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THE TEXTS OF SELECTED CANTATAS
OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
AS AN EXPRESSION OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM

By

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A Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

THE TEXTS OF SELECTED CANTATAS
OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
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INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem.

It is common knowledge that Johann Sebastian Bach was a religious man. It is natural to assume that his religion had some effect on his art. The purpose of this study is to consider Bach's religion as expressed in his writing. The most logical subject for study would be, on a prima facie basis, Bach's music. However, the field of music criticism is too technical for the theologian who has not had technical musical training to understand, as well as being rather subjective. Therefore, it is logical to turn to the words which Bach fitted to his music. The vast majority of the vocal works of Bach are found in the cantatas which he wrote for weekly use in church. It is to the texts of these works that attention shall be directed. This should be of particular interest since it will reflect that which Bach was trying to express to his congregations each Sunday. The ideas in the texts will be related to the religious life of the times in order to show the influence of the times on Bach as well as his contribution to the thinking of his age.

B. Delimitation of the Problem.

Perhaps the most common and usual approach to works of art such as cantata texts is an aesthetic approach. This work will limit itself to an entirely religious approach. The texts will be treated primarily as religious literature, and no attempt will be made to consider any other feature of the texts, however meritorious such a consideration may seem. The religion of the times will be considered only in terms of the main streams of thought and life. Hence, this study will not investigate any religious views peculiar to Bach, but will attempt to show his relation to the commonly held points of view. As implied by the title, not all the cantata texts will be studied. The ones selected and the reason for their selection are stated at the beginning of Chapter II.¹

C. Significance of the Problem.

The primary contribution of this study will be to show the approach to religion and religious problems which was made by a man who was both famous in art and sincere in religion. Whether or not religion needs art to aid the work of the theologians is a question which this study is intended to face. It is also intended that a by-product of this work will be enlightenment on the usefulness of music in the fulfilment of the work of the church.

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1. Post, p. 20.

D. Method of Procedure.

The methods of procedure will be of two types. In the first chapter there will be an historical analysis of the theological atmosphere of Bach's time and of his own religious life. The remainder of the study will be an analysis and evaluation of the texts of certain cantatas.

E. Sources Used.

The sources will be both secondary and primary. The implication of the method of procedure is that the first chapter will use secondary source materials, while the remainder of the work will be drawn from the primary sources, the texts of the cantatas themselves.

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1. It should be noted that accurate biographies of Bach are rare. Almost all are based on that of Philipp Spitta. Terry's is based on Spitta, but is more critical and emphasizes Bach as a cantata writer. Cf. Charles Terry: Bach, preface.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS CLIMATE OF BACH'S TIME AND BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS RELATED TO HIS RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

A. Introduction.

In a consideration of the texts of Bach's cantatas as they express religious truths, it is imperative that one know something of the man who produced the cantatas and also something of the times which produced the man. It would be most desirable to make an extensive survey of both Bach and his age. The scope of the present work, however, places such a study in the realm of the impossible. Therefore, this chapter presents but a brief survey of the religious factors which worked in the mind of Bach. The many other factors which contributed to and formed the religious life of Bach's times cannot be considered. It will be seen from this that the attempt of this chapter is not to create an original work on Bach's life and times, but rather to present in survey form those things which are prerequisite to an understanding of the remaining chapters. In the light of this, all materials in this chapter will be secondary materials.

B. The Religious Climate of Bach's Times.

Preliminary to the consideration of any individual's religious beliefs, one must become acquainted with the common religious views of his times; for his thinking will be in terms of one or more

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of these views. Bach's religious milieu was Lutheran beyond any question. In his time Lutheranism was dominated by two schools of thought which were called orthodoxy and Pietism.

1. Orthodoxy as Creedal Christianity.

a. The Need for Crystallization of Evangelical Doctrine.

After the Reformation, Lutherans felt a need for formal statement of their beliefs in order to conserve the positive results of the Reformation.² Such statement was quite necessary, for Protestantism is more than a negative reaction against some of the abuses of the Roman church. "It attacks human authority from respect for divine authority; it sets the Word of God over all the wisdom of men."³ Indeed, a creedal statement became imperative if the principles of the Lutheran Reformation were to survive, for attacks were made upon them from the very beginning. The attacks on the principles of the Lutheran Reformation were from four quarters.

(1) Roman Catholic.

It might be said that the Catholics were opposed to the Reformation before it ever was started. However, the first of

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1. Even in a man who is contrary to the spirit of his age this is true, for his views would be in terms of reaction to those commonly held.
2. Cf., Lars P. Qualben: A History of the Christian Church, p. 356.
3. Philip Schaff: The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. I, p. 205.
Cf., Issac Dorner: History of Protestant Theology, Vol. I, p. 122.

many polemics against Luther and his work was the reply by John Tetzel, or an associate of his, shortly after Luther published his ninety-five theses in Wittenberg in 1517.¹ This opposition continued as personal opposition to Martin Luther through the Diet of Worms in 1521.² By 1526 Luther had so many followers that the Emperor Charles V proposed military action against them.³ Charles was delayed in this action by other obligations. In 1530 he convened the Diet of Augsburg to which the Lutheran electors were to bring their defense. Inasmuch as the Lutherans wished to present a united front, they had Philip Melanchthon, Luther's associate and theologian, draw up a confession of their faith which they might present to their Emperor.⁴ This became known as the Augsburg Confession and was the first comprehensive Lutheran doctrinal statement. The Roman assault has since assumed many faces, but it has not to this day ceased, nor have Protestant attempts to meet these attacks ceased.

(2) Anabaptist.

It has already been shown that the Reformation was positive as well as negative.⁵ There were some Anabaptist groups which desired to go much further in tearing down concepts of the visible

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1. Cf. Henry C. Sheldon: History of the Christian Church, pp. 60-64.
2. Cf. Qualben, op. cit., p. 234.
3. Cf. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 96.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 98; Qualben, op. cit., pp. 248-249; George P. Fisher: History of the Christian Church, pp. 305-306.
5. Ante, p. 3.

church and other things which they considered hold overs from Romanism. These groups were ethical in emphasis but too often they were fanatical.¹ While Luther was at the Wartburg, some Anabaptists from Zwickau went to Wittenberg and there, allied with Luther's colleague Carlstadt, took control of the city and established a regime of communal living carrying their reforms far beyond what Luther felt the gospel called for. Luther came back and by his powerful oratory won the city to his more moderate evangelical point of view.² The Anabaptist leaders went elsewhere and finally encouraged a peasant revolt which was unsuccessful.³ They continued to be a problem to the orthodox even after this.⁴

(3) Reformed.

This attack was from the Zwinglian and later the Calvinistic quarters. It would certainly not be considered an attack on evangelical Christianity today, but Luther considered it serious enough to warrant his holding back from full fellowship with Zwingli.⁵ The one and only basic difference was in the view of the Lord's Supper. Luther held that the body and blood of Christ became corporeally real when the believer partook of the bread and wine, while Zwingli held that they were real only in a memorial sense.⁶ The Augsburg

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1. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., p. 122.
2. Cf. Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 87-89.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
4. Only a minority of the Anabaptists were revolutionary or heretical.
5. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., p. 212.
6. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., pp. 307-336; Fisher, op. cit., pp. 309-310; Qualben, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

Confession definitely condemns the Zwinglian view.¹

(4) Lutheran Heresies.

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which protected most Lutherans from persecution in the name of the empire allowed the Lutherans to devote themselves more fully to the formulation of doctrine in fine detail.² In the meeting of attacks from the three sources previously mentioned, it was inevitable that some should speculate their way into heresy. "The controversies...centered in the soteriological doctrines of the Reformation, concerning sin and grace, justification by faith, and the use of good works, but they extended also to the eucharist and the person and work of Christ."³ These controversies were primarily amplifications of minor differences between Luther and Melancthon.⁴

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1. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., p. 237.
2. Cf. Qualben, op. cit., p. 282.
3. The controversies are grouped as follows:
 - (1) The Antinomian Controversy concerning the place of the law in the work of salvation.
 - (2) The Majoristic Controversy concerning the place of good works in relation to salvation.
 - (3) The Synergistic Controversy concerning whether or not the human will works with the divine will in the acceptance of salvation.
 - (4) The Osiandrian Controversy concerning whether or not salvation and sanctification are separate acts.
 - (5) The Adiaphoristic Controversy over the importance of matters not forbidden by scripture, particularly in terms of Roman elements of worship.
 - (6) The Eucharistic Controversy over the Lutheran and Zwinglian views of the Lord's Supper.
 - (7) The Christological or Ubiquity Controversy over the divinity of the body and blood of Christ.
- Cf. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 268-312; Dorner, op. cit., pp. 344-379; Qualben, op. cit., pp. 282-283.
4. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 259-268; Qualben, op. cit., p. 283.

b. The Development of Creeds.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church recognizes the Book of Concord as its authoritative creedal library. This book is actually a collection of nine creedal works. Of these, six have been produced since the Reformation began. These are: The Augsburg Confession (1530), The Apology of the Confession (1530), The Articles of Smalcald (1537), Luther's Shorter and Longer Catechisms (1529) and The Form of Concord (1577).¹ All six books deal to some extent with all the problems mentioned under a above. That the first five books do not deal primarily with the Lutheran heresies is evident from the fact that the heresies arose after they had been written and accepted. The Augsburg Confession is the only one of the six which is generally accepted throughout the Lutheran Church.² Therefore, the questions of Romanism, Anabaptism and Zwinglianism are no longer questions for the Lutherans of Bach's age and even earlier. On the other hand, Philip Schaff writes, "The Form of Concord was never generally received, but decidedly rejected in several countries, and is disowned by the Melancthonian and unionistic schools in the Lutheran Church."³ Therefore, the issues in (4) above seem to have been live issues even up to the time when Schaff wrote the words quoted above.⁴ The Formula of Concord was, as its name implies, an attempt to bring unity and

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1. Cf. Qualben, op. cit., p. 221.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 222.
3. Ibid.
4. 1884.

peace to the Lutheran Church. It was backed by the elector of Saxony and drawn up by six divines of the Church in 1577.¹

c. The Overemphasis on Creedal Orthodoxy.

"The Period of the Reformation was succeeded in the Lutheran Church...by an epoch dedicated to the scholastic fortification of the system of doctrine contained in its symbols."²

"During the palmy period of Lutheran scholasticism the Formula of Concord stood in high authority among Lutherans³ and was even regarded as inspired."⁴ Unfortunately that which was to reflect what the scriptures taught came to be regarded with as much value as the scriptures. Luther was regarded as a "Third Elijah", and his sayings were equated with the "Gospel of Christ."⁵ Theology became exclusively dogmatics. Religion became solely the assimilation of traditional beliefs.⁶ Acceptance of correct doctrine replaced the living faith in Christ which the Reformation emphasized.⁷ Thus it developed that those who had tried to carry on the Reformation had in very fact undone some of the work of the Reformation and gone back to a Scholasticism as wooden as the Roman systems.⁸

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1. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., pp. 308-309.
2. Dorner, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 98.
3. That is, those Lutherans who accept it.
4. Schaff, op. cit., p. 336.
5. Ibid., p. 268.
6. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
7. Cf. Arthur C. McGiffert: Protestant Thought Before Kant, p. 141; Dorner, op. cit., pp. 118-130.
8. Cf. McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 144-146; Dorner, op. cit., pp. 118-130.

2. The Reaction to Creedal Orthodoxy in the Growth of Pietism.

"But orthodoxy did not merely produce quarrelsome theologians and a parched Protestantism. It also produced strong religious personalities, men who knew whom they believed and what they believed."¹ That there was a vigorous spiritual life in a few is evident primarily from the sacred song of the period.² There were a few who resisted the tide of scholastic dogmatism and the low moral standards brought on by the Thirty Years War (1618-1648).³

This resistance finally resulted in the growth of a reform movement which became known as Pietism.⁴ Pietism, since it emphasized regeneration of life, actually affected every sphere of life.⁵ However, for simplicity three major areas of reform can be seen in their work.

a. Moral Regeneration.

All of Christian life and activity must be with a view toward achieving moral perfection.⁶

b. Living Faith.

The Church must consist of believers with a living and operative not an intellectual faith.⁷ In this connection every

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1. Qualben, op. cit., p. 357.
2. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., p. 99.
3. Cf. M'Giffert, op. cit., p. 155.
4. Pietism was a movement in the church and definitely not an attempt to found a new church. For the history of Pietism Cf. Eldon Sayre: A Survey of the Pietistic Movement with a Critical Analysis of Its Contribution to Modern Christianity.
5. Cf. Qualben, op. cit., p. 364.
6. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., p. 210; M'Giffert, op. cit., pp. 159-160.
7. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., p. 209.

believer must have the Holy Spirit manifested within him in definite¹ ways.

c. Emphasis on the Scriptures.

Bible study by each believer was emphasized by the Pietists. One must know the Bible and be ruled by it in daily life. Preaching² must be from the Bible and be practical.

3. The Controversy Raised by Pietism.

It will readily be seen from a contrast of Pietism and orthodoxy as presented above that considerable friction was bound to arise between the adherents of the two groups. Strangely enough however, the orthodox welcomed the reforms at first, but they welcomed them only in the realm of ideas. When the Pietists began to demand moral changes in the orthodox, "they rose up, in the heat of a rigid and passionate conservatism, against the 'innovations' and the malady which had long been secretly affecting the Church in its members broke out in full virulence."³ As will be shown, this controversy was still raging heatedly at Bach's time, and he definitely⁴ confronted it in his church work. We must then understand Bach's religious expression in the light of this controversy between the practical religion of the Pietists and the academic religion of the orthodox.

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1. Ibid., p. 215. This view is in contrast to the orthodox view that the Holy Spirit had already spoken the complete truth through the Bible and the creeds. Cf. Ibid., p. 213.
2. Cf. Qualben, op. cit., pp. 364-365; M'Giffert, op. cit., p. 158.
3. Dorner, op. cit., pp. 210-211.
4. Post, p. 13.

C. Biographical Factors Which Influenced Bach's Religious Expression.

This section will present some of the things in Bach's family, life and work which help to shed light on his Christian faith and the expression of his faith.

1. Background.

The Bach family was found in Thuringia from before the¹ Reformation. It is quite clear that the Bachs² were devout and faithful Lutherans from Reformation times on. The father of Veit Bach, whom Johann Sebastian considered the forefather of the family, spent some time in Hungary, where he was persecuted by the counter-reformation and forced to return to Germany.³ From 1623 on Thuringia was ravaged by the Thirty Years War. During this time⁴ many of the Bachs were dispersed from their family home. There can be little doubt that the family remained strong Lutherans through this experience, although the moral quality of the times may well have made their faith something less than the regenerative⁵ force that it should have been.

2. Early Life and Education.

Johann Sebastian Bach was probably born on March 21, 1685.⁶

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1. Cf. Philipp Spitta: Johann Sebastian Bach, His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany 1685-1750, Vol. I. p. 1.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 13-18.
5. One of his ancestors, Heinrich Bach was remarkable for his piety in a day when piety was very rare. Cf. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
6. This is a deduction from baptismal records. Cf. Ibid., p. 181.

Both his father and his mother died while he was quite young.¹ In² about 1694, he went to live with his brother, Johann Christoph. Bach's first school was the Lyceum at Ohrdurf, where his brother lived.³ The school was rigidly orthodox, and all the masters had⁴ to sign the Book of Concord. Bach absorbed the anti-Pietistic⁵ theological bias of this school. Bach moved to the Ritteracademie in Lüneburg in 1700. This was due to the increasing size of his brother's family and also to the fact that a good scholarship for singing was open to him.⁶ At Lüneburg he studied Hutter's compendium,⁷ which was an orthodox theology. At eighteen he left Lüneburg to⁸ return to Thuringia, and with this his general education ends.

3. Early Positions.

a. Arnstadt.

On his return to Thuringia, Bach found a position as⁹ organist at Arnstadt. At Arnstadt, Pietism had been put down¹⁰ quite early by the Olearius', father and son. It does not appear that Bach was at that time particularly inclined to piety, even of such a sort as would please the orthodox; for he alienated the

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 81.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 184.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 186-187.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 189.
5. Cf. Charles S. Terry: Bach, p. 30.
6. Cf. Spitta, op. cit., pp. 189-190.
7. Cf. Terry, op. cit., p. 44.
8. Cf. Ibid., p. 53.
9. Cf. Spitta, op. cit., p. 311.
10. Cf. Ibid., p. 358.

choir by his tyrannical attitude, he neglected training the choir, he would not submit his organ playing to the needs of the worship service, he once went to a wine shop during the sermon, and he went on several long unauthorized trips.¹ Fortunately this is the last time that he distinguished himself by such gross lack of piety or even of decent human ethics.

b. Mühlhausen.

In 1707, the same year as his first marriage, he accepted a call to St. Blasius' Church in Mühlhausen.² The pastor of St. Blasius' was a Pietist, and Pietism was widely accepted in Mühlhausen. This led to some friction with Bach over his work, for the Pietists saw music only as a means for developing pious living. For the most part artistic values meant little to them. Bach, on the other hand, thought that art, not just the uses which could be made of music, glorified God. When an orthodox and rather small pastor took over one of the other churches and launched attacks on Pietism, Bach sided with him.³

c. Weimar.

In 1708 Bach accepted a call to Weimar, giving as his reason for leaving Mühlhausen the greater opportunity to better church music "free from the opposition and vexation encountered

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 312-330.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 331.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 358-369.

here."¹ The ruler of Weimar was Ernst, Duke of Sachsen. He was a very religious and moral man. His position was both orthodox and Pietistic without the zealotry and fanaticism which characterized both. He kept a uniformed orchestra but no operatic or theatrical company.² It was in Weimar that Bach had his first collaborator on cantata texts, Salomo Franck, a deeply pious court official.³

d. Cothen.

The Prince of Anhalt-Cothen appointed Bach as his Capellmeister in 1717, but Bach could not obtain his release from Weimar until 1718.⁴ The Cothen court was "Reformed" and therefore used nothing but stern Calvinist Psalm settings.⁵ It is a bit hard to see how such a move fits in with the reason he gave for leaving Mühlhausen. At any rate, his stubborn Lutheranism never permitted him to feel at home at Cothen. With the death of his wife in 1720,⁶ he began to look for another position.

4. Leipzig.

Bach's stay at Leipzig was his longest stay at any one place or position, and therefore merits separate treatment. It is

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1. Cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 86-87.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 88.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 111-115.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 115.

6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 130-141.

most important in relation to this investigation, for the vast majority of his cantatas and all the passions were written at Leipzig. Strangely enough, Bach had a very difficult time getting the position at Leipzig. Many inferior men were called. Some were rejected, but most declined. Only after several candidates declined was Bach accepted, although it was well known that he was the most superior. He finally moved to Leipzig in 1723. His position required him to teach school as well as direct the choirs of the city churches. The choirs all consisted of boys from St. Thomas' ¹ school.

Although Bach was required to sign the Book of Concord, the orthodoxy of Leipzig was very moderate and not antagonistic to ² Pietism. Hymn singing was the main musical part of the services in the Leipzig churches. Bach owned quite a collection of hymns and used them freely in his cantatas. Above all he loved the Reformation hymns, particularly those of Luther. Only at the principal Sunday service was "music" performed. The two main churches of the town shared two choirs on alternating Sundays. The first choir would sing a cantata every Sunday under Bach's direction, ³ while the second choir would sing a motet in the other church.

Bach conceived of his work, not primarily as teaching or choir directing, but rather as perfecting German religious art in

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 145-149.
2. Cf. Dorner, op. cit., p. 108.
3. Cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 151-161, 192-193.

its musical forms, the oratorio, passion and cantata.¹

Until his death in July, 1750, Bach continued his work in church music and such other works as he felt were to the glory of God.²

D. Summary.

An understanding of a man's times and his life is necessary to an understanding of his work. It has been shown that the religious situation of Bach's day was the result of attempts to conserve the results of the Reformation. The Reformation and its Lutheran developments were attacked first by the Roman Catholic Church, and later by the Anabaptists and Zwinglians. These attacks were met on the theological level by the Augsburg Confession of 1530. After the formulation of the Augsburg Confession, there arose among Lutherans several departures from Luther's theology. Widespread and bitter disagreement arose in the church because of these differences. In 1577 the Form of Concord was drawn up with a view to ending the controversies and establishing the correct doctrine of the church in regard to the disputed matters. The Augsburg Confession and the Form of Concord conserved the theology of the Reformation in creedal form. However, the Reformation was more than creed, and the adherence to the creeds alone resulted in the rise of a Protestant scholasticism which was dedicated to the

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 177.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 264.

exposition and defense of the creeds. In opposition to this scholasticism of the orthodox party there arose a movement called Pietism, which was dedicated to making Christianity a living faith. Moral regeneration, living faith and the use of the Scripture were the major emphases of this movement. Because Pietism emphasized the moral demands of the Christian faith, it was opposed by many of the orthodox. The long and bitter conflict between these two parties was still raging at Bach's time, and his religion must be understood in the light of this controversy.

Bach's family were Lutheran from Reformation times. His education at Ohrdruf and Lüneburg was strongly orthodox. While working at Arnstadt, Bach did not show even the small amount of piety expected by the orthodox. He did not get along well with his Pietist pastor at Mühlhausen. Bach's departure from Mühlhausen was hastened by the restrictions which the Pietists placed on his freedom to improve church music. In his next position, at Weimar, Bach worked for a very pious, though orthodox, Duke. There is no record of any theological friction between them. His next post, at Cothen, was in a Calvinistic court where church music was not performed. Bach's final position was at Leipzig, where he remained until his death. Bach considered his work at Leipzig primarily the perfection of the cantata and oratorio forms of German music. Leipzig was orthodox, but quite tolerant of Pietism. It is clear that Bach's training in early life and his sympathies in later life lay with the orthodox party. In youth his opposition to

Pietism was strong, while in later life he learned to keep peace with those of Pietistic tendencies.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF THE CANTATA TEXTS ASCRIBED TO BACH

A. Introduction.

Charles Sanford Terry states that of all Bach's cantatas there are thirty-two whose texts were written solely or largely¹ by Bach himself. Such a listing does not imply, of course, that other cantatas do not fairly represent Bach's thought, for it is hard to conceive a man of Bach's genius and religious nature failing to scrutinize thoroughly any material which he used in his church music.² This would be particularly true of Bach, since he was desirous of perfecting the cantata form.³ Therefore, it is quite reasonable to assume that any of Bach's cantatas could be considered a reasonable reflection of his religious faith. Since some arbitrary selection must be made of the two hundred nine⁴ cantatas published and translated into English, the author has chosen to survey those which Terry ascribes to Bach. In view of the purpose of this selection, there will be no attempt to evaluate critically Terry's ascription of authorship to Bach.

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1. Cf. Charles S. Terry: Johann Sebastian Bach, Cantata Texts Sacred and Secular, p. 12. The Bachgesellschaft numbers for these cantatas are: Nos. 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 27, 34, 35, 40, 42, 43, 51, 56, 58, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 84, 92, 122, 143, 147, 150, 153, 170, 173, 184, 194, 195, 197.
2. Cf. Ante, p. 14.
3. Cf. Ante, p. 15.
4. Cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 642-643.

It is the purpose of this survey to determine what major themes and ideas are found in the cantatas, and what emphases are intended thereby. There will be no detailed study of the texts at this point, but rather an attempt to discover in general the things which a member of the congregation in one of Bach's churches¹ might expect to hear over the course of time. The cantatas will² be arranged according to the seasons of the church year.

B. Advent Season Cantatas.

The Season of Advent begins with the first Sunday in³ December and continues through January sixth.

1. Christmas Day, 1723, Cantata Number 63.

This cantata is a call for the adoration of the infant who is a light to the nations. God has shown great favor to men who deserve death, by sending His Son into their midst, therefore, men can fully put their trust in God and ought to lift up praises to Him. The dominant idea is that God has sent his Son incarnate⁴ for man's salvation.

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1. It is realized that the music adds much in meaning to the words of the cantatas.
2. The numbers of the cantatas are the number of order of publication by the Bachgesellschaft and have nothing to do with chronology. These numbers are used for convenience of reference, since the German titles for the cantatas would be meaningless to many readers who do not read German, and the English titles vary according to the translator.
3. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, p. 6.
4. Cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

2. The Sunday After Christmas, c. 1742, Cantata Number 122.

The emphasis in this cantata is on the great joy that Christians should have at the coming of God's Son. In the second movement a bass sings of the joy which those who were scarred with sin should have at the coming of God's Son to earth. In the fourth movement a soprano recites the joy among angels who once shrunk from sinful man. The choral, which is the sixth movement, sums it all up rather well by exhorting all men to rejoice for the Year of Jubilee has come. Clearly, the intent is to equate the Year¹ of Jubilee with the coming of Christ.

3. Christmas Monday, 1723, Cantata Number 40.

The strongest emphasis in this cantata is that Christ's birth is a victory over Satan. In six of the eight movements Satan is mentioned or referred to. There is a strong contrast between the power that Satan has over men and the humility that God has in becoming man. Christ brings victory over sin, and the closing choral emphasizes strongly that Christian men should be² expecting through Christ's power to live a good and holy life.

4. Christmas Tuesday, 1723, Cantata Number 64.

This cantata, which apparently followed the one above, emphasizes the contrast between Christ and this world. The world

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

is characterized as evil and worthless. Christ has come to free men from earth. There is a strong element of expectation of a heavenly life in the future. However, there is also a strong note of man's freedom from sin while here on earth. By God's power and¹ by faith man already possesses heaven.

5. New Year's Day, 1724, Cantata Number 16.

A call to praise opens this cantata. After this, items for praise are enumerated, such as; physical blessings, the ceasing of wars, and the joy which the church knows. This is followed by a prayer for the protection of "Thy Church and doctrine,"² and for blessings, which are spoken of in physical terms, on God's people. The cantata closes with praise for Jesus and a petition for peace³ in the New Year.

6. New Year's Day, 1753, Cantata Number 143.

Peace is the theme of this cantata. First there is thanks for the coming of the Prince of Peace. Then follows the assurance of peace which those who trust in God have. Though most people are in fear, those who trust the sovereign Lord dwell in peace and safety. Finally, there is a call on Jesus to keep His⁴ people safe in peace throughout the coming year.

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
2. Ibid., p. 107.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 107-108.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 116-117.

7. The Sunday After the Circumcision of Our Lord, 1727, Cantata Number 153.

The key note of this cantata is the persecution of God's people by the many enemies in the world. The relation to the day involved is found in the seventh movement where faint hearts are exhorted to take courage by looking at Jesus who was persecuted from birth. The dominant element in this cantata is the fact that although Christians must live in a world of real danger and peril, they may have strength and joy in realizing that someday they will be called to heaven. There is included a prayer for deliverance¹ from sin until that final day shall come.

8. The Sunday After the Circumcision of Our Lord, 1733, Cantata Number 58.

This cantata is sung solely by a bass and a soprano. The soprano emphasizes the griefs and woes which the world holds. The base sings of God's deliverance, essentially in terms of paradise. In relation to the Sunday involved, the flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt is cited as evidence of God's protecting care.²

9. Epiphany, 1724, Cantata Number 65.

The Epiphany cantata for 1724 is one of personal consecration. The day is the commemoration of the day when the wise men brought gifts to Jesus. The development of the idea in the cantata is from the gifts which the Queen of Sheba brought to

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 121-123.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 123-124.

Solomon, through the gifts of the wise men to Jesus, culminating in
"Take me, Saviour,"¹ a full personal dedication.²

C. Pre-Easter Cantatas.

This period is from the end of the Christmas season, at Epiphany, until Easter. In terms of the Lutheran calendar this covers the Epiphany season of up to six weeks; Septuagesima,³ Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays; and Lent. For the Lenten season, figural music was omitted, and there are no cantatas for this period except a few for Palm Sunday.⁴

1. Septuagesima Sunday, 1731 or 1732, Cantata Number 84.

God's gracious providence is stressed in this cantata. If one does not have many physical blessings, he still can rejoice in the freedom which God has given his heart. Again there is a definite looking toward the day when the believer will be called to heaven.⁵

2. Septuagesima Sunday, c. 1740, Cantata Number 92.

This rather long cantata is based on a choral by Paul Gerhardt. The theme is again God's providence. First God's providence is extolled, then the wisdom of God's ways is presented. Christians are exhorted to grow by their trials. The conclusion

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1. Ibid., p. 130.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 128-130.
3. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, p. 6.
4. Cf. Terry, op. cit., p. 194.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 124-125.

presented in the last four movements is that the Christian should rest on God's faithfulness, whatever trial he may face, and trust God until the day when God calls him to the heavenly mansions.¹

3. Quinquagesima Sunday, 1723, Cantata Number 22.

The basis of this cantata is the failure of the disciples to understand what was involved in Jesus' going up to Jerusalem the last time. From it is drawn the desire to be kept pure by God's power from sin which dulls the spiritual senses. Jesus is spoken of in the most affectionate terms, and there is a strong emphasis on union with Him.²

4. Quinquagesima Sunday, 1724, Cantata Number 23.

This cantata is essentially an appeal to Christ for help. Man's only help is in Christ so the Christian must call upon Him.³

D. Easter Season Cantatas.

The Easter season is from Easter Sunday until the Festival of the Holy Trinity.⁴

1. Easter Monday, 1731, Cantata Number 66.

The opening three movements of this cantata express the idea, "The tomb is void and saved are we from ill."⁵ The fourth

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 176-179.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 187-188.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 188-189.
4. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, pp. 6-7.
5. Terry, op. cit., p. 224.

and fifth movements are duets in which the alto expresses fear and the tenor, hope. The final note is a choral which is joyful at Christ's triumph.¹

2. The First Sunday After Easter, 1731, Cantata Number 42.

This cantata takes its theme from the appearance of Jesus at the meeting of the twelve when they had the door barred for fear.² The lesson which Bach draws from this is that when His people are fearful and worried, then Jesus Himself appears to comfort them. The closing choral is a prayer for peace and for blessing upon the civil government.³

3. Ascension Day, c. 1735, Cantata Number 43.

In its two parts this cantata considers the ascension, first from the viewpoint of the viewers on earth and then from the viewpoint of those in heaven. The first part emphasizes praise in the form of shouting and playing trumpets. The end of this part declares that Jesus has finished His earthly work and is now going back to heaven, and heaven is called upon to receive Him. In the second part, the emphasis is on the crowning of Jesus and His sitting upon a throne. In this too, there is voiced the believer's hope of being drawn to the mansions which Jesus is preparing.⁴

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 224-226.
2. Cf. John 20:19.
3. Cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 237-238.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 264-266.

4. Whit Sunday, 1740 or 1741, Cantata Number 34.

This cantata opens with a call to the Eternal Fire to,
"Inflame us, reclaim us, and draw us to Thee!"¹ The remainder of
the cantata meditates with wonder on the idea that God could dwell
within men.²

5. Whit Monday, 1731, Cantata Number 173.

The six movements of this cantata divide quite naturally
into three parts of two movements each. The first section dwells
on the fact that he in whom God dwells shares the holy nature of
God. The second emphasizes the greatness of God's gift of love
to man and calls for man's response. The final section is one of
consecration, in which believers offer their hearts to God and
call on Him to help them to grow in grace until the time when
He takes them to heaven.³

6. Whit Tuesday, 1731, Cantata Number 184.

God is man's gracious providing Shepherd in this cantata.
He has given guidance, love, freedom from sin and death, and many
other blessings to man. Believers have great joy in trusting God
as their guide. This cantata closes with two chorals instead of
the usual one. The first asks protection from danger, while the
second is a plea for guidance and strength for life's way.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 283.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 283-284.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 287-288.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 291-292.

E. Trinity Season Cantatas.

The Trinity season is the longest season in the church year, and consequently more of Bach's cantatas are for this season¹ than for the other seasons.

1. Trinity Sunday, 1723, Cantata Number 194.

This cantata was written for and performed in connection with the dedication of a new church and organ near Leipzig. The first of two parts calls upon God to sanctify His house to its intended purpose. Included is a recognition of the fact that a building alone does not make a church and therefore, God is called upon to bless and sanctify the people who are in His house. The second part calls men to praise God. In a recitative duet God's great power is shown in contrast to man's weakness. The presence of the house which God has built is evidence of the goodness and kindness of God's attitude and actions toward man. The closing choral is an appeal to God for aid in life until He at last opens² the way to heaven.

2. The Sixth Sunday After Trinity, 1731, Cantata Number 170.

This short cantata for alto alone sets forth the blessings of virtue as contrasted with evil. The world is full of evil, which is characterized by ribald song, but man can follow God and

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1. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, pp. 6-7; Terry op. cit., pp. xiii-xv.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 297-301.

be freed from the influence of evil people. In spite of this, one can not be content to live in this evil world. The believer's expectation is that he will go to Jesus and be completely freed¹ from sin.

3. The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, c. 1727, Cantata Number 147.

Confession of Christ as God and Saviour is the theme of this two part cantata. The first part presents the need for a confession of Christ in the world, which is so evil and sick with sin. The second part relates the cantata to the festival on which it was performed. God is called upon to help the simple believer confess Christ just as He enabled John the Baptist to confess Christ while still in his mother's womb. The granting of this help is assumed in the thanksgiving expressed by the two final movements. Although it is not a major theme here, the expectation² of a heavenly home is expressed in the fifth movement.

4. The Twelfth Sunday After Trinity, 1731, Cantata Number 35.

This cantata is very similar to the one for the sixth Sunday after Trinity of the same year. It again is for an alto soloist, and it also is expressive of the joy which God gives to men. At first the joy is in the wonder of God's working in the physical realm in terms of creation and daily sustenance. In the

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 350-352.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 357-359.

later part it is the fact that God enters the hearts of the faithful¹ that causes amazement and joy.

5. The Fifteenth Sunday After Trinity, 1731 or 1732, Cantata Number 51.

A soprano soloist sings this entire cantata, including a choral. In the opening movements praise for God's gifts is dominant. The third movement is a request for Christ to dwell in the heart of the believer. The closing portions return to the theme of praise, ending with an "Allelujah!"^{2 3} aria.

6. The Sixteenth Sunday After Trinity, 1731, Cantata Number 27.

The question, "Who knows when life's last hour approaches?"⁴ opens this cantata. The answer is quickly given that only God knows when the end is to come, but that it certainly must come. The Christian's view of the approaching end is that it is his reason for living. He gladly welcomes death, for it is the dawn of a new life with Christ. All joy in the world is abandoned, for earth's joys are merely distractions from heaven where there is "...holy joy, peace and love without alloy."⁵

7. The Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, 1725, Cantata Number 19.

The opening of this cantata is a recounting of the battle

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 406-407.
2. Ibid., p. 426.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 424-426.
4. Ibid., p. 437.
5. Ibid., p. 439; Cf. Ibid., pp. 437-439.

of St. Michael the Archangel with Satan. Praise is lifted to God for the victory of Michael. The angels are then called upon to protect men who are frail sinners. Men are exhorted to cherish the presence of angels since they help on the way to heaven. The final choral is a request that the angels will keep the Christian from harm, as they did Elias and Lazarus, until he rises to meet¹ God in glory.

8. The Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity, 1731 or 1732, Cantata Number 56.

This might be called the Pilgrim Cantata, for it presents a picture of the Christian carrying his cross through life's journey. Though life is a journey full of danger, the Christian can rest on God. The yoke of life's burdens is broken by God so that the Christian can fly like an eagle. The coming of death brings joy, for it opens the gates at the end of the journey and² makes clear the way into the presence of Jesus.

9. The Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity, 1737 or 1727, Cantata Number 17.

The idea of praise is developed in a number of ways in this cantata. Praise helps to open the way to God. The creation praises God. God's moral attributes in relation to man cause man to praise Him. The story of the cleansed leper who returned to give thanks is interjected, followed by the question of what man

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 454-455.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 461-463.

can do to thank God for His mercies. The answer is that all man can do is to give his heart to God so that God may cleanse and purify it. God loves, as a Father, man who passes away as a flower. This is surely praiseworthy.¹

10. The Twenty-sixth Sunday After Trinity, 1716, Cantata Number 70.

The last judgement is the theme of this cantata. First, Christians are exhorted to watch and pray so that they will be ready at that day. Hardened sinners should tremble, while the elect have cause to rejoice. The day of judgement releases the Christian from the bondage of sin. God's will calls believers home. It is God who elects to salvation those who have neglected His will, and it is He who can guard and guide them until they are brought into His presence. The Christian can, therefore, stand bold in the face of the trials of the last day. He does not delight in earth, but only in Jesus.²

F. Unspecified Cantatas.

Bach wrote a number of cantatas which were not specified for a certain day in the calendar or for which the specification of day has been lost. Of the cantatas in this class for which Bach's authorship is assumed, two are wedding cantatas which were not written for a definite place in the church calendar, and one is unspecified, although it was probably written for a definite

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 419-420.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 503-506.

Sunday.

1. Wedding Cantata, c. 1726, Cantata Number 195.

This cantata opens with a proclamation of the light which has arisen and which brings joy to the righteous. This joy is prayed for on behalf of the couple wedded, whose righteous life is widely known. The couple is then exhorted to praise God in their happiness and also to praise Him if He blesses their home. In the closing choral, all people are bidden to praise¹ their God.

2. Wedding Cantata, 1737, Cantata Number 197.

The opening of this cantata is "God is our good Providence."²
A bass recites how God in His providence watches over and rules our life from youth to its end. Therefore, the couple can rest in confidence in God's care. If they follow Him, He will bring them into Canaan. A choral extolls God's great love which enables men to love one another. God has blessed the couple while they are still outside of Zion and He will some day lead them there. The remainder of the work is devoted to assuring the couple of God's concern for their happiness together here on earth.³

3. Unspecified Cantata, c. 1712, Cantata Number 150.

This cantata presents the assurance of the Christian

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 534-535.
2. Ibid., p. 542.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 542-545.

that, in spite of great trials, God is his help. The first vocal movement is an expression of longing for God and an appeal for defense from the foe. This is followed by a resignation to the wisdom of God's will. Confidence is expressed that though storms can uproot great cedars, God will keep His own from danger according to His Word. The final hope is that after a weary and difficult path, God will lead His child through to the hour of joy and glad-¹ness.

G. Summary.

A survey of the cantata texts which Terry ascribes to Bach shows that there is a very interesting variety of ideas in the texts which are assumed to have been written by Bach. As might be expected certain truths are emphasized at appropriate seasons of the year, such as the incarnation during the Advent season and the resurrection during the Easter season. The most widely used theme idea is salvation. The idea of salvation is used both spiritually and physically, sometimes both ways in the same cantata. The next most prevalent theme is related to salvation. It is the conflict between good and evil, and the victory of good as represented by God. This theme is frequently set up in terms of the conflict between the world and the saints. Other themes used are: The consecration of the Christian to God, the praise and thanksgiving of those whom God has blessed, the

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 551-552.

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blessings of the future life, and the faithfulness of God. Several ideas which are not the central theme of a large number of cantatas are, nevertheless, developed in the cantatas. By far the most prevalent of these ideas are the expectation of a future life of bliss and a consequent longing for death which is the gateway to this blissful future. Other ideas repeated in several cantatas are: the thanksgiving and joy of God's people, the salvation which God has wrought, the person and work of Christ, the conflict of good and evil, the consecration and sanctification of the Christian, and the union

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between God and man through Christ. It is of interest to note that only two cantatas emphasize the idea of the Church and only one the word doctrine, since these were two of the key ideas of the orthodox party's belief. In general, it can be said that the themes and ideas found in the cantatas studied were Pietistic in some cases and orthodox in others. It is certainly true that in these cantatas Bach, for the most part, avoided controversial themes and dwelt on those subjects which were held in common faith by the Pietists and the orthodox. In those few cases where controversial ideas, such as the indwelling of Christ in believers, or the doctrine of the Church arose, Bach handled them in a truly evangelical spirit, affirming the much needed truth but not anathematizing those who disagree.

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1. The themes of the cantatas are tabulated in the appendix.
2. The ideas developed in the cantatas are tabulated in the appendix.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF TWO TYPICAL CANTATA TEXTS

A. Introduction.

It has already been determined in the previous chapter what themes and major ideas are characteristic of the cantatas for which Bach's authorship is probable. It is as important in the study of Bach to know how he expresses his ideas, as it is to know what his ideas are. In regard to the controversy between Pietism and orthodoxy which was going on at Bach's time, means of expression are of the utmost importance. Orthodoxy was given to¹ dogmatics and scholastic justification of doctrine. Pietism, on the other hand, emphasized living faith.² It can easily be seen that in such a situation the two parties might hold the same basic articles of faith, but express this faith in vastly different ways and words. For these reasons, two of Bach's cantatas have been chosen as typical, in terms of ideas and themes, for further study with special reference to mode of expression.³ The cantatas chosen are: Cantata Number 153, The Sunday After the Circumcision of Our Lord, 1727;⁴ and Cantata Number 84, Septuagesima Sunday, 1731 or

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1. Ante, p. 8.
2. Ante, pp. 9-10.
3. Only two can be done due to the scope of this work. Actually for conclusive results all the cantatas should be analyzed in this manner.
4. Ante, p. 24.

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1732. For each cantata the entire text will be presented, followed
by the analysis.

B. Cantata Number 153.

This cantata was probably written for the Sunday after
the circumcision of our Lord, in the year 1727.²

1. Text.

The following is Terry's own translation of the original
German text of the cantata:

1. Choral.. (S.A.T.B.)³

How many, and how mighty rail,
The foes who press upon me!
Sore grievously do they assail;
My spirit faints within me.
Lord, with Thy grace my soul refresh;
So shall the Devil, World, and Flesh
No more prevail against me.

2. Recit. .. (A.)

O dearest Lord, do not in anger scorn me! Sustain
me! Help my frailty! On earth I dwell mid perils sore
and dangers many. Dread lions and dragons fierce my
timorous soul dismay, and day by day with fury rage
to rend me.

3. Aria .. (B.)

'Fear thou not! I am with Thee; nor despair; I am
Thy God. I'll strengthen thee. I'll thee uphold under
the strong right hand that is My righteousness.'⁴

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1. Ante, p. 25.
2. Cf. Discussion of date in Terry, op. cit., p. 123.
3. German names and instrumentation will be omitted in each case.
4. Isaiah xli. 10.

4. Recit. .. (T. ...)

Rare comfort, dearest Lord, Thou dost in me instil,
and my faint soul with peace and hope dost fill. Yet,
Lord, life's bitter sorrow doth e'er return with each
tomorrow! For fierce and many are my foes; my soul no
safety knows.

Their bows are bent on me in hate, their arrows sharp
on every side assail me. Out stretched their eager hands
would slay me. Lord, let Thine aid their wiles prevent!
The whole wide world with pain my soul is racking. Help,
Saviour, help, and save my heart from breaking!

5. Choral .. (S.A.T.B. ...)

When Satan's host's provoke thee,
And on thy pathway press,
Not then will God forsake thee,
But succor thy distress.
Do thou, on Him relying,
Pursue His purpose clear;
So shalt thou, Satan flying,
Fair course to heaven steer.

6. Aria .. (T. ...)

Rage and toss, ye billows stormy,
Dash, ye waves of menace, roar!
On me pour your fury!
With your malice mock me!
Plague and rob me of my ease!
Soon my God shall whisper, 'Peace!
I am thy Lord and will save thee.'

7. Recit. .. (B. ...)

Endure, faint heart! Take courage, bear thy smart!
Let not life's Cross, thy strength defying, make thee
forget that God can hear thy crying. Remember that His
Son, Lord Jesus, in our likeness languished, and for
us suffered anguish. Did not proud Herod's wicked malice
prepare for Him a poison-chalice and murderously plan
His end?

New come to earth from heaven, was He to sudden
flight not driven? Take heart! In Jesus find thy peace!
So all thy care shall cease! And know, that all who
here in Jesus sorrow do in their Master's footsteps follow.

8. Aria .. (A. ...)

Though must I live all my days
In distress and tribulation,
Still I turn to heaven my gaze,
Where is joy and jubilation.
Jesus Himself will blot out all my grieving,
And where He now reigneth will call me rejoicing.

9. Choral .. (S.A.T.B. ...)

While on this mortal earth I fare,
His Cross with Christ I'll gladly share.
O God, preserve me, steadfast, true,
To fulfil all Thou bidd'st me do.

Sustain my faith to act aright,
And worthy hold me in Thy sight.
My sinful heart and flesh control,
From earth's dark shame preserve my soul.

Guide Thou my heart Thyself to own,
Through life till death Thee serve alone.
Jesu, my Stay, O grant my prayer- 1
One day Thy house of bliss to share.

2. Analysis of Text.

An examination of the text as a whole reveals that the contents center on God's help in human trials. By means of continuation, God's help to man is developed in psychological order, just as man might experience it. Pointing up God's aid to man is a contrast throughout with Satan's treatment of man.

The cantata opens with a choral which sets forth the problem which the cantata will attempt to solve. This problem in the nature and number of the foes which the Christian faces. The foes are first spoken of as "How many, and how mighty... ."

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1. Terry, op. cit., pp. 121-123.

Then later the appeal is made for grace which will defeat "the Devil, World, and Flesh." This leaves no doubt that the enemies are those of the soul. They may be such as are able to exert their influence over men's bodies, but the origin of their evil power and design is in the Christian's three spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. He who speaks the words in this choral considers himself a child of God, for only a child of God would come to Him for refreshing. The fainting of his spirit is evidence that though he has known spiritual life through Christ, a time of weakness has come upon him. In fact, he is sure that if the Lord will refresh his soul, he will be victorious over his enemies. In this movement there is no emotional appeal to God, only a setting forth of the need and realization that God can meet it.

Emotion is more clearly expressed in the second movement. The Christian is beset with foes whom he characterizes as lions and dragons. Again, it is quite clear that these are enemies of the soul. The state of the petitioner's soul is also more clearly set forth here. He is fearful and knows it. Further, he has fears concerning God's willingness to help him. This seems to spring from an acute moral sense. There may be something in his life which angers the Lord and hinders the help which the Lord would give him. He is reconciled to God, for he calls Him "dearest Lord." But in view of the evil circumstances, he has doubts as to whether God is completely reconciled to him. In

this passionate call for mercy from God, whom he already knows and trusts, there can be seen the nature of the Pietist. The speaker is one who knows that there are certain moral demands made on him, and he well realizes that there is a real possibility that God could withdraw blessing from him if his life does not achieve the moral stature which God intends it to achieve.

Comfort and assurance is the tone of the third movement. The beautiful words of Isaiah, chapter forty-one, verse ten, are spoken by the Lord. There is nothing to fear. "I am Thy God." The answer to the sensitive man's question is in God's character and the relationship which God has created with man. It is implicit that He who is man's God will help man. Assurance is here, not just of help in spite of man's unrighteousness; but the right hand of God's righteousness is available for man. God's righteousness will uphold the sincere Christian who doubts his own moral worth. There is a strong moral note. God does not just excuse sinners, but He upholds His own in righteousness so that He can bless him.

What is man's reaction to the simple assurance of God's presence and good favor? As expressed in the tenor recitative which follows the assurance, it is definitely a mixed reaction. First, there is an acknowledgement of the comfort which such assurance brings. The tone is an intimate personal one using again the term, "dearest Lord." Yet the peace which has been received is regarded as a passing thing. The Christian is filled

with peace and hope now, but tomorrow his bitter foes will assail him anew and his heart may fail. Again, a real personal experience is described. This experience is one of genuine spiritual struggle. God's preserving grace can be easily acknowledged, but foes are made no less real thereby. A new appeal comes from the Christian at this point. He now wants God to do more than be with him and uphold him; he wants God to defeat his foes. Like Elijah's, his foes have increased in magnitude, at least in his mind, so that now the whole world is in league with Satan.

The reply to the above request comes in a choral and is not what the Christian expected. The answer comes apparently from another man, although it is conceivable that the choral is intended to represent God speaking. The reply is that God's promise of His presence is enough. True, Satan and his host press upon man, but God will help the Christian and keep him from trouble. There is something that man must do, however. If he would pursue a safe course to heaven, he must follow God's will. This is man's only responsibility. He need not worry about his enemies; God will take care of his worries. Just rely on God and follow His leading. Here again a rugged Pietism is expressed. Man's main responsibility is moral. He must follow the path which God has set for him, relying on God's help. Implicit in this answer is the suggestion that trials and testings are for man's good, and it is how he reacts to the assaults of Satan that is important.

The aria which is the sixth movement sets forth in a strong manner the Christian's attitude to the trials of the world. All the forces of evil are bidden to do their worst. They may beat against the Christian, mock him, rob him of his ease, or do whatever they will. God will soon whisper, "Peace!" and that is enough. There is implied in this movement a return to the basic idea set forth at the beginning of the cantata. It was known from the beginning that God could help the Christian in his trouble. The suggestion now is that the Christian should rely on God and go ahead and face the trials. There is no easy way out, no secret formula. God Himself is the only help.

But still the question arises, "What about these woes which I face?" God is not hardhearted, and He has an answer for this problem. The answer as expressed in the seventh movement of the cantata. "Take courage!" Do not let difficulties get the best of you. And here the cross comes into the consideration. If you have a cross to bear, remember that Jesus bore a cross which was for the sake of men. He came from heaven to earth, and what was the first thing that confronted Him as He came to men? A plot against His life. God cannot forget human trials for He in Christ endured them Himself. Therefore, man can be sure that God will hear and do what is best for him. When trials come, the child of God just looks to Jesus and in Him finds peace. This movement, which presents the cross, is the key to the theology of this cantata. Jesus' cross, which He bore from birth, is the theological

basis for exhortations to trust in God when troubles arise.

There follows a rejoicing and victorious aria. First, it is recognized that tribulation is the lot that must be expected here on earth. But that is not all, for one can turn his eyes to heaven where Jesus blots out all trouble. There will come the day when the Christian goes to be with Jesus and then rejoicing will be complete. There is no suggestion of heaven being anything other than complete and unbroken fellowship with Jesus.

The closing choral conserves the positive results of the thought of the cantata in three verses. The first verse sets forth the Christian man's attitude toward the cross he must bear in this life. He will carry a cross in this life, but not in his own strength; rather he will share Christ's cross. If he is going to bear a cross as God bids, he will have to have God's aid. The second verse is a request for preservation from sin and from man's own desires. The speaker speaks of, "My sinful heart and flesh..." These must be controlled by God. The reason for controlling these is so that the Christian may "act aright." This is a strong Pietistic note, for it emphasizes strongly the need for righteous living. The final verse is a plea for guidance until the day of death. Final salvation from all sin is anticipated here and protection until that day is petitioned. The heart is what the protection is requested for. If the heart is Jesus' then the whole person is safe and will one day be in eternal bliss with Him.

It has been seen that this cantata starts with a very basic human problem and develops what purports to be God's answer to the problem. The problem is, "How can a Christian face the Satanic foes abroad in the world today?" The simple basic answer is, "By looking to God for help." A number of questions arise in man's attempt to meet his problems with God's help. First comes the question, in view of the many foes besetting the Christian, of whether or not the Christian has angered God by his sin and thereby removed himself from God's protection. The answer comes back from God that He will not forsake man, but will help him. He is man's God, therefore man can trust Him. Furthermore, He will enable man to be acceptable before Him. This assurance is acknowledged with joy, but another question arises. The petitioner faces bitter foes and he wishes that God would destroy them. The reply is that though Satan and his host truly press on man, God will defend His own people against them. Therefore, they must trust in God and follow His will. God will help in trials, but trials cannot be done away with. Now the Christian sees and he bids all his foes to do their worst, God will still protect him. But still the problems of life press on the Christian. To meet these God reminds him of the cross of Christ and assures him that He understands the problems which man faces. The Christian is now assured that though he faces difficulties he can carry on his life looking forward to that day when fellowship with Jesus will be unbroken. In God's strength he will face whatever comes to him. This cantata

as a whole would be acceptable to both Pietists and orthodox, since it deals with some very basic evangelical truths about God and His ways with men. There are two features which would appeal to Pietists in particular. These are: the acute sense of moral responsibility on the part of the Christian, and the intimate and affectionate terms used in describing God.

C. Cantata Number 84.

This cantata was written for Septuagesima Sunday, which¹ is nine weeks before Easter. It was probably written in either² 1731 or 1732.

1. Text.

The following is Terry's translation from the German autograph:

1. Aria .. (S. ...)

My life is sweet with gracious blessing
Which on me God's dear love hath poured.
Shall I not thank Him oft and duly
For all the love He's lavished fully
On me unworth the least reward?

2. Recit. .. (S. ...)

To man God nothing oweth. If I rewarded be, it is
because He loveth me. Nought that I do deserves His
favour; for all I have to Him I owe. Yea, aught
of good that's found in my behaviour is due return to
Him Who loved me so. And yet is man's heart so exacting,
that moaning oft he makes when God doth not reward
or no attention takes. But, since our birth hath He not

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1. Cf. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, p. 295.
2. Cf. Terry, op. cit., 175.

e'er maintained and nourished us on earth? Doth He not
plan our happiness and open wide to us the skies? My
mod'rate prayer is this- that from my bench I never
hungry rise.

3. Aria. .. (S.)

With heart free and lightsome I welcome my lot,
Nor envy my neighbor his goods and his chattels!
A conscience unruffled, a happy content,
A heart ever thankful to gratitude bent,
These count I as blessings, few be they or not.

4. Recit. .. (S.)

My brow may run with honest sweat as here I toil,
my bread providing. But when my course is done, and
twilight o'er my head is closing, 'tis then God will my
penny pay and call me home above. O labour well
rewarded! How great a prize to be awarded! My heart's
content and set.

5. Choral .. (S.A.T.B.)

My life at peace with God proceedeth,
Nor death can rouse a thought of fear.
Content I take what He decree-eth,
For faith is strong, my course is clear.
Lord, through Thy blood once shed for me,
Soon call me home to rest with Thee.¹

2. Analysis of Text.

This cantata expounds the assurance of the Christian
man that in love God will provide for all his needs. This idea
is summarized in the opening aria and again in the closing choral.
The other movements particularize the types of blessings which
are received. The particularization moves from physical provision,
through spiritual gifts, and ends on God's greatest gift of pro-
vision, that of heaven.

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1. Ibid., pp. 174-175.

The first movement opens with two lines of recognition of the blessings which God's love has poured out. These blessings are important, for they make life sweet. Without God's blessings, life would be a rather sad, monotonous affair. But God has not permitted this to be the case. Therefore, thanks should be given often for these blessings, for the blessings themselves are seen often. Thanks should be doubly great for God has given great gifts of love to those who are not worthy of the least reward.

The second movement picks up the theme on which the first ended, God's gracious love for unworthy man. The only reason why man is rewarded is that God loves man. There is nothing in man that is worthy of reward. Anything good in human behaviour is only due gratitude for God's limitless love. And yet there always arises in man a feeling that he is not getting as much as he deserves. If man fails to get the attention which he thinks God owes him, immediately he complains of injustice. Counter to this, the speaker poses the fact that God has given us physical provision from the day of our birth. God has arranged the whole universe for our good. Everything is for our happiness. The whole sky is wide open before man. In view of God's provision for sinful man, the speaker resolves to limit his desires. He prays for provision of daily food to keep him from hunger and that is all.

The third movement helps to explain the speaker's attitude at the end of the second movement. He can be happy

with a small amount of physical provision because of the spiritual blessings which God has given him. His heart is free and he does not envy the man who has much of this worlds goods because God has satisfied his soul. First, he is free from guilt because God has fully redeemed him, therefore, his conscience is at complete ease. Secondly, he has learned to be content with whatever he has. This implies that God has enabled him to adapt to situations, rather than have situations adapt to him. The man who seeks contentment based on outward circumstances is not likely to ever find it. Finally, he has a grateful heart, which is a great gift. In the previous recitative it was seen that man's heart does not tend to be grateful to God. This Christian has been blessed with the gift of a heart "to gratitude bent." This is not natural, but one of the greatest gifts God can bestow, for it enables man to see and appreciate all he has. These are the blessings the speaker has and is content with. They may seem like a few to others who do not have them, but he counts them as great blessings. Here again, Pietism is evident in Bach's work, for in this aria a Christian's greatest blessing on earth is pictured as a transformed character which God has given him.

The blessing of character does not stand alone, for God has more blessing in store for His children. It is true that man labors and struggles to provide honestly his own living here on earth. However, the labor and the living are not all there is to life, for at life's end God will repay all honest

work. It is of interest to note that divine reward is expected for the work which provides one's own bread. The reason for this expectation of reward must be on the basis of the way work is done rather than the nature of the work. He who works faithfully as unto Christ will receive a reward no matter what his task be. Life's end is looked forward to with considerable joy. Labor will be well rewarded, a great prize will be awarded. The expectation is that of full and unbroken fellowship with Jesus.¹ In view of what is expected, the Christian is contented and joyful while he expectantly labors here.

The closing choral reaffirms the secure position of the Christian as he goes through life, with particular emphases on the final hope. The first and third lines indicate that because the Christian has a hope of heavenly rest, he can walk securely in this life. He has peace with God and knows that God is working for his ultimate good, therefore, he has strength to walk in his daily life even though it may be difficult. His faith is strong that, through the blood of Christ, he will one day be called to God's heavenly home to rest with Him.

This cantata expounds the greatness of God's provision for the good of His children. In the beginning of the cantata, God's gifts to unworthy man are extolled as being necessary to a satisfactory life. In answer to man's complaint against God for not giving man more, it is pointed out that from the cradle

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1.. Ante, p. 49.

God has blessed man with physical provision. Therefore, man should be more than grateful when God gives him daily food. Nor is God's provision limited to the meeting of physical needs. God changes man's character, if man will let Him, and makes him free from a sense of need. God's grace helps the Christian to face every situation in life and be grateful for all that God has given. Finally, the Christian can look at life with great joy and assurance for he knows that at its end he will go to a heavenly home and enjoy unbroken fellowship with Jesus. Most of this cantata expresses ideas held in common by the orthodox and the Pietists. The blessing of God in changing human character definitely tends toward the Pietistic frame of mind.

D. Summary.

The two cantatas analyzed in this chapter dealt with the same general theme, God's provision for His children. In the first, the provision was presented in relation to man's needs. In the second, God's provision for man was expounded with gratitude from the viewpoint of one who had partaken of His grace and been satisfied.

The first cantata opens with a statement of the opposition of Satan to the man who wishes to live righteously. Man is assured of God's help in facing the foe. The man, however, has doubts as to whether God is willing to help him. The voice of God assures him. Having been assured of God's help, man still

has to face his foes and he requests God to destroy his foes. God's reply to this request is negative. He will help man, but man cannot be freed from trials. The fact that Jesus came, was persecuted, and died on the cross is used to assure the believer that God understands his trials and would not permit them without a good reason. Finally, the Christian is assured of future bliss in the presence of God. Thus strengthened, he is able to meet all his foes. This cantata deals with a truth common to orthodox and Pietists alike, but in vocabulary and also in its acutely moral sense of man it shows characteristics of Pietistic thought.

The second cantata opens with an assurance of God's bountiful provision for His children. In three movements this provision is particularized as, provision of physical needs, provision of spiritual grace, provision of the hope of a heavenly home. The final movement voices the Christian's assurance in looking at life that he will be victorious and reach his heavenly home. Orthodox and Pietists alike could use this cantata freely, although the nature of the spiritual grace described in the third movement is more Pietistic than orthodox.

In general it may be said that these cantatas deal with truths which were common to the orthodox and Pietistic parties. In some details, a tendency toward Pietistic thought is shown. This tendency is not of such a nature as to constitute an espousal of Pietism.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this study to investigate the texts of the church cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach as they are found to express Bach's view of Evangelical Protestantism. Before direct studies of the cantata texts, it was necessary to investigate the religious life of Bach's time and also Bach's own personal life. The religious life of Bach's time was found to be a result of attempts to conserve the results of the Lutheran Reformation. In order to meet attacks on the principles of the Lutheran Reformation, several creeds were drawn up to represent the Evangelical faith. These creeds came to be regarded as the substance of the Evangelical faith. Protestantism fell into a scholasticism designed to expound and defend the creeds. Pietism rose in opposition to this dead orthodoxy and stressed moral regeneration, living faith, and the use of the Scriptures. The opposition between these two points of view became pronounced, and the church was embarked on a controversy which was still very much alive in Bach's time.

Bach's family had been orthodox Lutherans since the Reformation. Bach's early training was in schools of the orthodox position. All the evidence indicates that Bach agreed with the orthodox party throughout his life. In his early positions at Arnstadt and Mühlhausen, he was noted for lack of piety and also

for his open opposition to Pietism. In his positions at Weimar, Cothen, and Leipzig he learned to get along with pious people and, therefore, it is assumed that his view toward Pietism had moderated. At Leipzig he devoted himself to the perfection of the cantata and oratorio forms.

From a survey of those cantata texts which are ascribed to Bach, it was determined that salvation, in both spiritual and physical terms, is the prevalent theme of his cantatas. Also popular as a theme is the contrast between good and evil, as represented by God and Satan. Among the ideas found in the cantatas, which are not the theme of many cantatas, the most prevalent by far is the hope of a heavenly home and the consequent expectant longing for death. There are a few cantatas which emphasize Pietistic themes and a few which emphasize themes which are peculiar to the orthodox party. Most of the cantatas, however, are on themes and contain ideas which would be held in common both by the orthodox and the Pietists and, therefore, would be acceptable to both parties.

To determine how Bach expressed the ideas which were set forth in his cantatas, two cantatas were selected and analyzed. From these it was determined that, in general, Bach selected thought forms which might be considered neutral, not prejudiced toward orthodox or Pietist. There were several instances where his expression assumed the more devotional Pietistic forms. He particularly emphasized regeneration as a moral thing in much

the same way as the Pietists.

In view of this study, it may be concluded that Bach always considered himself a member of the orthodox party. In later life he outgrew the prejudices of his youth; and while he emphasized in his cantatas those beliefs which were common to both points of view, he seems to have adopted the depth of devotion and the moral acuteness of the Pietists, without actually avowing their party. Thus it is seen to be true that the musician has a real contribution to make to the development of religious thought and life. Bach overcame the prejudices of his time and even his own prejudices to produce work which was of real value to the church at large, and not just to one sect or viewpoint. His approach is well worth the consideration of the church today.

A very important question for future study is raised by this conclusion. Does a writer of church music, or Bach in particular, by the nature of his work, tend to the more devotional and moral type of writing?

APPENDIX

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466
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IDEAS DEVELOPED IN CANTATAS													
Location in Chapter II	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	C1	C2	C3	C4
Church					X								
Conflict of Good and Evil			X									X	
Consecration and Sanctification			X	X									
Death and Future Life				X						X	X		
Faithfulness of God											X		
Person and Work of Christ	X	X	X			X							X
Praise, Thanks and Joy		X			X	X	X						
Salvation - General				X				X		X			
a. Physical								X					
b. Spiritual										X			
Union with Christ and Indwelling of the Spirit												X	

* Ideas merely referred to are not included.

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