



Prayer Before Studying Theology:

O Lord, who has taught us that all our doings without love are worth nothing,
Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the very bond of peace and all virtues,
without which anyone who lives is counted as dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

--Book of Common Prayer, Quinquagesima

Radical Pietism

In the last two weeks, in examining Protestant renewal movements of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, we noted the emergence of a concept of individual intentionality, which we might provisionally define as follows:

the individual's voluntary determination

- a) personally to experience the truths of salvation and
- b) radically to alter
 - a. all traditional religious and social practices and
 - b. all of one's existing personal commitments

in order to bring one's life into agreement with that personal experience of truth.

This concept was developed by the Puritans and pietists to encourage conscious appropriation of the faith and thus promote the renewal of the state church.

As we noted in the discussion section of last week's class, however, this notion of individual intentionality was not without its problems, since it was a potentially unlimited concept:

- Once the religious experience of the individual, apart from the traditions and formal structures of the broader church, was seen as definitive of religious identity, attachment to the traditional church and its structures and received practices was no longer strictly necessary.
 - Voluntary Association: To the extent that community persisted, it would increasingly be understood as a voluntary association of like-minded persons with similar beliefs and experiences and would last for only as long as such shared beliefs or experiences were perceived to exist.
- When individual religious experience becomes a primary source or standard of authority, there may no longer be a reason or felt need for association with a broader religious community at all. An individual quest might suffice.

Example: Tracking These Developments by Examining Lutheran/Pietist Hymns and Poetry

Compare and contrast the assumptions, focus and content of the following:

- Early Lutheran hymns (Lund, *Documents*, pp. 96-98; read b and e; the forms and structure of c and d may also be examined);
- Halle Pietism (Lund, *Documents*, p. 308 #187)
- The Transition from Halle Pietism to Radical Pietism
 - Gottfried Arnold in Erb, pp. 237-239: “True Solitude,” “Walk with Jesus,” and “The Soul Refreshes Itself in Jesus”
- Radical Pietism
 - Gerhard Tersteegen in Erb, p. 249-251 (“Pilgrim’s Thought,” “Treasure,” “Resignation,” “God is Present” [selected stanzas])

Mysticism and Radical Pietism: Moving Beyond the Halle Pietist Program for the Renewal of the State Church and Its Religious Life

As separatists who had left behind the institutional structures of the state church, the radical pietists needed to find

- a new form of prayer (replacing the set prayers used in the public worship of the state church with a form of inward-looking, individual prayer that was not closely tied to the words, concepts and practices of any of the state churches)
 - This need was met by importing a quietist account of prayer and religious experience from contemporary Roman Catholic mysticism.
- new sources of spiritual inspiration that agreed with the movement’s emerging ideals
 - The radical pietists thought that
 - God is essentially love and the cross shows and symbolizes that reality;
 - the Gospel, then, is a call to turn from self-love to a genuine, heartfelt love for God and neighbor
 - ❖ The focus here is on one’s affective response to God and the life of piety that results from it.
 - the notion of a cruel deity who carries out retributive punishment and damns people to Hell should be questioned;
 - the idea (found in scholastic and Protestant orthodox theology) that reason was the most important thing and that reason could be used for polemical purposes (battles over doctrine and practice) should be discarded.
 - a human being is sinful only as long as his/her will set on his own advantage, but this is overcome when he/she is awakened and his/her will is conformed to God’s will, so that he/she desires to imitate Christ and, by this means, arrives at perfection in love.
 - ❖ Faith, then, is nothing more than love toward God as revealed in Christ.
 - the awakened Christian is
 - ❖ a new being in Christ;

- ❖ a person in whom divine love and divine wisdom have found a home;
 - ❖ is resigned to accept and follow the wisdom which is the gift of God's Spirit and thus to live a life of piety,
 - ✚ even if the call to devote all one's love to divine wisdom should result in a life of
 - ❖ singleness (not marrying),
 - ❖ poverty and
 - ❖ an unconventional lifestyle;
 - ❖ is supremely free and can be bound by none (no traditional doctrines, no religious or theological systems, no compulsory church attendance, no passive participation in a formal service of worship, no obligations which go beyond what has been freely chosen)
 - ✚ As a supremely free person, the awakened Christian possesses a Spirit-led inner light, which
 - ❖ gives him/her a restored sense of the rightness of things and
 - ❖ allows him/her to go beyond a merely outward, historical reading of the text to interpret Scripture in a spiritually meaningful way.
- This need for new sources of inspiration that agreed with the radical pietists' emerging ideals was met by
- limiting the importance of traditional doctrines (such as the doctrines of the atonement and eternal punishment) and
 - accepting (to a greater or lesser extent) the alternative account of God, the world and final salvation offered by the early seventeenth-century German mystic Jacob Boehme.
 - accepting the value of personal revelations (arising from the inner light) that were broadly in agreement with the above ideals.

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Quietism: Its Catholic Origins and Subsequent Influence on Radical Pietism

- Quietism was a reaction to the highly structured, very directive forms of prayer that emerged in the Catholic Counter-Reformation.
- There were competing "schools" of prayer in Counter-Reformation Catholicism, each of which taught a distinctive method of praying that became the basis for spiritual guidance.
- One of the common points of agreement among the various counter-Reformation approaches to prayer was that one was supposed to begin with a program of fasting, self-examination, and vocal prayer (using words and meditating on sensible images) so that the soul might be purified of habitual vices, which diverted one from the love of God.
- It was only after this process of spiritual warfare (embodied in outward acts) had been completed that one could rest in a state of contemplation, looking to God and remaining

with God in a communion of love without being distracted by the outward senses or by excessive (disordered) loves for created things.

Quietism was thus a reaction against the assumption that ascetical practices were necessary to arrive at actively acquired contemplation.

They also believed that concern for one's state of progress in the Christian life (What am I doing? How am I doing? Am I making progress? When will I have the satisfaction of a more direct experience of God?) hinders rather than helps one enter into and remain in the higher stage of contemplation.

The Quietists felt that in thinking about the ways in which we are touched and transformed by God's grace, we should

- take a very pessimistic view of all human action and
- emphasize instead the passivity of the believer who is wholly surrendered to and moved by the will of God:
 - a) One should be distrustful of human initiative;
 - b) In a corrupt world, one must depend exclusively upon the working of God's grace, which alone can bring one to union with God;
 - c) In prayer we must therefore remain wholly passive and at rest, waiting upon God, not being concerned with one's spiritual state or progress in the spiritual life.
 - d) Remaining in a passive state (*l'état passif*), one waits for God to do the one thing that is truly needed and yet beyond our grasp--namely, to create in us a pure love (*pur amour*, *l'amour pur*) that looks only to God, apart from our own interests, a love in and through which we may enjoy a stable and lasting communion with him.
 - The idea of pure, disinterested love is found already in previous Catholic spiritual writers, esp. St. François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote* and St. Jeanne de Chantal.
 - The idea of the stable, permanent state is possibly a further development advanced by later quietist writers.
 - e) In Madame Guyon and later writers, one often finds some version of the following doctrines:
 - In one's passive abandonment/resignation to the will of God, the other faculties (memory and understanding=reason) are subordinated to the will (which is devoted to pure love).
 - See the quotations from Madame Guyon in Lindberg, *The Pietist Theologians*, p. 164 and p. 162.
 - An apparent annihilation of the will then occurs as the perception of one's own will (as distinct from the will of God) disappears and the one will by which one is moved is that of God.
 - See the quotations on pp. 166-167.

The Origins of Quietism in Seventeenth-Century Roman Catholic Mysticism

Miguel de Molinos:

- a) Life: Born 1628 near Saragossa (Spain) and doctor in theology of the University of Coimbra. Even as a relatively young man, he gained a reputation as a preacher and confessor in Valencia, then sent to Rome where he stayed.

- b) Major Work: *La guida spirituale (The Spiritual Guide)*
 - a. Only contemplative prayer, in which one is purely passive, can lead to spiritual perfection and union with God.
 - b. One must devote oneself to inner quiet and abandon oneself wholly to the will of God, rather than engage in ascetic efforts (i.e., efforts to prepare oneself to draw near to God and behold his character).
 - c. One must surrender all of one's freedom to God and worry not about Hell, Heaven, or even one's own salvation, holiness or perfection.
- c) Attacked by Jesuits, eventually imprisoned (1686), tried, condemned (1687), died in jail in 1696
- d) Illumination and Guidance: At the trial, he claimed that an internal, God-given light enabled him to determine (when he was serving as a confessor) when a penitent's action came from the Devil.
- e) Significance of His Teaching: He blurred the traditional lines between
 - a. actively acquired contemplation (through fasting and the practice of spiritual disciplines one might prepare oneself to behold God's character and actually come to receive some initial, transient knowledge of God) and
 - b. infused, purely passive contemplation (the higher knowledge of God which comes when the passions are quieted and the soul is at rest and able to receive perfect and lasting spiritual knowledge of God and mystical communion with God as a gift from God himself).

This relativizes the value of all traditional devotional/ascetical practices, since perfect union with God can come only when all these things are abandoned.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon (1648-1717)-- best known Catholic Quietist writer

- 1) Life: hard life (mother neglected her, denied her maternal affection; sent off to boarding school at 2 1/2, returning home due to illness only in 1659; in 1664 she was unhappily married to an older, morose rather difficult man, Jacques Guyon, and under the supervision of a hostile mother-in-law; suffered frequent illnesses; suffered the loss of two of her children and the disfigurement of the third in a smallpox epidemic when she was refused permission to remove her children to safety; she herself scarred by smallpox, marring her natural beauty)
- 2) Influences: Her confessor, Father Lacombe, was a possibly unbalanced individual who was influenced by Molinos' ideas.
- 3) Works:
 - a) *Moyen court et [très] facile de faire oraison (Short Method of Prayer)*:
The prayer of quiet is the easiest to practice and the most spiritually productive (popular introduction to Quietist practice)
 - b) *Les Torrens* or *Torrens spirituels (Spiritual Torrents)* (1683; produced by automatic writing after a spiritual retreat)
The prayer of quiet reserved for the elevated persons who have made significant spiritual progress
 - i) When the soul has learned to become passive, the senses lose their distinct (individual) impact and come together in a single, united state of affection for God that is beyond reflective intelligence and deliberate will;
 - ii) When the soul becomes aware of its attachment to this (very enjoyable) state of affection, rather than to God (as the cause of this state of affection), God withdraws

- his graces and the state of affection ceases. (God does this so that one can learn to love God for himself, rather than loving his presence or loving him for the benefits he provides.)
- iii) The soul is deprived of the sense/taste of the divine presence and even of its ability actively to pursue or practice virtue. In this state of emptiness, aridity and desolation, it perceives no more signs of God's love and must come to terms with its total inadequacy and detach itself from anything other than God himself (loved for himself alone, even apart from his presence and benefits).
 - iv) Once one detaches oneself from everything other than God (disappropriation) and has attained to a pure, disinterested love of God, God takes total possession of the soul and elevates it to his own level, so that it may enjoy perfect communion with himself
 - (1) a stable, supra-sensible feeling of joy (different from the intermittent exaltation found in the first state described in [i] above)
 - (2) the soul's whole activity comes to be controlled by God as an instrument of his grace
 - (3) One therefore ought not to try to resist those motions of the soul and body that appear to escape one's control
 - (a) automatic speaking and writing: words come not from oneself but from deep within one.

Questions:

- What is the relation between the individual, God, church and society? How are their respective roles and authority defined?
- What is the relation between inner experience and external practice?
- In what ways might Quietist teaching be helpful (i.e. direct our attention to things that are of value)?
- In what ways might it be unbalanced or cause problems?
- What is missing or underemphasized in their account of prayer and the Christian life?

The Transmission of Quietism into Early Modern Protestant Spirituality

Pierre Poiret--Reformed pastor who played a central role in the transmission of Quietism into the Reformed churches and, through Wesley, into Methodist/Holiness spirituality (and from there into the twentieth-century evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches)

- Life: Born Metz 1646; died Rhynsburg 1719. Initially studied painting, became attracted to philosophy through reading Descartes, later studied theology at Basle and served as pastor of small communities of French exiles in Germany (visited Pietist groups established by Spener and Schütz) and the Netherlands.
- Translated and promoted the writings of various Catholic mystics (e.g. Antoinette Bourignon) in his *Paix des bonnes âmes (Peace of Good Souls)* (Amsterdam, 1687).
- See the study of Marjolaine Chevallier, *Pierre Poiret (1646-1719): Du protestantisme à la mystique*, Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1994.

Other Reformed pastors sympathetic to Quietism included

- Elias [Élie] Saurin [1639-1703; *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu* (Utrecht, 1703)],
- Daniël de Supervielle, and perhaps

- Pierre Jurieu [1637-1713; *Platique de la Dévotion ou Traité de l'Amour Divin* (Rotterdam, 1700)].
- Among the heterodox conventicles (which had left the Reformed church), those associated with P. van Hattem, were also associated with quietism and some related antinomian doctrines.

At the end of her life, Madame Guyon was attended by a circle of mystically-inclined Scotch Jacobites and Dutch, German and Swiss Pietists, who disseminated her teachings in radical Protestant circles (e.g. Gerhard Tersteegen) and transmitted them to Wesley's early Methodism.

Gerhard Tersteegen--hymn-writer who played a central role in the transmission of Quietism into the Reformed churches and, through Wesley, into Methodist/Holiness spirituality (and from there into the twentieth-century evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches)

- Early Life: Born Nov. 25, 1697 at Meers (Moers), a small town west of Duisberg in the lower Rhine in northwestern Germany, that was taken from the Netherlands and brought under German control at the beginning of the eighteenth century. (Thomas à Kempis, the medieval author of the *Imitation of Christ*, had been born nearby.) He was of humble origins, the sixth (or eighth?) and last child of Heinrich Tersteegen, a weaver or small-time cloth merchant, but was able to attend the local Latin school from the age of six (during his nine years there, he studied Greek and Latin (the upper levels studied French and Hebrew) and hoped to enter the ministry of the Reformed Church. Tersteegen's father died when he was ten and upon leaving school at the age of fifteen, his mother sent him to do a four-year commercial apprenticeship with his brother-in-law, Matthias Brink. His life with his sister and brother-in-law was not always a happy one and Tersteegen began to devote his free time to religious exercises.
- Conversion: In 1717 shortly after Pentecost, he had a remarkable conversion experience while traveling to Duisberg with a friend. He suffered an attack of pain so severe he thought he would die and prayed for time to prepare himself for eternity. The pain left immediately and he felt strongly moved to surrender himself to God. "Twenty-seven years ago the friendly God called me out of the world and gave me a sense that I should completely listen and follow him."
- Association with Pietist Conventicles and Quietist Approach to Prayer: The nearby town of Mülheim had had pastors educated in the Netherlands and associated with the *Nadere Reformatie* (incl. Wilhelm Teelinck and Theodor Underijk); Tersteegen began attending a Pietist circle there which had been founded by Underijk and renewed by Ernst-Christoph Hochman (a former student of Francke at Halle, friend of Gottfried Arnold, and later founder of a radical Pietist conventicle which became the Church of the Brethren), which was somewhat influenced by Quietist spirituality (including Madame Guyon's idea of perpetual interior prayer). One of the members of the circle, Wilhelm Hoffman, a theology candidate with a separatistic bent, became Tersteegen's friend and spiritual father, helping him to read widely and develop a deep and disciplined devotional life.
- The Need for a Self-Supporting Life that Facilitated Intense Prayer: Tersteegen separated from his family and opened a business of his own in 1717 but soon came to feel that he had little aptitude for commerce and felt that it distracted him from prayer. He therefore chose to live a solitary life, eventually making a very modest, frugal living from ribbon weaving, which left him free in the evening to engage in Bible study, translate devotional

works, attend religious meetings and visit the sick. (The account given of this period in Tersteegen's life in Lindberg, *The Pietist Theologians*, p. 192 is worth reading.)

- Tersteegen as a Translator of Quietist Works and a Hymn-Writer: While still continuing to work as a weaver, Tersteegen began to correspond with others sympathetic to Pietism, offering spiritual exhortation and counsel. He translated Quietist works (e.g. those of Bernières de Louvigny, *The Hidden Life with Christ in God*, publ. in 1727 and Madame Guyon and Jean de Labadie [1610-1674]) and wrote *Weg der Wahrheit (Way to the Truth)* and a collection of hymns, *Geistliches Blumengärtlein inniger Seelen (Spiritual Flower-Garden)* (1721), which were intended for the private use of the pious (only later being included in hymnbooks for public worship). These hymns were written during a period of his life when he was often sick and troubled by depression and were intended to be not only edifying but spiritually therapeutic:

The pious, reverential singing of hymns has something angelic about it and subdues the troubled emotions; it drives away cares and anxieties; it strengthens, refreshes and encourages the soul; it draws the mind unconsciously from external things, lifts up the soul to joyful adoration, and thus prepares us to worship in spirit and truth.

Through the translation of classic works and the production of hymns, Tersteegen aimed to guide others to that "inward, true Christendom" which has been found by all earnest persons of all confessions throughout the ages. (Permission for publication having been officially denied by the Reformed Church, Tersteegen, published these under the pseudonym, G.T.St. = *Gottseligkeit Trachtende Seele* "A Soul Striving for Piety" and without listing the publisher or place of publication, only the book fairs where the book could be found.)

- A Turning Point: Tersteegen's Mystical Self-Consecration to Christ: In 1724, when he was 26 years old, Tersteegen experienced a sudden "passage" into the presence of God, which made a "secret impression" upon his soul that removed all his doubts and allowed him to rest in uninterrupted communion with God. Tersteegen subsequently consecrated himself to Christ in a testament written with his own blood on Ash Wednesday or Maundy Thursday 1724:

O my Jesus, I consecrate myself to you, my only Savior, my Spouse, Jesus Christ, so as to belong to you for all eternity. With all my heart and from today I renounce all the rights and all the power that Satan unjustly gave me over myself, for you have ransomed me by your agony, your struggles and your sweating of blood in Gethsemane, you have shattered the gates of hell for me and have opened the heart of your Father, full of charity; so that, from today, all my heart and all my love shall be given to you in return; that, from this moment and for all eternity your will and not mine shall be done. Command, govern, reign in me. I give you all power over me and I promise you with time and help to shed the last drop of my blood rather than willingly disobey you or be unfaithful to you. I give all of myself to you, sweet friend of my soul, and I want to belong to you forever. May your Spirit never leave me and may your mortal agony always sustain me. Yes, amen, may your Spirit seal what here you are promised in all simplicity by your unworthy slave, Gerhard Tersteegen.

- Tersteegen's Subsequently Sought After as a Spiritual Advisor: After this, he began to travel widely speaking at prayer meetings and was much sought after as a spiritual

advisor (people would privately confess their sins and asked for his guidance regarding the first steps in faith). As the demands upon his time increased, he ceased ribbon weaving and would accept only small gifts from a few close friends, together with a modest income from the sale of his books. In his travels he preached extensively and composed a number of hymns and devotional works.

- Tersteegen's Separatism and His Role as a Teacher and Spiritual Counselor in Private Prayer Meetings: Tersteegen left the Reformed Church in about 1719 and, although he did not encourage others to separate, his prayer meetings were banned in Germany between 1730 and 1750 as a result of opposition from the Reformed clergy, leading him to spend much of his time in those years leading meetings in the Netherlands. In the 1750's, Tersteegen's health deteriorated and by 1756 he was no longer able to speak at larger meetings. He continued to correspond with others until the end of his life, dying on April 3, 1769 after a bout of dropsy.

Tersteegen's works are available today (compilation of works from various translators) and make interesting and challenging spiritual reading:

--Gerhard Tersteegen, *Volume I: Recluse in Demand—Life and Letters* and *Volume 2: Sermons and Hymns*, Yanceyville, NC: Harvey & Tait, n.d. (available from Harvey Christian Publishers, L.L.P., 70 Dodson Dr., Yanceyville, NC 27379; tel./fax: 910-694-1016 [\$6 each volume]; more easily obtained from the distributor, Pietan Publications, 26 Green Farm Road, New Ipswich, NH 03071; tel. 603-878-3962; pietan@peoplepc.com ; <http://www.pietanpublications.com>)

Questions:

- Where, in the readings assigned from Tersteegen (pp. 241-252) do you discern the presence of the traditional Quietist themes of inward stillness, passivity or abandonment to the will of God?
- On p. 243, Tersteegen writes, "Jesus, the true book of life, wishes to imprint himself in the ground of our soul so that through his spirit we might become the written, living copy, and letters of him, which cannot be read by all men. There is no danger in reading much in this book." What does this tell us about Tersteegen's conceptions of authority and revelation?
- How does Tersteegen view our present bodily existence (middle of p. 245; first line of "Pilgrim's Thought" on p. 249) and how might this shape his views about involvement in external activities (see one third of the way down the page on p. 247)?
- Given Tersteegen's account of interiority, authority and revelation, can the children of God (i.e. spiritually awakened persons) ever truly need each other and if so, why? (See bottom two thirds of p. 247, especially the part about Balaam's ass at the bottom of the page.)
- How does Tersteegen's discussion of the soul's being deprived of the sense of joy in God's presence (bottom third of p. 246) compare with Mme. Guyon's [quietist] discussion of this subject (see above)?

The Transmission of Quietist Thought to Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Evangelicalism

- The biography of Thomas Upham, *Life and Religious Opinions and Experiences of Madame de la Mothe Guyon* (2 vols., New York, Harper, 1847) made Guyon popular

among nineteenth and early twentieth century American advocates of the Holiness and Keswick (Higher Life/ Victorious Living) movements and early twentieth century conservative evangelical and Pentecostal evangelists and missionaries (Jesse Penn-Lewis, Watchman Nee, etc.).

- A.W. Tozer, a Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor in Toronto and well-known evangelical writer on the spiritual life, was heavily indebted to Guyon and Tersteegen in his devotional works and cites heavily from them in his *The Christian Book of Mystical Verse*, Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1963.
- Guyon's autobiography was reprinted by Moody Press and her works, in a heavily abridged, modernized form, were reprinted by Gene Edwards (Christian Books, Augusta Maine), who exercised a formative influence over the American house church and independent charismatic church movements during the early to mid-1980's; see Patricia A. Ward, "Madame Guyon and Experiential Theology in America," *Church History* 67:3 (Sept. 1998), 484-498 and her book, *Experimental Theology in America: Madame Guyon, Fénelon and Their Readers*, Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2009.

Jacob Boehme's Mysticism:

- **Its Influence on Radical Pietism in Germany and England**
- **The Search By J.C. Oetinger for a Pious, Counter-Enlightenment Program for Integrating Sacred and Secular Knowledge**

Jacob Boehme (or Böhme) (1574-1624) (*Philosophus teutonicus* "the Germanic philosopher") was a contemporary of Arndt. A self-educated shoemaker, he attended a mystically-oriented conventicle organized by Martin Moller in Silesia and in about 1600 began to experience moments of illumination, which led him to become increasingly estranged from the state church and eventually to write a series of prophetic books (beginning with *Aurora* in 1612) which combined mystical piety with the natural philosophy and alchemical thought of Paracelsus (1493/4-1541). His criticisms of institutional religion and his unorthodox approach to the problem of evil led Orthodox Lutheran clergy to oppose Boehme and his work.

Briefly, Boehme's approach to the problem of evil was this:

- (1) God contains elements in his nature which are distinct, yet in God are harmoniously ordered and united (God's Wisdom [=Sophia] as God's other self);
- (2) In the universe, which is an emanation of God and inferior to God, these elements have separated and become differentiated, but can be harmoniously reunited through regeneration in Christ. (Although the separation of Sophia from God is evil, this separation is the condition of their ultimate reunion, since through Christ/Sophia all things will be brought into perfect communion with God and in him experience their highest fulfillment.)

Later in his life focused more on practical issues, publishing *The Way to Christ* in 1624, which described the soul's approach to union with Christ or Sophia (divine Wisdom) and one's ability when quiet and silent to hear "the unspeakable words of God" and to "hear and see even with that wherewith God himself saw and heard in you, before ever your own willing or your own seeing began." (Here, revelation is not a once and for all event but continues as the Holy Spirit moves all of history toward its appointed goal).

Boehme felt that early Lutheran Orthodoxy laid too much emphasis on the sacraments as a means of grace and he also posited a distinction between the hidden church composed of all those experientially united with God (the Church of Abel) and the church visible in history (the Church of Cain; "stone churches" led by unregenerate pastors, who are in reality the servants of Babel)

Boehme emphasized that the center of the faith lay in the love for God revealed and made visible in Christ ("the law of love") and in which one may only participate when one resolves to devote oneself wholly to God. (There then occurs a redirection of all one's powers toward the righteousness to which one has been called externally and internally.)

After his death, a number of his works were published posthumously by his biographer Abraham von Frankenberg and significantly affected late seventeenth century and eighteenth century German religious thought (particularly the radical Pietists). Boehmist thought was also spread into England and then to English-speaking communities in colonial America through Jane Leade's (1623-1704) Philadelphian Society and the teaching and writing of Johann Kelpius (1673-1708; *A Short, Easy and Comprehensive Method of Prayer* [1791]).

In Germany, Friedrich Christoph. Oetinger (1702-1782) was perhaps Boehme's most gifted disciple. He reacted against the materialism and mechanistic conception of the universe in early Enlightenment thought and instead saw all of nature as being unified in a higher principle which gave nature its vitality. What interested him about Boehme was

- a) his attempt to integrate rational scientific enquiry and mystical knowledge within a single comprehensive framework (p. 277: "In regard to chemistry, it belongs to the true knowledge of that which is necessary, simple, and useful for understanding. Not gold or silver, but the true way, wisdom in Holy Scripture brought me to this");
- b) his account of "the law of love" as revealed and manifested in Jesus (p. 283 "look to Jesus as the highest law to love above all")
- c) the body as microcosm (i.e. a separate world which on a small scale represents and contains or replicates within itself what goes on in the universe as a whole): p. 275: "My church is the temple of my body, purified externally as well as internally and prepared as a dwelling place for the Trinity."
- d) the reconciliation of all opposites through Jesus/Sophia (p. 287):
 - a. at present sexual differentiation persists: "man is nothing without a wife and a wife is nothing without a man" but
 - b. this is relativized by Jesus since "in Christ there is neither male and female" and
 - c. this looks forward to the resurrection when "we become like the angels who are neither man nor woman."
 - d. In the meantime, while we wait for the future age, Jesus/Sophia effects a union with the person who devotes himself wholly to the Lord so that "Christ is the wife for the man and the husband for the woman."

As far as I know, none of Oetinger's monographs have been translated into English except for excerpts from his book on electricity and lightning rods (no, I am not kidding!: Ernst Benz, *The Theology of Electricity. On the Encounter and Explanation of Theology and Science in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, tr. Wolfgang Taraba, Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1989).

There is a brief treatment of Oetinger's theology and pietism in Harry Elwood Yeide, Jr., *Studies in Classical Pietism. The Flowering of the Ecclesiola*, New York: Lang, 1997.

Questions:

- According to Oetinger (bottom half of p. 275-top third of p. 276), what is the relation between the awakened believer and the church and its preaching and practices? (interiorization as creating alternative structures/sacraments)
- What is the relation there and in the top half of p. 277 between the Bible, Jesus' inner teaching and God's self-revelation in the external world?
Compare also
 - the comment on the bottom half of p. 279 that book knowledge does not attain but rather kills enlightenment;
 - p. 281, "Therefore there are many who take great steps on the way of natural knowledge and yet are far from true enlightenment. They do not understand the pleasures of God but bind themselves to the order of nature."
 - p. 281: Enlightenment "comes by grace, not through the elements of the world. God indicates to each person in his inner being by the holy Word how delicate his movements are and how inward are his workings."
- On the bottom half of p. 280, is Oetinger (discussing God's providential action) more successful than Tersteegen in explaining why external things are necessary in one's spiritual quest?

Radical (Separatistic) Pietism

Gottfried Arnold: The Three Phases of His Adult Life

Background: Born Sept. 5, 1666 at Annaberg (Saxony), his mother died when he was five and his father eked out a marginal living as a poorly paid teacher. After attending the *Gymnasium* (secondary education oriented toward classical studies), he studied at Wittenberg (1685-1689), which at that time was a bastion of Lutheran Orthodoxy and the polemical orientation of much of the theological curriculum was offensive to him. He instead focused his studies on the history of the early church, which offered an alternative paradigm for spiritual renewal. Writing in 1708, he commented, "It is now the twentieth year since the divine grace began to bestow on me a desire for the most ancient Christian truth in the writings of the first Christians... [by which I] was especially led to inward Christianity. Here I found so rich a treasure of the principal truths of the gospel and especially of the great secret of Christ in us, that I studied and concentrated on it more and with greater zeal for my own edification."

Arnold's Relationship with Spener:

Arnold became acquainted with Spener in 1688 and Spener tried to help him get a pastoral position but Arnold was disinterested: "After the recognition of the deep decay in all of so-called Christendom, I now had no intention to go into a public church office; especially since I did not find myself qualified and disposed to these outward ceremonies." In 1689 Spener arranged for Arnold a position as a tutor for a family in Dresden, another bastion of Lutheran orthodoxy. When Arnold's zeal for radical, inward Christianity led to his dismissal, Spener arranged another tutorial position for him in Quedlinburg, which was a town in which there was greater sympathy for mystical piety (e.g. Boehme and Arndt).

Arnold as a Radical Pietist and Separatist

Reading Boehme's work made Arnold increasingly skeptical about the institutional church and theological and ecclesiastical norms. He published his first major work in 1696 describing the early church as the ideal community of regenerate believers whose lives should be emulated by all Christians.

In 1697 he accepted (and a year later rejected) a position teaching history at the University of Giessen, which was sympathetic to Pietist thought.

His rejection of the position in 1698 and return to Quedlinburg marked a separation from the state church. In 1699-1700 he published a controversial work arguing that the ecclesiastical authorities who declare persons to be heretical "are the heretics proper, and those who are called heretics are the real God-fearing people." (The witnesses to truth will inevitably be persecuted and rejected by the corrupt visible church and its outward order; only Spirit-generated spontaneous activity will be appropriate for those who have entered into a mystical relationship with God.)

In 1700, Arnold published a Boehmist work, *The Secret of Divine Wisdom*, which held that to enter into the most intimate relationship with God, one must give one's love totally to the heavenly Sophia (divine Wisdom) and must therefore renounce earthly marriage.

Quietism and Arnold's Modification of His Radical Pietist Views: The Irrelevance of Externals and "The Blessed Middle Course" of Moderation and Love for One's Neighbor

--His marriage to Anna Sprögel (the daughter of a close friend in Quedlinburg) on Sept. 5, 1701 (Arnold had earlier preached celibacy. Now he argued that to the pure all things are pure, when approached with moderation: "just as all ordained, moderate, God-fearing use of such states [in this case, marriage] to the pure is pure, blameless and holy, so indeed all other things in themselves are good and permissible for a hallowed instrument")

--His return to the Lutheran church and his acceptance of a position as a pastor there in 1701 (recognized that the external forms of the visible church were necessary for weaker Christians and non-injurious for the more mature, who in any case ought to labor sacrificially for the benefit of their brother)

Questions:

- What might be the implications of the following for one's understanding of the Bible (p. 229)?: "Every spirit loving the truth will immediately accept this and remember his duty, namely that it is not enough to remain satisfied with the external history and mere knowledge as the chaff, but that one must seek and embrace the material itself and the kernel with one's interior power and virtues in earnest fashion. And that he must use this material so as to taste the highest good as we will soon see."
- What kind of access to God does the mystic ("theologian") have to God and how does this affect
 - the kind of authority which can be claimed by the mystic and
 - the mystic's relation to structures, authorities and practices of the visible institutional church?

(See bottom of p. 229 to top half of p. 230; compare also the top of p. 221 and the bottom half of p. 223)

- Who is Sophia and how does Arnold understand her nature and function within fall and redemption? (pp. 219-226; see esp. the middle of p. 222, the top of p. 224, middle of p. 225)
- How does Sophia's internal call (appeal to the conscience) polarize humanity? (see bottom of p. 220)
- What possible parallels with Quietism can be seen on the top half of p. 221, the middle of p. 224 and the middle of p. 225?

Summary Questions:

- (1) What common themes can be seen running through Tersteegen, Oetinger, and Arnold? What makes them "radical"? What, if anything does this latter term mean?
- (2) What differences may be noted in these three writers? Why do they differ on these issues? How significant are these differences, as compared to what these three writers have in common?
- (3) How do the assumptions and ideals of these radical Pietists relate to those of the earlier Puritans and churchly Pietists (e.g. Spener and Francke), especially with regard to their respective conceptions of individual identity, authority and intentionality?
- (4) What contributions, if any, have radical Pietists made to the life of the Church?
- (5) What benefits, if any, might present day radicals bring to the life of one's congregation or denomination?