

When Bach took over the Leipzig 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" and 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. 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. 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 Volumes 3 to 10 we continue to explore this great treasure of Bach's little-heard music by working numerically through all of the Cantatas, excluding those already included in the first two Volumes of *Soli Deo Gloria* or those Cantatas which are exceptional throughout and which we have presented in our *Bach Collection* in their entirety. The recordings given here 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 144 - Chorus 1: *Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin.*, Take what thine is, and go thy way. **Chorale:** *Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit, sein Will, der ist der beste. Zu helfen den'n er ist bereit, die an ihn glauben feste. Er hilft aus Not, der fromme Gott, und züchtigt mit Massen. Wer Gott vertraut, fest auf ihn baut, den will er nicht verlassen.* What my God wills, let it always be, 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 faithful God, and punishes with measure. He who trusts in God and builds firmly upon that trust, shall not be abandoned by Him.

2: BWV 147 - Chorus 1: *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben muss von Christo Zeugnis geben ohne Furcht und Heuchelei, dass er Gott und Heiland sei.* Heart and mouth and deeds and living, must offer their witness to Christ, without fear and falsity, that He is their God and Saviour. **Chorale 1:** *Wohl mir, dass ich Jesum habe, o wie feste halt ich ihn, dass er mir mein Herze labe, wenn ich krank und traurig bin. Jesum hab ich, der mich liebet und sich mir zu eigen gibet; ach drum lass ich Jesum nicht, wenn mir gleich mein Herze bricht.* Blest am I that I have Jesus, Oh, how firmly I hold Him, that He brings my soul refreshment when I am ill and filled with grief. I have Jesus, who doth love me and entrusteth Himself to me; Ah, I will hence leave Jesus not, for that would break my heart also.

3: BWV 149 - Chorus 1: *Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg in den Hütten der Gerechten: Die Rechte des Herrn behält den Sieg, die Rechte des Herrn ist erhöht, die Rechte des Herrn behält den Sieg!* They sing now of triumph with joy in the tents of all the righteous: the Justice of God triumphs, the Rule of God is exalted, His Justice wins the triumph! **Chorale:** *Ach Herr, lass dein lieb Engelein am letzten End die Seele mein in Abrahams Schoß tragen. Den Leib in seim Schlafkämmerlein gar sanft ohn einge Qual und Pein, ruhm bis am jüngsten Tage! Alsdenn vom Tod erwecke mich, dass meine Augen sehen dich in aller Freud, o Gottes Sohn, mein Heiland und Genadenthron! Herr Jesu Christ, erhöre mich, erhöre mich, ich will dich preisen ewiglich.* Oh Lord, let Thy beloved angel carry my soul in its last hour to Abrahams's bosom. Let my body rest peacefully in its chamber free of woe and pain until the Day of Judgment! And then from death awaken me that with mine eyes I may see Thee in total joy, O Son of God, my Saviour and my Throne of Grace! Lord Jesus Christ, O hear me now, O hear me now, I will praise Thee eternally!

4: BWV 172 - Chorus 1: *Erschallet, ihr Lieder, erklinget, ihr Saiten! O seligste Zeiten! Gott will sich die Seelen zu Tempeln bereiten.* Resound now, ye songs, ring out now ye strings! O happiest hours! God shall gather all the souls to His temples. **Chorale:** *Von Gott kommt mir ein Freudenschein, wenn du mit deinem Äugelein mich freundlich tust anblicken. O Herr Jesu, mein trautes Gut, dein Wort, dein Geist, dein Leib und Blut mich innerlich erquicken. Nimm mich freundlich in dein Arme, dass ich warme werd von Gnaden: Auf dein Wort komm ich geladen.* From God comes to me joyful light, when Thou with Thine own precious eye dost regard me with kindness. O Lord Jesus, my trusted goodness, Thy word, Thy soul, Thy flesh and blood inwardly enlivens me. Take me kindly now in Thine arms, make me warm with thy favour: to Thy word I come invited.

5: BWV 173 - Chorus: *Rühre, Höchster, unsern Geist, dass des höchsten Geistes Gaben ihre Wirkung in uns haben! Da dein Sohn uns beten heisst, wird es durch die Wolken dringen und Erhöhung auf uns bringen. Stir, Almighty, now our souls, that the Holy Spirit's blessings work their grace within us now! As thy Son did bid us pray, it will come bursting through the clouds and give its hearing to our petition.*

6: BWV 176 - Chorus 1: *Es ist ein trotzig und verzagt Ding um aller Menschen Herze. There is a devious and despairing aspect in all human hearts.*

7: BWV 177 - Chorus 1: *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, ich bitt, erhör mein Klagen, verlei mir Gnad zu dieser Frist, lass mich doch nicht verzagen; Den rechten Glauben, Herr, ich mein, den wollest du mir geben, dir zu leben, mein'm Nächsten nütz zu sein, dein Wort zu halten eben. I call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, I pray Thee, hear my crying; both lend me grace within this life and let me not lose courage; the proper path, O Lord, I seek, which Thou didst wish to give me: to live for Thee, to serve my neighbour well, and to uphold Thy word justly.*

8: BWV 178 - Chorus 1: *Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält, wenn unsere Feinde toben, und er unsrer Sach nicht zufällt im Himmel hoch dort oben, wo er Israels Schutz nicht ist und selber bricht der Feinde List, so ist's mit uns verloren. Where God the Lord stands with us not, whenever our foes are raging, and He doth not support our cause in Heaven high above us, where He is not Israel's shield, nor Himself breaks our foe's deceit, then is our cause defeated.*

Chorale 3 - Sonata: 2 Oboes d'Amore, Bassoon, Harpsichord

9: BWV 180 - Chorus 1: *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, lass die dunkle Sündenhöhle, komm ans helle Licht gegangen, fange herrlich an zu prangen; denn der Herr voll Heil und Gnaden lässt dich itzt zu Gaste laden. Der den Himmel kann verwalten, will selbst Herberg in dir halten. Deck thyself, O beloved soul, leave sin's dark and murky hollows, come to the brilliant light approaching, begin to now shine with glory; for the Lord with health and blessing hath thee as His guest invited. He of Heaven who governs, seeks His lodging here within thee. Chorale: Jesu, wahres Brot des Lebens, hilf, dass ich doch nicht vergebens oder mir vielleicht zum Schaden sei zu deinem Tisch geladen. Lass mich durch dies Seelenessen deine Liebe recht ermessen, dass ich auch, wie jetzt auf Erden, mög ein Gast im Himmel werden. Jesus, truly the bread of life, help me that I may never vainly, nor perhaps even to my sorrow, be invited to Thy table. Grant me that through this food of spirit that I may rightly measure Thy love, and that I too, as here on Earth now, may become a guest in Heaven.*

10: BWV 185 - Chorale: *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, ich bitt, erhör mein Klagen, verlei mir Gnad zu dieser Frist, lass mich doch nicht verzagen; Den rechten Weg, o Herr, ich mein, den wollest du mir geben, dir zu leben, mein'm Nächsten nütz zu sein, dein Wort zu halten eben. I call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, I pray Thee, hear my crying; both lend me grace within this life and let me not lose courage; the proper path, O Lord, I seek, which Thou didst wish to give me: to live for Thee, to serve my neighbour well, and to uphold Thy word justly.*

11: BWV 186 - Chorus 1: *Ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht, dass das allerhöchste Licht, Gottes Glanz und Ebenbild, sich in Knechtsgestalt verhüllt, ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht! Concern thyself not, O spirit, that the all-surpassing light, God's true image shining bright, will cast you into subservience, concern thyself not, O spirit! Chorale: Die Hoffnung wart' der rechten Zeit, was gottes Wort zusaget. Wenn das geschehen soll zur Freud, setzt Gott kein g'wisse Tage. Er weiss wohl, wenn's am besten ist, und braucht an uns kein arge List, des solln wir ihm vertrauen. Our hope awaits the fitting time which God's own word hath promised. When that day of joy shall be forthcoming hath God not informed us. He knows well when that day is to be best and thus treats us not with cruel guile, for this we ought to trust Him.*

12: BWV 187 - Chorus 1: *Es wartet alles auf dich, dass du ihnen Speise gebest zu seiner Zeit. Wenn du ihnen gibest, so sammeln sie, wenn du deine Hand aufst, so werden sie mit Güte gesättigt. Here look now all men to Thee, that Thou givest to them food at the proper time. When Thou to them givest, they gather it up; when Thou openest Thine hand, then are they well satisfied with Thy kindness. Chorale: Gott hat die Erde zugericht', lässt's an Nahrung mangeln nicht; Berg und Tal, die macht er nass, dass den Vieh auch wächst sein Gras; aus der Erden Wien und Brot schafft Gott und gibt's uns satt, dass der Mensch sein Leben hat. Wir danken sehr und bitten ihn, dass er uns geb des Geistes Sinn, dass wir solches recht verstehn, stets in sein' Geboten gehn, seinen Namen machen gross in Christo ohne Unterlass: so sing'n wir recht das Gratias. God hath set the Earth in fullness, with nothing lacking for its sustenance; He gives moisture to hill and dale that the grass may grow for the livestock; from the Earth God creates and gives us our fill both of wine and bread, so that Man may have his life. We give great thanks and pray to Him that He may give us the will of Spirit, that we may well understand it and forever walk in His commandments, magnifying His name in Christ without cease: and thus we will rightly sing "Gratias"!*