

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 to explore this great treasure of some of Bach's greatest music, much of it little-heard, by working numerically through all of the Cantatas; we have omitted those already included in the first two Volumes of *Soli Deo Gloria* or Cantatas which are exceptional throughout and which we have therefore 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 75 - Chorus 1: *Die Elenden sollen essen, dass sie satt werden, und die nach dem Herrn fragen, werden ihn preisen. Euer Herz soll ewiglich leben.* The hungry shall be nourished until they be sated, and they who desire the Lord shall praise Him, and your heart shall evermore flourish. **Chorale:** *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, dabei will ich verbleiben. Es mag mich auf die rauhe Bahn, Not, Tod und Elend treiben; so wird Gott mich ganz väterlich in seinen Armen halten; drum lass ich ihn nur walten.* What God does, is rightly done, and to that shall I cling. Though out upon the cruel road, driven by need, death and suffering; even so shall God, all Fatherhood, enfold me in His dear arms; and so will I yield to Him all my powers.

2: BWV 77 - Chorus 1: *Du sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben von ganzem Herzen, von ganzer Seele, von allen Kräften und von ganzem Gemüte und deinen Nächsten als dich selbst.* Thou shalt cherish thy God and Master with all thy heart, with all thy spirit, with all thy power and with all thine affection, as well as thy neighbour as thyself. **Chorale:** *Herr, durch den Glauben wohln in mir, lass ihn sich immer stärken, dass er sei fruchtbar für und für und reich in guten Werken; dass er sei tätig durch die Lieb, mit Freuden und Geduld sich üb. Dem Nächsten fort zu dienen.* Lord, through my faith come dwell in me, make it grow ever stronger, that it be fruitful more and more and rich in righteous labours; that it be active in my love, in gladness and skilled in forbearance, ever better to serve my neighbour.

3: BWV 79 - Chorus 1: *Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild. Der Herr gibt Gnade und Ehre, er wird kein Gutes mangeln lassen den Frommen.* God the Lord is our sun and shield. The Lord gives blessing and honour, He will withhold no worthy thing from the righteous. **Chorale 1:** *Nun danket alle Gott mit Herzen, Mund und Händen, der grosse Dinge tut an uns und allen Enden, der uns von Mutterleib und Kindesbeinen an unzählig viel zu gut und noch itzund getan.* Now thank ye all our God with heart and tongue and hands, who doth work mighty things for us in all our endeavours, who since our mother's womb and our first toddling steps has brought us countless benefits until this day. **Chorale 2:** *Erhalt uns in der Wahrheit, gib ewigliche Freiheit, zu preisen deinen Namen durch Jesum Christum. Amen.* Preserve us in the true path, grant everlasting freedom to raise Thy name in glory through our Christ Jesus. Amen.

4: BWV 91 - Chorus 1: *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, dass du Mensch geboren bist von einer Jungfrau, das ist wahr, des freuet sich der Engel Schar.* Kyrie eleis! All glory to Thee, Jesus Christ, for Thou as man was born, born of a virgin, that is sure, thus joyful is the Angel Host. Kyrie eleis!

Chorale: *Das hat er alles uns getan, sein gross Lieb zu zeigen an; des freu sich alle Christenheit und dank ihm des in Ewigkeit.* Kyrie eleis! All this He hath achieved for us, His great love to manifest; rejoice then all Christianity and thank Him for this evermore. Kyrie eleis!

5: BWV 92 - Chorus 1: *Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn mein Herz und Sinn ergeben, was böse scheint, ist mein Gewinn, der tod selbst ist mein Leben. Ich bin ein Sohn des, der den Thron des Himmels aufgezogen; ob er gleich schlägt und Kreuz auflegt, bleibt doch sein Herz gewogen. I have surrendered to God's own heart and mind; what seemeth ill is for my gain, even death itself, is for my living. I am a son of he who has laid open the Throne of Heaven; though He strikes me and imposes the Cross, His heart yet keeps me in its favour. Chorale: Soll ich denn auch des Todes Weg und finstre Strasse reisen, wohlan! ich tret auf Bahn und Steg, den mir dein Augen weisen. Du bist mein Hirt, der alles wird zu solchem Ende kehren, dass ich einmal in deinem Saal dich ewig möge ehren. If I then, too, must travel the way of death and its dark journey, lead on! I will walk the road and path which Thine own eyes have shown me. Thou art my shepherd, who will bring all things to a conclusion, that I one day may honour Thee within Thy courts for ever more.*

6: BWV 94 - Chorus 1: *Was frag ich nach der Welt und allen ihren Schätzen, wenn ich mich nur an dir, mein Jesu, kann ergötzen! Dich hab ich einzig mir zur Wollust vorgestellt, denn du bist meine Ruh: was frag ich nach der Welt! What need I of this World and all its treasures, if I may but in Thee, my Jesus, find my pleasure? Thee, and only Thee, have I envisioned as my joy; Thou art my delight; what need I ask of this world!*

7: BWV 95 – Chorus 1: *Christus, der ist mein Leben, Sterben ist mein Gewinn; dem tu ich mich ergeben, mit Freud fahr ich dahin. Mit Fried und Freund ich fahr dahin, nach Gottes Willen, getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn, sanft und stille. Wie Gott mir verheissen hat: der Tod ist mein Schlaf worden. Lord Christ, He is my life, death is my reward; to it I will surrender, with joy will I depart. With peace and joy do I depart, as God doth will it; consoled am I in heart and mind, calm and quiet, as God gave me his promise: death is become my sleep. Chorale: Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist, werd ich im Grab nicht bleiben; dein letztes Wort mein Auffahrt ist, Todsfurcht kannst du vertreiben. Denn wo du bist, da komm ich hin, dass ich stets bei dir leb und bin; drum fahr ich hin mit Freuden.*

8: BWV 96 - Chorus 1: *Herr Christ, der einige Gottessohn, Vaters in Ewigkeit, aus seinem Herz'n entsprossen, gleichwie geschrieben steht. Er ist der Morgensterne, sein' Glanz streckt er so ferne vor andern Sternen klar. Lord Christ, the only Son of God, the Father's eternally, from His own heart descended, just as in the scriptures; He is the Morning Star, whose light He spreads so broadly, more brightly than all the stars. Chorale: Ertöt uns durch dein Güte, erweck uns durch dein Gnad; den alten Menschen kränke, dass der neu' leben mag, wohl hier auf dieser Erden, den Sinn und all Begierden und G'danken hab'n zu dir. Overwhelm us with Thy kindness, arouse us with Thy grace; the old man now weakened, so that the new may live, and dwelling here on Earth, that he may raise to Thee his every thought and thanks.*

9: BWV 97 - Chorus 1: *In allen meinen Taten lass ich den Höchsten raten, der alles kann und hat; er muss zu allen Dingen, soll's anders wohl gelingen, selbst geben Rat und Tat. In all my undertakings I let the Master counsel me, He who owns all things and is able to do all things; He Himself must advise me in every matter and he Himself act, if it is to be accomplished. Chorale: So sei nun, Seele, seine und traue dem alleine, der dich erschaffen hat; es gehe, wie es gehe, dein Vater in der Höhe weiss allen Sachen Rat. To Thee be true, O Spirit, and trust in Him alone now, He who hath created thee; let happen what may happen, for thy Father who is in Heaven counsels well in all things.*

10: BWV 98 - Chorus 1: *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, Es bleibt gerecht sein Wille; wie er fängt meine Sachen an, will ich ihm halten stille. Er ist mein Gott, der in der Not mich wohl weiss zu erhalten; drum lass ich ihn nur walten. What God doeth, that is rightly done, His will is just forever; whatever course he sets for my life, I will trust Him with peacefulness. He is my God, who in my distress knows well how to support me; so I yield to Him all my power.*

11: BWV 99 - *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan II (text as above)*

12: BWV 100 - *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan III - Chorale: Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, darbei will ich verbleiben. Es mag mich auf die rauhe Bahn, Not, Tod und Elend treiben, so wird Gott mich ganz väterlich in seinen Armen halten; drum lass ich ihn nur walten. What God doeth, that is rightly done, and to that will I be cleaving. Though out upon the cruel road, need, death and suffering drive me, even so God will, all fatherhood, enfold me with His arms, so to Him I yield all my power.*