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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *weiden*, also dass er die Schafe unterweise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen sein, sondern auch daneben den Woelfen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht angreifen und mit falscher Lehre verfuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? — *1 Cor. 14:8*

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Johann Lorenz Mosheim's Philosophy of History

By LEWIS SPITZ, JR.

History as record and interpretation, just as history as past actuality, has been in constant change. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis* is the inexorable law of life and of living academic disciplines as well. The history of historiography powerfully demonstrates the truism that each generation writes its own history. As the world view of humanity changes, the new criteria of evaluating the human story necessitates a reworking of the history of the past.[1]

If modern genetic history has demonstrated anything, it is that great caution should mark the assignment of the absolute beginning of any historic development. Nevertheless, even in historiography itself men have not hesitated to label Herodotus the "father of history" and Bede the "father of English History" or to date the beginning of modern history from Niebuhr. While there is no special profit beyond that of employing a pleasant aphorism in ascribing intellectual paternity to certain historians, the consistent use of this device in historiographic literature at least emphasizes that certain times have witnessed particularly great changes in historiography. These have not been times when men merely excelled their predecessors in their own methods, but times of fundamental change in outlook. At such a point in the development of historical writing stood Johann Lorenz Mosheim.

Mosheim has been highly and variously praised in our

[1] Emil Menke-Glueckert, *Die Geschichtsschreibung der Reformation und Gegenreformation* (Leipzig, 1912), p. 1.

day as well as in his. Gesner, the distinguished philologist at the University of Goettingen during Mosheim's chancellorship, wrote, "Ubi Moshemius, ibi academia," and Gellert called him "die Ehre seines Jahrhunderts." [2] Others since have called him the foremost historian of his age,[3] a great historian,[4] the author of the best church history of the 18th century,[5] superior to all preceding Lutheran writers,[6] among the greatest historians of all times,[7] the author of epoch-making works,[8] the acknowledged master of church history writing,[9] the most outstanding historian,[10] the shining star of 18th century church history,[11] and, most frequently, the "father of modern church history." [12]

This chorus of adulation at once indicates an intrinsic merit in Mosheim's writing and suggests a special significance in the development of historical composition. The age of controversy and the age of erudition were giving way to the beginnings of scientific church history. Not only has Mosheim been credited with being instrumental in reviving interest in church history as an academic discipline,[13] but also with writ-

[2] Gustav Frank, *Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie,* II (Leipzig, 1865), p. 223.

[3] Albert Henry Newman, *A Manual of Church History* (Philadelphia, 1901), p. 536.

[4] Johann Michael Mehligs, *Kurzgefasste Kirchengeschichte* (Chemnitz, 1767), p. 550.

[5] Hans Leube, *Die Reformideen in der Deutschen Lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 21.

[6] Article "History, Ecclesiastical," *The Catholic Encyclopaedia,* VII, (New York, 1910), p. 377.

[7] James Thompson Shotwell, "History," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* XI (London, 1937), p. 596.

[8] Karl Heussi, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte* (Tuebingen, 1937), p. 3.

[9] Karl Hase, *Theologisch-Akademische Lehrschriften* (Leipzig, 1841), p. 9.

[10] Heinrich Hermelink and Horst Stephan, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Reformation, Gegenreformation und Neuzeit* (Tuebingen, 1912), p. 71.

[11] Johann Heinrich Kurtz, *Church History,* I (New York, 1888), p. 15.

[12] Cf. K. R. Hagenbach, *History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,* I (New York, 1869), p. 258; Karl Heussi, "Mosheim," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* IV (Tuebingen, 1930), p. 247; Albert Henry Newman, *op. cit.,* I, p. 14; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* I (New York, 1920), p. 39.

[13] Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (Norman, Okla., 1937), p. 248.

ing the first scientific[14] and comprehensive church history.[15] He was well prepared for scholarly work.

Born in 1693, Mosheim was the son of Ferdinand Sigismund Mosheim, a Catholic and a descendant of Rupert von Mosham, a radical of Luther's day.[16] His mother, a Protestant, reared her two sons in the Lutheran faith.[17] Upon his father's death, Mosheim was apprenticed to a merchant, but Princess Elisabeth Sophie Marie, the widow of Prince Adolf August von Holstein-Ploen, later Duchess of Braunschweig-Wolfenbuettel, provided the means necessary for him to attend the Catharineum, the Latin school of Luebeck.[18] In 1714 he began tutoring in Holstein, in Suelfeld, southwest of Luebeck, and even while in this relatively obscure position, he corresponded with Pastor Kaspar Starck, author of the *Luebeckische Kirchenhistorie,* J. G. Carpzov, Christian Joecher of Leipzig, Herman Reimarus, and Johann Christoph Wolf of Hamburg, as he later did with Franz Buddeus of Jena and Gottfried Wil-

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[14] Georg Weber, *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte,* XII (Leipzig, 1887), p. 923.

[15] *The Cambridge Modern History,* XII (New York, 1902, p. 817.

[16] There have been at least eight biographies of Mosheim in addition to many articles of a biographical nature. The oldest is that by Gabriel Wilhelm Goetten, *Das jetzlebende gelehrte Europa,* I, 1735, pp. 717 ff.; next in order is Johann Jacob Moser, *Beytrag zu einem Lexico der jetzlebenden lutherischen und reformirten Theologen,* 1740, pp. 511 ff.; Jacob Bruecker, *Pinacotheca scriptorum illustrium,* 1741; Johann Moller, *Cibria litterata,* 1744, I, pp. 447 ff.; Johann Matth. Gesner, *Memoria Johann Laurenz Moshemii,* 1755, reprinted in the *Biographia Academica Gottengensis,* 1768; Christian David Jani, Johann Peter Nicerons *Nachrichten von den Begebenheiten und Schriften beruhmter Gelehrten,* 1771, XXIII, pp. 406 ff., reputedly the best of the 18th century; Friedrich Luecke, *Narratio de Joanne Laurentio Moshemio,* 1837. Unfortunately these early biographies are for the most part inaccessible outside the Continent. By far the most complete biography of Mosheim is that by Karl Heussi, *Johann Lorenz Mosheim, Ein Beitrag zur Kirchengeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Tuebingen, 1906). Heussi not only used the older biographies, but had access also to the many manuscripts, documents, and letters which constitute the best sources for Mosheim's life.

[17] A. Nebe, *Zur Geschichte der Predigt; Characterbilder der bedeutendsten Kanzelredner in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von Luther bis Albertini* (Wiesbaden, 1879), p. 138. Even the year of his birth remained indefinitely fixed until the present century. A. Nebe, *op. cit.,* p. 138, gave the date as 1693 or 1694 and J. Wagenmann, "Mosheim," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie,* XXII (Leipzig, 1875—1910), p. 395, as 1694 or 1695. Karl Heussi discovered the recording of his birth by his father in the family Housebook as Oct. 9, 1693, *Johann Lorenz Mosheim,* p. 15, note 2.

[18] F. C. Schlosser, *History of the Eighteenth Century and of the Nineteenth till the Overthrow of the French Empire* (London, 1845), pp. 48 ff. On the Catharineum, cf. *Das Akademische Deutschland,* I (Berlin, 1930), p. 475.

helm Leibniz. In the fall of 1715 two Holstein noblemen, the *Landrat* von Alefeld and the *Amtmann* von Wedderkopp, made it possible for Mosheim to attend Kiel University.[19] Here he became an assistant to the philosophical faculty and in 1721 was named professor of logic and metaphysics.[20] Due to the Northern War, the court fled to Petersburg, and his commissioning never took place.[21] Instead, his former patroness, the Duchess Elisabeth Sophie Marie, had him called to the University of Helmstedt, where he remained for twenty-four years, instructing in church history and eventually receiving the vice-presidency of the University.[22] Mosheim reached the climax of his academic career with his acceptance of the chancellorship of the University of Goettingen in 1747, a position which actually allowed him additional freedom for scholarly pursuits.[23] He remained there until his death in 1755.

The key to Mosheim's life as a teacher and scholar was tremendous erudition. He worked in every department of theology and wrote homiletical works, exegetical studies, dogmatics, ethics, practical theology, and history of dogma, showing not merely extent of learning, but a degree of depth and novelty as well.[24] This variety of learning, of course, informed

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[19] For other instances of this type of patronage, cf. Karl Friedrich August Kahnis, *Der innere Gang des deutschen Protestantismus,* I (Leipzig, 1874), p. 189.

[20] Johann Stephan Puetters, *Versuch einer academischen Gelehrten-Geschichte von der Georg Augustus Universitaet zu Goettingen,* I (Goettingen, 1765), p. 20.

[21] Johann August Christoph von Einem, *Versuch einer vollstaendigen Kirchengeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1783), p. 234.

[22] For his advanced views on matters as academic freedom, the need for adequate equipment, and the obligation of making original contributions to knowledge, cf. Johann Lorenz Mosheim, "De Optima Academia," *Commentationes et Orationes* (Hamburg, 1751), pp. 636f.

[23] The best sources on the founding and early years of the University of Goettingen are the *Akten Cod. Goetting. Ms. hist. litt.* and E. Roessler, *Die Gruendung der Universitaet Goettingen,* Goettingen, 1855, cited in Nathanael Bonwetsch, "Johann Lorenz von Mosheim als Kirchenhistoriker," *Festschrift zur Feier des hundertfuenfzig jaehrigen Bestehens der Koeniglichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Goettingen* (Berlin, 1901), p. 237.

[24] Cf., for example, Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Anweisung erbaulich zu predigen; Erklaerung des Ersten Briefes des heiligen Apostels Pauli an die Gemeinde zu Corinthus; Sittenlehre der Heiligen Schrift; Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae in academicis quondam praelectionibus proposita et demonstrata.* Adolph Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte,* I (Freiburg, 1894), p. 26, calling Mosheim the "Erasmus of the 18th century," credited him with attempting to reach a critico-historical position in the matter of the history of dogma.

his studies of church history, which early became his chief interest. After the summer of 1725 he regularly read the church history lectures, and the following year he published his first compendium of church history.[25] He translated into German and Latin articles and books of Italian, French, and English historians as well as Greek patristic writings. After 1734 he extended the scope of his studies to include also the church history of the Orient.[26]

Mosheim's reputation as a church historian, however, rests primarily on two major writings, the *Institutiones historiae ecclesiasticae antiquae et recentioris,* 1755, and the *De rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum Commentarii,* 1753. The *Institutiones* underwent a steady evolution from a hastily compiled handbook to a comprehensive study based largely on primary sources, published only a few months before Mosheim's death. In 1739 Mosheim published a large volume on the church history of the first century, entitled *Institutiones historiae Christianae maiores,* but he never succeeded in duplicating this effort for the century following. Instead he evolved a plan for a work in which all available knowledge of the early centuries would be presented in a more succinct form. The huge *Commentarii* was the result, still today one of the most comprehensive works on the first three hundred years of the Christian era and considered by some to be the best example of Mosheim's writing.[27]

August Wilhelm von Schlegel once spoke of the historian as "a prophet looking backward." Today, as historians become increasingly realistic about the achievement and limitations of their work, the scientific method in the absolute sense loses adherents. Granting human freedom and infinite variability, the student must take account of the historian's philosophy in evaluating his writing. Written history is thought about the past informed by historical record; as such, it can-

[25] There are adequate sources for a study of Mosheim's writings. He himself in his *Notitia Scriptorum et Dissertationum* lists all his works written to 1731. Those published to 1764 are listed in the 2d edition of the *Institutiones,* pp. 953ff. Some of his essays have been collected into special volumes, *Dissertationum ad historiam ecclesiasticam pertinentium,* two volumes, *Dissertationum ad sanctiores disciplinas pertinentium syntagma,* and the *Commentationes et orationes varii argumenti.*

[26] Cf. Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Historia Tartorum ecclesiastica,* 1741; *Erzaehlung der neuesten chinesischen Kirchengeschichte,* 1748.

[27] Nathanael Bonwetsch, *op. cit.,* 261.

not be analyzed in a test tube. Documents alone never make history. They must be arranged and interpreted. Basic to an evaluation of a historian, therefore, is an appreciation of the philosophy which premised his writing.[28]

Voltaire is reputed to have coined the phrase "philosophy of history," but the idea itself comes from times very ancient. It did not develop from the Hellenic spirit. Neither Greek religion nor Greek philosophy evidenced any real sense of either freedom or progress. Submission to a directionless nemesis was most characteristic of classic antiquity. Three views of history are possible: that history is an atomistic totality of incongruous and chaotic events having no meaning or significance; that history is cyclical, marked by regression equal to progression; and, finally, that history is in a directed movement. The first of these possibilities has always proved unacceptable to a people with the least conception of complex relationships. The second most nearly approximates the position of Hellenism, brilliant but lacking in depth. The origins of the third possible philosophy of history must be found rather in Judaism. The conception found there was that God had initiated the historical process by a uniquely creative act. As Preserver as well as Creator He providentially directed its course toward a new and final age in which redemption, climaxed by judgment, would eventuate. Typical is the Book of Daniel, which in symbolic drama portrayed mankind engaged in a process tending toward a definite goal. Christianity not only grew in this conception, but placed itself consciously in the pattern therein outlined. Schelling has suggested that Christianity is in the highest degree historical and represents a revelation of God in history. This tie between Christianity and history is reflected in no other world religion. Christianity introduced a historical dynamism and an extraordinary force of historical movement making possible a philosophy of history not merely in a religious sense, but in the whole sense of movement and progress, a conception adopted even in secular Marxism.[29]

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[28] Cf. Charles A. Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *The American Historical Review*, XXXIV, No. 2, p. 219.

[29] Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History* (New York, 1936), p. 33. Cf. Shirley Jackson Case, *The Christian Philosophy of History* (Chicago, 1943), pp. 14 ff. William Ralph Inge, *The Idea of Progress* (Oxford, 1920), pp. 5 ff.

The systematizer and classic spokesman for the Christian philosophy of history was St. Augustine, to whom the "verdict of the world was conclusive." Squarely in his tradition stood the Reformers. To them both the four kingdoms of Daniel and Augustine's City of God were real and sure. Melanchthon was fond of the sentence *Deus transfert et stabilit regna!* [30] To acknowledge this fact was to them the purpose of historical studies, a purpose requiring far more depth, for example, than the practical political aim of a Machiavelli or Guicciardini. This conception of history activated Mosheim's philosophical insight and gave comprehensiveness to his view. In this sense Mosheim was very much a child of the Reformation. He believed that the world was created out of nothing by the infinite power of God, a belief which he expressly divorced from any dependence upon "human philosophies," on the ground that it is unique in being a belief in an actual historical occurrence, not as in the ancient philosophers, a trans-historical abstraction, conceiving matter itself to be but a state either of the world mind or human imagination.[31] His philosophy was essentially based on the theology of the Reformation. Not only his dogmatic formulations indicate this, but also many of his other non-historical writings.[32] Mosheim desired to remain within the framework of the orthodox theological structure.[33] He viewed Luther as the restorer of the true Christian doctrine.[34] His beliefs were based on revelation and a Biblical interpretation reassured by his trust in the perspicuity of the Scriptures. Therefore in his *Anweisung erbaulich zu predigen* he constantly inveighed against any allegorical or philosoph-

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[30] *Corpus Reformatorum*, XII (*Halis Saxonum*, 1844), pp. 779, 870, 992, etc.

[31] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, "De Creatione Mundi ex Nihilo," *Commentationes et Orationes*, pp. 124, 129, 135.

[32] Cf. *Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae in Academicis quondam praelectionibus proposita et demonstrata*, part III (Nuremberg, 1764), "Oeconomia Salutis seu ratio salutem obtinendi introductio." A very explicit example of his adherence to the accepted interpretations of Lutheranism was his "Cogitationes de Justificatione Abrahami ad illustranda Loca quaedam epistolae d. Pauli ad Romanos," *Commentationes et Orationes*, pp. 74 ff.

[33] Albert Henry Newman's analysis that Mosheim "cared nothing for orthodox Lutheranism" is very much oversimplified. *Op. cit.*, p. 536.

[34] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Historia Michaelis Serveti* (Helmstedt, 1727), Prooemium: "Illud inprimis tempus, quo vir immortalis memoriae, Martinus Lutherus, religionem integritati suae restituit, luculentissima nobis huius veritatis testimonia exhibet."

ical interpretation. To him theology was an artificial construction of the saving truth, revealed by God, not presented to the Apostles as a corpus or in a systematic rational plan.[35] Mosheim left room for his own individual stamp, however. He did not differ from the orthodox theology in definition, but in emphasis.

The direction of Mosheim's theological development was certainly not toward Calvinism. He severely chastised Calvinism for the doctrine of particular grace and the unchangeable decrees of God over man's salvation, even charging that these teachings were directly responsible for the apostasy of men like Thomas Hobbes.[36] His translation of John Hales' *Geschichte des Dordrechter Konzils* revealed the same opinion. When Pfaff, the chancellor of Tuebingen, urged a union between Lutherans and Reformed, Mosheim opposed it.[37] In the *De concilio Dordraceno,* 1724, he maintained that the Council of Dort made union impossible.[38]

Mosheim's theological leaning was transitional to a new development rather than to Calvinism. Eighteenth century theology in Germany can be divided into three periods, transitional theology, neology, and rationalism. The first was a period of critical inquiry within the limits of dogma and revelation. The second period gave up the dogma, but held to the revelation. In the final period both were abandoned.[39] Of course these periods were not strictly exclusive but overlapped, owing to the great variety among individual thinkers and writers. Mosheim's position may perhaps be best described as that of mild orthodoxy, a form of transitional theology. He proceeded on Leibniz's premise "je n'ai pas l'esprit desapprobateur." [40] Transitional theology was marked by a new emphasis away from dogma to exegetical and his-

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[35] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae in Academicis quondam praelectionibus proposita et demonstrata,* p. 1.

[36] Cf. Johann Lorenz Mosheim's introduction to John Tillotson, *Auserlesene Predigten ueber wichtige Stuecke der goettlichen Lehre* (Helmstedt, 1736).

[37] On the position of Pfaff see Revere Franklin Weidner, *Theological Encyclopaedia and Methodology,* I (Chicago, 1898), p. 24.

[38] Ferdinand Chr. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte der neueren Zeit,* p. 650.

[39] Joh. Ph. Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Milwaukee, 1917), pp. 558 ff.

[40] A typical expression is that found in Mosheim's *Historia Michaelis Serveti, Prooemium:* "Hominum genus bonis malisque semper permixtum fuisse, nemo tam rudis est, qui nesciat."

torical studies. Mosheim figured especially in this latter emphasis.[41] Another element in this *Uebergangstheologie,* which was also a part of Mosheim's approach, was the use of reason in presenting the old dogmatics in an elegant garment.[42] The tension between the Christian spirit and the new Hellenism was growing and the conflict was evident in Mosheim's thinking.

Rationalism and the Enlightenment had a tremendous effect on historiography. The movement named by Kant the *Aufklaerung* not only reduced interest in the historical by placing emphasis on existing institutions, but changed the whole basis of church history.[43] Orthodoxy had used as its measure in evaluating the progress of the Church the fortunes of the correctly believing Christians. Pietism had judged the course of church history on the basis of the distinction between the converted and the unconverted. The emphasis of the *Aufklaerung* was revolutionary. The revealed knowledge of God was compared with the natural knowledge dependent on reason, and Christianity was accepted as the religion best expressing the tenets of reason if it was accepted at all. Dogmatics were suppressed. Moreover, revelation was not limited to one dispensation, but continued at all times. New emphasis was placed on the practical and ethical. And, finally, the restriction of religion within the limits of pure reason required a recasting of the essential content of Christian doctrine. In spite of the defense of church history by Gottlieb Planck, its usefulness was under attack by the apostles of the *Aufklaerung.*[44] The total effect of rationalism on church history was to accelerate the critical approach and to reduce dependence on dogmatic theology, but at the same time by treating the Christian past as the product of human passion, mean mo-

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[41] Horst Stephan, *Geschichte der evangelischen Theologie seit dem deutschen Idealismus* (Berlin, 1938), p. 9.

[42] Friedrich C. Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte fuer das deutsche Volk,* XIV (Oberhausen, 1873), p. 515. Mosheim would have found impossible an artless presentation like his contemporary Christian Eberhardt Weismann's *Introductio in memorabilia ecclesiastica Historiae Sacrae Novi Testamenti ad iuvandam notitiam regni Dei et Satanae cordisque humani salutarem plana et facili methodo olim consignata.*

[43] Marianne Beyer-Froehlich, *Pietismus und Rationalismus* (Leipzig, 1934), p. 13.

[44] For a brilliant essay on the church history of the *Aufklaerung,* cf. Karl Voelker, *Die Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Aufklaerung* (Tuebingen, 1921).

tives, and trivial causes it lost a real appreciation for the organic connection and development of the whole. This defect was not really repaired until Neander, under the influence of Schleiermacher, undertook the writing of a more philosophic church history and Ferdinand C. Baur began writing under the influence of Hegel's system.[45] Because of this tremendous effect of the *Aufklaerung* on church historiography, an examination of Mosheim's relation to it is as necessary as is fixing his theological relation to orthodoxy.

The Enlightenment originated in England, where rationalistic tendencies began to appear in the seventeenth century. The deism of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the materialism of Hobbes preceded the rationalism of men like John Locke and John Tillotson. The latter was the foremost preacher of his day, an opponent of mysticism and a champion of reason, by which he meant the faculty of direct vision, comparison of the religious propositions with those propositions suggested by reason. The chief value of religion is in supplying divine sanctions for morality. The combination of the rationalist and supernaturalist in Tillotson was typical of his age. The work of Descartes in developing his individual thought system and the voluminous writing of Pierre Bayle introduced the Enlightenment to France. The Enlightenment reached Germany by various paths. Perhaps the intercourse with England through the House of Hanover expedited it.[46] The Leipzig jurist Christian Thomasius and his patron Samuel Pufendorf of Jena may also have transplanted the ideas of Locke to German soil.[47] But by far the most important figures in this development were Leibniz and Christian Wolf, who made clearness and reasonableness the sole criteria for truth. Translations of such English writings as Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, 1738, and Tindal's *Christianity as old as Creation*, 1741, began to appear.[48] Mosheim was keenly sensitive to the impact of the *Aufklaerung*.

Mosheim knew the English, French, and German litera-

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[45] Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (New York, 1922), p. 189.

[46] Joh. Ph. Koehler, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

[47] Karl Guden, *Das Jahrhundert der Aufklaerung* (Hannover, 1868), pp. 21 ff.

[48] Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

tures of the *Aufklaerung* well. His early writings against Toland, *Vindicae Antiquae Christianorum disciplinae, Adversus Tolandi Nazarenum,* showed his relation to the deistic movement. But his work on Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of the Universe,* 1732, offered him the best opportunity for noting his views in great detail. For deism he had no sympathy whatever. Herbert of Cherbury, while an excellent man, went to extremes in justifying and palliating the opinions and ceremonies of pagan nations, though, Mosheim conceded, he was driven to those extremes by Roman Catholic theologians who cast infamy on pagan religions.[49] He disagreed with Cudworth's charges of atheism leveled against Hobbes, finding in the *Leviathan* evidences of his belief in a deity with a very ethereal body.[50] He was careful to remark that "whether this cunning crafty man said this sincerely from his heart or merely to avoid odium, God only knows." [51] Mosheim had read almost all of the Latin and English works of Hobbes and considered his doctrines "wicked and impious" and Hobbes himself a "very bad man" who directed insidious attacks upon the heavenly truth. He found a serious contradiction in Hobbes's system in that Hobbes denied that the truth or falsehood of anything can be proved from the divine perfections, inasmuch as we have no true knowledge of them, and at the same time maintained that the torments of the wicked after death will have an end because that is evident from our notion of the divine mercy.[52] In his introduction to the German edition of Tillotson's sermons Mosheim gave almost unreserved praise to him as a great evangelical.[53] Though Mosheim cited Pierre Bayle often, Descartes' thought seems to have been more challenging to him. He took what was then considered a moderate view of Descartes — that he had some sort of religion, but held opinions not favorable to piety.[54] He felt that viewing wisdom and design in creation was irreconcilable with an opinion that God was withdrawn from the government of the world. He approved of Robert Boyle's *De Causis Finalibus,*

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[49] Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe,* II (London, 1845), p. 78, note 8. Notes by Mosheim.

[50] *Ibid.,* II, p. 510, note 3.

[51] *Ibid.,* II, p. 562, note 12.

[52] *Ibid.,* I, p. 103, note 3.

[53] Johann Tillotson, *p. cit., Vorrede.*

[54] Ralph Cudworth, *op. cit.,* I, p. 276, note 6.

in which Boyle opposed Descartes. He found, as had Pierre Gassendi, that the Cartesian proof for existence was reasoning in a circle, on the grounds that the notion of God, although innate and apparently evident to the person, might be fallacious and visionary.[55] Mosheim charitably concluded that Descartes had rejected final causes from his physics not through any innate depravity of mind or impiety toward God, but principally through his fondness for his own philosophy.[56]

In Germany the first important conflict over rationalism developed after 1723.[57] In 1719, Christian Wolf, following in the steps of Leibniz, published his *Rational Thoughts on God, the World, and the Soul*, with the aim of making philosophic truth as self-evident as the mathematical. Therefore the doctrines of Christianity would be either capable of demonstration or not worthy of belief. He thought the first of these alternatives possible. Additional proofs from experience were merely contingent and confirmatory. He definitely broke with church doctrine in viewing man as progressing independently toward a larger completeness.[58] He himself expressed his dependence on Locke, whose major premises he shared.[59]

Mosheim had the greatest admiration for Leibniz, praising the genius of that "greatest of eclectics." [60] He said of Wolf: "Wolf ist mein guter Freund, ob ich gleich, welches er selbst weisz, kein Wolffianer bin." [61] These words strikingly illustrate his actual relationship to the German Enlightenment. While his historical interests tended to detract from his dogmatic interests and from any sympathy with the scientific and ethical narrowness of the Pietists, they also separated him from the hypercritical and non-historical tendency of rationalism. Nevertheless, Mosheim may be identified with the group of

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[55] *Ibid.*, II, p. 591, note 2. III, p. 32, note 5. This deduction received the praise of Siegmund Baumgarten, *Untersuchung Theologischer Streitigkeiten*, I (Halle, 1762), p. 426.

[56] *Ibid.*, II, p. 616, note 3.

[57] For an account of the position of the leading German theologians in this controversy, cf. K. R. Hagenbach, *A Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, I (New York, 1861), pp. 376 ff.

[58] On the theology of the Enlightenment, cf. Karl Friedrich August Kahnis, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 ff.

[59] Christian Wolf, *Philosophia Practica Universalis Methodo Scientifica pertractata* (Halle, 1744), *Praefatio.*

[60] *Institutiones*, pp. 753, 821, 908.

[61] Johann August Christoph von Einem, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

theologians in that day moving in the direction which the Enlightenment eventually took.[62]

Mosheim's theological position and personal philosophy of history was of tremendous significance for his conception and evaluation of the factors in historical development. He was no real theoretician, and nowhere did he give a really extensive presentation of his philosophy of historical writing. He was no originator of great new insights into historical processes. His discussion of material organization and experiments in new division of historical narrative really were fundamentally more a matter of method than of theory. To define the scope and essential content of a limited discipline like church history had not been undertaken by his predecssors. The Centurians had presented their conception of the purposes of their writing but had not elaborated upon the reason for it. In comparison with them it might be said that Mosheim did make at least a beginning in defining the nature and purpose of the historian's task, though, as said, his actual achievement was modest.[63]

His conception of the nature and task of church history may best be learned from the definition which he gives in his *Institutiones,* p. 3:

The Ecclesiastical History of the New Dispensation is a clear and faithful narrative of the external condition, and of the internal state and transactions, of that body of men who have borne the name of Christians; and in which events are so traced to their causes that the providence of God may be seen in the establishment and preservation of the church and the reader's piety, no less than his intelligence, be advanced by the perusal.

The best form of such a history seems to be that which considers the whole body of Christians as constituting a so-

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[62] Franz von Wegele, *Geschichte der Deutschen Historiographie seit dem Auftreten des Humanismus* (Muenchen, 1885), p. 740.

[63] One of the earliest studies of Mosheim's philosophy of historical writing was that of F. Christian Baur in *Die Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtschreibung* (Tuebingen, 1852). Franz von Wegele, *op. cit.,* 1885, was heavily dependent on Baur and added little that is constructive. More recently Nathanael Bonwetsch contributed an article, "Johann Lorenz von Mosheim als Kirchenhistoriker," to the *Festschrift zur Feier des hundertfuenfzigjaehrigen Bestehens der Koeniglichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Goettingen* (Berlin, 1901), in which he made his analysis more directly on Mosheim's writing than on Mosheim's explanations of that writing. The most complete article of this nature is that of Karl Heussi, "Die Kirchengeschichtsschreibung Johann Lorenz von Mosheims" in the *Geschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Gotha, 1904), edited by Karl Lamprecht.

ciety or community, subjected to lawful authority and governed by certain laws and institutions. To such a community many external events must happen, which will be favorable to its interests or adverse to them: and, since nothing human is stable and uniform, many things will occur in the bosom of such community tending to change its character. Hence its history may very suitably be divided into its external and its internal history. In this manner the history of the Christian community, in order to embrace all the details and promote the greatest usefulness, should be divided.

This definition is hardly that of an original thinker. It is rather that of a man seeking a practical working concept. While it can easily be defended as consistent with the Orthodox theology, since it could be considered as *ecclesia visibilis*, in which were included the wrong believing as well as the correct believing members, the definition does have a secular ring to it. By identifying the Church as a *coetus hominum*, Mosheim did externalize the concept of the Church and deprived it of the specific meaning and connotation understood by his predecessors. If to them the Church was the veritable Kingdom of God in opposition to the kingdom of the devil, to him it was an association of humans. If to them the heretics were those who erred against the doctrine, to him they were disturbers of the peace. Of course, these differences were not absolute, but in general they represented the trend or emphasis of Mosheim's thinking. The analogy with the State is obvious. It was a useful device for simplifying the management of materials. The Church had its rulers, laws, wars, body of citizens, disturbers of the peace, just as the State. In spite of the detailed care given to doctrine and spiritual development in the sections of his works devoted to "internal history," the Church nevertheless remained essentially a body of people.

While this externalized conception of the Church lacked the dynamic element present in the histories of his predecessors, it served as the main thread of continuity in Mosheim's history. By the way in which he traced the relationship of the Church to the religious and cultural circumstances in which the Church existed and found the interaction between them, he demonstrated an appreciation of historical development.[64] He appreciated the significance of the whole milieu

[64] To say that he did not conceive of these changes as historical development, but possibly only as a matter of the "adverse events of the church" which happened to be cumulative over an extended period (Karl

for church history. The individual fact was dependent in part on the spirit of the times, the *Zeitbewusstsein.* Striking examples of this insight were the essays on world conditions at the time of Christ and again at the time of Luther.[65] Moreover, his rather consistent demonstration of the relationship of church history to political history is a further indication of his insight into factors of historical development.

His major failing in this respect was in overemphasizing the personal elements at the expense of the whole causal nexus.[66] This shortcoming was due to the influence of the *Aufklaerung* upon his thought, with its stress on the significance of personal motivation in explaining any occurrence. He found, for example, that the adoption of pageantry in the Church was due to the perverseness of mankind, which delights more in pomp and splendor than in true devotion. Again, in discussing the origins of Gnosticism, Manichaeism, or his conception of the general Oriental philosophy, he always referred to the originator, or parent, who himself contrived the system.[67] Never, however, did he go so far as Plutarch, Carlyle, Emerson, or similar devotees of the personal factor in history.

In spite of these limitations, Mosheim did contribute to an advance toward genetic history. The difficulty of comprehending the full meaning of the fact of continuity has always been one of the major difficulties of historiography. The pluralistic phenomena of history are so varied and often seemingly so inconsistent, a maze of promiscuous events, as

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Heussi, "Die Kirchengeschichtschreibung Johann Lorenz Mosheims," in Karl Lamprecht, *Geschichtliche Untersuchungen,* p. 29) seems rather a tendentious judgment in view of the fact that Mosheim never expressed himself on this phase of historical writing in any detail. The essential thing is that he actually presented changes as following upon an accumulation of factors. That is a presentation of development, whether it is done inadvertently or with full awareness.

[65] *Commentarii,* p. 1: Prolegomena de Statu orbis terrarum, quum nasceretur Christus; p. 564: Status rei Christianae ante Coeptam Reformationem.

[66] *Institutiones,* p. 6: "In exploring the causes of events, besides access to ancient testimony and the history of the times, a good knowledge of human nature is requisite. The historian who understands the human character, the propensities and powers, the passions and weaknesses of man, will readily discover the causes of many things attempted or done in former times."

[67] *Ibid.,* p. 37: "Sic enim parens eius sine controversia ratiocinabatur . . ."; p. 119, *re* Manes: "exuberantis vero ingenii et, quod valde verisimile est, emotae mentis et fanaticus"; *Commentarii,* pp. 26 f.: "eius auctor. . . ."

to defy a genetic approach.[68] Yet that is the historian's task. Mosheim's predecessors in church history had done poorly in this respect. The historians of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation had been didactic with emphasis on biography and dogma. The Polyhistorians of the seventeenth century had, like Aristotle, made history a matter of detail, not of the universal or necessary. Mosheim had attacked them mercilessly. In 1717 he wrote his "Cogitationes de studio litterario," in which he inveighed against the fruitless compilation of materials and masses of particulars without understanding the real relationship of the whole.[69] He determined to do better. He did have a real interest in the larger historical connections, although he was unable to articulate them in a new terminology. Like most pioneers, he lacked tools for ready generalization and classification. Larger conceptual terms, such as Renaissance, Reformation, Protestantism, Jesuitism, and Catholicism, did not occur to him. His effort to subordinate fact and detail to larger conceptions, though clumsily expressed, and to look for more extensive interrelationships between historical events owed its inspiration to another element in Mosheim's view of history. His Christian understanding of history would, of course, lead him to view history as a whole rather than as a meaningless mass of occurrences. But his effort to trace cause and effect relationships in history was derived more immediately from his conviction that history must serve a pragmatic purpose, must serve to "enlighten" and not just satisfy a natural curiosity about the past.

Pragmatic history, of course, did not originate with Mosheim. In classic times, Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus had been extreme examples of historians who viewed their task in this light. Bernheim has observed that this type of history has commonly appeared whenever a people of culture became self-conscious and subjective.[70] This keen analysis offers an explanation for the occurrence of this conception of history in Humanism and still more extremely in the historiography of the Enlightenment. Pragmatic history was renewed, after centuries of medieval collectivism followed by

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[68] Ernest Bernheim, *Einleitung in die Geschichtswissenschaft* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 7 ff.

[69] *Commentationes et Orationes varii Argumenti,* pp. 110 f.

[70] Ernest Bernheim, *op. cit.,* pp. 7 ff.

an increase in individualism, in the French and Italian memoirs and chronicles. In Germany "pragmatic" had first been applied to political history by Reiner Reineccius before the time of the Thirty Years' War.

Church history stood in an unusual relationship to pragmatic history in post-Reformation days. For Protestant historiography the expressions of Luther were basic and to him the pedagogical was the most important part of history.[71] It was not therefore the introduction of teaching purposes to history which won for Mosheim the distinction of having been the first to apply the pragmatic method of church history. Rather it was his orientation toward a new emphasis to which the Church of the Reformation had previously been hostile, namely, a devotion to morality divorced for all practical purposes from the broader aspects of the Christian faith.[72] Mosheim attributed the relatively few uses of church history as compared with secular history to its insufficient pragmatic development. Church history, indeed, gave full accounts of events, errors, origins of dogma and rites; it did not show the interrelation of changes with their results, the only way in which church history could serve as a teacher. Church history should serve theologians as political history served statesmen.[73]

Therefore Mosheim stressed the true presentation of events in their cause and effect relation. "In treating of both the external and the internal history of the church, the writer who would be useful must trace events to their causes; that is, he must tell us not only what happened, but likewise how and why." [74] Such an aim necessitated subordinating details. The story of the growth of the Church would *eo ipso* tend to confirm the faith of the Christian, since it demonstrated a prosperous development from small beginnings.[75] Mosheim consistently, even while applying a kind of philosophical pragmatism which traced the genesis of events from a natural

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[71] Walter Nigg, *Die Kirchengeschichtsschreibung. Grundzuege ihrer historischen Entwicklung* (Muenchen, 1934), p. 42.

[72] Cf. Benedetto Croce, *History, Its Theory and Practice* (New York, 1921), p. 248.

[73] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Dissertationum ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam Pertinentium*, I (Altonaviae et Flensburgi, 1743), pp. 89 f.

[74] *Institutiones*, p. 6.

[75] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *Dissertationum ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam Pertinentium*, I, p. 10.

standpoint, with what might be called a theological pragmatism, strove to recognize the agency of God working toward a further end. Particularly in the moderation with which he applied this method, Mosheim was far superior to the so-called Pragmatic School of church historians of the later eighteenth century. This "school," which considered Mosheim as its founder, composed of such historians as Johann Schroeckh, Ludwig Spittler the Voltairean, Gottlieb Planck of Goettingen, and Heinrich Henke of Helmstedt, went far beyond Mosheim in applying church history to pragmatic ends, particularly the ends of morality and ethics.

The abuse to which pragmatic history lent itself at the hands of the Pragmatic School emphasized the dilemma which Mosheim also faced. Either it had to be assumed that history of itself is of such a nature that an impartial presentation will serve pragmatic ends, or history must be presented so as to bring out the lessons more obviously even at the sacrifice of objectivity. Of these two possibilities Mosheim chose the former. He was sure that history did substantiate his dogmatic or philosophic position and was not really aware of the full implications which the growing historical relativism of the Enlightenment had with respect to those very pragmatic ends which he considered the desirable purposes of historical studies. Therefore it was possible for him to attempt with complete assurance the writing of both pragmatic and objective history. Indeed he constantly stressed the need for complete impartiality.[76] In 1727 he wrote the *Historia Michaelis Serveti,* a specific attempt at impartiality on a highly controversial issue. In 1746 he wrote his *Versuch einer unpartheiischen und gruendlichen Ketzergeschichte,* followed two years later by the *Anderweitiger Versuch einer vollstaendigen und unpartheiischen Ketzergeschichte.* He led the way from polemics and apologetics to the discipline of objective historical writing.

The effort to achieve objectivity led Mosheim to a thorough application of source criticism to documentary ma-

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[76] *Institutiones,* p. 835: "Si, quod omnes fatentur, Historici primum hoc munus est, ne quam vel gratiae, vel simultatis suspicionem excitet, hac arte nemo minus ad Historiam scribendam aptus fuit"; *Commentarii, Praefatio,* p. 1: "animadverteram, animo repetebam, esse in Historia rerum Christianarum haud pauca aut prorsus omissa, aut male narrando depravata, aut denique perperam sive negligentia, *sive partium studio* sive insto maiori alienae diligentiae fiducia intellecta."

terials. It is method, as Ernst Bernheim has pointed out, not genius or erudition, that makes the historian.[77] And one of the basic operations in historical method is the selection and criticism of sources. From the days of Hegesippus on, very few church historians, however bad the record of the chroniclers, have failed entirely to appreciate this. Source criticism received new momentum through the Reformation and the subsequent controversies over the historic nature of Christianity. The impact of this new concern for historicity was evident particularly in the work of Melanchthon, who in turn influenced the whole subsequent development of Protestant historiography. In Mosheim's own day, Leibniz had re-emphasized the necessity of basing history on original sources. In fact, he had even organized an association in 1670 to encourage the systematic collection of source materials. But no thorough application of source criticism had ever been made to the entire range of church history. Mosheim undertook that stupendous task. The heir of the Protestant tradition of insistence on true historical foundations and inspired to use a more scientific method by the intellectual stimulation of the Enlightenment, Mosheim attempted to apply the canons of criticism as he knew them to the complete story of the Church. Small wonder that his histories dominated the field for a century after they first appeared.

A proper assessment of history requires a sound study of the historian, particularly of one who does not use entirely the *sic narravere Patres* as his rule. An understanding of Johann Lorenz Mosheim's philosophy of history and place in the theology of the eighteenth century is most helpful in evaluating his conception of the nature and task of church history. History is indeed, as Cicero put it, "the witness of the times," of the times in which it is written as well as of the times about which it is written.

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[77] *Op. cit.*, p. 162: "Geist ohne Methode schaedigt die Wissenschaft nicht minder als Methode ohne Geist."