

Week 14: Writing III

Jesus, United by Thy Grace

Text: Charles Wesley (1707–1788), 1742

- Published in the Wesleys' *Hymns and Sacred Poems* under the title "A Prayer for Persons join'd in Fellowship"
- Originally had the opening line "Jesu, united by thy grace" rather than the modern "Jesus"
- Most hymnals include only the first six verses of the original nine

Tune: John Bacchus Dykes (1823–1876), 1866

- Originally written to accompany a different Wesley text, "Jesus, the very thought of Thee"
 - Named after the Christian martyr ST. AGNES who was killed after refusing to marry a local Roman nobleman, saying "I am already engaged to Christ, to Him alone I keep my troth."
1. As a "prayer for persons joined in fellowship", what ideas do you find in the text that still apply more than 250 years later? What suggestions does the hymn give as to how we can go about achieving church unity and community?
 - a. Everything is achieved through the work of Christ inside us:
 - i. He "helps us to help each other"
 - ii. His love lets "our hearts agree" and us "toward each other move"
 - iii. We are granted the mind of Christ in us
 2. Poetically, what features or images of this hymn stand out as unique?
 - a. Wesley manages to work in the word "inseparably", which takes up more than half the syllables in its line
 - b. The final stanza contains an enjambment after the word "possess", spreading the final phrase between two lines – a good way to give the final verse a little extra closure.
 - c. The concept of God's love as "lodestone" (magnet) is definitely not from scripture, but gives a memorable image of drawing us both closer together and closer to Christ
 - d. The same stanza also contains an example of "antanaclasis", repeating a word or phrase but with a change in meaning: "ever toward each other move / and ever move toward thee"

Exercises

1. Continue with writing a second hymn verse, focusing on local church community and fostering deep, rather than surface-level, relationships. Start with this line: "O Christian neighbors, siblings, friends..."