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### The Decline of Lutheran Church Music During the Period of Rationalism

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THE DECLINE OF LUTHERAN CHURCH MUSIC  
DURING THE PERIOD OF RATIONALISM

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
Henry John Eickhoff  
May 1947

Approved by: W. G. Peters  
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## Introduction

In tracing the history of the decline of church music one is faced with a

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To provide a proper background for the decline of the eighteenth century and to show its magnitude, the first chapter is devoted to a brief summary of the great development of Lutheran church music during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## Introduction

In tracing the history of the decline of church music one is faced with a negative subject and one, consequently, about which very little has been written. In histories of music and of the church the period of decline is commonly summed up in a few sentences or paragraphs, and the investigator has to be content with these and other small references in works covering a much broader field. Nevertheless, it is a most worthwhile subject, for in it are the underlying causes of the uncertain prospects that have faced the art of church music down to our own day. It is a subject whose study produces a clearer realization of what church music must be in order to fulfill its purpose.

To provide a proper background for the decline of the eighteenth century and to show its magnitude, the first chapter is devoted to a brief summary of the great development of Lutheran church music during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

With the appearance in 1524 of Johann Walter's Geystliche Gesangk-Buchlayen, there starts the epoch of the Lutheran chorale, that distinctive worship-song of the German Protestant Church, drawn from Latin, folk-song, or original sources. It was truly church music of the people and for the people.

## THE DECLINE OF LUTHERAN CHURCH MUSIC

Through

### DURING THE PERIOD OF RATIONALISM

music the property of the common man, he wanted to leave every possible room open for the artistic development of

#### I. The Golden Age, A Summary

At the head of two centuries of glorious development in the field of Protestant church music stands the figure of Martin Luther. "The ultimate fate of German Protestant music depended on this man who, as a student in Eisenach singing all sorts of merry student songs, and as a celebrant priest familiar with the gradual and the polyphonic Masses and motets, lived with music ringing in his ears." <sup>1</sup> This great influence may be thought of as twofold. Luther gave church music back to the people, thus directly opposing the old tradition of the Roman Church that church music belonged in the hands of the priests and the clerical choir alone. This was the natural outcome of his emphasis on the Biblical doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, of salvation through personal faith in the Redeemer without the necessity of an intermediary clergy or sacramental system.

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1. Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 207.

2. Georg Meissner, I, Col. 1424.

With the appearance in 1524 of Johann Walter's Geystlich Gesangk-Buchleyn, there starts the spread of the Lutheran chorale, that distinctive worship-song of the German Protestant Church, drawn from Latin, folk-song, or original sources. It was truly church music of the people and for the people.

Though Luther's fundamental idea was to make church music the property of the common man, he wanted to leave every possible door open for the artistic development of church music. Here lies the second part of Luther's great influence on the music of the succeeding centuries. "This remarkable man realized that a one-sided, popular, and earth-bound movement in art must inevitably decline."<sup>2</sup> The Reformation began during the flowering of the great Netherlands polyphonic schools whose music Luther dearly loved. This contemporary art music the earliest Lutheran composers made the basis for the culture of their own church. Luther's words on the subject are typical of his sanely Biblical outlook: "Auch dasz ich nicht der Meinung bin, dasz durch's Evangelium sollten alle Kuenste zu Boden geschlagen werden und vergehen, wie etliche Aberggeistliche vorgeben; Sondern ich wollte alle Kuenste, sonderlich die Musik, gern sehen im Dienste desz, der sie gegeben und geschaffen hat."<sup>3</sup> Under this influence Gregorian chant and polyphonic settings of the Mass were prominent features of the rich

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2. Ibid., p. 208.

3. Saemmtliche Schriften, X, Col. 1424.

musical services of the early Protestant Church.

To popularize the Protestant music and make it available for church, school, and home was the next aim of the Lutheran musical leaders. Melancthon firmly held that this cultus dei should be a part of the whole life of man, for he believed that the wholesome spread and retention of the doctrine depended on the wholesome sway of sacred music. <sup>4</sup> Accordingly, schools arose for the benefit of the great middle-class population, for the nourishment of the growing Protestant culture. Musical exercises were compulsory, the curriculum starting with the singing of simple songs and melodies and leading up to the study of four and eight-part choral works. In addition to this, music theory was studied. The chief instructors were the cantors, who, by reason of their positions, were also the musical leaders of the various communities.

This start by the men of the Reformation was responsible for the great things to come. Arnold Schering gives a concise summary of this influence:

Luther's Vorgehen gab das Signal zu einer heute in ihrer ganzen Staerke kaum mehr nachzufuehlenden Erweckung der musikalischen Kraefte im deutschen Volke, vor allem in Sachsen und Thueringen, die dem Herde der Bewegung am naechsten standen. Der erhoete Bedeutung des Schuelerchors und der damit verbundenen erweiterten Funktionen des Kantors fuehrten zu einer bis in die

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4. Lang, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

kleinsten Gemeinden sich erstreckenden Neuorganisation des Kirchlichen Musikwesens.<sup>5</sup>

At first, Lutheran church music, though fundamentally different from that of the Roman Church in its spirit, was stylistically much the same as contemporary Roman music. True, the German chorale was there, but it was some time before those of original German or folk-song origin displaced those of Latin origin and gave their distinctive traits to the new Protestant music. From the very beginning Lutheran composers took over the style of the polyphonic vocal music used in the Roman rite for their own use. Among the outstanding composers of this early period were Johann Walter (1496-1570), Joachim à Burck (1546-1610), Johannes Eccard (1523-1611), and Hans Leo Hasler (1564-1612).

It was at the end of the sixteenth century that the Lutheran Church began to create a literature of music that was distinctively its own. This literature began when the chorale was used by composers in their art music, - cantatas, Passions, oratorios, and organ music, and its distinctive characteristic all through its rise to glory in the baroque period is the all-pervading influence of the chorale. It was truly an art of the Lutheran Reformation. Lang says of it, "Congregation-consciousness speaks with convincing force in the Protestant chorales, which form the basis of this whole art, and in the cantatas and oratorios which are the

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5. "Evangelische Kirchenmusik", Handbuch der Musikgeschichte, p. 388.

greatest treasures of Protestant church art." 6

There rose, beginning with this period, an array of great composers who were to carry this art to an incomparable height. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) was "the most important organizer of Protestant church music since Luther first called on Johann Walter. . . . He explored every form and technique of his times and shuffled and melted them with imposing thoroughness, patience, and skill, into the musical world of the Protestant chorale." 7

The Lutheran composers were men imbued with the spirit of their times, and since drama played so great a part in the artistic expression of the baroque era, the Passion, cantata, and oratorio took a great place among their writings. One of the outstanding creative musicians of all times was Heinrich Schuetz (1585-1672). He "penetrated to the last depths of German Protestant religiousness to create, with dramatic energy and Biblical strength, music for its services that was destined to express all that German arts and letters of the period were unable to utter." Strangely enough, he was perhaps the only Lutheran composer of the seventeenth century who did not use the chorale in his works. "In his cantatas the power of his grandiose imagination brought to life a series of dramatic visions. . . . Although familiar with every secret of contemporary Italian

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6. Op. cit., p. 392.

7. Ibid., pp. 393-394.

music, . . . these are never conspicuous and are always subordinated to higher artistic aims. . . . All the foreign elements are melted in an epoch-making synthesis in the spirit of German Protestant church music." 8

Perhaps the most important field for Lutheran musicians and composers of this age was that of organ music. It most distinguished Protestant music from that of the Roman Church, for its most important function was the introduction and accompaniment of the congregational chorale, and while it is most natural that the chorale should rule in the vocal cantata and oratorio, we find that it also dominated the organ music. With his chorale paraphrases and variations, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621) was among the first to put artistic organ music in the service of the church. His pupil, Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) published harmonizations of the chorales and the first real book of organ accompaniments for congregational singing. He was "the first to treat the chorale in an artistic and idiomatic style for the organ." 9 Sweelinck, Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706), and Georg Boehm (1661-1733) were most important in the development of the chorale-prelude form for the organ, each one responsible for a distinct treatment of the chorale in this form, and all having a marked influence on Bach. From the hands of these and many others, of whom at least Dietrich Buxtehude

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8. Ibid., pp. 397-398.

9. Ibid., p. 400.

(1637-1707) must be mentioned, came also chorale-fantasias and variations besides free organ works, - toccatas, preludes and fugues, and passacaglias. Speaking of the German school of organists, Lang says that "the number of church and cathedral organists of the first water is so great that it is well nigh impossible to deal with them within the limitations of this book". 10

Some think that German Protestant art reached its highest point in this tremendous organ literature, even as Italian church music reached its zenith in the a cappella art of Palestrina (1525-1594). This is what Philipp Spitta has to say:

Als aesthetische Merkmale der wahren Kirchenmusik bezeichnete ich Erhabenheit und Unpersoenlichkeit, als ihr geschichtliches, die Entwicklung unter dem massgebenden Einfluss der Kirche. Die Protestantische Orgelmusik des 17. und der ersten Haelfte des 18. Jahrhunderts zeigt diese Merkmale deutlich. . . . Der warmen, athmenden, sinnlichen Schoenheit, der Antik anmuthenden Einfachheit, wie sie Palestrina's Compositionen zeigen, steht in der deutschen Orgelmusik eine Kunst gegenueber von rauherem Aeusseren, von einer duestern aber nachhaltigeren Kraft, einem abstracteren, aber tiefsinnigen Wesen. 11

It must be remembered that it was the "Kantoreien", the schools mentioned earlier, that spread this great literature of church music and awakened a love for it among the people. They were also indispensable in the leading of the congregational responses in the liturgical portions of

10. Ibid., p. 401.

11. "Die Wiederbelebung protestantischer Kirchenmusik auf geschichtlicher Grundlage", Zur Musik, pp. 40-41.

the service.

His . . . . Vor allem die Kantorei ist fast dreihundert Jahre lang der eigentliche Traeger des selbstaendig kuenstlerischen Wesens in Gottesdienst gewesen. . . . Dabei ist zu beachten, dasz der Kantorei nicht nur die sozusagen konzerthaften Einschuebe zu besonderer Anschmueckung von festlichen Gelegenheiten anvertraut gewesen sind, sondern dasz sie auch mindestens seit Luther's Deutsche Messe ihren festen, ja unentberlichen Platz in der Liturgie als Respons- und Antiphonarchor besessen hat, sodasz sie nicht etwa bloszen Gelegenheitsluxus bedeutete. 12

It remains yet to speak briefly of one more master whose work was in the highest tradition of the Lutheran Reformation, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). In his religious fervor and conviction Bach was a direct spiritual descendant of Luther. Combining this with his universal gifts and unsurpassed musical genius, he summed up all that Protestant music had produced in the preceding centuries and brought it once more to a magnificent flowering. He put his hand to all the forms, - Passion, cantata, Mass, motet, organ works based on the chorale, free organ works, besides many other types of instrumental works, and they all are masterpieces, the highest expression in their genre. All of his works show an unbelievable combination of perfect form with tender and highly expressive feeling. In the words of Lang, there is present in his works "the dual unity of ab-

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12. Hans Joachim Moser, "Die Wiederbelebung der Kantoreien und Kurrenden", Monatschrift fuer Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst, XXXI (December, 1926), pp. 373-374.

solute mathematics and absolute poetry".<sup>13</sup>

His sincere faithfulness to the ideals of the Reformation and his exalted work in its behalf seem all the more marvelous to us when we realize that he lived and worked in that period when the decline in church music, of which the main part of this paper will treat, had already set in.

"Johann Sebastian Bach offers one of the most remarkable cases in cultural history of isolation from the general artistic tendencies of his time. . . . Bach's art rests on the traditions of the German Reformation, which reached its highest manifestation in him, in the midst of the era of the Enlightenment." <sup>14</sup> In spite of the age in which he worked, however, so truly was he a man of the Lutheran Reformation, that for all times his work will remain the highest expression of religious fervor and conviction in music.

Bach and his position in the history of art can be adequately appreciated only in the light of Lutheran theology. The Lutheran Reformation was no mere intellectual housecleaning of doctrine, but an essential part of it was the application of pure doctrine to the life of every individual Christian. In answering the question, 'What does the grace of God in Christ Jesus mean for me in my everyday life?', Luther gave expression to a truly Christian philos-

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13. Op. cit., p. 494.

14. Ibid., p. 495

ophy of life. In a sermon on Luke 5, 1-11, Luther wrote,

Nun hat uns Gott sein Wort reichlich  
gegeben, dasz wir wohl und ohne alle Muehe  
alle unsere Werke und Thun in Gottes Wort  
fassen koennen. Denn wer den Glauben hat, das  
ist, wer sein Herz und Vertrauen auf Gottes  
Gnade, so er uns durch Christum bewiesen hat,  
setzt, der thue in seinem Beruf und Stande,  
was er wolle, er singe oder bete, esse oder  
schlafe, so ists alles wohl gethan. Denn er  
thuts ein Christenmensch, und glaubt an Chris-  
tum, und kann sagen: Ich will in Christus  
Namen lesen, beten, arbeiten, und meinem  
Herrn oder Frauen im Glauben dienen, und  
weisz dasz ich damit Gott im Himmel diene. 15

Glorifying God by serving the fellowman faithfully in what-  
ever calling or profession one found himself, - that was the  
Lutheran view of the calling of the Christian man. It was a  
God-pleasing view; it dignified every honest calling; it was  
the formula for a happy life, good for the baker and the  
coal miner, the housewife and the pastor, the student and  
the musician. The great German musicians of the seventeenth  
century were imbued with this spirit, and they produced the  
golden age of Lutheran church music whose climax came in  
Bach. That one of the greatest musicians of the ages should  
be endowed with a double portion of that solidly Lutheran  
spirit in an age in which the consciousness of the Chris-  
tians' calling was giving place to more worldly ideas of  
professional standing is nothing less than an act of divine  
goodness.

This realization of their Christian calling was of the

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15. Saemmtliche Schriften, XIII, Cols. 2216 f.

greatest importance to these Lutheran musicians. It gave purpose and goal to their artistic urges. And in so far as all Lutherans were aware of the common bond of Christian duty in whatever calling they were, they heard and appreciated and loved that music in the spirit in which it was given to them. Prof. Karl Hasse makes the following observations on the unity of Christian life in the seventeenth century:

Das kirchliche und das buergerliche Wesen durchdrangen sich in diesen Zeiten im protestantischen Deutschland noch so sehr gegenseitig, dasz von einer Trennung zwischen geistlicher und weltlicher Musik der ganzen Haltung noch nicht die Rede sein konnte. Der Musiker konnte seine volle, ungeteilte Persoenlichkeit in den Dienst der Kirche wie des buergerlichen Lebens stellen, unter Anwendung derselben musikalischen Formen und Stilarten. . . . Diese war ihm nicht etwas zum buergerlichen Leben Gegensaetzliches, in das man hineinfluechtet aus der Welt, da doch das kirchliche Wesen ihm eine ganz selbstverstaendliche Form war, die mitten im buergerlichen Leben darinstand.

Speaking of Bach in this connection, he writes:

Die protestantische, insbesondere lutherische Lebensauffassung durchdrang sein ganzes Leben. So brauchte er sich nicht einer kirchlichen Auffassung unterzuordnen, sondern konnte seine ganz persoenliche Anschauungsweise in der Kirche vertreten. Wie der Prediger seine persoenliche Ueberzeugung zum Ausdruck bringt, wenn er Gottes Wort auslegt, so auch Bach, so auch die Meister des 17. Jahrhunderts. 16

On looking over the Lutheran Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we see a church blessed not only

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16. "Evangelische Kirchenmusik und religioese Persoenlichkeit", Monatschrift fuer Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst, XXXVI (February, 1931), pp. 58-59.

with purity of doctrine, but also with a religious-cultural life that has never since been duplicated. The German cantor's art was based on the centuries-old liturgy of the Church which Luther had taken over and cleansed of the unscriptural infusions of the Roman Church; it was conditioned throughout by the chorale, the congregational song of the people. The total result was a religious culture that had an unbelievably exalting effect on the worship and life of the people. And behind it all stands Martin Luther, with his God-given sense of artistic and religious propriety.

## II. The Effects of Pietism

The greater part of the seventeenth century is known as the Age of Orthodoxy in the Lutheran Church. Lutheran schoolmen and professors set about systematizing the Biblical doctrines into a form more suitable for teaching and for opposing the tenets of the Roman Church. It was an age of dogmatics and dogmatical controversies, an age that was indeed necessary to establish firmly the pure Biblical doctrine, but an age that brought in its wake some rather unevangelical results to the Evangelical Church. This showed itself, for example, in the very legalistic means used to reestablish the Church after the devastations of the Thirty Years' War. The movement developed into a very one-sided one in which the Bible was regarded, by some, more highly as a compilation of God-given doctrines that must be upheld at all cost than as the power of God to an eternal life of salvation and a temporal life of sanctification. The emphasis was placed on the mind too much to the exclusion of the heart. This emphasis, originating with the schoolmen, ultimately came into the preaching of the individual pastor.

As a reaction to this formalistic orthodoxy, the Pietistic movement developed in the last quarter of the seven-

teenth century. "Pietism emphasized the duty of striving after personal and individual religious independence and collaboration and declared that religion is something altogether personal, that evangelical Christianity is present only where and in so far as it is manifested in Christian conduct." <sup>1</sup> Founder of the movement was Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), while August Herman Francke (1663-1727) led the movement to its climax in Germany. Many of the proposals for the improvement of the Church and the life of its people made by Spener were the very things needed to wake the Church out of its preoccupation with dogma alone. He proposed more Bible study by the people; encouragement of the people to take part in practical church work, mutual edification, and care for the brother's salvation; more emphasis on the Christian life; change in the method of preaching so as to build up the Christian life of the congregation. He succeeded in shifting "the center of interest from the maintenance of orthodox doctrine to conduct and practical piety, and from the objective validity of the verities of salvation and means of grace to the subjective conditions connected with them, their subjective ethical accountability then following as a necessary corollary". <sup>2</sup>

While Pietism achieved great results as a justifiable reaction against mere formalism, the seeds of degeneration

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1. Carl Mirbt, "Pietism", Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IX, p. 60.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

were quickly sown when the reaction went far beyond the point of necessity and justifiability. "The assumption that religious development was essentially fulfilled in the sphere of religious emotion prepared the way for an artificial excitation of this feeling, thus involving the danger of insincerity, self-deception, and sentimentalism, which, in the absence of self-discipline and sobriety, formed an easy transition to still worse aberrations." <sup>3</sup> This is exactly the course followed by Pietism. Spener urged his followers to meet in small groups separate from the rest of the congregation for Bible study, and thus little churches within the congregation were formed. The members of these groups came to regard individual experience as the chief criterion for true Christianity, and anyone who did not have such experiences or could not recall the date and time of his conversion after the example of Francke was looked on with suspicion. The healthy and sane Lutheran view of the Christian man's duty in his calling gave way to the view that subjective experience was the goal of the Christian life. So much importance was attached to this that the Pietistic life was one of anxiety and depression, for its Christianity depended on the constant renewal of experience.

As a result of this emphasis on the subjective element in religion, Pietism stressed private devotion, with its

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3. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

pious contemplation and communion with God, to the detriment of public worship, with its common use of the means of grace and common prayer and praise to God in the liturgy. In public worship the objective and sacramental parts of the liturgy were underestimated, as the subjective and sacrificial came to the fore. All liturgical forms were judged solely according to the subjective results they produced. Emotional piety was the order of the day, and all churchly forms that hindered its free and effective expression were ruled out.

Naturally Pietism combated worldliness, but it did more than that; the world and everything in it was looked upon as poisonously sinful, - to be strictly avoided. Into this category fell the adiaphora, and consequently Pietists had a strictly legalistic code of conduct. But more important for this discussion, also to be avoided was all art, science, and secular culture. Thus in the very Church that was fostering such a great musical culture, a movement arose to put an end to such worldly practice.

With its subjectivism and its declared opposition to liturgical form and the arts, Pietism took its stand against all beauty and art in worship. The situation is graphically described by Dr. Oskar Soehngen:

Wo der Pietismus auch im Gottesdienst nur die Unmittelbarkeit der Begegnung der Einzelseele mit dem Heiland gelten laeszt, ist jeder Liturgie, die von dem Bewusstsein der objectiven Gegenwart Gottes lebt, die Grundlage entzogen;

mit der Liturgie aber musste swangslaeufig die liturgie-gebundene Kirchenmusik fallen, mit der Kirchenmusik die ueberlieferten Formen des Musik- und Kirchenwesens; die fuerstlichen Kapellen wurden aufgeloeset, die Stadtpfeifer verloren ihr Brot, die Kantoreien und Singchoere versanken in Bedeutungslosigkeit, in den Schulen wurde nur noch Choralsingen geuebt, und das Domkapitel zu Naumburg konnte im Jahre 1708 ueber die Frage beraten, ob man die ueberfluessige Figuralmusik vor und nach der Predigt ueberhaupt einstellen solle - kurz, ein musikalischer Bildersturm, an dessen Auswirkungen wir noch heute zu tragen haben. 4

In Prussia the Pietistic Frederick Wilhelm I (ruled 1713-1740) decreed "'dasz in den staedten sowohl als auf dem Lande das Absingen der Gebete und des Segens, wie auch der Worte der Einsetzung des heiligen Abendmahles ein fuer allemal abgestellt' werden solle". 5 It is not known for what purpose the Prussian King made his decree, but one might suppose that this is an example of the Pietistic lack of appreciation for artistic forms in worship. Beginning with Luther, the Gregorian chant had been valued very highly in the Lutheran Church as an important means for proclaiming the Word of God, but with the new emphasis on forms in divine worship only in so far as they produced conversion experiences, these plainsong settings soon fell into disuse.

Pietism, of course, realized the great value of music in the church for the promotion of its individual experience program. For this purpose one type of music was fostered

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4. "Evangelische Kirchenmusik", Das Atlantisbuch der Musik, p. 865.

5. Ibid., p. 862.

exclusively, - the individualized spiritual song. The pious meditation so heartily endorsed by the movement brought about an unprecedented production of religious poetry. The number went into the thousands, and it has been estimated that there were ten thousand of such sacred poems by the beginning of the eighteenth century. In all of these the emphasis was on the individual. Already in the earlier part of the century the hymns, notably those of Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676), had shown the change from the "Wir" of the early Protestant hymnody to "Ich". But the "Ich" of Gerhardt and his contemporaries was still the congregational "Ich", speaking for the body of the believers in Christ. Pietism produced sacred poetry in which "Ich" was used in its most subjective and individualized sense, speaking for one particular person alone. Its emotional excesses were another feature of this poetry, as, for instance, in its dwelling on the details of the extreme suffering of the Savior. In this it offended good taste, decency, and, paradoxically enough, true piety.

Lang makes some interesting and amusing observations on the individualized nature of this body of sacred verse:

One Mecklenburg pastor collected in 1716 songs for one hundred and forty-seven different professions. In 1737 a Saxon clergyman published a universal song-book in which songs were to be found for christenings, marriages, and other family events, others appropriate for difficult law suits, for lameness, blindness, deafness, or for the affliction of having too many children, and for noblemen, ministers, officials, lawyers,

barbers, bakers, fishermen, teamsters, merchants' apprentices, and many other professions. In his Avertissement the author requested contributions for a few missing species, such as songs for clowns, tightrope walkers, magicians, thieves, gypsies, and rogues. <sup>6</sup>

The music connected with this sacred poetry was completely influenced by its individualized nature. In place of the congregational chorale there arose a spiritual song of the aria or solo-song type. The true Reformation chorale had at its basis the universality of the folk-song type, while this spiritual song sponsored by the Pietists was styled after the solo art song with its personal emphasis on the individual performer. With this subjectivity, the spiritual song was no longer a truly congregational song; it was entirely opposed to the spirit of the Reformation chorale. "The church melody as softened down into the spiritual aria with its sentimental or 'hearts-revealing' nature stands as far removed from the compact force and the sonorous full tones of the folk-song, as Pietism, whose favorite mode it becomes, from the Reformation." <sup>7</sup>

These melodies of the aria type, used to express the excessively subjective thoughts of Pietistic poetry, were written to cater to a public taste that was being degraded by the sentimentalism and superficiality of the secular song. Sie "waren vom Geiste der Zeit dictirt, einer Zeit,

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6. Op. cit., pp. 470-471.

7. H.A. Koestlin, "Sacred Music" (Part 2), Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, X, p. 157.

die ueber der Oper und dem galanten Tonspiel der Instrumente, die musikalischen Traditionen der Protestantismus, das Vermaechtniss eines Luther, Hasler, Eccard laengst vergessen hatte". 8

In 1704 there appeared in Halle, one of the foremost centers of the Pietistic movement, an important hymnal, containing many of the new Pietistic spiritual songs, as well as older hymns, some of them with new, sentimentalized melodies. It was edited by Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen (1670-1739), the son-in-law of Francke, and appeared under the title, "Geistreiches Gesangbuch, den Kern alter und neuer Lieder, wie auch die Noten der unbekanntenen Melodeyen in sich haltend". In his work, Evangelische Kirchengesang, Winterfeld speaks of the melodies employed in this hymnal and gives examples of the replacements of the old melodies made in it. 9 Of the new melodies in general he says,

Stellen wir die zu Kirchenweisen umgewandelten Volksmelodien des ersten Jahrhunderts der Kirchenreinigung neben die tanzhaften Weisen des beginnenden 18. Jahrhunderts, so werden wir nicht zweifelhaft sein koennen, dasz in jenen das echte Gepraege des Kirchlichen obwalte, waehrend diese, wo wir die Dichtung nicht kennen, eine ganz andere Bestimmung zu haben uns scheinen muessen. 10

Very interesting is the judgment made by the theological faculty of Wittenberg University on the Freylinghausen

8. Wilhelm Langhans, Die Geschichte der Musik, I, p. 425.

9. See pp. 21-22 for examples of the old and new melodies for "O Jesu, mein Braeutgam".

10. Quoted in Langhans, op. cit., p. 427.

## Darmstaedter Gesangbuch, 1698

0 Je - su, mein Braeut-gam, wie ist mir so

wohl; dein' Lie-be, die macht mich so trun-ken und

voll! 0 se - li - ge Stun - den, ich ha - be ge-

fun-den, was e - wig er - freu-en und saet-ti-gen soll.

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## Freylinghausen Gesangbuch, 1704

0 Je - su, mein Braeut-gam, wie ist mir so

wohl; dein' Lie- be, die macht mich so trun-ken und

voll! 0 se - li - ge Stun - den, ich ha - be ge-

fun-den, was e - wig er - freu-en und saet-ti-gen soll.

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Gesangbuch. This body evidently saw very clearly in the Pietistic melody the germs of the decay of church music.

Es sind die Melodeyen bei einem evangelischen Lutherischen Gesangbuch dergestalt zu ordiniren, dasz die Gesaenge sowohl in ihrem metro, als darauf gesetzten Compositionen und Noten, etwas ernsthaftes, andaechtiges und gottseliges in sich fassen, nicht aber auf eine ueppige, weltliche Gesaenge hinauslaufen. Denn es ist allerdings in der Music, darinnen die Lieder gesetzt sind und gesungen werden, etwas wodurch das menschliche Herz sowohl in Freude als Trauer gesetzt, und also durch eine gewisse springende und tanzende Art von Melodeyen wohl gar in eine empfindliche Veraenderung und Anfang einer Raserei gebracht werden kann; da denn diese und noch mehrere Uebestaende es nicht wohl verstatten wollen, solche springende, huepfende und leichtsinnige Lieder, sowohl in der Kirche singen zu lassen, als denen Leuten zu ihrer Hausandacht zu recommendiren und in die Haende zu legen, maassen dieses sowohl wider die Gravitaet und Hoheit der Sache, als auch der Gewohnheit der alten und bisherigen evangelischen Kirche laeuft, als welche viel von einer andaechtigen und gravitaetischen Melodey gehalten, wie man aus dem christlichen Glauben und denen Liedern, "Ach Gott vom Himmel", "Eine Feste Burg", benebst andern genugsam ersehen kann; dahingegen man unter allem Gesaengen Lutheri und anderer reinen Lehren kein einziges auf dactylische Verse, oder eine sonst gar sehr springende und huepfende Melodey gerichtes Lied antreffen und finden wird. 13

Under the influence of this new song, a great rift developed between congregational singing and the art music of the Church. No longer did the music based on the chorale have a vital connection with the congregation, because congregations, for the most part, were completely taken in by the spiritual song. People no longer felt the impact

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13. Quoted in Langhans, op. cit., p. 425.

or even had the desire to hear the great music of the two-centuries' heritage of the Church of the Reformation. Indeed, the church authorities frequently advised their members who could not sit patiently and listen to such music when it was used in the services to pass the time in reading their prayer books! <sup>14</sup> Adding to this rift was the declining influence of the cantors. Formerly the cantors and their work had been so universally respected in the Lutheran Church of Germany that even the secularizing influences of the Italian opera had long been held off. But this age saw in the cantor only a man whose duty it was to provide the necessary church music, his background or training making no difference. Accordingly, when men were chosen for that position whose training had been carried out in the purely secular fields of music, and whose art did not breathe the spirit of Lutheran worship, the cantors and their schools lost their leavening influence among the people.

In the face of this hostile atmosphere, the work of Bach seems all the more remarkable to us, - for it was in this age that his life and work fell. He most certainly was a stranger to the age. Speaking of the work of Bach and his contemporaries of the same mind, Lang says,

At this point, when Protestant church art was again seriously threatened, this time by Pietism, as it had been previously by the Calvinistic branch of Protestantism, the artistic

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14. Lang, op. cit., p. 472.

genius of the nation came once more to the rescue; it staged a last stand which was to culminate in the most sublime manifestation of Lutheran faith and Protestant tradition. 15

If "artistic genius" is the correct term for that which saved Lutheran art from being overwhelmed completely by Pietism, certainly inherent in it was the conviction that the traditional Protestant faith was the true basis for church art, admitting, of course, the importance of a more personal relation to God than that of a dead orthodoxy. But besides any "artistic genius", there was in these men who brought the Lutheran musical tradition to its climax that consciousness of Christian duty and calling which Luther had so strongly emphasized. Pure doctrine and its application to the life of the Christian man gave the basis and direction for artistic practice in the church; Pietism, obscuring pure doctrine for a false view of the Christian life, was obscuring and setting aside musical artistry in the church.

To what extent was Bach affected by the Pietistic spirit of his age? While he most certainly was opposed to the anti-cultural spirit, the emotional excesses, and the negativistic attitude of Pietism, it cannot be denied that his works show traces of its influence. Bach was opposed to a lifeless, formal orthodoxy; that is not Pietistic, however, but rather, evangelical. The Pietistic influence shows

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15. Ibid., p. 472.

itself in some of the lyric passages of his Passion and cantata texts, for which he was not directly responsible, but which he, nevertheless, used. There are occasional emotional outbursts that have a definite Pietistic flavor. Another example is furnished by the Musical Song Book, published in Leipzig in 1736, and edited by Georg Christian Schemelli, containing nine hundred and fifty-four spiritual songs and arias. To this collection Bach contributed several original melodies and a number of arrangements. Charles Sanford Terry, in his article, "Choral", in Grove's Dictionary, makes this observation:

Pietism, indeed, connoted for the Choral the end of its creative period, a fact strikingly illustrated in the case of Bach. . . . Unapproachable in his treatment of the ancient melodies, as his preference for them is patent, Bach's original hymn tunes (e.g. No. 42 of the Christmas Oratorio) are of the aria type, and, if they cannot be said to be wholly uncongregational, distinctly lack the characteristics of an effective congregational hymn. <sup>16</sup>

In historical references to the declining artistic life of the Church in this time, Pietism and Rationalism are often mentioned in the same breath. Certainly the two are separate movements with many fundamental differences between them, but they also have some points in common. In its attitude toward the Bible and revealed religion, Pietism was soundly Christian, while on this score Rationalism was essentially pagan. But together they were opposed to

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16. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., I, p. 640.

Lutheran orthodoxy, and together they insisted on a religion of practical morality.

The sincerest Pietism indirectly aided the rapid growth of the Enlightenment in Germany, not only in its contempt for culture, by giving the younger generation no adequate training to cope with enlightenment, but also through its neglect of such education, by driving those of scholarly inclinations into the rationalistic camp. <sup>17</sup>

While, therefore, the two are distinct movements, and Pietism cannot be said to be the cause of the Enlightenment, yet with its indifference to the maintenance of pure doctrine and sound education therein, Pietism provided fertile ground for the spread of Rationalistic thought. The effects of the two on church life seem therefore to be the same, differing only in degree.

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17. Mirbt, op. cit., p. 65.

### III. Rationalism in the Church

The period of Rationalism, known in the history of German theology and philosophy more distinctively as the "Aufklaerung" or the Enlightenment, "signifies a phase of historical evolution in Europe which may be characterized as marking the beginning of the modern period of secular culture, in contrast to the theological spirit that constituted the regulating principle of society in the preceding epoch".<sup>1</sup> The Enlightenment was the final and victorious step in the efforts of many centuries, beginning with the Renaissance, to secularize all life and thought and free it from the yoke of the Church. In its philosophical background was the rationalism of DesCartes, who rejected all that could not be demonstrated; the sensualism of Hobbes and Locke, who based all knowledge on the experience of the senses; the mechanistic theories of Leibnitz; and that crass materialism that denied the existence of the soul and tried to overthrow all arguments for the existence of God.

The new movement was one which upheld above all things the glory and omnipotence of reason. It was diametrically opposed to the Church's ideals of faith in a divine reve-

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1. E. Troeltsch, "The Enlightenment", Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IV, p. 141.

lation and to the supernatural religious elements that were the guiding forces in life. It sought the "explanation of the world on the basis of universally valid factors of knowledge and an ordering of life toward universally valid ends".<sup>2</sup> The struggle was between the dogma of revelation and the dogma of reason, and as the men of the Church came more and more under the impact of the new movement, the Church's dogma of faith and revelation was altered to meet the demands of the dogma of reason.

Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) attempted mediation between Rationalism and Christianity and held that the existence of an all-wise God could be proven by reason. Christian Wolff (1679-1754) stressed the need of a practical morality to secure temporal and eternal happiness and held that revelation was real only in so far as it harmonized with natural religion. Hermann Reimarus (1694-1768) rejected all revelation, tried to undermine the Biblical-historical foundations of Christianity, and made natural religion the criterion of all religious practice. In short, the Biblical doctrines of original sin and salvation were thrown out; the only thing retained was what man could know by himself, - the duty to lead a moral life. "Man is prevailingly good by nature; at any rate he possesses the moral powers to suppress the evil and thereby to make himself pleasing to God."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Ibid.

3. O.W. Heick, History of Protestant Theology, p. 78.

Unfortunately the strength of the German Protestant Church had been misdirected and spent in the field of purely intellectual orthodoxy, and Pietism had not helped matters along with its misdirected emphasis on practical morality. Consequently the Enlightenment was swift in moving in and taking over. The very roots of the Church, the divinely revealed doctrines, were attacked, and under this impact the Church and all religious life soon fell.

Both orthodoxy and Pietism were attacked by the Enlightenment, and under the onslaught of liberal reasoning Church and religious life declined, for tolerance dulls the edge of the weapons of a militant church. Luther's Volkskirche, the people's church, became a thing of the past when secular interests rose above religious in setting free the human spirit. <sup>4</sup>

Jesus Christ became nothing more than the teacher and example of the ethical ideal. The Church was regarded as a purely human institution for dispensing the great Teacher's ethical religion of reason, and its sacraments were looked upon as mere symbols.

With the coming of the Enlightenment the very conditions which promoted an inspiring church music art were removed. True Lutheran Christians could sing songs of praise to God for His grace, songs of confident trust, and songs asking for mercy in Christ Jesus. If the church of the Enlightenment sang what it believed, it could only sing songs that would induce man to save himself. The members of the

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4. Lang, op. cit., p. 700.

Church of the Reformation found their great source of strength and comfort and joy in coming together in common worship for the use of the means of grace and for offering their sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving to God. It was to beautify, elevate, and inspire these sacrifices of worship that church music found its *raison d'être*. The congregation appreciated and was edified by the music of the Church because it was united with the musicians in that Christian fellowship which strove in its Spirit-driven way to honor God to the best of its ability. What could the Rationalistic church offer in common worship but the words of man praising the worth of men, trying to raise the spirits of those striving after the ethical ideal, and to whom was the congregation giving honor but itself? Such a congregation could find no impelling force in music of Christian devotion. It required music that would induce a self-satisfied feeling of some pious emotion. And finally, those makers of music who had in the ages past put all their technical and artistic abilities into the service of God out of that heartfelt sense of Christian calling and duty had disappeared. For a church waving the banners of natural religion could not make its members conscious of the life in Christ with its joys and duties, and much less could it awaken a sense of Christian calling in professional musicians in whose ears the applause of a secularized public was ringing.

Furthermore, as man became the measure of all things and he was released from the authority of the doctrines of the Church, each seeking his ethical religion in his own way, the liturgy of the Church ceased to have any meaning or force. What liturgy remained after the Pietistic invasion was soon disposed of by Rationalistically inclined churchmen. "Church elders and municipal councils sought to simplify the services, making them 'a matter of the heart', instead of 'external splendor'." <sup>5</sup> In a study of the sources of information available on church life during the period of Rationalism, Paul Graff declares that very little is known about the church services of the time. However, from local church reports of the period, some information has come to light. He gives an example of a sermon outline on the Christmas story of Luke 2, containing nothing but pious thoughts. Concerning liturgical practice mentioned in the reports he says,

Auch vor dem Abendmahl selbst wird all-  
gemein eine kuerzere Ansprache gehalten 'um  
die noethige feierliche Stimmung zu erwecken',  
damit die 'Abendmahlsgaenger' eine 'hohe christ-  
liche Freudigkeit' erfasst. Eine eigentliche  
Liturgie auszer Vater Unser und Einsetzungs-  
worten war in zufolge der genannten Verfuegung  
von 1800 nicht mehr vorhanden, doch werden die  
Einsetzungsworte noch mancherwaerts gesungen. <sup>6</sup>

J.F. Ohl gives an excellent summary of the attitude of

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5. Ibid., p. 701.

6. "Neue Quellen zur Erforschung des Rationalismus",  
Monatschrift fuer Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst, XXXII  
(April-May, 1927), pp. 107-108.

### Rationalism to the liturgy:

Whilst Pietism regarded the historic service as too objective and sacramental, and therefore broke with its fixed forms rather than with its contents, Rationalism rejected both its forms and its contents. What sort of appreciation for the Church Year could a theology have that based its belief not on the great historic facts of redemption, but on its own speculations? How could such a religion of reason permit the Service on its sacramental side to remain what it originally was in the Lutheran Church, - a real communication of Divine grace through the audible and visible Word? What spiritual pleasure could it find in the hymns and prayers and liturgical formularies in which the living faith begotten by Word and Sacrament was once wont to bring its sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise? Or how could it even understand the meaning of a Cultus with whose history it did not care to become familiar, and that stood for a past to which it was absolutely indifferent? <sup>7</sup>

The very basis for the development of music in the Church was taken away in the destruction of the liturgy. Spitta says, "Kirchenmusik gehoert in den Gottesdienst, sie ist durch die Form der Liturgie bedingt und kann aus dieser nicht herausgeloeest werden ohne den wichtigsten Theil ihrer Wirkung, ihrer Verstaendlichkeit einzubueszen." <sup>8</sup> There could indeed no longer be any true church music, for the true concept of the Church was entirely missing.

Wo die "Kirche" tot ist, wo das Wissen darum verlorenggegangen ist, dasz die Kirche durch den Heiligen Geist als eine "Gemeinschaft

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7. "The Liturgical Deterioration of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association, IV, p. 71. See this study for a full discussion of the liturgical decline, including also extracts from agendas of the period.

8. Op. cit., p. 34.

der Heiligen" gebaut wird, wo man die Kirche darum, wie in der Zeit der Aufklaerung, fuer einen Zweckverband zur Pflege des religioesen Lebens erklaert, in dem Gottesdienst nur eine "Zusammenkunft" sieht und die Predigt zur "Rede" degradiert, kann auch von einer Kirchenmusik im eigentlichen Sinne nicht mehr die Rede sein. <sup>9</sup>

Under such destructive influences, the music of the Church was led into a complete downfall. Speaking of the work of Bach in this hostile age, Blume says,

Seine spaeten Kantaten ragen als letzte Urkunden eines vergangenen Geistes in einer Zeit, die sie nicht mehr versteht und wuerdigt; die evangelische Kirchenmusik bueszt ihre letzte Wurzel ein und erscheint fortan nicht mehr als Kern und Krone der deutschen Musik, sondern als Nebengebiet und Tummelplatz fuer kleine Geister. <sup>10</sup>

People were not interested in art, especially a church art. Their minds were taken up by mechanical marvels, the scientific discoveries of the age, and the literature propounding the new Rationalistic tendencies, all of these to a certain extent displacing the influence of music.

The picture facing us then is an extremely dismal one. The conviction and faith which stood behind the music of Bach was entirely lacking in his contemporaries, so that during his lifetime his music was not appreciated. Bach's music and that of his great predecessors in the Lutheran tradition was relegated to the shelf of forgotten antiquities. Very few of Bach's own pupils understood his music or

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9. Soehngen, op. cit., p. 864.

10. Quoted in Soehngen, loc. cit.

had any respect for the tradition in which he wrote. His successors at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, Gottlob Harrer (cantor 1750-1755) and Johann Friederich Doles (cantor 1756-1789) were definitely second-rate musicians, and as church composers, hardly that high on the scale. Men such as Adolph Scheibe, a noted critic of the time, and Johann Adam Hiller<sup>11</sup> (cantor at the Thomasschule 1789-1801) held that Bach's polyphonic style was entirely out of keeping with the Rationalistic ideal of the imitation of nature. "The new compositions showed an unbelievably rapid change from the monumental polyphonic style to a simple, uninspired, cerebral music, and the old compositions were discarded and forgotten."<sup>12</sup>

The Rationalistic spirit carried to further extremes the set-back already given the chorale under Pietistic influence. Schering has this to say:

Am schwersten litt das Kirchenlied. Wo alles auf Befreiung von den religioesen Ueberzeugung der Vaeter und blosze Erbaulichkeit abzielte, hatten Luther's kraeftige Glaubenslieder schweren Stand. Mit einer zeitgemaeszen "Reinigung" ihre Texte verbanden sich kecke Eingriffe in die musikalische Struktur, und wie man sogar "neutrale" Kirchenlieder fuer Christen aller Bekentnisse dichtete, so schuf man auch Weisen, deren musikalischer Inhalt neutral, d.h. characterlos war. Ein verheerendes Modernisieren und Nivellieren risz ein. Der choral ist zum empfindsamen Erbauungsliede geworden, und hat keinen anderen zweck mehr, als Saenger und Gemeinde in Ruehrung zu versetzen.<sup>13</sup>

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11. See p. 54 for a sketch of Hiller's life.

12. Lang, op. cit., pp. 574-575.

13. Op. cit., p. 407.

The spiritual song used in the services was very much the same as the secular art song, except that there was no real art in the former because all the rhythmic charm of the latter was absent. Even the old chorale melodies that were used were "improved upon" according to the new trend, so that they would be more practicable for popular use. The polyrhythm, in which lay much of the charm and force of the old tunes, was changed to isorhythm, the simplification and evenness of which often had a very weakening effect. The songs could not be sung according to the individual character of the verse, but according to the ideas then current about what was fitting to the dignity of worship. Accordingly, the songs were sung at so slow and dragging a tempo that rhythm was dispensed with altogether. Long fermatas at the end of each line added to the distortions. In the preface of a Choralbuch of 1799, Justin Heinrich Knecht wrote that the congregational hymn was "the slowest song that can fairly be conceived".<sup>14</sup> "J.S. Curwen, when in Germany in the 1880's, timed some of the singing and found one verse of an eight-lines long metre took 2 and three-quarter minutes."<sup>15</sup> What a far cry was the weak emotionalism of the Rationalistic spiritual song from the virile force of the congregational chorale of the Reformation age!

The Passion and oratorio became works for the theater

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14. Koestlin, op. cit., p. 157.

15. Percy A. Scholes, "Chorale", The Oxford Companion to Music, p. 163.

rather than the church. Very often the Biblical words were thrown out altogether and contemplative poetry was used. Sometimes the Biblical text was partially kept, as in Berthold Heinrich Brockes' (1680-1747) very popular Passion text which appeared in 1712, but this work was more an opera libretto than a devotional Passion text.<sup>16</sup> When texts such as these were set to music, they could not be called church music, but only religious music, in as much as they were connected with Biblical events and characters. Such composers as Georg Friedrich Haendel (1685-1759), Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), and Karl Heinrich Graun (1701-1759) set such religious texts to music. Their works might be classified as religious music drama for the theater or concert hall.

Church choirs and their choral music showed a steady decline. The German Lutheran adaptation of the old Latin a cappella motet disappeared completely.

Dafuer erscheint eine neue Motette, die Motette der Doles, Hiller, Rolle, Homilius, Schicht, Tuerk. Sie schwankt zwischen Homophonie und Polyphonie, unter Bevorzugung der ersteren, und bewegt sich in den Bahnen jenes gefaelligen Liedstils den die Komponisten des Gellertkreises (Graun, Quantz, Phil. Em. Bach) fuer religioese Affekte gepraegt und fuer ausreichend befunden hatten. Ihr jetzt auffaellig staerkes Hervortreten gegenueber der Kantata und die geringe Auffuehrungsschwierigkeit erklaert sich aus der Not und dem Unvermoegen der Zeit, die Kirchenchoere auf der alten Hoehe zu halten. Der Verfall dieser vollzieht

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16. Lang, op. cit., p. 480.

sich im selben Masse, als weltliche Singvereine auftreten und mit pseudogeistlichen "biblischen Dramen" (Rolle) Saenger wie Hoerer ins weltliche Konzert locken. Er zeigt sich in der wachsenden Interesselosigkeit der Gemeinden fuer alte Einrichtungen wie Kantorei und Kurrende, aber auch in der immer haeufigeren Beteiligung der Schulchoere an weltlichen Auffuehrungen. <sup>17</sup>

The Protestant schools completely lost their identification as the carriers of the great church art. The old, masterful cantors disappeared, and in their place came incompetent teachers. Very often the authorities cut the allowances of the schools and choirs so much that it was absolutely impossible for them to continue. Bach's troubles in Leipzig were caused by such situations, giving him great difficulty in getting the necessary personnel for his choirs. Johann Adam Hiller realized well enough that conditions were far from what they should have been during his cantorship at the Thomasschule, but he wrote in the Berlinische Musikalische Zeitung of March 3, 1793, "that he was almost helpless in the face of the neglected musical liturgy and it was not within his power to change matters for the better". <sup>18</sup> Moser writes of these schools,

Erst die Niedergang unserer Kirche unter dem Einfluss des Rationalismus seit 1750 hat auch diese weitausgebaute Organization, welcher vor allem die Tonkuenstlerische Hochbluete Sachsens und Thueringens von G. Rhau ueber Joh. Eccard bis zu Telemann zu verdanken gewesen ist, bis auf geringe Reste zerstoert. <sup>19</sup>

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17. Schering, op. cit., pp. 406-407.

18. Lang, op. cit., p. 702.

19. Op. cit., p. 374.

Also a victim was the glorious organ tradition of the Lutheran Church. That most distinctive form, the chorale-prelude, became a little religious piece under the influence of the spiritual song. Spitta complains because people didn't appreciate the treasury of chorale-preludes, especially those of Bach, for it showed that the spirit of Protestant music must have been altogether lost. If people didn't recognize or remember the melody of the chorale in the prelude, they certainly didn't remember the words and couldn't be affected by the symbolism of the chorale in its setting. He also complains about the fact that, from about 1800 on, the organ had no further liturgical use in the Church than to introduce and accompany the singing. <sup>20</sup>

In general, however, the organ art of the eighteenth century escaped total eclipse because of the carry-over of the great traditions from Bach to his pupils. But the true spirit of devotional artistry had gone, and, as Schering states, "viel Kraftloses, Hausgebackenes steht in den Fugen und Choralvorspielen der Aufklaerungszeit". <sup>21</sup> The playing of the organ in church was supposed to impart and build up some sort of pious and meditative mood in the hearer, and to that end the organist was directed to play slowly and always legato. Prof. Karl Hasse says of the organ style of the period,

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20. Op. cit., p. 51.

21. Op. cit., p. 409. Cf. also the discussion of Rinck and the example of his work, pp. 55-56

Die Organisten blieben noch lange bei ihrer Bachnachfolge, wobei allerdings ihr Begriff von Bach's Stil alles lebendige Erfassen ausschaltete und eine unpersoenliche Trockenheit und steife Kuenstlichkeit uebrig blieb, die hoechstens unter dem Einfluss der klassisch-romantischen Tonsprache hie und da einer unorgelmaeszigen Weichheit wich, die sich seit jenem Zeiten in unzuehligen Stuecken im Character des "andante religioso" weiterentwickelt hat. 22

We see then in the Protestant Church of the age of the Enlightenment a church music practice that was but a weak and insipid imitation of the great seventeenth century traditions. The Church was no longer the home of a vital church art, and because of its watered-down nature it could not produce or give inspiration to any great church musicians or composers. It is worthy of note that after the death of Bach, the field of church music belonged exclusively to the Roman Church. The period of Rationalism had relatively little effect upon the Catholic traditions of church music, because the ancient liturgy of the Church was kept strictly intact.

A concise summary of the entire decline in Protestant church music during this period is given by Spitta in an essay written about the middle of the nineteenth century:

Wer die Entwicklung der Musik in der protestantischen Kirche Deutschlands von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart studirt, musz zu dem Ergebnisz gelangen, dasz eine protes-

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22. "Die geistigen und religioesen Grundlagen der Orgelmusik seit Bach", Monatschrift fuer Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst, XXXIII (January, 1928), pp. 11-12.

tantische Kirchenmusik schon seit hundert Jahren nicht mehr besteht. . . .

Einen groszen Theil der Schuld tragen die Wandlungen welche das kirchliche Leben im vorigen Jahrhundert zu bestehen hatte. Erst suchte der Pietismus die Musik auf das denkbar kleinste Gebiet zu beschraenken, dan entzog der Rationalismus dem kuenstler jede Moeglichkeit eines begeisterten Aufschwunges. Am ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts zeigt das, was man gewohnheitsmaeszig fuer die Kirche componirte, eine solche Flachheit und Stillosigkeit, dasz man an dieser Periode am liebsten geschlossenen Auges vorueber-eilt. 23

#### IV. The Effects of Musical Development

Other influences on church music came from the course taken by the musical art in its historical development. The contrapuntal polyphonic style, which was so admirably used by the German masters of the seventeenth century in bringing Lutheran church music to its high level, was gradually abandoned. In its place came the homophonic style, with its emphasis on the upper voice, a style which composers thought much better suited for the more personal ideas they wanted to express in music. This change is often called the homophonic or monodic revolution. The earliest wide-spread evidences of this change were found in the Italian opera.

The seventeenth century saw the rise of the great opera schools of Italy. Their aim was to achieve a great aesthetic effect by the blending of poetry, music, and drama in one work, and in this the emphasis was, of course, on the solo song. After the first public operatic theater was founded in Venice in 1637, opera became a democratic institution, and, with its displays of magnificent scenery and virtuoso singers, its vogue soon spread all over Europe. It had a tremendous effect on musical art itself. Lang says, "The music drama impressed itself so firmly on the whole field of musical composition that we can safely say that

all important innovations, from the early seventeenth century to our day, can be attributed to operatic influences." 1

With the beginning of the eighteenth century the influence of operatic music became even greater with the appearance of the famous Neapolitan opera school. Its emphases were on the da capo aria (aria using the a-b-a scheme), recitatives as the element linking together the arias, and an excessive use of virtuoso singing in the bravura style.

These influences had relatively little effect on Protestant church music in Germany during the seventeenth century. With both people and the authoritative cantors so well grounded in the Reformation traditions, the Lutheran Church remained the center of musical life in Protestant Germany during that century. However, with the weakening of the Church under the effects of Pietism and Rationalism, and with the decline of the great tradition of the cantors and their schools, it was inevitable that the forward march of the operatic style should have a telling effect on Lutheran church music.

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722), Bach's predecessor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, felt this influence keenly, and though he was suspicious of the operatic elements, he realized that a reconciliation between church music and the

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1. Op. cit., p. 442.

strong operatic influences was necessary.

The problem to be faced, then, was the future of the Lutheran chorale as the prime principle of construction in Protestant church music as opposed to the forms and technique of opera. In this struggle the chorale lost. . . . Recitative, da capo aria, and other operatic elements appeared and displaced the chorale as formgiving principle, retaining it merely as a traditional ending. <sup>2</sup>

A great fusion took place in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach used operatic elements, especially the recitative and the da capo aria, very freely in his Passions and cantatas. Lang states that these works "represent the final synthesis of all that the baroque gave to music". <sup>3</sup> It would seem then that with this fusion church music was set for a great revitalization instead of a decline. But we must remember that Bach, in his solidly grounded Lutheran convictions, in his desire to use all of his great genius to the glory of God, and in his unique sense of the spirit of worship and devotion in church music, was really a man of the Reformation age and not of his own. He could use all these foreign elements and put them to perfect use for the worship of the Church, but not in his age or in any to come was there ever again another man of the stature of Bach. And so we have the paradox of Lutheran church music reaching the climax of its development in the very age in which theological, philosophical, and musical influences were causing

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2. Ibid., p. 478.

3. Ibid.

a serious decay in its spirit and structure.

The whole case of operatic influences versus church music is put in very simple terms by Schering, when he writes,

Nunmehr besteht die gewoenliche Sontagskantate, sofern sie nicht Vers um Vers als reine Choralkantate angelegt ist, aus Bibelwort, Choral und freier gereimter Dichtung, deren Vortrag, auf da-capo-Arie, Arioso, und Rezitative verteilt, Solosaengern anheimfaellt. Die Gefahr bestand, durch diese Wendung ins unkirchliche zu fallen. 4

"Unkirchliche" is the word for it. Under the hands of the Rationalistically inclined church musicians of the eighteenth century operatic influences came to the fore, and what passed for church music was, in most cases, really religious operatic music. Concerning Passion settings especially, J.A. Fuller-Maitland writes,

In this, as in all other branches of music, solidity and grandeur, massive effects, and the solemnity of piled-up harmonies were sacrificed to a gentle, not to say effeminate style, which aimed solely at stirring an amount of emotion which could be indulged without transgressing the limits of good breeding. What had been dignified became merely pompous; and for the poignant expression of Bach, the later composers gave soft inanities which were occasionally plaintive, but never pathetic. The tendency to this weaker style came undoubtedly from the opera, which, in all countries, was under the same influence. 5

Two very revealing examples of this sentimental style are Die Pilgrimme auf Golgotha, a Passion-oratorio by Johann

4. Op. cit., p. 402.

5. "The Age of Bach and Handel", The Oxford History of Music, IV, p. 44.

Adolph Hasse (1699-1783), and Der Tod Jesu, a work of the same type by Karl Heinrich Graun (1701-1759). The same author writes of the former work,

The evil traditions of the opera and the silly sentimentality that was their consequence, here reached the very limits of the absurd. Four pilgrims provided with male names, although all four voices are soprano, are conducted to the sacred hill of Calvary by a 'Fuehrer' (bass), and their pious ejaculations, conveyed in a long series of trite airs, with an occasional concerted number in the most meager style of harmony for two sopranos and bass, make up the whole plan of the work. 6

In Graun's Der Tod Jesu we have a work that retained great popularity until very recent times. At the time of its publication in 1760 it was regarded as one of the greatest masterpieces of religious music, while Bach's Passion according to St. Matthew lay entirely neglected.

"Graun's work belongs to that period of German cultural history which tried to unite under the same banner rationalism and a sentimentalism which depicted the Passion of the Lord in a series of touching, tearful, and lamenting pictures equipped with edifying running comments." 7 The work contains some polyphonic choral writing that has dignity and grandeur, but most of the numbers are da capo arias which definitely show the operatic style with their stress on vocal display and Italian bravura singing.

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6. Ibid.

7. Lang, op. cit., p. 502.

The new homophonic style, however, found its widest adaptation in the new forms developed during the rationalistic eighteenth century. The psychological background of these forms lay in the late-baroque doctrine of the affections. With the coming of the Rationalistic outlook, man and his "affections", - his state of mind, his sorrows, his joys, and all his various emotions, became the subject of thought and of arts and letters. The purpose of music was made the faithful portrayal and expression of these affections. Imitation of nature was the byword. The old polyphonic style of composition did not suit those wanting to express these personal feelings in music. Vocal writers found the solution in the operatic da capo aria. For instrumental music the solution was not so easily found. The story of the development of a suitable instrumental form is long and detailed; suffice it to say here that on the basis of the da capo aria form a much more elaborate instrumental form was developed, - the sonata form. The evolution of this form was of the greatest significance for musical history, for it has dominated musical composition to this day.

Dr. Karl Hasse makes the following observation on the development of this form:

Sieht man naeher zu, so ergibt sich, dass es hier jedenfalls nicht um die Steigerung der Faehigkeit handelt, unmittelbar das Innere, das Persoenlich zur Aussprache zu bringen, sondern darum, durch die ueberlegene Disposition ueber

die Mittel darstellend das Verschiedenartigste deutlich zu machen. So hat man auch die Sonatenformen in Gegensatz zu den sogenannten linearen Formen der Bachzeit fuer das geeignete Mittel erklaert, das Individuelle, Subjective, Persoenliche zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Und doch erfordert gerade die Sonatenformen die Disposition ueber verscheidenartige, ja entgegengesetzte Gefuehlswelten, waehrend die alte Monodie mit ihrer Einheitlichen Motiwick und ihrer deklamatorischen Form viel eher ein unmittelbares Ausstroemen aus dem Inneren der einen, unteilbaren Persoenlichkeit beguenstigt. <sup>8</sup>

Thus instrumental music found in the sonata form, with its contrasting themes in the exposition section, its development section, and its recapitulation to the original thematic material, the form that was ideally suited for the expression of diversified personal feelings. As this form developed and attained universal popularity, instrumental music dominated the field of musical composition, and the succeeding classical and romantic eras saw the rise of the symphony, the string quartet, the piano sonata, besides smaller forms, which have remained to this day the most popular forms of musical expression.

The development and almost exclusive use of this form, the rationalistic basis of which made it unsuited for the use of church music, and the ascendancy of instrumental music dealt church music a hard blow. And in the historical development of the musical art from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the present day, primarily in the operatic and symphonic fields, church music has been left far behind.

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8. Op. cit., p. 14.

V. Composers Representative of the Period of Decline

Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) was the second son of Johann Sebastian Bach by his first marriage. He was educated under his father at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, for eleven years held the position of official accompanist at the court of Frederick the Great, and spent the last twenty-one years of his life in Hamburg as a promoter of concerts and a director of church music. In spite of the education at the hand of so distinguished a father, he had the Rationalistic distaste for the polyphonic school of composition and disparagingly regarded that style as too "learned". He was very famous in his day as a keyboard composer and performer, but his chief claim to fame lies in his importance in the historical development of music, as one of the important founders of the sonata form. Both Haydn and Mozart regarded him highly as one of their musical forebearers. In addition to the keyboard music, he composed much church music. Speaking of one of his church works, Schering says, "Ein Werk wie Phil. Em. Bach's doppelchoeriges "Heilig" (1779) ragt hoch ueber die Masse gutgemeinter, aber kraftloser und von italienischen Gesangsfloskeln strotzender kirchliche Gebrauchsmusik." <sup>1</sup>

1. Op. cit., p. 407.

Johann Friederich Doles (1715- 1797) was also educated under J.S. Bach at the time of his theological study at the University of Leipzig. In 1744 he was appointed cantor at Freiburg, and in 1756 he succeeded Gottlob Harrer as cantor of the Thomasschule, a position which he held until 1789. Although he seems to have been proud of his relationship with Bach, he did nothing at all to encourage performances of the great master's works or to cultivate a taste for them among the people. His own works show very little of the Bach influence, being more in the sentimental operatic style, and his melodious compositions in that style made him very popular in Leipzig. The Italian influence in his work can probably be traced to his very frequent attendance of the opera performances at the Saxon court in Hubertsburg.

His opinions regarding the proper performance of sacred music are recorded in the preface to his cantata, "Ich komme vor dein Angesicht"; they have nothing at all in common with the great traditions of Bach, though coming from one of Bach's own pupils. Doles' complete lack of understanding of the true nature of sacred music is indicated in an incident related by Percy Scholes in The Oxford Companion to Music.

Mozart, hearing Doles, one of Bach's successors at the Thomas School at Leipzig, praise a very light-hearted Mass by a certain comic opera composer, took away the parts and brought them back with humorous words of his own written in, distributed them to a party of singers, and was

answered by approving laughter when he cried,  
'Now doesn't that go better?' 2

Karl Friedrich Christian Fasch (1736-1800) was a colleague to C.P.E. Bach as an accompanist at Frederick the Great's court. Unlike his brother composers of the period, he had great respect for the polyphonic traditions and regarded that style best suited for his church music. Influenced further by some tremendous Italian baroque Masses, he wrote a sixteen-voiced polyphonic Mass. But when he wanted to bring it to performance, he could find no choir in Berlin any longer capable of polyphonic singing. Shocked by this discovery, he zealously trained a chorus for years and eventually performed with them some of the great Italian sixteen-part Masses, though it is uncertain that he ever heard a performance of his own work. The chorus that he trained became the nucleus of the later very famous Berlin Singakademie.

Though he was somewhat influenced by the great works of the past, in grandeur of thought and expressiveness Fasch's works can't stand next to them. The opening measures of the Gloria from one of his Masses shows that he too was influenced to a great degree by the triteness and sentimentality of the current Italian opera style. 3

Karl Heinrich Graun (1701-1759) was in his day a very

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2. P. 543.

3. See example, p. 52. *op. cit.*, p. 395.

## Karl Friederich Christian Fasch

Glo- ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o!

Glo- ri-a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

4

celebrated operatic tenor. Beginning in 1735 he became a favorite of the Crown-Prince of Prussia, who, when he mounted the throne in 1740 as Frederick the Great, made Graun his Kapellmeister. During this time he wrote many operas besides fifty-two Italian Cantatas. After he personally had gathered an opera company from Italy for the court at Potsdam, he composed twenty-eight more operas for this group. Toward the close of his life he devoted himself exclusively to the composition of church music, two of his most famous works being a Te Deum and Der Tod Jesu.<sup>5</sup>

Johann Adolph Hasse (1699-1783) took his musical education in Italy under Porpora and Alessandro Scarlatti, and in 1731 he became Kapellmeister and director of the opera at the court of Augustus II in Dresden. During the middle part of the eighteenth century he was the most popular dramatic composer in Europe. He wrote more than a hundred operas, besides oratorios, Masses, cantatas, psalms, symphonies, sonatas, and concertos! His operas were all in the current Italian vein, his songs were all vehicles for display, and because of the sameness of style his works became totally monotonous. "Nor is there anything distinctive in his writing of church music, which presents in all respects the same characteristics as his operas."<sup>6</sup> As a result of this, his

5. See p. 46 for a discussion of the latter work.

6. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, II, p. 556. For a discussion of one of his works, see pp. 45 f.

tremendous output of music has been completely forgotten.

Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804) was greatly influenced by the operas and sacred compositions of Hasse and Graun, for whose works he had the most profound admiration. From 1758 on, Leipzig was the center of his activity. There he was active in oratorio performances and as a promoter of public concerts, originating the famous Gewandhaus concerts. He is famous chiefly as the father of the German Singspiel, which he adapted from the French operetta. In 1789 he was appointed to the cantorship of the Thomasschule, the third successor of Johann Sebastian Bach.

He was powerfully impressed by Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, while for Bach he had no sympathy at all. "He had deeply imbibed the spirit of that insipid and shallow age, which, being entirely out of feeling for historical propriety, permitted arbitrary changes in the treatment of older works." <sup>7</sup> His works include "Choral Melodien zu Gellert's geistlichen Oden und Liedern", motets, a Choralbuch (1793), a Passion-cantata, and a setting of the One Hundredth Psalm.

Gottfried August Homilius (1714-1785) was another pupil of Bach's and was the teacher of Hiller. He was a skilled organist. His most important post was that of organist and director of music in Dresden, as cantor of Kreuzschule there. He wrote much sacred music, all of which was charac-

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7. Ibid., p. 633.

terized by popular melody and a total absence of the polyphonic treatment of parts. His most important works are a Passion-cantata (1775), a Christmas oratorio (1777), a Christmas motet and other motets, several Passions, a Choralbuch, and much organ music.

Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770-1846) was a famous organist and organ composer who studied at Erfurt with Kittel, one of Bach's best pupils. His reputation is based on his "Practical Organ School". His compositions for organ, however, show no such greatness as might be expected from one so directly in the organ traditions of Bach. Grove's Dictionary states that throughout his organ works "fugue writing is conspicuous by its absence".<sup>8</sup> However an inspection of his "Organ School" will reveal that much of his work is in the polyphonic idiom, although his excessive use of chromaticisms makes it sickeningly sweet. His work is probably a perfect example of that artificiality that Prof. Hasse has called "steife Kuenstlichkeit".<sup>9</sup>

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767), a contemporary of J.S. Bach, was one of the most famous musicians of his day. Largely self-trained in music, he founded a student society, the Collegium Musicum, while he was attending Leipzig University, beginning in 1700. After various minor appoint-

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8. IV, p. 402.

9. Cf. quotation, p. 40. See also example, p. 56.

"Allein Gott in der Hoeh sei Ehr!",  
Close of Variation No. 2.

Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck

10. Practische Orgelschule, Op. 55, p. 20.

Note: the excessively chromatic counter-subject;  
the long-extended ending, meaningless in content;  
the sentimental effect of the whole.

ments, in 1721 he took the position of Cantor of the Johanneum and Musikdirector of the principal church in Hamburg, where he remained until his death.

In his day, Telemann was the most prominent representative of the Hamburg school at its prime and was ranked as a composer of the highest rank along with Hasse and Graun. He was very eagerly sought by Leipzig after Kuhnau's death, but a raise in salary induced him to remain in Hamburg, while Leipzig contented itself with Bach. He was a highly skilled contrapuntist and had an almost legendary facility for composition. Among his church music compositions are twelve complete sets of services for the year, forty-four Passions, many oratorios, uncounted cantatas and psalms, thirty-two services for installation of clergy, twenty ordination and anniversary services, twelve funeral and fourteen wedding services, all consisting of many separate numbers. Besides this there are forty operas and a mass of vocal and instrumental music, including six hundred overtures in the French style!

With this fertility, however, went a superficiality that has caused the name Telemann to be almost forgotten. Addicted to a realism that focused attention on mere externals, his music shows a total lack of a serious and dignified ideal of church music. His style was a mixture of conventional counterpoint and the Italian opera air which he used to get himself a name for quantity rather than for any

profundity. The triteness of much of later eighteenth century church music can be traced directly to his influence.

#### Conclusion

The church music of the eighteenth century was a child of its times. The Lutheran Church of Germany, weakened and split apart by the Pietistic movement, fell an easy prey to the onslaught of Rationalism. Both these movements attacked the theological position of the Church and, in their stress on a practical morality as the basis of religion, opposed all liturgy and art in the Church. In their lack of stress on the Christian ideal of service to the honor of Him who alone works salvation in this life and in that which is to come, they removed the very reason for the existence of church music. Add to this the overwhelming secularization of the musical art in the development of operatic and symphonic forms, and it is not hard to understand that the art of music dedicated to the worship of God quickly slipped from the place of honor it had held and was almost lost in the further development and progress of music.

From the details of the sad story several facts stand out clearly. For the existence of a vital art of church music, the primary requirement is a Church firmly grounded in the truths of the Word of God, for it is of these truths that the Church must sing. It must be a Church that imparts to its members, including its trained musicians, the Scrip-

tural concept of salvation beginning, not in the future, but in the present. Present salvation means for the believer a beginning of the joy of service to the honor and glory of

### Conclusion

God, which will be his greatest happiness in its perfect form. The church music of the eighteenth century was a child of its times. The Lutheran Church of Germany, weakened and split apart by the Pietistic movement, fell an easy prey to the onslaught of Rationalism. Both these movements attacked the theological position of the Church and, in their stress on a practical morality as the basis of religion, opposed all liturgy and art in the Church. In their lack of stress on the Christian ideal of service to the honor of Him who alone works salvation in this life and in that which is to come, they removed the very reason for the existence of church music. Add to this the overwhelming secularization of the musical art in the development of operatic and symphonic forms, and it is not hard to understand that the art of music dedicated to the worship of God quickly slipped from the place of honor it had held and was almost lost in the further development and progress of music.

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tural concept of salvation beginning, not in the future, but in the present. Present salvation means for the believer a beginning of the joy of service to the honor and glory of God, which will be his greatest happiness in its perfect form in heaven. It must be a Church whose members acquire, through practice, the skill of chorale singing and the appreciation for the best ecclesiastical art music, and also a Church willing to support musicians who dedicate their time and talents to its service. Finally, it must also be a Church whose members are convinced of the worth and benefit of the liturgy as the best form for congregational worship, - for drawing close to God to hear His Word, and to speak to Him in songs and prayers of petition and praise.

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