

O Lord give ear to my just cause

The Whole Booke of Psalmes (1621) - *Psalm 17*

Thomas RAVENSCROFT (1590 - 1633)

The musical score is arranged for five voices: CANTVS (Cantus), MEDIVS (Medius), TENOR (Tenor), BASSVS (Bassus), and SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The SATB parts are numbered 3, 4, 5, and 6 respectively. The score is in common time (C) and features a 'Salisbury Tune' for the Tenor part. The lyrics are: 'O Lord give ear to my just cause, at - tend when I com - plain: And hear the prayer that I put forth, with lips that do not fain.'

2. And let the judgement of my cause proceed always from thee:
And let thine eyes behold and clear this my simplicity.

3. Thou hast well tried me in the night, and yet could'st nothing find:
That I have spoken with my tongue, that was not in my mind,

4. And from the works of wicked men, and paths pervers and ill,
For love of thy most holy word, I have refrained still.

5. Then in thy paths that be most pure, stay me (Lord) and preserve:
That from the way wherein I walk my steps may never swerve.

6. For I do call to thee O Lord, surely thou wilt me aid:
Then hear my prayer, and weigh right well the words that I have said.

7. O Thou the Saviour of all them, that put their trust in thee:
Declare thy strength on them that spurn against thy majesty.

8. O Keep me Lord as thou would'st keep the apple of thine eye:
And under cover of thy wings defend me secretly.

The Second part

9. From wicked men that trouble me, and daily me annoy:
And from my foes that go about my soul for to destroy.

10. Which wallow in their worldly wealth so full and eke so fat:
That in their pride they do not spare to speak they care not what.

11. They lie in wait where I should pass with craft me to confound:
And musing mischief in their minds to cast me to the ground.

12. Much like a Lion greedily that would his prey embrace:
Or lurking like a Lion's whelp within some secret place.

13. Up Lord, with haste prevent my foes, and cast them at thy feet:
Save thou my soul from the evil man, and with thy sword him smite.
14. Deliver me Lord by thy power out of these tyrants' hands:
Which now so long time reigned have and kept us in their bands.

15. I mean from worldly men to whom all worldly goods are rife:
That have no hope or part of joy, but in this present life.

16. Thou of thy store their bellies fill'st with pleasure to their mind:
Their children have enough, and leave to theirs the rest behind.

17. But I shall with pure conscience behold thy gracious face:
So when I wake I shall be full with thy image and grace.

Critical notes:

Editorial sharp added in Medius bar 1. note 3;

Text somewhat modernised.