

When The Congregation Learned to Sing: German Hymnody in the Wake of the Reformation

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Week #6 (October 15): Luther's Best-Known Metrical Psalm; Philipp Nicolai and the "King" (and "Queen") of Lutheran Chorales

Translation Comparison: *Ein' feste Burg/A Mighty Fortress* (Trinity #92; 1529): The Penitential Hymn That Became a Fight Song

1. Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,
ein gute Wehr und Waffen.
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,
die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
Der alt böse Feind,
mit Ernst er's jetzt meint;
groß Macht und viel List
sein grausam Rüstung ist,
auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen.

1. Our God is a strong castle,
A good defense and weapon.
He sets us free from all distress
That has struck us.
The old evil enemy,
He's serious about it [i.e., the fight];
Great power and much deception
Are his terrible armor,
On earth is not his equal.

1. A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing.
Our helper he amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe.
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

2. Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,
wir sind gar bald verloren;
es streit' für uns der rechte Mann,
den Gott hat selbst erkoren.
Fragst du, wer der ist?
Er heißt Jesus Christ,
der Herr Zebaoth,
und ist kein andrer Gott,
das Feld muss er behalten.

2. Nothing is accomplished by our might,
We're quickly lost;
Let the right man fight for us,
Whom God himself has chosen.
You ask who He is?
His name is Jesus Christ,
The Lord of the Heavenly Armies
And no other is God,
He must hold the field.

2. Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing.
Were not the right man on our side,
The man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he.
Lord Sabaoth his name,
From age to age the same,
And he must win the battle.

3. Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär'
und wollt uns gar verschlingen,
so fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,
es soll uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürst dieser Welt,
wie sauer er sich stellt,
tut er uns doch nicht;
das macht, er ist gericht'.
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

3. And if the world were full of devils
and wanted to swallow us whole,
We shall not so greatly fear,
We shall yet succeed.
The prince of this world,
However furious he may appear,
Can do nothing to us;
That is because he is judged [already]
One little Word can fell him.

3. And though this world with devils filled
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him,
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure:
One little word shall fell him.

4. Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn
und kein Dank dazu haben;
er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan
mit seinem Geist und Gaben.
Nehmen sie den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib:
laß fahren dahin,
sie haben's kein' Gewinn,
das Reich muß uns doch bleiben.

4. That Word they should let stand,
and no thanks to them for that;
He is beside us on the plain [of battle]
with His spirit and gifts.
If they take our body,
Goods, honor, child and wife:
Let them all go,
They shall not profit by it,
The kingdom must remain to us.

4. That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them abideth.
The Spirit and the gifts are ours,
Through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also.
The body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still.
His Kingdom is forever

Johann Sebastian Bach, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, D major (triumphal!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAt2LgpDnaA>

- The first Bach cantata to be published (1821) after the composer's death (1750) Composed 1730 and inspired by the 200th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession Four movements reference text and music from the

original chorale.

- Note theatrical influences for which Bach was criticized in his day.
- Non-Luther texts by Salomon Franck (1659--1725) inspired by Luke 11 (14-28); the casting out of the devil by Christ

Chorale fantasia; choral parts sing an ornamented version of the chorale melody and the bass line occasionally quotes the chorale melody in its original form.

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, Ein gute Wehr und Waffen; Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not, Die uns itzt hat betroffen. Der alte böse Feind, Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint, Groß Macht und viel List Sein grausam Rüstung ist, Auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen.	A mighty fortress is our God, a good defense and weapon; he helps us freely out of the distress that we have now met with. The old evil enemy earnestly plots against us, great might and many forms of deceit are his fearsome weapons, on earth there is none to match him.
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Aria e chorale

*bass sings free poetry, and soprano sings second chorale stanza with obbligato oboe. A vigorous string theme may correspond to "victory" in the text

Bass: Alles, was von Gott geboren, Ist zum Siegen auserkoren.	All that is born of God Is destined for victory.
Sopran: Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan, Wir sind gar bald verloren. Es streit' vor uns der rechte Mann, Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.	By our own power nothing is accomplished We are very soon lost. the right man fights for us Whom God himself has chosen.
Bass: Wer bei Christi Blutpanier In der Taufe Treu geschworen, Siegt im Geiste für und für.	Those who by the bloodstained banner of Christ have sworn faithfulness in baptism gain victory in the spirit for ever and ever.
Sopran: Fragst du, wer er ist? Er heißt Jesus Christ, Der Herre Zebaoth, Und ist kein andrer Gott, Das Feld muss er behalten.	Do you ask who he is? he is called Jesus Christ, the Lord of Sabaoth, and there is no other god He shall hold the field of battle.
Bass: Alles, was von Gott geboren, Ist zum Siegen auserkoren.	All that is born of God is destined to victory.

Bass Recitative

A musical invocation with imitation between voice and continuo

Erwäge doch, Kind Gottes, die so große Liebe, Da Jesus sich Mit seinem Blute dir verschriebe, Wormit er dich Zum Kriege wider Satans Heer und wider Welt, und Sünde Geworben hat!	Only consider, child of God how great his love, since Jesus himself with his blood has given his pledge for you, by which for the war against Satan's army and against the world and sin, He has enlisted you!
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Gib nicht in deiner Seele	Do not give any place in your soul
Dem Satan und den Lastern statt!	to Satan and depravity!
Laß nicht dein Herz,	Do not let your heart,
Den Himmel Gottes auf der Erden,	God's heaven on earth,
Zur Wüste werden!	become a desert!
Bereue deine Schuld mit Schmerz,	Repent your guilt with sorrow
Dass Christi Geist mit dir sich fest verbinde!	so that Christ's spirit may be firmly united with you!

Soprano aria

Noted for decorative writing for the soloist; longing and renewal

Komm in mein Herzenshaus,	Come into my heart's house,
Herr Jesu, mein Verlangen!	Lord Jesus, my desire!
Treib Welt und Satan aus	Drive out the world and Satan
Und lass dein Bild in mir erneuert prangen!	and let you image renewed within me shine in splendor!
Weg, schnöder Sündengraus!	Away, loathsome horror of sin!

Chorale

A return to battle! -- the third stanza of the hymn; here the choir sing in unison with compound meter counterpoint for the orchestra

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär	And if the world were full of devils
Und wollten uns verschlingen,	and they wanted to devour us
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,	then we would not be very afraid,
Es soll uns doch gelingen.	we would still be successful.
Der Fürst dieser Welt,	The Prince of this world,
Wie saur er sich stellt,	however grimly he presents himself
Tut er uns doch nicht,	can do nothing against us,
Das macht, er ist gericht',	since he is already condemned,
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.	a little word can fell him.

Tenor recitative

A rally and a march -- notable for its joyous melismas

So stehe dann bei Christi blutgefärbten Fahne,	Then take your stand by Christ's bloodstained banner,
O Seele, fest	O soul, firmly,
Und glaube, dass dein Haupt dich nicht verlässt,	and believe that your leader will not forsake you,
Ja, dass sein Sieg	yes, that his victory
Auch dir den Weg zu deiner Krone bahne!	Will open the way to your crown!
Tritt freudig an den Krieg!	March joyfully to war!
Wirst du nur Gottes Wort	If only God's word
So hören als bewahren,	is both heard and kept by you
So wird der Feind gezwungen auszufahren,	then your enemy will be forced to withdraw,
Dein Heiland bleibt dein Hort!	your savior remains your protector!

Aria duetto

An alto and tenor duet, with obbligato violin with oboe da caccia. There is a joyous sense of unity with vocal writing largely together but with coloring and mood as "death has been defeated."

Wie selig sind doch die, die Gott im Munde tragen,	How blessed are those who bear God in their mouths,
Doch selger ist das Herz, das ihn im Glauben trägt!	but more blessed is the heart that bears God in faith
Es bleibet unbesiegt und kann die Feinde schlagen	Such a heart remains unconquered and can strike its enemies
Und wird zuletzt gekrönt, wenn es den Tod erlegt.	and will in the end be crowned after death has been defeated.

Closing chorale, with congregational participation

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn	They shall pay no heed to God's word
Und kein' Dank dazu haben.	And have no thanks for it.
Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan	He is indeed with us on the field of battle
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.	With his Spirit and his gifts.
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,	Let them take our body
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib,	wealth, honor, child and wife
Laß fahren dahin,	let them be taken away,
Sie habens kein' Gewinn;	they gain nothing by this;
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.	The kingdom must still remain ours.

Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)

→ *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens / Mirror of the Joys of Eternal Life* (1599): Written response to the decimation of his parish of Unna in Westphalia through the plague, 1596-1597; four songs in the appendix

Translation Comparison: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme / Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying* (Trinity #317; 1599): the “King” of Lutheran Chorales

1. Wachet auf / ruft uns die Stimme /
Der Wächter sehr hoch auf der Zinnen /
Wach auf du Stadt Jerusalem.
Mitternacht heißt diese Stunde /
Sie rufen uns mit hellem Munde /
Wo seid ihr klugen Jungfrauen?
Wohlauf / der Bräutigam kommt /
Steht auf / die Lampen nehmt /
Halleluja.
Macht euch bereit / zu der Hochzeit /
Ihr müsset ihm entgegen gehn.

2. Zion hört die Wächter singen /
Das Herz tut ihr von Freuden springen /
Sie wachet und steht eilend auf:
Ihr Freund kommt vom Himmel prächtig /
Von Gnaden stark / von Wahrheit mächtig:
Ihr Licht wird hell / ihr Stern geht auf.
Nun komm du werthe Kron' /
Herr Jesu Gottes Sohn /
Hosianna.
Wir folgen all zum Freuden-Saal /
Und halten mit das Abendmahl.

3. Gloria sei dir gesungen /
Mit Menschen- und Englischen Zungen /
Mit Harfen und mit Cymbaln schön:
Von zwölf Perlen sind die Pforten
An deiner Stadt / wir sind Consorten
Der Engel hoch um deinen Thron /
Kein Aug' hat je gespürt /
Kein Ohr hat mehr gehört /
Solche Freude.
Des sind wir froh / jo / jo
Ewig in dulci iubilo.

1. “Awake,” the voice of the watchmen
Cries to us high upon the battlements,
“Awake, you city of Jerusalem.
“This hour is called midnight,”
They cry to us with a clear voice,
“Where are you, wise virgins?
“All’s well, the Bridegroom comes,
“Get up, take your lamps,
“Hallelujah.
“Make yourselves ready for the wedding,
“You must go to meet Him.”

2. Zion hears the watchmen singing,
Her heart leaps with joy
She awakens and hurriedly gets up:
Her beloved comes splendid from heaven
Strong in grace, mighty in truth:
Her Light becomes clear, her Star arises.
Now come, you precious Crown
Lord Jesus, Son of God
Hosannah.
We shall all follow to the hall of joy
And take with you that supper [*lit.* the
Eucharist].

3. Glory be sung to you,
With human and with angelic tongues,
With harps and with cymbals fair:
Of twelve pearls are the gates
Of your city, we are consorts
Of the angels high around your throne.
No eye has ever sensed,
No ear has ever heard
Such joy.
Therefore we are glad / hooray / hooray
Eternally in sweet rejoicing

1. “Wake, awake, for night is flying,”
The watchmen on the heights are crying,
“Awake, Jerusalem, at last!”
Midnight hears the welcome voices,
And at the thrilling cry rejoices:
“Come forth, ye virgins, night is past!
“The Bridegroom comes: awake,
“Your lamps with gladness take;
“Alleluia!
“And for his marriage feast prepare,
“For you must go to meet him there.”

2. Zion hears the watchmen singing,
And all her heart with joy is springing;
She wakes, she rises, from her gloom:
For her Lord comes down all-glorious,
The strong in grace, in truth victorious;
Her Star is ris’n, her Light is come!
Ah, come, thou blessed Lord,
O Jesus, Son of God,
Alleluia!
We follow till the halls we see
Where thou hast bid us sup with thee.

3. Now let all the heav’ns adore thee,
And men and angels sing before thee,
With harp and cymbal’s clearest tone;
Of one pearl each shining portal,
Where we are with the choir immortal
Of angels round thy dazzling throne.
Nor eye hat seen, nor ear
Hath yet attained to hear
What there is ours;
But we rejoice, and sing to thee
Our hymn of joy eternally.

Bach BWV 140 *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* BWV 140 (1731)

*composed for the 27th Sunday after Easter, 1731

* unusual only in that it features duets rather than solo arias.

* seven movements symmetrically arranged in a three-part form:

*Matthew 25: 1-13, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

Opening Chorus “Wachet auf!”

*many melodies are in balanced, 2- or 4-bar phrases (more a trait of the emerging pre-Classical style than of the late Baroque style); most melodies are more lyrical than normal with Bach

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme
 Der Wächter sehr hoch auf der Zinne,
 Wach auf, du Stadt Jerusalem!
 Mitternacht heißt diese Stunde;
 Sie rufen uns mit hellem Munde:
 Wo seid ihr klugen Jungfrauen?
 Wohl auf, der Bräut'gam kömmt;
 Steht auf, die Lampen nehmt!
 Alleluja!
 Macht euch bereit
 Zu der Hochzeit,
 Ihr müsset ihm entgegen gehn!*

"Awake!" calls the voice of the watchman to us,
 Very high up on the battlements.
 "Awake, you city of Jerusalem!
 This is the hour of midnight,
 Calling us with clear voice:
 Where are your wise virgins?
 Prepare! The bridegroom is coming;
 Arise and take your lamps!
 Alleluja!
 Make yourselves ready
 For the wedding:
 You must go forth to meet him!"

Recitative "Er kommt" C minor for tenor and continuo; a poetic warning that the bridegroom is coming.

Nr. 2 Rezitativ (Tenor)

*Er kommt, er kommt,
 Der Bräut'gam kommt!
 Ihr Töchter Zions, kommt heraus,
 Sein Ausgang eilet aus der Höhe
 In euer Mutter Haus.
 Der Bräut'gam kommt, der einem Rehe
 Und jungen Hirsche gleich
 Auf denen Hügeln springt
 Und euch das Mahl der Hochzeit bringt.
 Wacht auf, ermuntert euch!
 Den Bräut'gam zu empfangen!
 Dort, sehet, kommt er hergegangen.*

He comes, he comes,
 The bridegroom comes!
 Ye daughters of Zion, come forth.
 His procession hastens from the height
 To your mother's house.
 The bridegroom comes like a roe
 Or a young hart
 Leaping upon the hills
 And brings you the wedding feast.
 Awake and rouse yourselves
 To greet the bridegroom!
 There, see, he comes hither.

Duet "Wann kommst du, mein Heil?" in C minor; a conversation between the Soul (for which the virgins are a metaphor) and Jesus; the Soul longs for Jesus to come quickly. Scored for soprano (the Soul), and bass (Jesus), it incorporates an obbligato violino piccolo (a small violin specially tuned a minor 3rd higher to reach high notes easier) and continuo. The violino piccolo part is virtuosic, quasi-improvisatory, and independent of the voices.

Nr. 3 Arie Duett (Soprano, Bass)

Sopran: *Wenn kömmt du, mein Heil?*
 Bass: *Ich komme, dein Teil.*
 Sopran: *Ich warte mit brennendem Öle.*
 Sopran/Bass *Eröffne/Ich öffne den Saal
 Zum himmlischen Mahl.*
 Sopran: *Komm, Jesu!*
 Bass: *Ich komme/Komm, liebliche Seele!*

When art thou coming, my salvation?
 I come, your partner.
 I wait with burning lamp.
 Open/I open the chamber
 For the heavenly feast.
 Come, Jesu!
 I come/Come, lovely soul!

Chorale "Zion hört die Wächter singen" in Eb major

Nr. 4 Choral (Tenor)

Zion hört die Wächter singen,

Zion hears the watchmen singing.

Das Herz tut ihr vor Freuden springen,
 Sie wachet und steht eilend auf.
 Ihr Freund kommt vom Himmel prächtig,
 Von Gnaden stark, von Wahrheit mächtig,
 Ihr Licht wird hell, ihr Stern geht auf.
 Nun komm, du werthe Kron,
 Herr Jesu, Gottes Sohn!
 Hosanna!
 Wir folgen all zum Freudensaal
 Und halten mit das Abendmahl.

Her heart leaps with joy,
 She wakes and rises in haste.
 Her friend comes from heaven in splendor,
 Strong in mercy, mighty in truth;
 Her light burns bright, her star rises.
 Now come, thou worthy crown,
 Lord Jesu, Son of God!
 Hosanna!
 We all follow to the hall of joy
 And join the Lord's Supper.

Recitative "So geh herein zu mir" that modulates from Eb major to Bb major. Written for the bass voice, representing Jesus calling the bride to him, the accompaniment is appropriately for strings and continuo.

Nr. 5 Rezitativ (Bass)
 So geh herein zu mir
 Du mir erwählte Braut!
 Ich habe mich mit dir
 Von Ewigkeit vertraut.
 Dich will ich auf mein Herz
 Auf meinen Arm gleich wie ein Siegel setzen
 Und dein betrübtes Aug' ergötzen.
 Vergiß, o Seele, nun
 Die Angst, den Schmerz
 Den du erdulden müssen
 Auf meiner Linken sollst du ruhn
 Und meine Rechte soll dich küssen.

Then come within to me,
 My chosen bride!
 I have been betrothed
 To you from all eternity.
 I will set you on my heart
 And on my arm like a seal
 And delight your troubled eyes.
 Now forget, O soul,
 The anguish and pain
 That you have to suffer;
 You shall rest at my left hand,
 And my right shall caress you.

Duet between the Soul and Jesus "Mein Freund ist mein" in Bb major, Bach uses the style of a love duet; parallel phrasing, duetting in 3rds, and the quasi-canonic writing between the voices, creating an almost dance like quality. An oboe provides the obbligato melody and is again independent of the vocal line. Da capo form,

Nr. 6 Arie Duett (Sopran, Bass)
 Sopran: *Mein Freund ist mein,*
 Bass: *Und ich bin dein*
 Sopran, Bass: *Die Liebe soll nichts scheiden.*
 Sopran: *Ich will mit dir*
 Bass: *Du sollst mit mir*
 Sopran, Bass: *In Himmels Rosen weiden*
Da Freude die Fülle, da Wonne wird sein.

My friend is mine
 And I am yours.
 Nothing shall sever our love.
 I will with thee
 You shall with me
 Pasture amid heaven's roses.
 The fullness of joy and bliss will be there.

"Gloria sei dir gesungen" incorporates in last stanza of the chorale--a song of praise. In simple 4-part harmonization; the orchestra doubles the choral parts, and again the chorale melody is in the soprano.

Nr. 7 Choral (Chor)
 Gloria sei dir gesungen
 Mit Menschen- und englischen Zungen,
 Mit Harfen und mit Zimbeln schon.
 Von zwölf Perlen sind die Pforten,
 An deiner Stadt sind wir Konsorten
 Der Engel hoch um deinen Thron.
 Kein Aug' hat je gespürt,
 Kein Ohr hat je gehört solche Freude.
 Des sind wir froh, io! io!
 Ewig in dulci jubilo.

Gloria be sung to thee
 With the tongues of men and angels,
 With harps and with cymbals.
 Of twelve pearls are thy gates;
 In thy city we are consorts
 Of the angels high around thy throne.
 No eye has ever perceived,
 No ear has ever heard such joy.
 Therefore we rejoice, Io, io!
 Forever in dulci jubilo.