

Luther's Hymns in the Works of Johann Sebastian Bach

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This study analyzes how the hymns of Martin Luther are treated in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. It has been stated that Bach often used Luther's chorales in his vocal and organ works, and yet there has been no monograph capturing its entire picture. In this article, 44 hymns whose texts are written by Luther are regarded as "Luther's hymns" (Table 1).

Among some 200 Bach's organ chorales, 53 are based on Luther's chorales (Table 2). In the *Orgelbüchlein*, Luther's hymns printed in contemporary hymnals are covered exhaustively. Bach used about 370 hymn stanzas in his vocal works. Eleven among 53 chorale cantatas are wholly based on Luther's hymns. 26 four-part chorales use Luther's hymns. In other vocal works, Luther's hymns are used in 58 movements of 46 works (Table 3-4). Bach used 100 stanzas of Luther's hymns in all. The data shown in this study demonstratively support the widespread statement that Bach often used Luther's hymns.

Table 1 shows which of Luther's hymns are used in which of Bach's works. It is considered that the most popular hymns in Bach's time were Luther's. However, Luther's hymns account for only one to nine percent in four hymnals Bach referred to. It is true that Luther's hymns are located at conspicuous positions in these hymnals; it is supposed that the ecclesiastical authorities had the policy to attach great importance to Luther's hymns. Nevertheless, it cannot be an accident that as many as a quarter of organ chorales and hymn stanzas Bach composed are based on those of Luther. Besides, the reason why 10 hymns of Luther were not composed by Bach was given.