Johann Christian Edelmann

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Johann Christian Edelmann

From Orthodoxy to Enlightenment

by

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For Maria

Preface

Johann Christian Edelmann was a major German radical thinker of the eighteenth century who lived in open conflict with most of the accepted philosophical and religious beliefs of his time. His intellectual development is characterized by a movement from orthodoxy to pietism and a combination of spiritualism with rationalism that was uniquely his own.

Edelmann's work has not been neglected by past scholarship, yet no entire book has been written about him. In important studies of the literature, philosophy, and theology of the eighteenth century by Hermann Hettner, Fritz Mauthner, Paul Hazard, and Emanuel Hirsch some excellent pages are devoted to his life and works.

Edelmann recorded the story of his own life, though only up to the year 1747. This autobiography was discovered among other manuscripts of his by C.R.W. Klose in the Hamburg City Library and published in 1849. Edelmann's works were printed in editions of five hundred copies, at most a thousand, and many of the copies were subsequently destroyed. For the first time since their original publication between the years 1735 and 1747 they are now being reprinted – by the publishing house of Frommann in Stuttgart under my editorship.

It is the purpose of this study to present Edelmann's life and work in the complex political and social environment of his time. The account of his formative years, of his attendance at various schools and at the University of Jena, and of contacts with major religious leaders is a rich chapter in the intellectual history of his time. The very nature of Edelmann's work provoked strong reaction, bringing the author fame and censure, loyal friendships and deep animosities.

Edelmann traveled his own road. Even more remarkable is the fact that, at a time when every preacher or teacher was attached to some office, he sought to be free from all such bonds. He was among the first German

intellectuals who felt that, in order to fulfill the mission of the 'unattached intelligentsia,' one could not be in anybody's pay. Consequently his precarious economic position exemplifies the struggle of the writer in a society in which those in power are hostile.

The discussion of Edelmann's works leads into the center of the religious and philosophical debate of his age. I have tried to guide the reader to Edelmann's works and to portray the ardent struggle waged by this great iconoclast.

At Yankton College, South Dakota, I first became aware of a religious tradition and search which I feel prepared me for the study of Edelmann. In Yankton Wolfgang and Gertrud Liepe, and Friends Meeting in Cambridge, have helped me to appreciate varieties of religious expression.

Friendships with the late Waldo Emerson Palmer, the late Lois Smith, and with Marshall Smith have helped me to understand truly independent thinkers.

Edwin E. Williams has listened with a 'third ear' to my incessant talk on Edelmann. How much I thank him cannot be expressed in an acknowledgment.

Professor Ernst Benz's interest in my work has given me great encouragement.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Howard Mumford Jones for reading the manuscript and for innumerable comments and suggestions. James Tanis' informed enthusiasm has given me continuous support, and Henry Hatfield's friendly impatience has contributed to my completing the study. George H. Williams' historical understanding of religious movements has elucidated many problems with which this study is concerned. I appreciate greatly his continuing interest, and also that of Bernhard Blume.

Alice Goebell, who corrected my first attempts to write English, also applied her editorial skill to this manuscript. So did Mrs. Madeleine Gleason, with unrelenting care and patience. I also thank Molly Matson for assistance, particularly on bibliographical questions.

I thank Clemens Heller for having found a home for this study.

Alyce Curran and Ellie Riordan typed and retyped the manuscript, always with good humor, and I am very grateful to both of them.

Erwin Neweling, the steward of the local treasures at Berleburg, guided

me to that rich archive. Heinz Lorenz and Ingo Bach showed me theirs and Edelmann's home town, Weissenfels. A visit to Herrnhut acquainted me with some of the Brethren's religious practices, and Richard Träger, of the Archiv der Brüder-Unität, Herrnhut, provided valuable information.

I am also grateful to the staff of the Universitätsbibliothek Marburg who greatly facilitated my work there in 1964/65 and in the summer of 1970. The Handschriftenabteilung of the Universitäts- und Staatsbibliothek Hamburg has kindly given me access to the Edelmann manuscripts and permission to film them. For difficult and excellent filming I am thankful to Fritz Meier, Rosen-Apotheke, Marburg. I thank Harold Jantz for providing me with a photocopy from the manuscript of Edelmann's *Die Andere Epistel Harenbergs* which is in his collection.

Fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, New York, and the Humboldt Gesellschaft, Bad Godesberg, have enabled me to pursue the research for this study, to visit most of the places where Edelmann lived, and to examine numerous local archives. I acknowledge also gratefully grants from the Clark Fund at Harvard University. This study could not have been written without such generous support.

The book was written in carrel 166 of Widener Library. From its window I could watch the Harvard Yard in the change of seasons and admire the loving care with which trees and grounds were attended. To these joys the use of the collection within the building walls and the use of the carrel were linked. For these privileges I am forever grateful.

University of Massachusetts at Boston W. G.

Contents

1. Childhood and Education
1698–1724

When the impressive castle 'Neu-Augustenburg' at Weissenfels was completed in the summer of 1680, Johann Adolf of Sachsen-Weissenfels (1640–97) moved his court from Halle to the town which gave the land and the ruling family its name. The establishment of the duchy of Sachsen-Weissenfels, like that of two others, Sachsen-Merseburg and Sachsen-Zeitz, resulted from the testament of the Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony, which divided the electorate into an Albertine Saxon main line and three secundogeniture lines; this division lasted for three generations until, in 1746, the last of the three, Weissenfels, returned to the main line.[1]

Music, which had had an important role in the lavish secular and religious festivities at the court in Halle, found in the new environment a rich and distinguished tradition. Johann Hermann Schein and Heinrich Schütz had lived at Weissenfels;[2] here 'in the eighth decade of his life, burdened by hopeless financial and courtly conditions, Schütz executed the three great Passion compositions in which the oratorios of Bach and Händel have their foundations'.[3] In 1672, only ten years after Schütz's death, the new castle's magnificent chapel built in ceremonial Renaissance style was inaugurated with a six-day celebration. For each day Johann Philipp Krieger had prepared new compositions calling for as many as sixty-six voices and instruments. It was also at the organ of this new chapel that the nine-year-old Georg Friedrich Händel made his debut in 1694.[4]

At Christmas 1695, Gottlob Edelmann, who came from a long line of organists and organ-makers,[5] joined the court orchestra; his elder brother Christian had entered the service of the count as organist and Kammercomposer in the early eighties.[6] Gottlob Edelmann undertook dual duties as a musician and tutor to the pages. This arrangement, which burdened the musicians with not inconsiderable administrative responsibilities, seems to have been peculiar to the Weissenfels; obviously it was financially advantageous to them.[7]

As a musician Gottlob Edelmann sang alto parts and played the flute.[8] The duties of the tutor to the pages are enumerated in a memorandum dated January 1711, which accompanied a letter of appointment to Edelmann's successor, Gottfried Wendebaum. What was expected of the new incumbent had certainly been asked of Gottlob Edelmann: he was to remain unwaveringly true to the pure Evangelical Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Schmalkaldic Articles and the Formula of Concord. The first paragraph of the memorandum demands that the tutor, above all, take care that the pages are taught and admonished in true piety and obedience to God.[9] Thus Gottlob Edelmann's duty had been to educate them in the strict Lutheran faith of the land, which doubtless he diligently did. He also seems to have won the favor of his master by his pleasing voice and by his art in playing the flute.

A son was born to Gottlob and his wife, Dorothea Magdalena, on July 9, 1698. The Duke Johann Georg, his younger brother Duke Christian, and their wives became the child's godparents although they were not present at the actual ceremony in the chapel on July 11th, but were represented by the Stallmeister von Seidlitz, the Junker von der Mosel, and the Lady Winterfeld.[10] The name chosen for the Edelmanns' oldest son therefore became Johann Christian [for the two Dukes]. In later years he remarked that the noble godparents had been of no advantage to him and it would have been just as well if his parents had chosen his godparents from among their own kind.[11]

Indeed, the actual financial circumstances of the Edelmann family were precarious, as the salaries at court were small and, in addition, were paid irregularly, and often not at all. The visible splendor of court life contrasted with the economy of a land which had been ravaged and its population depleted in the Thirty Years' War and the ensuing Northern Wars. The indulgence of the Elector Johann Georg II of Saxony in luxury and entertainment was shared by his brother Johann Adolf and his son Johann Georg at Weissenfels in the years when the country needed a prudent policy of economic reconstruction.[12]

Duke Christian, already deeply in debt, established his own household at Sangerhausen in 1711, a year before he actually became the ruler of the Duchy. With him he took as his secretary, Gottlob Edelmann, whose family now included his wife and mother-in-law, three sons Johann Christian,

Heinrich Gottlob and Moritz Rudolph, and a daughter Dorothea Sophia. The family were together for the last time; a year later the seven-year-old Dorothea Sophia died, and Gottlob returned with Duke Christian to Weissenfels, leaving the family at Sangerhausen.

Edelmann attended the Sangerhausen public school for four years. This was a welcome change because his teacher at Weissenfels had tried to make up for his own ignorance by freely using the cane.[13] The Sangerhausen city school was in its most successful era, under the leadership of Rectors Schneemelcher (1705–1714) and Henneberg (1714–1721?). Religion, Latin, Rhetoric and Greek occupied the major part of the curriculum. Among the Latin authors studied were Cicero, Virgil, and Cornelius Nepos; grammar and syntax were taught; Greek instruction was confined to the New Testament.[14]

The religious instruction relied primarily on memorizing and repeatedly plowing through Leonhard Hutter's *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum*, a text which would stay with Edelmann, as with all other students, into his gymnasium years. Christian II had commissioned the Wittenberg theologian Leonhard Hutter to produce a Lutheran textbook for use in the Saxon schools. Hutter submitted it to his own faculty and to that of Leipzig University for approval; when first published it carried a letter by the Elector in which he expressed the hope that 'youth who drink in with their mother's milk the primary elements of pure Christian teaching ... will not deviate easily from the royal road of recognized truth'. Hutter was convinced 'that the theological compendium of the main articles of the Christian faith be drawn from the Formula of Concord and that, as far as possible, the exact words of the Formula be observed in order to accustom the school children from tender youth to the modes of healthy expression'.[15] The entire material is presented by Hutter in thirty-four articles ('*loci*') in the form of questions; those intended for the more advanced students carried a cross, and those for even more learned little scholars, an asterisk. The first (I) of the questions was on the Holy Scriptures and characteristically included questions (10–17, all with asterisks) on the ecumenic or catholic symbols, the three confessions of faith, the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church, the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the Apology, the Schmalkaldic Articles of 1537, the two Catechisms of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.[16] Further articles dealt with the Trinity (II),

Creation (IV), the image of man in God (VI), the good works (XIV), the Church (XVII), the sacraments (XIX), hell (XXXIII) – to mention only a few which give an idea of the structure of the compendium. In its commentaries it leaned most heavily on the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord, the writings of Luther, Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz (co-author of the Formula), and Aegidius Hunnius. It is difficult today to realize how deeply the youth of that time was imbued with an extensive body of theological instruction.

A statement by Henneberg written before Edelmann transferred to Lauban bears witness to the latter's abilities as a student. That he had a sense of pride and enjoyed showing off is evident from an incident when a candidate for a teaching post was being examined before the mayor and other officials. When the candidate revealed his poor Latin, Edelmann could hardly keep from correcting the older student and displaying his own knowledge. His self-confidence was nourished by Henneberg's lavish and frequent praise.[17] On the other hand he could become frightened like any other fourteen-year-old boy – as when a classmate, having induced him to go rowing in a tub in a quite deep canal, the Wege, engaged in all sorts of acrobatic jesting in his own wide and safe tub, urging Edelmann in his much narrower and higher one to imitate him. It did not take long before Edelmann's tub capsized, and, though he quickly got out from under it, he long remembered the scare.[18]

Edelmann was a promising student, and his father, recognizing the fact, was anxious to further his education. The choices of secondary schools for Edelmann show clearly the father's interest in the boy's education, choices that might well have been influenced by family relations and by the need for finding inexpensive and suitable living conditions. What Gottlob did not do with his son was to follow the prescribed pattern for an aspirant at the Weissenfels court – that of sending him, after the Sangerhausen school, to the Weissenfels gymnasium for two years. This requirement was initiated in 1666, and Duke Johann Adolf impressed it on the city council of Sangerhausen again in 1689. Another rather easy course apparently was also rejected, that of taking up one of the scholarships available at Schulpforta to the graduates of Sangerhausen school.[19]

Edelmann was sent to his uncle Gottfried Edelmann, pastor at Lauban, to attend the Lyceum for the years 1715 to 1717. During this period his

evident self-confidence and eagerness to win attention and approval was reinforced. His fellow students were older than he and some were of the local nobility. They impressed Edelmann, who found them, in manners and education, superior to his classmates in Sangerhausen, and he worked hard to catch up and keep up with them. Although he was no born poet, Edelmann did not want to be held incompetent in verse-making (which was taught at the Lyceum) and therefore he mastered the art – at least to the point where he found that poems made to order could bring in some much-needed pocket money. Debate played an important role in the curriculum and although the questions and issues may have been worthless, as Edelmann observed in retrospect, the process sharpened his mind and tongue and he acquired facility in speaking Latin. A classmate of these years remembered Edelmann 'as a wide-awake youth, full of fire, who displayed his natural gifts to the great hopes of the teachers'.[20] The hopes of the teachers were that he would become a good clergyman worthy to join their ranks.

We have but few glimpses into Edelmann's inner life, but the story of the ambitious and self-demanding student during these years should not be ignored. In his uncle's house he shared a room with a theology student by the name of Flegel, whose undesirable name, meaning an impudent fellow, was, as it turned out, very appropriate. Flegel was obviously crude, but what Edelmann resented most was the older boy's flirtations with the maids in the stable and the kitchen. He even went so far as to denounce his roommate to his uncle, who, however, told him to mind his own business. It is not indulging in psychological speculation to interpret his resentment of sex as adolescent and his condemnation of what he was not yet ready to attain as an evil on which he could, self-righteously, pass judgment.[21]

These years at Lauban were not easy for Edelmann. Since he lived free of cost at his uncle's house, he felt under obligation; in school he was younger than most of the students and he put a great deal of pressure on himself to avoid being outdone; on occasion he preached in school; and he was poor among the well-to-do. He had already started to earn extra money as a tutor. He gave private instruction to Rector Heer's children and tutored a classmate, Wunsch, son of a Silesian aristocratic family, who was several years older and who would much rather 'have been his superior

officer than subject pupil'.[22] When his roommate Flegel left, Edelmann succeeded him as tutor to Gottfried Edelmann's children. But Edelmann resented his uncle's permissiveness in his household and towards his children; the burden of tutoring lay heavy on him; and he certainly did not find it easy to command authority, particularly in a home where he was not supported by the parents. He asked his father to find a different place for him.

The two years at Lauban were important ones for Edelmann: he began his preparation for the ministry and his career as tutor, an occupation he was to pursue for many years to come. He also started the habit of copying passages which seemed significant in his reading. This habit, begun as a device to pad sermons devoid of personal experience, helped him in later years, when he had recourse to these notebooks filled with quotations and excerpts from books no longer accessible to him.[23]

Edelmann now went to Altenburg where an uncle, Moritz Wilhelm Haberland, was chancellor in the service of the Duke of Gotha. Haberland was willing to take his nephew as a tutor while he attended the local gymnasium. The period of over two years (approximately February 1717 to September 1719) in this uncle's house and in the new school were happy ones for Edelmann. He was, however, not greatly impressed at that time by the change of scenery – neither the slopes of the Harz over Sangerhausen nor the wide panorama of soft hills in the Upper Lausitz seemed to attract his attention. It was not until later that his eyes were opened to the beauties and variety of nature.

In the Haberland house he found an atmosphere of mingled discipline and kindness. Uncle and nephew were in such harmony that Edelmann later found it hard to realize that not everyone approved of his sternness as a tutor. Although his gymnasium years were fragmented, he was again fortunate in finding a school under the leadership of an able and erudite director, Christian Friedrich Wilisch (1714–1720).[24] Wilisch, a graduate of Leipzig University, had humanist interests in literature and history. His special concern was the unusually fine school library which had grown from modest beginnings to approximately 5000 volumes. It was founded through Georg Spalatin's initiative. In spite of its size and quality, remarkable for its time, it had been badly housed and was now neglected. Wilisch started a program of cleaning the dusty tomes, cataloguing them, refurbish-

ing the library rooms, and setting up regular hours for the public to use the library. He did this with the help of the students, who became well acquainted with the collection and were thus motivated to use it for their orations and other papers.[25]

It is most likely that Edelmann attended Prima and Selecta (the last two years of the gymnasium) in order better to prepare for his academic studies. These special classes were intended to supplement and broaden the student's knowledge in the fields of logic, rhetoric, ethics, and also in physics, mathematics, astronomy, history and geography.[26] Despite these innovations the aim of education still was the 'exercitio pietatis'[27] and Latin was the foundation; the unavoidable *Compendium* of Hutter was still the standby, and Cicero and Virgil were read and re-read. Other classical authors like Tacitus, Ovid, and Plutarch were also on the reading list, besides textbooks for Hebrew. Students had the opportunity to discuss with their teachers, in evening sessions, the materials covered in their classes, as well as readings on local Saxon history, *jus gentium*, and natural history.

Natural history was especially well presented by a rather odd but learned man, Friedrich Friese (1668–1721), who had studied anatomy at Jena, had published books on the animal world and on folklore, and also had started a collection of specimens at the school.[28] Edelmann participated in disputations and, as he recalled long afterwards, he had benefited from having to endure the professor's censure of his cockiness.[29]

Director Wilisch lived to see the bicentennial jubilee of the Reformation. This was celebrated from October 31 to November 2 throughout the Duchy and was an impressive and memorable occasion at Altenburg. He skillfully made the Reformer's concern for the education of youth the theme of one of his major addresses.[30] In another oration he spoke on the Saxon princes' understanding of and concern for Luther's catechism, the most important work in the teaching of the faith. When the oration was printed, he dedicated it to Edelmann's uncle Moritz Wilhelm Haberland, among other government servants.[31] Inspired by the occasion, Edelmann was more eager than ever to teach the pure faith seriously and zealously.[32]

Edelmann had been at Altenburg less than two years when his uncle and family felt that it was time for him to leave a place of which he had become fond.[33] Upon his uncle Haberland's advice he decided to take an

examination that had been given by the consistory since 1664 to local students who planned to continue their academic studies, and sometimes to foreigners like Edelmann.[34] His success in passing this examination later encouraged him to choose the career of a preacher in the Gotha-Altenburg duchy.

It is amusing to see how Edelmann's admittedly choleric temperament misled him when, after leaving town, he received from Wilisch what was intended to be a favorable report and a letter of recommendation. He was surprised and indignant to find that the letter started with a picture of an indolent and slothful student. Feeling himself unjustly condemned, he was about to tear it up, but he restrained the impulse and was happily rewarded by finding himself described as a virtuous and ardent pupil – in sharp contrast, indeed, to the common type first cited.

Edelmann was ready to move on. The logical step was to start at a university, but the financial situation of the family had never been worse. Edelmann's mother with her youngest son and the grandmother were still at Sangerhausen, while his father was at Weissenfels. The Duke owed him eight years of salary; in addition, Gottlob had even lent money to the Duke out of his own meager reserves. Edelmann's autobiography[35] gives a glimpse of what went on behind the splendid facade of a courtly household, with its staff of 117 persons employed solely for the personal services of the family. For example, it took eleven of them to assist the Duke while hunting and twenty to run the kitchen, not counting the three pastry cooks and the Duke's private chef.[36] We do not know how they fared, but, if their salaries were more promptly paid than poor Gottlob's, it was at the expense of the long-suffering peasantry.[37]

The appalling poverty of the Edelmanns was cruelly evident when an opportunity arose for Gottlob to enter a new position at Eisenach – he found that he did not have enough money to travel. Johann Christian had to add a couple of thalers towards Gottlob's traveling expenses because his father could not get even this paltry amount from the ducal accounting office. It was a catastrophe almost leading to an emotional crisis when an ink bottle was spilled over Johann Christian's only suit. The father's effort to find a tailor who skillfully patched the spot pathetically illustrates the miserable life in the Weissenfels' service. Of the dukes Edelmann bitterly remarks 'that they made the Edelmanns blessed, because blessed are the

poor, but the state of bliss is not easily appreciated by those in such circumstances of want and oppression'.[38]

The year at the Weissenfels Gymnasium Augusteum Illustre, however praiseworthy that institution may have been, was for Edelmann a frustrating one. He meditated that it might have been wiser for his parents to let him learn a decent trade, rather than allow him, at twenty-one years of age, to reach a point in his education where his developing talents and acquired skills seemed doomed to a premature death. Reluctantly he acted in one of the many comedies produced for the entertainment of the court, yielding to the pleading of his father, who feared that a refusal would offend Princess Wilhelmine, the sister of the Duke. Edelmann did gain her favor and the promise of a new suit and ten thalers a year towards his future university education; this promise was kept.

Edelmann's tenacity in realizing his plans to attain a university education helped him to overcome all obstacles. He appealed to his uncle at Altenburg, who had appreciated him and who now succeeded in getting for his nephew a purse of twenty Meissen thalers from the Consistory. Professor Johann Michael Schumann, a man of reputation and weight, wrote a letter on Edelmann's behalf, testifying in moving words to the need of the deserving young scholar. With this recommendation Edelmann started early in May for Jena.[39] His father walked with him for an hour beyond the city gate; when they parted Johann Christian gave his father a gulden from his own pocket, and amid his father's tears and blessings, took his leave.

To study at the university was Edelmann's ambition and it seems that by 'the university' Jena was unquestionably understood. According to Pratje, the great reputation of Jena's theological faculty determined Edelmann's choice.[40] A statement by Pratje, as such, would not carry much weight, were it not for the fact that Edelmann did not dispute its truth as he had done, sometimes in pedantic detail, whenever he thought Pratje to be wrong. It should also be noted that Edelmann, though a foreigner in the Ernestine Gotha land, had taken an examination at Altenburg with the hope that it might later win for him a small scholarship. It seems probable that the scholarship was more readily granted to students who aspired to go to the University of Jena, of which Gotha-Altenburg was one of the

sustaining duchies. On May 4th he matriculated at Jena, followed by his brother Heinrich Gottlob six months later.[41]

Although Jena's theological faculty had declined towards the end of the seventeenth century, during the years when Edelmann was preparing to become a student there it had experienced a great period of deserved prestige. This was mainly due to the impressive personality, the fine human qualities, and scholarly breadth of Johann Franz Buddeus (1667–1729).[42] When Edelmann refers in his recollections to his 'beloved teacher Buddeus' with a certain tone of irony, it is perhaps belated self-mockery rather than an indication that he had not, as a student, felt admiration and loyalty towards his teacher. In Edelmann's four years at Jena he admittedly 'stuck as close as possible to Buddeus and Johann Georg Walch (1693–1775)',[43] his son-in-law. Walch had come to Jena in 1719 as professor 'philologiae et antiquitatum' and had transferred to the theological faculty in 1724. Edelmann's concentration on studies in church history is corroborated by the fact that Buddeus was lecturing in this field throughout the years from 1721 to 1725.[44] In the following pages an attempt will be made to describe the theologian Buddeus and especially some of his concepts as a teacher of church history; the focus is on his activity during the years when Edelmann was among his students.

Buddeus was one of the two professorial appointments made to raise the level of the theological faculty and at the same time to secure the teaching of Orthodox Lutheranism against the danger threatening from Pietism. The latter derived its name from Philip Jakob Spener's slender but consequential book *Pia Desideria* (1675), which outlined and defined the program and concept of Pietism. Fear of Pietism beset those ruling German Protestant families not carried away by its religious message. As a religious movement it threatened the frozen formalism and scholasticism of seventeenth-century orthodox Protestantism and, by emphasizing new modes of religious devotion, undermined the conventional church practices. As any threat to the austerity of the established church was also a threat to political power, Pietism often appeared to be a direct danger to the secular authority. The inward-directed quietistic character of Pietism did not favor any social or political rebellion. Rather, it fostered a warm, emotionally rich religious life which offered more to the socially oppressed than zealous harshness and theological righteousness. The stress on responsible conduct

as the true sign of belonging to Christ brought great comfort to many in the miserable decades following the Thirty Years' War, years of extreme human cruelty and princely rule that too often indulged in pomp and licence. The implied high moral standards of Pietism and its stress on active social service as the true practice of Christian charity made complacent clergy and self-indulgent princes uncomfortable. But even when the individual conscience was troubled, the princes did not feel that they could tolerate any weakening of a church for which they were responsible and whose authority rested in them.

In 1696 the five sustaining powers of the University of Jena – the Ernestine Saxon principalities Coburg, Meiningen, Weimar, Eisenach, and Gotha – appointed a committee to investigate the extent to which Pietism had infiltrated faculty and students.[45] The fear of Pietism seems to have been greater than its actual impact, but that fear continued and played a part when appointments were made at the turn of the century. Among the candidates considered were the famous arch-conservative professor Gottlieb Wernsdorf from Wittenberg and that uncompromising foe of Pietism, Valentin Ernst Löscher.[46] Buddeus, however, was the final choice. The hope of finding a man of real stature was indeed fulfilled, but if Buddeus was expected to be a bulwark against Pietism, such expectations were unrealistic and destined to be disappointed.

In 1705 Buddeus had come to Jena from Halle, where August Hermann Francke had developed a large complex of institutions, all aimed at realizing the ideas and ideals of Pietism. Buddeus had not been entirely successful there as a philosophy professor, and the pietistically oriented theological faculty remained cool towards him; yet he felt in sympathy with the spirit of Halle. Correspondence with Francke and frequent personal meetings testify to the continuation of Buddeus' feelings of real friendship. And Francke entrusted Buddeus with his son, who lived in Buddeus' house at Jena until Francke's successful disputation (February 12, 1720), when he left Jena, shortly before Edelmann's arrival.[47] At Halle the son of Philip Jakob Spener, the originator of Pietism, had also been a pupil of Buddeus.

The sympathy that Buddeus felt with the religious attitudes and endeavors of Spener and Francke is best understood in terms of Buddeus' own earlier religious educational experiences. Buddeus' ideal was Luther, the Luther who had purified theology of scholasticism. In his introduction to