

When Bach took over the St. Thomas Cantorate in the spring of 1723 as the leading musician of the foremost Cantorate in Protestant Germany, he achieved at long last the opportunity to realize his artistic aspirations: "the ultimate goal of a regulated church music," which he had described in 1708 to the Mühlhausen Town Council and which he had attempted to pursue, on a more restricted level, at the Weimar Court. Bach at once embarked on a program to provide a piece of concerted music - a Cantata - for every Sunday and Feast Day of the ecclesiastical year, except for the Lenten weeks preceding Christmas and Easter, when concerted music was suspended.

The Cantata supplied the principal music piece in the liturgy of the main service, and as such it highlighted and then interpreted a passage from the biblical text for the day. Thus all of Bach's Leipzig Cantata texts follow a standard pattern firmly grounded in the two-fold structure of a Lutheran sermon: *explicatio* and *applicatio*, biblical text and theological instruction, followed by practical and moral advice. The Cantata ordinarily opens with a Chorus using a Biblical dictum, normally a passage from the prescribed Gospel lesson that serves as a point of departure. Bach made a particular point of reflecting the mood of the text in his music. The Cantata usually concludes with a Chorale in the form of a hymn stanza.

Bach's own Bible was well used and frequently annotated in the margin. At the end of his Cantata scores he would write "Fine. S.D.G" (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Though formally employed by the City Council and responsible to his Choir and Congregation, the ultimate dedication of Bach's choral writing - indeed possibly all of his music - was "to the Glory of God Alone". We have used this as our title in these *Soli Deo Gloria* compilations from the two hundred or so known Cantatas. In the first two volumes (BACH 733 & 734) we offered a selection of some of Bach's finest opening Choruses conducted by Karl Richter. From Volume 3 onwards we continue exploring this great treasure of some of Bach's greatest music, much of it little-heard, by working numerically through all of the Cantatas, excepting those already included in the first two Volumes of *Soli Deo Gloria* or those Cantatas which are exceptional throughout and which we have already presented in their entirety. The recordings here presented were made over a number of years at the annual Greifswald Bach Festival by the East German Radio of the former D.D.R.

1: BWV 47 - Chorus 1: *Wer sich selbst erhöht, der soll erniedrigt werden, und wer sich selbst erniedrigt, der soll erhöht werden.* He who exalts himself, shall be made humble, and he who makes himself humble, shall be exalted. **Chorale:** *Der zeitlichen Ehrn will ich gern entbehren, du wollst mit nur das Ewge gewähren, das du erworben hast durch deinen herben, bittern Tod. Das bitt ich dich, mein Herr und Gott.* All temporal praise would I gladly forsake if Thou wouldst give me eternity, which Thou hast won for us through Thine own painful, bitter death. This do I ask, my Lord and God.

2: BWV 48 - Chorus 1: *Ich elender Mensch, wer wird mich erlösen vom Leibe dieses Todes?* A poor man am I, who will set me free from this dying body? **Chorale 2:** *Herr Jesu Christ, einiger Trost, zu dir will ich mich wenden; Mein herzleid is dir wohl bewusst, du kannst und wirst es enden.* Lord Jesu Christ, my only help, in Thee will I take refuge: my heart's distress is to Thee well known, Thou canst and will dispel it. Upon Thy will let all depend, deal, O my God, as Thou dost please: I am Thine for now and ever.

3: BWV 50 - Chorus 1: *Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft und das Reich und die Macht unsers Gottes seines Christus worden, weil der verworfen ist, der sie verklagete Tag und Nacht vor Gott.* Now is the health and the strength and the kingdom and might of our God and of His Christ come to us, for he who was accusing them is now cast down by God.

4: BWV 62 - Chorus 1: *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, der Jungfrauen Kind erkennt, des sich wundert alle Welt, Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.* Now is come the Gentiles' Saviour, as the Virgin's child has revealed, at whom marvels all the world, that God did ordain His birth.

5: BWV 63 - Chorus 1: *Christen, ätzt diesen Tag in Metall und Marmorsteine. Kommt und eilt mit mir zur Krippen und erweist mit frohen Lippen euren Dank und euer Pflicht; denn der Strahl, so da einbricht, zeigt sich euch zum Gnadenscheine.* Christians, etch this day in bronze and stones of marble! Come, quick, join me at the Manger and display with lips of gladness all your thanks and all you owe; for the Light which here breaks forth shows to you a sign of blessing.

Chorus 2: *Höchster, schau in Gnaden an diese Glut gebüchter Seelen! Lass den Dank, den wir dir bringen, angenehme vor Dir klingen, lass uns stets in Segen gehn, aber niemals nicht geschehn, dass uns Satan möge quälen.* Highest One, look now with mercy at the warmth of Thy reverent spirits! Let the thanks we bring before Thee resound in Thine ears with pleasure, let us walk in blessing, let it never come to pass that we suffer Satan's torments.

6: BWV 66 - Chorus 1: *Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen, entweicht, ihr Schmerzen, es lebet der Heiland und herrschet in euch. Ihr könnet verjagen das Trauern, das Fürchten, das ängstliche Zagen, der Heiland erquicket sein geistliches Reich.* Rejoice, all ye Spirits, depart all ye sorrows, our Saviour is alive and ruling in you. Ye can now dispel all that grieving, that fearing, that faint-hearted anguish, our Saviour restoreth his rule over the soul. **Chorale:** *Alleluja! Alleluja! Alleluja! Des solln wir alle froh sein, Christus will unser Trost*

sein, Kyrie eleis! Allelia! Alleluia! Alleluia! For this we shall be glad: Christ shall be our true comfort. Kyrie eleis!

7: BWV 69 - Chorus 1: *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele, und vergiss nicht, was er dir Gutes getan hat! Praise thou the Lord, O my spirit, and forget not the goodness that He hath shown thee. Chorale: Es danke, Gott, und lobe dich das Volk in guten Taten. Das Land bringt Frucht und bessert sich, dein Wort ist wohl geraten. Uns segne Vater und der Sohn, uns segne Gott der Heilige Geist, dem alle Welt die Ehre tut, vor ihm sich fürchte allermeist, und sprecht von Herzen: Amen! Let us thank Thee, O God, and the people honour Thee through good service. The land bears fruit, and improves itself, Thy word is well commended. May the Father and the Son bless us, and God the Holy Ghost, whom all the world doth glorify and hold in unexcelled reverence, and thus we speak from the heart: Amen!*

8: BWV 70 - Chorus 1: *Wachet! betet! betet! wachet! Seid bereit allezeit, bis der Herr der Herrlichkeit dieser Welt ein Ende machet!* Watch ye, pray ye, pray ye, watch ye! Keep prepared for the day when the Lord of majesty brings the world to an end! *Chorale 2: Nicht nach Welt, nach Himmel nicht meine Seele wünscht und sehnet, Jesum wünsch ich und sein Licht, der mich hat mit Gott versöhnet, der mich freiet vom Gericht, meinen Jesum lass ich nicht. Not for the world, nor Heaven, doth my spirit yearn with longing, Jesus seek I and His light, He who hath reconciled me to God, He who sets me free from judgment, therefore I will not forsake my Lord Jesus.*

9: BWV 71 - Chorus 1: *Gott ist mein König von altersher, der alle hilfe tut, so auf Erden geschieht. God is my Sovereign since ancient days, who brings all salvation to be found on Earth. Chorale 2: Dein Alter sei wie deine Jugend, und Gott is mit dir in allem, was du tust. Let thine old age be like to thy childhood, and God is with thee in every deed thou doest. Chorale 3: Du wollest dem Feinde nicht geben die Seele deiner Turtelauben. May'st thou not deliver to the Foe thy turtledoves' very own spirits.*

10: BWV 72 - Chorus 1: *Alles nur nach Gottes Willen, so bei Lust als Traurigkeit, so bei gut als böser Zeit. Gottes Wille soll mich stillen bei Gewölk und Sonnenschein. Alles nur nach Gottes Willen! Dies soll meine Losung sein. All things according to God's Will, in joy and deepest grief, in good and evil times. God's own Will shall be my solace under cloud and shining sun. All things according to God's Will! This shall be my salvation. Chorale: Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit, sein Will, der ist der beste, zu helfen den'n er is bereit, die an ihn glauben feste. Er hilft aus Not, der fromme Gott, und züchtiget mit Massen. Wer Gott vertraut, fest auf ihn baut, den will er nicht verlassen. What my God wills, must always be done, His will is the best will; He is prepared to help all those whose faith in Him is steadfast. He frees us from want, this righteous God, and punishes with just measure. He who trusts in God and builds upon Him will not be abandoned.*

11: BWV 73 - Chorus with Tenor, Bass & Soprano Recitative - Choir: *Herr, wie du willst, so schick's mit mir im Leben und im Sterben! Lord, as Thou wilt, let it be for me in life and in death! Tenor: Ach! aber ach! wieviel lässt mich dein Wille leiden! Mein Leben is der Unglücks Ziel, da Jammer und Verdruss mich leben foltern muss, und kamm will meine Not im Sterben von mir scheiden. Ah! Ah, alas! How much doth Thy will let me suffer! My life hath been misfortune's prey. For sorrow and dismay must plague me all my days, nor will even my distress in dying leave me.*

Choir: Allein zu dir steht mein Begir, Herr, lass mich nicht verbeben! Alone for Thee is my desire, Lord, leave me not to perish! Bass: Du bist mein Helfer, Trost und Hort, so der Betrüben Tränen zählet und ihre Zuversicht, das schwache Rohr, nicht gar zerbricht; und weil du miich erwählet, so sprich ein Trost und Freudenwort! Thou art my helper, strength and shield, who numbers every mourner's tears, and so does their confidence, that fragile reed which is in no way corrupt; and since Thou hast chosen me, so speak to me of hope and joy! Choir: Erhalt mich nur in deiner Huld, sonst wie du willst, gib mir Geduld, denn dein Will is der beste. Maintain me only in Thy grace, but as Thou wilt, let me forbear, for Thy will is the best will. Soprano: Dein Wille zwar ist ein versiegelt Buch, da Menschenweishet nichts vernimmt; der Segen scheint uns oft ein Fluch, die Züchtigung ergrimmete Strafe, die Ruhe, so du in dem Todesschlaf uns einst bestimmt, ein Eingang zu der Hölle. Doch macht dein Geist uns dieses Irrtums frei und zeigt, dass uns dein Wille heilsam sei. Thy will, in truth, is like a book that is sealed, which Human wisdom cannot read; Thy grace oft seems to us a curse, chastisement, oft a cruel judgment, the rest which Thou hast ordained in our dying slumber is an introduction to Hell. Thy Spirit, though, doth dispel our error and show that Thy true will doth make us well. Choir: Herr, wie du willst! Lord, as Thou wilt!

12: BWV 74 - Chorus 1: *Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten, und mein Vater wird ihn lieben, und wir werden zu ihm kommen und Wohnung bei ihm machen. He who loves me will keep my commandments, and my Father, too, will love him, and we shall come unto him and make our dwelling with him.*