

O God give eare

The Whole Booke of Psalmes - *Psalm 55*

John MILTON (1562 - 1647)

CANTVS

MEDIVS

TENOR
or Playnsong

BASSVS

Norwich Tune

O God give ear, and do ap- ply to hear me when I pray:

O God give ear and do ap- ply to hear me when I pray:

O God give ear and do ap- ply to hear me when I pray:

O God give ear and do ap- ply to hear when I do pray:

3

S. And when to thee I call and cry, hide not thy face a way.

A. And when to thee I call and cry hide not thy face a- way.

T. And when to thee I call and cry, hide not thy face a - way.

B. And when to thee I call and cry hide not thy face a - way.

2. Take heed to me, grant my request,
and answer me again:
With plaints I pray full sore oppressed,
great grief doth me constrain.

3. Because my foes with threats and cries,
oppress me through despite:
And to the wicked sort likewise,
to vex me have delight.

4. For they in council do conspire,
to charge me with some ill:
So in their hasty wrath and ire,
they do pursue me still.

5. My heart doth faint for want of breath
it panteth in my breast:
The terrors and the dread of death,
do work me much unrest:

6. Such dreadful fear on me doth fall,
that I therewith do quake:
such horror whelmeth me withal,
that I no shift can make.

7. But I do say who will give me
the swift and pleasant wings
Of some fair Dove, that I may fly,
and rest me from these things?

8. Lo then I would go far away
to fly I would not cease:
And I would hide myself, and stay
in some great wilderness.

9. I would be gone in all the haste,
and not abide behind:

That I were quite and overpassed
these blasts of boist'rous wind.

10. Divide them Lord, and from them pull
their devillish double tongue:
For I have spied their City full
of rapine, strife, and wrong.

11. Which things both night and day throughout,
do close her as a wall:
In midst of her is mischief stout,
and sorrow eke withal.

12. Her privy parts are wicked plain,
her deeds are much to vile:
And in her streets there doth remain
all crafty fraud, and guile.

The Second part.

13. If that my foes did seek my shame,
I might it well abide:
From open enemy's check and blame,
somewhere I could me hide.

14. But thou it was my fellow dear,
which friendship didst pretend:
And didst my secret counsel hear,
as my familiar friend.

15. With whom I had desire to talk
in secret and abroad:
And we together oft did walk,
within the house of God.

16. Let death in haste upon them fall,
and send them quick to hell:
For mischief reigneth in their hall
and parlour where they dwell.

17. But I unto my God do cry
to him for help I flye (*flee*):
The Lord doth hear me by and by,
and he doth succor me.

18. At morning, noon and evening tide
unto the Lord I pray:
When I so instantly have cried,
He doth not say me nay.

19. To peace he shall restore me yet,
though war be now at hand:
Although the number be full great,
that would against me stand.

20. The Lord that first and last doth reign
both now and evermore,
Will hear when I to him complain,
and punish them full sore.

21. For sure there is no hope that they,
to turn will once accord:
For why? they will not once obey,
nor do not fear the Lord.

22. Upon their friends they lay their hands
which were in covenant knit:
Of friendship to neglect the bands
they pass or care no whit.

23. While they have war within their hearts
as butter are their words:
Although their words were smooth as oil,
they cut as as sharp as swords.

24. Cast thou thy care upon the Lord,
and he shall nourish thee:
For in no wise he will accord
the just in thrall to see.

25. But God shall cast them deep in pit
that thirst for blood always:
He will no guileful man permit
to live out half his days.

26. Though such be quite destroyed and gone
in thee O Lord I trust:
I shall depend thy grace upon
with all my heart and lust.

Critical notes:

the different text in the Bassus, bar 2, is in the original;
this setting is similar to the one of Psalms 5 and 102;
text somewhat modernised.