practical activities were better than words; objects—such as the museum's models of the rival planetary systems—were better than pictures. Students even used the mathematical text written by the university's popular and increasingly prominent rationalist philosopher Christian Wolff to guide the process of identifying causal powers through systematic measurement (Whitmir (2015)).

The Clash of Faculties

While philosophy remained subservient to theology, scientific study reinforced the religious goals of Francke's instructional project. The problem came when Wolff turned his rational method on what the pietists viewed as the unique province of Scripture, the shaping of mind and character. The result was an explosive epistemological dispute that resulted in Wolff's dismissal from Halle, and a profound public debate over the proper relation of the academic faculties within the German university (Howard, 2006). Human reason could not be allowed to challenge the authority of the Bible and the priority of faith.

The now famous clash was ignited by his 1721 lecture to students and faculty—delivered as outgoing rector—on the practical value of Confucianism (Becker, 1991). Drawing upon the writings of Leibniz and various Jesuit authors, Wolff described how the Chinese had developed a system of education designed to school the future leaders of a rationally ordered, virtuous, and happy society. Although this did not conflict with the teachings of Christianity, it did support his contention that scientifically informed experts

should shape social policy. This was pure heresy for the pietists. Committed to the spiritual elevation of the soul, Wolff's secularism was received as an endorsement of atheism. Far from learning from Confucius, Francke was insistent that Christian missionaries be sent to offer the divine guidance and religious discipline necessary to raise the Chinese from their carnal depravity (Holloran, 2000).

As for Wolff, both he and his doctrines became the object of severe and bitter criticism. Protected by the University's rules of toleration, he battled against charges of determinism and the denial of God's active agency in the world. He was also accused of corrupting the morals of students with materialistic doctrines; many of whom had fled theology for his more engaging classes. The Jena theologian Johann Franz Buddeus was recruited to assess Wolff's philosophical sins. But an official tribunal judged his conclusion—that rationalist doctrines might be dangerous to religion because they undermined the authority of divine law—insufficient to warrant Wolff's censure. At this point Francke turned to politics. Convincing the king of Wolff's threat to the state, Frederick gave Wolff just 48 hours to leave the country (Holloran, 2000).

Wolff found a more accommodating position at the neighboring University of Marburg where he continued to defend and popularize rational analysis. Determined to protect the dominion of theology, the pietists increased their attacks on naturalistic explanations of morals. In their anthropology virtue flowed from the sentiments of the regenerated mind. Reason had to show humility before God. Naturally, philosophers and theologians across Europe were drawn into the contest, including many who sought to reconcile the insights of the two camps. But the pietists did not relent. In 1727, as interest in Wolff's philosophy continued, Frederick was persuaded to ban the sale and discussion of his works. He also ordered all theology students to matriculate under the pietist controlled faculties at Halle or Konigsberg (Melton, 2003).

Francke's dispute with Wolff also had ramifications for the pupils in the Foundation's schools. According to Whitmer (2015) the curriculum became increasingly Biblio-centric. Geography and history, for example, focused on the Holy Land and the key figures of the Old Testament. The same held true for the sciences. Where earlier students had been encouraged to observe, examine, and form their own conjectures, the dangers of rationalism necessitated a more structured approach. How could the mere observation of events unlock the inner properties and complex order of the world? As Arndt and his followers taught, nature had to be approached through a Christian Philosophy that explained the purpose of God's workmanship. Expanding upon Comenius' Mosaic account of creation, Buddeus' presented an eclectic philosophy designed to provide a comprehensive Christian understanding of life and the religious uses of natural knowledge—an ideal captured in the image of Solomon's Temple, modeled within the Museum, and the rivers of enlightenment that would flow from it (Kelley, 2001; Whitmer, 2015).

Conclusion

The pietist ascendancy at the University of Halle was short lived. By the early 1730s most of its leading figures had followed Francke to grave (died 1727). None that followed could match his reformist drive. Pietism also lost standing with Berlin, especially after the more cerebral and religiously skeptic Fredrick II succeeded his father to the throne in 1740. Indeed, given the alignment of Wolff's rational paternalism with the goals of the absolute state, Frederick, Prussia's "philosopher king," convinced Wolff to return to Halle the following year claiming in a letter that it was now "up to the philosophers to be the preceptors of the universe and the tutors of its princes" (quoted in Andrew, 2006, p. 70). But Francke and his co-religionists at Halle did leave an important intellectual deposit. Their stress on Biblical hermeneutics and the development of a personal relationship with God helped shape the course of theological thought through the century

(Zimmermann, 2012). The role of language in the cultivation of the faculties also proved key. Together with the writings of Locke and other influential enlightenment thinkers, Wolff's views on the innate powers of the mind undercut the pietist vision of human depravity. Yet for those schooled in pietistic theology, such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Wolff's narrow focus on calculating interests failed to capture the intense inner experiences generated by the affective faculties, most especially through the contemplation of poetry and the inspired verses of Scripture. The true, the good, and the beautiful were not merely questions for intellectual intuition, they involved aesthetic appreciation. The development of the sentiments was as important as the development of reason for the virtuous life. Meshing with similar arguments forwarded by English and Scottish moralists, Baumgarten's synthesis contributed to a fundamental turn in German anthropology (Grote, 2017). As witnessed in Kant and Herder, the pietistic project of overcoming of human corruption gave way to *Bildung*, the full and harmonious cultivation of all the mind's powers.

Francke also had a profound influence on educational practice. Halle served as a model for Königsberg's *Collegium Fridericianum* (where Kant studied and Herder taught), Johann Hecker's institute and *Realschule* in Berlin, and numerous orphanages and schools throughout Europe (Melton, 2003). Its graduates were instrumental in the transformation of the Prussian military and the state bureaucracy. They also took Francke's message of Biblically-informed Christian praxis to communities across the land (Gawthrop, 2006). As Melton (2003) explains, pietism focus on voluntary action, industry, and community service met the monarchy's principal need for social control without coercion—evolving, as the century progressed, into reforms aimed at the creation of an independent and disciplined workforce. Drafted by Hecker in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, Frederick II's *Generallandschulreglement* of 1763 looked to the pietistic schooling of the nation's largely rural population in face of famine and

economic distress. But with little financial support from the crown the law remained a dead letter; local authorities could or would not raise taxes for schools and teachers. It was not until the Nineteenth Century reforms initiated by Wilhelm von Humboldt that compulsory public education was finally established across Prussia. While these famously promoted the goal of human *Bildung* in the university and the *Gymnasium*, elementary schooling for the children of agricultural and manufacturing workers inevitably turned to the century-long tradition of promoting practical or "Positive Christianity" through the kind of pietistic pedagogy pioneered by Francke (Schleunes, 1989).

What I hope this paper shows is the origin of this hugely influential movement in the theocentric anthropology of Spener and Francke. Their energetic crusade for the reformation of human nature through education gave birth to a powerful pedagogy of psychological control. It also formulated a profound new mission for teachers and clergy; the creation of a religious commonwealth dedicated to personal industry and neighborly love. While the vision of Mankind's fundamental character evolved under the influence of enlightenment thought, the nuanced cultivation of the mind's faculties remained a potent political instrument, especially for the management of an inherently volatile population.

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