

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 186

Form: Part 1: Chorus - Recit (B) - Aria (B) - Recit (T) - Aria (T) - Chorale.
Part 2: Recit (B) - Aria (S) - Recit (A) - Duet (sop/alt) - Chorale.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

See note regarding Bach's two-part and "double" cantatas. BWV 186 is a reworking of an earlier cantata for the third Sunday of Advent. In Leipzig, the second to fourth Sundays of Advent were observed as a penitential "tempus clausum," during which no cantatas were performed so Bach reworked the Advent cantata (BWV 186a) for its new liturgical designation. The result was an expanded work in 2 parts, each ending with a stanza of a chorale that replaced the original concluding chorale, revised texts for movements 3 and 5, and additional recitatives (nos. 2, 4, 7, and 9), which link the cantata to the Gospel reading of its new liturgical designation (see note). None of the arias are of the da capo type. BWV 186 was Bach's last bipartite cantata before reverting to shorter works.

J.S. Bach Cantata No. 186 Ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht Prima Parte.

Eric Chafe sees allegorical significance in the cantata's tonal plan (see note).

For background and analysis by Uwe Wolf, see note.

A cantata revised and expanded to fit a new liturgical designation, emphasizing faith in the face of deprivation experienced by Christ and his followers.

The first movement uses phraseology from +Matthew 11:2-6 (the Gospel for the cantata's original Sunday): "When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word... 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?' And Jesus answered... 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense (Luther 1545: ärgert) at me.'" (Also Luke 7:20-23.) It also melds several other biblical passages and themes (see note).

Nº 1. Coro.

186/1. Bach darkens the sound of the obligato by mixing oboe and violin timbres (see also no. 5 & 10).

• Incarnation: God became servant; do not take offence! (186/1).

(Poco adagio ♩ = 60.)

Ob I/Vln I

Ob II/Vln II

G minor

D minor

A7

D minor

Bach darkens the sound of the obbligato by mixing oboe and violin timbres (see also no. 5).

- Form (Rhyme: AabbA)
- Sinfonia (1-9) Gm
- A. Line 1 (9-22) Gm-Dm (imitative motto: 9-13; sinfonia material+vocal fugato: 14-22)
- B. Lines 2-4 (22-27: a capella homophonic) Dm-Cm
- Interlude (27-29) Dm-GM
- A". Line 1 (29-39) G7-Cm (imitative motto: 29-31; sinfonia material+vocal fugato: 31-39)
- B'. Lines 2-4 (39-44: a capella homophonic) Cm-Dm
- A". Line 1 (44-49: imitative) Gm

Alfred Dürr writes, "The opening chorus is in [rondo] form—A B A B A—with line 1 of Franck's four-line text assigned to section A and lines 2-4 to section B. Section B is conceived as a capella and predominantly homophonic, though with imitation in the outer parts. Section A, on the other hand, represents an interesting combination of vocal and instrumental principles of composition. An eight-bar instrumental sinfonia is followed by a brief motto-like fore-structure, first vocal and then instrumental, which in turn leads to the main part of section A: a fugal texture for the choir built into partial returns of the instrumental sinfonia. Here the principal theme remains instrumental, whereas the counter-theme (a quasi-fugue subject) is assigned to the choir. At its second and third statements, section A is heard in an increasingly abbreviated form, especially as regards its instrumental introduction and motto-like forestructure: on the third occasion they are absent altogether." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, trans. by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 444.

C# dim.7

D minor

D minor

F7

The monotonous, trudging bass suggests a mundane and unprivileged human existence, the very aspect of Christ's life that apparently made John the Baptist question whether Jesus was the Messiah (see Gospel reading for the cantata's original Sunday), despite the fact that he had earlier announced Jesus as such.

B-flat major 7

E-flat major

D7

G minor

G minor

9 **Soprano. Line 1 (imitative motto).**

Ärg'- re dich, o See - le, nicht,
Fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul,

Alto.

Ärg'- re dich, o See - le, nicht,
Fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul,

Tenore.

Ärg'- re dich, o See - le, nicht,
Fret thee not, thou mor - tal - soul,

Basso.

Ärg'- re dich, o See - le, nicht,
Fret thee not, thou mor - tal - soul,

p

Ob I/Vln I

Ob II/VlnII

G minor

13 **Line 1 (sinfonia material + vocal fugato).**

ärg're dich, o Seele,
fret thee not, thou mor-tal

ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, o See - le, ärg're dich
fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, o thou soul, fret not thy -

mf

Ob I/Vln I

Ob II/VlnII

G minor D minor A7

16

nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele, ärg're dich
 soul, fret thee not, thou mortal soul, fret thee not, thou mortal self, fret not thyself, thou soul, o thou soul, fret not thyself

nicht, ärg're dich nicht, Seele, o Seele, ärg're dich
 self, fret not thyself, thou soul, o thou soul, fret not thyself

D minor F7 B-flat major D7

18

nicht, o Seele, ärg're dich nicht, o Seele, ärg're dich
 soul, o thou soul, fret not thyself, o thou soul, fret not thyself

nicht, o Seele, ärg're dich nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele,
 self, o thou soul, fret not thyself, fret thee not, thou mortal

ärg're dich, o Seele,
 fret thee not, thou mortal

ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, o Seele, ärg're dich
 fret thee not, thou mortal soul, o thou soul, fret not thyself

Vla Ob II/Vln II

G minor G minor D minor A7

20

nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le,
self, fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal

nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, o See - - - le, ärg'-re dich
soul, fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, o thou soul, fret not thy -

nicht, o See - - - - - le, ärg'-re dich
soul, o thou soul, fret not thy -

nicht, o See - - - - - le, ärg'-re dich
self, o thou soul, fret not thy -

D minor

22

Lines 2-4 (a capella homophonic).

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes Glanz und E - ben -
soul, at thy mean and - hum - ble role, all that lives doth God per -

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes
self, at thy mean and hum - ble role, all that

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes
self, at thy mean and hum - ble role, all that

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes
self, at thy mean and - hum - ble - role, all that

D minor C7 F major G7

24

bild, sich in Knechts - ge - stalt ver - hüllt, in Knechtsge -
vade, in His im - age thou art made, art in His

Glanz und E - ben - bild, sich in Knechts - ge - stalt ver - hüllt, in
lives doth God per - vade, in His im - age thou art made, art

Glanz und E - ben - bild, sich in Knechts - ge - stalt ver - hüllt, in
lives doth God per - vade, in His im - age thou art made, art

Glanz und E - ben - bild, sich in Knechts - ge - stalt ver - hüllt, in
lives doth God per - vade, in His im - age thou art made, art

C minor C7 F minor C minor B dim.7 C minor B dim.7

26

stalt ver - hüllt.
im age made.

Knechtsge - stalt ver - hüllt.
in His im age made.

Knechtsge - stalt ver - hüllt.
in His im age made.

Knechtsge - stalt ver - hüllt.
in His im age made.

A Ob II/Vln II

C minor C minor

25

Line 1 (imitative motto). Extended note is like a wail.

Ärg' - re dich
Fret thy-self

Ärg' - re dich
Fret thy-self

Ärg' - re dich
Fret thy-self

Ärg' - re dich
Fret thy-self

Ob I/Vln I

C minor G minor D7 G7 B dim.7 C minor

31

Line 1: sinfonia material + vocal fugato)

nicht,
not,

nicht,
not,

nicht, ärg're dich,
not, fret thee not,

o See-le, nicht, o See-le, ärg' - re dich
thou mor-tal soul, o thou soul, fret not thy -

nicht, ärg're dich,
not, fret thee not,

o See-le,
thou mor-tal

Vla

Ob II/Vln II

C minor C minor G minor D7

33

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, o See - le, ärg' - re dich
 self, fret thee not, o thou soul, o thou soul, fret not thy -

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le.
 soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal

G minor F7 B-flat major A-flat major G7

35

ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, o See - le, ärg' - re dich
 fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, o thou soul, fret thy-self

ärg're dich, o See - le,
 fret thee not, thou mor - tal

nicht, o See - le, ärg' - re dich nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le,
 self, o thou soul, fret not thy - self, fret thee not, thou mor - tal

nicht, o See - le, ärg're dich nicht, o See - le, ärg' - re dich
 soul, o thou soul, fret thy-self not, o thou soul, fret not thy -

Ob I/Vln I Ob I/Vln I

C minor C minor C minor D7

37

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le,
 not, fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, fret thee not, thou - mor - tal

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, See - le, ärg're dich
 soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, o soul, fret thy-self

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le,
 not, fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal

nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le, nicht, ärg're dich, o See - le,
 self, fret thee not, thou mor - tal soul, fret thee not, thou mor - tal

G minor C minor F minor B-flat 7 E-flat major G7

39

Lines 2-4 (a capella homophonic).

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes Glanz und E - ben -
 soul, at thy mean and hum - ble - role, all that lives doth God per -

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes
 not, at thy mean and hum - ble role, all that

nicht, dass das al - ler - höch - ste Licht, Got - tes
 soul, at thy mean and hum - ble role, all that

nicht, dass das al - lerhöch - ste Licht, Got - tes
 soul, at thy mean and hum - ble - role, all that

C minor F7 B-flat major C# dim.7

41

bild, sich in Knechtsge-stalt ver-hüllt, in art
 vade, in His im-age thou art made, art

Glanz und E-ben-bild, sich in Knechtsge-stalt ver-hüllt, in art
 lives doth God per-vade, in His im-age thou art made, art

Glanz und E-ben-bild, sich in Knechtsge-stalt ver-hüllt, in art
 lives doth God per-vade, in His im-age thou art made, art

Glanz und E-ben-bild, sich in Knechtsge-stalt ver-hüllt, in Knechtsge-
 lives doth God per-vade, in His im-age thou art made, art in His

A7 D minor C# dim.7 D minor

43

Line 1 (imitative).

Knechtsge-stalt ver-hüllt, ärg'-re dich
 in His im-age made, fret not thy

Knechts-ge-stalt ver-hüllt,
 in His im-age made,

Knechts-ge-stalt ver-hüllt, ärg're dich, o See-le,
 in His im-age made, fret thee not, thou mor-tal

stalt ver-hüllt,
 im age made,

D minor D minor D7 G minor F7

45

nicht, self,
 ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht,
 fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul,
 nicht, soul,
 ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, ärg're dich, o Seele,
 fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, fret thee not, thou mor-tal

B-flat major D(7) G minor

Ob I/VI in I

47

o See - - - - - le, ärg' - re dich nicht.
 o thou - - - - - soul, fret not thy - self.
 ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, o See - - le, ärg' - re dich nicht.
 fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, o thou - - - - - soul, fret not thy - self.
 ärg're dich, o Seele, nicht, o See - - le, ärg' - re dich nicht.
 fret thee not, thou mor-tal soul, o thou soul, fret not thy - self.
 nicht, o See - - - - - le, ärg're dich nicht.
 soul, o thou - - - - - soul, fret not thy - self.

G minor G minor G minor

In light of the Gospel for the cantata's new liturgical designation (Jesus' feeding of the 4000), the newly added implications of the opening movement's exhortation: Christ's poverty and hardship will be shared by his followers. In its expansion, the libretto alludes to various biblical passages and themes (see note).

Alfred Dürr notes, "A progressive enhancement in scoring characterizes the four arias (which, in the Weimar version, followed each other without a break), ranging from continuo accompaniment (no. 3), via trio texture (nos. 5 and 8), to orchestral texture with vocal duet (no. 10). The stages were originally still clearer: the fifth movement formerly required a solo obbligato instrument, an oboe da caccia, and only later did Bach choose to score the part for unison violins and first oboe, with the result that it was transposed up an octave." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 444.



Nº 2. Recitativo. (Added in this version) •Poverty strikes Christ as well as his members (186/2).

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 7 mm. to depict the plight of the human condition ("Die Knechtsgestalt, die Not, der Mangel").

186/2. 1. **Basso.** G C A-flat F D B E-flat

Bass is often the voice of authority.

Die Knechts - ge - stalt, die Noth, der Man - gel trifft Chri - sti
 Our hum - ble role, our need, pri - va - tions, are not en -

C minor

Alfred Dürr notes that "the four inserted recitatives, with their sometimes very extended arioso sections, betray their close proximity in time to Bach's Weimar and Cöthen periods: there is not a single recitative in this cantata that does not show, at least at the end, a rhythmic consolidation into arioso." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 444.

3 Glieder nicht al - lein, es will ihr Haupt selbst arm und e - lend sein. Und ist nicht
 dured by us a - lone, but to our Lord Him - self were al - so known, And are not

6 Reichthum, ist nicht Ü - berfluss des Sa - tans An - gel, so man mit Sorg. falt mei - den
 rich - es, is not o - pu - lence, but Sa - tan's pit - fall, which man must shun with di - li -

8 muss? Wird dir im Ge - gentheil die Last zu viel zu tragen, wenn Armuth dich beschwert, wenn
 gence? When trou - bles come a - new, whose bur - den seems past bear - ing, when want is press - ing sore, with

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 5 mm.

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11 D-flat G-flat

Hunger dich verzehrt, und willst sogleich ver-zagen, so denkst du nicht an Jesum, an dein
hun-ger at the door, in - stead of vain des-pair-ing, be - think you then that Je - sus died for

F minor F7 A dim.7 F major

14 (Arioso $\text{♩} = 54$)

Heil. Hast du, wie je - nes Volk, nicht bald zu essen, so seuf - zest du: Ach
you, When you, like those of old, have naught to feed you, do not - then cry: "Ah

B-flat major B-flat 7 G major C minor

17

Herr, wie lan - ge, wie lan - ge, wie lange willst du mein ver-gessen?
Lord, ^{how long,} for - got - ten, ^{how long} for - sak - en, how long wilt Thou not deign to heed me?"

The cry to God is set as an expressive arioso with vocal sighs and a throbbing bass.

C7 E dim.7 F minor D7 G minor E-flat aug. 6 D major

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions.

<p>Bist du, der da kommen soll, Seelen-Freund, in Kirchen Garten? Mein Gemüth ist Zweifels-voll, Soll ich eines andern warten! Doch, o Seele, zweifels nicht. Laß Vernunft dich nicht verstricken, Deinen Schilo, Jacobs Licht, Kannst du in der Schrift erblicken!</p>	<p>(Are you the one who is to come, Soul friend, in the church's garden? My mind is full of doubt, Shall I wait for another! Yet, O soul, do not doubt. Let not reason entangle thee, Thy Schilo, Jacob's light, Canst thou behold in the Scriptures!)</p>
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Original Text

No. 3. Aria.

186/3. (Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$) •Doubt: Is this the one who is to help me? (186/3).

Ritornello derived from vocal line.

Continuo alone, right hand is editorial.

B-flat major The triple meter and the ensuing triplets were probably prompted by the pastoral Quasi-ostinato bass... pastoral reference in the original text: "Are you the one who is to come into the church's garden?" Perhaps they are allude to the Trinity.

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

Martin Petzoldt notes the aria, "like the preceding recitative for bass voice, reformulates the "coming" of the Messiah (3rd Advent) into the "helping" of Jesus (Gospel of the 7th Sunday after Trinity), which should serve to recognize reason as adjacent to doubt." See *Bach-Kommentar* 1:154. The doubt about Jesus' identity relates to the Gospel for the cantata's original liturgical designation, in which John the Baptist sends representatives to ask Jesus if he is the the expected Messiah: John...sent word [to Jesus]..."Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matthew 11:2-3). For more on reason, see below.

BWV 186a: kommen ("come").

4 **Basso.**

Bass is often the voice of authority. In the original text (BWV 186a) it is the voice of John the Baptist.

Bist du, der mir hel-fen soll,
Thou who al - ways help me so,

B-flat major

8

bist du, der mir hel-fen soll, eilst du nicht, mir bei - zu -
Thou who al - ways help me so, haste Thee now to my sal -

B-flat major

12

ste - hen? Bist du, der mir hel-fen soll, eilst du nicht, eilst du nicht, —
va - tion. Thou who al - ways help me so, haste Thee now, haste Thee now, —

B-flat major

F major
C7

F major

16

— mir bei - zustehen, mir bei - zu - ste - hen?
— to my sal - va - tion, to my sal - va - tion.

Ritornello

F major

20

Mein Ge-müth ist zwei-fels-
I am filled with doubt and

p

F major (F7) F# dim.7

tritone tritone

24

voll, ist zwei- woe, with doubt

Word painting: Convoluted melisma for "full of doubt."

- fels-voll, mein Ge-müth- and woe, I am filled-

D7 G major G7 C minor F minor G7

tritone

28

- ist zwei-fels-voll, du ver-wirfst vielleicht mein Fle-hen, du ver-
with doubt and woe, hear Thou this my sup-pli-ca-tion, hear Thou

tr

G7 B-flat 7

32

wirfst vielleicht mein Fle-hen;
this my sup-pli-ca-tion;

f Ritornello *mf*

E-flat major E-flat major E-flat major

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36

doch, o See-le, zweif - le nicht, zweif - le nicht, zweif - le
 leave, O soul, thy doubt be-hind, doubt be-hind, doubt be-

E-flat major F7 F# dim.7 D7 G minor N6

With regard to the attitude of orthodox Lutheranism towards reason in Bach's day, see note.

40

nicht, lass **Ver-nunft** dich nicht be - strik -
 hind, let not rea - son thus be - witch

Word painting: Convoluted melisma for "bestriken" ("captivate"); BWV 186a had "verstricken" ("ensnare").

G minor G minor A7 D minor

44

A minor D7 G minor B-flat major G7 C minor

48

- ken, lass Ver-nunft dich nicht be - strik -
 thee, let not rea - son thus be - witch

F# dim.7 G minor C# dim.7 D minor

51

ken. thee. Dei - nen Search the

f Ritornello *p*

D minor D minor D minor B dim.7

BWV 186a: Schilo ("Schiloh")

Hel - fer, Ja - kobs Licht, kannst du in der Schrift er -
Scrip - ture, there - to find how thy God will soon en -

G7 C minor C minor F7 B-flat major

"Schilo," interpreted as a reference to the Messiah on the basis of Genesis 49:10: The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he (Hebrew: Shilo) comes to whom it belongs.

blik - ken, dei - nen Hel - fer, Ja - kobs Licht, kannst du in der Schrift er -
rich thee, search the Scrip - ture, there to find how thy God will soon en -

B-flat major

Word painting: Consonant, sequentially rising melisma with (reflective) pauses for "erblicken" ("behold").

blik - rich - ken, dei - nen Search the

B-flat major

66

Hel - fer, Ja - kobs Licht, kannst du in der Schrift er - blik - ken. *Ritornello*
 Scrip - ture, there to find how thy God will soon en - rich thee.

B-flat major

70

B-flat major B-flat major

No. 4. Recitativo. (Added in this version) • Body is temporal but Word's manna feeds our souls (186/4).
 186/4. *Secco*
Tenore. 1.

This added recitative helps connect the cantata to its new liturgical designation. The 3000 people in the day's Gospel reading prioritized Jesus' teaching over physical food and contemporary believers should do the same. The text alludes to various biblical passages and themes (see note).

Ach, dass ein Christ so sehr vor sei-nen Kör-per sorgt! Was ist er
 Ah! Chris-tians too much heed our mor-tal bod - y's need! What is it

F# dim.7 D7 G minor



3II

mehr? Ein Bau von Er-den, der wieder muss zur Er-de werden, ein Kleid, so nur ge-
 then? A lump of dirt, which back to earth must soon re - vert; sa - tire, we have on

G major G7 C minor B dim.7

borgt. Er könnte ja das beste Theil er - wählen, so sei-ne Hoffnung nie be-
 hire. — Our so - journ here is but the prep - a - ra - tion for hopes in which we firm a -

G7 C minor C minor F major F7

9

trügt: das Heil der See-len, so in Je - su liegt. O se - - - lig,
bide, our sure sal - va - tion, gained when Je - sus died. O bless - - - ed,

D7 G7 C7 F7 B-flat major B-flat 7

12

wer ihn in der Schrift er-blickt, wie er durch sei - ne Leh-ren auf
they who ver - i - ly - be - lieve Thy Ho - ly Word and Teach - ing, the

E-flat major A half-dim.7

Long Arioso.
 Andante. (♩ = 56.)

14

Al - le, die ihn hören, ein geistlich Manna schickt! Drum, wenn der — Kum - mer
man-na which, be-seech-ing, our spir - its shall re - ceive. So, though mis - for - tunes

D7 G minor G minor F7

17

gleich das Her - ze nagt und frisst, das Her - ze — nagt — und
fall, and - cat a - way the — heart, and eat — a - way — — — the

B-flat major E-flat 7 A-flat major D7 G7 C7 F minor B-flat 7

- - - Trudging bass, reminiscent of no. 1...

Chromaticism for ["das Herze] nagt" ("gnaw [at your heart]").

19

frisst, drum, wenn der Kummer gleich das Her - ze - nagt.
heart, so, tho' mis - for - tunes fall, and eat - a - way

E-flat major A7 D minor B dim.7 C minor F7 B-flat major E-flat 7

21

— und frisst, so schmeckt und se - het doch, so schmeckt und se - het doch, wie
— the - heart, we will re - mem - ber all, we will re - mem - ber all, how

A-flat major D7 G minor G minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major G7

Word painting: Melisma colors "freundlich" ("knd").

23II

freundlich Je - sus ist, so schmeckt und se - het doch, wie freund -
lov - ing - kind Thou art, we will re - mem - ber - all, how lov -

C minor C minor F7 B-flat major

26

- lich, wie freundlich Je - sus ist.
- ing, how lov - ing - kind Thou art.

B-flat major B-flat major B-flat major

Meßias läßt sich merken
Aus seinen Gnaden=Wercken,
Unreine werden rein.
Die geistlich Lahme gehen,
Die geistlich Blinde sehen
Den hellen Gnaden=Schein.

(Messiah lets himself be recognized
From his gracious works,
The unclean become clean.
The spiritually lame walk,
The spiritually blind see
The bright light of grace.)

186/5. **Nº 5. Aria.** • Savior powerfully manifested, nurturing body & soul (186/5).

Revisions to the original aria text (in BWV 186a) reflect the cantata's new liturgical designation with its attendant Gospel reading, moving the emphasis from Jesus' works as signs of his Messianic identity to an emphasis on his works in nourishing body and soul (linking the aria to the foregoing recitative).

(Poco adagio ♩=66.)

Ob I, Vln I, II

Ritornello

Bach darkens the sound of the obbligato by mixing oboe and violin timbres (see also nos. 1 and 10).

Figura corta (see note).

D minor (for significance, see note). A minor E7 A minor A minor

A minor G7 A7 D minor

Tenore.

Mein Hei-land lässt sich mer - ken, mein Hei-land lässt sich
My Sav - iour oft ap - pear - eth, my Sav - iour oft ap -

D minor D minor Trudging bass...

mer - ken in seinen Gnaden - wer - ken, mein Heiland lässt sich mer - ken in
pear - eth - in mer - cy that en - dur - eth, my Sav - iour oft ap - pear - eth in

D minor C(7) F major

sei - nen Gna - den - werken, mein Hei-land lässt sich mer - ken in sei - nen Gna - den -
mer - cy - that - en - dear - eth, my Sav - iour oft ap - pear - eth in - mer - cy - that - en -

F major F major G7 C major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 186

13

wer - ken, in - sei - nen Gna - den - wer - ken, mein Hei - land lässt sich -
 dear - eth, in - mer - cy - that en - dear - eth, my Sav - iour oft ap -

F major C major G7 C major C major

15

mer - ken in - sei - nen Gna - den - wer - ken, in - sei - nen Gna - den -
 pear - eth in - mer - cy - that en - dear - eth, in - mer - cy - that en -

E7

17

werken.
 dear-eth.

mf Ritornello

Figura corta (see note above).

A minor E minor (B7) E minor C major

20

E7 A minor

22

Da er sich kräf - tig weist, den schwa - chen Geist zu
 His Grace will make me whole, my fee - ble bod - y

A minor C7 F major

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 186

24

leh - ren, den mat - ten Leib zu näh - ren, dies sät - tigt Leib und
 nour - ish, that I may grow and flour - ish, and sat - is - fy my

D7
G minor

26

Geist, dies sät - tigt Leib und Geist;
 soul, and sat - is - fy my soul;

G minor
G minor

28

da er sich kräf - tig weist, da er sich kräf - tig
 His Grace will make me whole, His Grace will make me

G minor B-flat major B-flat major G# dim.7

30

weist, den schwachen Geist zu leh-ren, den mat - ten Leib zu
 whole, my fee - ble bod - y nour-ish, that I may grow and

A7 D minor C7 F major A7

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 186

32

näh-ren, dies sät-tigt Leib und Geist, den
 flour-ish, and sat-is-fy my-soul, my

D minor A7 D minor

34

schwachen Geist zu leh-ren, den mat-ten Leib zu näh-ren, dies
 fee-ble bod-y nour-ish, that I may grow and flour-ish, and

36

sät-tigt Leib und Geist.
 sat-is-fy my soul.

mf Ritornello

D minor D minor D minor A minor

38II

(E7) A minor A minor F major

40II

(C7) A7 D minor D minor D minor

No. 6. Choral. (Mel.: „Es ist das Heil.“)

Chorale (Added in this version) (See also 9/7, 155/5.)

186/6. (♩ = 72.)

Ob I
Ob II

Strings

Ob I
Ob II

Strings

Ob I
Ob II

mf Parallel 3rds suggest sweetness...

F major G minor

311

Soprano. Line 1.

Alto. Stollen 1 of chorale's bar form. Ob sich's an - liess', als

Tenore. The pervading concertante alternation of oboes (upward, questioning motive) and strings (descending answer) with material thematically unrelated to the chorale reflects the two contrasting perceptions of reality expressed in the text. However, as underscored in the Abgesang, God's Word outweighs experience in determining reality. For supporting biblical passages, see note. Though God ap - pears at

Basso. Ob sich's an - Though God ap -

Strings +Ob I, II

Ob sich's an - Though God ap -

F major F major F7

6

Line 2 (lower voices enter imitatively in descending order, like echoes).

wollt' er nicht, lass dich es nicht er -

times se - vere, let not your heart be

liess', als wollt' er nicht, lass dich es nicht er -

pears at times se - vere, let not your heart be

liess', als wollt' er nicht, lass dich es nicht er -

pears at times se - vere, let not your heart be

liess', als wollt' er nicht, lass

pears at times se - vere, let

B-flat major C7 D7 G minor G minor C7 F major G7

9

schrek - - - ken;
trou - - - - bled,

schrek - - - ken;
trou - - - - bled,

schrek - - - ken;
trou - - - - bled,

diches nicht erschrek - ken;
not your hearts be trou - bled,

= m. 1. = m. 2.

C major C7 F major G minor

12

A Line 3.

Stollen 2 of chorale's bar form.

denn wo er ist am
for grace con - cealed will

denn wo er
for grace con -

denn wo er
for grace con -

denn wo er
for grace con -

A = m. 5.

= m. 3. = m. 4.

F major F major F7

Line 5 (lower voices enter imitatively in descending order, like echoes).

20

B

Abgesang of chorale's bar form.

Sein
His

The Abgesang is given relatively more weight by separating the lines with longer interludes. The result is an emphasis on the first line: God's Word outweighs experience. See note for relevant biblical passages and themes.

G7 C major G7 C major F major

23

Wort lass dir ge - wis - ser sein,
Word will be your guide and stay,

Sein Wort lass dir ge - wis - ser sein,
His Word will be your guide and stay,

Sein Wort lass dir ge - wis - ser sein,
His Word will be your guide and stay,

Sein Wort lass dir ge - wisser sein,
His Word will be your guide and stay,

F major G7 C(7) F major G7 C major C7 F major

26

Line 6 (lower voices enter imitatively, like echoes).

und ob dein
and though your

und ob dein
and though your

28II D7 G major E7 A minor C7 F major F7

Herz sprach' lau - - ter Nein,
hearts would say you "nay",

und ob dein Herz sprach' lau - ter Nein,
and though your hearts would say you "nay",

Herz sprach' lau - ter Nein,
hearts would say - you "nay",

und ob dein Herz sprach' lau - ter Nein,
and though your hearts would say you "nay",

B-flat major D7 G minor G minor

A7 D minor

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 186

Line 7 (lower voices enter imitatively in descending order, like echoes, starting before the cantus firmus).

34

so lass dir doch nicht
hold stead fast, and com -

so lass dir doch nicht
hold stead - fast, nev - er com -

so lass dir doch nicht
hold stead - fast, and con -

so lass dir
hold stead - fast,

D minor D minor C7 F major

36

grau - en.
plain not.

grau - en.
plain - ing.

grau - en.
plain not.

doch nicht grau - en.
and com - plain not.

F major

38

F major

Fine della prima parte.

The opening recitative contrasts physical dearth with the spiritual nourishment of Christ's Word. Just as the 4000 people listening to Jesus in the desert had no way to find food, so believers often find themselves in physical need. The poet describes the situation using language borrowed from God's warning to Israel in Leviticus 26:18-19: "If...you will not hearken to me, then I will chastise you again sevenfold for your sins, and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like brass (Luther 1545: euren Himmel wie Eisen und eure Erde wie Erz machen)." Still, if believers prioritize God's Word over earthly matters, God will have mercy and bless them.

Seconda Parte.

No. 7. Recitativo.

7. Bass Recit. (Added in this version) • Physical dearth but spiritual nourishment (186/7).

186/7.

1. Basso.

E-flat

A-flat B-flat

D-flat

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 12 mm.

Bass is often the voice of authority. *Es ist die Welt die grosse Wüste; nei; der Himmel wird zu Erz, die*
The world of man is but a wil-der-ness, the heav-ens seem like dross, the

"Halo" of strings.

The "halo" of strings, presumably represent "Christi Wort" ("Christ's Word")—see m. 6.

E-flat major

E-flat 7

F7

F# dim.7

G minor

Er-de wird zu Eisen, wenn Christen durch den Glauben weisen, dass Christi Wort ihr
earth ap-pears but bra-zen, to them who do not hold the Scrip-tures the great-est rich-es

C minor

D major G major

B dim.7

G major

C minor

More flowing line...

grösster Reichthum sei; der Nahrungsse-genscheint von ihnen fast zu fliehen, ein steter
mor-tals can pos-sess; our pov-er-ty ap-pears to be our lot and por-tion, and want to

F7

B-flat major

D7

Mangel wird be-weint, da-mit sie nur der Welt sich de-sto mehr ent-zie-hen; da
be our con-stant trial, which God im-parts to us to turn our thoughts to-ward Him. No

G major

C7

E dim.7

C7

F minor

Text painting: A surprising harmonic twist illustrates the heart prepared for God's Word in face of earthly deprivation.

12

B

fin-det-erst des Heilands Wort, der höchste Schatz, in ih-ren Herzen Platz: ja,
oth-er rich-es can com-pare or take the place of Je-sus' sav-ing Grace. Yea,

A7 D major F# dim.7 G minor F# dim.7 D7 G minor

15

Arioso (♩ = 56.)

jammert ihn des Vol-kes dort, so muss auch hier sein Her-ze bre-chen und
His com-pas-sion, rich and rare, will reach us here, to give-us cour-age and
his heart break, and

Text painting: As the bass describes God coming to the rescue with a word of blessing, the line evolves into arioso. →

The strings repeat a *circulo mezzo* figure, apparently symbolizing the blessing being pronounced, as stated in the text (see note.)

G7 C# dim.7 F7 Pulsing bass...

17

ü-ber-sie-den Se- gen spre-chen.
fill our hearts with hope and com-fort.
over them the blessing speak/pronounce.

B-flat major B-flat major

No. 8. Aria. • Lord shows mercy to needy, giving them Word of life (186/8). The original text (from BWV 186a) is general enough that it did not need to be revised for the new liturgical occasion.

186/8. (Poco adagio ♩ = 60.)

1. Vln I/II

Ritornello *mf* Concertante exchange...

G minor D7 G minor C7 (F7)

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement. In this aria, the obbligato (thematically independent of the vocal line and played by unison violins) and the continuo (which answers in concertante exchange) apparently symbolize the encircling arms of the Lord, as referenced in the text. From this perspective, the chromaticism of the obbligato suggests the empathy of the Lord for the needy, as referenced in the text.

3 (41)

D7 G minor A7 D minor G7 (C7)

Ascending/descending chromatic obbligato line of sighing duples.

5 (43)

A7 D minor G minor A7 D minor

7 (45)

A major D major A7 B dim.7 C minor C# dim.7 D major

9 (47) **Soprano.**

Die Ar - - men will der Herr um - ar - - men, -
 The Lord will help the poor and need - - y, -

p *mf* D major

G minor The ascending/descending chromatic obbligato line of sighing duples creates an image of the Lord's empathy for the needy, as referenced in the text.

111

G minor G7 C minor D major G minor D major N6 C# dim.7 D major G minor

14

die Ar - men will der Herr um - ar - men mit
 the Lord will help the poor and need - y, their

G minor F# dim.7 G minor D major

16II

Gna - den hier und dort, mit Gna - den hier und
 mor - tal bur - dens lift; their mor - tal bur - dens

G minor F7 B-flat major B-flat major B-flat major

19

dort;
 lift;

Ritornello

B-flat major F7 B-flat 7 (E-flat major) F7 B-flat major

22

er schen - ket ih - nen aus Er - bar -
 and for e - ter - ni - ty will grant

B-flat major G7 C minor N6 G7

24^{II}

- - - - - men den höchsten Schatz, das Le - bens -
 - - - - - them the Word of Life, most pre - cious

C minor C7 F minor A-flat major A-flat major G7 C minor

27

wort, das Le - - benswort, den höch - sten Schatz, das Lebenswort,
 gift, most pre - - cious gift, the Word of - Life, most pre-cious gift,

Ritornello

C minor F7 B-flat major C# dim.7 A7 D minor

30

E7 A7 D major N6 D minor

32

er schen - - ket ih - - nen aus - Er - bar - -
 and for e - ter - - ni - ty will grant

D minor D7 G minor N6 D major

34II

- men den höchsten Schatz, das Le - bens -
- them the Word of Life, most pre - cious -

G minor G7 C minor N6 N6 D7 G minor

37

wort, den höch - - sten Schatz, das Le - - - bens - wort.
gift, the Word of - - Life, most pre - - - cious - gift.

Literal word painting: Highest note for "höchsten Schatz" ("highest" treasure"), i.e., greatest treasure.

G minor G7 C minor D7 G minor G minor Dal Segno.

No 9. Recitativo. *Secco* Alto Recit. (Added in this version) • Word leads & sustains us on hard course to paradise (186/9).
186/9. 1. **Alto.**

The recitative is rich with biblical allusions (see note).

Alto is often the voice of faith.

Nun mag die Welt mit ih.rer Lust ver - ge - hen; bricht gleich der Mangel
The world and its de-lights I hold for noth-ing; though pov - er - ty im -

C minor

3

ein, doch kann die Seele freu - dig sein. Wird durch dies Jammerthal der Gang zu schwer, zu
pend, my soul for-sees a joy - ous end. If through this vale of tears our way is hard and

F7 B-flat major B-flat major (D7) F# dim.7

Moves from minor to major depict the soul's joy and the blessing of Jesus' Word (see note).

A central arioso intervention is an almost literal quotation of Psalm 119:105:
Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

(Arioso ♩ = 72.) Ascending scale for the soul's pathway.

6

lang, in Je-su Wort liegt Heil und Se-gen. Es ist ih-res Fusses
long, in Je-sus' Word is hope and bless-ing. 'Tis a lamp un-to my

Continued secco recitative: Right hand is editorial.

Adagio.

G minor C7 F major F7

(Recit.)

9

Leuchte und ein Licht auf ih-ren We-gen. Wergläubig durch die Wüste reist, wird durch dies
feet and is a light un-to my path-way. The Faith-ful Ones by it are led through de-sert

B-flat major (C7) F major F major B dim.7 C minor

12

Wort ge-tränkt, ge-speist; der Hei-land öff-net selbst, nach die-sem
waste: are clothed and fed; The Sav-iour o-pens, by this Word, for

F7 B-flat major B-flat 7

14

Wor-te, ihm einst des Pa-ra-die-ses Pfor-te, und nach voll-brach-tem
mor-tals the way one day through Heav-en's por-tals; so at the jour-ney's

G major C minor

Word painting: Circling motives in voice and continuo depict "crown."

16 (Arioso $\text{♩} = 60.$)

Lauf setzt er den Gläu-bi - gen die Kro - - - - ne auf.
 end, a - round the throne the - Faith-ful may _____ at - tend.

(Adagio.)

F minor B-flat 7 E-flat major C minor E-flat major

Nº 10. Duetto. •Remain faithful in suffering; a crown awaits you (186/10). The original text (from BWV 186a) is general enough that it did not need to be revised for the new liturgical occasion. The gigue-like meter reflects the joyful anticipation of heaven after all suffering is ended.

186/10. (Allegretto $\text{♩} = 58.$)

In its emphasis on constancy in the face of hardship with the hope of eternal reward, the duet reflects various biblical passages and themes (see note).

Ritornello derived from vocal theme

Gigue-like C minor C minor

Bach darkens the sound by mixing oboe and string timbres (see also nos. 1 and 5).



8(188)

C minor A-flat major E-flat major E-flat major E dim.7

16(196)

C7 E dim.7 C7 F minor F minor F minor B-flat major

24(204)

E-flat major G7 C minor C minor

This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

32(212) **Soprano.** The voices move predominantly in parallel 6ths and 3rds, suggesting sweetness...

Soprano.
 Lass, See-le, kein Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den,
 Though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee,

Alto.
 Lass, See-le, kein Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den,
 Though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee,

p *mf* **Ritornello**

C minor C minor C minor

The strings play leaping eighth notes in unison (see viola part in m. 1) in unison, with no continuo support. Bassetto technique (removing continuo support) is often used by Bach to depict something heavenly, unearthly, incomprehensible, or without foundation. Here the line appears to represent the blows of adversity referenced in the text.

lass, See - le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich schei - den, lass,
 though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, though

lass, See - le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich schei - den, lass,
 though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, though

p **Bassetto texture with strings playing leaping 8th-notes in unison.**

C minor

See - le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich schei - den, sei, See - le, ge - treu;
 suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be stead - fast and true;

See - le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich schei - den, sei, See - le, ge - treu;
 suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be stead - fast and true;

mf **Ritornello**

C minor A-flat major E-flat major E-flat major E-flat major E-flat major

54

Brief imitative counterpoint.

lass, See-le, kein Lei-den von Je - su dich
 though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er

lass, See - le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich schei - den, sei,
 though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be

p

F major B-flat major C7 F major D7

61

scheiden,
 part thee,

lass, See-le, kein Lei - den von Je - su dich
 though suf - fer - ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er

See - le, ge - treu, sei, Seele, ge - treu,
 stead - fast and true, be stead - fast and true,

G minor G minor G minor

68

scheiden, sei, See - le, ge - treu;
 part thee, be stead - fast and true;

lass, See - le, kein
 though suf - fer - ing

sei, See - le, ge - treu;
 be stead - fast and true;

lass, See - le, kein
 though suf - fer - ing

Ritornello

mf

G minor G minor G minor G minor

76

Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den, lass, See-le, kein Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den, sei,
smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, though suf-fer-ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be

Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den, lass, See-le, kein Lei-den von Je - su dich schei-den, sei.
smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, though suf-fer-ing smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be

G minor E-flat major B-flat major

83

See - le, ge - treu!
stead - fast and true; Lass, See - le, kein
Though suf - fer - ing

See - le, ge - treu!
stead - fast and true; Lass, See - le, kein
Though suf - fer - ing

Ritornello

mf *p*

B-flat 7 B-flat major E-flat major

90

Lei - den von Je - su dich schei-den, sei, See - le, ge - treu! Dir blei-bet die Kro - ne aus
smart thee, from Je - sus ne'er part thee, be stead - fast and true; At thy lib - er - a - tion, the

Lei - den dich schei-den, sei, See-le, ge - treu! Dir blei-bet die Kro - ne aus
smart ——— thee, ne'er part thee, be stead - fast and — true, At thy lib - er - a - tion, the

Bassetto texture with strings playing leaping 8th-notes in unison.

E-flat major E dim.7 C7

Imitative counterpoint employing inversion. Here the break from parallel motion reflects the text: "When you are free from the bonds of the body."

97

Gna-den zu Loh - ne, wenn du von Ban - den des
crown of sal - va - tion waits thee when life's wea - ry

Gna-den zu Loh - ne, wenn du von
crown of sal - va - tion waits thee when

Ritornello

mf *p*

F minor F minor

104

Lei - bes nun frei, von Ban - - - den des Lei - - - bes nun
jour - ney is through, when life's wea - ry jour - - - ney is

Ban - den des Lei - bes nun frei, von Ban - - - den des Lei - - -
life's wea - ry jour - ney is through, when life's wea - ry jour - - -

F minor E-flat 7 A-flat major

111

frei, wenn du von Banden des Lei - bes nun frei;
through, waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through;

- - bes nun frei, wenn du von Banden des Lei - bes nun frei;
- - ney is through, waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through;

Ritornello

mf

C7 F minor F minor F minor F minor

118

dir
 dir blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, zu
 at thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of - sal - va - tion, sal -

Imitative counterpoint employing inversion. Here inversion is related to Luther's Theology of the Cross (see note at no. 1). at

F minor B-flat major E-flat major G major

125

blei - bet die Krone aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, - zu Loh -
 thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of sal - va - tion, sal - va -

Loh - - - ne, aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, - dir blei - bet die Krone aus Gnaden zu
 va - - - - tion, the crown of sal - va - tion, at thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of sal -

C minor G minor D7 G minor G minor

132

- - ne, wenn du von Ban - dendes Lei - bes nun frei;
 - - - tion, waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through;

Loh - ne, - - - wenn du von Ban - dendes Lei - bes nun frei;
 va - - - - tion, - - - - waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through: Ritornello

G minor F major B-flat major

Imitative counterpoint employing inversion with telescoped text.

139

dir blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna - den zu
at thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of sal -

wenn du von Ban - den des Lei - bes nun
waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is

B-flat 7 E-flat major G major F minor (G7)

Bassetto texture with strings playing leaping 8th-notes in unison.

146

Loh - ne, aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, dir
va - tion, the crown of sal - va - tion, at

frei, des Lei - bes nun frei, dir
through, life's jour - ney is through, at

Ritornello

C minor C minor

153

blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, dir blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna - den zu
thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of - sal - va - tion, at thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of sal -

blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna - den zu Loh - ne, dir blei - bet die Kro - ne aus
thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of - sal - va - tion, at thy lib - er - a - tion, the

C minor C minor F major B-flat major C7 major

160

Loh - ne, wenn du von Bandendes Leibes nun frei, von
va - tion, waits thee when life's wea-ry jour-ney is through, when

Gna - den zu Lohne, dir blei - bet die Kro - ne aus Gna.den zu
crown of sal - va - tion, at thy lib - er - a - tion, the crown of sal -

F major G7 C minor F7 B-flat major

167

Ban - den des Lei - bes nun
life's wea - ry jour - ney is

Loh - ne, wenn du von Ban - den des Lei - bes nun frei,
va - tion, waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through,

G7 C minor C minor B-flat 7 E-flat major

174

frei, wenn du von Ban - dendes Lei - bes nun frei.
through, waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through.

wenn du von Ban - dendes Lei - bes nun frei.
waits thee when life's wea - ry jour - ney is through.

G7 C minor C minor

No 11. Choral: 2 Strophe des Chorals No 6, siehe Chorstimmen.
(Replaces closing chorale of previous version) (See also 86/6.)

Da Capo.

