



<sup>15</sup> *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.* (Psalms 17:15)

<sup>15</sup> *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* (Psalm 1:15)

This classical hymn of praise was written by Thomas Ken, an Anglican Bishop and considered as one of the fathers of modern English Hymnody, in 1674. His intention was for the hymn to be used to enhance the worship life of the young men of Winchester College in their private devotions. His instructions were the hymn be only sung in their private rooms. Why, you may ask? Because at the time of its writing, all hymns were believed to be valid only if they contained only Holy Scripture and not simply expressing sentiments ABOUT Scripture. It may surprise some to learn that the last stanza of this hymn is the source of our Doxology sung in almost every Reformed Church. The structure of the hymn is such as to serve for Morning Prayer augmentation (verses 1 & 2) and Evening Prayer (verses 3 & 4). Since a verse of this song is sung at every Anglican Service, it fits well into use in any Church season, including ADVENT. The tune is *Old Hundredth*.

Bishop Ken requested this hymn to be sung at his funeral which, fittingly, was conducted just at sunrise.

### **Awake, my Soul, and with the Sun**

Awake, my soul, and with the sun  
thy daily course of duty run.  
Cast off dull sloth, and joyful rise  
to pay thy morning sacrifice.

All praise to thee, who safe hast kept  
and hast refreshed me while I slept!  
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,  
I may of endless life partake.

All praise to thee, my God, this night  
for all the blessings of the light.  
Keep me, oh keep me, King of Kings,  
beneath Thine own almighty wings.

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.

*“Awake, my soul, and with the sun thy daily course of duty run. Cast off dull sloth, and joyful rise to pay thy morning sacrifice.”* Unfortunately, many souls make their full circuit through this worldly wilderness and never experience the joy of AWAKENING from the sleep of the sinner. Make no mistake; our souls have a daily duty to perform in serving God and our fellow man. Moreover, we are to care for God’s creatures as ones having dominion over them. Slothfulness is a habit needful to be broken. And righteous living is a Godly characteristic reinforced by habitual practice. *“<sup>11</sup>The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD.”* (Jer 33:11) Our morning sacrifice is praise to the Lord who made us, and should be exercised at the first moment of awakening. This stanza begins our Morning Prayer devotions.

*“All praise to thee, who safe hast kept and hast refreshed me while I slept! Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake, I may of endless life partake.”* Do you remember your first prayer? I remember mine. It first appeared in the New England Primer in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was recited without severe psychological damage by students in the public schools all of the way up to the time of the Supreme Court’s abrogation of the First Amendment by outlawing school prayer fifty years ago:

*Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

This hymn justly expresses the sentiments of that child’s prayer. While sleeping, we are unconscious of our surrounding’s, and our protection and security is a matter of God’s Providence. This, of course, spills over into life itself as we were all asleep (dead) in trespasses and sin (Eph 2) before the Providence of God awakened us to the beauty and melody of His mercy and drew us inextricably by the bonds of love to His Bosom.

*“All praise to thee, my God, this night for all the blessings of the light. Keep me, oh keep me, King of Kings, beneath Thine own almighty wings.”* Here we have the beginning of our Evening Prayer devotions as conceived by Bishop Ken. It is best that we sleep at night and labor during the light of day. So much of the world’s sin occurs during the hours of darkness. Sin loves darkness. The snail personifies sin in Scripture. *“<sup>s</sup>As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.”* (Psalm 58:8) There are two things that a snail (or sin) cannot abide – salt and light. It melts away at the presence of either of these. See how Jesus counsels us on these two qualities of the Christian: *“<sup>13</sup>Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. <sup>14</sup>Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men,*

*that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* (Matt 5:13-16)  
There is only ONE dark place that is safe for the child of God: “*8Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, 9From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.”* (Psalm 17:8-9) and “*7Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 8My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.”* (Psalm 63:7-8)

***“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.”*** Here is the DOXOLOGY – the most Biblically sound summary of our faith, for size, of any I know. The tune for the entire hymn is Old Hundredth because the Doxology expresses the meaning of the 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm: “*1Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”* (Psalm 100:1-5)

This last stanza which is the Doxology is a hymn of praise, but also a creedal statement that summarizes our whole faith. Not only do His creatures on earth praise Him, but all in Heaven above as well. Even the lower creatures of earth praise Him in their strict adherence to His Laws of Nature, which He has made an innate part of their being. The Doxology praises the One God of all living in Three distinct Persons – a prayer that a Muslim, a practicing Jew, a Buddhist, a Unitarian, a Mormon, a Jehovah’s Witness, or a lukewarm Christian cannot repeat with full faith and allegiance. There is no good gift that does not descend directly from the very hand of God. “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* (James 1:17)

Dear reader, is it not time to awaken to reveille?

**Dormez-vous?**