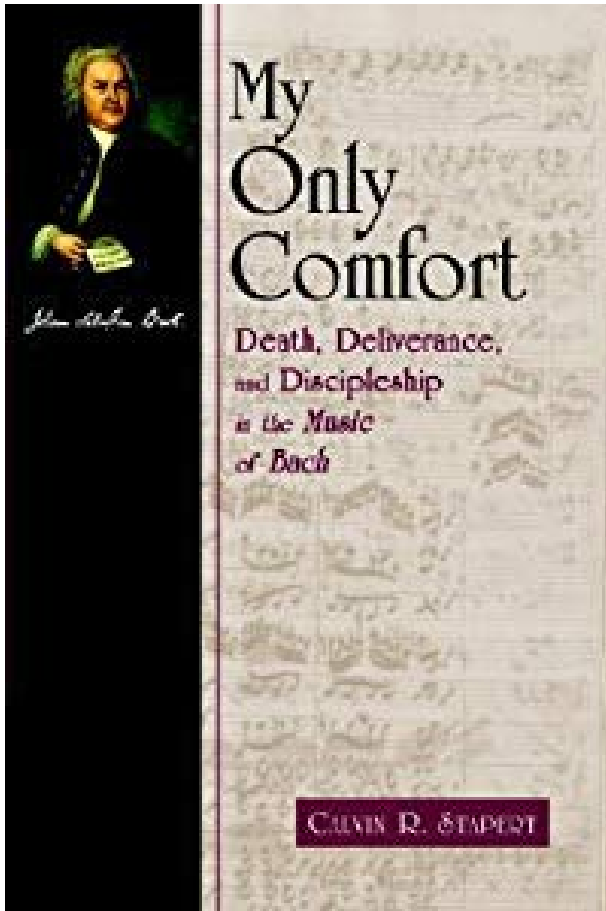


# My Only Comfort: Death, Deliverance, and Discipline in the Music of Bach



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In the history of Western music, J. S. Bach is unsurpassed in mastery of technique and profundity of thought. He was also a devout Lutheran with a broad knowledge of Scripture and theology. Given Bach's combination of musical prowess, personal devotion, and theological depth, it is not surprising that his music stands unexcelled among artistic expressions of the Christian faith. With the passage of time, however, many of the essential keys to understanding Bach's music have been lost. *My Only Comfort* uniquely reconnects modern listeners with Bach's music, enabling them to listen to Bach with renewed understanding and appreciation. After an introduction to Bach, his theological knowledge, his musical language, and the various genres of sacred music in his output, Calvin Stapert leads readers through specific works by Bach that express, interpret, and vivify some of the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. For each work discussed, Stapert provides relevant quotations from the Heidelberg Catechism (a novel and provocative approach to the study of Bach), a literal translation of the text set beside the German original, and textual and musical commentary meant to contribute to a more perceptive and devotional listening to the work.