

A beautiful flower emerged from one of our compost piles, & I let it flourish: honey can come out of a lion carcass (Josh.14.14-18), beauty (in the form of a flower, from which bees make honey) sprang forth out of the dying of our kitchen & garden refuse.

Praise is the honey-sweetness & the flower-beauty that, when the heart is right, rises up out of our dyings & disappointments, out of the layerings of what we call, in moments of low insight, our negative experiences.

1 This meditation hit me after Loree & I finished (in alternate daily readings to each other) Mary E. Waller's classic novel of Cape Cod, *THE WINDMILL ON THE DUNE* (Little, Brown/31). Seth Chelworth lives his first 46 years "purblind," as he says (p.352). Through all those years religion was a nonentity for him, as it is for the book till near its end (the narrative being first-person, his). P.353, his daughter (whom he hadn't known he had) asks, "Have you comprehended your life in any way, father?" "I could not comprehend because I was blinded by my own obstinacy, Constance; but in the coming and the going of the years I was impelled to have compassion on others....I was forced to put aside hatred [especially for his wife, who'd abandoned him for his brother] and substitute only loving thoughts....I am able now at last to comprehend my life only through Love," after a night of wrestling through which he opened to God & received the divine forgiveness. (If it sounds sentimental, I assure you that in Ms. Waller's expert hands, it's not.)

While in retrospect it seems that all the other characters on Love's chessboard conspired to illumine him out of his dug-in, art-for-art's-sake deep hole, the Christ figure is his Aunt Susan, who through the blossoming of his soul's flower on the compost heap of his life experienced (p.321) "a little glimpse of the coming of the kingdom of God....I've been crying for pure joy." So if you "should happen to come in and hear me playing '**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,**' singing it too, at the top of my voice at some unearthly hour, you'll know my reason for making the noise, and won't think that I'm crazy" (boldface, mine).

Through all those years of Seth's wanderings, Susan had been living **doxologically**, & finally Seth learns to do so & is reconciled with his wife (his brother having died).

2 Why did Loree & I think that book worthy of reading to each other? Because it came from Goodfriend Francis Whiting, who's long been about the business of doxological living. He'd read it as a teener when it was published, then again (in "a recovery of newness") 60 years later, & this summer is at it again "to see what wells up from deep within" (how deep now his life's compost pile!). After the middle reading, he wrote this in his copy: "The underlying Christian sureties, so magnificently set forth, spoke to me in a trying time. The old sureties came to me, ministering to me. Here were the things that I absorbed in my own Puritan and New England upbringing, in my Christian culture. The culture which made our country before it began to be denigrated by super roads and super communications and polyglot devolutions. \$It was insular but therein lay its power. It is gone and I will be one of the last ones to remember it, a Puritan out of season. \$I'm not fool enough to stand against the tide of a coming world culture. I have to welcome it. I'm venturesome and knowledgeable to rise up and go on. But I bring to the new, wider world something of value, a sharing, a dossier of precious things. \$That new-English mystique is a grail-like thing, a cup shared by a people of centuried age, a wine sustaining and vivifying, heady with convictions and goodnesses and beauties, trueness and freedom, costly with adventure, astringent with tragedy, warming with its intimations of rightness and wholeness--the ultimate nutrients of life lived near to eternity." Nostalgia, yes, but more: depth, trust, & hope.

3 "Life lived near to eternity": The closer we come to God, the easier & louder is our praise to God, our **glorying** in God (the Greek way of putting it, from δόξα *doxa* --whence "doxology"), our **hallowing** of God's Name (the Jewish way of putting it, as in the Lord's Prayer & the Kaddish). The principle appears in the medieval life-goal *Dei sola gloria* ("To God alone be the glory") & in TO BE NEAR

UNTO GOD, by Dutch theologian-statesman Abraham Kuyper & (beloved of A.K.) the Westminster Catechism's "Man's chief end is to **glorify** God and enjoy him forever."....Since A.K.'s was a truly doxological life (d.1920), this further NOTE on him: Like Dag Hammarskjöld's MARKINGS, TBNUG (Eerdmans/n.d.; 110 meditations, 611pp, for which I paid 50¢ 51 years ago as a gift to my parents "for daily family devotional") is the heart-work of a man of action in the world. For almost $\frac{1}{2}$ c. he was Holland's PM & head of the national church. "He made a lasting impress on primary and secondary education, politics and literature in the Netherlands" (TCERK.634). Besides a classic on the Holy Spirit, he wrote PRO REGE (ie, For Christ the King), "seeking to establish the authority of Christ in every sphere of life" (3 vols.). I can still feel the awe from overnighing in what had been his home in Amsterdam. Loree & I are reading TBNUG aloud. It's as fresh as when I read it in my late teens. (On divine-human "nearness" unwithdrawn from the common life & its troubles [A.K. was anti-monastic!], meditate on Pss. 34 & 145.)

4 Literally, "doxology" is "**glory**-discourse (or speaking or words)." Often in holiness, pentecostal, charismatic, & black churches I've heard the "Glory! Hallelujah!" (Heb. "hallel" is **praise**, "jah" is YHWH-Adonai.) This doxological shout appears also as the Sanctus ("Holy! Holy! Holy!" in the Is.6). In Hebrew it's very frequent as the call to "Make great [Lat., "**Magnify**," as in the Magnificat] the Lord!" Since "glory" is the common Gk.-Lat. doxological word, it's often used to translate Heb. "make great," as in the Kaddish (Aramaic, "holy") of the Reform prayerbook (GATES OF PRAYER, p.114): "Let the glory of God be extolled....Let the name of the Holy One...be glorified, exalted and honored...." This in spite of the fact that *chavod*, "glory," does not appear in the Hebrew text.

The Hebrew verbs "make great" & "make holy" get Englished as, respectively, "magnify" & "**hallow**"--the latter as the first verbal of the Lord's Prayer, which is "very likely based on an ancient version of the *Kaddish*" (p.188 of GATES OF UNDERSTANDING, the commentary on GATES OF PRAYER; p.187: it "became a mourner's prayer..., on the principle that one should praise God in sorrow as well as in joy (Job 1.21)"; p.188: it "has no reference to death, for it looks forward to the Messianic time when 'death will be swallowed up for ever (Is.25.8)'"--I add, cp. the eschatological note in the Lord's Prayer's second line).

5 So close are glory (glorifying God) & **gratitude** that doxological living can also be called *todah* (Heb., "thanksgiving") living, thanksgiving. As it's often put, we praise God for what he is & thank him for what he's done / is doing. The two are mixed in the Psalter (eg, the Great Hallel [Ps.113-118] & the last six psalms), in Jesus, & in Paul (who begins six of his letters with outbursts of doxological thanksgiving, teaches that this attitude should fill our hearts & shape our lives at all times & for all things (1Cor.10.31: "whatever you do,...do it all for God's glory")).

6 As a **genre**, doxology pervades Christian liturgy. Susan (§1) burst out in joy with the trinitarian doxology so familiar to all Christians, "Praise God...!" The "lesser d." begins "Glory be to the Father,...." The "greater d.," "Glory to God in the highest,...." And the trinitarian conclusion of many prayers is in doxological form.

SEGUE to the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, which in all its forms ends with a doxology but which has not appeared "in the Form of a Doxology," though one version wrongly claims to be just that:

7 How came this false appellation? Roger Shinn suggested "that the original S. of F. might be written as a doxology addressed to God....some of the Psalms might be taken as models" (his 5 Aug 92 letter to me, 2572.2). Misunderstanding Roger & the genre "doxology," some ignorant person then (1) merely shifted from 3rd to 2nd person, (2) threw out "Father" & "Lord," & stuck the "doxology" label on a product that's no more doxological than its predecessors--sacrificing both literature & the heart of the Christian language on the altar of trendy sentimentality, viz radical-feminist sensitivity. (& many doxologies are 3rd-person!)