

The Glory Which Is Due to Jehovah.

by Edward Payson

Giving Jehovah the glory due to his name involves recognizing his divine nature, character, relations, offices, and works, and responding with worship, praise, and obedience.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:28, Psalm 29:2, Psalm 50:2, Psalm 86:10, Psalm 96:4, Psalm 96:8, Psalm 145:3, Malachi 1:11, Revelation 4:11

Topics: "Worship And Adoration", "Gods Glory"

Description

Edward Payson preaches a Thanksgiving Sermon based on 1 Chronicles 16:28-29, emphasizing the importance of giving glory and strength to the Lord, bringing offerings, and worshipping Him in holiness. He delves into the nature, character, offices, and works of God, highlighting the debt of gratitude humanity owes to God for His blessings and the inadequacy of human praise compared to God's infinite glory. Payson urges listeners to acknowledge God's divine nature, perfect character, sacred relations, and marvelous works, emphasizing the need for heartfelt adoration, obedience, and thanksgiving to fully give God the glory He deserves.

Transcript

"Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come before him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

1 Chronicles 16:28, 29

A Thanksgiving Sermon.

sacred song, from which these words are selected, was composed by the sweet psalmist of Israel, in honor of the most interesting and joyful event, which occurred during the whole period of his eventful life. The event to which we allude was, the triumphant removal of the ark of God's covenant, the symbol of his presence, from the state of obscurity in which it had remained for many years, to a suitable place in the royal city. To the psalm which David composed on this occasion, no higher or more appropriate praise can be given, than is contained in the remark, that it was in all respects worthy of the occasion which called it forth.

He seems to have been inspired, while penning it, with a double portion of that Spirit which dictated all his psalms, and which causes them to resemble the songs that are sung by saints and angels before the throne. Sing unto the Lord, he exclaims, all the earth, show forth his salvation from day to day: Sing unto the Lord, Sing to him sacred songs, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Remember the marvelous works which he hath done; his wonders and the judgments of his mouth.

Declare his glory among the heathen, his marvelous works among all nations; for great is Jehovah and greatly to be praised, he is to be feared above all gods; for all the gods of the people are vanity and a lie, but Jehovah made the heavens. Glory and honor are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place. Then follow the words of our text. Give unto Jehovah, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto Jehovah glory and strength; give unto him the glory due unto his name.

Bring an offering and come before him; worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness. The duties which all the kindreds of the people, or, in other words, all nations, are here called upon to perform, are precisely the duties for the public performance of which, this day is set apart, and for which we are now professedly assembled. Of these duties the first mentioned, and that which virtually includes them all, is, to give unto Jehovah the glory which is due unto his name. He who rightly performs this duty will perform, not only the appropriate duties of a day of public thanksgiving, but every other duty which God requires of his creatures; for the whole preceptive part of the Bible is contained in this one command, Give unto Jehovah the glory which is his due.

To skew what it is to do this, is my present design. With this view I remark, that every being has a right, and may justly claim, to be regarded and treated, by all who know him, in a manner suited to the nature and character which he possesses, to the relations and offices which he sustains, and to the works which he performs. For instance, human nature, or the nature of man, is of a higher order than that of the brutes. All who possess this nature have, therefore, a right to be regarded and treated in a corresponding manner.

Should we in any instance, disregard this right, and treat a man as if he were a brute, we should be guilty of injustice, we should not give him that which is his due. Similar remarks may be made respecting character. If any being possesses a lovely character he has a right to be beloved; if a venerable character, he has a right to be revered; if he is faithful and true, he has a just claim to our belief and confidence. There are also offices and relations, which give those who sustain them a right to claim particular services and affections from others.

A man who sustains the relation of a father, has a right to the filial affections of his children. A man who sustains the office of a sovereign, has a right to the obedience of his subjects. Finally, there are various works which entitle those who perform them to be regarded with suitable affections. One who performs any admirable work has a claim upon our admiration. And the man who performs an act of kindness, has a right to expect grateful returns. To apply these remarks to the case before us.

Jehovah possesses a nature and character peculiar to himself; he sustains various offices and relations, and he has performed many works which he alone could perform. On all these accounts something is due to him from his creatures. And when we regard him with such affections, and yield him such services, as his nature, character, offices, and works deserve, then we give unto him the glory which is due to his name. 1. Let us inquire what is due to Jehovah on account of his nature.

The nature of any being is that, the possession of which constitutes him what he is. Thus the possession of human nature constitutes a man. The possession of angelic nature constitutes an angel, and the possession of a divine nature constitutes God. Now the nature of Jehovah is divine. In what it consists, or what is its essence, we cannot indeed tell. We only know some of its properties. We know that it is uncreated, self-existent, independent, and eternal. It could have no beginning; for there is no cause which could bring a divine nature into existence.

It can have no end; for there is no cause which can put a period to the existence of divinity. And as Jehovah possesses a divine nature, so he alone possesses such a nature. He is not only God, but God alone. There is no God before him, none beside him. In a word, he is the only being of the same kind who now exists, who ever has existed, or who ever will exist. In this respect he differs widely from all other beings. Of those who possess human nature, and angelic nature, the number is great.

Of course, whatever is due to human or angelic nature must be divided among a great number of individuals. Whatever is due to angelic nature must be divided among all the angels. But with respect to Jehovah the case is different. He has no partners in the divine nature. Of course, there are none to share with him in what is due to that nature. All that is due to divinity is due to him alone, without division. Here then is a being who deserves something which is due to no other being in the universe, who may justly claim to be regarded with affections to which no other being has any title.

He therefore who does not give something to Jehovah, which he gives to no other being, does not give unto him the glory which is his due. If it be asked, what must be given to Jehovah, which is given to no other being? I answer, one thing, which must be given to him alone, is, religious worship and adoration. Many other things indeed are his due, which we shall have occasion to notice; but this is due to him, considered simply as a being who is by nature God over all. And the religious worship which is paid him must be suited to his nature.

He is by nature a spirit, and must therefore, as our Saviour informs, be worshipped in spirit and in truth. He is also a most holy Spirit, and must therefore, to use the language of our text, be worshipped in the beauty of holiness, in the exercise of all those holy affections which constitute moral beauty and excellence. The man who thus worships Jehovah, the man whose body, soul, and spirit, all bow down before him in humble prostration, whose understanding acknowledges that he is God alone, and whose heart adores him as God alone, gives unto him the glory which is his due on account of his nature. 2.

Let us next inquire what is due to Jehovah on account of the character which he possesses. We have already seen, that every being may justly claim to be regarded with affections, suited to his character. Now the character of Jehovah is absolutely perfect. It is the very standard of perfection. We may safely challenge the whole created universe to mention or conceive of, a single beautiful, amiable, admirable, or venerable quality, which he does not possess in an infinite degree.

Indeed it is certain that no language has even a name for any excellent, moral or intellectual quality, which is not found in the character of Jehovah. And it is worthy of remark, that there is, in his character, something which is suited to excite every proper affection of which the human soul is capable. Are we, for instance, capable of feeling veneration and awe? There is something in God's character which is suited to excite these emotions. Are we capable of feeling admiration?

There is in his character everything to admire. Are we capable of love? In his character there is sufficient to raise the flame of love to the highest pitch of intensity. Are we capable of exercising confidence? His

truth and faithfulness may well lead us to confide in him. Are we capable of hope? His mercy is well suited to excite it. And can it be necessary to remark that, if any being can deserve praise, he who possesses such a character as this deserves it. Is it not most evident that he is worthy to be feared, and venerated, and admired, and loved, and confided in, with all the heart and soul and mind and strength?

Now to regard him with all these affections, and to express these affections in fervent humble praise, extolling him as infinitely great and powerful and wise and good and merciful and true, is to give him the glory which is due to his character. Of him who thus offers praise, God says, He glorifieth me. 3. Let us inquire what is due to God on account of the relations and offices which he sustains. The first and principal relation which he sustains with respect to us, is, that of a Creator to his creatures.

And what relation can be more sacred, or invest him who sustains it with so many rights as this? What is not due from us to him who is at once the Former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits? That you may be prepared to answer this question, suppose yourselves standing by the throne of God, with your eyes fixed on empty space. You are told, that in that space, God is about to exert his power. He speaks, --and suddenly a shapeless mass of dead, unorganized matter appears, where before there was nothing.

He speaks again, and this shapeless mass assumes the form and countenance of a human body, with all its limbs and organs of sensation. He speaks once more, and an immortal spirit, endued with rational faculties, comes into existence within that body, and the newly created being awakens to conscious existence, and begins to exert its limbs and faculties. Suppose God should then reveal himself to this being, and say, I am thy Creator. I called into existence that matter which now forms thy body; I gave it its form, its members, its senses, and I breathed into it that living, conscious, intelligent spirit, by which it is actuated and controlled.

In these circumstances what should be the feelings and conduct of such a creature? What return would God have a right to expect from him? What return would you expect him to make? Would you not expect to see him fall at his Maker's feet, and to hear him say, Lord I am thine, wholly and forever thine; all that I am, all that I can ever acquire, is thine. To thee I consecrate my existence, my body, my soul, with all the powers of both. To thee alone it belongs to prescribe the manner in which I shall employ them, the thoughts and feelings which I shall exercise, the words which I shall utter, and the services which I shall perform.

Speak Lord, and appoint me my duty, for thy servant heareth, and is ready to obey? Language like this, and feeling corresponding with this language, you would surely expect from such a creature, in such circumstances. And should he, instead of realizing these expectations, pay no regard to his Maker, deny that he had any right to his affections and services, and live only to please himself, you would feel that he was very far indeed from rendering unto God that which was his due, that he was ungrateful and criminal in the highest degree.

My hearers, what you would expect from such a creature, God expects and demands from each of us. And he has a perfect right to demand it, nor can we give him the glory which is due to him as our Creator, unless we cordially comply with this demand to its utmost extent. Another relation, which God sustains with respect to us, is that of a Preserver. It is now almost universally acknowledged by philosophers, as well as by divines, that preservation is equivalent to a continually repeated act of creation, and that to keep any being or thing in existence, requires a constant exertion of the same power, which first gave it existence.

Hence it follows, that God does in effect repeat the act of our creation, and renew the gift of existence every moment. Every moment then our obligations to his goodness increase. They are greater today than they were yesterday; and they will be greater tomorrow, than they are today. No man who forgets, or who is not suitably affected by these truths, can be justly considered as giving unto God the glory which is due to his name. From the relations of Creator and Preserver in which Jehovah stands to his creatures, it results, that he must sustain with respect to them, various offices, important and honorable.

He must necessarily be the universal Teacher, Master, Sovereign and Judge. Now we consider each of these offices as honorable, even when possessed by men only, and as entitling those who fill it to peculiar regards. What then is due to Jehovah, who sustains them all with respect to the whole intelligent universe? and who is perfectly qualified to perform the duties of them all in the most perfect manner? Considered as an infinitely wise, omniscient, and infallible Teacher, he may justly claim, that all his instructions should be received with the utmost docility and the most profound submission.

Considered as a Master, every service is due to him which he may choose to require of us. Considered as the rightful Lawgiver, Sovereign and Judge of the universe, he has a perfect right to demand unlimited submission to his authority, and obedience to all his commands. If then we would give him the glory which is due to his name, we must acknowledge that he fills all these offices, and must regard and treat him in a corresponding manner. Lastly; let us inquire what is due to Jehovah on account of the works which he has performed.

It has been already remarked, and will be readily allowed, that every being is entitled to all the praise, which his works deserve. The historian, the poet, the orator, the painter, the sculptor, the architect; are all admired, applauded, and honored, in proportion to the real, or supposed excellence of the works which they produce. This admiration, applause and honor, are universally considered as their due, and while the debt is readily acknowledged, it is paid with cheerfulness, and often with rapturous enthusiasm.

Thousands of volumes have been written, and ten thousand times ten thousand tongues have been eloquent, in praise of the natural and acquired abilities, which some of the works of men have displayed; nor is it pretended that the authors of these works have received more praise and honor than was their due. O then, what praise, what honors, are due to him, of whom it may with such truth be said, Among the gods, O Lord, there is none like thee, neither are there any works like unto thy works!

As all the nations of the earth are less than vanity, in comparison with Jehovah, so all the works of men appear to be less than nothing and vanity, when compared with his. There is one class of his works indeed, toward the performance, or even toward the imitation of which, no man, nor angel, can make the smallest approach. You will perceive at once that I refer to his works of creation. Men may modify and combine and alter what is already created, but they can create nothing, not even a particle of dust; nay they cannot even originate a single new idea.

If any doubt the truth of this assertion, let them try to form an idea of a sixth sense, or of any objects with which such a sense would make us acquainted, and they will soon find that the attempt is vain. How wonderful, how inconceivable, then, must be the powers and operations of that eternal, infinite, all-creating mind, which, before any worlds and creatures existed, could form an idea of all the worlds and creatures which now exist, of all their various parts, and of all the numberless relations and connections which subsist between them!

What infinite wisdom and knowledge were displayed, in originating all these ideas, in causing them to stand as it were before the eye of his mind, in forming the whole complicated plan of such a universe as this! And when this plan was formed, what infinite power was required to execute it, to bring out of nothing into existence so many millions of systems and suns and worlds and creatures as now exist! Consider, too, the variety which marks and adorns God's works of creation.

Among all the countless objects which God has formed, probably no two can be found which, in all respects, perfectly resemble each other. While all the individuals of each particular species have a general resemblance, no two men, no two animals, no two plants, nay, no two leaves, are exactly alike. Yet who would have thought such a diversity possible, had he not witnessed it? who would have thought it possible that the few features which compose the human countenance could be so infinitely diversified, that no two individuals of the human race should perfectly resemble each other?

That each individual should differ from all others in the tones of his voice, is perhaps still more wonderful. So far as we can discern, a similar difference exists between the minds of different individuals. As no two bodies, so probably no two souls are exactly alike. Parents who have numerous families, and instructors who have many youth under their care, often notice this diversity with surprise. My hearers, reflect a moment upon these facts. Recollect that God has been constantly employed, for more than five thousand years, in forming new men, animals, and plants; and yet, so far as we can discover, has never formed any two which are exactly alike.

What an idea does this fact alone give us of the inexhaustible riches of the divine mind! And could we pass from this world to all the worlds which God has made, we should probably find every where new proofs of this truth, everywhere find new varieties of being, new forms of material and intellectual existence. From the consideration of God's works of creation, let us proceed to his works of providence, or those works which he performs in preserving, guiding, and governing the universe which he has made.

His works of this nature also display infinitely greater wisdom, skill, power, and goodness than all the works of men. We admire the ability displayed by a commander, who regulates, without confusion, all the motions of a numerous army; by a monarch, who skillfully manages all the concerns of an extensive and populous empire. But what is this, compared with the wisdom, knowledge, and power, which are exhibited by Jehovah in the preservation, control, and government, of all his innumerable hosts, and his almost boundless empire!

He must every moment see everything which takes place in the universe; every feeling, thought, word, and action of each of his creatures, and every motion of each particle of matter. He must not only see all these things, but he must never forget them. He must not only see and remember them, but direct and overrule them all, in such a manner, as shall cause them to work together for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and for the good of those who love him. He must also foresee; and be able to foretell, everything which will take place, with the time and the manner in which it will occur.

In fine, he must be continually working in every place; and the past, and the future, heaven, earth, and hell, all time, and all space, with all which they contain, must be constantly present to his view. And O, what a mind must that be, which, without effort, and without confusion, can attend at once to such an infinite variety of objects and events, and direct and control them all in the wisest and best possible manner! Equally wonderful is the display of moral excellences which God's works of providence exhibit.

We admire the bounty of a man who feeds a hundred poor families from his table. But God every day feeds the whole family of man, together with all the inferior animals, besides bestowing on them numberless additional blessings. We admire the magnanimity and generosity of an earthly monarch, who forgives rebels and traitors, when they lie at his mercy. But God has forgiven millions of the worst of rebels, adopted them as his children, and made them his heirs. We extol the condescension of a sovereign, who, on one day in the week, orders his palace gates to be thrown open for the admission of petitioners.

But the ear of the King of kings is every moment open to the petitions of the meanest slave who crawls upon his footstool. We justly admire and venerate St. Paul, who was the instrument of converting and saving some thousands of immortal souls. But God, as the sole efficient agent, has converted and saved many millions of our race, and is still daily converting and saving more. There is another point of view in which the superiority of the works of God to those of men appears, if possible, still more evident.

He is the real author of all the admirable and excellent works which men perform. He gave them all the abilities by which these works are performed, prompted them to attempt the performance, and then crowned their attempts with success. All the writers, who have enlightened the world, were but as a pen guided by him. All the great men, who have delivered their countrymen from oppression, were but a sword in his hand to cut off oppressors. All the inventors and improvers of useful arts, were indebted to him for all their inventions and improvements.

And all the good men, who have blessed the world by their example, and their exertions, owed all their goodness, and all their success to him. He is also the author, the dispenser of all the happiness which has ever been enjoyed on earth or in heaven. He gave us senses capable of being gratified, and provided for them their appropriate gratifications. He gave us our intellectual faculties, and placed before them objects in the contemplation and acquisition of which they might find pleasure.

He made us capable of affections which it is delightful to exercise, and gave us relations and friends towards whom those affections may flow out. And all religious enjoyments, all the happiness of heaven proceeds directly from him. In fine, he is constantly doing good, doing it on the largest scale, doing it not merely to individuals, families and nations, but to whole worlds and systems at once. Now, if we would give God the glory which is due to him on account of his works, we must acknowledge that he performs all the works which have been mentioned, and, with suitable admiration, and affection, render unto him the praises and thanksgivings which such works deserve.

But what creature, or what combination of creatures, can give him all the praise and thanksgiving which such works deserve? If we praise the sculptor, who merely forms the image of a man, how can we sufficiently praise him who created not only the sculptor himself, but ten thousand thousand other forms, glowing with life, and radiant in beauty! If we admire the painter who skillfully delineates a landscape, or a human countenance, what admiration is due to the divine Artist, who spreads out his canvass over the whole earth, and, with colors dyed in heaven, makes it all one grand landscape, in which all that is beautiful, and all that is sublime, are exhibited in contrast, or harmoniously blended!

If we extol the historian, the poet, the orator, the philosopher, how can we sufficiently extol him who created and gave them all their powers. If we admire the astronomer who discovers the motions of the heavenly bodies, how shall we sufficiently admire him who lighted up the firmament with suns and planets, and guides Arcturus with his sons. If we applaud the man who preserves the life of a single fellow

creature, what applauses are due to that God who daily preserves all creatures and all worlds in being.

If no praises are thought too great for the patriot, who delivers his country from temporal bondage, what praises are sufficient for him who offers to a ruined and enslaved world, deliverance from sin and misery, and death and hell? never, never, can any creature, nor all creatures combined, give God the whole glory which his works deserve; not though they should spend an eternity in praising him. All they can do is, to give him all that they have, to acknowledge that he alone is worthy to be praised, that all glory and honor are his due, and to combine all their powers, and all their affections and exertions in forming one refulgent unequalled crown, not to be placed on his head, for it would be unworthy, but to be cast at his feet.

When all creatures shall unite in doing this, when they shall all fear, and admire, and love, and serve, and obey, and thank, and praise, Jehovah, with their whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, then, and not till then, will they obey the command which calls upon them, to give him the glory which is due to his name. This is done in heaven. There every heart is filled to overflowing with all holy affections; every tongue is loud in his praise; every crown is cast at his feet; saints, angels, and archangels are all prostrate before him.

And thus it ought to be on earth. Thus it would be, were not men alienated from God by sin, and blind to the glories of his nature, his character; and his works. We have not exhibited, nor even mentioned, the thousandth part of his glories, nor of his just claims to receive glory from his intelligent creatures. But we must leave the subject, all imperfect and unfinished as it is, and conclude with a few inferences and reflections. 1. Does God require nothing more of his creatures than the glory which is due to him on account of his nature, character, offices, and works?

O, then, how reasonable, how just, are his requisitions. He merely requires the payment of a just debt, a debt far more justly due, than any debt which was ever paid by man to man, by children to their parents, by subjects to their prince. How unreasonable then, is it to complain of his requisitions! How ungrateful, cruel, and unjust to refuse to comply with them! How inconceivable the guilt which men thus incur! 2. Is all the glory which has been mentioned due unto God's name, and ought it, in strict justice, to have been ascribed unto him by men, ever since man began to exist!

How immeasurably great then is the debt which our world has contracted, and under the burden of which it now groans! During every day and every hour, which has elapsed since the apostasy of man, this debt has been increasing; for every day and every hour all men ought to have given unto Jehovah the glory which is due to his name. But no man has ever done this fully. And a vast proportion of our race have never done it at all. Now the difference between the tribute which men ought to have paid to God, and that which they actually have paid, constitutes the debt of which we are speaking.

How vast then, how incalculable is this debt! For more than five thousand years every individual of the human race has been adding to it. Can we then wonder if its constantly increasing weight should finally sink our world down to hell? There is another point of view in which our contemplation of this debt may assist us to compute its magnitude, or rather convince us that it is, beyond computation, great. Compare the blessings which have descended from heaven to earth, with the returns which have ascended from earth to heaven.

The difference between them composes the debt under consideration. And O, how immeasurable is this difference! That you may be convinced it is so, look first at the blessings which God has sent from heaven to earth. As soon as the world was created, see the windows of heaven opened above it, and all the

fullness of the Godhead gushing forth, and pouring down upon it in a torrent, a flood of blessings, rich, various, inestimable blessings. Without cessation or diminution this flood has ever since continued to flow, as if all heaven were to be poured out upon earth, while, in its descent, the deluge divides into as many streams as there are individuals in our world; a constant stream falls upon each.

My hearers, were God's blessings waters, they would long ere this have risen more than fifteen cubits above the summits of the highest mountains. Now look at the returns which men have made for all this deluge of blessings. From a comparatively small number of families and individuals scattered here and there, see a few clouds of incense, a few imperfect offerings, praises and thanksgivings slowly ascending to heaven. And is this all? Yes, my hearers, this is all, all the returns which men have made to God for blessings without number and without measure; and for the unspeakable gift of his Son.

Need anything more be said to show, that the debt which our world owes to God is great beyond all finite calculation? In this debt every nation participates. In this debt our own country largely shares. Of this debt every individual present owes a part. So far as the blessings you have received exceed the returns which you have made; so far as each of you has failed to glorify God to the utmost extent of his powers, so far you are indebted to him. Well then may each of us be represented as owing God a debt of ten thousand talents.

And is not this debt sufficiently large? Will any one present proceed to increase it by still neglecting to give God the glory which is due to his name? Will any one still refuse or neglect to apply to that Saviour, through whom alone the remission of his mighty debt can be obtained? Rather let all, without delay, apply to him for this purpose, and then proceed to present their bodies and their souls as living sacrifices to God, continually offering those praises, thanksgivings, and spiritual services, which are acceptable through Jesus Christ.

Finally; is all this glory due unto God's name? Then there is no reason to fear that saints and angels in heaven will not have sufficient employment to occupy them through eternity. What God is he will be unchangeably and eternally. What God does shall be forever. He will therefore forever continue to deserve all the glory which he now deserves; and to ascribe unto him this glory in ceaseless praises and thanksgivings, will constitute the employment, and the felicity of saints and angels through endless ages.

Nor will this employment ever become wearisome. New glories and new works of wonder will still burst upon their astonished sight, and excite in their bosoms new emotions of wonder, admiration, gratitude and love; and these emotions it would pain them not to express in new songs of thanksgiving and praise. Christian, is this to be thine eternal employment and felicity? Is thine ear destined to hear, and thy tongue to join in the songs of heaven? Is thine eternity to be one long endless day of thanksgiving?

If so, abound more and more in this blessed work; be jealous for the honor of the Lord your God, and with increasing diligence and fervor and constancy, give unto him the glory which is due to his name.

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