

Hymn Story

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

By Harry Eskew

This familiar four-line hymn, usually sung by the choir and congregation at the close of a Sons of Jubal concert, is sung in many churches as an expression of gratitude to God after worshippers place their tithes and offerings in the collection plate during Sunday worship. We call this hymn “The Doxology.” The word “doxology” is from two Greek words meaning “glory” and “saying.” A doxology is a short hymn of praise to God, often added to the end of canticles, psalms, and hymns. A doxology is typically praise to the Holy Trinity, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, often the final stanza for hymns of praise.

Our hymnals often include the *Gloria Patri* from the fourth century, which is translated from the Latin as follows:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost'
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end,
Amen, amen.

The *Gloria Patri* is known as the Lesser Doxology as distinguished from the “Great Doxology,” the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, “Glory to God in the Highest.” Congregations were instructed to join their voice in praise to God the Father, the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to counter the rising influence of the Arian heresy that denied the Trinity.

The hymn we call “The Doxology” was written by an Anglican bishop, Thomas Ken (1637-1711). Ken wrote these four lines as a final stanza for three hymns to be sung by the boys of Winchester College, published as *A Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester College* (1695 edition). He was serving as a chaplain at Winchester College when he wrote these hymns. Ken’s Doxology has been said to have done more to teach the doctrine of the Trinity than all the theological books ever written.

Ken’s three hymns concluding with his doxology were written to be sung in the morning, in the evening, and at midnight. His morning and evening hymns are in many hymnals today. Ken’s stanzas are in long meter (8.8.8.8.) so they would fit a number of well known hymn tunes. The Christian teachings expressed in these stanzas published more than three centuries ago contain lessons that would readily apply to children today. The following stanzas are taken from *The Hymnal 1982* of The Episcopal Church:

Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Lord, I my vows to thee renew;
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design, or do, or say;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

All Praise to Thee, My God this Night

All praise to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light:
Keep me, O keep me King of kings,
Beneath thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done;
that with the world, myself and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace my be.

O may my soul on thee repose,
And with sweet sleep mine eyelids close;
sleep that shall me more vigorous make
to serve my God when I awake.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.