

## Week 13: Writing II

# Christ, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Text: Charles Wesley (1707–1788), 1740

- Originally the fourth part of a six-part poem “The Communion of Saints”
- This epic poem totaled 39 stanzas of eight lines each, equivalent to 78 stanzas of common meter
- Published in the second edition of the Wesleys’ *Hymns and Sacred Poems*

Tune: Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625), 1623

- Born in Oxford, England, son of a wait (town piper employed by the local government)
- Appointed senior organist at the Chapel Royal by King James I, later at Westminster Abbey
- Also played keyboards in the court of King Charles I (Prince Charles at the time)
- Died suddenly at age 41, leading to rumors he died of the black plague (autopsy revealed this to be untrue)
- Considered one of the finest composers of his generation, best known for his keyboard works
- Composed this tune for a text from the Song of Songs, published as the thirteenth hymn in *Hymnes and Songs of the Church* by George Withers, leading to its common name of SONG 13
- Some hymnals refer to the tune by the name CANTERBURY instead, the place of Gibbons’ death and burial

1. Wesley is known for (among other things) the scriptural content of his hymns. This hymn also quotes some non-biblical sources as well. What references can you find?
  - a. 1 Corinthians 12 talks about spiritual gifts and one-body-many-members
  - b. Ephesians 4 talks about unity (“one Lord, one faith, one baptism”)
  - c. Galatians 3:27-28 talks about ending divisions (“there is neither Jew nor Greek” ...)
  - d. Opening line comes from Thomas Ken’s “All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night”, which gave us our doxology
  - e. Final three lines of the opening match portions of the *Book of Common Prayer*
  - f. Final verse paraphrases a poem by Matthew Prior, *Solomon*, saying:

Or grant Thy passion has these names destroy'd  
that Love, like Death, makes all distinctions void.

2. What unique features of this hymn make it memorable and meaningful? How well are these techniques executed?
  - a. Literary devices:
    - i. Epanalepsis: “Join us, in one spirit, join”
    - ii. Repetition: The “all in all” is used first for the completeness of Christ’s fulfillment, then as a title for God
  - b. In the first line, “perfecting” has syllables mismatched with the “natural” flow of the tune

## Exercises

1. Use the thoughts and ideas from last week to write a first verse focusing on church unity at the “world-wide” scale. Use CMD (8.6.8.6D) and this opening line as a starting point: “O Christian church across the globe...”