O thou who camest from above

1. O thou who camest from above
   the fire celestial to impart,
   kindle a flame of sacred love
   on the mean altar of my heart!

2. There let it for thy glory burn
   with inextinguishable blaze,
   and trembling to its source return
   in humble prayer and fervent praise.

3. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
   to work, and speak, and think for thee;
   still let me guard the holy fire,
   and still stir up the gift in me.

4. Ready for all thy perfect will,
   my acts of faith and love repeat;
   till death thy endless mercies seal,
   and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley, the youngest son and 18th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, was born at Epworth Rectory, educated at Westminster School and afterwards at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated M.A. In 1735, he took Orders and immediately proceeded with his brother John to Georgia, both being employed as missionaries of the S.P.G. He returned to England in 1736. For many years he engaged with his brother in preaching the Gospel. He has been justly assigned the appellation of the "Bard of Methodism." His prominence in hymn writing may be judged from the fact that in the "Wesleyan Hymn Book," 623 of the 770 hymns were written by him; and he published more than thirty poetical works, written either by himself alone, or in conjunction with his brother. The number of his separate hymns is at least five thousand.
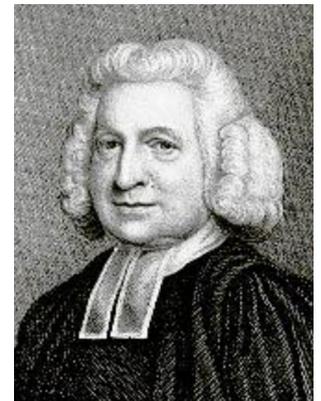
Charles was the great hymn-writer of the Wesley family, perhaps, taking quantity and quality into consideration, the great hymn-writer of all ages. He is said to have written no less than 6500 hymns, and though, of course, in so vast a number some are of unequal merit, it is perfectly marvellous how many there are which rise to the highest degree of excellence. His feelings on every occasion of importance, whether private or public, found their best expression in a hymn. His own conversion, his own marriage, the earthquake panic, the rumours of an invasion from France, the defeat of Prince Charles Edward at Culloden, the Gordon riots, every Festival of the Christian Church, every doctrine of the Christian Faith, striking scenes in Scripture history, striking scenes which came within his own view, the deaths of friends as they passed away, one by one, before him, all furnished occasions for the exercise of his divine gift. Nor must we forget his hymns for little children, a branch of sacred poetry in which the mantle of Dr. Watts seems to have fallen upon him. It would be simply impossible to enumerate even those of the hymns which have become really classical. The saying that a really good hymn is as rare an appearance as that of a comet is falsified by the work of Charles Wesley; for hymns, which are really good in every respect, flowed from his pen in quick succession, and death alone stopped the course of the perennial stream.

The hymn **'*O thou who camest from above*'** was written and published by Charles Wesley in 1762 in *Short Hymns on Selected Passages of the Holy Scriptures.* He later edited it in 1780 for use by the *People Called Methodists.* There were many criticisms about the first two lines of the second stanza:
   There let it for thy glory burn,
   with inextinguishable blaze
Critics argued that "inextinguishable" is too long a word to be used in poetry and that words with five or more syllables must be used in hymns sparingly, and this has limited its appearance in many collections. John Wesley edited it to read, "With ever bright undying blaze." However, many collections still use the original word. This hymn can be traced to the words of Leviticus 6:13, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out." This literally speaks of the work of Holy Spirit in the believer. With humble prayer and fervent praise, the Holy Spirit goes and returns to its source in our hearts.

sources: Hymnary.org   hymnary.org/person/Wesley_Charles
         HubPages   discover.hubpages.com/...O-Thou-Who-Camest-from-Above