

## "Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben" BWV 147

### Erster Teil

1. Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben  
Muss von Christo Zeugnis geben  
Ohne Furcht und Heuchelei,  
Dass er Gott und Heiland sei.

2. Gebenedeiter Mund!  
Maria macht ihr Innerstes der Seelen  
Durch Dank und Rühmen kund;  
Sie fängt bei sich an,  
Des Heilands Wunder zu erzählen,  
Was er an ihr als seiner Magd getan.  
O menschliches Geschlecht,  
Des Satans und der Sünden Knecht,  
Du bist befreit  
Durch Christi tröstendes Erscheinen  
Von dieser Last und Dienstbarkeit!  
Jedoch dein Mund und dein verstockt Gemüte  
Verschweigt, verleugnet solche Güte;  
Doch wisse, dass dich nach der Schrift  
Ein allzu scharfes<sup>1</sup> Urteil trifft!

3. Schäme dich, o Seele, nicht,  
Deinen Heiland zu bekennen,  
Soll er dich die seine<sup>5</sup> nennen  
Vor des Vaters Angesicht!  
Doch wer ihn auf dieser Erden  
Zu verleugnen sich nicht scheut,  
Soll von ihm verleugnet werden,  
Wenn er kommt zur Herrlichkeit.

4. Verstockung kann Gewaltige verblenden,  
Bis sie des Höchsten Arm vom Stuhle stösst;  
Doch dieser Arm erhebt,  
Obschon vor ihm der Erden Kreis erbebt,

### Part 1

1. Heart and mouth and deed and life  
Must bear witness of Christ,  
Without fear and hypocrisy,  
That he is God and savior.

2. Blessed [Mary's]<sup>2</sup> mouth!  
Mary [the mother of Jesus] makes her innermost soul  
Known by thanks and glorifying.<sup>3</sup>  
She begins with [those miracles wrought upon] herself,  
To tell of the savior's wonders,  
What [great things] he has done to her as his maidservant.<sup>4</sup>  
O human race,  
Servant of Satan and of sin,  
You are freed  
By Christ's consoling advent  
From this burden and servitude.  
Yet your mouth and your stubborn disposition  
Keeps quiet, denies such goodness;  
But know that in accordance with scripture  
You will meet an all too harsh judgment.

3. Do not be ashamed, o soul,  
To profess your savior [now],  
If he is to call you his own  
Before [God] the father's countenance [at the end time].  
But whoever is unafraid  
To deny him on this earth  
Will be denied by him  
When he [the savior] comes in glory [at the end time].

4. Stubbornness can blind the powerful  
Until the arm of the Most High<sup>6</sup> casts them from their  
throne;  
But in contrast this arm,

<sup>1</sup>Modern editions here give one word, "allzuscharfes." Bach's own score and performing part, however, give this as two words. An "allzuscharfes Urteil" might readily suggest an "excessively harsh [and unproductive] judgment." An "allzu scharfes Urteil," however, more readily suggests an "all too harsh [but productive] judgment," the reading that makes more sense in this context.

<sup>2</sup>In Luke 1:42, it is said to the pregnant Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, "Gebenedeiet bist du unter den Weibern, und gebenedeiet ist die Frucht deines [Mutter-]Leibes!" ("Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb").

<sup>3</sup>Mary's words of glorifying the Lord are found in Luke 1:46-55, the canticle that came to be called the "Magnificat," from the Latin translation of Luke 1:46, "Et ait Maria: Magnificat anima mea Dominum" ("And Mary said: My soul magnifies the Lord").

<sup>4</sup>This is the language of Luke 1:48-49, where Mary says, "er hat die Niedrigkeit seiner Magd angesehen; ... er hat grosse Dinge an mir getan" ("He [the Lord] has looked upon the lowliness of his maidservant; he has done great things to me").

<sup>5</sup>Some modern editions give "deine" ("your") here (which does not make sense). Bach's own score and performing part clearly read "seine" ("his").

<sup>6</sup>"Most High" is a name used frequently in the Hebrew Bible for the Lord God of Israel. In the New Testament, God the Father (but not Jesus, the Son) is called "Most High."

Hingegen, die Elenden,  
So er erlöst.  
O hochbeglückte Christen,  
Auf, machet euch bereit,  
Itzt ist die angenehme Zeit,  
Itzt ist der Tag des Heils:  
Der Heiland heisst  
Euch Leib und Geist  
Mit Glaubensgaben rüsten,  
Auf, ruft zu ihm in brünstigem Verlangen,  
Um ihn im Glauben zu empfangen!

5. Bereite dir, Jesu, noch itzo die Bahn,  
Mein Heiland, erwähle  
Die gläubende Seele  
Und siehe mit Augen der Gnade mich an!

**6. 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.<sup>11</sup>**

Zweiter Teil

7. Hilf, Jesu, hilf, dass ich auch dich bekenne  
In Wohl und Weh, in Freud und Leid,  
Dass ich dich meinen Heiland nenne  
Im Glauben und Gelassenheit,

<sup>7</sup>God's "arm" effects salvation (e.g., Isaiah 33:2).

<sup>8</sup>"Die angenehme Zeit" is a biblical expression meaning "the acceptable (or, 'propitious') time," not "the pleasant time." The cantata's poetry is a verbatim quotation of 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Jetzt ist die angenehme Zeit, jetzt ist der Tag des Heils" ("Now is the acceptable/propitious time [of mercy], now is the day of salvation [in Jesus]"). Luther described the "angenehme Zeit" as a Hebraism referring to God's "Evangelische Zeit" ("time of the gospel"), marked by forgiveness and mercy in Jesus. The Luther Bibles of Bach's day, for example, render Psalm 69:14 as "Ich aber bete, HERR, zu dir zur angenehmen Zeit" ("But I pray, Lord, to you at the acceptable/propitious time").

<sup>9</sup>"Heissen" seems here to be used in the older, specific sense of "befehlen" ("to command").

<sup>10</sup>This is an adaptation of Isaiah 40:3, "Bereitet dem Herrn den Weg, machet auf dem Gefilde eine ebene Bahn unserm Gott" ("Prepare the way for the Lord; make in the desert plains a smooth highway for our God"). In Christian interpretation of this verse, Jesus is the God for whom the highway is made. Jesus is apparently being asked, in the cantata poetry, to prepare the "highway" himself, such that he can then travel into the believer's heart.

<sup>11</sup>A stanza of "Jesu, meiner Seelen Wonne."

<sup>12</sup>Lutheran doctrine taught that one must not only believe in Jesus but also profess him openly. Human beings were said to be inherently tainted with sin, however, and thus unable to believe or profess without Jesus's help. "Bekennen" ("to profess") is akin to the "Christo Zeugnis geben" ("to bear witness of Christ") in movement 1 of the cantata.

<sup>13</sup>"Gelassenheit" is used here in its older sense of resignation and calmness associated with leaving things to God's will, as opposed to its modern sense of general placidity or imperturbability.

Though the earthly globe trembles before it,  
Lifts up the miserable/exiled,  
Whom it [God's arm]<sup>7</sup> redeems.  
Oh highly fortunate Christians,  
Up, make yourselves ready;  
Now is the acceptable<sup>8</sup> time;  
Now is the day of salvation:  
The savior bids<sup>9</sup>  
You equip body and spirit  
With gifts of faith;  
Up, call to him in ardent desire,  
To receive him in faith.

5. Prepare the highway for you [into my heart],<sup>10</sup> Jesus, even  
now;  
My savior, choose [for salvation]  
My believing soul  
And look upon me with eyes of grace.

**6. [It is] well with me that I have Jesus;  
Oh, how fast I hold him,  
That he might refresh my heart  
When I am ill and sad.  
I have Jesus, who loves me  
And gives himself to me, to be my own;  
Ah, thus I will not let Jesus go,  
Even if my heart breaks.**

Part 2

7. Help, Jesus, help that I too may profess<sup>12</sup> you  
In weal and woe, in joy and sorrow;  
That I may call you my savior  
In faith and resignation [to your will],<sup>13</sup>

Dass stets mein Herz von deiner Liebe brenne.

That my heart may ever burn with your love.

8. Der Höchsten<sup>14</sup> Allmacht Wunderhand  
Wirkt im Verborgenen der Erden.  
Johannes muss mit Geist erfüllet werden,  
Ihn zieht der Liebe Band  
Bereits in seiner Mutter Leibe,  
Dass er den Heiland kennt,  
Ob er ihn gleich noch nicht  
Mit seinem Munde nennt,  
Er wird bewegt, er hüpfet und springet,  
Indem Elisabeth das<sup>15</sup> Wunderwerk ausspricht,  
Indem Mariae Mund der Lippen Opfer bringet.  
Wenn ihr, o Gläubige, des Fleisches Schwachheit  
merkt,<sup>16</sup>  
Wenn euer Herz in Liebe brennet,  
Und doch der Mund den Heiland nicht bekennet,

8. The wonder-working hand of the Most High's  
omnipotence  
Acts in [the womb,] the hidden place of the ["mother,"]  
earth.<sup>19</sup>  
John has to be filled with [the Holy] Spirit:<sup>20</sup>  
The bond of [Christian] love clothes<sup>21</sup> him  
Already in his mother's [Elizabeth's] womb,  
So that he knows the savior,<sup>22</sup>  
Even though he [John] does not yet  
Call him [Jesus, by name] with his mouth;  
He [John] is stirred, he skips and jumps<sup>23</sup>  
As Elizabeth proclaims<sup>24</sup> the wonderwork,<sup>25</sup>  
As Mary's mouth brings the offering of [praise from] the  
lips.<sup>26</sup>  
When you, O believers,<sup>27</sup> take note of flesh's weakness,

<sup>14</sup>This word is capitalized in Bach's own score.

<sup>15</sup>Bach's original performing part here reads "dis," a contemporary alternate spelling of "dies" ("this"), but Bach's own score reads "das" ("the").

<sup>16</sup>Some modern editions read have mistranscribed Bach's "merkt" ("take notice") as "werd't," a contraction of "werdet" ("become").

<sup>19</sup>The meaning of this otherwise rather cryptic line is related to the sense of Psalm 139:15, which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "Es war dir mein Gebein nicht verholten, da ich im Verborgnen gemacht ward, da ich gebildet ward unten in der Erden" ("To you [God], my skeletal frame was not concealed when I was made [by you] in the hidden place, when I was formed down in the 'earth' [deep in my mother's womb]"). The notion of the earth as a "womb" is expressed clearly in Sirach 40:1 (41:26), which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "Es ist ein elend jämmerlich Ding um aller Menschen Leben, von Mutterleibe an, bis sie in die Erde begraben werden, die unser aller Mutter ist" ("Life is a miserable wretched thing for all persons, from the womb on, until they are buried in the earth, which is the mother of us all").

<sup>20</sup>This is a quotation of Luke 1:15, which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "er wird noch in Mutterleibe erfüllet werden mit dem Heiligen Geist" ("he [John the Baptist] will yet in the womb [already] be filled with the Holy Spirit").

<sup>21</sup>The meaning of this otherwise cryptic line is related to the sense of Colossians 3:14, which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "Über alles aber ziehet an die Liebe, die da ist das Band der Vollkommenheit" ("Above all, however, put on [or, 'clothe yourself with'] love, which then is the bond of [Christian] perfection"). By dint of the biblical source, the phrase "zieht der Liebe Band" is meant to be understood as "zieht an der Liebe Band."

<sup>22</sup>The idea, promoted by Luther, is that even babies—already in the womb, at that—can be blessed by the Holy Spirit with Christian faith and some ability to profess it.

<sup>23</sup>Luke 1:44.

<sup>24</sup>"Aussprechen" is used here in its older sense of "to proclaim," "to express fully."

<sup>25</sup>The wonderwork Elizabeth proclaims, in Luke 1:41-44, is the Holy Spirit's causing her baby to have leapt in the womb as a joyous expression of Christian faith.

<sup>26</sup>Namely, the Magnificat; see fn. 3, above. The language of this line is derived from Hebrews 13:15, "So lasset uns nun opfern, durch ihn, das Lobopfer Gott allezeit: das ist, die Frucht der Lippen, die seinen Namen bekennen" ("So let us now offer, through him [Jesus], the praise offering to God all the time: that is, the [verbal] fruit of the lips that profess his name").

<sup>27</sup>"Ihr Gläubige" is a common alternative spelling to "ihr Gläubigen" for "you believers" (hyperliterally, "you believing [persons]").

Gott ist es, der euch<sup>17</sup> kräftig stärkt,  
Er will in euch des Geistes Kraft erregen,  
Ja, Dank und Preis auf eure Zunge<sup>18</sup> legen.

When your heart burns in love,  
And yet the mouth does not profess the savior,  
God is the one who powerfully strengthens you;  
He wants to stir up in you the power of the [person's]<sup>28</sup>  
spirit,  
Yes, put thanks and praise on your tongue.

9. Ich will von Jesu Wundern<sup>29</sup> singen  
Und ihm der Lippen Opfer bringen,  
Er wird nach seiner Liebe Bund  
Das schwache Fleisch, den irdischen Mund  
Durch heiliges Feuer kräftig zwingen.

9. I want to sing of Jesus' wonders,  
And bring him the offering of [praise from] the lips;  
In accordance with the covenant of his love, he will  
powerfully conquer<sup>30</sup>  
Weak flesh, the earthly mouth  
By [baptism of] holy fire.<sup>31</sup>

**10. Jesus bleibt meine Freude,  
Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,  
Jesus wehret allem Leide,  
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,  
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,  
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;  
Darum lass ich Jesum nicht  
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.<sup>32</sup>**

**10. Jesus remains my joy,  
The consolation and sap/blood<sup>33</sup> of my heart;  
Jesus bars all sorrow;  
He is the [protecting]<sup>34</sup> power of my life,  
The desire<sup>35</sup> and sun of my eyes,  
The treasure and bliss of my soul;  
Thus I will not let Jesus  
Out of heart and sight.**

(transl. Michael Marissen and Daniel R. Melamed)

<sup>17</sup>Some modern editions have mistranscribed Bach's "euch" ("you") as "uns" ("us").

<sup>18</sup>Some editions give the plural "Zungen" ("tongues"), which might reasonably make more sense in context. Bach's own score and performing part clearly read "Zunge," however, and this usage reflects biblical language. Psalm 126:2, for example, reads "Denn wird unser Mund voll Lachens und unsere Zunge voll Rühmens sein" ("Then our mouth will be full of laughing and our tongue full of glorifying").

<sup>28</sup>This line—likewise, probably, line 12 of movement 4—alludes to Matthew 26:41, "Der Geist ist willig, aber das Fleisch ist schwach" ("The [person's] spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak").

<sup>29</sup>Some editions give "Wunden" ("[salvific] wounds [on the cross]"), but "Wundern" ("wonders") is much more plausible all round.

<sup>30</sup>In poetry, "zwingen" is often used as a clipped form of "bezwingen" ("to vanquish/conquer/quell").

<sup>31</sup>In Luke 3:16, the adult John [the Baptist], preaching repentance in Israel, says "er wird ... mit dem heiligen Geist und mit Feuer taufen" ("I, John, have baptized you with water, but] he [Jesus] will baptize with the holy Spirit and with fire").

<sup>32</sup>A stanza of "Jesu, meiner Seelen Wonne."

<sup>33</sup>The blood of Jesus, said in Lutheranism to be physically present in the consecrated wine of the sacrament of communion, is spoken of as a live-giving "Saft" in hymns and sermons. The hymn, for example, that closes Bach's Cantata 136 begins "Dein Blut, der edle Saft, hat solche Stärk und Kraft" ([Jesus,] your blood, the noble sap, has such strength and power"). In Bach's day, as now, the word "Blut" was sometimes employed to refer to the dark juice from plants and fruits.

<sup>34</sup>This line derives its sense from the wording and context of Psalm 27:1, which in the Luther Bibles of Bach's day reads "Der HERR ist meines Lebens Kraft; für wem sollt mir grauen?" ("The Lord is the [protecting] power of my life; before whom should I be afraid?"). The standard Latin Bible, the Vulgate, gives this passage as "Dominus protector vitæ meæ, a quo trepidabo?" ("The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?").

<sup>35</sup>"Lust" can mean "delight" or "desire." The phrase "Augen Lust," however, appears a number of times in the Luther Bibles, where in context it seems to mean not "eyes' delight" but "eyes' desire."



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