

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

### ***Creator of the Earth and Skies***

Common Praise #173

1. Creator of the earth and skies,  
to whom the words of life belong,  
grant us your truth to make us wise;  
grant us your power to make us strong.
2. We have not known you: to the skies,  
our monuments of folly soar,  
and all our self wrought miseries  
have made us trust ourselves the more.
3. We have not loved you: far and wide  
the wreckage of our hatred spreads,  
and evils wrought by human pride  
recoil on unrepentant heads.
4. For this, our foolish confidence,  
our pride of knowledge, and our sin,  
we come to you in penitence;  
in us the work of grace begin.
5. Teach us to know and love you Lord,  
and humbly follow in your way.  
Speak to our souls the quickening Word,  
and turn our darkness into day.



This is a relatively “modern” hymn found in the Lenten section of our Common Praise Hymnal.

The hymn was written by Donald Wynn Hughes (1911-1967) the son of a Methodist minister. He was educated at Cambridge where he studied Classics and then English. A sportsman and a scholar, he was a first class cricketer and a man of letters. Headmaster of [Rydal School](#) in Colwyn Bay, North Wales from 1946-67, he was also a Justice of the Peace and held various public offices in the town. He wrote extensively on education and also wrote plays, light verse and operettas. Three of his hymns were published in the Methodist Hymnal *Hymns and Psalms*. As Headmaster he became a much-loved figure who cared deeply about the power of education and the children under his care. If a family fell on hard times, he would arrange a financial solution under secrecy, and even paid the fees himself in some cases, which was unknown to anybody at the time. He sadly passed away in 1967 as the result of a car accident.\*

The hymn almost takes the same form as our Ash Wednesday litany of penitence (BAS p. 283). It is almost a laundry list of everything that is wrong with our modern society and it's cruel, wasteful and warring ways.

The first stanza addresses the Creator of the universe in the first two lines. The remaining two lines are a petition to "grant us your truth" for wisdom, and "grant us your power" for strength. Stanza two begins, "We have not known you." The poet then addresses space flight in negative terms: "to the skies our monuments of folly soar." Stanza three begins, "We have not loved you." The author speaks blatantly that our lack of love for God has devastating results: first, "far and wide the wreckage of our hatred spreads," and second, "evils wrought by human pride/recoil on unrepentant heads."

The final stanza poses a rhetorical question: "How shall we follow in your way?" The hymn ends with a petition framed with the antithesis of dark and light.

### **Questions you might ask yourself:**

- What follies have modern technology made possible? Are we so confident in our "knowledge" that we overlook the works of grace?
- What kinds of things have happened due to the "wreckage of our hatred" and how can we begin as individuals and community to solve those things?
- How can we let Jesus teach us and lead us humbly in his way?"

\*Sources include "A Dictionary of Methodism,"  
Hymnary.com and rydalpenrhos.com