

# 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.  
A.  
T.  
B.

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