



To the Glory of God Alone

This is the fourth in a series of devotions on the Five Solas of the Reformed Faith. You may have noticed I have not covered them in the order they are most often listed. I do this as a personal preference to save the “best wine for last” which is that of *Sola Christus* – the topic of our next and last devotion on the Five Solas.

But today we will cover *The Glory* reserved for *God Alone* which may be summarized as ALL Glory to God and none to man.

The below prayer is said or sung as a concluding prayer of the Service of Holy Communion in the Reformed Anglican Church of England. It rightfully attributes all glory to God where it belongs, and reflects precisely the biblical perspective on that glory due to the Divine Sovereign of our Souls.

¶ Then shall be said Gloria in excelsis, all standing, or some proper Hymn.

GLORY be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

(American Book of Common Prayer - 1928)

The most beautifully poetic passages of the Bible give abundant counsel on our duty to give all glory to God for without him, we are nothing. Old *One Hundredth* proclaims this wonderfully: *1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know 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. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.* (Psalm 100:1-5)

Without God, we would not even be sheep; but a lamb can never boast of its wonderful works – of its creative genius, of its great accomplishments – and we are less than lambs without God. *1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* (Psalm 8:1-5)

I love to read of inspiring events from the past when Christian faith was more a common possession than the exception it has become today. Here is one which inspires the heart, mind, and ear:

A Custom Involving Handel's Hallelujah Chorus:

On 23 March 1743, when Handel's Messiah was first performed in London to raise funds for orphans, the King of England – George II - was present in the audience. As *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, was wafted by the multitudinous choir with overwhelming power and majesty, King George could not resist the urge to stand up. From that first performance to today, it is customary - nay, mandatory! – that all stand when the Hallelujah Chorus is sung.

When one comes face-to-face to the reality of God's majesty, he cannot help but stand to glorify that magnificent Personage!

Of course, when we glorify God, we are glorifying the *Three in One* – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Though we can own no glory to ourselves, we can share in that glory by being safe in the Ark of Christ who is glorious beyond measure.

The people of God first glimpsed the splendor and majesty of God's glory in the Glory Cloud that both followed **and led** the Children of Israel across the Red Sea Basin and throughout their Wilderness Journey. He, by the way, both follows and leads us in this wilderness journey of the modern day. *19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.* (Ex 14:19-20) Amazingly, the glory of God blinds the wicked and gives Light and Guidance to the righteous.

When the hearts of the American people were fixed on the Rock of their Salvation at the nation's founding, symbols of the glory of God were inculcated in our national symbols. One of those symbols in the Glory Cloud found on the one dollar bill and incorporated in the National Seal. If you look on the obverse side of the one dollar bill (the green side) you will see the Glory Cloud depicted above the Great Eagle. Inside the Glory Cloud you will find thirteen stars with the dual reference to the thirteen colonies as well as the thirteen tribes of Israel. Remember the tribe of Levi was dispersed among the other twelve tribes much as the Holy Ghost is dispersed among the Church.

We not only have as our Sovereign the King of Kings, but the King of Glory as well. *7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.* (Psalm 24:7-10)

Reverence, honor, dignity, and respect are gone along with the days of chivalry in our time. We see adult men walking about with their pants down about their bottoms. Self-respect is gone along with the loss of reverence for God. If we do not revere God, it is unlikely we will bear respect for others. Public dress has grown sloppy and immodest in both men and women. This is an outward sign of the inward spiritual depravity of our age. Even our worship music has become more worldly than that of the WORLD. Instead of modest dress and dignity of appearance, men and women have graven images in their flesh (tattoos). The glory of God's Creation is marred by irreverent paintings that mar the perfection of nature, and music which appeals to the sensual rather than the spiritual. The Great Masters of the past would be overcome with despondency to see the low point of morality to which modern man has sunk.

I spoke with a friend about this the other day and he responded, "Yes, I know; however, every generation has claimed the present to be of lesser moral value than the previous."¹ That is a great deception. I know because I have lived in times and places – perhaps long ago and far away – in which a divorced person was never seen in my community. No girls became pregnant in school. None of us knew what marijuana, cocaine, or homosexuality was. I believed the latter was simply a bad joke when I heard of it in high school. I did not realize the reality of this filthy sin until after I graduated high school.

Perhaps you are one of those light-headed scholars who do not believe that the wicked imaginations of man's heart have no limits for worsening. *5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.* (Gen 6:5-7)

The condition of the world today reminds me precisely of those days of Noah. How long will the Lord withhold His hand of judgment against such a vile society as we see about us today. Of course, there remain devoted remnants of God in wilderness areas – in the mountains of Luzon, in the jungles of the Solomons, in the threatening environment of Pakistan and Syria, and in the faithful plains of Serbia/Macedonia. There even remains a remnant of God's people in modern-day America, but the numbers are growing fewer with the passage of time.

For those intoxicated on the modern indoctrinations of schools, here is food for thought: *7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* (Luke 18:7-8)

A good start to restoration of soul and spirit would be to return to glorifying God. In doing so, we see how small we are; and how great and mighty He is!

¹ By the way, this, if true, is merely indicative of a gradual decline in the world; not a thing in which to take comfort.