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# The Religious Enlightenment of Johann Joachim Spalding: A Paradigmatic Case

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**Abstract:** In the eighteenth century, being both a Christian and a supporter of the Enlightenment was not easy, and this applies in a very particular way to the German clergyman, theologian and philosopher Johann Joachim Spalding (1714–1804). Widely known as the author of the bestseller, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, Spalding embodies some recurrent features of the German Enlightenment: he was educated and eventually served as a Lutheran pastor; read the works of Christian Wolff, and was fascinated with Anglo-Scottish moral sense philosophy, contributing crucially to its introduction into the German territories; and finally took a critical stance on the obscurantist politics of Frederick William II and his minister's edict in religious matters. It comes as no surprise that he was credited with symbolic value by both allies and enemies, who saw him as a leading star or radical rebel, eager to modernise – or destroy – the dogmatic system of Protestantism.

This essay aims to reconstruct Spalding's efforts to realise this challenging task. To do so, it will provide a comprehensive overview of Spalding's works, including minor and lesser known writings. Particular attention will be given to Spalding's views on the aim of human life, the role of religion in attaining this, and the distinctive conception of philosophy at stake here. At the same time, Spalding's definition of "enlightenment" (*Aufklärung*) will also be unpacked and carefully explored. In so doing, the article will offer a fresh and additional insight into one of the most fascinating epochs of Western thought and culture, which Spalding – once more – exemplifies paradigmatically.

**Keywords:** Johann Joachim Spalding; enlightenment; philosophy as a way of life; religion.

## Introduction

In the eighteenth century, being both a Christian and a supporter of the Enlightenment was not easy, and this applies in a very particular way to the German clergyman, theologian and philosopher Johann Joachim Spalding (1714–1804). Widely known as the author of the bestseller, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* – first appearing in 1748 and later republished in ten revised and augmented editions up to 1794, not to mention a great many translations and extracts in anthologies – Spalding embodies some recurrent features of the German Enlightenment: he was educated and eventually served as a Lutheran pastor;

read the works of Christian Wolff, endorsing his willingness to reconcile reason and faith; was fascinated with Anglo-Scottish moral sense philosophy, and contributed crucially to its introduction into the German territories; and finally took a critical stance on the obscurantist politics of Frederick William II and his minister's edict in religious matters. It comes as no surprise that he was credited with symbolic value by both allies and enemies, who saw him as a leading star or radical rebel, eager to modernise – or destroy – the dogmatic system of Protestantism.

This essay aims to reconstruct Spalding's efforts to realise this challenging task, as well as the resistance he met from some prominent orthodox figures. To do so, it will provide a comprehensive overview of Spalding's works, including minor and lesser known writings such as his short contributions to the discussions of the Berlin Wednesday Society (*Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft*). Particular attention will be given to his views on the aim of human life, the role of religion in attaining this, and the distinctive conception of philosophy at stake here. At the same time, Spalding's definition of "enlightenment" (*Aufklärung*) will also be unpacked and carefully explored. In so doing, the article will offer a fresh and additional insight into one of the most fascinating epochs of Western thought and culture, which Spalding – once more – exemplifies paradigmatically.

## 1. Spalding's Life, Works and Intellectual Import

Spalding was born in the town of Tribsees in Swedish Pomerania in 1714, and was educated according to the standards then prevailing in the cultivated Lutheran milieu. In his childhood and youth, he received both private and school instruction in Classical languages and Hebraic, but most of all in religion, and in 1731 he enrolled at the University of Rostock as a philosophy and theology student with a view to eventually becoming a pastor. The conservative attitude of most of his professors, and particularly their opposition to Wolff's ideas, was so disappointing that Spalding decided to take a rest from his studies, working as a private tutor in Tribsees and Greifswald. During these years, he was able to profit from the acquaintances he was fortunate enough to make, such as the pastor Gottlieb Schulz in Tribsees, who provided him with free access to his library and in so doing gave him the opportunity to read in depth the writings of both Wolff and his supporters at Tübingen, Georg Bernhard

Bilfinger and Israel Gottlieb Canz. So in 1735, Spalding resumed his academic path at the University of Greifswald, where he published and successfully defended a theological disputation centered on the lively topic of Jesus' miracles.<sup>1</sup> One year later, he did the same again at his old university, with a philosophical dissertation in metaphysics vindicating Wolff's system against any prejudice circulating in the German territories, especially at Rostock.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, Spalding's preferences hovered on the boundary between philosophy and theology, following the most recent novelties in both. He did not draw back from challenges such as rationalism, nor was he – even if temporarily – unaffected by the fascination of heterodox theories including Socinianism;<sup>3</sup> however, he was never led to abandon his sincere and profound Christian faith – quite the contrary. In his 1735 disputation, he defended the credibility of Jesus' miracles against the accusations of emperor Julian as well as modern Deists, and in 1738 he published a second piece of writing – this time in German – revolving around Wolff's ideas, with a view to presenting them as a weapon against “freethinkers”, “atheists”, “*Pelagians* and naturalists”.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, his intense study of early modern apologetic literature was not confined to theological writings and controversies, but also took in philosophical and ethical debates on faith, revelation and reason.<sup>5</sup> This familiarity with the European intellectual landscape offered much more than mere erudition, and contributed towards producing a particularly open, progressive and liberal attitude of mind.

It was precisely this audacious curiosity that motivated him shortly thereafter to read and appreciate the writings of an English philosopher otherwise ostracised in the German lands for his ambiguous, and partly hostile stance on religion, and particularly the Christian religion. This was Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who in the first decades of the eighteenth century passed for one of the most dangerous enemies of faith and morality, and was consequently labelled a deist or free-thinker. Spalding decided to approach Shaftesbury's texts in the early 1740s in order to “study English”,<sup>6</sup> yet ended up finding his author's ideas so convincing that he did not hesitate to embark on a proper translation. So in 1745 he published the first German edition of *The Moralists*, and in 1747 the first German edition of *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* – the only other work by Shaftesbury already available in German since 1738 being the *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author*.<sup>7</sup>

The core of Spalding's interest lay in Shaftesbury's theory of a “moral sensation [*moralische Empfindung*]”, which in his eyes reflected “the creator's wise goodness” and hence could not but be considered “an indubitable thing”.<sup>8</sup> Tellingly, it had been precisely the naturalness in this “perception [*Wahrnehmung*]” and “feeling [*Gefühl*]” for “harmony” and “order”<sup>9</sup> that had provoked major preoccupations amongst theologians, who feared that a natural virtue might undermine the role of divine grace. Once more, Spalding proved courageous enough to challenge the commonly held views of his time, most importantly those of his fellow believers, and to strive for a neutral evaluation – which turned into a proper re-evaluation – of what seemed to be a direct attack at Christianity. As will

be shown in the second section of this article, he would succeed.

In late 1745, after publishing his first translation, Spalding moved to Berlin to take up his new position as the secretary of the Swedish ambassador, whom he had first met earlier that year. In the Prussian capital he was enthusiastically welcomed into a literary and cultural circle, centred around the poet Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim and including fellow correspondents such as Johann Georg Sulzer, all of whom shared a sincere enthusiasm for none other than Shaftesbury.<sup>10</sup> These were “golden days”, as Spalding himself would nostalgically recall in 1764.<sup>11</sup> During this sojourn, Spalding worked at his second translation, which of course represented one of the main topics of conversation during the several meetings among friends, and – to add to his – he became more closely acquainted with the prominent Reformed theologian August Friedrich Wilhelm Sack, whom he initially came across in early 1745.<sup>12</sup> In this context, Spalding was thus able to strengthen the whole spectrum of his interests, both philosophical and theological, and also enjoy the stimulation of intellectual dialogue, thereby gaining in self-confidence. All of this was to prove crucial to his further development.

In the spring of 1747, Spalding left Berlin and returned home in order to resume his plans for a career in the clergy, but also to assist his father, who was seriously ill. In the months spent at his parent's bedside, Spalding wrote his first book, which was also – as emerged before long – his masterpiece. This small treatise, entitled *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (Meditation on the vocation of the human being),<sup>13</sup> was published in May 1748, bearing testimony to the impact of Spalding's stay in Berlin and most of all to his willingness to combine modern philosophy and the Christian religion. In actual fact, it was primarily the product of Spalding's appropriation of Shaftesbury's ethics and the subsequent discussions with Gleim and his various associates, as is confirmed by Spalding's own recollection.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it represented the occasion for testing the compatibility of reason and faith, a major preoccupation for Spalding since his university studies at Rostock and Greifswald. Tellingly, this little work became a proper bestseller with ten further revised, updated and considerably augmented editions (1748, 1749, 1752, 1754, 1759, 1763, 1764, 1768, 1774, 1794), as well as several clandestine reprints, reproductions within the works of other authors or anthologies, and translations into Czech, French, Latin, Dutch, Russian and Swedish. Starting with the seventh edition of 1763, the title was shortened to the more direct and impactful *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (The vocation of the human being).<sup>15</sup> Besides being a visible market success, the treatise also and foremost marked the beginning of a new era in Enlightenment culture, and can thus be considered a “founding document”<sup>16</sup> of eighteenth-century Protestant German theology or, as it has become customary to term it, Neology.<sup>17</sup> Hence, already before his appointment as pastor, Spalding entered the Enlightenment scene as a hero.

In 1749, Spalding finally obtained his first post in Lassan, where he remained until moving to Barth in 1757. In the eight and seven years respectively spent serving as

a parish pastor in these two towns of his native Pomerania, Spalding was able to keep hold of his previous intellectual interests, balancing his ministry with reading, writing and thinking. So in this period he translated the works of two prominent English theologians, namely Jacob Foster and Francis Gastrell, who were both committed to fighting the rise of deism. Moreover, he published short essays, and most importantly his first theological work, entitled *Gedanken über den Werth der Gefühle in dem Christenthum* (Thoughts on the Value of Feelings in the Christian Religion). This treatise first appeared in 1761, being subsequently published in four further editions up to 1784, and was aimed at assessing the role of emotions in religion, with a view to avoiding the excesses of some Pietistic groups.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1764 marked a turning point. In October 1763, Spalding accepted the post of first pastor at the Marienkirche in Berlin, which also meant becoming provost at the Nikolaikirche as well as a member of the Prussian Upper Consistory and, as a consequence, the highest-ranking Lutheran ministry in Brandenburg-Prussia. In June 1764, he moved to Berlin, where he was to remain until his death. Over the last decades of the century, Spalding rose to a leading position in the Berlin Enlightenment and crucially contributed to shaping its main trends. He published several collections of sermons and minor essays, as well as three further books focusing on the function of homiletic activity and the role of religion as opposed to theology as an erudite science. These were entitled as follows: *Ueber die Nutzbarkeit des Predigtamtes und deren Beförderung* (On the Usefulness of the Ministry of Preaching and its Promotion), first appearing in 1772 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1773, 3<sup>th</sup> ed.: 1791); *Vertraute Briefe, die Religion betreffend* (Familiar Letters on Religion), first appearing in 1784 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1785, 3<sup>th</sup> ed.: 1788); and *Religion, eine Angelegenheit des Menschen* (Religion, a Concern of the Human Being), first appearing in 1797 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1798, 3<sup>th</sup> ed.: 1799, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.: 1806). As in the case of his first work, Spalding's later volumes were all re-published, mostly in revised and updated editions, which testifies both to his willingness to adjust or reformulate passages – be it for internal reasons or at others' suggestion – and to his immense success. Spalding was in fact a widely-read author, and this applied not only to his colleagues in the clergy, but also to scholars in other fields and even people of inferior education. The latter found in Spalding's texts a way into the most crucial questions in ethics and religion, which he dealt with elegantly, clearly, and without any erudite embellishment; the former followed in his footsteps towards an existential and practical way of thinking, which would unify religion, philosophy, and literature as different tools working towards one end, namely discovering and fulfilling the purpose of human life.

In the light of this, it comes as no surprise that prominent poets, novelists, and thinkers such as Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte and Heinrich von Kleist, all praised Spalding's merits, quoted extracts from his writings, or appropriated some of his ideas;<sup>19</sup> his contribution to his time's intellectual life can be considered a milestone, and nobody who was committed to the ideals of the Enlightenment could ignore it.

Yet Spalding was a protagonist not only of the cultural, but also of the political scene. As a provost and member of the Upper Consistory, in fact, he played an important role in the administration and supervision of primary and university education, as well as the whole range of pastoral activity across all the Lutheran parishes of the Prussian territory. His own pastoral care and representative responsibilities were also his duty. However burdensome and stressful all this might have been – and at least at the beginning, it was certainly so<sup>20</sup> – it carried enormous symbolic value and influence. So it was not without effect when in 1788 Spalding resigned as provost in (implicit yet evident) protest against the Edict on Religion issued by Johann Christoph Woellner that same year.<sup>21</sup> Although he did not leave the Upper Consistory – in whose activities he participated actively until Autumn 1791 – Spalding's decision quintessentially embodied the dissent of the Berlin Enlightenment against the new king and his cultural and religious politics, and made him a living paradigm of his theoretical convictions.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Spalding and Philosophy

Spalding's interest in philosophy was a constant throughout his life and did not originate merely in a personal predilection. As the biographical sketch provided in the previous section should have at least hinted, it responded to a quite precise project of religious renewal. Spalding was in fact committed to restoring religion to its original mission, i.e., helping, guiding and orientating human beings on their earthly path, and this implied alliance with philosophy and separation from theology. The latter he regarded as a science for the few; the former he came to discover as a universal form of knowledge available to all. Spalding had gained this conviction by the mid-1740s – that is, already before being appointed a parish pastor – and he never abandoned this outlook. What followed was an intense and uninterrupted reworking of this first insight.

While delving as a student into the multifaceted early modern controversies about revelation and reason, Spalding in fact developed a clear predilection for universal and existential arguments over erudite ones: in his eyes, the truth of Christian faith did not lie in difficult, obscure and often ambiguous theories, but rather was a simple message speaking to any- and everybody. In origin, the Christian religion was not a system, nor did it presuppose a specialist language; it was a form of knowledge within everybody's reach, dealing with issues of general interest. “[T]he inner excellence of Christianity” applies to “truths, moral doctrines and motives of consolation”,<sup>23</sup> and hence does not need any scholarly support in order to be properly grasped.

Paradoxically enough, embracing the apologetic fight against the enemies of Christianity and working on a philosopher who was usually counted among these very enemies here came together and created a new kind of vision of religion and its relation to philosophy. In point of fact and against all expectations, it was none other than the “Oracle of the Deists”, Shaftesbury, who contributed the final and crucial element to Spalding's unfolding ide-

as,<sup>24</sup> which had ultimately lacked a clear anthropological basis. This was provided by the notion of “moral sense”, which Spalding considered essential to an overall reassessment of Shaftesbury’s thought, and accordingly made into the inner voice leading the human being to God. In fact, this moral sense was a feeling, perception or sensation, naturally given to everybody regardless of education, previous knowledge or particular profession, and in Spalding’s view it identified the distinctive feature of the Christian faith as speaking to any- and everybody. In the light of this, it makes perfect sense that Spalding made Shaftesbury’s ethics his chief argument in support of the truth of Christianity. But this is not all that Spalding learnt from Shaftesbury.

The latter’s commitment to Greek and Latin culture was also a consideration, and by no means a secondary one. Besides translating *The Moralists* and the *Inquiry*, Spalding knew all of Shaftesbury’s writings included in the three volumes of the *Characteristics*,<sup>25</sup> which consistently testify to a very specific way of conceiving of philosophy. This was a legacy of Ancient thought, according to which philosophy is considered a tool for dealing with universal issues – the place of the human being in the world, the rules that govern behaviour, the pathway to happiness – and accordingly prioritises practice over speculative enquiry. In current studies, the expressions most commonly used to identify this particular perspective are “philosophy as a way of life” or “art of living”, “mode of life”, “style of life”, and “care of the self and others”. Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault were responsible for inaugurating a new departure in research in the 1980s, calling attention to the originally existential mission of philosophy, which was increasingly lost sight of over the Middle Ages, but especially in the early modern era.<sup>26</sup>

Being an enthusiastic reader of the Ancients – and likewise a strong supporter of the lasting validity of their ideas – Shaftesbury typically embodied the relevant traits and was not coincidentally identified by Hadot as a shining exception to the general oblivion that he lamented.<sup>27</sup> So he opened his *Soliloquy* with a telling quote from the Latin poet Persius, aimed at clarifying the existential import of the subsequent reflections: “nec te quaesiveris extra” reads the seventh line of Persius’ first *Satura* (Satire), which Shaftesbury (himself) translates as “No need to inquire outside yourself”.<sup>28</sup> Against the background of this verse, Shaftesbury defines the soliloquy as a “sovereign remedy and gymnastic method” enabling the individual “to gain [...] a will and [...] a certain resolution by which he shall know where to find himself, be sure of his own meaning and design and, as to all his desires, opinions and inclinations, be warranted one and the same person today as yesterday and tomorrow as today”.<sup>29</sup> To succeed in this, no “learned a childhood” is required nor previous instruction “in our own and other higher ‘natures’, ‘essences’, ‘incorporeal substances’, ‘personalities’ and the like”; on the contrary, all this scholarly equipment is to be put aside in order “to come leisurely, in another view, to inquire concerning our real self and end, the judgment we are to make of interest, and the opinion we should have of advantage and good, which is what must necessarily de-

termine us in our conduct and prove the leading principle of our lives”.<sup>30</sup>

In his *Miscellaneous Reflections*, Shaftesbury projects these considerations into a fictitious scenario, which was to prove crucial to Spalding himself:

Let us suppose a man who, having this resolution merely, how to employ his understanding to the best purpose, considers *who or what he is, whence he arose or had his being, to what end he was designed, and to what course of action he is by his natural frame and constitution destined [...]: what we are and the lives we are born to live [Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur?].* ‘Where are we?’, ‘Under what roof?’, ‘Or on board what vessel?’, ‘Whither bound?’, ‘On what business?’, ‘Under whose pilotship, government or protection?’ are questions which every sensible man would naturally ask if he were on a sudden transported into a new scene of life.<sup>31</sup>

Once more, Persius is the inspiration, and particularly verse 67 of the third *Satura* (Satire).

Given the amount of time spent reading and translating Shaftesbury’s texts, but also – and maybe most importantly – intensively discussing them with his Berlin friends, it is little wonder that Spalding chose to open his first book with the same quote. “*Quid sumus? et quidnam victuri gignimur?* – Persius” reads the first line of the *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (Meditation on the vocation of the human being) in the first, as in all ten further authorised editions.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, Spalding’s treatise stages a monologue by a fictional I – or rather, by the fictional I created by Shaftesbury in his *Miscellaneous Reflections* – who commits him- or herself to discovering the meaning of existence and the following rules of behaviour. The underlying conviction is of course that expressed by – again – Shaftesbury in his *Soliloquy*, namely that introspection is the only way to achieve such an end.

I see that I can spend the brief time that I must live in the world according to very different basic rules, whose value and consequences therefore cannot be the same in any way. Since I undeniably find in myself an ability to choose and to prefer one thing over another in my decisions, thus in this case too I must not proceed blindly, but first try to distinguish, as best as my abilities allow me, which way is the most secure, most respectable and most advantageous. [...] It is well worth the effort to know why I exist and what I should be according to reason.<sup>33</sup>

The ensuing inner journey leads the protagonist over sensibility and intellectual activities to virtue and ethics, finally enabling him, or her, to acknowledge the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.<sup>34</sup> In all this, Spalding’s fictional I is completely alone in that he, or she, does not speak to anybody else nor read any book, be it religious or philosophical. The speaking hero gives up any external assistance because, on the one hand, “examples” stemming from daily life are “so infinitely different from one another” that “choosing a guide from among them” would produce much more “confusion and embarrassment” than looking for “the right way” autonomously; and on the other, he, or she, totally trusts the voice within, alerting him, or her, whenever anything is wrong, e.g., causing “the painful feeling of remorse after performing actions” that are not just.<sup>35</sup> Shaftesbury’s moral sense is

evidently the underlying anthropological premise as well as the key to the success of the whole process. So there is no need of others' opinion or erudite authorities, not even those of the clergy, whose ranks Spalding was about to enter. In the first edition, the Bible does not figure at all. Paradoxically, though, the Ancients do. Besides opening the soliloquy with a verse from Persius, Spalding places two further quotations from Latin authors in strategic positions, with Horace appearing on the cover, and Cicero on the final page.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly, Spalding's willingness to apply the ancient way of conceiving philosophy to religion in order to restore it to its original task, implies refraining from explicit theological references, since these could distract from the existential core of Christianity, misleading one into prioritising knowledge and education over the purity of the heart. Accordingly, no complete understanding of any dogma is required, no matter how crucial it may seem. So in the text itself there is no mention of original sin, nor of the justification *sola fide*, and the several objections raised in this regard by orthodox Lutherans such as Johann Melchior Goeze or Johann Martin Chladenius did not motivate Spalding to change this.<sup>37</sup> In 1749, he added an appendix clarifying his purely Christian intentions as a reply to Goeze's direct attack – and more precisely his accusation of deism – but at the same time declaring himself not to deem it necessary to adjust the monologue accordingly.<sup>38</sup>

The *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (Meditation on the vocation of the human being) has been appropriately described as the “matrix of a rich and consistently unfolding and expanding life's work”.<sup>39</sup> As a matter of fact, Spalding devoted all of his subsequent writings to vindicating the universal character of the Christian religion, while distinguishing this from the cultivated competencies that some Christians may possess, on account of their background or particular job. So in the aforementioned *Ueber die Nutzbarkeit des Predigtamtes und deren Beförderung* (On the Usefulness of the Ministry of Preaching and its Promotion), religion does not include “merely theoretical doctrines”, “scholastic over-subtleties”, and “church doctrines”;<sup>40</sup> these are “very empty and sterile speculations”, which often prove “simply vain” – and one might wish that they do not turn out “something more than vain”.<sup>41</sup> This applies to all those difficult teachings which do not exert any influence over human behaviour, since they address purely speculative issues, such as the doctrines of the two natures of Christ, the Eucharist, or the Trinity.<sup>42</sup> These belong to the field of “science”, but not that of religion, because “each religious truth derives its importance from its force in bringing the soul in the right direction and raising it to God”; yet Spalding does not intend to dismiss them entirely, since they “give the intellect nourishment and pleasure”, and satisfy the “desire to know”.<sup>43</sup> Put simply, they do not help human beings to become better.

However, other theological theories are very likely to affect human conduct detrimentally, since they concern practical and ethical issues. This is the case with original sin and the justification *sola fide*, which call for strong theological competence in order to be properly understood or at least interpreted, and otherwise risk undermin-

ing the individuals' ability to work on themselves.<sup>44</sup> For this reason, preachers should refrain from dealing with them in sermons, and Spalding did so himself, or more precisely: he omitted any reference to original sin, while explicitly claiming – against the letter of Lutheranism – that good works were necessary for salvation.<sup>45</sup> For, as Spalding had already stated in the appendix to his Gastrell translation of 1755, a “way of philosophising” which “turns its supporters into worse human beings” cannot “possibly be worth a thing”,<sup>46</sup> and this applies also – or rather, pre-eminently – to the Christian religion.

The key to succeeding in giving Christianity back to this task is *Aufklärung*.

### 3. Spalding and the Enlightenment

Spalding's contribution to the Enlightenment is beyond dispute. Not coincidentally, the term *Aufklärung*, or any of its equivalents in languages other than German, occurs in the title of almost every piece of scholarship on Spalding, both theological and philosophical. Sometimes, it is used as a scholarly category encompassing the historical epoch in which Spalding lived as well as its distinctive intellectual features; at others, it is used to designate a dynamic and never-ending theoretical process, mostly associated with a cultural project that began in the past and is still ongoing.<sup>47</sup> So we may come across rather neutral formulations such as *Johann Joachim Spalding: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Aufklärung*,<sup>48</sup> *Johann Joachim Spalding: Meistertheologe im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*,<sup>49</sup> and “The Determination of Man: Johann Joachim Spalding and the Protestant Enlightenment”;<sup>50</sup> and elsewhere we find more qualifying expressions aimed at describing the very nature of Spalding's understanding of the enlightenment, e.g., *Aufklärung der Religion: Die Religionstheologie Johann Joachim Spaldings*,<sup>51</sup> and *Aufklärung als Selbstdeutung: Eine genetisch-systematische Rekonstruktion von Johann Joachim Spaldings “Bestimmung des Menschen” (1748)*.<sup>52</sup> Further elements are provided by studies focusing on Spalding's “representations about the aims of ‘true enlightenment’”,<sup>53</sup> as well as his participation in the well-known debate around the very notion of *Aufklärung*, and his linguistic usage of the whole semantic spectrum surrounding the noun, including verb (*aufklären*, “to enlighten”), adjective (*aufgeklärt*, “enlightened”), and other cognate terms (e.g., *Aufklärer*, literally “enlightener”).<sup>54</sup>

In what follows, both continuity and discontinuity with the past will be pursued with a view to, first, confirming the close connection between enlightenment and religion alongside the crucial role of the subject in enabling and enhancing this very connection (continuity); second, unearthing the cultural project underlying this insight, which stems from a practical conception of philosophy in the footsteps of the Ancients, audaciously projected onto Christianity (discontinuity). To achieve this end, some chosen passages from Spalding's texts – spanning from the first published work to the mature writings – will be quoted, and in at least one case made available in English for the first time. As a result, enlightenment as a process relating to self-perfecting and, hence, as a way

of life will emerge as a hitherto neglected, or maybe forgotten if not unacknowledged, aspect of Spalding's thought.

From the outset of his literary activity, Spalding makes no mystery of his conceiving enlightenment and religion as being closely intertwined, with the latter identifying the most significant field of application for the former. So in 1748 the doctrine of the immortality of the soul "promises a complete enlightenment [*Aufklärung*] of all [...] obscure points in the plan according to which the world is ruled",<sup>55</sup> and a year later "the light of the Gospel" is said to have "enlightened [*aufgeklärt*] the spirits".<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, in 1772 "an enlightened Christian [*ein aufgeklärter Christ*]" is someone who comprehends and fulfils the main purpose of the Christian religion,<sup>57</sup> which is nothing other than "the main and ultimate end of all religion, namely, to make the human being better and happy".<sup>58</sup> Against the background of these selected, highly representative extracts, it is legitimate to conclude that in Spalding's eyes *Aufklärung* was, or rather, is a process and method of moving away from the darkness of superstition, ignorance and prejudice towards the light of truth, justice and happiness. Not for nothing are the adjectives accompanying the noun often comparatives (e.g., "more complete [*vollständiger*]"),<sup>59</sup> or do they designate by their very essence the idea of continuous growth (e.g., "constantly increasing [*fortwachsend*]"),<sup>60</sup> in both cases indicating an open course rather than the achievement of a final goal. That this steady development does not refer merely to theoretical problems and related concepts, but also, and most importantly, to existential issues such as those of ethics and religion, is indicated by further linguistic associations, pointing to the consoling and practical relevance of the enlightenment, which is described as "comforting [*trostvoll*]";<sup>61</sup> "useful [*nützlich*]";<sup>62</sup> and "highly beneficial [*heilsamst*]";<sup>63</sup> So enlightenment and religion converge in helping human beings find their direction in life and follow the necessary rules of behaviour in order not to lose their way.

An extremely interesting, detailed and programmatic definition of *Aufklärung* is to be found in a brief text written by Spalding in 1784 for a very exclusive circle of readers. These were the members of the so-called *Mittwochsgesellschaft* (Wednesday Society), a secret cultural group that met in Berlin twice a month (in autumn and winter) or once a month (in spring and summer), always on Wednesdays. It was founded in 1783 with a view to reflecting on and fostering enlightenment, but closed in 1798 as a consequence of the edict against clandestine societies issued by Frederick William III of Prussia. Over these fifteen years of activity, it counted no more than twenty-four members in all. The gatherings consisted of a presentation by one or, more frequently, two members, and a subsequent discussion as well as dinner; in the weeks following the official meeting, the manuscripts were circulated and members could provide further feedback in the form of written notes. All of this had to remain secret.<sup>64</sup>

Spalding was a member of this group and, as far as the extant documents permit us to judge, he was an active participant from 1783 to 1786, attending meetings and also contributing notes to the following discussions.<sup>65</sup> One

of these notes is of the utmost interest in the present context, as it addresses the chief issue of the time, namely "what does to enlighten mean?" or "What is enlightenment?"<sup>66</sup> Since it is generally unknown – especially in the English-speaking world – it might be useful to quote this text extensively, although not in full.

Both of the present essays as well as the remarks thereon have provided very useful motives for contributing to specifying the otherwise oscillating usage of the term *enlightenment* [*Aufklärung*]. My concept is as follows: according to the metaphor, enlightenment [*Aufklärung*] refers to previous darkness and is per se a disclosure of the light or of the hitherto lacking true knowledge. The latter happens *either* when all knowledge is lacking *or* when wrong representations are already in place. That lack simply requires instruction, but I do not think that according to the linguistic usage all instruction, e.g., of a child, should be called enlightenment [*Aufklärung*]; on the contrary, rather, this consists in dissipating the darkness caused by erroneous representations that are already in place. The child, the wild savage – in general the complete innocent – is *instructed*; the one who is captured by unfounded prejudices is *enlightened* [*aufgeklärt*].

This last word, if used without any further apposition and more precise determination, seems to me not to apply to any form of disclosed knowledge or removal of any erroneous prejudice; rather, it seems to apply only to right representations regarding the common matters of interest for the human being and the citizen, without limiting oneself to the insights belonging to a particular social condition or job. [...] So according to this concept, to work on *enlightenment* [*Aufklärung*] as such and with no further addition, would mean to teach those individuals who are caught in prejudices about reasonable truths in religion and the human rights, as well as the constitutional rights of the citizens taking into account the social constitution. [...]

Spalding  
May 24, 1784.<sup>67</sup>

Again, Spalding is committed to vindicating the universal relevance of the enlightenment, which is not primarily aimed at solving esoteric issues or merely speculative problems, but is intended for the human being as such. Enlightenment is a lifelong process to be enacted in daily life, since the issues addressed are intrinsically practical, and furthermore, they can never be exhausted – at least not in this life. The introspective journey undertaken by the protagonist of Spalding's first work provides a paradigm for this training, which appeals to any- and everybody in any and every stage of their adult life. In the eleventh and last edition of *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (The Vocation of the Human Being), Spalding not coincidentally insists on the lasting relevance of his youthful treatise, which was meant to serve as a model for "application on oneself" following the example of the fictional I in order to augment the "beneficial influence" of the considerations being made "on honesty and religiosity".<sup>68</sup>

So continuously working on oneself with a view to perfecting one's representations regarding the most urgent needs of human existence is enlightenment, or perhaps we should add: religious enlightenment. For in Spalding's eyes, there is no enlightenment without religion, or more precisely, there is no true enlightenment without true religion, and it is not possible to call for pure *Aufklärung* outside of Christianity, whose main task lies in making,

“through real enlightenment”, “the basic truth of Christian worship certain to my intellect and important to my heart”.<sup>69</sup> In this, Spalding was and remained a typical representative of the German Enlightenment.

## Abbreviations

AA: Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (and successors) (Berlin and Leipzig: 1900ff.).

SpKA: Johann Joachim Spalding, *Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Albrecht Beutel, I, vols. 1-6/2: *Schriften*, II, vols. 1-6: *Predigten* (Tübingen: 2001-2013).

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *De calumnia Juliani Apostatae in confirmationem Christianae religionis versa Exercitatio Theologica [...]*, SpKA, I, 6/1, 1-37.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Dissertatio philosophica, quaestionum metaphysicarum bigas sistens [...]*, SpKA, I, 6/1, 39-74. The most detailed survey of Spalding's life and work is provided by Albrecht Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding: Meistertheologe im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: 2014). Insightful analysis of Spalding's education and early Wolffianism is provided by: Clemens Schwaiger, "Zur Frage nach den Quellen von Spaldings *Bestimmung des Menschen*: Ein ungelöstes Rätsel der Aufklärungsforschung," *Aufklärung. Interdisziplinäre Halbjahresschrift zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts und seiner Wirkungsgeschichte* 11/1 (1999): 7-19; Marco Sgarbi, "Il destino dell'ontologia: Johann Joachim Spalding interpretate di Christian Wolff," in *Zwischen Grundsätzen und Gegenständen: Untersuchungen zur Ontologie Christian Wolffs*, eds. Faustino Fabbianelli, Jean-François Goubet and Oliver-Pierre Rudolph (Hildesheim: 2011), 172-73; Georg Raatz, *Aufklärung als Selbsteutung: Eine genetisch-systematische Rekonstruktion von Johann Joachim Spaldings "Bestimmung des Menschen" (1748)* (Tübingen: 2014), 63-85.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Wolffischen Philosophie Bittschrift an die Akademie zu R\*\**, SpKA, I, 6/1, 78, 93.

<sup>5</sup> On this wider context as well as Spalding's position within it, I refer to Laura Anna Macor, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen (1748-1800): Eine Begriffsgeschichte* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: 2013), 74-79; Michael Printy, "The Determination of Man: Johann Joachim Spalding and the Protestant Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74/2 (2013): 189-212.

<sup>6</sup> *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 124.

<sup>7</sup> On the German reception of Shaftesbury's writings and thought, including a complete list of both published and only projected translations, see the standard monograph by Mark-Georg Dehrmann, *Das "Orakel der Deisten": Shaftesbury und die deutsche Aufklärung* (Göttingen: 2008).

<sup>8</sup> [Johann Joachim Spalding.] *An den Leser*, in Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Die Sitten-Lehrer oder Erziehung philosophischer Gespräche, welche die Natur und die Tugend betreffen, aus dem Englischen des Grafen von Shaftesbury [sic] übersetzt nebst einem Schreiben an den Übersetzer* (Berlin: 1745; reprint ed. Heiner F. Klem-

me, Bristol: 2001), 16. In both his translations, Spalding included extensive prefaces, staging a fictional dialogue between the translator and an anonymous friend of his, with the latter being given as the author of the first preface. For this reason, some scholars suppose that the first preface stems from a close interlocutor of Spalding, and not from himself, cf. Michael Albrecht, "Zum Wortgebrauch von 'Aufklärung' bei Johann Joachim Spalding. Mit einer Bibliographie der Schriften und zwei ungedruckten Voten Spaldings," in *Vernunftkritik und Aufklärung: Studien zur Philosophie Kants und seines Jahrhunderts*, ed. Michael Oberhausen (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: 2001), 14; Ulrich Dreesman, *Aufklärung der Religion: Die Religionstheologie Johann Joachim Spaldings* (Stuttgart: 2008), 33. However, others are of the opposite view, cf. e.g., Dehrmann, *Das "Orakel der Deisten"*, 132; Raatz, *Aufklärung als Selbsteutung*, 181-82. Spalding's editor Albrecht Beutel first opted for not including this preface in the relevant volume of Spalding's critical edition (cf. SpKA, I, 6/1, XVIII), but later considered the possibility of Spalding's intentionally disguising his identity (Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 46-47). I am firmly convinced that Spalding composed both prefaces and followed literary conventions of the time in presenting them as an epistolary dialogue.

<sup>9</sup> *Schreiben des Uebersetzers an Herrn –*, SpKA, I, 6/1, 177 (this second preface is explicitly attributed to the translator himself, who addresses all the issues raised by his anonymous friend – signing as S.A.T.I.P. – in 1745).

<sup>10</sup> For further details about this circle one can profitably read: U. Dreesman, "'Enthusiasmerey der Freundschaft': Kirche und Freundschaftskultur am Beispiel Johann Joachim Spaldings," in *Christentum im Übergang: Neue Studien zu Kirche und Religion in der Aufklärungszeit*, eds. Albrecht Beutel, Volker Leppin and Udo Sträter (Leipzig: 2006), 151-59; Dehrmann, *Das "Orakel der Deisten"*, 223-29; Raatz, *Aufklärung als Selbsteutung*, 131-39.

<sup>11</sup> *Spalding an Gleim*, August 9, 1764, in Johann Joachim Spalding, *Briefe*, eds. Albrecht Beutel and Olga Söntgerath (Tübingen: 2018), 163.

<sup>12</sup> Sack was, and remained, one of Spalding's closest interlocutors; on Sack's life, works and thought see Mark Pockrandt, *Biblische Aufklärung: Biographie und Theologie der Berliner Hopprediger August Friedrich Wilhelm Sack und Friedrich Samuel Gottfried Sack* (Berlin and New York: 2003); Albrecht Beutel, *Aufklärung in Deutschland* (Göttingen: 2006), 252-54.

<sup>13</sup> The German noun *Bestimmung* is a properly untranslatable term, since its polysemy has no satisfactory equivalent in English (nor in French, Spanish or Italian). The most commonly used options include "vocation", "calling", "determination", "destination" and "destiny", but each of these necessarily leads to the loss of at least some of the shades of meaning coexisting in the original. That said, in what follows the word "vocation" is consistently used, since this is the prevailing trend in the majority of specialised studies. On the linguistic and semantic aspects relating to the noun *Bestimmung* and its possible translations, see: Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, "La notion de 'Bestimmung'," in Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Conférences sur la destination du savant (1794)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron (Paris: 1994), 94-97; Pascal David, "Schicksal/Verhängnis/Bestimmung," in *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Cassin, Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood (Princeton and Oxford: 2014), 931-32; Laura Anna Macor, "Destinazione, missione, vocazione: 'un'espressione pura per la pura idea filosofica di *Bestimmung des Menschen*,'" *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 70/1 (2015): 163-201.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 133.

<sup>15</sup> For these and further editorial details, see Macor, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, 100-109.

<sup>16</sup> Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 86.

<sup>17</sup> On this category, its emergence and usage, I refer to Eric Carlsson, "Eighteenth-Century Neology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800*, eds. Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller and Anthony G. Roeber (Oxford: 2016), 642-48.

<sup>18</sup> On Spalding's intellectual activity in these years, see Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 49-53, 129-40.

<sup>19</sup> On Spalding's gigantic impact on his contemporaries, see: Fotis Janinidis, "'Bildung' als 'Bestimmung des Menschen'. Zum teleologischen Aspekt in Goethes Bildungsbegriff," *Pädagogische Rundschau* 53 (1999): 441-55; Reinhard Brandt, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen bei Kant* (Hamburg: 2007), 61-77, 108-25; Laura Anna Macor, *Der moralische Zirkel der menschlichen Bestimmung. Friedrich Schillers Weg von der Aufklärung zu Kant* (Würzburg: 2010), 25-71; Fichte's Vocation of Man. *New Interpretative and Critical Essays*, eds. Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (Albany, NY: 2013); Laura Anna Macor, "Kant und Spalding über menschliches Verdienst und Gnade Gottes. Philosophie und Theologie im Dialog," *Historia philosophica. An International*



*Journal* 13 (2015): 73-88; Risto Saarinen, *Recognition and Religion: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Oxford: 2016), 125-36 (Anerkennung in Religion: Fichte and Spalding); Albrecht Beutel, "Der junge Goethe als Zaungast der Neologie. Theologiegeschichtliche Bemerkungen zum Pastorbrief von 1773," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 116/3 (2019): 290-321; Laura Anna Macor, "Kleist, Johann Joachim Spalding and the *Bestimmung des Menschen*: Philosophy as a Way of Life?," in *Heinrich von Kleist: Literary and Philosophical Paradigms*, eds. Jeffrey L. High, Rebecca Stewart and Elaine Chen (Rochester, NY: 2022), 209-32.

<sup>20</sup> Spalding's memories are unequivocal in this respect, cf. *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 156-60.

<sup>21</sup> According to his autobiography, Spalding did not want his sermons to be subjected to an "Inquisition tribunal", obsessively intent on finding justification for quick condemnation, cf. *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 180-81.

<sup>22</sup> For a survey of the relevant debates, see Michael J. Sauter, *Visions of the Enlightenment: The Edict on Religion of 1788 and the Politics of the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century Prussia* (Leiden: 2009); Uta Wiggemann, *Woellner und das Religionsedikt: Kirchenpolitik und kirchliche Wirklichkeit im Preußen des späten 18. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: 2010).

<sup>23</sup> *Lebensbeschreibung*, SpKA, I, 6/2, 120.

<sup>24</sup> For the label "Oracle of the Deists", see Dehrmann, *Das "Orakel der Deisten"*, 89.

<sup>25</sup> Spalding was in possession of the 1733 edition of the *Characteristics*, which is identical to that of 1714, cf. Macor, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, 80.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, transl. Michael Chase (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: 1995); Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, transl. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass., and London: 2002); Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-82*, ed. Frédéric Gros, general eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, transl. Graham Burchell (New York et al.: 2005). Foucault acknowledged several times his debt to Hadot, who in turn commented on Foucault's theories explicitly; their views were very close, and pursued the same end, namely reconstructing a forgotten history of philosophy as well as vindicating an obscured way of doing philosophy, but they were not identical. On all this see: Arnold I. Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge, Engl.: 2005), 123-48; John Sellars, "Self or Cosmos: Foucault versus Hadot," in *The Late Foucault: Ethical and Political Questions*, eds. Marta Faustino and Gianfranco Ferraro (London: 2020), 37-52; Michael Ure, "Foucault's Reinvention of Philosophy as a Way of Life: Genealogy as a Spiritual Exercise," in *The Late Foucault: Ethical and Political Questions*, eds. Marta Faustino and Gianfranco Ferraro (London: 2020), 19-36.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 321.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge, Engl.: 2000), 70.

<sup>29</sup> *Ivi*, 84.

<sup>30</sup> *Ivi*, 137.

<sup>31</sup> *Ivi*, 406.

<sup>32</sup> SpKA, I/1, 1, 42-43.

<sup>33</sup> SpKA, I/1, 1 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1748).

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed overview of the structure and content of this work, see: Andreas Kubik, "Spalding's *Bestimmung des Menschen* als Grundtext einer aufgeklärten Frömmigkeit," *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 16/1 (2009): 1-20; Caroline Tippmann, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen bei Johann Joachim Spalding* (Leipzig: 2011); Laura Anna Macor, "The Place of the Human Being in the World: Johann Joachim Spalding, Religion, and Philosophy as a Way of Life," in *On the Human Vocation*, eds. Courtney D. Fugate and Anne Pollok (London: 2022), forthcoming.

<sup>35</sup> SpKA, I/1, 1 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1748).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. SpKA, I/1, LII, 25 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1748). On Spalding's proximity and debt to the Ancients, I refer also to: Brandt, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen bei Kant*, 72-73, 145-54; Ludwig Coenen, *Studien zur Anthropologie und Religions-Philosophie von Johann Joachim Spalding* (Berlin: 2018), 71-91.

<sup>37</sup> On Goeze's and Chladenius' criticism, as well as Spalding's reaction, see: Albrecht Beutel, "Spalding und Goeze und 'Die Bestimmung des Menschen': Frühe Kabalen um ein Erfolgsbuch der Aufklärungstheologie," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 101/4 (2004): 426-49; Macor, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, 111-39.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. SpKA, I/1, 214 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.: 1749).

<sup>39</sup> Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 86.

<sup>40</sup> SpKA, I/3, 134, 153, 174 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1772).

<sup>41</sup> SpKA, I/3, 147 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1773).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. SpKA, I/3, 147, 150 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1772).

<sup>43</sup> SpKA, I/3, 139, 163 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1772). On the distinction between religion and theology in Spalding's work, see: Dreesman, *Aufklärung der Religion*, 121-31; Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 229-30.

<sup>44</sup> SpKA, I/3, 179-84, 191-95 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1772).

<sup>45</sup> On this see Lavater's letter to Breitinger of July 6, 1763, describing Spalding's homiletic activity in Barth, cf. Ursula Cafilisch-Schnetzler, "'Wegzuleuchten die Nacht menschlicher Lehren, die Gottes Wahrheit umwölkt': Johann Caspar Lavaters literarische Suche nach dem Göttlichen im Menschen, dargestellt an den Wurzeln der Zürcher Aufklärung," in *Bodmer und Breitinger im Netzwerk der europäischen Aufklärung*, eds. Anett Lütteken and Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer (Göttingen: 2009), 505-507.

<sup>46</sup> SpKA, I, 6/1, 269.

<sup>47</sup> Usually, the term "enlightenment" is capitalised if it serves as a historiographical category, designating the eighteenth century and/or the relevant intellectual and cultural movement; otherwise, i.e., if its meaning shifts to the "process – or act – of enlightening", lower case is used. In this final section, this convention will be followed. The standard narrative on the emergence of this distinction is summarised very clearly by James Schmidt, "What Sort of Question Was Kant Answering When He Answered the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'," in *Rethinking the Enlightenment: Between History, Philosophy, and Politics*, eds. Geoff Boucher and Henry Martyn Lloyd (Lanham: 2008), 90: "both he [Kant] and his contemporaries used the noun *Aufklärung* to characterize a set of practices, attitudes, projects, and activities in which individuals were engaged, rather than the historical epoch in which they lived. It was not until Hegel's Berlin lectures on the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy that *Aufklärung* began to be used to designate what we have now come to call 'the Enlightenment'". However, a clear consciousness of the special role played by the early modern era, and particularly by the eighteenth century, is to be presupposed in Enlightenment thinkers themselves – one only has to think of Kant's well-known definition of his epoch as "an age of enlightenment [*Aufklärung*]", in "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?," AA, VIII, 40; "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?," in *What Is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley-Los Angeles and London: 1996), 62.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Joseph Schollmeier, *Johann Joachim Spalding: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Aufklärung* (Gütersloh: 1967).

<sup>49</sup> Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*.

<sup>50</sup> Printy, "The Determination of Man".

<sup>51</sup> Dreesman, *Aufklärung der Religion*.

<sup>52</sup> Raatz, *Aufklärung als Selbstdeutung*.

<sup>53</sup> Coenen, *Studien zur Anthropologie und zur Religions-Philosophie von Johann Joachim Spalding*, 158.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Albrecht, "Zum Wortgebrauch von 'Aufklärung' bei Johann Joachim Spalding"; Giuseppe Landolfi Petrone, "Woellners und Spaldings Antwort auf die Frage: 'Was ist Aufklärung?'," in *Religion und Aufklärung. Akten des Ersten Internationalen Kongresses zur Erforschung der Aufklärungstheologie (Münster, 30. März bis 2. April 2014)*, eds. Albrecht Beutel and Martha Nooke (Tübingen: 2016), 183-92.

<sup>55</sup> *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen*, SpKA, I/1, 20 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1748).

<sup>56</sup> *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen. Anhang bey der dritten Auflage*, SpKA, I/1, 202 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.: 1749).

<sup>57</sup> *Ueber die Nutzbarkeit des Predigamtes und deren Beförderung*, SpKA, I/3, 93 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1772).

<sup>58</sup> *Betrachtung über die Bestimmung des Menschen. Anhang bey der dritten Auflage*, SpKA, I/1, 204 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.: 1749).

<sup>59</sup> *Gedanken über den Werth der Gefühle in dem Christenthum*, SpKA, I/2, 24 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1761).

<sup>60</sup> *Neue Predigten. Zweyter Band*, SpKA, II/3, 48 (1784).

<sup>61</sup> *Neue Predigten. Erster Band*, SpKA, II/2, 186 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1768, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1770, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.: 1777).

<sup>62</sup> *Neue Predigten. Zweyter Band*, SpKA, II/3, 42 (1784).

<sup>63</sup> *Vertraute Briefe, die Religion betreffend*, SpKA, I/4, 86 (1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 1784).

<sup>64</sup> On all this, I refer to: Günter Birtsch, "Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft (1783-1798)," in *Über den Prozeß der Aufklärung in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert: Personen, Institutionen und Medien*, eds. Hans Erich Bödeker and Ulrich Herrmann (Göttingen: 1987), 94-112; Ernst Haberkern, *Limitierte Aufklärung: Die protestantische Spätaufklärung in Preußen am Beispiel der Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft* (Marburg:

2005); Walther Gose, “Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft,” in *Handbuch der Berliner Vereine und Gesellschaften 1786-1815*, ed. Uta Motschmann (Berlin and Boston: 2015), 171-84; Ritchie Robertson, *The Enlightenment: The Pursuit of Happiness 1680-1790* (London: 2020), 369.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Albrecht, “Zum Wortgebrauch von ‘Aufklärung’ bei Johann Joachim Spalding, 35-36; Beutel, *Johann Joachim Spalding*, 213-17.

<sup>66</sup> Albrecht, “Zum Wortgebrauch von ‘Aufklärung’ bei Johann Joachim Spalding, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Albrecht, “Zum Wortgebrauch von ‘Aufklärung’ bei Johann Joachim Spalding,” 38-39. Spalding was reacting to the presentations by Johann Friedrich Zöllner and Christian Gottlieb Selle, and in the proceedings of this discussion, his note follows that by Moses Mendelssohn, which would later be published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* as the well-known essay quoted by Kant himself at the end of his own text. On this particular round of discussion, see: Henri Hümpel, “Was heisst aufklären? – Was ist Aufklärung? Rekonstruktion eines Diskussionsprozesses, der innerhalb der Gesellschaft von Freunden der Aufklärung (Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft) in den Jahren 1783-1789 geführt wurde,” *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 42 (1994): 185-226; Schmidt, “What Sort of Question Was Kant Answering When He Answered the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’?”

<sup>68</sup> SpKA, I/1, 32 (11<sup>th</sup> ed.: 1794).

<sup>69</sup> *Vertraute Briefe, die Religion betreffend*, SpKA, I/4, 195 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: 1785).