

How ever it be

The Whole Booke of Psalms (1621) - Psalme 73

Thomas RAVENSCROFT (1590-1633)

CANTVS
MEDIVS
TENOR
or Playnsong
BASSVS

Cambridge Tune

How ever it be, yet God is good, and kind to Is - ra - el:
How ever it be, yet God is good, and kind to Is - ra - el:
How ever it be, yet God is good, and kind to Is - ra - el:
How ever it be, yet God is good, and kind to Is - ra - el:

5
S. And to all such as safe - ly keep their con - science pure and well.
A. And to all such as safe - ly keep their con - science pure and well.
T. And to all such as safe - ly keep their con - science pure and well.
B. And to all such as safe - ly keep their con - science pure and well.

2. Yet like a fool I almost slipped,
my feet began to slide:
And eke I wissed even at a pinch
my steps began to glide.

3. For when I saw such foolish men
I grudg'd and did disdain:
That wicked men all things should have
without turmoil or pain.
4. They never suffer plagues nor grief
as if death should them smite:
Their bodies are both stout and strong,
and ever in good plight.

5. And free from all adversity,
when other men be (shent):
And with the rest they take no part
of plague or punishment.
6. Therefor presumption doth embrace
their necks as doth a chain:
And are even wrapped as in a robe
with rapine and disdain.

7. They are so fed, that even for fat
their eyes oft times out start:
And as for worldly goods they have
more then can wish their heart.
8. Their life is most licentious,
boasting much of the wrong
which they have done so simple men,
and ever pride among.

9. The heavens and the living Lord
they spare not to blaspheme:
And prate they do of worldly things,
no wight they do esteem.
10. The people of God oft times turn back
to see their prosperous state:
And almost drink the self fain cup
and follow the same state.

The second part.

11. How can it be that God, say they,
should know and understand
These worldly things, since wicked men
be Lords of sea and land?
12. For we may see how wicked men
in riches still increase:
Rewarded well with worldly goods
and live in rest and peace.

13. Then why do I from wickedness
my fantasy refrain?
And wash my hands with innocents,
and cleanse my heart in vain?
14. And suffer scourges every day,
as subject to all blame?
And every morning from my youth
sustain rebuke and shame?

15. And I had almost said as they
misliking mine estate:
But that I sould thy children judge
as folk unfortunate.
16. Then I bethought me how I might
this matter understand
But yet the matter was to great,
for me to take in hand.

17. Untill the time I went unto
thy holy place, and then
I understood right perfectly
the end of all these men.

18. And namely, how thou settest them
upon a slippery place:
And at thy pleasure and thy will
thou dost them all deface.

19. Then shall men muse at this strange sight,
to see how suddenly
They are destroyed, dispatched, consumed,
and dead so horribly.
20. Much like a dream when one awakes
so shall their wealth decay:
Their famous names in all mens sight
shall ebb and pass away.

The third part.

21. Yet thus my heart was grieved then,
my mind was much oppressed
22. So fond was I and ignorant,
and in this point a beast.
23. Yet nevertheless by my right hand
thou hold'st me always fast:
24. And with thy counsel dost me guide,
to glory at the last.

25. What thing is there that I can wish
but thee in heaven above:
And in the earth there is nothing
like thee that I can love.
26. My flesh and eke my heart doth fail,
but God doth fail me never:
For of my heart God is the strength,
my portion eke for ever.

27. And lo all such as thee forsake
thou shalt destroy each one:
And those that trust in anything
saving in thee alone.
28. Therefor I will draw near to God,
and ever with him dwell:
In God alone I put my trust
thy wonders will I tell.

Critical notes:

Bar 2, note 5: the 'conflict' between the E flat in the Medius and the E natural in the Tenor is in the original and has to be respected;
this setting is similar to the one of Psalms 2, 106, 117 & 128;
text somewhat modernised.