

Lecture 23 – “A Warmth from the Fire of God in the Heart of the Country”: Pietism & Bach

“History repeats itself. Has to. No one listens.” “History Lesson” by Steve Turner

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
2 Timothy 3:16

Background Reading

Gonzalez, ch. 23, pp. 205-209

Prayer

From Count von Zinzendorf

“Jesus, lead Thou on till our rest is won;
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless:
Guide us by Thy hand to our fatherland.”
“Jesus, lead Thou on till our rest is won;
Heav’nly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, control, protect us,
Till we safely stand in our fatherland. Amen.”

From Johann Sebastian Bach

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!
Be all Thy graces now outpoured
On each believer’s mind and heart;
Thy fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of Thy light,
Thou in the faith doth men unite
Of every land and every tongue;
This to Thy praise, O Lord, our God be sung.
Alleluia, alleluia.” Amen.

“A Warmth from the Fire of God in the Heart of the Country”: Pietism & Bach

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “Go to the eighteenth century...Read the stories of the great tides and movements of the Spirit experienced in that century. For a preacher it is absolutely invaluable” (*Preaching and Preachers*, 118).

I. The Problem of “Dead Orthodoxy”: Separation Between Doctrine and Life

Cotton Mather: “The world begins to feel a warmth from the fire of God which thus flames in the heart of Germany” (1715).

II. The Pietists**A. Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705)**

1. Influenced by Luther, the Dutch Second Reformation, and the English Puritans
2. “Collegiae Pietatis”
3. *Pia Desideria* (or, *Heartfelt Desires for a God-Pleasing Improvement of the True Protestant Church*)—Spener’s preface to Johann Arndt’s *True Christianity*
4. University of Halle
5. August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)—*Pietas Hallensis, or a Public Demonstration of the Footsteps of a Divine Being yet in the World*

B. Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)

1. Zinzendorf—"I have one passion. It is He."
 2. Hussite refugees at Herrnhut and "The Golden Summer" of 1727
- C. The Pietists and the Moravians
1. Spiritual awakening
 - a. Bible study
 - 1) Biblical theology
 - 2) Johannes Albert Bengel (1687-1752)—"Put nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden, that is really in them."
 - b. Prayer: One-hundred-year prayer meeting
 2. Social concern
 3. Missions
 - a. 60 missionaries went from Halle during the 18th century, beginning with Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, Christian Friedrich Schwartz, and Heinrich Plütschau who went to India in 1706
 - b. Over half of all Protestant missionaries of the 18th century were Moravians
 - 1) Leohard Dober and David Nitschmann were sent to the slaves of St. Thomas in 1732; Christian David went to Greenland in 1733; August Gottlieb Spangenberg was sent to Georgia in 1735

"See Germany send forth
Her sons to pour it [salvation] on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigor of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's Rose
On icy plains and in eternal snows."
(William Cowper, referring to the Moravian missionaries in Greenland, in his poem "Hope")
 - 2) "The Sampling of the Nations" (1747)
Emil Brunner: "Quite apart from its rejuvenation of the dried-up Protestant church, what Pietism accomplished in the sphere of social amelioration and foreign missions is at least the token of that Spirit which is promised in the Bible to those who truly believe, and is among the most splendid records of achievements to be found in church history" (*The Divine-Human Encounter*, 23).

III. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

- A. "The Fifth Evangelist"
- B. "How the Glory of the Lord Appeared after Beautiful Music" (Subtitle in Bach's Bible at 2 Chronicles 5:13)
 1. Bach's marginal comments: 1 Chronicles 25—"NB. This chapter is the true foundation of all God-pleasing church music"; 2 Chronicles 5:13—"NB. Where there is devotional music, God with His grace is always present."
 2. "He based his music on a solid foundation of theological orthodoxy and consistent personal piety" (R. Dinwiddie, "J. S. Bach: God's Master Musician," *Christianity Today*).
 3. "S. D. G." (*soli deo gloria*) and "J. J." (*Jesu juva*)
 4. Unfinished chorale, "Before Thy throne, My God, I stand" ("Grant that my end may worthy be, and that I wake Thy face to see")

Questions from Class

What happened to the Moravians after those who had been with Count von Zinzendorf?

What is Moravian doctrine?

Were Handel and Bach both equally concerned with church music?

For Further Study

A. Read the additional material from Spener's *The Pia Desideria*, Francke's "On Christian Perfection," Muhlenburg's "Examining the Candidate," and the hymn "Christian Hearts, in Love United."

B. Read the entire *Pia Desideria* and especially pages 31-49 from *Pietists: Selected Writings*, ed. Peter C. Erb (Paulist, 1983). Use the following questions for reflection.

*What are the "proposed exercises" that Spener discusses in section 1?

*What is Spener's vision for the "spiritual priesthood" (section 2)? How well, in your opinion, has the modern evangelical church done in this area?

*Do Spener's ideas (in section 3) violate the doctrine of justification by faith? What practical advice does he give to promote Christian love and Christian growth in general?

*Review the four rules Spener gives (in section 4) to guide Christians in witnessing to unbelievers. His fifth rule has more to do with conduct in religious and theological controversy. What is his main concern in this area?

*Notice Spener's striking description (in section 5) of what schools of theology should be—"nurseries of the church" (seed beds or seminaries) and "workshops of the Holy Spirit." Both professors and students should take careful heed to what Spener writes in this section. What books does he recommend to promote the spiritual life?

*What is Spener's chief concern about sermons (section 6)? What is his definition of orthodoxy?

C. "First Fruits" is an excellent film (and video) depicting the mission of Dober and Nitschmann to St. Thomas and the conversion of a little orphan boy and a few others, the "first fruits" of the Moravian mission.