Phillis Wheatley, â??Isaiah lxiii. 1â??8â?•

Description

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

â??**Isaiah lxiii. 1â??8**â?•

Say, heavâ??nly muse, what king, or mighty God,
That moves sublime from *Idumeaâ??s* road?
In *Bozrahâ??s* dies, with martial glories joinâ??d,
His purple vesture waves upon the wind.
Why thus enrobâ??d delights he to appear
In the dread image of the *Powâ??r* of war?

Compressâ??d in wrath the swelling wine-press groanâ??d,
It bled, and pourâ??d the gushing purple round.

â??Mine was the act,â?• thâ?? Almighty Saviour said,
And shook the dazzling glories of his head,
â??When all forsook I trod the press alone,
And conquerâ??d by omnipotence my own;
For manâ??s release sustainâ??d the pondâ??rous load,
For man the wrath of an immortal God:
To execute thâ?? Eternalâ??s dread command
My soul I sacrificâ??d with willing hand;
Sinless I stood before the avenging frown,
Atoning thus for vices not my own.â?•

His eye the ample field of battle round
Surveyâ??d, but no created succours found;
His own omnipotence sustainâ??d the fight,
His vengeance sunk the haughty foes in night;
Beneath his feet the prostrate troops were spread,
And round him lay the dying, and the dead.

Great God, what lightâ??ning flashes from thine eyes?
What powâ??r withstands if thou indignant rise?

Against thy *Zion* though her foes may rage,
And all their cunning, all their strength engage,
Yet she serenely on thy bosom lies,
Smiles at their arts, and all their force defies.

NOTES:

Title *Isaiah* First prophet in the Hebrew Bible.

2-3 *Idumeaâ??s roadâ?¦Bozrah â??*Idumeaâ?• is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word â??Edom,â?• an area of modern-day Jordan settled by the Edomites; Bozrah is the capital of Edom, situated along the Kingâ??s Highway, an â??ancient thoroughfareâ?• that traverses Jordan (*Britannica*).

4 *purple vesture* Mourning clothes (*OED*).

20 *succours* â??Aid, help, assistanceâ?• (*OED*).

27 *Zion* â??The biblical land of Israelâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: ***Poems of Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*** **(London, 1773), pp. 60-61. [Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History].**

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