'The Orgelbüchlein': Another Bach Problem. II

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might have valiantly weeded-out this and the other false thing from the ways of men, and made a bit of God's Creation more melodious—they have purchased you away from that; chained you to the wheel of Prince Mahogany's chariot, and here you make sport for macassar Chatabagues and his improper females past the prime of life! Wretched spiritual Nigger, O, if you *had* some genius, and were not a born Nigger with mere appetite for pumpkin, should you have endured such a lot? I lament for you beyond all other expenses. Other expenses are light; you are the Cleopatra's pearl that should not have been flung into Mahogany's claret cup. And Rossini too, and Mozart, and Bellini, O heavens! when I think that Music too is condemned to be mad, and to burn herself, to this end, on such a funeral pile,—your celestial Opera-house grows dark and infernal to me!

A prophetic wail, this; a kind of touching funereal dirge chanted at the obsequies of a decadent art. There is—or rather was—disease somewhere.

Of a truth, if you will read a Psalm of Asaph till you understand it, and then come hither and hear the Rossini-and-Coletti Psalm, you will find the ages have altered a good deal.

And, as we have already seen, it was left to one sagacious layman at least, among the many wise professors of the art, to unmask the prevailing poverty of purpose, and bemoan the want of a salutary integrity. And no little insight this: the clear discernment of the clamant need for speedy, drastic purgation. So he interrogates: 'Why heroes are not born now, why heroisms are not done now?'—to which he makes swift reply: because 'It is a world all calculated for strangling of heroisms.' He does not expect, however, 'the Opera will abolish itself this year or the next'; but is there none to rescue this 'Rossini-and-Coletti Psalm,' and magically transform it into a 'Psalm of Asaph'? The summons has been made,—likewise the answer: the challenge has been given, and the champion has appeared. For Richard Wagner has both sung and spoken; though not without many an unsuccessful attempt at strangulation at the hands of his numerous opponents. He, at least, has in his own emphatic way sung afresh the 'Psalm of Asaph'; he, at least, has purged the operatic stage of much of its specious puerility, its vapid inanity and 'foot-light' hollowness, and raised it again to the level of Shakesperian dignity.

So one other voice has blended with that of our learned censor; one other hand has sought to slay the gorgon-monster of degenerate dilettantism, and restore once more the crown and sceptre to the dethroned ruler of man's heart. For nothing so excruciated the mind of this trenchant reformer as lack of truth and absence of reality in matters appertaining to the artistic. He was the last to remain dumbly acquiescent in the ruthless degradation of an art which one time was priestess at the shrine of devout and pious offering. So combatant a nature could not, without strenuous opposition, see it play the fatuous and fawning slave to an appetent aristocracy. Hence Wagner wrote for no purse-proud princes, descended to no titillation of the vapid, but spoke outright to the universal heart of man. And whatever be the opinion of the critical, whatever be his musical shortcomings and blemishes, essential Wagnerism stands, once and for all, for depth of purpose and sincerity of aim. In fine, Carlyle's admonishment is that of Wagner's:

I would have you a Population abhorring phantasms;—abhorring *unveracity* in all things; and in your 'amusements,' which are voluntary and not compulsory things, abhorring it most impatiently of all.

'THE ORGELBÜCHLEIN': ANOTHER BACH PROBLEM.

BY C. SANFORD TERRY.

II.

In a postscript to my article in the *Musical Times* for January, 1917, I was able to announce the discovery of the hymn-book which inspired Bach to draw up the programme of the 'Orgelbüchlein,' and from which he took the hymns it contains. The interesting quarto volume bears the following title:

Psalmodia sacra, Oder: Andächtige und schöne Gesänge, So wohl des Sel. Lutheri, als anderer Geistreichen Männer, Auf Hochfl. gnädigste Verordnung, In dem Fürstenthum Gotha und Altenburg, auf nachfolgende Art zu singen und zu spielen. Nebst einer Vorrede und Nachricht. Gotha, Verlegt Christoph Reyher, 1715.

The steps to the discovery led me over fairly open country. To begin with, once the full programme of the 'Orgelbüchlein' was revealed, it was patent that the work was a condensed Hymnary, whose contents, it could be inferred, Bach extracted from a congregational hymn-book in local use at Weimar. The inference involved a corollary; the hypothetical original could not be of earlier date than that of the most recent hymn or tune in the 'Orgelbüchlein.' Examination of the latter revealed the information that while a number of its hymns date from the late 17th century, only one of them belongs to the 18th. The hymn in question, No. 75 of the 'Orgelbüchlein,' is the penitential hymn 'Wir haben schwerlich,' one of those in the collection whose melody Bach has not treated there or elsewhere. After considerable searching it was established that the hymn appears for the first time in the 'Psalmodia' of 1715.

Two other circumstances suggested that the Gotha hymn-book of 1715 might prove to be the work for which I was searching. In the first place it seemed highly probable that Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach would be in touch with the hymnody of neighbouring Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. In the second place, there was independent evidence that the Gotha hymn-book was known to Bach at Weimar. He used its version of the melody 'Das alte Jahr vergangen ist' for the 'Orgelbüchlein' prelude. From it also there can be no doubt now, he took the melody 'Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig,' for the Variations written at this period. Moreover, the assumption that he was familiar with the book clears up the confusion between Nos. 82 and 163 of the 'Orgelbüchlein.' Bach calls No. 163's melody 'Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig, or, O Jesu, du edle Gabe,' and uses it in its Gotha form. No. 82, described by him as 'O Jesu, du edle Gabe,' certainly is another and later melody, also found in the Gotha book.

Such considerations drew my attention to the 'Psalmodia sacra' of 1715, a copy of which is in the British Museum.* A collation of its contents amply confirmed my inference. Not only does the arrangement of the book correspond closely with Bach's design, but it contains all the 161 hymns of the 'Orgelbüchlein' except two (Nos. 6, 83). Whence Bach took the latter cannot be stated and is immaterial; both were accessible to him in earlier collections.

The 'Psalmodia sacra' of 1715 was edited by Christian Friedrich Witt, son of Johann Ernst Witt, Court organist at Altenburg, and born there *circa* 1660. The patronage of Duke Frederick I. of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (d. 1691) gave the boy a musical education at Vienna and Salzburg which enabled him

* It has another title-page, but otherwise is identical with the Gotha edition.

to become organist, and from 1713 Capellmeister, to the ducal court at Gotha. He died in 1716, a few months after completing the 'Psalmody sacra.'

In an Introductory Note, Witt states that the volume was prepared and published at the express command of the Duke, because throughout the ducal territories great disorder existed in the rendering of hymns, many of which were sung to no regular melody, and some of them to ill-fitting tunes. Witt does not specifically mention the earlier Gotha 'Cantional' of 1646, but declares his own collection to be composed partly of old and partly of new material, and prescribes it as the standard for all schools and choirs in the Duchy to follow.

Exclusive of collects and responses and a short Appendix of twelve hymns (five tunes), Witt's hymn-book contains 762 hymns, 407 of which are merely annotated by the title of the tune to which they are to be sung, while the melodies of the remaining 355 are printed over a figured bass. One-third of the latter are 16th-century tunes. Another third is drawn from the best sources of the 17th and 18th (Freylinghausen, 1704 and 1714; Strassburg, 1713) centuries. It includes melodies by Eccard, Gesius, Schein, Vulpius, Melchior and Michael Franck, Crüger, Schop, and others. Of 101 new melodies in the collection nearly half have survived, though less than half-a-dozen are in popular use.

As a whole, therefore, Witt's collection is eclectic, rich in the early tunes that Bach loved, representative also of the best work of the 17th century. I have shown in Part 2 of my 'Bach's Chorals: the Hymns and Hymn Melodies of the Cantatas and Motets,' that Bach introduced no less than 132 hymn-tunes into his vocal and organ works. It is sufficient to establish the excellence of Witt's book that with comparatively few exceptions all of them are found in it.

It remains to demonstrate the intimate relation between the 'Orgelbüchlein' and Witt's hymn-book. As has been stated already, all but two (Nos. 6, 83) of Bach's hymns are in the 'Psalmody.' The correspondence of the two works is not less close in their plan or programme. In what I have called Part I. ('The Church's Seasons and Festivals') of the 'Orgelbüchlein' the two schemes are almost identical. I give below Witt's sectional divisions side by side with those which I had adopted independently for the 'Orgelbüchlein.'

The hymns are represented by their No. in the 'Orgelbüchlein.* The bracketed figures reveal the corresponding No. of the hymn in Witt's 'Psalmody.' The bracket after the cross-titles states the number of hymns in that section in Bach and Witt respectively.

PART I.

THE CHURCH'S SEASONS AND FESTIVALS.

Advent (1—4).

Advents Lieder (3—17).

Nos. 1 (4), 2 (5), 3 (17), 4 (15).

Christmas (5—15).

Auf Weynachten (18—53).

Nos. 5 (35), 6, 7 (19), 8 (20), 9 (21), 10 (22), 11 (36), 12 (32), 13 (337), 14 (34), 15 (33).

New Year (16—18).

Auf das neue Jahr (54—72).

Nos. 16 (56), 17 (57), 18 (62).

Epiphany (19).

Am Tage der Offenbarung (73—77).

No. 19 (80).

Purification of the B.V.M. (20).

Auf Lichtmess (78—83).

No. 20 (81).

Passiontide (21—33).

Vom Leiden Christi (90—138).

Nos. 21 (104), 22 (103), 23 (95), 24 (113), 25 (96), 26 (135), 27 (94), 28 (124), 29 (127), 30 (290), 31 (129), 32 (108), 33 (126).

Easter (34—39).

Von der Auferstehung Jesu Christi (139—157).

Nos. 34 (140), 35 (144), 36 (141), 37 (142), 38 (146), 39 (145).

Ascension Day (40—41).

Von der Himmelfahrt Jesu Christi (158—167).

Nos. 40 (160), 41 (165).

Whit-Sunday (42—48).

Auf das heilige Pfingst-Fest (168—184).

Nos. 42 (169), 43 (170), 44 (171), 45 (173), 46 (172), 47 (174), 48 (176).

Trinity Sunday (49—54).

Auf Trinitatis (185—200).

Nos. 49 (240), 50—51 (241), 52 (185), 53 (188), 54 (189).

St. John the Baptist (55).

Am Tage Johannis des Taufers (201—204).

No. 55 (201).

Visitation of the B.V.M. (56).*

Auf Mariä Heimsuchung (205—207).

No. 56 (205).

St. Michael the Archangel (57—58).

Auf Michaelis Tag (208—215).

Nos. 57 (209), 58 (208).

Feasts of the Apostles (59—60).

Auf der Apostel Tage (216—218).

Nos. 59 (216), 60 (217).

Apart from the identity of plan which the collation reveals, it illuminates Bach's personality and exposes the spirit in which he designed the 'Orgelbüchlein. In the Advent,† New Year, Ascension Day, Whit-Sunday, and Apostles' Festivals sections we observe him transferring from Witt's pages, and in the order in which they occur there, the hymns appropriate to the 'Orgelbüchlein.'

It is in the Christmas, Passiontide, and Easter sections especially that Bach's purpose and personality stand revealed. In the Christmas section his first hymn ('Puer natus in Bethlehem') is almost the last in Witt's numerical order. His second hymn is not in Witt at all, and for the concluding five hymns he discards Witt's arrangement altogether. The effect of these alterations is to transform a haphazard collection of Christmas tunes into a Christmas Mystery. First come three hymns (Nos. 5, 6, 7), to introduce the Festival. The four that follow picture the first Christmas morning; No. 8 ('Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich'); Nos. 9-10 ('Vom Himmel hoch' and 'Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schaar'), in which we listen to the Angels and their message; and No. 11 ('In dulci jubilo'), in which we hear their angelic song above the Infant's cradle. The concluding four hymns express the jubilation of mortals. The second of them (No. 13: 'Jesu, meine Freude'), an act of personal devotion, is pointedly and characteristically transferred from the 'Jesus Lieder' at the end of Witt's volume. The inversion of Witt's order for the last two Hymns (Nos. 14, 15) also is with purpose. His No. 34 is the more austere melody 'Christum wir sollen loben schon.' His No. 33, with which Bach prefers to conclude, is 'Wir Christenleut,' which rings out so jubilantly in the 'Christmas Oratorio.'

In the Passiontide section Bach follows the stages of the great tragedy with absorbed and reverent interest. He completely discards Witt's order. The first three hymns, Nos. 21-23, 'O Lamm Gottes unschuldig,' 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes,' 'Christus, der uns selig macht,' summon us to Calvary; No. 24

* Bach omits the Annunciation, probably unintentionally.

† In this section Bach merely alters Witt's order so as to end on a note of joyful expectation.

* See the list in the *Musical Times*, January, 1917.

('Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund') places us before the Cross; No. 25 ('O Mensch, bewein') challenges mankind to own its guilt in Christ's martyrdom.*

In another mood, No. 26 ('Wir danken dir') gives thanks for the approaching Atonement. In No. 27 ('Hilf Gott, dass mir's gelinge') a long ballad, the sufferings and death of the Saviour are consummated.† No. 28 is a passionate invocation of the pierced Hands, Feet, and Side. No. 29 is sung at the Saviour's burial. Christ is dead, but Bach hastens to interpolate (No. 30) Selnecker's song of faith, 'Allein nach dir, Herr Jesu Christ.' There follow two hymns of accusation and remorse, one of which (No. 32), Johann Heermann's 'Herzliebster Jesu,' Bach used in the same context in the 'Matthäus Passion.' The last hymn, No. 33 ('Nun giebt mein Jesus gute Nacht') leaves Christ sleeping in the tomb. The section is a miniature of the greater 'Passion' written twenty years later.

The Easter division more closely follows Witt's order. But the variations (Nos. 37 and 39) are significant. Here, as in the other sections, Bach begins with introductory hymns which summon us to the Festival (Nos. 34, 35, 36). The last two Hymns (Nos. 38, 39) are songs of triumph. Bach places the second of them 'Heut' triumphiret Gottes Sohn' last, and out of Witt's order in order to end on the thought of Death conquered.‡ Holding the centre of the section is the hymn 'Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ' (No. 37). It is placed out of Witt's order because, cast in the form of a dialogue between Mary and the Angels at the tomb, it states the fact of the Resurrection, the central thought of the Festival.

In what I have called Part II. of the 'Orgelbüchlein' Bach displays a larger licence of selection and arrangement than is apparent in Part I. A collation of the 'Orgelbüchlein' and Witt's Hymn-book makes the fact clear:

PART II.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The Catechism (61—66).

Catechismus Gesänge (219—245). §

Nos. 61 (222), 62 (221), 63 (219), 64 (228), 65 (232), 66 (243).

Penitence and Amendment (67—77).

Buss-Lieder (246—270).

Nos. 67 (261), 68 (258), 69 (286), 70 (280), 71 (265), 72 (283), 73 (253), 74 (282), 75 (267), 76 (291), 77 (292).

Holy Communion (78—86).

Vom Abendmahl des Herrn (308—333).

Nos. 78 (320), 79 (324), 80 (633), 81 (319), 82 (322), 83, 84 (317), 85 (293), 86 (384).

For the Common Weal (87—88).

Von denen drey Haupt-Ständen (471—473).

Nos. 87 (473), 88 (472).

Christian Conduct and Experience (89—96).

Vom Christlichen Leben und Wandel (514—97).

Nos. 89 (694), 90 (514), 91 (299), 92 (531), 93 (542), 94 (525), 95 (526), 96 (527).

In Time of Trouble (97—113).

* How constant Bach remained to early impressions! Twenty years later, Nos. 21 and 25 of the 'Orgelbüchlein' hold a precisely relative place in the first Part of the 'Matthäus Passion.'

† Schweitzer, l. 286, calls the hymn a meditation. His analysis of the remaining numbers of the section is not supported by the text of the hymns.

‡ The circumstance that in Witt's Hymn-book 'Heut' triumphiret' is an Easter Hymn conclusively settles the 'problem' stated by Mr. Newman and discussed by Mr. Atkins in recent numbers of the *Musical Times*.

§ Witt actually gives the following divisions: Catechismus-Gesänge (219—220); Von den zehn Geboten (Ten Commandments) (221—225); Vom Glauben (Creed) (226—229); Vom Gebeth (Prayer) (230—239); Vor der Predigt (Before the Sermon) (240—241); Nach verrichtetem Gottesdienst (After public worship) (242); Von der Tauffe (Baptism) (243—245).

Von Kreutz und Verfolgung (598—658).

Nos. 97—98 (606), 99 (630), 100 (656), 101 (601), 102 (638), 103 (639), 104 (604), 105 (605), 106 (723), 107 (641), 108 (598), 109 (552), 110 (632), 111 (599), 112 (550), 113 (553).

The Church Militant (114—123).

Vom der Christlichen Kirchen und Worte Gottes (476—497).

Nos. 114 (480), 115 (481), 116 (482), 117 (483), 118 (485), 119 (486), 120 (479), 121 (610), 122 (477), 123 (520).

In Time of War (124—126).

Um Friede (498—513).

Nos. 124 (498), 125 (499), 126 (502).

Death and the Grave (127—142).

Vom Sterben und Begräbnissen (659—742).

Nos. 127 (678), 128 (697), 129 (661), 130—131 (660), 132 (722), 133 (733), 134 (719), 135 (698), 136 (695), 137 (680), 138 (684), 139 (703), 140 (720), 141 (743), 142 (744).

Morning (143—147).

Morgen-Gesänge (410—429).

Nos. 143 (419), 144 (411), 145 (412), 146 (414), 147 (415).

Evening (148—151).

Abend-Gesänge (430—446).

Nos. 148 (431), 149 (430), 150 (434), 151 (435).

At Meals (152—155).

Tisch-Gesänge (449—461).

Nos. 152 (452), 153 (455), 154 (456), 155 (457).

For Good Weather (156).

Um gut Wetter (462—466).

No. 156 (462).

The Life Eternal (157—164).

Vom jüngsten Gericht und ewigen Leben (743—762).

Nos. 157 (336), 158 (284), 159 (665), 160 (659), 161 (672), 162 (607), 163 (125), 164 (308).

(To be concluded.)

Occasional Notes.

A writer in the *Daily Province*, A CANADIAN a British Columbia journal, after CRITIC. discussing with good sense and humour such diverse subjects as sleeping on the verandah, the weather, the advantages of goat-keeping, and the character of the Swiss as colonists, ventures, greatly daring, into musical criticism, and at once gets out of his depth.

I had the very great pleasure, he says, of hearing a rehearsal of that interesting oratorio — which is to be given at — Church, on Thursday. The choir of 100 voices are working hard to attain perfection under the rigorous Anglo-Saxon training of Mr. —, who on the grand night of rendition will vacate his place at the console of the organ in favour of Mr. — of —. . . Banked up to a considerable height in front of the great organ, the owners of the hundred voices that will sing the choruses presented an imposing *tout ensemble*. They were very intelligent, alert, and handsome to look at, and when they sang they justified their appearance. . . . Lovers of music will have a considerable treat when they hear — performed for the first time on this continent. It is an oratorio that differs in many points from other oratorios. There is a good deal of variety in it. It is grand, but also tuneful. One of the choruses I heard seemed to quite waltz over its bars.

We are glad to learn, from a later issue of the *Daily Province*, that on 'the grand night of rendition' the intelligent and handsome chorus justified their appearance even more fully than at the rehearsal. It appears that they 'sang superbly,'—a tribute to rigorous Anglo-Saxon training. The lady who sang the part of the Queen was also very successful, her voice being:

as it always is, full of perfect intonation,