

# **THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS**



**A. W. Pink and Jonathan Edwards**

# The Beauty of Holiness

## The Beauty of Holiness by A. W. Pink

***“Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Psa. 29:2).***

Holiness is the antithesis of sin, and the **beauty of holiness** is in direct contrast from the ugliness of sin. Sin is a deformity, a monstrosity. Sin is repulsive, repellent to the infinitely pure God: that is why He selected leprosy, the most loathsome and horrible of all diseases, to be its emblem. When the Prophet was Divinely inspired to depict the condition of degenerate Israel it was in these words, “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores” (Isa. 1:6). O that sin were sickening and hateful to us: not merely its grosser forms, but sin itself. At the opposite extreme from the hideousness of sin is **“the beauty of holiness.”** Holiness is lovely in the sight of God: necessarily so. It is the reflection of His own nature, for He is “glorious in holiness” (Exod. 15:11). O that it may be increasingly attractive to and earnestly sought after by us. Perhaps the simplest way of bringing out the **beauty of holiness** will be to contrast it from the beauties of time and sense.

First, the **beauty of holiness** is imperceptible to the natural man, and therein it differs radically from the beauties of mere nature. He can behold and admire a lovely glen, the softly flowing river, the mountain pines, the rushing waterfall; but for the excellence of spiritual graces he has no eyes. He regards one who (by grace) meekly submits to sore trials as a milksop. He looks upon one who denies self for Christ’s sake as a fool. He considers the man who adheres strictly to the narrow way as one who misses the best of this life. The natural man is totally incapable of discerning the excellence of that which is of great price in the sight of God. Do some think we are stating this too strongly? Then let them be reminded of the solemn fact that when the Holy One tabernacled here upon earth the unregenerate saw in Him “no beauty” that they should desire Him (Isa. 53:2); and it is the same today. God must remove the scales from the eyes of our heart before we can perceive that holiness is beautiful.

Second, the **beauty of holiness** is real and genuine, and therein it differs radically from much of the beauty which is seen in this world. How much that appeals to the gaze of the natural man is artificial and fictitious. How much human beauty is made up, the product of the artifices of the salon. Even when physical beauty is natural, how rarely it is accompanied by moral virtues. No wonder our forefathers were accustomed to say, “Beauty is but skin deep.” Not so the **beauty of holiness**: it is rooted in the inner man, and sheds its purifying influence over the entire being. “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain” (Prov. 31:30). But holiness disappoints not its possessor, for its beauty is spiritual and Divine. True, it has many counterfeits in the religious world, yet the genuine article has a ring to it which the godly cannot mistake.

Third, the **beauty of holiness** is abiding, and therein it differs radically from all the beauty of earth. The wooded glen, whose varied tints are so pleasing in the summer sunlight, is leafless and drab when winter comes. The glorious sunset which human skill can neither produce nor adequately reproduce disappears within a few minutes. The fairest human countenance quickly withers: “all her beauty is departed” (Lam. 1:6). Even when it is preserved to the end of a short life, “their beauty shall consume in the grave” (Psa. 49:14). Yes, change and decay in all we see. The only beauty which is unfading and everlasting is the **beauty of holiness**. The fruit of the Spirit will never lose its bloom: spiritual graces shall endure after this poor world has all gone up in smoke. How fervently, then, should we pray, “Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us” (Psa. 90:17).

Fourth, the **beauty of holiness** is satisfying, and herein it differs radically from the beauty of the things of time and sense. Sooner or later they either pall on one or else leave an aching void. Take the globe-trotter who journeys east and west, north and south, seeking fresh scenes. How soon he tires, discovering that the loveliest landscape cannot supply contentment of mind and peace of heart. Man is more than a material creature, and therefore it requires something else than material things—no matter how

beautiful—to meet his needs. It is the things of the Spirit which alone afford satisfaction. “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). True, the Christian is never satisfied with his own holiness: rather does he continue to hunger and thirst after righteousness to the end of his wilderness journey. Nevertheless, the holier we are—the closer we walk with God—the more real rest of soul shall we enjoy. And the blessed sequel will demonstrate the contrast still more plainly: instead of discovering that we have only chased the shadows, the Christian has the assurance: “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psa. 17:15).

Fifth, the **beauty of holiness** is glorifying to God, and therein it differs radically from much of human beauty. To glorify his Maker is the bounden duty of man, and nothing honours Him so much as our walking in separation from all that is displeasing to Him. But alas, physical charms and spiritual graces are rarely found in the same persons. A notable example of this is seen in the case of Absalom, of whom it is recorded, “In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him” (2 Sam. 14:25); yet he feared not God and perished in his sins. How many a woman has used her personal attractions to entice men rather than magnify God. How many a well-proportioned and handsome man has employed his gifts for self-glorification rather than the praise of God. But the **beauty of holiness** ever redounds to the honour of its Author.

“**O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**” This is the only kind of beauty which the Lord cares for in our devotions. “Godliness is to the soul as the light is to the world, to illustrate and adorn it. It is not greatness which sets us off before God, but goodness” (Thomas Watson). Ornate architecture and expensive apparel God delights not in. It is the loveliness of inward purity and outward sanctity that pleases the thrice Holy One. Sincerity of heart, fervour of spirit, reverence of demeanour, the exercise of faith, the outgoings of love, are some of the elements which comprise the “**beauty of holiness**” in our worship.

**Taken from ‘A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections’  
by Jonathan Edwards**

*Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the moral excellency of divine things. Or, a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the spring of all holy affections.*

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things.—The word *moral* is not to be understood here, according to the common acceptance, when men speak of *morality*, and a *moral* behaviour; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and especially the duties of the second table. Nor is it taken for mere seeming virtues, proceeding from natural principles, in opposition to those that are more inward, spiritual, and divine. The honesty, justice, generosity, good-nature, and public spirit of many of the heathen, are called *moral* virtues, in distinction from the holy faith, love, humility, and heavenly-mindedness of true Christians; but the word *moral* is not to be understood so in this place.

In order to a right understanding of what is meant, it must be observed, that divines commonly make a distinction between *moral* good and evil, and *natural* good and evil. By *moral* evil, they mean the evil of sin, or that evil which is against *duty*, and contrary to what is right and *ought* to be. By *natural* evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly opposed to duty; but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any respect to a rule of duty. So the evil of *suffering* is called *natural* evil, such as pain and torment, disgrace, and the like: these things are contrary to mere nature, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. If a child be monstrous, or a natural fool, these are *natural*, but not *moral* evils, because they have not properly the nature of the evil of *sin*. On the other hand, as by *moral* evil divines mean sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by *moral* good, they mean that which is contrary to sin: or, in other words, that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it *becomes* them to be and to act. And, it is obvious, that is *becoming*, which is most *fit, suitable,*

and *lovely*. By *natural* good, they mean that good which is entirely of a different kind from holiness or virtue, *viz.* that which perfects or suits nature, considering nature abstractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or measure of right and wrong.

Thus *pleasure* is a natural good; so is *honour*; so is strength; and so is speculative knowledge, human learning, and policy. Thus there is a distinction to be made between men's natural and their moral good; and also between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven. The great capacity of angelic understandings, their great strength, and the honourable circumstances they are in as the great ministers of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is their *natural* good. But their perfect holiness and glorious goodness, their pure and flaming love to God, to the saints and one another, is their *moral* good. So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the *moral* perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God, are good, right, infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's *natural* perfections, they mean those attributes wherein his *greatness* consists; such as his power, his knowledge, his being from everlasting to ever lasting, his omnipresence, his awful and terrible majesty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being, is more immediately seated in the *heart* or *will*. That intelligent being whose will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.—This moral excellency, when it is true and real, is *holiness*. Therefore *holiness* comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other *true virtue*, but *real holiness*. Holiness comprehends all the true virtue of a good man; his love to God, his gracious love to men, his justice, his charity, his bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other Christian virtues, belong to his holiness. So the holiness of God, in the more extensive sense of the word—the sense in which the word is commonly, if not universally, used

concerning God in Scripture—is the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature; comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness. As in holy men, their Christian kindness and mercy belong to their holiness; so the kindness and mercy of God belong to his holiness. Holiness in man, is but the *image* of God’s holiness; and surely there are not more virtues belonging to the image, than are in the original. Has derived holiness more in it, than is in that underived holiness, which is its fountain?

As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which are summed up in his *holiness*, and his natural attributes—strength, knowledge, &c.—that constitute his *greatness*; so there is a twofold image of God in man, his *moral* or *spiritual* image, which is his holiness, that is the image of God’s moral excellency; (which image was lost by the fall); and God’s *natural* image, consisting in man’s reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which is the image of God’s natural attributes. From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that love to divine things for the beauty of their *moral excellency*, is the spring of all holy affections.

It has been already shown, under the former head, that the first objective ground of all holy affections is the supreme excellency of divine things as they are in their own nature. I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that the *kind* of excellency which is the first objective ground of all holy affections, is their *holiness*. *Holy persons*, in the exercise of *holy affections*, love divine things primarily for their *holiness*; they love God, in the first place, for the **beauty of his holiness**, or *moral* perfection, as being supremely amiable in *itself*. Not that the saints, in the exercise of gracious affections, love God *only* for his holiness; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite greatness, power, knowledge, and terrible majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their love to God for his holiness is what is most *fundamental* and *essential* in their love. Here it is that true love to God *begins*; all other holy love to divine things flows from hence.

Love to God for the beauty of his *moral* attributes, necessarily causes a delight in God for *all* his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes. Infinite holiness supposes infinite wisdom, and infinite greatness; and all the attributes of God as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings primarily and most essentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness. Herein consists the loveliness of angels, without which, notwithstanding all their natural perfections, they would have no more loveliness than devils. It is moral excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: it is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of, their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency, if I may so speak, is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not.

Strength and knowledge do not render any being lovely without holiness, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely when joined with holiness. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their strength and knowledge, because these natural perfections of theirs are sanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very strong, and of great natural understanding, yet they are not the more lovely. They are more *terrible*, indeed, not more *amiable*; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the *beauty* of all his natural perfections. And so it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the Divine Being: holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the *beauty of holiness*, (Psa. 29:2. Psa. 96:9. and Psa. 110:3). This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wisdom, that it is a *holy* wisdom, and not a wicked subtlety. This makes his majesty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a *holy* majesty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a *holy* immutability, and not an inflexible obstinacy in wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God's loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in



his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving God) it derives its loveliness from this. Therefore, it is impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, until this is seen: and it is impossible that any perfection of the divine nature should be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true *loveliness* of all God's perfections, arises from the loveliness of his holiness; then the true love of all his perfections, arises from the love of his holiness. They that do not see the glory of God's holiness, cannot see any thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace. They see nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest. For these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature primarily consists in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are *saints*, or holy ones: it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are *holy* angels, and so not devils; (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23. Matt. 25:31. Mark 8:38. Acts 10:22. Rev. 14:10). Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so *holy* a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so *holy*; Psa. 119:140. "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it." Verse 128. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Verse 138. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful. And verse 172. "My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness." And Psa. 19:7-10. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the

Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.” Herein primarily consists the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; even in that he is *the holy One of God*, Acts 3:14. and *God’s holy Child*, Acts 4:27. and *he that is holy, he that is true*, Rev. 3:7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, compassion to the miserable, &c. all is summed up in his *holiness*. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, also primarily consists in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a *holy* gospel, and so bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ. Herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are *holy* doctrines, or doctrines *according to godliness*. Herein consists the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so *holy* a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the *holy city*, the *holy Jerusalem*, the *habitation of God’s holiness*, and so of *his glory*, Isa. 63:15. All the beauties of the New Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation, are but various representations of this. (See chapter 21:2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27; chapter 22:1, 3).

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the saints love all these things. Thus they love the word of God, *because it is very pure*. It is on this account they love the saints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and those holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes. It is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the way of salvation therein revealed. “To the right closing with Christ’s person, this is also required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil; else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him, as the greatest good. For we told you, that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is

for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ: he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn, to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable is his holiness, which is in him to make him holy too. As in marriage, it is the personal beauty draws the heart And hence I have thought it reason, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more.” From Shepard’s Parable, Part I.

Under the head of the first distinguishing characteristic of gracious affection, I observed, that there is given to the regenerated a new supernatural sense, a certain divine spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the **beauty of holiness**, is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; or, this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, John 4:32, 34. “I have meat to eat, that ye know not of—My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the 119th Psalm. The psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. *God’s law*, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God’s nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the great object of the love, the complacency, and

rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments *above gold, yea, the finest gold*, and to which they are *sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb*; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before. The same psalmist declares, that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law, Psa. 19:7-10. "The law of the Lord is perfect—the commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart—the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb."

A holy love has a holy object: the holiness of love consists especially in this, that it is the love of that which is *holy*, for its holiness; so that the holiness of the object, is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. A holy nature must needs love that chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that which above all others is agreeable to a holy nature, is holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itself. And so the holy nature of God and Christ, the word of God, and other divine things, must be above all agreeable to the holy nature of the saints.

Again, a holy nature doubtless loves holy things *especially* on account of that for which sinful nature has enmity against them: but that for which chiefly sinful nature is at enmity against holy things, is their *holiness*; it is for this, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, against the law, and the people of God. Now, it is just arguing from *contraries*; from contrary causes, to contrary effects; from opposite natures, to opposite tendencies. We know that holiness is of a directly contrary nature to wickedness: as therefore it is the nature of wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate holiness; so it must be the nature of holiness chiefly to tend to and delight in holiness.

The holy nature of saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration, and constant praise of the bright and burning seraphim; Isa. 6:3. "One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his

glory.” Rev. 4:8. “They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” So the glorified saints, chapter 15:4. “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.”

And the Scriptures represent the saints on earth as adoring God *primarily* on this account; they admire and extol all God’s attributes, either as deriving loveliness from his holiness, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praise God for his power, his *holiness* is the beauty that engages them; Psa. 98:1. “O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his *holy* arm hath gotten him the victory.” So when they praise him for his justice and terrible majesty; Psa. 99:2, 3. “The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name, for it is *holy*.” Verse 5. “Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool: for he is *holy*” Verses 8, 9. “Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the Lord our God is *holy*.” So when they praise God for his mercy and faithfulness; Psa. 97:11, 12. “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous: and give thanks at the remembrance of his *holiness*.” 1 Sam. 2:2. “There is none *holy* as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.”

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various creatures show the difference of their natures, very much, in the things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true saints and natural men: natural men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least *for* their holiness. They have no taste for that kind of good, and so may be said not to know it; it is wholly hid from them. But the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural sense given them, by which they perceive it. It is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing, to the heart of a true saint in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages

his soul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happiness, both in this world, and in another. By this you may examine your love to God, to Jesus Christ, to the word of God, and to his people. By this you may examine your desires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this sort of beauty, without being primarily moved by your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great seeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a *profitable good* to me, what greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as *bonum formosum*, a *beautiful good* in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated, by the free grace of God.

Thus it appears, that though persons may have a great sense of the *natural* perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in the beauty of his *moral* perfections, it is no certain sign of grace. What though men have a great sense of the *awful greatness and terrible majesty of God*; this is only his *natural* perfection, which men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the beauty of his moral perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual taste which relishes this divine sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing mark of gracious affections, that what is spiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is possible for any graceless person to have, while he continues graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without grace, should have a clear sight, and very great and affecting sense, of God's greatness, his mighty power, and awful majesty; for this is what the devils have, though they have lost the *spiritual* knowledge of God, consisting in a sense of the amiableness of his moral perfections. They are perfectly destitute of any relish of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God,

his awful greatness and majesty; this they behold, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all shall behold at the Day of Judgment; God will make all rational beings to behold it, angels and devils, saints and sinners. Christ will manifest his infinite greatness and awful majesty to every one, in a light that none can resist, when *he shall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye shall see him*. Then they shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting view of it, to all eternity. God hath often declared his immutable purpose to make all his enemies to know him in this respect, in so often annexing these words to the threatenings he denounces against them, *And they shall know that I am the Lord*; yea, he hath sworn that all men shall see his glory in this respect, Num. 14:21. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." And this kind of manifestation of God is very often spoken of in Scripture, as made, or to be made, in the sight of God's enemies in this world. See Exod. 9:16 and chapter 14:18 and 15:16; Psa. 66:3 and Psa. 46:10. and other places innumerable. This was a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; so that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will see, and have a great sense, of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, except the beauty of his moral perfection. They will see his infinite greatness, majesty, and power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, eternity, and immutability; and even will see every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, except their beauty and amiableness. They will see and know that he is perfectly just, righteous, and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will see the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints. Nothing will be hid from their eyes, but the *beauty* of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men while in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchadnezzar had a great and very affecting sense of the

infinite greatness and awful majesty of God; of his supreme and absolute dominion, his irresistible power, and high sovereignty. He saw that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth, were as nothing before him, had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. 4:1-3, 34, 35, 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections, seems to be very much like his, Dan. 6:25., &c. But saints and angels behold the *beauty of God's holiness*: and this sight only, will melt and humble the hearts of men, wean them from the world, draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of the awful greatness of God may overpower men's *strength*, and be more than they can endure; but if the *moral* beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the *heart* will remain in its full strength. No love will be kindled, the will, instead of being effectually gained, will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects with a power which nothing can withstand.

The sense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God, may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify, but elevate them, and raise their joy and praise. This will be the natural effect of it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shown already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the same time, has a sense of his infinite greatness, and that he is as nothing in comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his gratitude and praise the higher, for kindness to one so much inferior. A sense of God's greatness had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, on that extraordinary favour of his restoration, after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts. A sense of God's exceeding greatness raises his gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him. If a natural man, at the same time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite greatness and majesty, entertains a strong conceit that this great God has made him his child and special favourite, and promised him eternal glory in his



highest love, will not this have a tendency, according to the course of nature, to raise his joy and praise to a great height.

Therefore, it is beyond doubt, that too much weight has been laid on the discoveries of God's greatness, awful majesty, and natural perfection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy, lovely majesty of God. And experience does abundantly confirm what reason and Scripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the greatness and awful majesty of God, but have been very far from a Christian spirit and temper, in any proportion, or fruits in practice in any wise agreeable; nay, their discoveries have worked in a way *contrary* to the operation of truly spiritual discoveries.

Not that a sense of God's greatness and natural attributes is not useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a manifestation of the **beauty of God's holiness**. Though that be something beyond it, it *supposes* it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural men may have a sense of the natural perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the saints, than with them. Grace enables men to see these things in a better manner, than natural men do; and not only enables them to see God's natural attributes, but that *beauty* of those attributes, which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holiness.

