CHAPTER IX. BACH'S COMPOSITIONS

To have produced so many great works in all forms of musical expression Bach necessarily must have been a prolific writer. For if a composer be the greatest genius in the world, unless he constantly exercises his art he cannot hope to produce real masterpieces. Superlative excellence is the fruit of indefatigable application. Yet in Bach's case we should be wrong to acclaim as masterpieces all the products of his great activity just because masterpieces at length were the fruit of it. Already in his early compositions we find undeniable evidence of genius. But they are blemished by faults, passages poor in quality, extravagant, insipid, that are hardly worth preserving, though of interest to the student who wishes to trace from its source the development of Bach's genius.

It is not difficult to distinguish with exactitude those of Bach's early compositions which are of the first excellence; for he has been at pains to give us the clue. As he did not publish his first work until he was about forty years old\footnote{The first of Bach's works to be engraved was the Mühlhausen Cantata, \textit{Gott ist mein König}, (parts only). It was published in 1708, when Bach was twenty-three years old. Forkel refers to Partita I. in the first Part of the \textit{Clavierübung} (P. bk. 205 p. 4). It was engraved in 1726, when Bach was forty-one years old. In 1731 he republished it, with five others that had appeared in the interval, in the first Part of the \textit{Clavierübung} (P. bks. 205, 206).} we are justified in assuming the merit of what, at so mature an age, he thought worthy to put into print, and in concluding generally that all his engraved works are of first-rate merit.\footnote{Forkel's rather casual critical axioms seem to be as follows: “Publication postulates excellence”; “An amended MS. implies that the original text was}
With respect to his unpublished compositions, and they are by far the most numerous, we must in order to distinguish their merit rely partly on a critical examination of their texts, partly on Bach's own judgment. Like all great composers, he was continually working on his compositions with a view to making them still more finished. Indeed, he actually attempted to improve some of them that were already perfect. Any that were susceptible of improvement he improved, even those already engraved. Such is the origin of the variant readings of his works found in older and more recent texts. By constantly retouching his compositions Bach aimed at making them indisputable masterpieces. In this category I place most of what he wrote before the year 1725, as I show in detail in the following catalogue. A great many compositions subsequent to 1725, which for reasons easily understood are still in MS., bear too evidently the stamp of perfection to leave us in doubt whether to class them as early essays or as the finished work of an accomplished master.

The following are those of Bach's works which have been engraved:

1. *Clavierübung*, or “Exercises for the Clavier, consisting of Preludes, Allemandes, Courantes, Sarabandes, Gigues, Minuets, etc., for the Diversion of Amateurs. Opus I. Published by the Composer, 1731.” This was Bach's first published work and contains six Suites. The first of them came out in 1726; the others followed in successive years until all were engraved together in 1731. The work was much noticed at the time. Such compositions for the Clavier

---

225 It was the first work engraved by Bach himself, though the parts of the Cantata *Gott ist mein König* had been published by the Town Council at Mühlhausen in 1708.

226 The work was published at Leipzig “in Commission bey Boetii Seel, hinderlassenen Tochter, unter den Rath-hause.” The Suites, or Partitas (P. bks. 205, 206), are in B flat major, C minor, A minor, D major, G major, E minor.
had not been seen or heard before, and the man who could
play them was sure of a success. Our young players to-day
would profit by the study of them, so brilliant, agreeable,
expressive, and original are they. In the new edition they
are entitled, “Exercises for the Clavier.”

2. *Clavierübung*, or “Exercises for the Clavier, Part II.,
consisting of a Concerto in the Italian style and an Overture
in the French manner for a Clavier with two manuals.
Published by Christopher Weigel, Junior, in Nürnberg.”

3. *Clavierübung*, or “Exercises for the Clavier, Part III.,
consisting of various Organ Preludes to the Catechism and
other Hymns, composed for the diversion of amateurs and
particularly of competent judges of such works. Published
by the Composer.” Besides the Preludes and Fugues for the
Organ, all of which are masterly, the book contains four
Duetti for the Clavier, models of their kind.

4. *Sechs Choräle*, or “Six Choral Melodies of different
kinds, for an Organ with two manuals and pedal. Zella, in
the Thuringian Forest. Published by Johann G. Schübler.”
They are full of dignity and religious feeling. In some of
them, too, we have instances of Bach's original management
of the stops. Thus, in the second Choral, *Wo soll ich

---

227 In 1801 Hoffmeister and Kühnel unsuccessfully attempted to publish Bach’s
works by subscription.
228 The Partita in B minor (P. bk. 208 p. 20).
229 The work was published in 1735. The Italian Concerto in F major is
published by Novello and P. bk. 207.
230 The work appeared in 1739. It was intended to contain works for the Organ
only; the four Duetti are incongruous and seem to have crept in by mistake.
See the scheme of the work discussed in Terry, *Bach’s Chorals*, Part III. The
Choral Preludes are in Novello’s ed., bk. xvi.
231 The work was published circ. 1747-50. Five of the six movements
certainly, and the sixth with practical certainty, are adaptations to the Organ
of movements out of Bach’s Church Cantatas. See Parry, *Bach*, p. 535. The
Chorals are in Novello’s ed., bk. xvi.
232 See supra, p. 65.
fliehen hin, he gives to the first manual an 8 foot, to the second a 16 foot, and to the pedal a 4 foot stop. The pedal has the cantus firmus.\footnote{Thus the pedal sounds above the part given to the second manual and is often the topmost part. See Novello’s ed., bk. xvi. 4.}

5. \textit{Clavierübung}, or “Exercises for the Clavier, consisting of an Aria with several Variations, for a Clavier with two manuals. Published by Balthasar Schmidt at Nürnberg.”\footnote{Published circ. 1742; the so-called “Goldberg Variations.” They are in P. bk. 209.} This admirable work consists of thirty Variations, some in canon, in a variety of movements and at all intervals from the unison to the ninth, with easy flowing melody. It includes a regular fourpart Fugue,\footnote{Variation No. 10 is a Fughetta in four parts.} several extremely brilliant Variations for two Claviers,\footnote{Ten of the Variations are marked “a 2 Clav.,” that is, for two keyboards or manuals: Nos. 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28. Nos. 5, 7, 29 are marked “a 1 ovvero 2 Clav.”} and concludes with a Quodlibet, as it is called, which alone would render its composer immortal, though it is not the best thing in the volume.\footnote{The movement is constructed upon two merry folk-songs, \textit{Kraut and Rüben haben mich vertrieben}, and \textit{Ich bin so lang nicht bei dir gewirt}.}

The Variations are models of what such compositions ought to be, though no one has been so rash as to attempt to follow Bach's footsteps. We owe them to Count Kaiserling, formerly Russian Ambassador at the Saxon Electoral Court, who frequently visited Leipzig with Goldberg, already mentioned\footnote{See supra, p. 101.} among Bach's pupils. The Count was a great invalid and suffered from insomnia. Goldberg lived in the Ambassador's house, and slept in an adjoining room, to be ready to play to him when he was wakeful. One day the Count asked Bach to write for Goldberg some Clavier music
of a soothing and cheerful character, that would relieve the
tedium of sleepless nights. Bach thought a set of Variations
most likely to fulfil the Count's needs, though, on account of
the recurrence of the same basic harmony throughout, it was
a form to which he had hitherto paid little attention. Like
all his compositions at this period, however, the Variations
are a masterpiece, and are the only example he has left
us of this form.²³⁹ The Count always called them “my
Variations” and was never weary of hearing them. For long
afterwards, when he could not sleep, he would say, “Play
me one of my Variations, Goldberg.” Perhaps Bach was
never so well rewarded for any composition as for this. The
Count gave him a golden goblet containing one hundred
louis d'ors, though, as a work of art, Bach would not have
been overpaid had the present been a thousand times as
large. It may be observed, that in the engraved copy of the
Variations there are serious mistakes, which the composer
has corrected in his own copy.²⁴⁰

on the Christmas Hymn ‘Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich
her,’ for an Organ with two manuals and pedal. Published
at Nürnberg by Balthasar Schmidt.” The work contains five
canonic variations of the utmost ingenuity.²⁴¹

²³⁹ In fact Bach wrote the early *Aria variata alla maniera Italiana* (Peters bk.
215, p. 12) for the Clavier. For the Organ he wrote four sets of Variations
upon as many Choral melodies (Novello bk. xix.). But all except the Goldberg
Variations are youthful works, and in his maturity Bach clearly had no liking
for the form. The theme of the Goldberg Variations, moreover, is itself a
youthful idea; at least it dates back to as early as 1725, and is found in A. M.
Bach's *Notenbuch* (No. 26, Aria in G major).

²⁴⁰ There is no reference to these corrigenda in the B. G. edition.

²⁴¹ The work has been referred to already in connection with Bach's
membership of Mizler's Society (supra, p. 112). It was composed presumably
circ. 1746 and in point of technical skill is the most brilliant of Bach's
instrumental works. Forkel states that it was engraved after June 1747, when
Bach joined Mizler's Society. Spitta (iii. 295) is of opinion that it was already
7. *Musikalisches Opfer*, or “A Musical Offering,” dedicated to Frederick II., King of Prussia. The theme received by Bach from the King is treated first as a three-part Fugue under the acrostic title “Ricercare” (Regis iussu cantio et reliqua canonica arte resoluta). There follows a six-part “Ricercare” and Thematis regii elaborationes canonicae of various kinds. The work includes a Trio for Flute, Violin, and Clavier upon the same subject.

8. *Die Kunst der Fuge*, or “The Art of Fugue.” This work, unique of its kind, did not appear till about 1752, after Bach's death, though the greater part of it had been engraved by his sons during his lifetime. Marpurg, the leading German musical critic of that day, contributed a preface to this edition which contains many just observations on the value and utility of such treatises. But, being too good for the general public, the work found only a small

---

242 Supra, p. 25.
243 The presentation copy of the work, which Bach sent to Frederick along with a dedicatory letter (July 7, 1747), is in the Berlin Amalienbibliothek and proves that only the first third of the work, as far as the “Ricercare a sei voci” (see B.G. XXXI. (2)) was sent then. The latter and the remaining canons were dispatched subsequently probably by the hand of C. P. E. Bach. The six-part Ricercare was a particular compliment to the King. Frederick had desired Bach on his visit to play a Fugue in six parts but left it to the player to select his theme. Bach now employed the thema regium for the purpose. The first reissue of the work was by Breitkopf and Haertel in 1832. Peters (bk. 219) brought it out in 1866. See Schweitzer, i. 417 IV. and Spitta, iii. 191 ff. and 292.
244 In C minor (P. bk. 237 p. 3).
245 The statement is inaccurate. The work was written for the most part in 1749 and the greater part of it was prepared for engraving by Bach himself during his last illness. None of his elder sons was with him at his death, and the blunders that disfigure the engraved copy show that they clumsily finished their father's work. It is in P. bk. 218.
246 Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, b. 1718, d. 1795.
247 The work was published shortly after Bach's death, but had no sale. C. P. E. Bach then commissioned Marpurg to write a preface, and the new edition
circulation among those who discerned its merit and eagerly bought copies. The plates were never used again and eventually were sold\textsuperscript{248} by Bach's heirs at the price of old copper. Written by a man of Bach's transcendent genius, and commended as a masterpiece by a critic so highly regarded as Marpurg, a work of this kind, if published in any other country than Germany, would have passed through at least ten editions by now, if only at the bidding of patriotism. But in Germany not a sufficient number of copies was sold to pay for the plates used in engraving the work!

The work consists of fugal Variations planned on the most elaborate scale.\textsuperscript{249} The composer's intention was to show in what a variety of ways the same theme can be treated fugally. The Variations (here called “Contrapunctus”)\textsuperscript{250} are complete Fugues upon the same theme. The last Fugue of all has three subjects, in the third of which the composer signs his name, B A C H.\textsuperscript{251} Bach was prevented from finishing it by the disorder of his eyes, and as an operation brought no relief the movement was never completed. It is said that Bach intended to introduce four themes into it and to bring it to an impressive conclusion by inverting them.
all. All the Fugues in the work are equally smooth and melodious.

To make up for the unfinished Fugue Bach concluded the work with a Choral Prelude upon the tune “Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein,” which he dictated to his son-in-law, Altnikol, a few days before his death.\textsuperscript{252} Of the extraordinary skill it displays I do not speak, save to remark that even in his last illness it proclaims Bach's skill undiminished. The pious resignation and devotion that characterise it move me deeply whenever I play it. Nor should I find it easy to say which I had rather had been omitted, the Choral Prelude, or the conclusion of the unfinished Fugue.

9. Lastly, after Bach's death, his four-part Chorals were collected by his son, Carl Philipp Emmanuel, and were published by Birnstiel (Berlin and Leipzig), Part I. in 1765, Part II. in 1769.\textsuperscript{253} Each Part contains one hundred Chorals, mostly taken from the composer's church Cantatas.

More recently Kirnberger edited, in four volumes, a collection of Bach's Chorals. They are published by Breitkopf.\textsuperscript{254}

Bach's works, still in MS., consist of compositions for the Clavier, Organ, with and without other instruments, Strings, and the voice. I will enumerate them in that order.

\textsuperscript{252} Supra, p. 27. The movement is in N. bk. 17 p. 85. It is not certain that Bach intended the Prelude or the unfinished Fugue to be included.

\textsuperscript{253} C. P. E. Bach was only concerned with the first volume. Erk, in his edition of the Choralgesänge, conjectures that Kirnberger was responsible for the second.

\textsuperscript{254} The four volumes were published at Leipzig between 1784-87. Spitta states that C. P. E. Bach was the editor. Erk joins Kirnberger with him in that position. As C. P. E. Bach died in 1788 Kirnberger's association with the work is probable, especially if he had already been responsible for the 1769 volume.
I. Compositions For The Clavier

1. *Six Little Preludes for Beginners*.\(^{255}\)

2. *Fifteen Two-part Inventions*. An Invention is a musical theme so constructed that by imitation and inversion a whole movement can be evolved from it. The subject having been first stated, the rest develops naturally out of it. For the instruction of a young Clavier player these fifteen Inventions are of great value, seeing that the composer has been careful not only to provide exercises for both hands but for every finger as well. They were composed at Cöthen in 1723, with a long title which begins: “An honest Guide, in which lovers of the Clavier are shown a clear method of playing correctly in two parts,” etc.\(^{256}\)

It cannot be denied that, among other blemishes, the Inventions occasionally exhibit melodic poverty and roughness. But finding them useful to his pupils, Bach eventually revised them and removed from them everything that offended his maturer taste, so that they now stand as masterpieces of pure music. Moreover they are invaluable exercises for the fingers and hands and are sound instructors of taste. There is no better introduction to Bach's larger works than they afford.

\(^{255}\) Bach’s Clavier school consisted of eighteen Preludes for beginners (all in B.G. XXXVI.); the two-part and three-part Inventions; and the *Well-tempered Clavier*. The six Preludes mentioned by Forkel, and which alone he knew, were published by him for the first time. Seven more are found in Wilhelm Friedemann's *Clavierbüchlein* (B.G. XLV. (1)), and the remaining five have survived in texts handed down by others of Bach's pupils. The eighteen are in P. bk. 200.

\(^{256}\) The Autograph was written at Cöthen and is dated 1723. It also contains the fifteen Symphonies, or three-part Inventions mentioned in paragraph 3. Both Inventions and Symphonies are in F. bk. 201. According to Spitta (ii. 57 n.) the Inventions were published at Leipzig in 1763. See also Schweitzer, i. 328 ff.
3. *Fifteen three-part Inventions*, also called Symphonies. They were written for the same purpose as the Inventions, but are more advanced.\textsuperscript{257}

4. *The Well-tempered Clavier*, or, Preludes and Fugues in all tones and semitones, composed for the profit and use of young musicians desirous of knowledge, as also for those who are skilled already in this studio. Part I. was finished in 1722. Part II., like Part I., contains twenty-four Preludes and twenty-four Fugues in every key, and was composed at a later period.\textsuperscript{258} Every number of it, from first to last, is a masterpiece. In Part I., however, certain Preludes and Fugues bear marks of immaturity and are included probably only in order to complete the series. But here again Bach eventually corrected whatever seemed to him lacking in finish. He altered or rewrote entire passages, so that in the later texts few movements are not perfect. Among these few I reckon the Fugues in A minor,\textsuperscript{259} G major and G minor,\textsuperscript{260} C major,\textsuperscript{261} F major and F minor.\textsuperscript{262} The rest are excellent, some of them so superlatively good as to be not inferior to those in Part II.\textsuperscript{263} Even Part II., for all its

\textsuperscript{257} See the previous note.

\textsuperscript{258} The second Part was compiled in 1744 and Bach's Autograph of it, though not the earliest Autograph, is in the British Museum. See Schweitzer, i. 331 ff. and Spitta, ii. 161 ff. The whole work is in P. bks. 1, 2; or 1a, 1b; or 2790a, 2790b.

\textsuperscript{259} No. 20. Spitta (ii. 164) attributes it to the years 1707 or 1708. Schweitzer (i. 332) also regards it as a youthful piece written, moreover, for the pedal Clavicembalo.

\textsuperscript{260} Nos. 15 and 16. Spitta, admitting that the two do not rank with the most interesting in the collection, finds no indication of their being of different date from the best movements.

\textsuperscript{261} No. 1. Here Spitta (ii. 165 n.) challenges Forkel.

\textsuperscript{262} Nos. 11 and 12. In regard to No. 12 (F minor) Spitta holds Forkel to be in error. As to No. 11, he expresses the same opinion as in note 3, supra.

\textsuperscript{263} The date 1744 places the second Part among Bach's latest compositions. On the other hand, like the first Part, it contained work of earlier date.
original perfection, has been improved by the composer, as may be observed by comparing the original and later texts. Both Parts contain treasures of art not to be found outside Germany.

5. *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue.* I have taken considerable pains to discover a similar piece of music by Bach, but without success. The Fantasia is unique and unequaled. Wilhelm Friedemann sent it to me from Brunswick inscribed with these words by a mutual friend. “Anbey kommt an etwas Musik von Sebastian, sonst genannt: Fantasia chromatica; bleibt schön in alle Saecula.” It is remarkable that this piece, for all its technical skill, appeals to the most unpractised hearer, if it is performed at all tolerably.

6. A *Fantasia in C minor.* It is not of the same character as the preceding work, but resembles rather the Allegro of a Sonata. It is divided into two parts, but must be played as a single movement. It is an excellent work, and in old copies an unfinished Fugue follows, which, however, cannot belong to it. The first thirty bars certainly are by Bach, for they are marked by an extremely bold use of augmented and diminished intervals and their inversions, in three-part harmony. None but Bach attempted such things. The rest of the movement seems to have been added by another hand and bears no trace of Bach's style.

7. *Six large Suites,* consisting of Preludes, Allemandes, Courantes, Sarabandes, etc. They are known as the “En-

---

264 Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor (P. bk. 207 p. 4). It probably dates from circ. 1720-23.
265 The MS. was discovered in 1876 and is now at Dresden. It was written circ. 1738 and disproves Forkel's conjecture that the fugue did not belong to the Fantasia and is only partially by Bach. The Fugue contains forty-seven bars. As the Autograph is a fair copy the Fugue cannot be called unfinished. See Spitta, iii. 182. The Fantasia is in P. bk. 207 p. 50; the Fugue in P. bk. 212 p. 88. See B.C. xxxvi., xxxviii., and xlii. for other Clavier Fantasias.
lish Suites,” because the composer wrote them for an Englishman of rank. All of them are of great merit as works of art, and some movements, in particular the Gigues of the fifth and sixth Suites, are perfect masterpieces of harmony and melody.

8. *Six small Suites*, consisting of Allemandes, Courantes, etc. They are generally called the “French Suites,” because they are written in the French style. The composer is intentionally less academic in them than in his larger Suites, and their melodies are more than usually pleasant and agreeable. In particular the fifth Suite deserves to be noticed: all its movements are most melodious, and in the concluding Gigue only consonant intervals, especially thirds and sixths, are used.

These are Bach's principal works for the Clavier which can be considered classics. A great number of single Suites, Toccatas and Fugues, besides those already mentioned, have great and varying merit, but are youthful

---

266 The true explanation seems to be that the Prelude of the first Suite (A major) is based upon a Gigue by Charles Dieupart (d. circ. 1740), a popular teacher and composer in England. The words fait pour les Anglois, which head the A major Suite in an early MS., have been wrongly interpreted as applying to the whole set of six. They merely indicate Dieupart's borrowed Gigue. See Grove, vol. i. 701, and Parry, *J. S. Bach*, p. 463. A copy of the work exists, of date 1724-27, made by one of Bach's pupils. But the composition of the Suites may certainly be assigned to the Cöthen period. They are published in P. bks. 203, 204.

267 The French Suites undoubtedly date back to the Cöthen period, since they figure, though incomplete, in the *Notenbuch* of A. M. Bach (1722). They are published in P. bk. 202.

268 Forkel's incomplete catalogue may be compared with the Bachgesellschaft volumes III., XIV., XXV. (1), XXXI. (2), XXXVI., XLII., XLIII. (1 and 2), XLV. (1). See generally Schweitzer, ch. 15, and Pirro, pp. 218 ff.

269 P. bks. 205, 206, 208, 212 (fragment in F minor), 214, 215, 1959.

At the most, ten or twelve of them seem to me worth preserving, some of them because they would be useful as finger exercises, for which their author originally intended them, others because they are at least better than similar works by other composers. As an exercise for the fingers of both hands I particularly single out a Fugue in A minor, in which the composer has been at great pains to write florid passages in order to give equal strength and suppleness to both hands. For beginners a little two-part Fugue should also prove useful. It is melodious, flowing, and not at all old-fashioned.

II. Music For The Clavier With Other Instruments

1. *Six Sonatas for Clavier with Violin obbligato.* Composed at Cöthen, they are among Bach's masterpieces in this form and display fugal and canonic writing which is both natural and full of character. The Violin part needs a master to play it; for Bach knew the capabilities of the instrument and spared it as little as the Clavier. The six Sonatas are in the keys of B minor, A major, E major, C minor, F minor, and G major.

2. *Several Sonatas for Harpsichord and Violin,* *Harpischord and Flute,* *Harpischord and Viol da Gamba.*

---

271 For the most part these youthful works will be found in B.G. XXXVI.

272 P. bk. 207 p. 16.

273 In C minor (P. bk. 200 p. 10).

274 In P. bks. 232, 233.

275 Suite in A major (P. bk. 236), Sonata in E minor (P. bk. 236), Fugue in G minor (P. bk. 236), four Inventions (P. bk. 2957), Sonata in G minor (BG. ix. 274; not in P.), Sonata in C major for 2 Violins and Clavier (P. bk. 237).

276 There are six Sonatas for Flute and Clavier, in B minor, E flat major, A minor, C major, E minor, E major (P. bks. 234, 235).

277 There are three Sonatas for Clavier and Gamba, in G major, D major, G minor (P. bk. 239).
They are admirably written and most of them are pleasant to listen to even today.\footnote{278}

3. \textit{Several Concertos for the Clavier and other instruments}. They contain real gems of art but are antiquated in form.\footnote{279}

4. \textit{Two Concertos for two Claviers}, with an accompaniment of two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello. The first, in C minor,\footnote{280} has an antique flavour. But the second, in C major,\footnote{281} is as fresh as if it had been written yesterday.\footnote{282} It may be played without the String quartet and still sounds admirable. The final Allegro is a majestic movement and strictly fugal. Compositions of this form were first perfected, indeed, we may conjecture, were first attempted, by Bach. At least, I have met with only a single example by another composer that may perhaps be older—namely, Pachelbel of Nürnberg's Toccata, as he called it. Pachelbel, however, was a contemporary of Bach and may have taken the idea from him. However, his work is not worth considering. One instrument merely repeats the other's phrases without being at all concertante. It almost seems as if Bach at this period had made up his mind to discover what could be done with
any number of parts. Having already written for a single solo instrument music which required no accompaniment, he next experimented in dividing his material between as large a number of solo instruments as possible. Hence the Concertos for two Claviors were followed by 5. *Two Concertos for three Claviors* with an accompaniment of Strings.\[131] These Concertos present a remarkable characteristic: besides the concertante combination of three Claviors, the stringed instruments also have concertante parts distinct from the accompaniment. It is difficult to realise the art involved in this achievement. For, in spite of their technical skill, the two works are so delicate, full of character, and expressive, that the composer might be treating a simple melody (note particularly the Concerto in D minor). Words are inadequate to express the admiration they arouse. But Bach was not satisfied. Hence he wrote 6. *A Concerto for four Claviors* and four stringed instruments.\[284] I cannot judge the effect of this composition, for I have never been able to get together the four instruments and four performers it requires. But that it is admirably written can be seen from the parts.

### III. Compositions For The Organ

The pedal is the distinctive feature of the Organ which places it above all other instruments, and gives it its magnificence,

---

\[283\] In D minor and C major (P. bks. 258, 259). The tradition is that Bach wrote these two Concertos in order to play them with his elder sons. Spitta (iii. 144) finds the tradition trustworthy. Hence the two works must have been written by c. 1733 at latest, before the sons left home. See also Schweitzer, i. 414.

\[284\] In A minor (P. bk. 260). This is not an original composition, but is an arrangement by Bach of a Vivaldi Concerto for four Violins. Spitta (iii. 149) assigns it to the same period as the Concertos for three Claviors, c. 1733. See B.G. XLIII. (1) infra.
sonority, and majesty. Deprive it of the pedal and you take from it the solemn and imposing tones which are its distinctive utterance, reducing it to the level of a “positiv,” or Chamber-organ, an instrument relatively insignificant.

But an Organ equipped with a pedal must be able to employ it in its full compass, and both composer and organist must know the proper use of it. No one excelled Bach in this knowledge. Not only is his rich harmony and melody singularly adapted to the instrument, but he gave the pedal a part of its own, even in his early compositions. Yet it was only gradually that he mastered its technique; for his Organ masterpieces belong to the period in which those for the Clavier began to be classics. His early and immature Organ works are widely dispersed; for as soon as a composer begins to be distinguished everybody is anxious to possess a specimen of his art. Public curiosity, however, generally dies down long before a composer comes to maturity, particularly if his work is over the heads of the public. And this seems to have been Bach's fortune. Consequently his mature Organ works are less familiar than his early efforts. The latter, however, cannot possibly be admitted to a “correct and critical” edition of his works, and I mention here only those whose merit is as incontestable as that of the Clavier works enumerated in the preceding paragraphs.

Bach's finest Organ music falls into three groups:

1. *The Great Preludes and Fugues*, with obbligato pedal. Their number cannot be stated, but I believe it not to exceed a dozen. At least, after prolonged search I have not been able to collect more than that number. To these I must

---

285 The pedal on the small German Organ had only the compass of an octave.
286 The Great Preludes and Fugues are, with one exception, in B.G. XV. The Prelude and Fugue in E flat was published by Bach in the third Part of the *Clavierübung*. Its Fugue is known as the “St. Anne’s.”
287 From the figures printed by Forkel the twelve can be identified as follows (the references in parentheses are to the Novello edition of Bach's Organ
add a very clever and original Passacaglia, which, however, seems suitable rather for a two-manual Clavicembalo and pedal than for the Organ.\footnote{288}

2. Preludes on Choral Melodies. It was at Arnstadt that Bach began to compose Variations on Choral melodies, under the title \textit{Partite diverse}.\footnote{289} Most of them can be played on the manuals alone. Those which I include here are an exception and require the obbligato pedal. Their number may amount to one hundred. I myself possess above seventy, works:

Prelude and Fugue in C minor, the “Great” (bk. vii. 64).
Prelude and Fugue in A minor, (bk. vii. 42).
Prelude and Fugue in G major, (bk. viii. 112).
Prelude and Fugue in E minor, (bk. viii. 98).
Prelude and Fugue in B minor, (vii. 52).
Prelude and Fugue in C major, (bk. ix. 156).
Prelude and Fugue in D minor, (bk. ix. 150).
Prelude and Fugue in C major (bk iii. 70).
Tocatta and Fugue in D minor (bk. x. 196).
Tocatta and Fugue in F major (bk. ix. 176).
Prelude and Fugue in G minor (bk. viii. 120).
Prelude and Fugue in E minor (bk. ii. 44).

\footnote{288} The Passacaglia in C minor (Novello bk. 10 p. 214) was written originally for the Clavicembalo and pedal. It belongs to the later Weimar period, i.e. circ. 1715. See Spitta, i. 588 and Schweitzer, i. 280.

\footnote{289} They are all printed in Novello bk. 19, and are three in number, on the melodies “Christ, der du bist der helle Tag”, “O Gott, du frommer Gott,” and “Sei gegrüsset, Jesu gültig.” The pedal is only required in one movement of the first, in none of the second, and considerably in the third. Without question
and more survive elsewhere.\textsuperscript{290} No other Choral Preludes approach them in religious feeling, dignity, and sublimity of expression. I cannot notice them individually; they are too numerous. Besides the larger, there is a great number of shorter and easier ones, particularly useful for young players. MSS. of them exist in considerable number.\textsuperscript{291}

3. \textit{Six Sonatas}, or Trios, for two manuals and an obbligato pedal.\textsuperscript{292} Bach wrote them for his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, whom they helped to become the great performer he was when I knew him. It is impossible to overpraise their beauty. Bach composed them when he was in the full vigour of his powers, and they may be considered his chef d’oeuvre in this form.\textsuperscript{293} He also wrote other Organ Sonatas, the MSS. of which are in various collections. They are fine compositions, though they do not equal the Six in all three date from Bach's earliest period, but whether they were written at Arnstadt or Lüneburg cannot be stated.

\textsuperscript{290} The fullest collection of these miscellaneous Organ Choral Preludes is in B.G. XL. Not counting variant readings they number fifty-two, besides two fragments and thirteen of doubtful authenticity, of which two are sets of Variations. The Novello edition contains fifty-two in bks. 18 and 19. To these must be added the “Eighteen” Preludes on Choral Melodies, which Forkel nowhere mentions, as well as the third Part of the \textit{Clavierübung}, the \textit{Schübler Chorals}, and the Variations on \textit{Vom Himmel hoch}, to which he has already made reference in the first section of this chapter. As he does not mention it specifically, it is to be inferred that Forkel was ignorant of the existence of the \textit{Orgelbüchlein}; otherwise he could hardly have failed to introduce it in this section. All Bach's Choral Preludes, miscellaneous and in collections made by himself, are in Novello's edition, bks. 15-19. A useful key to their melodies is provided by bk. 20. For more detailed information see Terry, \textit{Bach's Chorals}, Part III.

\textsuperscript{291} The large number of MSS. of many of the miscellaneous Preludes is made evident in the introduction to B.G. XL.

\textsuperscript{292} The Sonatas in E flat major, C minor, and D minor are in N. bk. 4; E minor, C major, G major in N. bk. 5.

\textsuperscript{293} The so-called “Sonatas” were actually written for a Clavicembalo with
IV. Instrumental Music

There are few instruments for which Bach did not write. In his day it was usual to play a Concerto or instrumental Solo during the Communion office. Bach composed many of these pieces himself, and always with a view to their improving the technique of the player. Most of them are lost. But two important works of another kind survive and to some extent compensate us. They are:

2. Six Solos for Violoncello, unaccompanied. The Violin Solos have long been considered by the finest players to be

---

294 None are extant. Spitta, iii. 213 n., conjectures that Forkel refers to the Trios in D minor and C minor (N. bks. 2 p. 54, 12 p. 108) and the Pastorale in F major (N. bk. 12 p. 102.) His incomplete knowledge of the Organ works is revealed by Appendix V. infra.

295 This is a pure conjecture and Schweitzer scouts it (i. 416 n.).

296 The oldest copy of them dates from circ. 1720; they belong therefore to the late Cöthen period. The 1720 MS. is in A. M. Bach's handwriting and was discovered in 1814 at Petrograd among old papers about to be sent away to a butter dealer. The Sonatas are in P. bk. 228.

297 They also date from the Cöthen period and are in P. bk. 238a, 238b.
the best instructor for the instrument. The Violoncello Solos are equally effective.\textsuperscript{298}

V. Vocal Music

1. Five complete sets of church Cantatas for the Sundays and Festivals of the year.\textsuperscript{299}

2. Five compositions for Holy Week, one of which is for double chorus.\textsuperscript{300}

\textsuperscript{298} Forkel omits to mention the Brandenburg Concertos (P. bks. 261-266); the Overtures in C major (P. bk. 267), B minor (P. bk. 268), D major (P. bk. 269), D major (P. bk. 2068); and the Violin Concertos in A minor (P. bk. 229), E major (P. bk. 230), and (for two Violins) in D minor (P. bk. 231). In B.G. XXI. (1) is a Symphonic movement, in D major, for Violin and orchestra. A Sinfonia in F major (B.G. XXXI. 96) is another version of the first Brandenburg Concerto. The Clavier Concertos have been mentioned supra.

\textsuperscript{299} The set of five is complete only for Christmas Day, Feast of the Circumcision, Whitsunday (one of the five is of doubtful authenticity), Purification of the B.V.M., and Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. See Terry, \textit{Bach's Chorals}, Part II. 2 ff.

\textsuperscript{300} In giving the number of \textit{Passions} as five, Forkel repeats the statement of the \textit{Nekrolog}. The number corresponds with the five sets of Church Cantatas which Bach is known to have written. It is, however, exceedingly doubtful whether Bach wrote more than four \textit{Passions}. Only those according to St. Matthew and St. John have come down to us from C. P. E. Bach, who was left the Autographs of both by his father. The \textit{St. John Passion} was first performed in 1724 and the \textit{St. Matthew Passion} in 1729. Picander, Bach's librettist, certainly wrote two other Passion texts, one of which was written for Good Friday 1725, and the second, based on St. Mark's Gospel, was actually performed at St. Thomas', Leipzig, on Good Friday 1731. Spitta (ii. 505) gives good reason
3. Several Oratorios,\textsuperscript{301} Masses,\textsuperscript{302} a \textit{Magnificat}, settings of the Sanctus,\textsuperscript{303} compositions for birthdays and Saints'

\textsuperscript{301} Other than the \textit{Passions}, the only Oratorios are the \textit{Christmas Oratorio}, (1734), the \textit{Easter Oratorio} (c. 1736), and \textit{Ascension Oratorio} (c. 1735).

\textsuperscript{302} Besides the B minor Mass (1733-? 38) Bach wrote four miscalled “short” Masses, in F major, A major, G minor, and G major. They all belong to the Leipzig period (c. 1739).

\textsuperscript{303} Besides the setting of the Sanctus in the B minor Mass there are four detached settings, in C major, D major, D minor, and G major. Of these only that in D major is probably by Bach (c. 1723).
Days,\textsuperscript{304} funerals,\textsuperscript{305} marriages,\textsuperscript{306} and some Italian Cantatas.\textsuperscript{307}

4. Several Motets for single and double chorus.\textsuperscript{308}

Most of these works are now dispersed. The Church Cantatas were divided between his elder sons after their composer's death. Wilhelm Friedemann had the larger share because, being organist at Halle, he could make use of them. Later, circumstances compelled him to part with them gradually. I know of no other collection of Bach's larger choral works. There exist, however, eight or ten Motets for double chorus, but they are dispersed in various hands.\textsuperscript{309} In the collection bequeathed by the Princess Amalia of Prussia to the Joachimsthal Gymnasium at Berlin there are some of Bach's vocal compositions.\textsuperscript{310} Their number is not considerable, but among them are the following:

\textsuperscript{304} The music for Saints' Days is included in the church Cantatas. For the Birthday Odes see supra, Chap. IIA.

\textsuperscript{305} Besides the \textit{Trauer-Ode}, three or four of the church Cantatas and certainly three of the Motets were written for funerals. See Terry, op. cit., pp. 24, 44.

\textsuperscript{306} Among the church Cantatas there are at least five for use at weddings. Bach wrote also three secular wedding Cantatas: \textit{Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten} (c. 1730); \textit{O holder Tag} (11749); the third (1728) has disappeared.

\textsuperscript{307} Two Italian Cantatas—\textit{Amore traditore} and \textit{Non sa che sia dolore}—have come down to us. A third, \textit{Andro dall colle al prato}, is lost. See B.G. XI. (ii.), XXIX.

\textsuperscript{308} Only six are genuine. See infra, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{309} Of the Motets that have come down to us as his, only six are Bach's. Forkel mentions five of them in secs. 7 and 3 of the next paragraph; he omits \textit{Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden}. In 1802-3 Breitkopf and Haertel published six Motets—the five mentioned by Forkel and another, \textit{Ich lasse dich nicht}, of which Bach made a copy, but whose composer actually was Johann Christoph Bach. We know that Bach composed at least one Latin Motet for double chorus, and Friedemann's share of his father's autographs may have contained it and others known to Forkel but no longer extant.

\textsuperscript{310} The Amalienbibliothek of the Joachimsthal Gymnasium, Berlin, contains one of the most important Bach collections, but it has long been superseded by
1. Twenty-one Church Cantatas.\textsuperscript{311} In one of them, set to the words, \textit{Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde},\textsuperscript{312} the composer introduces a bell obbligato. From that fact we may conclude that the Cantata was not composed in the period of Bach's maturity,\textsuperscript{313} for the use of bells is of doubtful taste.

2. Two Masses for five voices with instrumental accompaniment.\textsuperscript{314}

3. A Mass for double chorus, the first being accompanied by Strings and the second by wind instruments.\textsuperscript{315}

4. A Passion, for double Chorus,\textsuperscript{316} the text by Picander.\textsuperscript{317}

5. A Sanctus, for four voices and instrumental accompaniment.\textsuperscript{318}

6. A Motet, for four voices, \textit{Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu}

---

\textsuperscript{311} The Amalienbibliothek has only one Autograph, namely, Cantata 34, \textit{O ewiges Feuer}. The rest are early copies.

\textsuperscript{312} Cantata 53. No Autograph of this Cantata exists, and the copies from which the B.G. edition was printed are in the Amalienbibliothek.

\textsuperscript{313} On the contrary, the Cantata belongs to the Leipzig period, 1723-34.

\textsuperscript{314} None of the four "short" Masses is in five parts. All have instrumental accompaniments. The autograph scores of the Masses in A major and G major are in Messrs. Breitkopf and Haertel's possession. Copies of the other two scores, in Altnikol's handwriting, are in the Berlin Royal Library. See Introduction to B.G. VIII.

\textsuperscript{315} An eight-part Mass in G was performed at a Leipzig Gewandhaus Concert on March 7, 1805, and was published later in the year by Breitkopf and Haertel. The score is admittedly, for the greater part of the work, in Bach's hand and is in the Berlin Royal Library. The publication of the work was under consideration by the Bachgesellschaft in 1858. That it is not by Bach is generally held. It has been attributed to Johann Ludwig Bach (d. 1741). See Genealogical Table II.

\textsuperscript{316} The \textit{St. Matthew Passion}.

\textsuperscript{317} A nom de plume for Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700-64), who wrote a large number of Bach's Leipzig texts.

\textsuperscript{318} Perhaps Forkel indicates the short Sanctus in Richter's edition of the
7. A Motet for five voices, Jesu, meine Freude.

8. Four Motets, for eight voices in double chorus:
   (a) Fürchte dich nicht, ich bin dei dir.
   (b) Der Geist hilft unserer Schwachheit auf.
   (c) Komm, Jesu, komm.
   (d) Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied.

9. A detached four-part fugal chorus, Nimm was dein ist, und gehe hin.

10. A bucolic Cantata, with Recitatives, Aria, Duet, and Chorus. A note is prefixed to it.

On the MS. of the last-named Cantata and of the Mass for double chorus (No. 3 supra) there is a note by Kirnberger analysing the skill and merit of the compositions.

Choralgesänge, No. 123, or that in B.G. XLI. p. 177.

319 This is the first Chorus of Cantata No. 38. It is printed as a separate Motet in Erk, No. 150.

320 Forkel's list is complete except for Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden.

321 The opening Chorus of Cantata 144.

322 Forkel refers to the Peasant Cantata, or Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet, performed on August 30, 1742. Forkel clearly was not familiar with Bach's other secular Cantatas. See B.G. XI. (ii.), XX. (ii.), XXIX. The Autograph score of the Peasant Cantata is in the Berlin Royal Library.